

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 29 June 2017 11:52 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Select Committee into changes in the Fire Services.

To whom it may concern

My name is [REDACTED] and I write to you today as Leading Fire Fighter in the MFB. I have been a career fire fighter for over 10 years, spending the bulk of my career in Melbourne's North Western fringe at St. Albans Fire station, one of the Melbourne's busiest stations. St. Albans Fire station has a wide range of calls, however the majority would be house and car fires and EMR calls for elderly and drug overdoses. The station also turns out in CFA areas (Caroline Springs and Hillside) which comprises of both paid and volunteer CFA fire fighters.

In my time at St. Albans I've watched the urban fringe grow majorly towards Melton with hundreds of homes and thousands of residents entering the area, however the fire coverage has not changed to meet the growth. Often we drive up to 15 minutes into CFA areas to provide assistance where volunteer coverage is random at best however often non-existent. In an industry where safety to the community and emergency service personal is paramount, this is simply unacceptable.

I recall one example where we arrived at a semi involved house fire in a volunteer area. As my colleague and I waited at the front door to enter to provide an internal attack, back up was being requested by my officer to cover us. However frustration soon ensued when none of the volunteers on scene were BA qualified thus could not do what the officer requested. To make matters worse, volunteer trucks had blocked the street stopping the MFB aerial appliance from entering the area. When asked to move the trucks, the majority of the volunteers weren't qualified to drive the vehicles. By the time more career staff arrived we'd decided to enter the home and make an internal attack putting ourselves in danger but saving a majority of the home. In the public's eye, there were 20 plus fire fighters on scene however to us there were four initially who could do anything helpful and the rest whilst having good intentions, we're basically a hindrance in my opinion.

Volunteers will always have a place in Victoria's rural fire communities. They'll always be required to protect their communities and be called on in times of great fire threat. The metropolitan community expect the fully qualified highly trained fire service they pay for. Career fire fighters have suffered unprecedented attacks in the last four years, being called thugs, sexists and bullies. All the while we've taken the high road and continued to provide the service the community expects from us. It's time to end these attacks. I urge you to accept the legislation and return the CFA to its volunteer roots and give metro Melbourne the coverage it desperately needs and deserves.

Could my submission please remain **confidential**.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]

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