

Kirra Vanzetti

From: SCHWAGER, Anna [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 3 July 2017 10:14 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Inquiry into the Firefighters' presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017

To the committee members,

As an MFB Qualified career firefighter with 4 years experience and specialist qualifications such as the Ladder Platform appliance and Water Tanker, I possess the knowledge and skills to work with my colleagues to protect the Metropolitan Fire District (MFD) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It also fills me with confidence that as a member of the public who resides within the MFD, I am afforded this protection for both my property and my family.

The confidence I mention above is based on the knowledge that in the event of an emergency affecting my house or family in Reservoir, a minimum of 2 appliances will be responded to within 90 seconds, arriving on scene within 7 minutes (the scientifically documented time it takes for a fire to spread from room of origin), thereby limiting the potential for risk to my families lives, damage to my property, as well as damage to surrounding properties.

Unfortunately as I write this letter, I am faced with a loss of this confidence due to the fact that, many of my close friends and family members (including my little 8 year old brother and sister) live outside of the MFD (such as Greenvale and Eltham) which although most people would not considered these areas country, they are not afforded the same coverage as I am with only a couple of suburbs between us.

This erosion in confidence has little, if anything to do with the capabilities/training/skills of the volunteer firefighters supporting this area, which I believe in many cases to be on par with that of career firefighters (with several of my colleagues acting in the capacity as volunteers within their local communities). Instead, it has everything to do with the fact that as with the rest of the community, volunteers lead increasingly busy lives, which at best limits their ability to respond to emergencies in a timely manner and at worst makes them unable to respond at all. The impact of this is that if my father's house (which my little brother and sister live in) outside of the MFD was to catch fire, even though he pays a higher Fire Service Levy than I do, I do not have the confidence that 2 appliances, containing 7 firefighters will arrive within 7 minutes. This significantly increases the potential for his property to become fully involved and significantly reduces the safety of my 8 year old brother and sister as well as that of the firefighters attending the call.

I strongly believe that the proposed Victorian Fire Services Reform is the first (and most critical) step in beginning to alleviate these concerns by addressing antiquated district borders (which haven't been reviewed in 60 years), providing ALL built up areas with a consistent, skilled and timely fire service response.

Regards

Anna Schwager
 Qualified fire Fighter
 [REDACTED]

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