

## **Fire Service Bill Select Committee 2017**

Committee Members,

I am providing a submission to the Fire Service Bill Committee as I believe that this is a great opportunity for Victoria to have a more equitable fire coverage and also provide fire-fighters with a certainty regarding the presumptive legislation for designated cancers.

My name is Alan Quinton – Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Fire Safety Director with the MFB – I have over 39 years' experience with the MFB and have worked in all departments across the organisation in that time.

- I have been an incident controller at a number of major fires across Melbourne and have also been a deputy Incident Controller at the Hazelwood fire.
- Have a Masters of Public Policy & Management, Associate Diploma in Applied Science (Fire Technology).
- Have been awarded the Emergency Management Medal, the National Medal, and two clasps.
- Have received awards for work done in Multicultural Communities.
- Am a fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.
- In my current role, I am responsible for MFB obligations regarding Dangerous Good & Building Regulations, Fire Investigation & Analysis, and Alarm Assessment (charging for false alarms).

I am disappointed that the MFB will no longer continue to exist and am very proud of the service MFB has provided to Melbourne and to Victorians and Australians in general for over 126 years, however it is time to move beyond this parochial attitude and modernise the fire service provided to the community of Victoria. The communities in highly urbanised areas have expectations upon fire services to provide a responsive service in a timely manner.

The nature of an uncontrolled fire is that it grows exponentially and will quickly engulf a home. In the past, it was deemed that a fire would totally involve a room in about 7 minutes, however, today this timeframe is greatly reduced because of the materials and furnishings utilised in a home.

The proposed Fire Rescue Victoria will provide for career fire-fighters who will respond in a timely manner to urban environments. It also provides for the growth of

urban areas with mechanisms to incorporate career fire-fighters into these growth communities when the time arises that they meet a designated criteria.

I believe the volunteers, who provide a great service to Victoria, will also benefit from this proposal as their representatives have been arguing over the past few years they will not be dictated to by a union or career fire-fighters. They will have total autonomy to develop and run their organisation as they desire. In recent times, there has been an unhealthy relationship between career and volunteers in recent years through industrial disputation. This will no longer be an issue under FRV.

As the Director of Fire Safety I believe there will be an opportunity under the proposed FRV to provide a more consistent approach to the protection of urban communities through the Dangerous Goods & Building Regulations. The issues identified through the Lacrosse fire in Melbourne and the Grenfell fire in London highlight the need for a common and consistent input from the fire service to assist regulators, practitioners and the community better understand the risks in high density urban living.

I believe the new FRV will provide the community in urban areas with consistent input into the protections they need in high risk areas – such as hospitals, nursing homes, high rise housing and industrial areas especially in relation to storage and handling of dangerous goods.

I encourage you to seriously consider the benefits this legislation will provide for Victorians, I believe that it will significantly enhance the growing urban communities as well as supporting and enhancing the opportunities for volunteers. This bill also provides for the presumptive legislation in relation to certain cancers and from a personal level where I have lost a brother and a recruit course college a number of years ago this would have assisted their families moving forward.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Alan Quinton

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Director Fire Safety

Telephone: 