

Jamie Lakeland

c/o Hallam fire Brigade
12-14 Belgrave-Hallam Road, Hallam VIC 3803

03 July 2017

My name is Jamie Lakeland, I live in Kilsyth South at the foothills of Mt Dandenong east of Melbourne.

I'm employed with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) as a Leading Fire fighter stationed at Hallam (District 8) on B platoon. I have served the local and surrounding communities in the city of Casey and Greater Dandenong for the last 16 years.

I joined the CFA as a volunteer 27 years ago and I have been a professional CFA Fire fighter for over 17 years.

Over this time I have gained qualifications in specialist areas such as –

- Heavy Rescue
- USAR (Urban Search and Rescue)
- Trench Rescue
- Rope Rescue
- Hazmat Technician
- Ground observing
- CBR

I have been awarded –

- National Emergency Medal
- National Service Medal
- Service medal 25 year (CFA)

I write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform.

I've experienced firsthand what happens when neighbouring brigades fail to respond time and time again. The extra strain and stress that it puts on a single fire unit as backup has failed to respond because volunteers have had to leave their area for work to provide for their families which in turn leaves their Community exposed.

Is this their fault? No!

I have witnessed a structure fire in a neighbouring area, 2 streets away from a very busy volunteer fire station, we (career staff) have eventually arrived on scene at the same time as the local volunteers. 3 volunteer members in an urban appliance, 1 x member dressed only in wildfire gear, 1 x member in structural gear however not trained to use breathing apparatus inside! 1 x member structure gear operating the appliance. In the eyes of CFA, this has met service delivery. In the eyes of a professionally training career fire fighter, this is a dangerous reality of where our fire service is at in outer metro. If there were persons reported inside this structure fire, local crews wouldn't be able to effect a rescue.

Is this the fault of those individual volunteers that answered the call for help? No! Is it their fault that these members are inadequately trained and do not have the correct protective clothing to deal with this situation? No!

Does the community deserve a better service than this? Absolutely!

This is the result of a changing environment, a changing and dynamic landscape where the fire service has failed to keep up and be dynamic.

Reform will guarantee that two trucks with at least 7 fire fighters will be dispatched within 8 minutes. For years I have witnessed firsthand when supporting into neighbouring volunteer brigade areas and the host brigade fails to respond. Extra work loads placed on the initial 3 fire fighters is outright dangerous.

With reform, knowing that a second appliance is en route with a minimum, suitably trained crew, instead of a unit that sometimes turns out with 1 fire fighter, or a couple of fire fighters with wildfire only (training/PPE) and/or qualified in external only Breathing Apparatus only to a going structure fire.

Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'.

These areas need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised areas as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career fire fighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

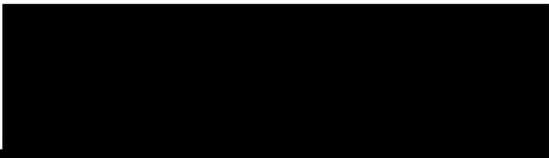
All Victorian, professional and volunteer fire fighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a fire fighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our fire fighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer fire fighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

I believe that the reform will not negatively impact volunteer brigades or bushfire response. However reform WILL ensure extra safety for our Fire fighters, our communities in these areas. Also reform will ensure that ALL Fire fighters in Victoria will benefit in their time of need with presumptive legislation.

Yours sincerely



Jamie Travis Lakeland
Leading Fire fighter
24864