



"WILSON, Michael A"

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF

cc "WILSON, Michael A"

bcc

Subject Submission To Parliamentary
Committee Regarding Fire Service
Reform.

Dear DPC,

My name is Mik Wilson and I have been a professional MFB firefighter for 5 years. I am currently based at West Melbourne MFB fire station.

I write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform.

- In my area of Central zone district, a swift and adequately manned professional response is vital for our community and imperative to the safety of MFB firefighters..
- I've also seen first hand what happens when high density areas do not receive the necessary coverage they deserve from professional firefighters.
- Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'. Indeed, I live in Montmorency and I am only a hop skip and jump away from Warrandyte-an area I would call very high risk and in need of better response coverage as seen by severe response time failure. The community of Warrandyte is but one area sorely in need of professional firefighting protection. With only one main roadway in and out, the need for a professional career response within 8 minutes of a minimum of seven firefighters is essential.
- These geographic 'country' areas need to be protected by a modernised, career fire service so that they receive the emergency service response they deserve. The proposed fire service reform will deliver this outcome. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.
- All Victorian firefighters strive to provide modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including myself as a firefighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform. Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of your constituents, and all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

I also respectfully submit that you give consideration to my request to modernise the fire service along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before

the commencement of the fire season. This is important to me and my colleagues and an issue that has touched me personally in even my short time in this proud but dangerous profession.

The number of internal emails we receive notifying us of our brothers and sisters who have passed away as a result of occupational cancers is all too high and constant. I personally read 5 emails last night of the passing of my brothers due to cancers. I wear the registration number (3425) of a former colleague on my helmet in memoriam of a firefighter who spent over a decade fighting multiple cancers brought on by his work as a firefighter. Unfortunately, he also spent this time battling the cruellest of unsympathetic and clinical beurocracies-a disgusting trend that has gone on for too long for those in need of prompt and warranted medical assistance.

The reality may be we are more likely to contract said forms of this insidious disease because of our chosen profession but the legislation being passed will greatly improve the speed at which treatment can be sought, found, and started. This will increase our chances of being protected. As professional firefighters, we are also trained Emergency Medical First Responders. In this role, we are dispatched to cardiac arrest/unconscious/not breathing patients for the purpose of early intervention of sustaining life so that patients have the best possible chance of survival and, thus, recovery. Presumptive Legislation is like an EMR response for firefighters. It is so very important we have swift access to medical help when we, too become ill with occupational cancers.

I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to talk to you further about my personal experiences as a professional firefighter and why this reform is so important.

Kind regards
Mik Wilson
MFB Qualified Firefighter
MFB West Melbourne

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