



"Amanda Dettmann"

07/07/2017 12:14 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject submission to the Fire Services
Reform Bill

To all the Honorable members of the Fire Services Bill Select Committee:

My name is Graeme Dettmann. I am 46 years old, a Leading Firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, stationed at Footscray Fire Station. I have been a firefighter for 17 years, and prior to that I was a motor mechanic for 12 years. I have the extra qualifications of Hazmat and USAR technician, and Ladder platform. I am married with 2 children, a girl and a boy, 15 and 13 years old respectfully. I have lived the bulk of my life in the CFA area, and currently reside in Macedon (one of the 52 most at risk towns for bushfire), and own a small farm at Greenhill (also CFA area).

As you can see I have quite a vested interest on both sides of the argument. Safety at work and safety of my family when I am at work.

In regard to work, I would very much like the reform to go through, as it will make a massive (positive) difference to my work life, which I am sure you have received vast amounts of hard evidence regarding response time, coverage, the need for boundary reform, structured response (GARS), etc.

However, I also need to ensure that whatever reforms go through, will not adversely affect fire coverage at my residential address (my own family's safety), or even the farm. I have studied the reforms and am confident that the proposed bill can only have a positive effect on coverage and volunteer engagement (they will be their own entity after all, something that was requested by the volunteer association). No doubt there will be some short term larger expenditure, which happens any time major, long awaited, overdue reform is brought in – the longer you wait to reform there will always be a financial impost, however reform always (and in this case certainly will) results in a net benefit to long term costings and community service. In regards to underlying policy rationale, no doubt you will hear from people far more qualified than me as to that topic.

I will leave you with a conversation that I had when I first started as a firefighter, and was stationed at Oakleigh fire station, and was discussing how the CFA/MFB boundary worked, as like most people I really hadn't thought about it, and it has stuck in my mind all these years as to how inherently inequitable the current system is.

(me)...so why hasn't the boundary just moved out – its getting pretty big, Melbourne?

...Because it has to go through local government, and no one wants to move it because they will have to pay more to get proper coverage.

(me)...I thought it would have been automatic - so it just won't move. What about EMR (emergency medical response)?

...they don't get EMR. The boundary hasn't moved in my time (30 years) and probably never will.

Now, 17 years later, those areas are finally getting EMR, but the boundaries still haven't changed, and the fire service is still below standard (I say that with utmost respect for the firefighters in those areas, it is in regard to the system not their abilities) compared to people living literally on the other side of the

street. No one will ever know how many lives could have been saved, if the boundaries had moved out automatically with the cities growth. That reason alone should be enough to make people sit up and pay attention.

Sincerely

Graeme John Gordon Dettmann

