

**Prue Purdey**

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**From:** Patrick Burns [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 3 July 2017 10:42 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Fire services reform

To the select committee,

My name is Patrick Burns and I am a Leading Firefighter with the metropolitan fire brigade. I have been with the MFB for over 5 years and am writing to offer my support for the reforms being considered before you.

I believe these reforms are essential and long overdue. The reforms will allow all urban areas in Melbourne to have guaranteed fire coverage. Under the current model, communities and suburbs outside of the Metropolitan are only guaranteed 1 firetruck with 4 professional firefighters. While those within are guaranteed 7 firefighters on 2 firetrucks in under 8 minutes. What this means for myself as a firefighter is the ability to fully commit to an internal search and attack of the fire knowing there are fully trained crews ready to help should something go wrong.

It is now more critical than ever to have firefighters on scene as quickly as possible due to the materials used to make houses and furnishing. 50 years ago houses and furniture was built using hardwood and natural fibres like wool and cotton, today we have houses made out of cheaper wood and construction materials and furniture made out of synthetic materials that are a lot more flammable. We also have cladding being used throughout Melbourne that is highly flammable and is a great risk, as shown by the incident at the lacrosse building fire on the 25th of November 2014 and the recent fire at the Greenfell tower in London.

Those within the metropolitan fire district also benefit from the Emergency medical response (EMR) program. This program which was introduced in 2001 has been highly effective and led to many lives being saved. The program provides a high level of first aid training to Firefighters who are then dispatched to patients who are not conscious and/or not breathing at the same time as an ambulance. This leads to earlier cpr and defibrillation increasing the likelihood of a positive outcome for the patient. This is an incredibly valuable tool that is provided to those in the metropolitan district but not those just outside.

Volunteers do a great job but with our population growing we cannot continue to expect them to be on call constantly or for them to be trained at the same standard as career firefighters. The time commitment required to obtain and maintain skills is a large undertaking. When you also take into consideration emergency call outs the amount of time that has to be dedicated to brigade responsibilities is very large. On top of these commitments there are also work commitments with many volunteers also having to commute, and of course there is also commitments to family life. These factors can often lead to delayed responses, under crewing and in some cases a failure to respond. This is an unacceptable risk to communities and firefighters and needs to be addressed by these reforms.

Victoria is the fastest growing state in Australia. Melbourne's population is rapidly growing towards 5 million at a faster rate than every other Australian city and some large international cities like Paris and New York. The bulk of this growth was on the urban fringe, with a record 22,700 housing lots being sold in 2016. With our growing population, our emergency services also need to grow. I believe these reforms will allow for the change and growth required for our great city and state.

Thank you for your time.

LFF Patrick Burns

Metropolitan fire brigade

Cert. II & III Public safety (firefighting and emergency operations)