

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to express my support for the fire service reform proposed by the State Government.

My name is Anita Faras, I am 47 years old, I live in Main Ridge, and I have been a professional Qualified Firefighter for fourteen years.

My time in the fire service has been spent at Integrated Stations in the highly urbanised areas of Doveton, Hallam, Frankston and currently Rosebud.

Over this time period, I have worked with minimum manning of 2 (Doveton), 3 (Hallam/Rosebud), 4 (Frankston), and recently 4 (Rosebud).

Many times over the years I have seen myself, my colleagues, and the public we serve, put in significant danger by the inadequacies of the current system. We never know if our neighbouring volunteer brigades will turn out at all, or if they do, how many will be on their trucks, or what skills and experience they have. Many times we will reach jobs in support areas well before the home brigade has left their station.

Bearing in mind the necessity for a fully qualified crew of seven to safely take on a structure fire, you can see that very often we are faced with the moral dilemma, and safety issues of having to begin firefighting operations with way under that safe number.

This was highlighted on just my last nightshift. We were paged to support Rye at a Structure Fire at 3/15 Weir St Rye. A unit and the caravan in its carport were well alight, gas was flaring from the ruptured gas meter, and electricity was live and arcing. The neighbouring house was being impinged upon, and there had been multiple calls. This job was close to Rye fire station, and was a support job for us.

We were first on scene with our crew of four and immediately went to work, doing the very best we could with three less than world's best practise.

I want to emphasise that when Rye volunteers turnout on time and with a full and experienced crew, they do a wonderful job. The very nature of

volunteerism meant that in this case, they were unable to turn out on time and only had a crew of three. When they arrived my Officer asked how many breathing apparatus wearers they had, the answer was none.

My Officer had already gone above and beyond in assisting us with a dangerous gas shut down and trying to gain access to the caravan which had a very high fuel load in it.

Myself and my colleague both went through two breathing apparatus cylinders each during the fire fight, and it was approximately 25 minutes before we had back up from another BA wearer. Had we needed to perform a rescue, the other house would not have been saved, and as it was, myself and my crew were put in a very inadequate and dangerous position by this situation.

This is just one example of many similar situations that have happened over the years.

I fully believe the time has come for these urbanised areas to be FULLY covered with professional crews who are fully trained and who turn out in 90 seconds, 24/7, 365 days of the year. The public we serve deserves no less, and it is time to stop playing politics with peoples safety.

Sincerely,

Anita Faras

Qualified Firefighter

B Platoon

Rosebud Fire Station



