

To the Parliamentary Committee,

Details

Jamie Condon

Recruited to the MFB 1985

Station Officer at Nunawading Fire Station #27

(Eastern District Rescue Station)

Qualifications: Rescue, Wildfire, Emergency Medical Response (EMR), Ultra Large Pump, Control Unit, Chainsaw, Flare Off, Chemical Biological Radiation (CBR) Elevated Work Platform.

We have two groups of career firefighters in this state with different operational systems, different communication regimes, different uniforms, different urban appliances and different structure and hierarchy. This has created a convoluted system lacking efficiency of emergency responses to our community. There is no doubt that the broader community wishes a thorough and consistent coordination between two emergency service groups to ensure a safer environment. With a better-resourced and autonomous volunteer CFA, I believe the Fire Service Reform is the first step in turning this shared aspiration into a reality.

Positives of the Fire Service Reform

- Guaranteed *90 second response*, *7 fully trained* firefighters, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, ***365 days a year***
- All career fire fighters in Victoria have passed a tough and competitive regime of ***physical*** and ***psychological*** testing **JUST** to be selected as a recruit
- ***Ongoing training*** after recruits to ensure skills and expertise are up held.
- 7 Firefighters on the ground helps to ensure a *safe operating environment* for all firefighters.
- All Career firefighters are trained in ***Emergency Medical Response***

- Melbourne Fire Service boundaries have not kept up to date with the growth of the city. **Volunteer brigades** are now responding into **fully urban** areas as the **primary response**.
- In my experience on the urban fringe, volunteer responses are often *significantly delayed*, or in some cases **non-existent**.
- **Volunteers** have always, and will always provide an *imperative* firefighting force, that is **highly valued** by career firefighters and the community.

My Personal Experience

Prior to 2016 the area in which I live was serviced by volunteers at South Warrandyte CFA station. Many of these volunteers are locals to the area whom I have respectful relationships with. The constant commitment these volunteers have to the CFA coupled with the safety of the community does not go unnoticed. However as the population increases subsequently the calls increase. This creates a greater demand for consistent and timely responses. Evidently this was noted by **Former Captain Greg Kennedy AFSM, from the South Warrandyte Brigade**, “having career staff within the brigade at the new station will significantly enhance the response times, we will have minimum crew of four paid firefighters on a truck, out the door in 90 seconds, and because our quicker response times it enables us to get further afield and support more of the surrounding brigades including the MFB” (Warrandyte Diary Newspaper, June, 2016). In contemporary society, Volunteer Firefighters cannot fully commit 365 days a year to serving their community in areas that need a consistent 24/7 service. “There are always [volunteer] members available, but there are times...when the brigade struggles to have sufficient numbers to respond to calls” (Warrandyte Diary Newspaper, June, 2016). This creates serious concern for the safety of the community. This Fire Service Reform will guarantee a *90 second response*, with *7 fully trained* firefighters, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, *365 days a year*.

So let me ask you, why wouldn't we want this for our community? Denying our community of an improved emergency service response will inevitably have regrettable consequences. With Greater Melbourne growing by over 100,000 thousand people per year the need for the reform is over due. It is time to walk away from the political gains and focus on what is imperatively necessary for the safety and development of our society.

Are you going to be responsible for the tragedies that result from an inadequate fire service, that are in the near future? Or are you going to be responsible for enabling what could be the best Fire Service Reform contemporary society will see?

Thank you for considering my stance on this pressing situation,

Regards,

Jamie Condon

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