

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 9:42 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission for Fire Service Committee

Dear Committee members of the fire service bill inquiry

I write to you to express my families view on why Victorian public and the firefighters of Victoria need the fire service reform.

I am Julie my husband is a firefighter of 16 years and he currently works with the CFA as a Station Officer, we have 4 children and we reside in Bentleigh East. I grew up in Purnim which is 20km north of Warrnambool and my parents still live there.

I am bewildered to why the fire services boundaries have not changed in 60 years? 60 years ago our property was a market garden in Bentleigh. Currently Dandenong Sth is classified as country in the boundaries, Really have you seen the industrial infrastructure out there lately?

I often hear about the stories of the fire fights that go on in my husband's profession, unbelievable is one way of putting it but more suitably it is best described as Dangerous. The only wish a loved one of a firefighter has is for them to be safe at work while they are protecting the communities that we live in. Sadly this can be seriously questioned when it comes to the lack of safety of the career fire fighters currently serving Victoria's ever expanding suburbs and regional towns. This is not due to the lack of skill or care, but purely because of an out dated fire service model that allows unsafe firefighters numbers to be despatched to an event that the general public are running away from. These examples of lack of firefighter safety are very concerning, the firefighters already work in adverse conditions that are dangerous so why should an out dated fire service structure make it even more dangerous? It is my understanding that we pay a fire service levy, our neighbour does, our friends do on Mt Dandenong and my family and friends do around Warrnambool. So why is it that we all get different levels of fire service? We had our farm house burn down 20 years ago in Purnim, local volunteers did there utmost to save it but sadly they had their work cut out for them from the start. If Warrnambool career firefighters were despatched would it have been a different result? I guess they would have been despatched in 90 seconds not up to 8 minutes.

I know volunteers from brigades around Warrnambool; I have spoken to them about the hysteria created by politicians and media. They share with me that their members don't care it's the ones from the brigades that will get a career fire truck come into their areas more regularly. Will this mean the community from those areas get a better service? That they pay for! They may even get emergency medical response as well; this has to be good for the community doesn't it?

My husband mentions that the data that is kept by the CFA must demonstrate that the fire service could do better, I do hope you as members of a committee acting on behalf and for the benefit of the Victorian public seek out that data for you to educate yourselves before making any recommendations.

The final point I would like to express is that all career firefighters have suffered unnecessary stress which sadly has seen people suffer mentally and relationships breakdown. This has been because of the prolonged period that they have to go through an industrial battle. They want to have the ability to go to work and be safe, not have a questionable response of fire trucks and unsafe numbers of firefighters and certainly not to pick up the papers and be victimised and used by the media or politicians.

I do hope you take into account my points and evidence that I have given when making a report.

I am happy to discuss this further if required

Yours sincerely

Julie Fleming – Black
[REDACTED]