

Kirra Vanzetti

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 1 July 2017 6:14 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform

To the committee of the fire services reform,

My name is David Anthony Kelly and I can be contacted on this email address or my phone [REDACTED]

I am a current MFB, senior station officer who has served for 30 years. I live in the eastern suburb's and have worked in CBD and through the eastern, southern and northern suburbs. I have predominantly been on operations and have served in various departments.

I have experienced in my time an enormous population growth, within all of the area's I have served in. Areas that were once considered rural or outer suburbs have now become thriving urban areas that require more essential services due to population, industry and residential growth. In areas that were considered outer Melbourne we are now experiencing buildings that are being built up to 25 storey's high. Along with new hospitals, new schools and the ever increasing density of the suburbs there is massive infrastructure growth and change. All of these require a modern fire service to deliver a timely response and the skill set to combat the complexity of problems that may arise.

The need to have a minimum of 7 professional firefighters dispatched to structure and non structure fires not only provides safety for the community but also the firefighters. At times the volunteers will arrive with good intentions but do not have the skill set that is required to combat a number of complex and ever changing situations. The volunteers provide a great service to the community, however, the CFA needs to be returned to what it once was, a community based rural fire service, which is totally volunteer staffed.

I believe that the new reform will not impact on the volunteers in any way. They will still be able to serve their communities as they always have. The misconception disseminated about their abilities to provide search capacity is false as stated in the Victorian Fire Services Reform document. All independent reviews from Fair Work to the independent appointment of David O'Byrne as well as the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission have stated that there is a need to review the boundary's of the fire districts and the need to modernise and reform Victoria's Fire Services.

From a personal experience, there have been two situations that stand out in my mind of where the conflict between professional and volunteer firefighters have occurred. The first being responded into a CFA volunteer area for a car accident, person trapped which was confirmed. My appliance was responded and approximately 500 meters away when I was called off by the Lieutenant of the area and another CFA appliance was responded with no CFA appliance on scene. This to myself and my crew was a total disregard for not only the skill set that we would have provide but also a total disregard for the person trapped in the vehicle. It was raised with the MFB and I was told that the volunteers could cancel our services within their protocols. The second experience was in the same area, where a petrol tanker had rolled over spilling 5000 litres of petrol which ignited threatening homes and properties. The CFA volunteer assignment rule excluded any MFB response even though we were less than 5 minutes away which could have provided 6 professional firefighters to the incident.

The impact that this dispute has had on me personally and my professional colleagues within the MFB and the CFA is significant. It also includes my family who have been deeply affected by this dispute. I feel that my integrity has come into question from the constant attacks printed in the Herald Sun, 31 front page headlines to be exact. The barrage and constant interference from the VFBV and the State Liberal Government who only used the volunteers and all firefighters as a political ploy. Then, the Prime Minister of Australia and the Employment Minister who have always stated 'We will abide by the Independent Umpires decision, yet, when Fair Work Australia handed down their decision the Liberal Government was not happy and they changed legislation to suit themselves. Also the silence and continual bullying from the CEO, the Acting Chief Officer and the previous Chief Fire Officer of the MFB at times was too much to bear. When I began my career Firefighters were highly regarded and respected for the difficult and often dangerous job that they do. When this dispute arose the lies and the innuendos that were publicised caused me to have to explain my job to people and defend my choice to make this my career. I have always acted in a professional manner and this is not a job to me, it is a vocation that I take seriously and am proud to do.

Thankyou for taking the time to read my concerns and I hope that you will not be influenced by what you have heard but will investigate and understand the facts that have been given multiple times over.

Yours Sincerely
Dave Kelly

Email sent using Optus Webmail