

FIRE SERVICES BILL SELECT COMMITTEE 2017

Date: 05/07/17

Submitter: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY REQUESTED FOR THIS SUBMISSION

Fire fighting Qualifications: Leading Fire fighter, Heavy Rescue, Teleboom (Aerial Appliance), Water Tanker.

I am a Leading Fire fighter based in Northern District and on occasion, I am required to perform the role of Officer in Charge (OIC) at a station for a shift. This role is part of my duty and I have undertaken specific training to perform this role.

The Greater Alarm Response Matrix (GARS) gives MFB OIC's / fire fighters a guaranteed response of oncoming appliances and qualified crews to enable safety on the fire ground for all staff and the community we serve. The same cannot be said for all volunteer responses and this has the potential to put crews and the community at risk.

I recognise the valuable work that volunteer brigades perform for their fellow Victorians but the community as a whole expect and deserve the same level of protection, regardless of post code or suburb.

I have witnessed volunteer crews fail to respond, or arrive on scene only to spectate as they lack crew qualified in breathing apparatus or structural fire fighting and cannot offer back up to MFB crews wearing B.A. or undertaking internal fire fighting.

These incidents are occurring more frequently. The pressure placed on MFB OIC's/crews first on scene to formulate plans and tactics without reliable resources turning out to the job is an unnecessary problem in an already challenging and dynamic situation. Population growth around Melbourne's urban fringe and the out-dated Metropolitan Fire District boundary's make change inevitable.

The ongoing politicisation of these issues for cheap point scoring and votes needs to end. The Victorian public deserve better. The media attacks on Fire fighters have had negative impacts on morale, fire fighters health, welfare and family lives. There is a genuine desire to see things resolved and allow career staff to get back to being fire fighters and doing what they do best, serving their community.

I am asking that you support this much needed Fire Service Reform.