

Kirra Vanzetti

From: James Hall [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 July 2017 2:38 PM
To: LCSC
Cc: consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au
Subject: Fire Services Reform

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is James Hall, Leading Firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board. I have served the MFB for 8 years and prior to that was a volunteer firefighter for the CFA in the Melton brigade for 5 years. I live the suburb of Hillside, CFA area, and currently work in the Operations Improvement Department in Burnely. My current role is as the Computer Simulation Technician delivering Command and Control skills maintenance sessions. I have just recently started day work and was previously stationed at North Laverton station for the last 3 years prior. My most notable qualification is as an RPAS operator. RPAS involves using an unmanned aerial vehicle to enhance situation awareness and information gathering by capturing aerial videos and photographs to improve fireground activities. I am one of a small number of firefighter in the MFB with this training and the MFB is the only organisation in the country that can provide this emergency service.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed fire service reforms and presumptive rights compensation.

As stated above, I live in a CFA area that is fortunate enough to be protected by CFA career staff. This however is not always the case. On several occasion I have discovered that in my highly urbanized suburb, the required fire protection level, which I pay a considerable cost in Fire Services Levy, is not being met. This is due to the local CFA station sometimes being "shut down" without the community being made aware. This requires CFA volunteers to have to "pick up the slack" and respond to all emergency calls in that area. It puts unfair pressure on the volunteers and does not guarantee the level of fire protection that is required for my community. In an area with such urban development, worlds best practice (7 on the fire ground) can not be relied upon leaving areas less protected and community and firefighters lives at risk while still being require to pay for a service that is not being provided.

Now that I am involved in the organisational side of the MFB, I have been exposed to that amount of work that goes into developing and improving our fire service. It is an area that provides consistency between all firefighters and across all stations and is most evident when responding with CFA firefighters. Procedures, policies, and equipment vary between the two services and does not support consistent fire grounds activities. Bring the two services together will eliminate these issues making firefighters and the community safer.

The MFB and CFA boundaries are outdated and and do not provide adequate fire protection for the state of Victoria. These new fire service reforms will improve firefighter safety, fire service consistency and the necessary protection the state demands now and into the future without diminishing the protection of rural areas.

I look forward to the results of the committees deliberations.

Your sincerely,

James Hall

