

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Troy Eaton [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 10:05 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Service Reform

Troy Eaton

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4th July 2017

Attention:

Assistant Clerk Committees

Department of the Legislative Council

Fire Service Bill Select Committee

Parliament House

Spring Street, East Melbourne

Victoria 3002

My name is Troy Eaton and I am a Leading Firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). I am currently stationed at Thomastown Fire Station (FS7). I joined the job in 2012 after a nearly three year application process and have always remained extremely proud and honoured to call myself a professional career firefighter. I have lived in South Morang for nearly ten years.

In the five years since I joined the MFB I have been provided with first class, ongoing training and specialist educational opportunities that enable my colleagues and I to provide an ever-reliable and professional level of community emergency response to metropolitan Melbourne.

Unfortunately, throughout my first five years as a career firefighter this professionalism and reliability has been consistently questioned and challenged by various media organisations and politicians. Whilst this continual barrage of misinformed attacks on my profession and the United Firefighters Union has been highly offensive and grossly inaccurate it has not affected our want and desire to continue to put the safety of the community we serve first and foremost. This is true also for my professional career colleagues in the Country Fire Authority (CFA) who I have contact with when attending emergency jobs on the metropolitan boundary as well as combined training exercises at the Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre (VEMTC) in Craigieburn.

I am writing in support of proposed fire service reform in Victoria. The vast and continual urbanisation of Melbourne's outer fringe and Victoria's regional centres has left a rapidly growing population at risk of inadequate emergency response. The current metropolitan fire boundaries were drawn up over 50 years ago and are currently serviced by a guaranteed response of two firefighting appliances with a combined minimum crewing of seven firefighters. This provides safety for crews who will be wearing breathing apparatus and will have the guaranteed back-up from oncoming appliances. It also provides adequate firefighting strength to provide search and rescue, exposure protection and fire suppression where response time is critical.

Residential communities as well as commercial and industrial assets in the ever growing areas outside of the metropolitan district deserve this same guaranteed response however under the existing model this is not the case. A combined professional fire service amalgamating CFA and MFB career firefighters is needed to meet community safety needs and expectations in an ever expanding urban environment both in greater Melbourne as well as Victoria's growing regional centres.

Volunteer firefighter support will be maintained under the proposed reform and will not diminish surge capacity or affect a volunteer brigades ability to turn-out to an emergency. Fire service reform will benefit volunteers as it has included a package to assist with volunteer recruitment and retention across what will be a completely volunteer CFA operation.

Regards

Troy Eaton

Leading Firefighter

Metropolitan Fire Brigade

