

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

I am writing to you in confidence.

My name is Dragan Lukic (██████) and I have been employed by the CFA for just over 3 years and hold the rank of Qualified firefighter. I am stationed at Dandenong Fire Station and hold specialist increments in Heavy Rescue, 42 metre ladder platform and steep angle rope rescue whilst also providing Emergency Medical Response.

The area of Greater Dandenong which is covered by Dandenong Fire Station is not only a highly urbanised area but has a major trauma hospital, psychiatric hospital, nursing homes, schools and is home to major hazard facilities such as BOC Gases, Elgas and the main gas gates from Bass Strait situated amongst its large offensive industrial area in Dandenong South.

I am writing to you as a member of the community and as a career firefighter who is in support of the proposed fire services reform.

Firstly as a member of the community, I live in Chelsea Heights with my wife and two girls aged 4 and 2 which falls in the assignment area of Patterson River Fire Station and Edithvale Fire Station to the north as a support brigade. The proposed reform would mean that my family, our friends and neighbours would have the peace of mind that we were adequately protected with a response guaranteed by two FRV trucks which would enable at least seven career firefighters to be dispatched to the fireground along with the neighbouring volunteer brigade in Edithvale. In the current out-dated system Patterson River and Edithvale would respond to a house fire in my area, now if Edithvale were delayed or unable to get a truck out the door this would mean that the Patterson River crew would be on scene without any support en route. If Edithvale were to get a truck out the door the incident controller has no information on how many crew are on board or the extent of their qualifications (BA qualified, Structural qualifications) to be able to factor them in to their tactics or to provide ability to initiate rescue of their crew if necessary.

Now as a career firefighter at Dandenong Fire Station I support the proposed reform for quite a few reasons. As I mentioned above regarding seven on the fireground and the locations that would be affected by this, this would ensure the safety of my colleagues and I, as we would know with certainty that we have crews en route to assist us, crews that are guaranteed to have the exact same qualifications such as structural firefighting, search and rescue, BA, pump operator and atmospheric monitoring to name a few.

With no disrespect to volunteers as they do a great job but unfortunately due to pressures of life and work it is unrealistic to expect them to offer up all of their spare time away from work and family to get a truck out the door and maintain safety of residents and emergency service workers in built up urban areas. This has been experienced many times by me as a career firefighter at Dandenong. In the space of a two week period I was allocated to Dandenong Pumper 2 where on the first occasion my Officer and I were responded to a switchboard fire in Noble Park, 6 doors down from the Noble Park Fire Station arriving on scene in with Springvale pumper under 4 minutes with no response from the local brigade after 8 minutes let alone any Noble Park volunteer members with structural firefighting qualifications, such as breathing apparatus and search and rescue. On the second occasion we were responded to the same area for a kitchen fire in an apartment which was

next door to Noble Park Fire Station and yet again not one Noble Park member attending the fire station to attempt to get a truck out the door or assist the crews on scene.

Reforming and modernising our fire services and creating FRV would provide a guaranteed response of two trucks with equally qualified crews dispatched in built up urban areas which would enable them to work more safely and quicker, providing the level of safety the community expect and deserve whilst also relieving the pressure volunteers are put under to try and get a truck out the door with sometimes inadequate skills and crewing on board.

With the creation of FRV there will be no effect to volunteers or surge capacity as volunteers will continue to do what they do just as they do today. The only difference will be that there will be greater support for them when FRV appliances respond into their areas to support them, as two FRV trucks will be dispatched and arrive on scene to assist if the incident is large and complex enough. They will also be supported by the \$153,000,000 that will be allocated for extra training and station resources which will those volunteer members who will remain committed to protecting and serving their community and providing the surge capacity when required. The volunteers that I have spoken to that volunteer at Dandenong and neighbouring brigades are in support of the reform and look forward to both organisations being brought into this century.

I thank you for your time and look forward to you supporting the modern fire services firefighters and the community need.

Dragan Lukic

Qualified Firefighter 28469

Dandenong Fire Station

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