

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** Denis Rich [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 1 July 2017 9:08 AM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Submission to the Fire Services Bill Select Committee

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

### **INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017**

My name is Denis Rich and I have been a professional MFB firefighter for 38 years and as such write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform. I do this because Victoria's fire service delivery model is dated and response boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years, resulting in 35 areas such as Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong still zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. These areas need to be modernised as part of the reform of the fire service to ensure the minimum fire cover standard of a rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks.... as occurs in the MFD.

All emergencies have two common elements....they are time critical and require immediate resources. On arrival at an emergency and as the first attending Officer I am expected to deal with:

- The presenting situation
- Time pressure
- Unknowns
- Possible multiple scenarios – rescue, exposures, confinement, evacuation
- Night – lack of visibility
- Lack of resources
- Rapid fire spread
- Environmental impact
- Tactical decisions

The mitigation of the many different types of incidents that we attend can only be achieved by ensuring appropriate response times with appropriate on-scene support/ resources.

People other than those on the 'front line' in the emergency services generally live without ever having to perform under pressure, so to ensure the community safety of all Victorians - including emergency first responders - I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

For the past 32 years of my career as an Officer, I have had the express responsibility for the operational skill level and safety of my crew and the safety of the community whose lives can be at risk. All Victorians, including both professional and volunteer firefighters, deserve a modern fire service that meet the needs of our

growing communities. Reform of our fire services will not only ensure the safety of communities in our growing state, additionally it will ensure the safety of all firefighters by reducing the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters as a result of the enormous urban growth and along with that, increased volume of emergency calls.

Its erroneous to also suggest employing all career firefighters in one fire service will affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity, it will not. Volunteer support will still be maintained through FRV/CFA arrangements and there will be no impact/effect on those volunteer brigades outside the 35 integrated station primary response areas, including bushfire response. It's my understanding the fire service reform will also be just as beneficial to volunteers in that it will assist with recruitment and retention, as well as funding for volunteer station upgrades.

The synergies associated with the fire service reform are numerous, such as; standardisation of career training / specialist response / response standards / equipment / cost savings / consolidation of Depts. / management efficiencies

I also respectfully submit that you not only give consideration to the reform of the fire service but also the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect firefighting employees. Research has shown that there is a higher incidence between firefighting and certain cancers. The politicising and delay in the legislation only adds to the stress of not recognising occupational cancer for firefighters who have an increased risk of developing certain types of cancers related to their work and exposure to carcinogens.

These issues are important to myself and colleagues, as it should be to every member of the Committee, and both matters need to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament.

Denis Rich AFSM

