

Prue Purdey

From: Paul T [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 July 2017 10:38 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: fire service reform.

Dear Committee Members,

Please could you read the following and deeply consider when next asked what you think about FRV and the fire service review.

My name is Paul Tyrrell and I have been a professional MFB firefighter for 40 years. I am currently based at FS5 in the suburb of Broadmeadows.

I write to add my support for the proposed fire services reform. Professional fire-fighters are the people called upon when the public is truly in need. So why, when we aim to enshrine safe conditions for ourselves - to ensure we have the best chance of going home to our families safely, do certain people feel it's their right to use us for their own political gains?

Our brothers and sisters in the fire service are people of integrity and who show pride in their profession. We answer the call of those in their moment of despair without any hesitation, we're on the road within 90 seconds, and are on scene within 7 minutes at the longest. Mostly with the way our stations are set out around the metropolitan fire districts, and us being a full-time brigade having crews at the stations at the ready 24/7, We can be there in even less time than that to within minutes.

I believe everyone is entitled to this type of response from their fire service. Sometimes we pay the ultimate sacrifice. What we as professional fire-fighters are, is not just getting cats out of trees as the myth goes, I can tell you from my experience of the past 40 years that I have attended countless factory fires, school fire, shop fires, house fires of all sizes, high-rise, ships, fuel tankers and bush fires, for example; Ash Wednesday in 83, the Melton fires in 84, Black Saturday in 09. The mine fire at Morwell, bush fires at Halls gap and various other incidents giving assistance to the CFA when they've required our professional expertise.

Not only do I fight fires, I also am trained in road rescue, and have over the years attended some horrendous scenes, not to mention the industrial accidents of all types I've had to contend with. I am also trained, as are the rest of the MFB, as a first responder, where as, we attend to people that require an ambulance if an ambulance isn't available, and start treating them until an ambulance arrives. I have many more qualifications to my name.

I've dedicated my whole life to the fire brigade in protecting the community in various areas over the years, and done this without any question.

This is why I find it very distressing when I, like my firefighter brothers and sisters are just doing our job that we are very well trained in, hear absolute demeaning reports on the media, be it on radio or in newspapers totally degrading our role in the community.

Never before have we been attacked with such ferocity and falsehoods from so many directions, as we have in recent years. The fact is that Victoria's fire service is operating under a dated and fractured model. Our main aim is to deliver the best service possible to keep the people of Victoria safe. Fixing and modernising the fire service, in consultation with all major parties, is surely a major positive step forward.

Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this out-dated 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'.

In the interest of public safety being a high priority, this shouldn't be about who's area of response it is, it should be more about getting the closest fire crews on scene in the quickest time, no matter if they're volunteer or professional. Public safety should not be put at risk by a select few that argue over who's patch it is.

These areas need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised areas as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid 8-minute response, with 7 professional career fire-fighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas. If volunteer firefighters get on scene before the professionals, by all means they without hesitation should commence firefighting operations straight away. In the same principal as MFB firefighters do when attending medical response call, we immediately start working on a patient before the ambos get there and keep assisting them when they arrive.

All Victorian, professional and volunteer fire-fighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including myself as a fire-fighter, 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 fire-fighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer fire-fighters 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.

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

Please let the FRV have your vote;

Kind regards

Paul Tyrrell

(Leading firefighter) Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board