

Prue Purdey

From: BADDOCK, Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 2:55 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to you to express my point of view in regards to the proposed fire services remodel.

My name is Peter Baddock, I am a leading firefighter at Ringwood Fire Station, (FS22 MFB).

I am a qualified operator of specialist gear such as the Water Tanker and Teleboom.

I have been employed for more than 8yrs.

I have lived in Chirnside Park 3116 for about 15yrs and like many of my neighbours didn't realise that I wasn't protected by a full time fire service. Chirnside Park has a volunteer brigade.

The current fire services model is outdated and hasn't allowed for the growth of population and industry. Growth that needs more services, just as there is need for more school, shops, amenities. There is a need for increase in Emergency services. Police, Ambulance and Fire Fighters.

Before being stationed at FS22 I was stationed at FS26 (Croydon) for about 3yrs. Croydon is as far east you can go in the MFB area before it becomes CFA area (all volunteer). FS26 has always had a great working relationship with the surrounding CFA stations. We both understand that we need each other, and when called upon the two services work well together. The proposal of the fire service reform will not change this relationship we have. We still need to back each other up at calls, whether it be in the new Fire Service area or the CFA area.

I commend the volunteers and what they do in their own time, but also understand that in current times that people are busier than they have ever been, and that getting to the fire station to go to a fire/car accident/incident takes time for the volunteers. They can only drive at normal speeds to get to the station to be able to get on the truck.

Time is what's most critical here. A volunteer pager goes off and the volunteer has to decide whether they can get to the station in time (4mins) before they page the next fire station. Then a further 4 mins before the next truck can respond. If my house is on fire and triple 0 has been called, I want the Fire Truck there as soon as possible, not only because my family may be trapped inside, but that houses burn much quicker in modern times compared to older times. Everything is constructed of more combustible materials which dramatically changes fire behaviour and the speed in which it spreads. So you can see how time critical it is for early intervention of a fire service.

Compare the response times of permanent staff, both MFB and CFA where they are in the truck and out the door in 90 secs. Permanent staff have a greater chance of containing the fire to of the room of origin.

There have been calls that I have personally been to where both services were responding to in the CFA area that FS26 has been on scene before any CFA volunteer truck has arrived. Sometimes it's just minutes, other times the CFA haven't been able to crew a truck and then no truck arrives.

An example of this was a couple of years ago.

FS26 went to a call inside the CFA area where a worker had his hand stuck inside an auger at a factory. We had been dispatched with the surrounding CFA brigades as well as a rescue unit from the SES at Knox. On route to the call I remember the officer on our truck asking if SES rescue had left the station yet, and the answer was that they had replied but not yet left the station. They were still waiting for enough crew to arrive. My officer then requested that Rescue 27 be responded as well, just in case they were needed. Rescue 27 turned out within the 90 sec time frame and were on the road. FS26 had 2 trucks arrive well before any CFA volunteer brigade did. R27 arrived approx. 20 mins before SES Knox arrived.

As you can imagine, the patient that had his hand inside the machine didn't care which service arrive first, just that someone could help.

As I have said previously I admire what the volunteers do, but feel that there are some suburbs that have built up so much that it is physically impossible for the volunteers to be able to respond to in a reasonable time. I'm sure if you ask volunteers why they volunteer they will tell you it's "for the community". In some cases it would be better for "the community" to be covered by 24/7

Firefighters. Firefighters that are also EMR (emergency medical response) trained to help the Paramedics that are also stretched to the limit. (we carry defibrillators and oxygen kits)

Please don't get me wrong, I value what the volunteers do, but the current system is flawed and is in desperate need of reform.

All Victorians deserve the best emergency service, and I believe the proposed model is a huge step forward.

Regards

LFF Peter Baddock

10562

FS22

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