

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** GLENN, Janine [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 1 July 2017 5:59 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire Services Reform - Submission from Station Officer Janine Glenn

To the Fire Services Reform Bill Committee,

My name is Janine Glenn and I have been a professional firefighter in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) for 13 years. I have also worked for the MFB as a corporate staff member in training and education for three years prior to undergoing training to become a recruit firefighter. I am very proud to be a member of the MFB so supporting a submission to amalgamate MFB and Country Fire Authority (CFA) professional firefighting services into Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) which will result in the MFB no longer being an entity in its own right, is a decision I make with considerable reflection.

I currently hold the rank of Station Officer and I have been stationed in Central, Northern and Western districts throughout my career. As well as working as an officer on shift I have had the opportunity to work in our day work departments. Operational staff are in the unique position to come in contact with certain population groups who experience more risk than others due to factors such as age, disability or disadvantage. The MFB has developed and implements risk mitigation and prevention strategies designed to minimise the risks faced by the most at-risk segments of the population. Currently this process only applies to individuals living at addresses covered by the Metropolitan Fire District. The realignment of boundaries and fire services reform to create a more modern fire service would allow these risk mitigation and prevention strategies to apply across all urban communities in Victoria – a statewide approach.

As I understand it, under the proposed new legislation, Fire Rescue Victoria will transition to 82 stations and 2800 career firefighters. The guaranteed response will be provided 24/7 52 weeks a year which will include an Emergency Medical Service response capability to support Ambulance Victoria in areas that FRV will service. Realignment of the boundaries will also have a significant impact on how many more people will have access to the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) program where the MFB firefighters, and now CFA career firefighters also, assist Ambulance Victoria at code 0 calls. Having attended numerous EMR calls, I know too well the importance of quick response times to provide the patient with the best possible outcome.

I don't question the dedication and importance of volunteer brigades. They do a great job with the skills and experience they have. We live in a small coastal town on the Bellarine Peninsula which means my own home will remain in CFA area under the new proposed model and I am well aware of the need for fire coverage by competent and supported volunteers in all parts of the state. I haven't seen any evidence that there will be a change to the way volunteer brigades operate in the new fire services model.

Based on population growth, urbanization and changing community expectations I believe that fire service reform is essential to ensure the community is provided with a contemporary service delivery model. It must reflect the changing demographics of communities and risk profiles of the areas in which they live. This is particularly evident in the growth corridors surrounding Melbourne and the larger regional areas. How can the current emergency response arrangements provide the best service delivery model for communities across Victoria, particularly to those on the urban/rural response interface and the larger regional areas when they haven't changed for a

number of years? Why should built up areas such as Werribee, Melton, Craigieburn, Springvale and a number of others not receive the same standard of service?

Research shows the modern home fire is a “perfect storm” of conditions and outcomes: larger open plan homes with increased fuel loads and new construction materials mean faster fire growth, shorter time to flashover, rapid changes in fire dynamics, shorter escape times and shorter structural collapse times. As I understand it, the proposed reforms will provide flexibility within legislative framework to allow the FRV footprint to expand to meet the changing needs of the community as the risk profile changes.

I am a peer for the MFB peer support program so have a strong awareness of just how detrimental the ongoing industrial disputation is to my colleagues as well as myself. I have never observed firefighter morale as low as it is currently in the 16 years I have worked in the MFB. One of my personal mantras is to send my crew home in the same or in a better state than they arrived, given the stresses for firefighters of being in a job that has become politicised and disenfranchised, this is becoming increasingly difficult.

In closing, my opinion as a career firefighter is that the fire service reform will provide the modern fire service that Victoria needs - A fire service that has the capacity to grow with the population and urban expansion, that is better equipped to provide an appropriate and timely response and one that utilises the best of what the current fire services have to offer to meet the challenges of our ever-evolving environment.

Thank you for your time

Station Officer Janine Glenn  
Phone [REDACTED]

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