

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** JESS [REDACTED] <JJESS@mfb.vic.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 5 July 2017 9:03 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Submission for Inquiry Fire Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

My name is Jonathan Jess and I am a Leading Firefighter with MFB. I have been an Operational Firefighter with the MFB for 13 years and have attained numerous qualifications during that time including, Mark IV and Mark IV Pumper & Pumper Tanker Operator, Water Tanker Operator, Wildfire I & II qualified, and Emergency Medical Responder. I have also completed a Certificate and Workplace Training and Assessment, and as such I have been accepted as an Instructor at VEMTEC (Training College), in the area of Structural Firefighting.

I mention the above skill sets, as they simply must be a key consideration for the Committee when making their decision (I will provide pertinent examples below).

I live in Sunbury and currently work at the Broadmeadows Fire Station (one of the busiest stations in the State of Victoria). As a Professional firefighter with the MFB, who happens to live in a CFA serviced area, I believe I am uniquely informed and qualified to share some critical thoughts on improving our Fire Services. I believe the governments' attempts to improve our fire services have been hijacked by self interest groups, and those with a political axe to grind. Often those opposed to reform can only provide emotional arguments, offering no "facts" for the retention of the current outdated model. Let's get one thing straight – this has to be about COMMUNITY SAFETY.

Our outer suburban centres are getting larger each day. It's quite staggering that anybody would seriously resist changes to a 1950's model, when the simple facts are that unless we make improvements someone's life may one day be exposed to unnecessary risk. Let me explain

- Professional Fire Stations are manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Professionals turn out in under 2 minutes after receiving an emergency call.....Volunteer stations simply cannot and do not provide this response ( I encourage you to look up the stats) – it is physically impossible for them to leave jobs/homes, make their way to a station, wait for the necessary operational strength to arrive, and then despatch. Slow response times cost lives.
- Every professional firefighter is BA (Breathing Apparatus) compliant....., Very few volunteers are fully BA qualified. To put it bluntly, only a firefighter who is BA trained can save someone who may be trapped in a burning house or is otherwise compromised by smoke and fire. Who would you prefer to turn out to YOUR burning house?
- MY safety as a firefighter relies on having fully competent and fully trained firefighters working with me on the fireground. One day I may need somebody to pull me out of a fire if things go wrong. Having worked with volunteers on numerous occasions, I simply don't have the same confidence in their abilities and qualifications. It is ridiculous to expect any volunteer to have the same training and experience as a full time professional.
- This ridiculous notion of "surge capacity" has to be contested and refuted. Quite frankly, what a load of crap. Show me the facts on "surge capacity" or shut up and stop using emotionally irresponsible arguments. I'll give you one factual, comparative example on how "surge capacity" will never be a problem. It's called New South Wales.

It gives me no pleasure to state the above points and I in no way wish to denigrate volunteer firefighters – they provide a great service for the role they were initially intended. But the lies and obfuscation has to stop. It is time to speak plainly even if it means it may hurt peoples' feelings, or deflate a few egos.

It is your job to put aside emotionally driven arguments spouted by those with a political axe to grind. I believe that nobody in all good conscience could oppose improvements to an outdated, 'broken' model. There is really only one important question you need to consider when making your decision..... "WHAT IS THE BEST OUTCOME FOR THE SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY, AND FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR FIREFIGHTERS"

Yours Sincerely

Jonathan Jess



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