

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 9:35 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform Bill Submission

Dear Committee,

My name is [REDACTED] and I have been a full-time professional firefighter with the MFB for the past 11 years. I also live in Knoxfield which is covered by a volunteer Country Fire Authority Station (Scoresby), so I have a keen interest in the outcome of these proposed changes.

I am primarily based at Richmond Fire Station which is one of the busier stations in Victoria, especially with regards to medical response. In particular, we respond to many drug overdoses, but also heart attacks, drownings, suicides, and injuries due to motor vehicle accidents, and I personally estimate that I have attended more than 300 such incidents with the majority being saved lives. Of course, there are also many instances where we try our best but without luck. This component of our job largely goes unrecognised by the public but nevertheless we train hard and often to maintain our skills. My station is also responsible for rope rescue and attend many incidents where people require rescue from height. This is a 6 week full-time course plus regular skills maintenance and a large time investment and commitment. We attend structure fires, non-structure fires, floodings, false alarms, tram and train incidents, car accidents, hazardous material incidents, perform annual key checks for keys held in our maintenance area, attend fetes and fairs, conduct fire education programs for primary schools, and support the CFA during major protracted incidents either by backfilling their stations, or by attending the incidents. Our recruit courses are 19 weeks long and that is just the beginning of our learning. On the job training and attending many jobs is what makes us professional and very good at our jobs. We are out the door within 90 seconds and get to the job within our target time of 7.7 minutes. This time has been shown to be critical in terms of containing fires to room of origin and also early intervention in heart attacks has been proven vital to a successful outcome.

I am not going to be critical of volunteers as they are giving up their time, many of them for the right reasons. However, it stands to reason that if you have a job, are not in station and near a fire truck, are not first responders, are not all trained in breathing apparatus the service delivery cannot possibly be as good. As a concerned resident in a thriving suburb I cannot believe we rely on volunteers in this day and age. Knoxfield is not located in the country and to expect volunteers to cover this area is not acceptable. A few years ago I was stationed for a time at Glen Waverley Fire Station and we were responded to a fire at Knox Tavern. Anyone who has ever been to Knox City will attest that it should NOT be classified as country. Anyway, by the time we were responded were probably the 5th or 6th truck to arrive on scene. However, due to the fact there were no Breathing apparatus operators in attendance at the time we arrived, no-one had entered the building to conduct a search for victims. We were the first crews to enter and search the premises. Luckily no-one was inside as they would have perished given the time delay. I have heard of many cases where responses have either been unacceptable or not at all.

I love my job and take pride in performance. At the moment, I am sick of being used as a political football and resent the media and their portrayal of us as thugs searching for power. I do this job to help people and make a difference. I urge you to consider the changes that have occurred in Melbourne since the 1950's and make your decisions based on sound logic and not politics.

Please respect my wish for confidentiality with this submission.

kind regards,

