

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Mark Zanatta [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 2 July 2017 11:08 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Inquiry into the Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Mark Zanatta; I am a Leading Fire Fighter of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade with 28 years' service. I am currently stationed at Newport Fire station and live in Sunshine North (in Melbourne's western suburbs). I have been stationed at Deer Park fire station for most of my service from approximately 1994 through to 2012. I am writing to yourself and the Committee to convey my reasons (from a personal level) to support the Bill proposed to reform Victoria's Fire Services.

During my time at Deer Park I saw the area transform from being the outskirts of Melbourne's urban fringe to become a fully metropolitan community. With major changes in Transport (The Western ring Road), Shopping, Industrial, Prison and Commercial precincts and large scale housing developments (Caroline Springs, Cairnlea, Watergardens). All this development was also going ahead in other areas of Melbourne's west and North/West e.g. Werribee, Point Cook, Sydenham, Somerton etc.

During this time in the late 90's through the 2000's I noticed that the increased workload, and complexity of incidents we were being responded to meant that we couldn't always rely on the CFA volunteer Brigades being available to respond. This did put an enormous amount of added stress and responsibility on us in the MFB to provide an adequate service to the residents of the area. As well as put us at increased risk of injury when responding. It was not the volunteers' fault; they always did what they could and were exemplary in their efforts when available. But it was a fact that we couldn't be certain of their response or the expedient arrival of the CFA's resources.

I always thought it was unfair and dangerous to expect this level of responsibility from the Volunteer's. It put them, us (the MFB crews) and most importantly the public at undue risk. Only when the CFA and MFB - EBA's over the period of the 2000's guaranteed changes that lead to permanent CFA staff being introduced to form "integrated" stations did this situation change. On a personal note I can whole heartedly say that this change to Caroline Springs CFA station changed the dynamics of my job significantly for the better. We could now rely on a minimum of 7 fully time staff being responded to every incident, with Volunteers for back up.

But what I see now is no slowing down of the urban sprawl in Melbourne's West. Most Council's now have policy for medium density housing developments which incorporate 10 to 12 story developments. Werribee has a major Hospital precinct as well as a new "city" of Werribee East

with industry and high rise planned. This will only lead to pushing the load onto more Volunteer brigades who don't have the skills training, resources and staffing to accommodate the potential risk involved in this environment. This really isn't acceptable to the people who live and work in these areas of Victoria.

The industrial environment my workplace (MFB) and the CFA has been in for the last 4-5 years has been taxing on my mind set and general health (as well as my families). I certainly hope that the amendments to this Act will go a long way to help end this impasse, but also mean it isn't an issue into the future. And most importantly means the people of Melbourne and Victoria have a service that is constantly reviewed and develops to meet the needs, risks and dynamics of our society. I believe this will also establish the CFA into a robust, independent and adequately funded organisation for volunteers' of the 21st century.

For these reason I do sincerely hope that you recommend the implementation of the Fire Services Reform Bill currently before our Parliament.

Kind regards,

Mark Zanatta.

[Redacted signature]