

SUBMISSION OF BEN BARBETTI

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

I am Ben Barbetti, currently working as a Level 3 Firefighter employed by the CFA at Warrnambool Fire Station, where I have been employed for 3 years and have lived previously for 7 years.

I have qualifications in First Aid and EMR, Increments and tickets on tanker, pumper and aerial appliances, Endorsed as a steep, high and confined space rescue operator, AIIMS credited, Endorsed on other equipment including Gas Detectors, Ammonia detectors, radiation detectors, Breathing apparatus qualified, Thermal imaging camera, Gas suit and splash suit trained, Completed modules on Fire prevention, fire behaviour, mathematics for firefighting, alarms, sprinkler and booster systems. I am endorsed and qualified in many other areas and would be happy to send my qualifications sheet of all included.

Before I give my full submission I would like to state that without the current day to day basis of training, scenarios and on the job learning, anything less and I would easily be able to say that anyone could not simply say they are trained and also proficient in the areas to say they are confident in their skills as you may be able to do a course but it also takes constant continuation of skills to upkeep what we do.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

As a firefighter, it is extremely important to have the most available number of people for a job as possible, hence why at least 7 firefighters dispatched within 8 minutes of a call out is idea as if you were to compare that with a very common single story 3 bedroom house fire, the organisation would be as follows:

The first truck of 4 B.A trained operators would be used to have the Leader command and take control of the incident having extensive training and experience, the leading firefighter and 1 firefighter to commence fire attack or protect exposures and the other firefighter to get the water source for continuation of attacking the fire.

The next truck that arrives with another 3-4 personnel would then be used as follows,: one for assisting with pumping operations or boosting into the other truck for a further 2000-3000 litres of water, another 2 to either start internal attack from the other side of the house and help with possible person inside the occupancy or protecting further exposures, the other member would also assist with traffic management, first aid and public management. There are still countless cases that would need to include many more personnel which can then be called upon but this number is a good midway to be ready for a house fire or below.

This response means a faster, safer approach for the firefighters, community and improves protection ten fold.

Employing all career staff will not affect volunteer turnout or surge capacity at all! This is one of the worst spread rumours as the last thing this will do is precisely that, by doing this, a brigade in urban area, or out of town in a rural area, will still respond to any job they would be previously be called out to before the merge of all career firefighters in Victoria. I am yet to hear a legitimate reason as to how volunteers getting a job now, and getting a job after the merge will be changed. Will a merge change the outcome and volunteer response of a fire? No. Will a merge change the outcome and response of a gas leak? No. All that will be changed for them is extra firefighting members with all qualifications needed available for response to where they need, if they need it.

By bringing this merge together, it will also ensure that a timely and prompt response will happen, even without new age and increased risks in our community. By this, I mean people having to get to their responding station, through highly congested traffic, getting out of work which is becoming extremely hard in these new days and also having to wait for further crew to arrive at their station, so they can then drive their appliance out to the job involved. If there is already members on their way to the job involved, then by the following stations who will then be able to get to the job, knowing there are already a number of trained members at the scene, will put a huge relief on them to know somebody will already be assisting and helping in all ways possible. I must also note that in this current generation, it is extremely hard to commit 100% having both partners in a relationship working, children to be cared for, to ensure that training and turning out constantly in areas that may not be high member numbered, day after day expectations of up keeping training and attending meetings, further training, turning out, the younger generation also studying and working to pay expenses and tuition, while all the same enjoying their general lives. To do all of these things would be impossible and place huge emotional and mental stress on someone who is trying to help their community when the possibility of increased manning will cover this so much more.

The current drive of some parties labelling me as a 'thug' has placed a huge emotional toll on me and my family as I am someone who does this job as a career to serve and protect the community as my main role while also continually training for the job, educating the younger generations and community of fire awareness, being a role model for all but to then be accused of trying to tear the community apart and being a 'bully' or 'thug' hurts me deeply and these parties never seem to be able to come up with a legitimate answer than 'just a UFU thug answer' or 'just the vibe'.

Thank you for your time on reading this and I encourage you to just do what is right for this community and allow a merge to increase our ever growing population and join the rest of Australia with the same structure. By the end of this, all parties will have been given time of

consultation and may come up with another excuse, but how many excuses can be made before you just allow this to happen

Your sincerely

Ben Barbetti

