

Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Service Bill Select Committee
Parliament House, Sprint Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Mr A Roche



29/06/2017

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Andrew Roche I am a professional fire fighter, married with three adult children and I live in a rural Torquay, Victoria.

In recent years my area of Torquay has recorded unprecedented population growth and the construction of large new supermarkets creating high density shopping zones, Construction of a large commercial factory precinct the addition of several new retirement villages and more under construction. Our local emergency response fire and rescue organisation (all volunteers) are experiencing added responsibilities and pressures of maintaining coverage of a large expanding metropolis with a definite up turn of fires, incidents and emergencies.

I have been an urban and rural emergency services responder for almost 30 years. Serving both the CFA in a volunteer capacity from 1990 to 2003 and the MFB as a full time trained professional from 1988 to this current time. Some of my qualifications and continuous training are in the specialty areas of Road accident Rescue, Medical first response, (Rural)Wild fire, Emergency Maritime response and Urban search and rescue. Indeed In 1997 I was part of the very first Victorian MFB contingent to respond to the tragic Thredbo land slide disaster delivering highly specialised equipment and urban search and rescue experience, contributing to that rescue effort.

My experience in the area of emergency and disaster response is significant. I have worked shoulder to shoulder with both full time professional and well trained volunteer members in many emergency response situations.

Broadly addressing the stated four Terms of Reference:

My opinion regarding the proposed fire services upgrade or changes is that they can only have a positive impact on fire services throughout and serve to enhance all the operations of all services involved within this state. The current volunteer organisations will in all honestly only stand to gain from all of this, most significantly in the area of safety now and in the future. Indeed more often conducting operations working closer to professional crews and their added resources on a more regular basis ultimately having a positive impact on these people. No matter how you may view it, this can only be a positive outcome.

All politics aside and when fog has cleared, stepping back and looking at the big picture of what is proposed in this upgrade. Now and in the future, can only serve to be a most positive outcome for all involved most importantly for the people of Victoria.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this review.

Andrew Roche

