

**Prue Purdey**

**From:** SMITH, Karl [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 June 2017 11:13 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Re: Submission in support of Fire Services Reform

To Whom it concerns,

I hope that you have the time to take my email into consideration.

My name is Karl Smith and I have been a professional MFB firefighter for 15 years. I am a Station officer currently based at Carlton fire station.

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

- I grew up in Mildura and have lived in Melbourne for 21 years. During my 14 years in the MFB I have been stationed at Templestowe, Vermont, Glen Waverley and Croydon MFB Fire Stations. All of these station are on the border of the Metropolitan Fire District. I also reside in Croydon Hills in a street that is approximately 200m outside of the Metropolitan Fire District.
- I have had first hand experience at working and living within the restrictions of the current system. I know that 200m to the south of my place of residence that there will be 3 permanently manned fire trucks dispatched to a fire. However for my house I will only get 1 and then have to wait on a volunteer response arriving some time after. I know that if my family, my neighbours or I require urgent medical attention that people 200m to the south will also have a Fire crew responded for Emergency medical response as well as the ambulance. For my family, neighbours and myself we will only get an Ambulance. Is this fair?
- Early in my career due to family reasons I wished to return to Mildura to be closer to my family. Due to the current system I could not transfer to the CFA even though the job is exactly the same. I would have been required to go through a second recruit course process (If I was a successful applicant) to be able to live and work in Mildura. This does not make sense. Not from a recruitment aspect or financial rationale for the CFA or MFB. To lose one member from one service and spend money training them to work at the same job they are already trained for does not make sense.
- Through my working experiences I have continually found it challenging that whilst the CFA and MFB do the exact same job that both fire trucks are required to carry different radios, hose couplings, breathing apparatus and other equipment based on a boundaries rather than common sense. I know that if I look on the MFB website and put in my postcode to look for potential bush fire danger the website will provide me with dangers on the southern side of boundary not the northern side. Through my training I know that the risk is far more significant coming from the north out to Warrandyte and Wonga Park. However, again because of the boundary this isn't highlighted by one service. This is misleading to the general public. In person I could also detail to you the many challenging situations presented to Professional Firefighters when responding outside of the out dated boundaries. These challenges are both physical and psychological. These challenges are also faced by volunteers that affect their health and safety.
- 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. Warrandyte, Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'.
- 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 firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.
- All Victorian, professional and volunteer firefighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

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 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.

Kind regards

**Karl Smith**  
**Station Officer | Carlton Fire Station | B Platoon**



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