

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Steve Attard [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 29 June 2017 11:10 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: My Fire Service Reform Inquiry Submission - Steve Attard

Hello,

My name is Steve Attard. I have been involved with CFA since 1995 firstly as a volunteer then moving into the career side as a professional firefighter.

When I started at Hoppers Crossing the focus was to provide a service to the local community. There was a drive by most the members to give as much as they can, to the best of their ability drawing on their experiences from the diverse backgrounds and work skills. Back then the population in the area was approximately 70,000. The local hang out was the Lone Star restaurant, and the Werribee Plaza had McEwans as a hardware store.

Now a days the population is in excess of 225,000 and rapidly growing, so to the expected work load on volunteers. In 2000 I was successful in gaining full time employment as a professional firefighter with CFA. After completing my 14 week live in recruit course, I was appointed to Geelong as the start of my many career placements. Not wanting to turn my back on where I came from, my intention was to continue my volunteer membership with my local brigade with the intention to give back with my newly gained knowledge from an organisation I was proud to be a part of.

Was I in for a rude awaking.

I was singled out, ridiculed, and bulled out of the brigade as a volunteer due to my full time status within the organisation. This wasn't from a small number of members, but the majority of the brigade. Management focus is to wash under the carpet issues that would impact on volunteer moral, therefore dealing with such matters wasn't even thought of. Not much has changed. There is a mentality that the volunteer system will still work and that career firefighters will take over. It's all ego driven, and in the end the community is who misses out.

I worked my way through the organisational ranks to the position of Senior Station Officer.

Throughout my career, my primary focus has been to give 150% service knowing that every callout I attend is a person in my local community in need of assistance. The community that I live in.

The model currently in use is so far out of date, depending on volunteers to respond to calls, not taking into consideration that people need to work, stay at home to look after children, and provide for their families. Most outer metropolitan communities are dormant during the working week, meaning people leave the areas they live in to work or go about their lives away from where they live. These are the volunteers we depend on for the emergency call outs.

As a full time firefighter there is an organisational expectation for the fire truck to leave the station within a 90 second timeframe. And so there should be, that's why we are there. A volunteer fire truck has a 4 minute period to respond, how does that work?

A full time crewed appliance has a minimum crew number of trained personnel on board. Currently these trucks are supported by volunteer crews, with the 4 minute response time, more than likely only two or three members on board, then out of the two or three personal, the chance of them being trained to provide structural firefighter support most likely not going to happen.

Not putting down any volunteer, remembering I was one previously, just the way it is.

If a structure fire hasn't had any firefighting intervention within 3 to 4 minutes of ignition taking into account modern structural building methods and furnishings, the likelihood of containing it to the room of origin is greatly reduced, so the life risk of any occupants is therefore increased - FACT.

I can say this as I have seen this first hand as a Fire Investigator. I have recently transferred across to MFB, and the comparisons between investigations conducted in MFB areas compared to the ones in CFA regions stands out regarding the amount of fire damage between the two.

I live in CFA area, why should the level of service differ between two services worked out on out dated response models. It's time for change, and having experienced all sides, full time, CFA, MFB, and volunteer and there needs to updated single model to the level of fire service delivered to all Victorians.

I am contactable on the number or email listed below.

Yours sincerely

Steve Attard

