

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 10:08 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017
Attachments: Copy of Email.docx; Volunteer Response.xlsx

****I request that the committee treat this email as Private & confidential.**

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees.

Inquiry into the firefighter's presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (Reform) Bill 2017.

My name is [REDACTED], I am a Senior Station Officer with the Country Fire Authority, stationed at Pakenham Fire Station. I have been an employee as an operational career firefighter for 30 years. Prior to that I was a volunteer firefighter for seven years.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons.

Within the area that I work, Pakenham and the Shire of Cardinia, I currently respond with my crew (4) to fires, incidents and EMR (Emergency Medical Response) events. Pakenham and the Shire of Cardinia lies within one of Melbourne's rapidly developing growth corridors, not only growing with residential housing and population, but also with supporting infrastructure ie, schools, shopping precincts, nursing homes, road and rail networks, along with commercial and industrial developments.

In the three years that I have been stationed at Pakenham, I have seen incredible growth within all the areas I have just mentioned. With our response to calls within our area of response, two other brigades (volunteer) are also paged to be deployed. Unfortunately, these brigades often fail to respond, or respond with 1 or 2 per appliance. Often with inappropriate skills, meaning they may be qualified to deal with wildfire, but not structure, they aren't Breathing Apparatus qualified, or may simply be lacking in skills generally. I have no guarantee whatsoever if a support crew is coming, or what sort of skills they may have if they do respond. This makes my job, extremely difficult and stressful, with constant problems being faced, on top of the emergency that we are trying to deal with.

Attached is a copy of an email I sent to a colleague from another station last year highlighting some major problems with supporting brigade response, and there complete lack of required skills. Please excuse the frustrated speak.

A solution to this would be a backup response from either Hallam or Cranbourne, both, staffed stations. I realise that the time taken to get from these locations to Pakenham would usually be greater than 10 minutes, **however the benefit is, I know they are coming and I know the skills they will be bringing with them.** Currently I have no idea if an appropriately skilled crew is coming at all.

2 staffed trucks with minimum 7 guaranteed skilled crew on the fire ground would solve the problems I frequently encounter.

Attached is a record of failures to respond, along with a lack of personnel from supporting brigades over the last 16 months. This is a random record. The problems encountered within this record occur a lot more than the record actually shows.

Employing all career firefighter's in one fire service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity whatsoever. We may end up wearing a different badge to CFA, we may end up having a different employer. We will still be the same people working in the same locations. It is up to us all, to make FRV / CFA work. How would it be any different

to what happens now with Mentone MFB supporting Edithvale Volunteers, or vice versa. Or, CFA supporting DEWLP. There are sections within organisations Acts covering how things are to work within another organisations area. Memorandums of Understanding between organisations, and SOP's.

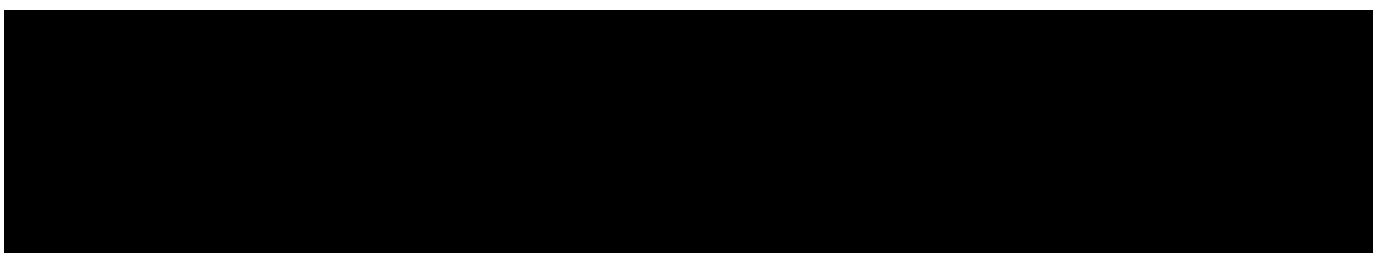
If volunteers want to turnout, I strongly believe they will continue to do so. Politics and unwarranted emotions won't stop them. As for surge capacity, once again I honestly believe that if something major is happening, people will want to volunteer or get involved. Regarding surge capacity, maybe we need to look beyond the current model of volunteerism and look at the 4 million people within the MFB District as a possible source of people to be utilised to add to greater ability of surge capacity.

Volunteer support will continue as it currently does. With Firefighter's, Operations Officers and Operations Managers being employed by FRV being contracted to CFA and continuing the roles that they currently do within CFA supporting volunteerism. Once again it will be the same people as current, just wearing a different uniform. Don't volunteers and staff currently receive training and support from other organisations such as DEWLP, Vic Police, Ambulance Victoria. What's the difference? Professional people giving professional support. Why are CFA volunteers getting bothered because CFA staff may end up with a different employer. When they work beside DEWLP staff, do they have the same concerns? All I see is a lot of scaremongering.

Regarding other volunteer brigades on the boundaries of integrated stations. Why will anything change. Interoperability and sensibility is the key to moving forward. What the reform does set out to do, is giving the best possible service to the community, and a safer model of operations within our rapidly expanding metropolis. Bushfire response will remain the same, the most suitable response required for the particular fire that is burning.

CFA as it currently operates is fraught with many problems. As mentioned, failures to respond, lack of personnel, skills requirements not available. These are just some of the many problems that we currently have to deal with at and around the existing 35 integrated stations. This leads to constant problems on the fire ground. Unnecessary stresses are being encountered by all, all too frequently. The risks and dangers that this places people under I fail to understand. The results that the public experience would be greatly improved upon with a better model of Fire Service Delivery within our ever increasing metropolitan areas with the implementation of FRV. Surely politics and egos aside, common-sense, intellect, and CFA's own statistics make this apparent.

Volunteerism comes with many uncertainties as I have mentioned, and is obvious to anyone who is telling the truth. Having said what I have said, I will say this, there are many, many good volunteers out there, doing the absolute best they can. Good people with the best of intentions, proud of what they do and how they do it. What I have stated is by no means a shot at volunteerism. All I am saying is, we need to improve on the way we do things. Given time, once we accept change, I have no doubt that all will agree that it is for the best.



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