

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 3:35 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Mr Ross Wenlock
 [REDACTED]

Leading Firefighter
 [REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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As a Firefighter employed by the MFB for over 31 years I feel I am well qualified to provide an "at the coalface" opinion as to why now is the time for fire services reform in the State of Victoria. Having worked mainly on the western outskirts of Melbourne over this time I can state categorically that what were once considered the outskirts of the Urban fringe are now very much Suburban..

Areas that were at one time able to be serviced by a volunteer service have grown to the point where this notion is not only incorrect, but potentially life threatening. The integrated fire stations that worked in conjunction with volunteer members are now positioned in literally suburban zones.

A recent article in The Sunday Age of July 2 cited figures of a population rise from 3 million people 20 years ago to a forecast 8 million by the year 2050. In addition the article likened the annual increase in population was akin to the addition of a city the size of Ballarat.

The four largest municipalities are all growth areas : Casey, Wyndham, Whittlesea and Hume.

As with other services that are having to improve and enlarge to meet community needs, (Public Transport, Sports Facilities, Shopping Centres etc...) so too are the safety and 24 hours per day coverage of these growing communities needing to be addressed.

Just because first home buyers have had to move to these suburbs to be able to afford to buy a home, surely the safety and expectations of these residents is no less important than residents living in inner suburban established neighbourhoods.

"Acceptable Risk" is an insurance term which I have trouble coming to terms with personally.

Be that as it may, Why should Acceptable Risk be thought of as Inevitable?

Why should residents have to accept a lesser standard of coverage simply because a volunteer is unable to enter a structure wearing breathing apparatus because they have not been trained in the use of this equipment. (I have witnessed this occurrence). Not that the personnel were not wanting to assist but had simply not been trained to do so.

Times change, cities grow and expand, and Melbourne has most certainly done just that and will continue to

do so. This issue is beyond political point scoring and debate. The time is now to embrace the introduction of a full time professional service to maintain the safety and security of all residents of Greater Melbourne.

Respectfully yours.
Ross Wenlock.

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File1:

File2:

File3: