



## Leader of the Opposition

Mr Roger Flavell  
Chairperson  
Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations  
38 Ironbark Avenue  
Flagstaff Hill SA 5159

Dear Mr Flavell

Thank you for your correspondence regarding volunteer organisations and Commonwealth industrial legislation.

I appreciate the time you have taken to set out the concerns of your members on these matters. Labor respects and values the tireless dedication and commitment of both volunteers and paid fire fighters in emergency management across the country. I firmly believe that all firefighters are committed individuals who are dedicated to the safety of all Australians.

It is disappointing that the Turnbull Liberal Government has sought to politicise this issue to cover up for the failings of its own local representatives, rather than focusing on the interests of volunteer and paid firefighters. While Malcolm Turnbull has proposed amendments to federal workplace relations laws, the details of these changes are as scarce as they are opportunistic. I am not convinced that there is a pressing need to rush into ill-considered amendments of Commonwealth industrial law.

As you are aware, I have dedicated much of my working life to the practice of industrial relations. In my experience workplace negotiations and related matters are often complex, but not without a beginning, a middle and an end.

My expectation is that the Victorian Government will resolve this issue as quickly as possible with an outcome that is agreeable to all parties. To this end, I am pleased to have been advised that a conciliation process has been established to further consider the views of volunteer and paid firefighters in consultation with the Victorian Government.

I am confident that the remarkable individuals in the Victorian firefighting service, paid and volunteer, possess the goodwill required resolve this matter in a mutually satisfactory way.

The contact in my office for this letter is my Chief of Staff, Cameron Milner, who can be contacted on 0417 704 991.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bill Shorten'.

Bill Shorten MP  
Leader of the Opposition

1 July 2016