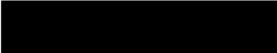




**Metropolitan Fire and
Emergency Services Board**
ABN 28 598 558 561

450 Burnley Street
Richmond
Victoria Australia 3121


www.mfb.vic.gov.au

Friday 30th June 2017

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Fire Service Reform

My name is George Arnold; I live at 3 Furneaux Grove Bulleen 3105. I have been employed by the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFESB) as a professional fire fighter for 37 years. I currently hold the rank of Commander.

My current position is Commander Technical Rescue, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Department within the Technical Operation directorate of the MFESB. I have a comprehensive understanding of the emergency response and technical rescue requirements of the state. I am currently charged with the maintenance of the state's capability and capacity in USAR.

I have been a resident of the north eastern suburbs of Melbourne for the past 50 plus years. Over this time I have witnessed minor change to fire service delivery standards, the facilitation of the career staff at Eltham has been one positive step forward. Even so I still have real concerns with the current fire service delivery model as the service delivery in the outer areas of my municipality do not meet the same delivery standards of the inner suburbs and inner Melbourne.

The areas that are of a concern are:

- Turn out and response time differential between professional and volunteer stations.
- Response time comparison for the arrival of second appliance on scene between professional and volunteer stations.
- Sustainability of safe crewing levels on scene with appropriate skill levels(qualifications)
- No Emergency medical response in areas not covered by career staff.

Current fire service boundaries were established in the 1890's this establishment was based on fire service needs governed by population, infrastructure and urban environments at that time there was clear delineation between the urban and country environments.

Today the urban spread has engulfed the then country fringe to create 35 urban areas that are still zoned as Country Victoria. The time has come for urgent fire service reforms to address the fire service boundary issue and the service provision in the outer suburbs of metropolitan Melbourne.



Career staff in these areas may be able to meet the initial 8 min response time. The issue is the probability that the initial response crew or second response appliance are already attending an incident. In this case increasing the probability of a delayed initial response or extended on scene time of the required second appliance.

An eight minute response time and seven trained fire-fighters and two fire appliances are the minimum requirement needed in response and mitigation of a fire emergency. This minimum standard has the potential to maximise life safety and minimise property damage.

Currently a rapid and efficient response under eight minutes is only guaranteed within the metropolitan fire district. The strategic location of MFB fire stations has enabled a minimum of two fire appliances on scene at an alarm of fire with seven professionally trained fire-fighters.

The standard of fire cover should be the same across all urban environments in Victoria. Residents of the outer Melbourne suburbs pay the same contributions to the fire service levy as inner Melbourne residence. Sections of the Victorian community should not be disadvantage due to their residential location.

Yours

Commander George Arnold
Technical Operations
Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
450 Burnley Street, Richmond, VIC, 3121.