

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** SMITH, Phil [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 30 June 2017 3:41 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Submission to the committee

**Submission to the Fire Service Review Committee**

Dated: 30/06/2017

Prepared by: Senior Station Officer Phil Smith

**My role:**

Senior Station Officer, 29 years experience, full-time professional fire fighter, attended many major fires within MFB district and many urban fires in CFA district including Mt Macedon and Dandenongs, various tertiary qualifications in Fire Industry and Education, several year's experience in Training and Education of all levels of fire fighter skills and qualifications.

**Inter-operational experience:**

Attended four major fires in CFA areas, worked alongside CFA volunteers and permanent staff to fight those fires. Studied tertiary courses including Fire Technology (Diploma) and Fire Management (Degree) on courses of MFB/CFA fire fighters. Developed training resources and researched operational requirements with CFA staff.

**Why I support Fire Service Review:**

In 1910 the MFB fire district covered areas from within an area reaching from Altona to Deer Park, St Albans, Epping, Croydon, Mt Waverly and Mentone, with much of this area market gardens, orchards and undeveloped land. At that time the population of Melbourne was around 600,000 people.

In 2017 The MFB district still very much covers the same area of Melbourne, even though the population of Melbourne is in excess of 4,000,000 and stretches well beyond (the areas that were once gardens and orchards) to areas as far as Mt Martha Pakenham, Rockbank, Caroline Springs Werribee and Geelong that contain significant numbers of people.

Consistent training, appropriate resources (including appliances, fire fighting tools) station facilities for safe decontamination of gear and equipment, inequitable funding of Metropolitan and Urban brigades, safe turnout gear for all fire fighters (permanent and volunteer) has been lacking, with some units without even basic structural fire fighting protective equipment.

An explosion in growth, both population and economic, to the outer areas of Melbourne has not been met with an appropriate growth in the protection of those communities. Protection in relation to Fire and Safety.

Some highly populated suburbs of Melbourne have the reassurance that they have full-time professional fire fighters, highly trained in fighting fires within compartments as well as large urban fires, who also have medical training (which has saved 100's of lives since inception). Other suburbs which abut those fortunate areas fall in areas covered by volunteer brigades who are often unable to provide the same levels of cover, even though all that separates these communities is a small line on a map.

**Conclusion:**

Melbourne has grown exponentially over the last 100 years. Thousands of people are living in densely populated areas that extend well outside the traditional historical suburbs of Melbourne. In my experience the volunteer service has provide an extremely valuable contribution to the safety of the community, but they are now responsible for communities far larger than they ever did before.

The quality and consistency of training fire fighters receive across the state is crucial for the safety not only of the public, but for fire fighters themselves. Ensuring the growing population of communities outside the traditional metropolitan areas have a level of protection afforded to their neighbours in adjoining suburbs is not only reasonable but is to be expected.

Having worked in this industry for 28 years I can clearly see the benefits, not only to myself and the organisation I work in, but to the whole of the community Victoria wide, to create a Fire Service such as being suggested.

Removing not only inter-organisational boundaries that may exist, but also political boundaries and territorial boundaries will greatly benefit the delivery of a higher standard of cover to all Victorians. Through the combining of service we can eliminate the differences in our procedures and processes, the gear we wear and the tools we use, the trucks we drive and the way we communicate. We would have a state-wide service where a fire fighter in Rosebud is as professionally trained and skilled as a fire fighter in Dandenong or Melbourne.

And I believe that the volunteer brigades will gain greatly out of the establishment of FSV.

Phil Smith

Senior Station Officer, MFESB

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