

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Sue Murphy [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 9:21 PM
To: LCSC; [REDACTED]
Subject: Fire services reform

Dear Committee,

My name is Sue Murphy and I reside in Ferntree Gully, a suburb until recently, covered solely by volunteer brigades at Scoresby and Ferntree Gully. Thankfully, these volunteer stations are now supported by Boronia and Rowville, both manned by full time staff.

I absolutely support the proposed fire services reform and see it as an integral part in the process of keeping abreast of growing population and industry, demands on the fire services and community expectations. Volunteers are just that - they are "volunteers" who have families and other commitments and are not always available to respond quickly to an alarm of fire. At times they do not have qualifications for BA and structure firefighting meaning they cannot enter burning houses to rescue occupants and support other firefighters if required.

Victoria's fire services boundaries have remained pretty stagnant for 60 years. Sixty years ago Ferntree Gully was a "country town" complete with holiday homes and a much lower population. It certainly did not have all the factories, schools, hospitals and dense residential living that it now has. We have several high rise apartment blocks, dual occupancy and quite high density industrial areas. This area should no longer be zoned "country".

Our outer suburban areas need to be modernised as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid, guaranteed 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed and expected by the community.

As ratepayers and residents of Knox (for some ridiculous reason we also pay more in our fire service levy than if we lived in the other side of Dandenong Creek just a few kms away where we would be covered by MFB firefighters) we deserve a modernised fire service that meet the needs of our growing community.

Reform will ensure the safety of communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls. I believe that one of the volunteer fire stations in our area, Bayswater, are sleeping at their station to ensure they meet service levels and turnout times. This is very commendable however if they feel the need to do this they really are acknowledging the need that a full time service/integrated station is required. Volunteers are not able to sustain this over months and years.

Another very important reform required ASAP is the need to extend the boundaries for EMR (emergency medical response) by qualified firefighters. The community expect and deserve to be covered by EMR. It should not depend on an invisible line that EMR trained permanent firefighters cannot cross due to political reasons. People have and will continue to lose their lives until this can be extended.

Presumptive legislation is a no brainer for both volunteers and professional firefighters and this legislation should have passed many years ago. People's lives are at stake and all firefighters are being used as pawns by government - State and Federal.

Kind regards and thank you for reading,

Sue Murphy

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