

Kirra Vanzetti

From: WILLIAMS, Craig [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 3:34 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire service reform

To the Fire Service Select Committee 2017

My name is Craig Williams, I am a Commander with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. I have been a professional MFB firefighter employee for 29 years, currently I am stationed at Sunshine fire station. I am passionate about the role that I perform, providing community safety to the Metropolitan fire district. For this reason I support the Fire service reform proposals planned for the state of Victoria.

I am a resident of Doreen which is one of the many suburbs classified as a country town, even though the urban growth is expanding exponentially in this area and many others like it. In the 1990's Doreen had a population of approximately 1000 people. Today this population is in excess of 21000 and increasing. This area has petrol stations, restaurants, state & private schools, child care centres & shopping centres. Doreen and its surrounding suburbs are currently serviced by volunteer CFA brigades. The work these volunteers currently do and will continue to do will not change. Doreen is a prime example of a suburb that has changed dramatically, yet its fire service is still based on an out dated country fire service model.

In a little more than one decade from now, Melbourne could be the largest capital city in Australia. With the increase in population, the outer urban areas are increasing rapidly however our fire service boundaries have not changed significantly for 60 years. I have witnessed the consequences of prolonged response times to both structure and bush fires. I believe that a rapid 8 minute response with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard required in these highly urbanised areas.

A plan for Victoria's overdue fire service reform has been put forward for consideration. This plan will see professional firefighters from the MFB & CFA merged into one professional service known as Fire Rescue Victoria. The CFA would remain as a volunteer organisation servicing rural areas in country Victoria and assisting with state surge capacity when major incidents occur, as is the current practice. A panel will oversee Victoria's expansion in rural areas and provide direction as required for Victoria's urban growth. This plan will ensure the safety of all Victorians, including me as a firefighter.

I support the proposed fire services reform proposals of our fire services, to ensure the safety of our communities in our growing state. Additionally it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth.

Kind regards

Commander Craig Williams | D Platoon Commander
Western District | North West Metro Region
Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board

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