

**Kirra Vanzetti**

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**From:** STANLEY, Nicholas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 6 July 2017 6:15 PM  
**To:** LCSC  
**Subject:** Inquiry into the firefighters' presumptive rights compensation and fire services legislation amendment (reform) bill 2017

Dear Assistant Clerk Committee Members,

My name is Nicholas Stanley of the Bundoora MFB.

I write to you today to express my support for presumptive legislation and fire service reform.

There are a number of different reasons that I believe these changes are not only beneficial to the community as a whole, but crucial for the safety of firefighters while we do an already dangerous job. This email is to inform you of my thoughts and experiences from my time as a firefighter in the northern suburbs, and how I believe these proposals will better serve members of the public, as well as family and friends who live in other areas considered 'rural'.

In the following, I would like to draw on some experience from the last two years working near the boundary of the Metropolitan Fire District (MFD). This includes going into the community, and also responding to calls from Thomastown, Epping, Greensborough, Bundoora, Broadmeadows and Preston.

I would also like to use some data collected from different sources, to highlight the need for a full time service in areas that are considered 'rural', explain why having all career staff under one fire service, and finish with how this dispute has affected my family and I personally.

Firstly, from a firefighter safety point of view, the proposed fire service reform will have wide reaching benefits for all firefighters.

Having a minimum of 7 firefighters dispatched to an alarm of fire means that, if required, crews are on their way to back us up if we are presented with a situation that is volatile and time critical.

Our workplace procedures states that 'BA Operators are to work in teams of at least two (2)', for our personal safety. This becomes a dilemma when confronted with time critical situations, as we won't be committed to an internal attack, unless we know we have a crew on scene or on route for firefighter safety.

We have been to a number of fires where we receive reports of persons unaccounted for. In these time critical situations, we need to know that we can immediately follow our breathing apparatus procedures of teams of two, and know that another crew is on scene or around the corner. This allows us to enter a building and begin a search or firefighting activities, then the arriving truck is there to aid in case we require assistance or if fire threatens another property once we exit the premise.

We have responded to grass and shrub fires that start for any number of reasons. They can be along creek beds running close to homes in built up areas, in parks and gardens like Bundoora park or Latrobe university, sometimes sports fields also. On hot, dry, windy days, time is of the essence to prevent fire extending to property. Having an initial turnout of 7 firefighters in 2 trucks, that are in the truck within 90 seconds of a call being received, to be on scene within 8 minutes, greatly aids in protection of exposures, extinguishing of fire, and prevention of damage costs to the community. This service is offered to areas where staff are employed.

Working near the MFD boundary, we have responded to numerous calls with CFA staff and CFA volunteers as we always have. With the reforms being proposed, this will continue to happen. We will continue to respond with volunteers, as they do an incredible service to their community. This reform will not affect volunteer turnout as these people are there for their community, and should continue to do so.

The areas of reform are around the 35 integrated stations and their primary response areas. This is 35 out of **1087** stations across Victoria. 204 being urban fire stations, and 951 being rural according to the CFA website.

These 35 areas are now highly urbanised. They have a high residential risk, and present many challenges to their large and growing populations.

The areas covered by the CFA already pay more for firefighter response, yet may not have access to the Emergency Medical Response offered by all MFB stations, but only a handful of CFA integrated stations.

I find this unfair as I believe the entire community should receive the same level of service.

Having all career staff working as one fire service has a number of benefits to all;

Uniform procedures, appliances, training, specialist skills, access to the nearest relevant truck or person with specialty experience.

Using an example of a recent incident, at the moment if there is an incident in the CFA area of Greensborough, though an MFB station is in Greensborough, it may not be responded and may be overlooked for a truck that is further away.

Specialty aerial equipment might had to come from Dandenong as opposed to the nearest one in Thomastown. This is unacceptable.

By having all career staff under one service will remedy this issue

Finally I would like to finish with how my family and I have been affected by this ongoing dispute.

The constant barrage of negativity has affected us personally.

Members of the public have seen me during the day wearing union clothing or clothes for our recruit course.

Some have gone out of their way to mention things they have read that aren't true, and then argue the point.

I never thought that I would feel negativity towards my job until some of the public acted like this.

It affected my sleep, relationships, and my willingness to show my pride for the job in public.

When at functions with friends, I would be constantly answering questions and telling family that know me, that no the world is not coming to an end and that we will still run into the burning building when needed.

This is stress that we don't need when we are already exposed to some horrific scenes already.

I Joined the job to help my community and serve them the best I can.

My parents, siblings, friends, uncles, aunties and partner all know that I do this because I love to help my community.

We have received relentless abuse in the media over the past years, denigrating firefighters, labelling us all as 'thugs' on numerous front page articles, publishing misleading and untrue stories about changes.

All we as firefighters want to do is our job and protect life and property.

All our family want is for us to come home safe, happy and healthy.

All our community want is the best service regardless who is there to help.

Please support fire service reform and presumptive legislation for my families and my own safety.

Firefighter Nicholas Stanley

A Platoon

Reg # 11023

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Metropolitan Fire Brigade | [REDACTED]



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