

From:

Darren Sanders

MFB Station Officer, Tullamarine Fire Station.

Home address, [REDACTED]

Ph [REDACTED]

FIRE SERVICES BILL SELECT COMMITTEE 2017 - SUBMISSION

Hello, my name is Darren Sanders.

I have lived in country Victoria all my life, in fact my children are 4th generation on the same small farming property in Myrniong. Until recently I was also a 3rd generation volunteer member of our local CFA brigade.

For the past 32 years I have also been a fulltime firefighter with the MFB, so believe I have a good appreciation of both sides of the recent disputes between the Volunteers Association, CFA, UFU, and Victorian Government.

These disputes have been very damaging to the community I live in, as well as many other Victorian communities. People who for many years have worked and volunteered together for the benefit of their communities are now finding themselves on opposite sides of a rift that has been allowed to widen by various political entities, through misinformation and scare tactics.

Although I am sure that there are many points of view which your committee must consider, these are three which I am particularly keen to bring to your attention:

1. The bad feeling and conflict between committed and dedicated paid firefighting staff, and committed and dedicated volunteers will cease to be an issue when the fire services are reformed and each group can get on with what they do best (protect their community) and not be side tracked by political argy bargy.
2. It has been a very long time since Victorian Fire Service boundaries have been reviewed. Many areas that were paddocks when I joined the MFB in the 80's are now high density urban areas. The residents of these areas should expect to have similar emergency services cover to their counterparts a couple of suburbs away.
3. Now, there are many duplications of service which could be reduced, saving a considerable amount of money, such as the multiple levels of management, uniforms, human resources, payroll, (and many more) as well as different types of firefighting equipment which could be standardised to reap the cost benefit of buying power.

On a personal note, I would like to comment on the scare tactic which is being thrown around in the local and wider media, that volunteers would "leave in droves". I know many CFA volunteers, including family members, whose sole purpose for being a CFA volunteer is to serve and protect their community. There is no chance that they would cease to serve based on the recommendation of a political figure, rather, they would continue to they and I do best, protect their community.

Thank you, Darren Sanders