

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Luke McClelland [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2017 9:13 PM
To: LCSC
Cc: Luke McClelland
Subject: Submission to the FF presumptive rights and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill.

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017.

I am Luke McClelland, a fire fighter with CFA in Mildura, Victoria. I have only been a fire fighter for 4 and half years, but I have worked in emergency services now for 16 and half years. Previous to this job I worked for Victoria Police for 12 years.

I don't know if you're familiar with Mildura but it is a long way from anywhere. I lived and worked in Melbourne for 11 years (3 yrs University, 8 years policing) before I moved HOME to Mildura. Mildura is a wonderful place, it is a very tough place to police, but a wonderful place to work as a fire fighter. I love it here, I have no intentions of moving away at the moment.

Before I joined the CFA as a career firefighter I didn't know what a Volunteer was. I kid you not, I would attend jobs as a police officer, the fires would show, and I had no idea if they were paid or not. And like most people say, I didn't care. As long as they were there to do what was needed.

I am writing this submission in SUPPORT of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons.

If you call me, that means you need me. I have never been a Volunteer so I will not try to speak from a Volunteers point of view. BUT. I know for certain, that if you need me, my crew, or any other crew I work with in Mildura will be there as quickly as we can, we will work tirelessly to help you, do what needs to be done AND we will get it done. We were put through rigorous training, we continue to train and develop our skills and all maintain a very high standard of competencies in many, many fields.

Before I joined the fire brigade I had no idea about what fire can do. I mean really can do. I didn't know what a "flash over" was, I certainly didn't know that it can happen in 7-10 minutes. I had no idea that a flash over occurs when temperatures reach above 500-600 degrees Celsius.. That's hot considering your cup of tea BOILS at 100 degrees Celsius. All this information was new to me, and now I realise just how crucial this information is.

We all pay a fire service levy. That means we all expect a certain amount of service for this cost. As a career fire fighter, we are available to HELP YOU 24hrs a day, 7 days a week and we'll be out the door in less the 90 seconds to HELP YOU. Time is critical in this job, just ask the people in the Grenfell Towers in London. In the past, the Volunteers would provide this service. In some rural areas, they still do. I have an enormous amount of respect for people who are prepared to stop their day, put themselves in harms way all to help someone that they probably don't know. That is an amazing gesture. However, Volunteers are drawn from the community, and like most people in the community they have jobs, commitments and other obligations to meet day to day. Can they make it to you when YOU NEED HELP in less than 7-10

minutes.? The answer is, probably not. Is that a blight on them? Definitely not. This is why CFA had a job vacancy advertised, this is why I applied, this is why I now have a job as a career fire fighter. We asked to much of our volunteers in the past, its not fair on them, the community now pays for a "service" and they expect a service within a reasonable time frame.

So when I applied for this job and got sent to Mildura what did I expect? I thought the brigade would say, 'we have another soldier', another member of the brigade that can help us to lighten the load. Was that what happened when I got to Mildura? Unfortunately not. I was made to feel as though I wasn't welcome, that I was not required, that I was taking someone else's role/job. I felt out of place. This was not from the career staff, this was how the Volunteers made me feel. I actually thought they'd be happy because if I was there they wouldn't have to skip out on dinner, they could stay home with their families. Apparently I was wrong, I was the enemy. I still don't understand this mentality.

I, like all of the staff I work with do this job to HELP PEOPLE. If a volunteer can get there before me to help someone then I'm 100% for it. Send them. But if they can't, then please send us, because that is what we signed up to do, to help people. Like I said earlier, the patient, (victim) doesn't care who shows, as long as someone shows to help them as QUICKLY as possible.

Is there a role for Volunteers? Absolutely. Do we still need them? Absolutely. Will they benefit from having their own organisation? (in my opinion) ABSOLUTELY. The Volunteers in Mildura I have spoken with think that this proposed reform will be great. It will enable them to have OWNERSHIP of their station, of their gear, their trucks, of their role which currently (I'm only speaking from a Mildura perspective) that they don't have, or perhaps feel they've had stolen from career staff.

PLEASE pass this legislation so we can get on doing what we all signed up to do. HELP PEOPLE. I am so so tired of being slagged in the papers, of being made out to be a money hungry, selfish, dishonest person. I just want to do my job, I really want the Volunteers to be able to provide their service also, but the FACTS speak volumes, time is critical and in so so many areas the Volunteers can't make these timeframes which could potentially endanger people. I again reiterate that, this is not their fault, but we all want to save lives, so please give us the frame work (this reform) so that we can do this.

I am 100% in favour of this reform. I know that I can trust my co-workers, the staff at Mildura 100%. I do not feel the same way about the Volunteer staff in Mildura. I was in a shop fire located in the Langtree Mall, Mildura not long ago, this fire had burnt almost half of this shop and was spreading to adjoining shops either side. My officer called for Volunteer support as this fire had potential to spread and cost millions of dollars damage, it took over ONE HOUR to get ONE volunteer to respond. Imagine if WE weren't there? Just food for thought.

You will undoubtedly receive many, many of these emails/reports. As I stated earlier I was a police officer for 12 years. In my first 24 months in the fire brigade I was confronted with things far more stressful and frightening than my 12 years as a police officer (I arrested murderers with the body on the floor next to me, I got surrounded by bikies and told they were gunna stomp my head in, I got spat on, I got exposed to Hep C twice, I had knives pulled on me just to list a few) but the thing with VicPol was, I had a home, I had people who supported me and protected me if needed. The fire service in its current form, I don't have this. Instead I have people who want to see me fall (volunteers and politicians), who don't want me to have this job and people who aren't happy that I'm here (I feel this is CFA Management). I really feel as though I need a home, somewhere to belong and I believe that creating Fire Rescue Victoria will provide me with the home I, and many of my colleagues need. I really feel as if CFA does not want us (career staff), that we are a necessary evil brought about from politics and court rulings. This reform will also give the Volunteers a home, it will give career fire fighters a home and I believe it will create a much more

harmonious relationship between staff and volunteers and more importantly will provide Victoria with the service it deserves.

Please support this reform.

Yours sincerely,

Luke McClelland
Mildura Fire Brigade



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