

Kirra Vanzetti

From: peter baxter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 5:24 PM
To: LCSC
Subject: Fire Services Reform Submission

The Secretary
Legislative Council Select Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Peter Baxter, of [REDACTED]

I write to you in reference to the Fire Services Bill and the need for reform in the Victorian Fire Service.

I am currently a Station Officer with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. My Firefighting career started as a Volunteer at the Frankston CFA Station in 1988, in 1990 I became a member of the MFB. I am now in my 27th year as a career Firefighter.

I will cover my observations as briefly as possible below.

Training:

I have been on scene at house fires on the MFB - CFA border. CFA Volunteers have arrived in scene and cannot back up the career staff in the house as they are not Breathing Apparatus trained. There are no more full time qualified staff en route. Emergency Medical Response. Persons rescued from house fires not receiving adequate care as Volunteers have not had sufficient training or do not want to deal with the casualty.

Accountability:

At large structure fires Volunteers can, and do, turn up in private vehicles. They can then get equipment and get to work. If they do not inform the Control Centre of their arrival there is no way of tracking them if an emergency situation develops.

This is in no way a slight on the Volunteers, it highlights the need for further investment in quality training, and recognised qualifications for all persons who want to be identified as a Volunteer *Firefighter*. Much of this training can be delivered by more career staff throughout Victorian supporting the Volunteers.

Money.

The talk of cost will always be raised. With every house or commercial building paying the fire levy the money for Fire Service should be there. It will cost to standardise the equipment and procedure, but when done Victoria will have a well equipped and truly flexible Fire Service that can operate anywhere. Please note, at this point the MFB-CFA operate different radios, trucks, equipment on those trucks, breathing apparatus, station administration systems, wordback systems and so on.

This causes issues when MFB appliances move to cover CFA stations in State Emergencies, and vice versa.

The Fire Services Reform can only benefit the people of Victoria. I have seen the issues first hand at time critical emergencies (a car accident in Frankston for example) when the CFA career

appliance arrives and is carrying rescue equipment but cannot start to perform a rescue task as it is in the Frankston SES area, we then have the Langwarrin CFA Volunteer road rescue team as well.

Standardisation and reform is needed.

Yours faithfully

Peter Baxter



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