

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 8:46 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

For:

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

From;

Melanie Mills

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Melanie Mills and I am married to a Station Officer with the MFB. I live in Frankston and grew up in the Chelsea – Frankston region and have many friends who are volunteers with the CFA.

I write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform for the following reasons;

- As the wife of an MFB officer I find it reassuring to know that whenever he turns out to a call he is fully supported by a responding back-up appliance, staffed with fully trained and qualified fire-fighters, ensuring that he is as safe as it is possible to be in such dangerous situations. I am very aware that in non-MFB areas this level of back-up is not always available and cannot be guaranteed.
- o As the wife of an MFB officer I am fully aware of how much training he regularly undertakes and what level of assessment he is required to achieve
- o As the friend of many CFA volunteers I am also aware of the training sessions provided to CFA volunteers and that attendance at these sessions is encouraged, but voluntary.

- There have been many reviews over recent years addressing the state of Victoria's fire services and all of the reviews have indicated that the MFB/CFA boundary needs to be modernised, these boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years, but areas such as Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong have grown massively in this time. As part of the reform of the fire service, a rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career fire-fighters on two fire trucks would become the minimum standard in highly urbanised areas, as it currently is in the MFB area.

- Every time a new EBA has to be negotiated I have to sit back and watch as my husband becomes more and more depressed by the slander perpetrated by the volunteer's belief that "the union is grabbing more power", that all professional fire-fighters are "bullies and thugs". This reform will separate the volunteers from the paid fire-fighters enabling the CFA to become a fully volunteer service, which is something they have repeatedly campaigned for.

- The current system relies on a volunteer brigade requesting permanent staff to be appointed. There are no guidelines determining when this decision needs to be made, it is a purely self guided process. Essentially requiring the volunteer brigades to put their hands up and say "we're not coping", this is a difficult thing for anyone to do and the lives and safety of our communities should not be dependent on something so impartial. The fire service reform will remove this process from individual decisions and will put it in the hands of an impartial, independent body, with methods to support the volunteer system.

- In the unfortunate event that my husband develops cancer attributable to his employment in the fire brigade, the presumptive legislation will ensure that any necessary treatment will be provided, minimising stress to our family.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on this reform, I sincerely hope that the best result can be achieved.

Regards

Melanie Mills



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