

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

I'm a Former Volunteer at an Integrated Station for over 11 years holding the rank of Lieutenant and now at a fully volunteer brigade for the last 1, I'm also a Career firefighter from Broadspectrum situated at Puckapunyal Military base for the last 4 years, with the rank of Qualified Leading Firefighter.

As a matter of safety, I would expect 2 Trucks turn up to incidents, with at least 7 structurally trained firefighters. The way Victoria's Urban sprawl has increased over the last 10 years and with the increased risk to the community, to have this response gives me piece of mind both for my family and also for the safety of the career firefighters within my area and beyond. The response is necessary because it can guarantee a 90 second response and give firefighters on the ground piece of mind that they know that they have liked trained backup on the way, now don't get me wrong volunteers do an amazing job for the state of Victoria, but with growing traffic problems just getting to the station and work and family commitments make even a 4-minute response hard! With this problem, you cannot always guarantee you will have a fully manned volunteer truck with volunteers with the level of training that will be needed for a going structure fire for instance.

Employing all career firefighters into one service, will only strengthen the fire service with a guaranteed 90 second response and standardisation of training to all firefighters. If done properly, the co habitation of integrated brigades will work well and provide "surge" capacity to the outer boundaries of Melbourne and even further. Volunteers will benefit with increased funding, better training opportunities, recruitment and retention of the volunteers who decide to help their communities.

This reform is predominately for the areas where integrated brigades exist and that no effect on the other smaller brigades in outer Victoria will happen, in fact as I said previously *"Volunteers will benefit with increased funding, better training opportunities, recruitment and retention of the volunteers who decide to help their communities."*

In Closing as a volunteer, I would implore you to vote in favour of this reform, as it will lighten the load on volunteers, their families and their working life. I was lucky and was able to spend a lot of my time dedicated to my Brigade, but with the brigade relying on myself and a few others that were shift workers for day time response, and with the ever-increasing growth of our area it was hard to juggle all areas of my life. I love being a volunteer in the State of Victoria and will continue to for a long time to come, but we need reform now!! Melbourne has grown and reform is needed.

Kind Regards

Simon Kerr