

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 29 June 2017 12:17 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission for the fire services select committee

Categories: CONFIDENTIAL REQUEST

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

Inquiry into the Firefighters presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) Bill 2017.

Please treat this submission as confidential.

My name is [REDACTED]

I am a Leading Firefighter with the MFB and have been employed with them for 27 years (1990- present). My qualifications include various Pumper trucks, Rescue, Ladder Platform aerial appliances, Water tankers and Pumper Tankers.

I live in Waurm Ponds and have been stationed for the last 20 years at the Footscray Fire Station.

Prior to joining the MFB, I was a volunteer firefighter at Highton Fire Brigade for a period of 25 years, some of that time overlapping employment with the MFB.

Highton is a purely volunteer station. I became a volunteer when I was 20, (1984) and retired in 2009 due to moving house well outside the stations boundary.

I held various positions of rank at Highton, including the position of First Lieutenant for 6 years.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

*Better community safety and greater support to other responding fire appliances through faster and guaranteed turnout of career staff. A response of two trucks within 8 minutes.

*In areas supported or controlled by volunteer brigades, this will have no effect to the way they respond, but will only enhance their fire fighting efforts through the support and assistance should they require by any integrated or volunteer station.

*Greater ability to rescue fire trapped residents and to guarantee better safety for firefighters conducting searches of fire affected areas by firefighters wearing Breathing apparatus. This is achieved by having a minimum of 7 trained BA wearers on the fire ground to perform rescue as required and may also include any rescue of internal fire fighting crews should it become necessary.

*Surge capacity enhanced not diminished. As a Volunteer CFA officer, I helped organize many strike teams consisting of Highton volunteers for bush fires. But before we could commit a crew for a task force deployment, we also had to have crew members available to respond to calls in Highton's primary turn out and support areas.

Integrated stations already have crews and the capacity ready to maintain this coverage, enabling all of its volunteers if they desire, to be available for task forces.

*Increased population, greater residential density and the resulting increased traffic volumes adds to response times. Unfortunately, the rapid spread of fire has no sympathy for these factors, so improving and modernizing the boundaries of fire cover to reflect this and also in relation to the positioning of fire stations and trained, readily responsive crews is vital.

*This reform provides assistance to volunteers in recruitment and retention. Something that was a constant concern to me when I was an CFA officer, as it directly effected the Brigades ability to respond 24 hours a day with sufficiently trained crews.

*The reform also provides the volunteers to have greater ownership of their organization with the transfer of the career staff to FRV. This seemed to be important to them as they embraced the "Hands off the CFA"

campaign.

*The introduction of Presumptive Legislation which gives all of us some assistance should we contract cancer. The toxins and exposures that I have faced collectively over 47 years of service to the community is of concern. Magnified by the loss of many of my friends, work colleagues and fellow firefighters who are no longer alive today because of cancer.

In my experience, having been a firefighter both as a volunteer and as a career firefighter and having attended hundreds and hundreds of fire calls. They all require the quickest, most professional call to assist, all whilst maintaining safety to the public and particularly to ourselves, the firefighter.

As already mentioned, the brigade of which I was a volunteer, sometimes struggled to get enough people on the truck to get out the door. The area the station was located in was 99% residential and a shopping centre. Brigade members simply worked at locations away from close proximity to the station.

Responding from home or work to the station meant uncertainty to who was in the area at that given time of the call. It sometimes meant the truck would respond under resourced. Sometimes not all on the truck were qualified to wear BA. Brigade members simply had lives outside the CFA. Belmont (integrated station) Pumper would often pass by the Highton fire station front door before we started the truck even for calls into our area. That can simply be the costly delay of responding from home or work to the station.

Worthy of note is that Highton, as with so many other areas located on the fringe of many cities, is experiencing a housing boom.

This reform as previously stated gives assistance to volunteer brigades facing similar problems. It takes nothing at all away from them, but instead gives the community the fire service they deserve and so rightly expect.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.

<https://www.avast.com/antivirus>