

Submission to Fire Services Bill Select Committee 2017

Station Officer Simon Mildren

Mornington Fire Station

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STATION OFFICER SIMON MILDREN – MORNINGTON FIRE STATION
[REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Simon Mildren and I have been a professional CFA firefighter for 10 years. I am currently stationed at the Mornington Fire Station.

I write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform.

I will comment predominately on my experience as a Station Officer within the Mornington area. I have attached a list of the known hazards and high risk premises within the Mornington area for you to consider. I have many experiences where the current system has let us down and most importantly let down the community. I would like to highlight a few of those issues but it would be remiss of me not to mention that I value the work and contribution of most of the volunteers I work with.

Here are the details of a number of situations and emergencies where the Mornington community does not get a fair emergency response in my opinion:

- Emergency Medical Response is a lifesaving time critical role that career firefighters perform regularly. At Mornington we treat this role very seriously but are restricted by out-dated emergency response boundaries and as such only respond a few short kilometres from our fire station. In November 2015 we resuscitated a 16yo when he collapsed on the Esplanade near Wilson's Rd, Mornington. Had he been a few kilometres south (Craigie Rd) he would have been relying on help from Ambulance Victoria who are often busy and travel much further than us. We could be on scene within minutes to provide lifesaving care prior to ambulance arrival.
- In 2016 we responded to a large house with smoke issuing. Thankfully on arrival this house (it was a three storey mansion) was not engulfed in flames and a short investigation revealed a smoking electrical fitting. This incident was significant as we had no response from any of the volunteer brigades that were paged to support us to this call. There were only three career fire-fighters in attendance which is an unsafe number to commence any meaningful fire fight. This is no way a criticism of the role of a volunteer but highlights the need for an improved system in what is already a busy and expanding urbanised environment.
- In 2016 we attended a Truck rollover with a driver in another motor vehicle trapped in his vehicle. It took SES rescue 25 minutes to arrive on scene which I put down to the large distance required for any rescue unit to attend the Mornington/Moorooduc area. It then took over 30 minutes to remove the casualty. This was due to poor skills in this instance by the rescue operators. To be honest this area needs a career staffed rescue

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unit to make up for the delayed response coming from Dromana and Frankston and sometimes the varied skills within these rescue teams.

- In July of 2015 we attended a house fire in Mornington with only 3 fire-fighters for the first ten minutes. It took considerable time before volunteer support arrived and we ended up requesting a career firefighter crew from Frankston when we realised we were without any meaningful support. This incident had many complexities including collapsed occupants, a missing occupant, live power lines on the road, asbestos exposure and high fuel loads due to hoarding. Three fire-fighters were not enough to manage this effectively.
- As previously mentioned the Mornington career staff are not able to respond a meaningful distance from our current fire station. This is largely due to internal politics, out-dated response arrangements and poor management. I can see that this fire service reform will resolve these matters in order to provide a better service to the community.
- We are also resource deficient and I believe the reform will address this issue. We are allocated insufficient radios to be able to talk to each other effectively and we are not able to gain approval to acquire more radios. This is due to the perceived burden that if we are allocated more radios to meet our needs then all the volunteer brigades will want the same. All I ask for is to be able to communicate effectively with my crew and manage a chaotic incident scene. The fire service reform will allow these changes.
- For the month of May 2017 the average response by volunteers at Mornington to emergencies has been just under one member. In most instances this means they cannot even respond to the emergency as it is standard practice to not travel alone to emergencies. This leaves me and my crew with no guaranteed support when responding to emergencies. If we have the system modernised then at least I know that I will have another career crew being despatched at the same time we are deployed. This is a significant factor considering we could have more than 10,000 people attending an event at the local racecourse or dozens of non-ambulant people in one of the many aged care facilities to have to evacuate in an emergency. The volunteers are great when they are there but there is no way of knowing if we are going to get their help.

It is very clear that a more meaningful response to emergencies (7 career firefighters dispatched) would enhance emergency response and reduce the impact of emergencies on communities. I cannot comprehend how this could be viewed in any negative manner.

The fire services are desperate for a new management approach that sees past empire building and delivers the most practical solution for all Victorians. With respect to those who are reading

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this if you think that the current system is world class and delivers high quality response arrangements then you are very wrong.

In conclusion I fully support the fire service reform as it has been proposed and commend the government and current emergency service leaders for finally taking this necessary action that the Victorian community desperately deserves.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mildren
Station Officer
Mornington Fire Station
[REDACTED]

Att. Special Risks - Mornington

SPECIAL RISKS – MORNINGTON

All in Mornington's primary response area unless otherwise noted.

Shopping Centres

- Peninsula Home Maker Centre
- Masters Building - Shopping Precinct (vacant ATM)
- Coles Express
- Mornington Village
- Mornington Central
- Benton's Square
- Bunning's Centre

Retirement/ Nursing Villages

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| • Shearwater Apartments | |
| • Mornington House | |
| • Peninsula Grange | |
| • Parkhill Gardens | |
| • Beleura Village | |
| • Bentons Lodge | |
| • Opal by the Bay | |
| • Corowa Court | |
| • Andrew Kerr Aged Care | |
| • ACSAGGeorge Vowell Nursing | Mt Eliza |
| • Craigcare | Mt Martha |
| • Marthas Point | Mt Martha |
| • Koorootang Village | Mt Martha |
| • Mt Martha Retirement Village | Mt Martha |

Key Infrastructure

- Mornington Library/ Council Offices
- Mornington Racecourse
- Mornington Shire Recycling & Waste Depo

Pubs/ Hotels

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| • The Royal Hotel | |
| • The Bay Hotel | |
| • The Royal Hotel | |
| • Tanti Hotel | |
| • Canadian Bay Hotel | Mt Eliza |
| • Dava Hotel | Mt Martha |

Schools

- Mornington Primary
- St McCartens Primary
- Mornington Special Development School - Special Needs School
- Mornington Park Primary
- Benton Junior College
- Mornington Secondary
- Padua College
- Mt Eliza Primary **Mt Eliza**
- Mt Eliza North Primary **Mt Eliza**
- Mt Eliza Secondary College **Mt Eliza**
- Belcombe Grammar **Mt Martha**

Medical/ Hospital

- Peninsula Health
- Belleura Hospital
- The Bays Hospital
- Mornington Centre - Rehab Centre
- Elite Medical & Dental Group
- Gastro Medicine/ Endoscopy
- Peninsula Animal Hospital **Mt Eliza**

Miscellaneous

- BATA Shoes – Manufacturing Facility
- Mornington Leisure Centre - Community & Recreation Centre
- 7 Fleet Street - DHS/ Commission Housing Complex
- Hart Marine - Boat Manufacturing
- Door World/ Aust Fire Arms Co – Ammunition in Containers
- Mornington Gardens Holiday Village - Caravan Park
- Norwood House – Motel **Mt Eliza**
- Mornington Star Estate - Winery & Accommodation **Mt Eliza**
- Mt Eliza Business School **Mt Eliza**
- The Briars Parklands **Mt Martha**
- Peninsula Pistol Club **Mt Martha**