

Submission to Fire Service Inquiry

My name is Bruce Stephen Quarrier and I have been a professional CFA firefighter and volunteer for 42 years. I reside at [REDACTED]. I have been competent in 201 firefighting related nationally accredited and CFA modules including being recognised and authorised by the Chief Officer as a CFA Fire Investigator in Structure, Vehicle and Wildfires. I am currently an Operations Officer with CFA and the Officer in Charge of the Bendigo fire station. I am a third generation volunteer with CFA and have been employed as a career firefighter since 1981.

I write to express my support for the proposed fire services reform.

- In the area of greater Bendigo, my crews are regularly responding to all types of incidents without the reassurance that they will have further backup on scene. Whilst the surrounding brigades generally do a fantastic job, there are frequent occasions that brigades are either failing to respond, or having delayed responses whilst they wait for crews to arrive at the station. Although on paper brigades are meeting the Service Delivery Standards, this is only because career firefighters from Bendigo are arriving on scene first which is not a true reflection of the response times of the volunteer brigades.
- You will hear it said by many people and parts of the fire service that volunteers and career staff receive the same training. This is simply not true. Before volunteers can respond to any calls they must have minimum bushfire firefighting skills. Particularly in an urbanised area, there is no guarantee that any volunteers will respond that have breathing apparatus qualifications or the skills to conduct an internal search or firefight. Please refer to Attachment 1 which demonstrates the vast difference between the minimum training of a career firefighter and that of a volunteer firefighter. For a career firefighter to achieve the rank of Station Officer, he must have passed in excess of 74 modules as well as two assessments and multiple exams to the satisfaction of the Chief Officer. A volunteer Captain, a similar rank to Station Officer, needs only to have obtained a minimum of 7 modules, been a Lieutenant for two years and become elected by a popular vote.
- I've seen first-hand what happens when career staff are reliant on volunteers to provide BA support to structure fires. Although it was some time ago, when Bendigo only had five career firefighters on duty per shift, one of which was a dedicated control room operator, I attended a house fire and had to conduct a search on my own without BA as the volunteers from both Bendigo and Golden Square had not responded. Neighbours were insistent that there was an old gentleman in the house and given that I only had the one appliance on scene with one other firefighter, I was faced with the choice of waiting for further crews to arrive or conduct a quick search. Thankfully the 85yo gentleman had gone to the shops without the neighbours knowing.
- I have worked on a fire station on my own for up to 72 hours straight whilst stationed at Morwell in 1985 and we have come a long way since those days. It wasn't safe then and not having a minimum of 7 suitably qualified firefighters responding in all metro and urban areas is not safe now. I realise that it is not viable for all volunteers to be trained to the same level as career staff, equally as you cannot guarantee that they will be available to respond. In those heavily populated built up areas places in Victoria where it has been determined that career staff are warranted, surely we should be ensuring that they are working in a safe environment and have a greater chance of returning safely home to their families.
- Victorian communities have been well served for a very long time by dedicated volunteers and they have every right to expect that to continue. Combining all of the state's career firefighters

into one service will leave the volunteers of the CFA to concentrate on what they do best, without the hindrance of political interference by those without the best interest of those communities.

- The areas currently being serviced by CFA integrated stations need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.
- The often mentioned “surge capacity” will not be affected in any way by this bill being passed. Under the current system, as a Rostered Duty Officer I am well aware of the difficulties obtaining sufficient relief crews once the fire has been contained and the news media are no longer interested. Employers of our volunteers are reluctant to release their employees to “black out” a fire that, as far as the public are concerned, is already out. The problems of surge capacity will most likely either remain as it is now, or may even increase once the CFA is a volunteer only service.
- All Victorians, including professional and volunteer firefighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

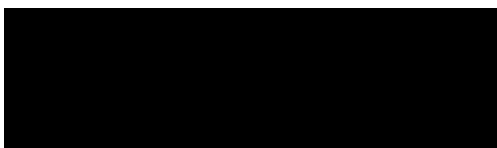
To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a firefighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of your constituents, and all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in an increase in the volume and complexity of emergency calls.

I also respectfully submit that you give consideration to my request to modernise the fire service along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before the commencement of the fire season. This is important to me and my colleagues.

I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to talk to you further about my personal experiences as a professional firefighter and why this reform is so important.

Kind regards,



Bruce Quarrier



2nd July 2017

Position	Career Staff	Volunteer
Recruit Firefighter Selection	Short listing and screening interviews Beep test Physical ability and aptitude tests Senior panel interviews Personality profile (CPI) Medical check National police check Employer referee checks Must hold a valid Victorian HR licence.	National police check Vote by the majority members of a brigade.
Completion of Recruit Firefighter Course	PUAFIR201A Prevent injuries PUAOHS002A Maintain safety at an incident scene PUATEA001A Work in a team PUAOPE002A Operate communication systems and equipment PUAFIR204A Respond to wildfire PUAFIR309A Operate pumps Op Tanker (G) Operate tanker (Generic) PUAVEH001 Drive vehicles under operational conditions END ADV PUMP Advanced pumping endorsement PUAEME001 Provide emergency care PUAEME002 Manage injuries at emergency PUAEME 003 Administer oxygen in emergency situation PUACOM001 Communicate in the workplace PUAFIR208 Community safety activities PUAFIR206 Installed fire safety systems PUAFIR202 Isolated/remote structure fires PUAFIR207 Operate breathing apparatus (open circuit) PUAFIR308 Employ personal protect ion at a hazardous materials incident PUAFIR306 Render Hazmat incidents safe PUAFIR203 Respond to urban fires PUAFIR204 Respond to wildfire PUASAR001 Participate in a rescue operation PUAEQU001 Prepare, maintain and test equipment PUACOM005 Promote a positive organisational image in the community PUACOM006 Plan and conduct public awareness HLTAID001 Provide CPR HLTAID002 Provide Basic life support HLTAID003 Provide first aid HLTAID005 Provide first aid in a remote situation HLTAID006 Provide advanced first aid HLTAID007 Provide advanced resuscitation CFA186 Thermal imaging camera operation OP TIC Struct Operate TI camera in a structural environment OP TIC Urban Operate TI camera in an urban environment CFA042 Traffic management CFA076 Hazmat awareness CFA146 Equal opportunity introduction CFA174 Community education firefighter CFA340 Fire safe kids presenter CFA374 Operate enhanced forcible entry techniques.	PUAFIR201A Prevent injuries PUAOHS002A Maintain safety at an incident scene PUATEA001A Work in a team PUAOPE002A Operate communication systems and equipment PUAFIR204A Respond to wildfire PUAFIR309A Operate pumps END Tanker (G) Operate pump on tanker

Position	Career Staff	Volunteer
Leading Firefighter/ Lieutenant	<p>All of the above plus:</p> <p>PUAOPE010 Operate an automated external defibrillator in an emergency</p> <p>PUAFIR403 Assess building plans</p> <p>PUAOPE004 Conduct briefings/debriefings</p> <p>CFA065 Crew leadership</p> <p>PUAOHS001 Follow defined OHS Policies</p> <p>CFA40401 Into to AIIMS</p> <p>BSBCMM401 Make a presentation</p> <p>PUAFIR307 Monitor hazardous atmospheres</p> <p>PUAOPE003 Navigate in a rural and urban environment</p> <p>ICAU1128 Operate a personal computer</p> <p>ICAU1129 Operate a word processor</p> <p>TAEDEL301 Provide work skill instruction</p> <p>TAEDEL401 Plan, organise and deliver group-based learning</p> <p>TAEDEL402 Plan, organise and facilitate learning in the workplace</p> <p>BSBMGT401 Show leadership in the workplace</p> <p>PUAOPE001 Supervise response</p> <p>PUAFIR314 Utilise fire safety systems</p> <p>PUATEA002 Work autonomously</p> <p>Minimum of 4 years full time employment</p> <p>3 week full time development course</p> <p>2 months station development and personal study</p> <p>1 week of assessments including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Hours policy and legislation exams (CFA Act, CFA Regs, EBA) 1.5 hour Rural command and control assessment 1.5 hour Wildfire exam 1 hour In-tray assessment 20 minute short duration drill presentation assessment Human Relations role play assessment Command and control practical assessments. 	<p>All of the above plus:</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to lead and manage diverse groups in a changing environment. (subjective)</p> <p>Demonstrated high level of interpersonal skills and effective presentation and oral communication skills. (subjective)</p> <p>Vote by the majority members of a brigade.</p>

Position	Career Staff	Volunteer
<p>Station Officer/ Captain</p>	<p>All of the above plus: CFA3.07 Dangerous Substances 2 CFA 3.10 Writing Workplace Documents CFA 3.12 Dealing With Conflict CFA 3.13 Negotiation Skills CFA 3.18 Wildfire Suppression 3 CFA 3.21 Introduction to Law CFA 3.23 Wildfire Behaviour 3 CFA 3.24 Meetings CFA 4.02 Pre Incident Planning 1 CFA 4.03 Operational Management CFA 4.04 Incident Control Systems CFA 4.07 Fire Prevention 2 CFA 4.10 Administration 2 CFA 4.11 Communication 1 CFA 4.15 Public relations A CFA 4.16 Leadership and Team Management</p> <p>Minimum of 12 months full time employment as a Leading Firefighter 3 week full time development course 2 months station development and personal study 1 week of assessments including; 4 Hours policy and legislation exams (CFA Act, CFA Regs, EBA) 1.5 hour Rural command and control assessment 1.5 hour Wildfire exam 1 hour Inray assessment 20 minute short duration drill presentation assessment Human Relations role play assessment 2 x Command and control practical assessments.</p> <p>Station Officers MUST be endorsed by the Chief Officer</p>	<p>All of the above plus: Demonstrated understanding and ability to implement management systems for business planning, finance, training and human resources (subjective) Minimum of two years as a Lieutenant Vote by the majority members of a brigade.</p>