

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Bernie Fradd [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 30 June 2017 4:45 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Bill Select Committee 2017

My name is Bernard John Fradd, I live at [REDACTED] and my contact phone number is [REDACTED]. I am not seeking confidentiality however would like my contact details to remain private.

I have been an employee of the Country Fire Authority for over 30 years starting as a fire-fighter and I am currently an Operations Manager in District 16, based in Ararat. I have also been an Operations Officer responsible for Volunteer brigades in a catchment as well as being the Officer in Charge of Ballarat City Fire Brigade, an integrated brigade. During my career I have worked at a number of stations which are nominally in the country area of Victoria however have evolved to significant metropolitan areas. Places such as Boronia, Dandenong, Morwell and Ballarat have grown to the extent that it is extremely difficult for volunteers to service the areas to the community's expectations. This is in no way due to a lack of willingness by volunteers merely that the growth of Melbourne and regional areas has outstripped our current service delivery model.

I expect that these changes, once fully implemented will have a positive impact on fire service delivery across the more urbanised regional and metro centres of Victoria without impacting on the viability, enthusiasm, engagement or participation of volunteer brigades in the rural and smaller regional centres and Districts.

Some positives I see arising from these changes are the ability of CFA brigades to be able to negotiate directly with the Chief Officer in order to build fit for purpose rural appliances. I do not see these appliances as being lesser than the current appliances merely different for different purposes and needs. Removing all career staff to FRV will, I think, also remove a large amount of the angst and conflict which arises each time an EB agreement is negotiated. I see this as a real positive for CFA. This recent EB negotiation has been the most divisive and bitter to date and I have seen the negative impact this has had on both volunteer and career firefighters. A future without that conflict would be most welcome for all involved. Having an increased pool of staff, current MFB and CFA, to choose from should also enable CFA to fill previously difficult to fill locations and positions in rural areas. This will be of direct benefit to CFA in supporting volunteers and the communities they serve.

I would also like to see the ability for CFA to have a Graduate Entry program for Operations Officer positions whereby each District is able to have a Graduate position every two years who would be developed to be an Operations Officer at the end of their 2 year on the job training. I see this as a way to create employment in rural and regional locations and allow young people a pathway to a valuable job in their own communities. The current Fire Services Commissioner, an MFESB Deputy Chief Officer and CFA Deputy Chief Officer, to name a few, began their careers as Assistant Regional Officers which is very similar to the model I propose.

I am not able to comment on the costs of this legislation however I fully expect governments of both persuasions will be committed to ensuring CFA is fully funded and does not become the "poor cousin" of the fire services.

Using the philosophy that community safety is at the core of what we do I am sure that the underlying policy rationale is sound and the government, and any future governments, continue to develop policy for the benefit of all Victorians.

In my opinion these legislative changes, and the Governments Fire Service Policy, are valuable and worthwhile changes. It is brave legislation and whilst the detail is currently not known I feel that CFA will be in a position to design and determine our own destiny and that will be good for all Victorians.

Thankyou for accepting my submission.

Bernie Fradd