

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** Garry Windus [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 July 2017 10:38 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Submission for 'Inquiry into the firefighters presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017.'

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Garry Windus and I'm employed by 'The Country Fire Authority' as a Leading Firefighter , stationed at 'Boronia Fire Station'.

I have been professionally employed as a Firefighter with The 'CFA' since 2007 (10 years' service).

I live in Ferntree Gully and work in Boronia (both 'CFA' serviced areas).

I have many stories (including being heavily involved in 'Black Saturday') that I could share to support the reform but I will keep it to a minimum as you will no doubt have a lot to read.

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

- **7 FIREFIGHTERS DISPATCHED** : As a firefighter, it is important to have guaranteed back up, a guaranteed two truck response with 7 'Fully Qualified Firefighters' dispatched within 8 minutes.

With that response....in regards to the community, the community will receive faster and more efficient preservation of life and property due to more 'fully qualified Firefighters' on scene and able to undertake all forms of attack and trained/competent in all equipment/gear on the trucks.

In regards to Firefighters safety, we will have back up to be able to make a more rapid/aggressive attack with back up, or in the case of Firefighter down in a structure, we have crews on standby. Also, with a 'multiple casualty scenario, we have crews on scene or already dispatched. The volunteers do a great job but only when available and if qualified to do required tasks.

I have many good volunteer friends and some are like family, so by no means am I degrading or under valuing the work that they do. I am strongly pointing out the existing responses and services that the community currently receives. The same community that I work and live in are under the current response and on a personal level, I like everyone else, want the best protection for my family and friends and service that each and every one of us should demand and be entitled to receive.

- **AFFECT ON VOLUNTEERS WITH ONE FIRE SERVICE** : Employing all career Firefighters in one service will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity.

The volunteers will still be relied on for turnouts as they are today, in fact there will be more emphasis on their preparedness where 2 staff trucks are responded to a fire/medical emergency (EMR event)...etc, and another emergency event occurs, they would either be at the fire assisting or in station by now and able to respond to additional incident as they would in current circumstances.

As an example.....volunteers have 4 minutes to respond to station and if they cannot respond, it defaults to the next brigade....so there is currently no guarantee that they are able to leave their families or work to attend incidents, but when they can, they are still needed as they are now. Surge capacity will not be affected as they will still be able to attend/assist in major emergencies as they do now.

- **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT WILL BE MAINTAINED** : With Firefighters with Operations Managers and Operations Officers....etc, being employed by 'Fire Rescue Victoria' but continuing their roles through an arrangement with 'Country Fire Authority'. These Operations Managers and Operations Officers currently oversee, manage and support the volunteer only stations as well as the Integrated Brigades. Under the fire service reforms, they would continue their roles with 'CFA'.
- **REFORM ONLY TO THE 35 CFA INTEGRATED BRIGADES** : Will not affect any other volunteer brigades or bushfire response. The reforms are only to the 35 integrated brigades primary response areas, now highly urbanised with high residential occupancy and other risks.
- **TRAINING/RESPONSE** : The reform will assist with standardisation of career training/specialist response/response standards and equipment. As it stands, 'CFA' and 'MFB' have some different regulations, standard operating procedures, equipment, training, command structures....etc. Having one fire service with the same training/equipment/skill sets/SOP's/Regs/Act/command structures...etc, will remove any discrepancies the way we work together now but as a result of measures/equipment consistent with all Professional Firefighters across the State.

It will remove the interference from outside influences in regards to our workplace agreements with our Employer and the State Government.

Importantly, having 'FRV' as Professional career Firefighters only and a Volunteer only 'CFA', will cease the destruction of our relationships with our volunteers and also put all firefighters back in the public's eyes with some respect and trust.

The damage and disputation in the workplace has had a huge effect on our relationships with our volunteers and the stress levels of my own shift members has been immense for a long time now and has become chronic. We have been abused down the shops getting lunch or out and about on numerous occasions from the public and in some instances, from cars with volunteer stickers on them, passing the fire truck abusing us. The media concentration from several corners in vilifying career firefighters and the Union, that we pay to protect our jobs has been unprecedented and disgraceful and it has to stop.

Front page of mainstream newspapers on so many occasions with so many mistruths....why can't people see we need to modernise our fire services that have Acts and Regulations from the 1950's, and see that reform is well overdue to more efficiently and safely protect our communities ?

My wife and children are effected and get asked at work, school and on the street about their husband or dad and what he's doing to the 'CFA'. They all see our demeanour and ask if we're ok. From a personal point of view, we are at breaking point with accumulative stress becoming chronic. The job itself carries a lot of stress and unpleasantries and we don't need to be questioned in every conversation. We just want to do the job we love, serving and protecting the community.

- **THE REFORM WILL BENEFIT THE VOLUNTEERS** : As it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across the 'CFA', and also includes funding for volunteer station upgrades....etc.

**I live and work in CFA response areas and as a local community member, I demand that myself and my family have the most efficient response in times of need (as would any other community member).**

**I put this TRUE example out there : You and I live opposite each other on the same residential street (Scoresby Rd), but our suburbs are different, I live in Boronia and you live in Ferntree Gully only because the boundary is defined by the middle of the road.**

The Captain of Ferntree Gully has the power to decide who enters his response areas if there is an emergency. He doesn't want Career staff in his area so he eliminates Boronia Fire Brigade from his response table and it's signed off.

So, if you have an emergency, you may, or may not get a fire truck to your front door in your time of need, because it depends on whether his brigade has any available volunteers to respond. This brigade has 4 minutes to turn out before it fails it's 'Standard Delivery Service' (SDS) times.

Meanwhile, there's 4 highly trained Professional Career Firefighters located 1 minutes' drive from you, who won't be responded because of a Captains decision not to have Career Staff respond into his area.

At 22:45 on the 08/08/2016, we turned out to an 'Emergency Medical Response' (EMR) event where a gentleman went into cardiac arrest. Boronia staff were responded within 90 seconds and on scene in 90 seconds arriving at 22:48. The gentleman had no signs of life and we began lifesaving CPR, ventilation and attached the defibrillator which delivered a shock and with the combined rapid intervention, we had the gentleman (ROSC) Return Of Spontaneous Circulation. Ambulance Victoria (AV) were on scene at 22:52 (4 minutes behind).

Not only were we able to give this gentleman a chance at life now combined with (AV), but this also showed the benefit for the community in having career staff trained in EMR and able to support (AV) in assisting the community in their greatest time of need.

**MY BIGGEST POINT HERE IS, THAT IF THIS GENTLEMAN LIVED ACROSS THE ROAD ON THE FERNTREE GULLY SIDE OF SCORESBY ROAD, HE WOULD NOT BE ALIVE TODAY AS WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN RESPONDED BECAUSE OF A BOUNDARY DECIDED BY PERSON, RATHER THAN DECIDED BY A PANEL WITH THE COMMUNITIES NEEDS AT THE FOREFRONT. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE AND ITS ONE OF THE CHANGES THAT WILL BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY WITH THE REFORM OF FRV.**

There are many examples like this where the community are not getting the best service possible and these are life threatening decisions that people are making.

Imagine it as your child, mum, dad, friend....etc.....those precious seconds count.....we all need the best possible service and response when we are in dire need. This should not be about someone having the power to stop the community getting what they need because he/she doesn't want other people in his/her patch. This is disgraceful and morally wrong.

It should only be about getting the fastest guaranteed truck on scene giving lifesaving treatment !!!

The volunteers do a good job but they are busy sometimes in their own lives with work/family etc.....especially in the busier brigades in urban territory they cannot turnout and the community waits. We need to broaden these out dated response areas that haven't changed in 60 years and give the community a service it needs.

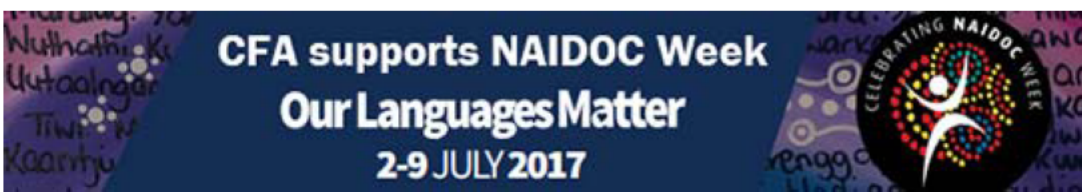
**THE SKY WILL NOT FALL IN AS THE SCAREMONGERS SAY.....THE ONLY WAY FORWARD AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE COMMUNITY THAT WE ARE HERE TO SERVE AND PROTECT, I URGE YOU THE SELECT COMMITTEE TO BACK THE REFORM AND BE A PIONEER WHO DOES PROVIDE A WORLD CLASS FIRE SERVICE TO THE VERY COMMUNITY THAT ELECTED YOU.**

I THANK YOU ALL IN TAKING THE TIME TO READ MY SUBMISSION AND I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ELABORATE ON MANY MORE EXAMPLES IF NEED BE.

YOURS SINCERELY, Garry Windus (Leading Firefighter) Boronia Fire Station.



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