

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Nathan Shell [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 4 July 2017 10:22 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Submission for fire service reform

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Nathan Shell and I am currently a Career Fire Fighter with Country Fire Authority (CFA) stationed at Boronia Fire Brigade. I have been involved with the CFA for 15 years in a variety of roles including as a volunteer, corporate staff member, and now as a career fire fighter for the past 3 years.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

Service delivery to the community:

This is the biggest reason for fire service reform: providing a world class fire service for the community of Victoria should be our priority. As Melbourne's urban growth has expanded, our fire services have failed to grow with it. For major urban areas in the most liveable city in the world to be covered by a fire service that is not guaranteed and doesn't provide critical services that it should (such as Emergency Medical Response) is letting the community down. We also have anomalies that lie within our response areas and how these are decided. The fact that these response areas and which brigades attend there, are decided by the local brigade is archaic and allows for personal decisions to be made that affect the quality of response to that area. An example of this is a car accident with entrapment I attended on 31/03/2017 in Kilsyth. Boronia Fire Brigade is currently undertaking a trial of 10min radial response to Emergency Medical Response (EMR) and as part of this we were dispatched to an EMR call in Kilsyth. En route to this call it was changed to a car accident possible persons trapped, and as we were already en route we continued on to this call. Under normal dispatch arrangements we would not have been responded to this call if the call was 10m to the north. Boronia Pumper was first on scene to this call and Ambulance Victoria on scene determined the trapped casualty to be time critical. Because of the urgency of the situation we were able to extricate the patient with our enhanced forcible entry equipment prior to the rescue's arrival. The patient was airlifted to hospital and subsequently survived the ordeal. Due to the decisions made by the local Brigade not to have us responded into that area, if not for a dispatching error, this incident could have had a far different outcome.

Fire Fighter safety:

Fire fighting is an inherently dangerous occupation and many dangerous situations present on each and every fire ground we attend. Many of these situations are out of our and the employer's hands, but many can be mitigated at a policy and procedure implementation point. At this point is where the fire service reforms are crucial to fire fighter safety. The guaranteed dispatch of 7 fire fighters is a major step forward to increasing the safety on the fire ground for all fire fighters and the community. A recent example of this safety issue was at a house fire in Ferntree Gully where career fire fighters from Boronia were first on scene and able to remove a casualty from the house. There was reports of further people trapped inside and the crews who removed the casualty continued to search the property, leaving the casualty with myself (the driver/pump operator). I was now placed in the position where I had to make a decision whether to secure water to the hose line for my fellow crews inside or provide first aid to the casualty. Crews from Ferntree Gully had arrived at this stage, but as they are not an Emergency Medical Response Brigade and they have a different appliance, they could not relieve me of either of these tasks. If 7 careers fire fighters were dispatched at the time of the call, they are trained in Emergency Medical Response and operating the same appliance and would've been able to relieve me of either task to ensure best outcomes for the patient outside, and prospective patients inside.

Maintaining volunteer capacity and support:

Establishing the CFA as a standalone volunteer organisation will only grow and strengthen the organisation. As a volunteer I was involved in a busy, urban, fully volunteer brigade. As a brigade we would attend approximately 400

calls per year and this was a huge commitment to service these calls. The fire service reform will be able to assist in that commitment by providing increased support mechanisms, funding and a commitment to increased training. Volunteer surge capacity is a crucial part of Victoria's fire fighting capability with no change to volunteer response and an increase in support, funding and training, this capacity can only get better and strengthen.

It is time to treat Victoria for what it is; 'one of the most fire prone areas in the world' and a reform of our fire services will help to meet this risk.

Yours Sincerely,



Nathan Shell Fire Fighter – C Platoon
Boronia Fire Station – 300 Boronia Rd Boronia Vic 3155

[Redacted contact information]

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