

Prue Purdey

From: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2017 9:46 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Mr Kevin Beardmore
 [REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Parliament of Victoria
 Inquiry into the fire fighters' presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017

I argue 7 professional fire fighters must be dispatched to all fire calls within high density urban communities.

My name is Kevin Beardmore and I am a Station Officer employed by the MFB at Ascot Vale Station (Pumper 50). I have been a professional firefighter for 9 years. [REDACTED]

Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria

Emergency services in general and FRV specifically will maintain preparedness arrangements with numerous stakeholders involving a continuous assessment of the risks involved with structure fire (likelihood and severity). Response time is a fundamental component of fire risk mitigation, particularly considering the survivability of flashover. I urge you to read my narrative which demonstrates the impact on fire service delivery across Victoria. I argue 7 professional fire fighters must be dispatched to all fire calls within high density urban communities.

Easter Saturday 2017

I was the officer-in-charge of Pumper 50 working with Andy, who was the driver/pump operator, and Wayne the attack Firefighter. We were called to a fire in a flat at Wingate Street in Ascot Vale. We could see smoke on the horizon as Andy, very skilfully, negotiated the congested traffic through Ascot Vale. We arrived under 4 minutes and the scene was hectic. Flames were rolling out of a ground floor flat and attacking the large window on the second floor whilst residents (over 50 people) had evacuated to the grass area. As I exited the appliance I asked witnesses if anyone was trapped inside, I was told everyone was out. I witnessed the arsonist in a highly agitated state ranting in the crowd creating an obvious security issue. I assisted Wayne to deploy a hose reel to the front window and provided a situation report over the radio. I put water on the fire through the window whilst Wayne finished donning his breathing apparatus. I directed him to enter the front door which was on fire and conduct an internal attack on the fire. Andy was very busy finding a hydrant and deploying hose, Pumper 50 has 1300 litres of water and will run out of water in 90 seconds unless he finds and connects the pump to a hydrant. While Wayne was conducting an internal attack and Andy was focused on water I looked up to the second floor window and saw someone waving frantically. Obviously the reports that no-one was trapped were false and I needed to conduct an immediate rescue, critically I had run out of Firefighters. I entered the stairwell and escorted a woman and her two children from the 2nd floor flat. Pumper 47 (Footscray) arrived on scene with 4 firefighters and we rapidly gained control.

This narrative describes my priorities, which are enshrined in operational doctrine, when a crew initially attack a fire. I have passed competency base training designed to provide the best opportunity to rescue people (the mother and her 2 children), protect exposures (fire rolling into the 2nd floor flat) and confine the fire (Wayne's internal attack using breathing apparatus).

Frankly, I am proud of the skills Andy and Wayne demonstrated at that job and I believe we saved the lives of that mother and her children, this was not luck. We arrived prior to flashover and attacked the fire immediately. We had appropriate equipment, verifiable firefighting skills (I hold a Certificate II & III Firefighting Operations, Certificate 4 Fire Technology and a Certificate 4 Public Safety (Firefighting Supervision), and modern protective gear. Our fire rescue experience has been honed with continuous real life firecalls. In other words rescuing people from fire is our central competency demonstrated when Pumper 50 and Pumper 47 provided 7 professional fire fighters at the critical time which prevented fire deaths.

Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery

I was a volunteer with SES for 14 years. I have worked with volunteers during Black Saturday, 9 tours of Hazelwood and firecalls when I was stationed at Laverton North (station 49) and believe I have an understanding of Volunteerism. Volunteers are fantastic. They provide an invaluable resource to the Victorian community. Volunteering is hard work and requires immediate deployment despite family and professional priorities. Volunteers selflessly respond to callouts, however growing urbanisation seriously affects the normalcy of their lives as more time must be devoted towards attending firecalls, including false alarms. We need Volunteers, particularly for surge capacity, however a volunteer brigade could not have achieved what Andy, Wayne and I achieved on Easter Saturday. They would have failed to arrive in time because they must respond from home to the station and then to the fire. Or, if they respond directly to the fire they would be without a pumper or breathing apparatus and the fire would have entered the 2nd floor flat. This is particularly evident in urban areas with high traffic flow and Volunteers cannot respond code 1 in their private cars.

Communities such as Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are designated as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised. The Fire Services Legislation Amendment (reform) Bill 2017 will meet the needs of these growing corridors if it enables firecalls to be

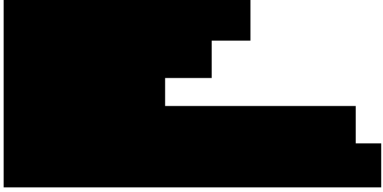
responded to by professional fire fighters who are obligated to respond within prescribed temporal and competency frameworks.

Please support the proposed fire services reform along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect me and my crew from having to sue the government to prove our cancer was caused by fire fighting.

I invite you to my station to talk about my experiences as a professional firefighter and why this reform is so important.

Yours Sincerely

Kevin Beardmore
MFB Station Officer 10501



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File1:

File2:

File3: