

Kirra Vanzetti

From: CLARKE, Adam [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 2 July 2017 8:25 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission for Fire Service Bill Select Committee

Fire Service Bill Select Committee

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

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

My name is Adam Clarke

I am currently employed with the MFESB and have 31 years of employment as a fire-fighter.

My current rank is Senior Station Officer.

Diploma of Public Safety (emergency management) PUA50513

I am an instructor in compartment fire behaviour.

I have urban search and rescue.

Certificate IV in training and assessment.

I have spent 28 years as an operational fire-fighter and 3 years in training.

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

As a compartment fire behaviour trainer I have learnt that time is the most critical thing when fighting a fire. Approximately 30 years ago for a fire to flashover in a standard room of a house was approx. 25 minutes. Today that figure is approx. 4 minutes. This is due to the high fuel load in your average house now. We tend to not have wool carpet, wool blankets timber furniture etc. Unlike the 70's and 80's furnishings today are nylon polyester, furniture is made from plastics and petrochemical products, hence a larger fuel load. Time is a crucial factor for survival. The current system if there is a fire in CFA area where the station is totally volunteer with no response there is a time delay for the next appliances to be despatched thus creating a larger fire and reducing the chances of survival if someone is trapped. This alone highlights a need for change.

During my time I have worked on the inner and outer edges of the Metropolitan Fire District (MFD). I have turned out with CFA career staff and volunteers. I have been in situations where I have been waiting for more appliances to arrive at a structure fire and believing that I would have BA operators who were structural fire fighting trained and they have not arrived putting at risk my life and other fire-fighters on scene. The appliance that

arrived had six crew but no BA operators. This was no use to me for the fire was internal. Not the volunteers fault, it is the system that allows for this to happen.

It is must that all structure fire calls attended too are met with seven fire-fighters that all have BA and structural training for a safe work practice. This does not currently happen. This highlights the fact that there needs to be at least a two trucks with a minimum of seven fire-fighters despatched as quickly as possible to meet an on scene time of 8 minutes.

This opportunity of reform is not taken lightly and I believe that it can only benefit fire-fighter safety whether it be career or volunteer and provide a better more efficient service to the community.

As a fire-fighter I believe the system is broken in its current format and needs to change. I believe volunteers have a crucial role in our community safety but at what price do we pay when it goes wrong.

I have witnessed a system that has allowed properties to burn down instead of the fire being contained to room of origin due to the delayed response model we have now. The impact on the community when this happens can be devastating and have a large flow on effect to the community. Business's take longer to recover. There is a larger insurance bill which eventually affects everyone with higher premiums. The impact on family's that lose everything in a fire is devastating. Consequence management teaches that you need to try and reduce the impact on the community at any call we attend. To do this safely, time is the critical key. The faster we arrive the quicker we control and reduce the impact.

I live in the city of Whittlesea the fastest growing municipality in Australia. Doreen where I live has CFA volunteer cover and they do a great job when they can, but like all areas there are times when they cannot respond due to volunteers being unavailable. I just hope that this does not happen when they are needed for a house fire with a rescue. Ten years ago this area was mainly grass land now it is housing estate after housing estate, the urban fringe is going further and further out. The MFD is not catching up and has not changed in over 40 years. We cannot keep going on with this current model before someone loses their life. The city of Whittlesea is growing a approx. 8000 people a year(Table insert 1). Also according to the city of Whittlesea "Between 2011 and 2041, Donnybrook is forecast for the greatest increase in development of new dwellings in the City of Whittlesea." I have provided a quote from the city of Whittlesea website (table insert 2).

This reform brings the opportunity to standardise fire fighting in Victoria. This will allow for better service at large scale events, better training and creating a flow on effect to volunteers with better training. I can only see benefits for the community and both the volunteers and career staff fire-fighters.

As a fire-fighter of 31 years I have witnessed several close colleagues battle cancer. Some with success and some without. In 2011 Federal parliament passed a bipartisan bill to protect fire-fighters **Presumptive legislation**. The anguish of watching people try to prove their cancer was work related is heart breaking. This legislation is beyond politics and yet

we just keep seeing Victoria politicians trying to point score for their own benefit over the last 6 years. Politicians who voted down the bill now want the bill, others talk up the bill and vote it down. This has got to stop. All fire-fighters know the risk in what we do and we try to reduce the risk at all times. We put our lives at risk to save the community and yet we get treated like a political football.

The dispute leading up to this reform has had a lot of scaremongering and innuendo spoken about it. The denigration of fire-fighters and volunteers in the media that are based on fiction have taken a personal toll on myself and my family. This reform gives you the chance to examine the facts and base your decision on the facts not the scaremongering for personal and political gain.

This reform does not remove volunteers from playing a major role it provides a better system for community safety.

What would I like to see?

Fire Service Bill with Presumptive legislation be recommended and voted **YES**

There needs to be reform.

I fully support the reform of the fire service.

I am willing to be contacted if you need further information regarding my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Station Officer Adam Clarke | D Platoon | Northern District

Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board

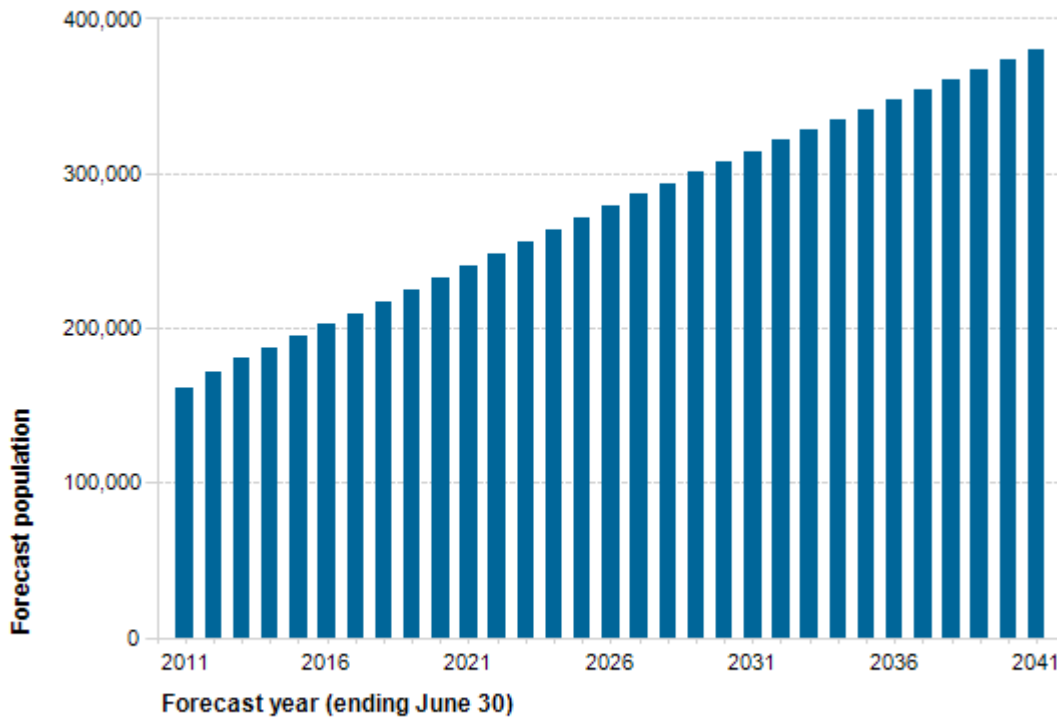
Brunswick Fire Station

24 Blyth Street Brunswick

Table insert 1:

Forecast population

City of Whittlesea



Population and household forecasts, 2011 to 2041, prepared by .id, December 2016.



Table insert 2:

We are one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia and currently welcome around 8000 new residents per year (about 156 a week). On average there are 63 babies born every week in the City of Whittlesea.

Our current population is approximately 202,730 residents, and this is expected to grow to 333,700 persons by 2036.

We are also home to Australia’s fastest growing suburb over the last 10 years - South Morang.

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