

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Daniel Carew [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 9:37 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform Response

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS

COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT

(REFORM) BILL 2017:

My name is Daniel Carew and I am a Career Firefighter with the Country Fire Authority stationed at Mildura Fire Station. I have been a career Firefighter for nearly three years.

I write to express my submission to the Fire Services reform Parliamentary inquiry. I can talk from both sides with experience as both a career Firefighter and a volunteer Firefighter. I volunteered for nine years previously at two fire stations during my time, one being at Hamilton which is a fully volunteer brigade and one being at Boronia which is an integrated brigade.

During my time as a volunteer, I can recall numerous incidents and calls where it was too difficult for us to turn a truck out. A big reason that personally affected me was I started at the age of 16 which then of course, I didn't have my driver's licence. Once I was old enough and got my driver's licence, I then didn't get the opportunity to undertake my heavy rigid vehicle licence because I was not seen as an order of priority compared to other people on the list. With saying that, the other people in front of me were all over the age of 30, had children, full time and some shift work and struggled to turn out a lot of the time, especially during the day. Another problem we faced was not many employer's allowed their employee's to leave work and turnout to fire calls due to multiple reasons like loss of work and working outside of the brigade response area.

I can remember a house fire I personally attended in Boronia where we needed more BA (breathing apparatus) qualified wearers. We asked for a pager message to be sent out and with this, we only had two people show up. If it wasn't for having the career staff at Boronia and MFB staff supporting, there would have been minimal wearers on the fire ground which would have made it an extremely dangerous environment.

Here in Mildura we had a similar incident. We attended a fire at approximately 0230 one Sunday morning which was paged to us as a skip bin fire. Once arriving on scene, it was found to be a shop in Langtree Avenue with the rear of it fully involved and spreading into neighbouring shops. The initial call from my officer was to re-page our volunteers and for an extra 3 pumpers which one of those being from Wentworth in New South Wales as they are retained firefighters. Wentworth is 30Km from Mildura and they were our next truck to arrive on scene. In total, we re-paged our volunteers over five times and we finally had two arrive over an hour later. This isn't by any means an email from me putting our volunteers down; it is one to state the facts. The problem with that night was a lot of them were away, being a Saturday night they had been out for the

night and also a group of them went away camping. The two that arrived were camping together and felt the need that they HAD to leave their camping trip with their families and turn out to the call as no one else was.

This highlights the importance of having seven career Firefighter's responded to each call in their turnout area to guarantee support and a safe working environment. Seven allows us to have an incident controller, two pump operators (one for each vehicle), two teams of two people in BA for a rapid but thorough internal search in a building for missing persons and one person as a spare to offer first aid and medical response and also help with scene management and hose management.

After the CFA Chief Officer came and visited the Mildura and surrounding brigades, he discussed with us how it will affect everyone. A neighbouring brigade captain who isn't very supportive of career Firefighters actually spoke up and said "This isn't really going to affect us as the volunteers at all. It's going to effect the career Firefighters." The Sunraysia volunteers are for the reform and have already met to discuss what they plan on doing in the future with a new station and vehicles. They see it as an exciting and maybe challenging time but one that needs to happen.

The fire services in Victoria are out dated and the public deserve a better service. We need to be proactive and change now before we have to be reactive and change because more lives are lost. Thank you for taking the time to read my submission, I hope it has helped.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Carew
Mildura Firefighter

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