

Kirra Vanzetti

From: W S [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 30 June 2017 2:54 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission for The Fire Services Bill Select Committee

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

My name is Warren Short

I am a Leading Firefighter in the MFB and am currently stationed at Highett Fire Station.

I have been a firefighter with the MFB since 2008 and attained the rank of Leading Firefighter in 2013. I have been stationed at Oakleigh, Ringwood, Highett and South Melbourne as well as other stations throughout the MFD. I was also involved in step ups to Dandenong and Boronia CFA stations and asset protection in Healesville during the Black Saturday period of 2008, and step up to Traralgon CFA during the Hazelwood mine fire as well as attending Hazelwood a number of times in a HAZMAT capacity. Qualifications obtained include HAZMAT Technician, BA Service, Long Duration BA operator and Ship to Ship Firefighting as well as being able to operate a number of specialist appliances. I strongly support the bill and overall fire service reform, something which I believe is urgently needed.

I, like most of my extended family, live in Melbourne's growing southern suburbs serviced by the CFA, specifically Chelsea Heights, with a fully volunteer brigade covering my suburb supported by neighboring integrated stations and other fully volunteer brigades. With Melbourne's outer suburban area growing at such a quick rate there is a real need for a modern urban fire service, guaranteeing an actual response in the first place, having a minimum of seven firefighters responded which is world's best practice, and thirdly that those responding will have the appropriate training and qualifications to deal with whatever emergency has occurred.

While I see the role of volunteers vital in one of Victoria's fire services, I do not see how the fire service reform will affect them negatively. It will only enhance response to emergency situations. Volunteers simply cannot be on call and available 24 hours, seven days a week as they too have many commitments which may prevent them from turning out in a timely matter, leading to blown out response times and even a failure to respond at all if not enough crew are available. In fact, the change to a fully volunteer CFA will only benefit the organisation, further enshrining the role of volunteers in the CFA Act, while also

receiving \$56.2 million via a CFA Support Fund increasing brigade support and improved health, safety and wellbeing.

The current system is outdated with the MFB/CFA boundaries not changing in 60 years despite Melbourne's population growth in that time, reaching a predicted 4.82 million by the end of June 2017, a massive increase from 1.5 million in 1956. Under proposed changes an independent Fire District Review Panel is to be established, vital in advising on future changes to the boundaries between fire services, something which is long overdue.

Also in long overdue changes, the fire service reform will introduce legislation providing firefighters with presumptive rights to cancer compensation, being made available to both career and volunteer firefighters. This is very important to myself, having seen many firefighters in my career pass away from cancers suspected of being fire related, including my grandfather and my own father, both Station Officers with 30 year plus careers in the MFB.

Yours sincerely,

Warren Short

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]