

Fire services committee,

My name is Tristan Perry. I'm a Leading Fire fighter on A shift in the MFB, and I joined the service in early 2009. I have spent the majority of my time in the MFB stationed on the border of the Metropolitan Fire District (MFD) and CFA areas. I am currently stationed at fire station 27 (Nunawading), and regularly attend calls with the CFA (both professional and volunteer). Having had many different experiences during my time as a fire fighter, I believe the fire services reform is the best thing for the Victorian Public and its Fire fighters.

All emergency services are in place to provide a service to the community. This service should be delivered in the most timely and efficient way possible. When the original MFB/CFA boundaries were drawn up many decades ago, it represented the population and risks of the time. This system is now out-dated with massive population growth and sprawl plus elevated risks due to today's construction methods, there are greater dangers present to the community and its emergency services. Emergency services should grow in accordance with these risk factors and mould to the community around it.

Being stationed in the outer east means I see a range of issues with the current CFA/MFB boundaries. We see firsthand the strain that increased call volumes and a greater range of call types puts on its emergency services. The most stress is put on the fringe volunteer stations to keep up with the higher call volumes and greater range of skills needed to attend these calls. When we turn out in the MFD we have the confidence that a second appliance, the closest available and with a fully trained crew, is on its way to the call. Turning out in a CFA area does not afford this luxury. The assignment rules in CFA areas sometimes mean that appliances will drive past available stations on their way to a call. We have also found on several occasions that the volunteer crew attending does not have qualifications needed to adequately respond to the emergency. For example, we have regularly turned out with a crew that is not BA qualified.

Response times are also a vital part of attending an emergency. This becomes more and more imperative as an area grows and the risks in that area grow with it. The MFB always strives to be on scene in 7.7 minutes, and this is part of the reason the MFB maintains such a fantastic public safety record. The only reason why the MFB is able to meet these standards is by having a 24h 7 days a week crewed station within a reasonable distance of the occurring emergency.

The very nature of having volunteer stations means that reasonable response times are regularly not met. CFA volunteers give up a large amount of time to respond to emergencies, but they cannot be expected to be able to attend every call. This means that on occasions CFA appliances will not respond when called to an emergency, not only putting the public at greater risk, but putting other fire fighters at risk too.

We have turned out into CFA area on numerous occasions and arrived on scene to a

call (even right out the front of a volunteer station) before a CFA appliance has even turned out. This means that we are relying on stations, sometimes quite a distance away to back us up. This results in an increased risk to the first fire fighters on scene.

I'm proud of the fantastic, rich history of the MFB and CFA. Both organisations have done a fantastic job protecting their communities for a long period of time. However, we should not let this history and pride get in the way of positive and sensible change. Legislation allowing our fire services to work as one coherent professional organisation (FRV) and a strong dedicated group of volunteers (CFA) is a great opportunity. This will allow each organisation to make decisions in the best interests of its members and the community they serve. This legislation will also allow for fire coverage to change over time, as the community and risks grow around it.

I have family and friends in both the CFA (volunteer) and MFB. After talking at length with all of them, the general consciences is that this change, although large, is going to make our roles a lot easier to perform, in turn making it simpler to safely protect the community.