

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Mark Steven [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 3:54 PM
To: LCSC; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission - Fire Service Reform

To whom it may concern

My name is Mark Steven.

I am a Senior Station Officer at Geelong City Fire Station. I have worked in an operational fire-fighting role with the Country Fire Authority for 16 years.

I write this submission with apprehension; as I have invested myself in what I believe is a purposeful career and I am hopeful that I can offer some concise observations to assist you in making positive change.

Fire Services reform is needed. I fully support a reform that addresses;

- Appropriate fire – emergency service coverage for all Victorians
 - This would involve setting pre-determined criteria for establishing fire service capacity relevant to the risk in any area of Victoria eg. Rural tin shed verses urban volunteer brigade/ staffed station/ major station or specialist station.
 - Periodic review of risk and emergency service delivery statistics, to drive decision making
- Interoperability
 - 'Like risk' to receive 'like response' eg. nursing homes to receive a minimum guaranteed response of 3 pumpers
 - One fleet of operational appliances, with enough spare appliances to maintain operational capability at all times i.e. Allowing vehicle maintenance to take place without compromising operational capability eg. When Geelong's 42 metre ladder platform requires maintenance, at best it is replaced with an aerial appliance known as a teleboom. The key differences are 20+metres in height and no rescue capability. Literally incomparable. The risk hasn't changed but our capability to combat the risk is significantly reduced.
 - Alignment of operational equipment across the State eg. Standard radio's and breathing apparatus
 - Alignment of operational processes and training across the State eg. Technical rescue techniques and training/ assessment material to be standardised.
- Safety
 - Mandate 7 qualified fire-fighters on fireground to allow for safe internal attack at structure fires i.e. CFA largely relies on the assumption of volunteer response and the assumption that those responding will be appropriately qualified eg. We recently supported a volunteer brigade respond to a structure fire within their response area. We were 1st onscene and happy to assist the local brigade members in any way possible. Upon their arrival, a volunteer; who was inappropriately dressed in wildfire personal protective clothing, intended to assume incident control. While they felt confident enough to assert themselves, I had every indication that they were both unqualified and inexperienced and couldn't 'assume' their suitability for the role of incident controller, other than being the most senior member of their volunteer brigade.
 - That empowers those with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to fill operational roles i.e. Not using CFA personnel with bushfire qualifications to fill leadership and technical roles that they are not qualified for
 - Ensuring recruitment processes are driven by physical and mental requirements of the fire-fighting role rather than meeting diversity quota's.
- Consolidated Fire and Emergency Services Legislation
 - Giving the 'Chief' of the fire service decision making power. The head of an emergency service should be an operational member i.e. the CEO should develop business modelling to support the Chief Officers intent. eg. A previous Deputy Chief used the following analogy to explain his point of view to my shift. "If the CEO or government decided that tomorrow the CFA would be making parachutes then that is what we do." A fire service requires a true leader of people, with a

commitment to the community. Not an agent of change without a genuine investment in a positive long term outcome that contributes toward 'protecting life and property' in Victoria.

As with all people it is my personal experiences that have shaped my views toward fire service reform. If I were to document more than I have I fear the onus of wading through reading my submission me become too great. I would be happy to further discuss / elaborate on my views should you feel this would assist you in delivering positive change for Victoria's Fire Service.

I believe in a 'Fire Service' that serves and protects the community.

Sincerely Mark Steven



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