

Kirra Vanzetti

From: Mark McGuinness [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 9:49 AM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform

Dear, Fire Services reform committee.

My name is Mark McGuinness and I am a professional firefighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. I take this opportunity to share my views on the proposed fire services reform with some of my experiences within the MFB and also as a member of the Victorian public.

I live in Mount Evelyn, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne, which is solely a CFA volunteer area. There is no doubt that the volunteer CFA firefighters in Mount Evelyn, the surrounding areas and Victoria do a fantastic job and will continue to do so into the future. Mount Evelyn, along with many other suburbs throughout Victoria is no longer a country area. They are mostly densely populated suburban housing, factories and infrastructure that needs to be protected by a full time staffed fire station. So that when I leave my partner at home, while I'm working, I can be assured that she is protected by the best service possible.

A career staffed truck has just 90 seconds to respond to a call of any description, whereas a volunteer truck has 4 minutes to get to the station and respond. If they do not meet this target the next brigade is paged and the process repeats. This is by no means the fault of volunteers but a fact that responses in Melbourne's outer suburbs and major regional cities needs to be improved and the only way to guarantee this response is through fire service reform.

Everyone on a career staffed truck is qualified in structural firefighting and breathing apparatus. Meaning they can enter a structure (house, factory etc) and perform a rescue or an internal attack on a fire. Volunteers have different levels of training, making it 'hit or miss' whether you get an appropriately trained firefighter to perform the necessary roles involved in some very dangerous situations.

This not only puts the community at risk but also other firefighters. We never know if the oncoming truck can come and help or leave you inside a burning building without any backup. It is imperative that these types of situations do not continue to happen. The safety of the community and firefighters is paramount.

Another point I would like to make is that the areas that are largely suburban but fall under volunteer only coverage, is that they do not have the Emergency Medical Response (EMR). This program was started within the MFB, and now has been rolled out within the CFA utilising the career staff on appliances to respond to priority zero calls. Which involve cardiac arrests, unconsciousness, difficulty breathing and so on.

The same rules apply in this scenario. A career staffed truck has only 90 seconds to respond. This gives the patient a higher chance of a better outcome because not only is an ambulance on the way, a fire truck with first responders on board is also coming. In a lot of cases firefighters have provided lifesaving CPR and defibrillation because of the quick dispatch and strategic placement of fire stations.

These changes are not only for the immediate benefit of the community, firefighters and Victoria as a whole, but an investment for the future safety for all.

Yours sincerely,

Mark McGuinness
[REDACTED]

Mobile [REDACTED]

