

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Nick Draper [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 30 June 2017 7:07 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Submission

Fire Services Bill Submission

My name is Nick Draper. I am a Leading Firefighter stationed at the MFB's Heidelberg Firestation.

I live and work in the Heidelberg area and have done so most of my life. The population density has increased significantly in my lifetime. As a firefighter, I am now attending multi storey low rise developments with frequency. I have attended multi storey fires (including some involving external cladding) and I have experienced the complexities of those jobs first hand. Those types of fires require specialist skills that are part of professional firefighters' training. Any fire but particularly those types of fires are very dangerous due to potential rapid fire spread. It is critical that firefighting crews arrive quickly and in the numbers that ensure both public and firefighter safety.

The Heidelberg turnout area also includes 4 major hospitals (Austin, Mercy, Repat and Warringal Private), many retirement homes and sheltered accommodation, residential housing and semi industrial complexes.

Fortunately for this area it has complete 24/7 coverage as the public rightly expects.

However many of my friends and family are in newer suburbs that are not part of the antiquated Metropolitan Fire District. These suburbs (such as Laurimar, South Morang and even Whittlesea) now have extensive housing with all the infrastructure that goes with it (schools, shopping centres, etc) and they cannot rely upon timely or specialist fire coverage. And yet they pay the same fire services levy and have the same expectations of personal and community safety.

The lack of adequate coverage is no-one's "fault" it is simply a result of urbanisation.

The volunteer brigades do a sterling job. My family are 5 generations of farmers and I know first-hand the sincerity and willingness of volunteers to assist their communities. However I also know the gaps in fire coverage that are created by relying on volunteers that have full time jobs and livelihoods. They cannot respond in the same times and with the same skill sets as crews that do it for a living. This is not an indictment on them just a reality that highlights why we employ full time firefighters.

I have attended several fires that have resulted in the complete loss of the premises because of time delays with the arrival of volunteer crews and then no aggressive internal fire fighting as the majority of the crews on scene didn't hold Breathing Apparatus qualifications. They have resisted calling mutual professional support in a timely manner and the consequences have been devastating.

The fire services reform is a chance to look after everybody but most importantly the communities that rightly expect adequate and timely fire coverage.

I appreciate the opportunity to have my say and genuinely welcome any members of the Committee to engage me further with specifics of my experiences.

Yours sincerely and respectfully,

LFF Nick Draper

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