



"JENZEN, Russell"

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission regarding the Fire Services Reforms

Ladies and Gents,

My name is Russell Jenzen, I am a Station Officer with the MFB. I have been a fire fighter for 28 years.

I have spent the majority of my career in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, I have also been an Instructor on recruit fire fighter courses and currently am working on a project to bring mobile data to the appliances.

The following statement is my opinion, made from my observations over 28yrs

Growing up in Ringwood and working at Ringwood fire station for the majority of my career , I have seen the vast changes that have occurred in the local areas. Population growth due to increased housing density and multiple story residential buildings , increased traffic flows and congestion, massive increases in the size of risks at shopping centres, freeways, industrial hubs and hospitals in this area alone. This on its own is justification to vote in favour of the legislation !

But lets dig a little deeper into just the small area that I have been involved with, as the Officer in Charge(OIC) at Ringwood Fire Station(FS22), on either Pumper Tanker(PT22) or Teleboom(TB22).


At FS22 we attend many call with the CFA, both career and volunteer crews. Many of these calls are to Nursing homes, Hospitals, Large industrial complexes or major freeway/tunnel structure. Many of these hazards are in the volunteer station areas. None of these hazards existed when the last review of the fire boundaries happened. There have been numerous times that I have been dispatched to calls, to these very same hazards, in the volunteer areas, where the volunteer brigades have failed to respond. The reasons for their failure to respond are many, work location/pressure, life and family constraints, lack of suitably trained personal(drivers/BA) etc. All of which are unacceptable when your response is time critical to protect life and property.

As the OIC dispatched to any of the above calls, I never know whether there will be any of these volunteer brigades able to attend! Consequently the MFB has a policy of turning out an extra MFB appliance for safety of the attending crews(seven on the fire ground). This has the effect that there may be delays to calls, as fire trucks have to travel further to my call or to another call.

I am not anti-volunteer, they do the best they can. Victoria will always need volunteers. But in areas like mine, that are now highly urbanised, their best is not is not the best we can do to protect the community! The state of Victoria is growing at a rapid rate, the urban fringe has spread enormously, some country towns are more like small cities. There has been no change to the fire fighting boundaries to reflect this spread since the 1970's. Why should it be that in 2017, one end of a street in my station's area gets Emergency Medical Response, but the other end of the same street doesn't because they fall into a volunteer CFA area?

This is not about getting rid of volunteers, not about political point scoring to get votes, not about twisting the truth or making up lies to sell papers. This is about having the guts to do what is in the best interests of protecting the Victorian community.

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