

Kirra Vanzetti

From: John Leddin [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 1 July 2017 9:18 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

I am John Leddin.

I am a Commander with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). I have been employed by MFB for 32 years. I hold an Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Firefighting Management).

I live in Keilor Park and work in the North West Metropolitan Region of Victoria.

My current role within the MFB is as Commander for Infrastructure and Regional projects for the North West Metropolitan Region. My past roles have included co-ordination of the first joint (MFB/CFA) recruit course at the Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre (VEMTC) Craigieburn and 20+ years as an operational Station Officer and firefighter.

I support the proposed reform of the fire services in Victoria for the following reasons:

- The ongoing industrial disputation I have experienced over the last few years has had a serious impact on my work life and personal life. I no longer engage in social media because of the anger and frustration it has caused when trying to explain my position. I have witnessed my professional standing in the community brought to question after decades of admiration. I have had family questioning me about various newspaper articles they have read which for the most part have no basis in fact. The reform of the fire services will alleviate a lot of these concerns not only for me but for future professional firefighters, my family and the general public.
- The importance of having at least 7 firefighters on 2 trucks dispatched within 8 minutes of a call cannot be overstated. The nature of materials used in building construction and furnishings allows fire to take hold at a much faster rate than was experienced as little as 30 years ago. The recent Lacrosse fire in Melbourne and the tragic Grenfell fire in London are testament to this. In the 32 years I have been in the fire service I have seen a dramatic increase in the speed with which a fire takes hold in houses. The safety of responders relies on having back-up crews available to attack the ferocious fires that are prevalent in this day and age. The 35 integrated stations that this reform will address have become more and more urbanised over the past decades. It is in these areas that guaranteed turn-outs will provide the communities greater protection and safety.
- In 2014 the first partially integrated MFB/CFA recruit course was run from VEMTC Craigieburn. Over the 16 weeks of the course we saw how much we as firefighters have in common. We could see the financial benefits to the state of having a single fire service not only from a training perspective but from an equipment perspective. Purchasing two

different sets of equipment, clothing and trucks for essentially the same outcome is ludicrous. The cost to the state is in the millions of dollars.

- During my time at VEMTC I was involved in training CFA volunteers in structural firefighting and the use of breathing apparatus in an urban context. The plaudits we received from the volunteers and their training officers indicated that they appreciated the professional attitude displayed toward them and that they looked forward to more training of this calibre. The reform to the fire service in Victoria will enhance the opportunity for more high-level training for volunteers by career firefighters. It is the clear intention of the reform to maintain and enhance volunteer skills. This will assist in the recruitment and retention of volunteers across the state as they see that they will never be left behind.

I hope the committee can see that the reforms will only serve to enhance the service and protection provided to Victorians.

Yours sincerely,

John Leddin

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