

Lindsay FORBES

c/o Hallam Fire Station

[REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

My name is Lindsay FORBES and I am employed with Country Fire Authority (CFA) as a Qualified Fire Fighter stationed at Hallam fire station on B platoon. I have served the local community in this role for the last four years. Before this role I was a Sergeant in Victoria Police where I worked in this area and also Greater Dandenong for 10 years.

Over this time I have gained qualifications such as;

- Bachelor Teaching
- Bachelor Applied Science
- Diploma of Public Safety (policing)
- Certificate Four in Work Place Training and Assessing
- EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) and instructor
- Hazmat Technician
- CBR (Chemical, Biological, Radioactive)

I write to express my support for the proposed fire service reform.

I have experienced firsthand what happens when neighbouring brigades fail to respond to incidents in their primary areas. This creates increased stress and work load for a single fire unit because back up has failed to respond. This occurs when volunteers fail to respond as they have full time, paying careers and jobs they need to attend. They do this to support their families but in turn this leaves the community exposed to massive potential risks.

Can I just say that this is not the volunteers fault as of course they need to provide for their families and themselves but times have changed. New infrastructure, communities, buildings, schools and roads are being put into the outer suburban communities constantly. So much so that I work in a council area that has a population larger than Canberra.

We also respond to EMR situation which is Emergency Medical Responder. Because we turn out within 90 seconds we can get to the patient quickly and administer life - saving skills and techniques onto the patient. The first five minutes in a cardiac arrest is crucial to attempt to revive a patient using a defibrillator. Having this response is serving our community which is what fire reform is all about.

I have attended several incidents where we (career fire fighters) have been second or third appliance to arrive but first through the door and attacking the fire in a support call. Again this is not the volunteer's faults but they have had lack of training and don't implement their skills sets on a regular basis like career fire fighters do.

This leaves the community exposed and at risk. The community pay their fire service levy and they expect a good quality service. They don't expect a delay in attendance or no attendance at all.

Victoria needs to move with the times and upgrade the fire services to an effect fire service. Make it active and not reactive. All Victorians, fire fighter both professional and volunteer deserve better.

I would always be comfortable in discussing this reform and my beliefs with anyone willing to speak with me on this subject and I will be telling them we need fire service reform.

Ask yourself if it was your loved one in cardiac arrest or your house burning down, what sort of response would you want to attend? A professional quick response or a response that may turn up in a delayed time if at all?

Thank you

Lindsay FORBES