

My name is Warren Lane. I live at [REDACTED] and I am a Leading Firefighter with 34 years experience in the MFB.

During my career I have seen many improvements in equipment, training and the service provided by the MFB. Our recent compartmental fire- training program has clearly shown us the dire consequences of any delay in responding to structural fires. The risk of a flashover is greatly increased if firefighting does not commence as soon as possible.

Many Victorian areas, which were once deemed rural, are now as densely populated as any Melbourne suburban area. However, they still have volunteer fire cover. As dedicated as volunteers are, it is impossible for them to provide the recommended eight-minute response, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It would be unfair to expect them to. Many volunteers, understandably, are also untrained in the use of breathing apparatus. This reduces their capacity to safely attack a fire internally and provide the safety of backup BA crewing. A full time professional fire fighting crew can also provide Emergency Medical Response, a service extremely difficult to provide with volunteers. I know through personal experience that this service has saved lives.

People living in the areas proposed for reform deserve the same fire and emergency protection as Melbourne Metropolitan residents. The contribution volunteers provide is still as important as ever. However, reform needs to occur as the Fire Service boundaries have not kept pace with population growth.

The protracted and politicized nature of this dispute has been taxing and damaging to the CFA and MFB. I can't stress enough the importance of this chance for a final resolution. Not only to those of us who have made firefighting our

career but, I would imagine, to those good enough to volunteer their time to the CFA.