

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Simon Callen and I have been a professional CFA firefighter for 3 years where I am currently based at Cranbourne fire station, and I write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform.

I wish to give you an insight of how the fire service currently functions in my area of Cranbourne and what benefits the reform will bring for not only the people of Victoria, but for the safety of myself and my colleagues.

Within my short time as a firefighter I've seen firsthand regularly what happens when we receive a support call to a neighbouring volunteer area such as Hampton Park, Clyde, Devon Meadows, Narre Warren and Pearcedale to name a few, particularly in the middle of the day to a time critical event such as a house fire, motor vehicle accident and the brigades listed are unable to respond either on time or a lot of the time if at all. I want to stress that this is not an attack of volunteer firefighters whatsoever, I appreciate what they do for the community, and I have family and friends that are volunteers and see the great pride that they gain from being able to assist the community where they can. The issue I am trying to highlight is that in this day and age the "traditional" volunteer who once signed up to protect the local rural community, is no longer working in the town itself and able to respond during the middle of the day to whatever event occurs, majority of these people are at work away from their towns in the city etc. This is not their fault whatsoever as earning a living comes first, but it highlights the importance for change and to adapt to a fire service model that the community deserve in 2016.

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 Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential.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'. As mentioned in an article in The Age newspaper on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, Cranbourne East was listed as one of the top 5 fastest growing suburbs in Australia; currently our only support for jobs in Cranbourne East is a "maybe" support from volunteers.

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 firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

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

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a firefighter, 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 your constituents, and all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read

Kind regards  
Simon Callen