

Prue Purdey

From: Vaughan Stott [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 27 June 2017 9:59 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Support for the fire services bill

To The Secretary – Legislative Council Select Committee,

I write to you today regarding the proposed fire services reform for Victoria.

I joined the CFA as a volunteer in Caroline Springs in 2012. At the time I, like much of the Victorian public, had little knowledge of the fire service in our state. I did not even know that I lived in a CFA area until I found a flyer in my letter box one day recruiting volunteers. My experience as a volunteer fire fighter was very rewarding and I had great exposure the role of career fire fighters as Caroline Springs is an integrated station. After a year as a volunteer I decided I would like to make serving the community my profession, despite the pay cut my family would be facing from my current career as an IT professional. Over the next 2 years I improved myself both physically and mentally and was eventually successful at becoming a career firefighter in 2015. Since then I have worked in the communities of Wangaratta, Sunbury and now South Warrandyte.

The politics, publicity and misinformation over recent years have had a huge negative impact on moral for all firefighters and sadly the community's faith in the service which we provide. Whilst I am a proud previous CFA volunteer (My family and I have moved house and now no longer live in a CFA area) and I do think CFA staff and volunteers provide a high level of service to the communities they serve, I have been involved in several situations where there has not been a sufficient volunteer response (both as a volunteer and a career firefighter) to ensure the safety of the members of the community involved, myself and my crew. There is no blame to be laid in these situations, it is just the nature of volunteering that the volume and skills mix of the response is varied and unfortunately sometimes lesser than what would be provided in the Metropolitan Fire District.

Reform to the fire services is both needed and warranted in the heavily urbanised areas that fall within what is currently known as the "Country Area of Victoria". I am also supportive of the presumptive cancer laws proposed to protect both volunteer and career firefighters should they contract this horrible disease as a result of their service.

I ask you to please give due consideration to the fire service reform and presumptive cancer legislation that will shortly be before you. Change is difficult and often scary but I am confident the good people of CFA, MFB, EMV and hopefully the soon to be FRV will drive and shape the change to ensure a better quality of service, improved safety and workplace culture is achieved as a result.

I am happy to be contacted on the details below if you would like to discuss anything further.

Regards



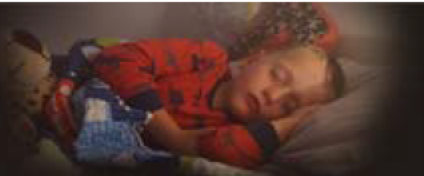
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