

Fire Services Bill

Submission

Mr Shane Rhodes



Dear Fire Services Bill Select Committee

RE: Fire Services Reform Submission

I forward to you my submission relative to the Fire Services Bill as a 30+ year Firefighter for the MFB.

Over this period I have progressed myself through the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) Ranks and currently hold the position of Operations Commander Western District.

As the District Operational Commander for Western District I am responsible for the 12 MFB Western District stations, which consists up to 100 Officers and Firefighters who are rostered too these stations.

Throughout my career I have attained a number of qualifications being:

- Certificate IV in Fire Technology
- Graduate Certificate in Applied Management
- Advanced Diploma in Public Safety Management

As Commander I have also attended large scale and protracted emergencies both within the MFB boundaries and outside them as follows:

Black Saturday Fires 2009

Member of MFB Strike Team 2501 deployed to Kilmore East

MFB, Marysville strike team

Victorian Floods 2011

Shepparton ICC, Media Liaison Officer

Coal Mine Fire 2014

Hazelwood, MFB Operations Commander

Morwell ICC, Incident Controller for 2 x Night Shifts.

I have resided in volunteer CFA fire coverage for the past 31 years and over this period have identified that I and my family are not provided the same Fire protection and other emergency roles provided for those who reside in MFB and CFA integrated station response areas.

The current response model of 7.7 minutes is being met continually by both MFB and Integrated CFA stations which have professional permanent Firefighters.

This assists in being able to have the fire extinguished and in most cases confined to the room of origin for any Structure Fire.

Timely on scene responses for ALL emergencies is what the Victorian Communities expect and by instigating Fire Reform and change will ensure that their expectations are met. The current Victorian Fire Service model is extremely out dated and desperately needs 21st Century change to address the impact on fire service delivery across Victoria.

I would also like to highlight the importance of ensuring minimum 7 Firefighters on the fire ground. By achieving this reduces the potential for injuries to Firefighters and provides health and safety to them

In closing I hope that the Fire Services Bill Select Committee decision is for the immediate implementation of the restructuring of Victoria's fire services as contemplated by the Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Kind Regards

Shane Rhodes