

Prue Purdey

From: Ben Tatti [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2017 11:36 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Service Reform

To whom it may concern,

I write to you in regards to the fire services reform that is currently being discussed before parliament. I am a career firefighter at Frankston Fire Station, holding the position of Qualified Firefighter. I have been in this profession for 3 years. I hold the qualifications of heavy pump operator, tanker operator, protective equipment van operator and teleboom operator.

The city of Frankston is a rapidly developing area of Melbourne. Statistics show that in the population in 2011 was 35,000 people yet in 2017 that figure has increased dramatically to 135,000 people. This is an area clearly demonstrating the rapid rate of growth that outer metropolitan areas of Melbourne are experiencing. Along with an increase in population comes increased surrounding infrastructure such as shopping centres, hospitals, recreation facilities, busier roads and freeways, nursing homes and schools just to name a few. These areas of infrastructure demand a greater timely response from the fire brigade.

As a career firefighter, I am responded to fires and incidents within 90 seconds. I have been to numerous calls where volunteer brigades that we support have failed to turnout. This failure to respond places both myself and my colleagues in a greater risk of danger due to not having sufficient resources and personnel to combat the fire/incident in a safe and timely manner. I find this incredibly frustrating and disturbing that in a 'modern' world the firefighting service that the community deserve relies on an outdated service. The second truck at Frankston is used to support the neighbouring volunteer brigades to their fire calls. On the majority of responses the appliance from Frankston will be first on scene at these 'support' calls. In addition to career firefighters being first on scene to calls outside the Frankston area, the volunteers that do respond often don't have sufficient qualifications to be utilised at the fire/incident. Examples of this include volunteers responding to structure fires who are not structure fire qualified. This places a great strain on the incident controller who all of a sudden has insufficient resources on scene to combat the task at hand.

The continually debated industrial action has taken a great toll on both myself and my family. Firefighters are a proud bunch of men and women who chose a career to protect the lives and property of those in their community and beyond. They forego time with their families, birthdays, Christmas etc to ensure that when a member of the community has an incident that requires assistance, we respond to assist to the best of our ability. This is not only Monday to Friday but 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The constant media attention that firefighters are thugs, bullies and every other term thrown at us chip away at morale and pride. I have personally stopped telling people who ask me outside of work what I do for a profession as the backlash and comments that come from telling someone you are a firefighter is not worth it. You get publically criticised and people who know nothing about the risks you take, the dangers you face and the sacrifices you make will try and make assertions about something they are ill-informed about. Yet when a fire/incident arises they expect that the fire brigade will respond in a timely and professional manner due to the modern world we live in where people want things yesterday.

To quote the Victorian Government "*Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, Australia is home to around 4.14 million people. More than 70 percent of Victorians live in Melbourne. Melbourne continually ranks highly in international research on liveable cities. Safe and clean.*" <http://www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au/living-in-victoria/melbourne-and-regional-victoria/melbourne#.WVMDQSCG071>

Within this website lists the suburbs that comprise 'Metropolitan Melbourne'. The majority of these are serviced by the Country Fire Authority, which clearly demonstrates that the time has come for a change to the structure of the fire services that the rapidly growing population deserve.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission,

Regards



Ben Tatti Fire Fighter
 Frankston Fire Station – 3 Cranbourne Road, Frankston 3199
 [REDACTED]

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