

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Bryan Morrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 2 July 2017 12:44 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform Bill Select Committee

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Bryan Morrison and I am a Station Officer employed by the MFB for 29.5 years. I have held the rank of Station Officer since 1995. I am one of 4 Station Officers in charge at the Croydon Fire Station in outer east Melbourne. Croydon Fire Station has the unique situation where we respond with 7 different volunteer Brigades from the CFA as it is the last MFB station in the Eastern District before the boundary with CFA. So I feel I have a very unique and sincere outlook in terms of CFA and MFB dual responses. I also hold the position of OH&S Representative for Eastern District on my Platoon so fireground safety and accountability is of paramount importance to me.

I would like to take a moment to thank you in advance for reading this submission which I type with great care and empathy for all Victorians. It is truly a privilege to be involved in this historic Fire Service Reform. In my submission I will point out from the onset that I am not going to put down CFA Volunteers in any way, as a matter of fact I have several very good friends I have made in my role when co responding to emergency call outs together. I will always show respect to CFA Volunteers because I believe and always will that people who volunteer to help out their Community are in fact very good people.

In terms of safety on the fire ground I cannot stress the importance in having a minimum of 7 Professional firefighters on the fire ground. Let me explain why I use the word professional. Professional firefighters are all fully qualified in the use of breathing apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT). Structure fires are more rapid in terms of fire spread than they were in the 1960's due to the use of plastics and other man-made products such as foam and other building materials. A fire can flashover (a very dangerous phenomenon of a fire where all unburnt products of combustion explode into a violent fire) in a matter of a few minutes nowadays as opposed to say 15 – 18 minutes on the 50's and 60's. So it is very, very necessary to have fully qualified firefighters on scene to implement safe incident control measures. Unfortunately not all CFA Volunteer firefighters are qualified in breathing apparatus use and the response times for CFA Volunteer brigades are insufficient due to various work and family pressures.

As stated above, I respect CFA Volunteers but due to work and family commitments Volunteers cannot always be available to respond when paged to attend an emergency call out. I have experienced first-hand when on duty at Croydon MFB and responded to emergency calls outside my area and into CFA highly urbanised area that some CFA brigades are unable to respond to calls as they have insufficient crews or no qualified drivers to respond. I have also seen CFA appliances on scene at house fires and they have insufficient breathing apparatus qualified firefighters to enter a dwelling to perform a search and rescue. Again, no disrespect is intended to CFA Volunteers it just highlights a broken and antiquated system.

There has been terrible publicity and lies on the matter of the impact on Volunteers in this reform. This reform will have no impact on CFA Volunteers as they will still remain at all 1200+ CFA stations and surge capacity will not be affected in any form. I see it as a massive win for the community where highly urbanised areas will have a Fire service capable of responding to calls within 90 seconds and be on scene within 7.7 minutes 90% of the time. This will reduce damage to properties and will certainly save lives. Professional Firefighters also provide the much needed Emergency Medical Service which has been involved in excess of 150 lives saved in the past 17 years of operation in the MFB.

Again I would like to stress I have no issue with CFA volunteers responding to emergency events I would just like to see full time professional firefighters in highly urbanised suburbs and towns throughout Victoria. It really is time to modernise the Fire Service and move out of the 1960's and protect highly urbanised areas with a modern fast responding service. It is what the community needs and deserves to have.

This current industrial climate has had an enormous effect on my family and my work colleagues and I would very much like to see it come to an end as soon as possible. I see many of my work colleagues ill with cancer related illnesses and the data will show it is incredibly higher than the general population. The presumptive legislation of cancer in firefighters should be passed as soon as possible to remove the enormous pressure of cost of treatment to these families.

Please contact me anytime by email or the phone number listed if I can contribute any more to this submission.

Regards

Station Officer Bryan Morrison GFireE

MFB – Croydon Fire Station

