

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Casey Faganel [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 1 July 2017 9:46 PM
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

My Name is Casey Faganel

I'm a Qualified fire fighter at Bendigo on D shift. Currently employed by the Country Fire Authority I have 4 years of Service. One and half years here at Bendigo and two and half years at Sunbury Fire Brigade.

I'm incremented on the type 4 heavy pumpers, the type 3 pumpers both 3.4c and 3.4d tankers as well as being 4x4 competent and a pfit operator.

I'm Steep angle and high angle trained. BA Van Incremented and about to complete my Bronto 37m ladder platform assessment next week.

I live in Kennington a suburb of Bendigo and work in Bendigo.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

I believe as a firefighter that it is important to have guaranteed backup - guaranteed that two trucks with at least 7 firefighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes. So ensure the safety of myself and my shift members. Ultimately to make sure I go home at the end of the shift to my family.

This response means that the community will have greater protection from fully trained (with the same qualifications) firefighters.

Employing all career firefighters in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity as we will still work for the communities we all protect. Here at Bendigo our volunteers have already decided to stay on station with us when we become a new fire service. As we all learn off each other and draw on everyone's experiences, not only on the fire ground but also in training.

This reform centres itself around the 35 integrated stations primary response areas – no effect on other volunteer brigades or bushfire response will occur.

The 35 areas are now highly urbanised – with a huge increase in residential housing and infrastructure to accommodate the population increase. These areas are already under protection from career staff due to the high risk buildings and interties and require the best protection from a professional service that is highly trained in all areas of fire fighting and rescue capabilities.

The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment. Bringing the best out of everyone.

To have all career staff being employed by one fire service will allow for standardisation for all, with fire ground practices and standing orders being the same. Which ultimately provides a safer work place for us all.

The ongoing attacks on us as professional firefighters from the media and some disgruntled volunteers has been relentless. To a point where I've seen it shake up my shift, affect colleges mentally to a point where they need to take time off and get away from it all. To verbal attacks in the streets from misinformed people who do not know what is going on but believe what they read in the media is gospel. To having my own partner question me about her and my children's safety on the roads as we have a union sticker on the rear window.

The reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the CFA; and includes funding for volunteer station upgrades.

Below are examples from my experiences which demonstrates the failures of the current structure:

In 2014 on a hot dry total fire ban day in Sunbury, when a deliberately lit fire burnt out 10 acres of paddock. We were the only truck on scene for 25 minutes as the volunteers from the station had not yet responded and we had to wait for other volunteer firefighters to arrive from neighbouring brigades. The closest being a 15 minute code 1 drive away. I was a level 1 firefighter at this stage and was not yet part of minimum manning as they say. The leading firefighter and I worked like draught horses for those 25 minutes in smoke, dust and flame to prevent the fast moving grass fire from getting to the nearby houses. If another staff truck had been alerted at the same time maybe there wouldn't of been so much damage.

All the fire calls that occurred at Sunbury while I was positioned there would be treated as you were the only three on the fire ground as we never knew how many volunteers would be on the way to help. Most of the time we knew 2 were coming from the main station. Both to their credit did everything they could to help us out at all jobs but there is only so much two 70 year olds can do.

At Bendigo we are quite often paged to road rescue jobs and we 9 out 10 times arrive 7 – 10 minutes before the SES. Very critical time frames for those that are stuck in the cars and are required to be cut out for medical attention. The new structure would see all of our heavy pumpers become road rescue pumpers. Having a rescue on the road in 90 seconds is a massive advantage to the community.

In the end one fire service will be a great asset for the community of Bendigo and its surrounding neighbours.

Yours sincerely,
Casey Faganel – [REDACTED]



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