

Kirra Vanzetti

From: HEWETT, Brett [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 7:55 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Inquiry into the Firefighters' presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017

To the committee members,

My name is Brett Hewett and I am a MFB career firefighter with 4 years experience. As a Qualified FireFighter, I possess the knowledge and skills to work with my colleagues to protect the Metropolitan Fire District (MFD) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, also filling me with confidence that as a member of a family who resides within the MFD, I am afforded this protection for both my property and my loved ones.

The confidence I mention above is based on the knowledge that in the event of an emergency affecting my house or family, a minimum of 2 appliances will be responded to within 90 seconds, arriving on scene within 7 minutes (the scientifically documented time it takes for a fire to spread from room of origin), thereby limiting the potential for risk to my families lives, damage to my property, as well as damage to surrounding properties.

As I write this letter, I am faced with the erosion of this confidence due to the fact that, within the next few months, I will be moving out of the MFD to Edithvale, a suburb which by most if not all would not be considered country, but in fact is currently protected by a 100% volunteer brigade, supported by stations in surrounding suburbs consisting of a combination of both career and volunteer fire fighters.

This erosion in confidence has little, if anything to do with the capabilities/training/skills of the volunteer firefighters supporting this area, which I believe in many cases to be on par with that of career firefighters (with several of my colleagues acting in the capacity as volunteers within their local communities). Instead, it has everything to do with the fact that as with the rest of the community, volunteers lead increasingly busy lives, which at best limits their ability to respond to emergencies in a timely manner and at worst makes them unable to respond at all. The impact of this is that if my house in Edithvale was to catch fire, even though I pay my Fire Service Levy in exactly the same manner (and in many cases, to a greater dollar value) than those who reside within the MFD, I do not have the confidence that 2 appliances, containing 7 firefighters will arrive within 7 minutes, which significantly increases the potential for my property to become fully involved and significantly reduces the safety of my family as well as that of the firefighters attending the call.

I strongly believe that the proposed Victorian Fire Services Reform is the first (and most critical) step in beginning to alleviate these concerns by addressing antiquated district borders (which haven't been reviewed in 60 years), providing ALL built up areas with a consistent, skilled and timely fire service response.

Regards

Brett Hewett
Qualified fire Fighter
[REDACTED]

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