

**Prue Purdey**

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**From:** Gianna Verdini Fensom [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 June 2017 9:32 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Submission to Fire Services Reform Bill Select Committee

To Whom it may concern.

This is a letter I sent to my local MP, Tim McCurdy last week. I believe it is a relevant piece to be submitted to your committee. I am an MFB Leading Firefighter, registered number 10642. My career began in 2010 in recruit course 101, at the Burnley Complex, CFA Fiskville and CFA Sale. I am a specialist operator of the Control, BA and Hazmat Units. I attended the Women's Police, Defence and Emergency Services Leadership Summit in 2015.

I have worked in central and northern districts, and am currently on extended parental leave until December 2011, at which time I am looking forward to returning to a job that I love, hopefully without the distraction the current industrial climate has created. I feel that fire service reform is the best way to move forward from the current climate of conflict between career and volunteer firefighters and the ufu and vfv, and will offer greater protection to areas of outer Melbourne and regional Victoria that have become densely populated.

Having been first on scene at many car, house, factory and grass fires, I have experienced firsthand the sense of relief that comes with knowing that another fully crewed appliance is en route, and if anything were to happen to myself or my crew, or we encountered someone in need of first aid, that we have colleagues arriving within minutes. Seven on the fireground is vital to be prepared and effectively respond. It is a vital part of our operations - Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

Dear Tim

My name is Gianna and I'm writing to you in regards to the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017, due to be debated in the Legislative Council next week.

This is an issue that directly affects me, as I am an MFB Firefighter. I feel needs your consideration as I currently reside in your electorate, in Harrietteville and enjoy my role as a volunteer for Harrietteville CFA. I also recently read and wish to respond to your media release on this issue.

When I started my career as a Firefighter in 2010, I was living in Melbourne. Only months previously, I had partnered (very appropriately I think!) with Jordan, a Ski Patroller at Mount Hotham, somewhere I have maintained connections with since my first holiday there seventeen years ago. Soon after and quite unexpectedly I was pregnant with our first child. It was at this time we decided to purchase a house in Harrietteville to make it easy for us to be together and Jordan to fulfill his seasonal commitment. Since then we have shared our time juggling two careers between a rental home in Melbourne and our property in Harrietteville until our second child was born 18 months ago. I am currently on extended parental leave until Dec 2017 and have been active in my community in the Harrietteville CFA, as a yoga teacher, through the Harrietteville Community Forum as editor of the Harrietteville Times and as a Volunteer Ski Patroller at Mount Hotham while our 5 year old son settles into Harrietteville Primary School and our youngest gets less clingy by the day.

So for me personally these changes are fantastic as it would enable me to apply for a position at Wangaratta or Wodonga and hopefully save being away from my family for 4 days at a time to go to work and do the job I love, protecting my community, and give me more time to be active in this community.

But these changes are not just about what's best for me. I honestly believe that the CFA as a volunteer only organisation and a statewide career service such as the proposed FRV is the best model we could possibly have, both in terms of opportunities and support for the members and for the delivery of fire services to the state of Victoria. I say this from my own experiences including at the 2013 Harrietteville Bushfire and from conversations with both volunteer firefighters and Career CFA firefighters at integrated stations, not just from material provided to me by the UFU, although I am a member.

The presumptive rights compensation legislation has already been passed in the Australian Parliament, and SA, QLD, Tasmania, and WA. It offers peace of mind, as well as compensation to Firefighters and their families and I, believe you are a supporter of this bill, but not of attaching it to the Firefighters Reform Bill. I hope this letter has offered you some food for thought on this position from the perspective of a career MFB and Volunteer CFA Firefighters perspective, as well as that of a mother and outdoors enthusiast that loves her home in Victoria's North East. I am always willing to chat more, feel free to call me anytime on [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely

Leading Firefighter  
Gianna Verdini Fensom

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