

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Jarrod Harrington [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 8:50 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Jarrod Harrington and I am a professional fire fighter with the MFB. I am currently at station 43 in Deer Park and I am writing to you in support of the fire service reforms. I believe the proposed reforms are vitally important and their implementation absolutely necessary for the safety of the community of which my family and I live in.

All of my family and I live in Geelong and have for many years, we believe it to be absurd that Geelong still be classified as a 'county area' in regard to the out-dated fire service boundaries. Boundaries that have not changed significantly in 60 years cannot adequately reflect the population growth in 'country areas' such as Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia.

The fire service reforms modernise these 'country areas' and can provide a rapid 8 minute response with 7 professional career fire-fighters on two trucks as a minimum! Geelong is the second largest city in Victoria with over 320,000 residents; it needs these reforms to ensure the safety of its population for now and in the future. My family deserve the protection that these reforms will bring!

Volunteers have done a wonderful job protecting our community and will continue to do so in the future, however they should not have to carry the burden of an ever growing population in highly urbanised areas. It is unrealistic and unfair to rely volunteers to protect their communities where there has been enormous urban growth which will result in increased emergency calls.

As you can appreciate, safety in my line of work is of the utmost importance, everyday there is an element of danger that can only be mitigated through teamwork and the correct protocols being followed. The reform ensures a minimum of 7 professional fire-fighters and two fire trucks proceed to the emergency. Without 7 fire-fighters, protocols cannot be followed and the safety of my colleagues in these 'county areas' are at risk.

These reforms will guarantee 7 professional fire-fighter's, on two appliances be dispatched within 90 seconds and be on scene within 8 minutes. Being on scene within 8 minutes greatly increases the chances of the fire being contained to its room of origin. I know this because I have seen it with my own eyes; I have seen what happens when volunteers don't arrive on scene in a timely manner or even at all. I would like to point out that I do not blame or begrudge volunteers in anyway, they are volunteers and cannot be expected to attend every fire call day or night like professional fire-fighters will.

Think of your own home or someone in your family that lives within these 'country' areas wouldn't you want the best possible response times to ensure they are provided with the highest chance of saving their homes?

This industrial dispute has been ongoing for my entire career within the MFB, I have only known dispute during my four years as a fire-fighter. Four years is a long time for our name and profession to be dragged through the proverbial 'mud', day after day of attacks have taken an immense toll on my colleagues and I.

I am now hesitant to tell people of how proud I am to be a fire-fighter, I am afraid the public has been fed the wrong information about what we do as a profession and what we are like as people.

We are not the 'Union Thugs' that the media and government have tried to convey, we are helpful and compassionate, caring and diligently professional. We love our job and the satisfaction it brings when we can make a difference within the community that we defend 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

I implore you to vote in favour of the Fire Service Reforms and modernise the fire service so it can protect you, your family, me and my family. Bring an end to this mentally jarring and disruptive dispute. Fire-fighters are often asked to help people, but this time it is the fire-fighters that need your help.

Yours Sincerely,

QFF Jarrod Harrington

