

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 5:08 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: FIRE SERVICES BILL SELECT COMMITTEE SUBMISSION by S.D.McKirdy

To the Committee members,

My name is Samuel McKirdy and I am a MFB career firefighter with 28 years of service. I am presently a Leading Firefighter and have an Associate Diploma in Fire Technology from Swinburne University, along with numerous qualifications in specialist appliances such as aerial appliances and ultra large pumps. I live in Hillside Victoria which is one of the integrated areas most affected by this legislation. I write to you very much in favour of this very important legislation, as I see it as a much needed step forward for community safety and the Fire Services as a whole.

As has been well stated, the fire services and its boundaries, have remained very much unchanged for more than 50 years, this has seen the protection of outer urbanized areas fall below what the community require and expect. There are 35 highly urbanized areas that are still wrongly zoned as 'country Victoria' under these antiquated fire boundaries, using a combination of professional career firefighters and volunteers, - these areas require an rapid urban fire response, that being a response in under 8 minutes by seven professional firefighters on two trucks This is the minimum standard needed for emergency response to maximise the potential to save lives and minimise damage to property. Fire crews must respond in 8 minutes because after that, a fire reaches the flashover point – the point of “no return” where the property and people inside are at a very real risk. Volunteers do a great job to assist but cannot be expected to be constantly on call or trained to the same standard as professional career firefighters. On many occasions, volunteers can't respond to emergencies due to commitments like work and family. This leads to delayed response times and under crewing - when not enough firefighters deploy to fight a fire. This is an unacceptable risk, both to our community and firefighters, which is a result of the antiquated fire boundaries There are numerous benefits to the community with having a fully professional fire service response.

Response teams have specialist training to respond to a range of emergencies, including:

- Specialised road accident rescue
- emergency medical response (EMR) (rapid medical intervention)
- urban search and rescue
- high angle rescue
- emergencies on waters in Port Phillip Bay, Portland, Docklands, Port of Melbourne, St Kilda marina and the river systems
- industrial accidents and hazardous material handling and storage incidents
- suppression of all types of fires
- assisting other emergency response agencies in emergencies
- Chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear incidents

There has been much talk that the new legislation will reduce surge capacity and adversely affect the role of volunteers. Surge capacity will not be affected by the proposed changes to modernise Victoria's fire services. This is because the changes will not impact volunteer firefighters. Volunteers will continue to service rural and regional areas, as they have always done, and will still be relied on as additional support to the professional fire fighters – as they have always done. There will still be a role for volunteer firefighters in outer metropolitan Melbourne, including the 35 integrated stations - where there are a combination of professional career firefighters and volunteers. Victoria's valued volunteers will continue to be able to respond to emergency calls and deploy to fight fires. In the event of large and long-running fire, there will be the same surge deployment On a personal level I have made a point to talk to the residents around my area, and ALL were shocked and horrified to discover that they did not receive the same level and quality of response that their neighbours on the other side of the railway line in Taylors Lakes received. The people of Victoria should not have to stand for an out dated fire service that doesn't meet the needs of our growing population, and puts people's lives and property at risk.

Yours Sincerely
Samuel McKirdy

Samuel McKirdy



(I do not require confidentiality)