

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** CURRIE, David [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 4 July 2017 10:17 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire services reform - Select Committee submission

FF David Currie  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]**Fire Services reform, Select Committee 2017**

To whom it may concern,

I write to you today to show my support for the proposed legislation for Fire Services reform. This is important for the safety of the ever growing population of Victoria and will assist in providing a much needed, guaranteed response in larger, more populated zones. It will improve safety within the ranks of fire fighters, paid and volunteer, and it will mean that changes that have been needed for a long time will be able to occur.

I am an operational Fire Fighter within the MFB and have worked on the outer fringe of the MFB's boundaries in the past. This means working alongside CFA paid and volunteer members. The competence shown by both volunteer and paid staff is not in question. The volunteer fire fighters that I have worked with are, on the whole passionate, eager and driven to protect their communities. They are doing the best job that their training, skill level and equipment can allow. This can be extremely high or not so much for newer members.

Whilst working on the outer fringe of our boundaries, I have witnessed many occurrences where volunteer brigades are unable to respond to calls. They either can't get someone who is trained to drive the truck or can't get the number of people needed or with the appropriate qualifications. Volunteers have lives outside of the CFA, they have families and need to earn an income and this must take precedence sometimes. In 2017, people are travelling into the CBD for work a lot more than usual so they can't always respond during the day. This is not the fault of the volunteers BUT the lack of response is worrying. By using a volunteer fire service in the urban landscape that is Melbourne's outer suburbs, it's unavoidable.

Industry best practice within the fire service is, on receipt of a report of fire, at least 2 (sometimes 3) trucks are deployed. This means that the appropriate amount of fire fighters will be on the ground and able to combat the fire on arrival. It also means, if one is in an accident or detained due to traffic, a rail crossing or any other means, the other truck still arrives. When turning out into CFA area's with volunteers, the arrival of the secondary appliance can't be guaranteed. Sometimes, it will arrive but not have enough people who are appropriately trained on board. Sometimes it won't arrive at all. When doing an internal attack or any sort of rescue the additional crews on the second truck is extremely important and needed. Industry best practice is to always operate in teams of two with a secondary crew outside in case the internal team need rescuing. Without a second crew this isn't possible.

The massive growth that the outer suburbs of Metropolitan Melbourne have seen in the last 30 – 40 years is staggering. The CFA/MFB boundary has seen none of this and is largely unchanged

for the last 40 years. Previously, areas protected by volunteer CFA stations were small towns or communities in their own right. They were made up of small business, farming and residential. These small towns have grown to the point where they have merged and become suburbs of Greater Melbourne. They contain hospitals, large schools, industrial complexes, housing estates, shopping centres and high rise buildings. The population in these areas has risen exponentially. The volunteers offer an amazing service but they cannot offer a guaranteed response, it's just not possible when the volunteering model is used. It's unfair on the communities and the volunteers themselves for us to expect them to be able to.

A lot of Volunteers are concerned that the changes will affect them or stop them from volunteering and protecting their community. This is simply not the case. Firstly, the overwhelming majority of volunteers will not see any changes at all. Any Volunteers that are not located near Melbourne will most likely see no changes. They will continue to serve their communities as they do now. Volunteers who are at stations on the urban fringe or at integrated stations will see an enhanced response with Fire Rescue Victoria fire fighters being turned out to a wider array of jobs in a larger area once boundary realignment has occurred. This should only ever be seen as a positive as it means that someone will be arriving sooner which will preserve life and property.

As Greater Melbourne grows, our fire service needs to grow with it. Please support the Fire Services Reform Legislation.

Regards

Fire Fighter David Currie

Heidelberg Station

Metropolitan Fire Brigade

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