

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 8:57 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Bill

Gordon Bishop
[REDACTED]
Station Officer MFB

To Committee Membership
I am supporting the Fire Services Reform.
I am requesting that my report and information to remain anonymous.

I have been employed with the MFESB since 26/09/1983 as a Firefighter, I progressed to the rank of Station Officer completing the courses on 13/12/1989. During this period I have undertaken and achieved passes in various courses including Hazmat Operator, DLI crane and forklift certification, Heavy Rescue Operator, EMR Operator and Wildfire Certification.

Most of my Officer years have been at outer Western stations which Turnout and liase with boardering CFA Volunteer Stations. I always wondered even back as far as the early 90's in regard to the CFA Volunteer areas why it was even possible, considering the amount of industrial and domestic housing, that the area of Werribee, Hoppers Crossing and associated outer areas were not covered by a 24/7 Professional brigade.

I had many Turnout experiences with the CFA Volunteer Brigade where it was legislated that each Brigade had a boundary of responsibility. Once I entered the CFA's area I would become under the control of their officers and deliver a role as a support to them, the biggest problem I experienced with this was that our Appliance and man power were on scene and in many cases actually dealt with the emergency before any CFA Appliance got on scene to take control.

I would question and write reports to convey my concerns to try and have this dangerous condition addressed in a sensible manner, the result I achieve was quite distressing, the CFA decided to get around the fact that they could not get to their calls in a reasonable time with a crew and firefighting appliance by simply having anyone of their crew arrive on scene in a car or on many occasions a person on a motor bike armed with a CFA radio who then gave the message to the communication centre that CFA are "on scene". This amounted to a form of misinformation and was a dangerous action as the CFA on scene firefighter then had control of stopping the MFB standard Turnout of 2 appliances fully manned which happened on numerous occasions without the CFA appliance or crew actually being on scene, this was akin to falsely altering their Turnout information at the expense of the people in their areas.

One specific occurrence of this was when our MFB appliance was out on road drill and we noticed a plume of smoke coming from the Hoppers Crossing area, this area is clearly not in our area but I had my driver start to travel toward the direction in case we were required, we stayed in our Turnout area as per our procedures and waited.

Approx 5 mins went by as the plume of smoke increased, then we received the call via communication centre to respond to a fire at Tino Ballan Holden Dealership. Us(Laverton) and Altona responded, not long into the Turnout we received a message from the CFA that MFB were not required and we were to cancel and return to our station or area. Altona were able to use a break in the highway medium strip to return however my appliance was a lot closer to the fire and the only place we could turnaround was luckily in front of the fire address, as we went to do the u turn I noted that there was not one firefighting appliance on scene but in stead they we just coming through the rail boom barriers, luckily I knew the captain of the Werribee appliance and I asked why we were not required, he was flabagassed when I told him we were cancelled and he requested our assistance which due to our state of the art appliance we effectively feed the CFA appliances and firefighters water to extinguish the fire.

Again I forwarded reports but due to the CFA command structure I never received any reply.

My mother now lives in a retirement village in the Werribee area and I fear for her protection under the existing Volunteer regime.

I could go on and on with many examples of this type of action from the current CFA regimes however I want to stress that the most of the volunteers just want to do their job but they no longer and for a long time before now simply are not able and these areas and co location stations must for the sake of community service and safety be transferred to a new restructured Victorian Fire Service which is being reviewed.

Due to the politics which have been used by the current Liberal Party in denigrating my own, my colleges, my family/friends position of being professional Firefighters I have decided to leave the MFB workforce and attempt to forget the almost 34 years which I have faithfully service the people whom I was trained to protect, I am absolutely gutted and feel a sense of shame instead of being pride of what I achieved, this disgraceful attack on us from the Liberal Party in conjunction with the Herald Sun and VFBV that I am now introducing myself as a Electrician to new aquantances instead of when I felt like a proud Proffesional Firefighter, a job I once loved!!

Thankyou
Gordon Bishop

Sent from my iPadcent