

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017

Dear Parliamentary Fire Service Bill Select Committee:

Honourable Members

Chair - Gordon Rich Philips (Lib – South-Eastern Metropolitan)

- Deputy Chair – Daniel Mulino (ALP, Eastern Victoria)
- Colleen Hartland (Greens – Western Metropolitan)
- Daniel Young (Shooters, Fishers & Farmers – Northern Victoria)
- Cesar Melham (ALP – Western Metropolitan)
- Hriet Shing (ALP – Eastern Victoria)
- Luke O’Sullivan (Nat – Northern Victoria)
- Wendy Lovell (Lib – Northern Victoria)

My name is Peter Boicovitis and I work for the Country Fire Authority:

My rank is a Fire Service Communications Officer.

The role of the Fire Service Communications Control (FSCC), are the CFA’s representative based at the Mt Helen (aka VicFire Ballarat) centre and on certain days also operate from Tally Ho (ESTA’s other location).

The FSCC liaise directly with the ESTA staff providing 24hour advice regarding operational issues that fall outside or require interpretation from the SOP’s. The FSCC also provide an initial after hours contact service for all Regional and District Headquarters and the Public Affairs department along with the ability to make contact all duty officers across the state. We also work closely with CFA brigades be it Volunteer or Integrated Fire Stations on a daily basis, assisting with enquiries, CAD related matters and the first point of contact for CFA after hours and weekends.

The FSCC also liaise with other emergency services and Police on incidents as required.

I was awarded an Emergency National Medal for my role in the Black Saturday Fires, I was on duty in the IECC (State Control Centre) working night shift as the State Situation Unit Leader

I hold State Level IMT (Incident Management Level) qualifications in  
 State Resourcing Leader  
 Situation Leader  
 Intelligence Officer

I am also qualified as a  
 Strike Team Leader  
 Sector Commander  
 Instructor  
 Senior Operational Project Officer (*that I am currently performing*)

## This is why I support the Fire Service Reform:

I am a 27 year veteran with in the fire service starting off as a proud volunteer back in 1990 at Hoppers Crossing Fire Brigade where I rose through the ranks to be Captain of one of the busiest brigades in state of Victoria, responding to over 650 incidents per year (Back in 2001/2002) and have worked as a Casual Fire Instructor in the mid 90' and became a Fulltime Operational member with CFA in 2003.

Late 2001 we as a brigade at Hoppers Crossing were responding to numerous calls and the burden it started placing on our proud Volunteers was quite high and I as a Captain needed to act.

It is important to note that we at Hoppers Crossing Fire Brigade who did ask for assistance back in late 2001 with Career Staff, was not due to the lack of commitment, dedication or membership, but simply due to the location of the existing station (the main road through Hoppers Crossing), the heavy traffic, numerous new intersections and the **Growth** of the community that was starting to get become very close to hinder our volunteers in responding to calls in the appropriate times and the level of service our community requires and expects.

Over the years the City of Werribee (now City of Wyndham) was once the **"Country Suburb"** a population back in to 1987 of 55,000 and today we are close to 220,000.

In the City of Wyndham, we have 2 Integrated Fire Brigades and 3 Volunteer Fire Brigades

- Hoppers Crossing
- Point Cook

Volunteer

- Werribee
- Truganina
- Wyndham Vale

Like many other suburbs in the outer metropolitan ring of Melbourne and larger Regional Centres, they were all once small provincial communities, **BUT** today they are heavy populated areas, with more schools, shopping centres, Hospitals, nursing homes, the ever-increasing child care centres and the Industrial Estates are also growing to keep up with the demand in their local areas. All of these present a serious life hazard from fire.

*"our population is growing and will continue to grow"*

These communities are expecting a level of service and attendance in an appropriate time frames

- Career Staff **must** respond within 90 seconds from time of Pager notification
- Volunteer Brigades varies across the state and location
  - It depends on their Class of Hazard
  - Range is 4 min > 10min for turnout time **\*not on scene time\***

The new model of FRV and CFA, I see as a moral way of moving forward for the best needs of the community (paramount importance) of Victoria and the two Fire Services.

- Every day we are outgrowing our fire services due to the rapid transformation of Victoria's population and landscape
- The 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission and 7 other enquires have all stated "that we must modernise our states fire service"
- We are working off rules and boundaries from the 50's

- This will improve fire coverage through a deeper and wider pool of career firefighters within the one organisation
- Leadership better defined across FRV and CFA
  
- As I am still affiliated to the Volunteer Brigades in my area through friendship of many years, I truly see that this Fire Service Reform will only benefit the Volunteers in:
  - Direct Support
  - Better infrastructure
  - More direct funding
  - Improve training capacity
  - Expand brigade support
  -

This Parliamentary Committee needs to ensure that we get these changes right and work on the best transformation.

**To make this work we need to ensure the following:**

- Support all members crossing over to FRV and defining what is actually occurring
- Ensure on going funding for both FRV and CFA continue
- All or any future (Co-Located Bridges) the model needs to be right
- Volunteers still have an active purpose in their role/s
- Better leadership and management for both organisations

Kind regards



Peter Boicovitis

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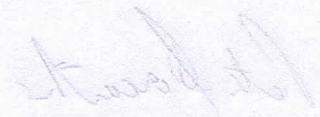
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