

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Anthony Dundas [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 30 June 2017 10:18 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Bill - Select Committee Submission

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

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

I am a Qualified Firefighter employed by CFA at Ballarat City Fire Station. I have worked in Ballarat as a Firefighter for approximately three years and hold Hazardous Materials, Protective Equipment Support, 37 Metre Ladder Platform, Steep and High Angle Rescue specialist qualifications that support the station's many and varied responses in the protection of our community.

I am writing this submission in strong support of the proposed reform of the fire services.

As a Ballarat resident, I find it alarming that I and other members of highly urbanised residential areas pay the Fire Service Levy in good faith and yet receive inferior fire and emergency coverage when compared to our Melbourne counterparts.

I really do value the contribution of our CFA volunteers but find the over-reliance and expectations placed on a volunteer organisation has increased beyond what is reasonable given the increased urbanisation and accompanying risks as our state grows. As a full time career Firefighter in a growing urbanised "country" area, I am constantly challenged to develop and maintain a wide range of skill sets to be able to respond to a myriad of emergency types including structure and wild fires, motor vehicle accidents, rope rescues, industrial accidents, medical emergencies and chemical spills to name a few. Each of these require proficiency in both equipment use and procedures that can only come from regular study and practice. In a nut shell, the more urbanised an area, the greater the risk profile which in turn means the greater amount of time required to maintain a technically proficient emergency response to increasingly complex incidents.

It is unfair to expect that people will be able to develop and maintain proficiency in such a range of skill sets in volunteered time only. In Brigades in urbanised areas such as Ballarat City, a reformed fire service will enable our co-located volunteers to have a clearly defined role and scope of emergency service response. I believe this will enhance volunteer response at our station and will have no negative impact on surge capacity. The reform will further benefit volunteers as it has a package included to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades. It will also completely remove any additional stress and strain on CFA volunteers from future employment negotiations.

Reform will align Victoria's fire service with successful models in other Australian states and will be far more efficient in the long term for the Government to have all career staff being employed by the one service. It will also greatly assist with standardisation of career training, specialist response, response standards and equipment procurement.

As a firefighter it is important to have guaranteed backup – the reform will give me greater safety on the fire-ground by guaranteeing that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes.

As a resident it is imperative for the state of Victoria that this reform happens. As our state population centres grow, so too do the associated risks and hazards. Our fire service must evolve to fairly protect all levy paying community members without placing unfair demands on volunteer firefighters.

Yours sincerely,



Tony Dundas Firefighter

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