

5 Jul. 17

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Troy Bormann and I am a career firefighter with the CFA based at Traralgon Fire Station. I have been employed by CFA for almost 1 year. Previously to my full time position with CFA, I was a volunteer for 12 years at Traralgon West fire brigade. I have also been a volunteer and helper with local sporting clubs for the past 10 years.

I am writing to you in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons,

- Presumptive rights compensation for all firefighters is long overdue. It has been proven that the exposures that a firefighter has as part of the job increases the risk of many types of cancer. I accept that my job as a firefighter is more dangerous and has higher risks than most, but I still deserve to have safe working conditions and be compensated accordingly should my job make me unwell.
- The other main concern for me as a firefighter is to ensure that enough personnel are on the fireground to manage and complete all tasks required. The new reform ensures this, with a minimum of 2 trucks and a minimum of 7 career firefighters dispatched to any incident within a Fire Rescue Victoria area.
- Most fires are time critical and therefore the longer that they are left unattended, the greater the risk to lives and property. Fire doesn't wait, so if a brigade fails to respond another brigade is paged and further time delays occur. This is unacceptable.
- Having the above mentioned response ensures that the community are receiving the highest level of protection available. Highly trained firefighters arriving on scene in a timely manner with the right equipment and the right qualifications to complete the tasks.
- The metropolitan and country boundaries have not changed since they were first introduced in 1958 and are in desperate need of a review. We can no longer call many areas country Victoria due to large population growth. The reform will modernise Victoria's fire service to meet the

current needs of the ever expanding communities around the state, especially around the metropolitan and outer suburbs of Melbourne.

- CFA currently has 35 staffed stations in areas that are identified as highly urbanised and with other large assets and risks that require specialised equipment should a fire or incident occur. By merging the CFA career staff and MFB together as one organisation means that we can all work as one professional fire service. This then allows the CFA to remain as volunteer organisation. It will put an end to all of the bad publicity, rumours and other negative comments that have been made over recent times.
- The only volunteers that I see will be affected in any way is the ones that are currently at the 35 intergrated stations. These volunteers will have options on how they would like to work with the changes. The additional funding by the government will ensure that any changes required are addressed accordingly.
- All other volunteer stations will not be affected in any way, and will continue to respond and provide the valuable service to the community that they already do. In fact most brigades will be better off with further funding from the government for training and other requirements.

Whilst I understand that change is difficult to accept for many, it has been proven time and time again that the fire service in Victoria needs to be updated to service the ever growing population.

It is time that emotions and pride are put aside and the actual facts are addressed. Poor turnout numbers, waiting for drivers, failure to respond, unqualified operators, inadequate training, are just a few issues that I have seen on a regular basis during my first year.

Like I said before, I was a volunteer for 12 years also and I can see both sides of this debate. Myself and my colleagues are not here to criticize or disrespect volunteers in any way, they do an amazing job when they turnout. The problem is that times have changed and people are very busy these days with work and family commitments and don't have as much time to give. Community expectations have grown and people just want to see a fire truck arrive when required.

I have been married for 16 years and have a 15 year old son. I have always been someone that puts out my hand to help others and have been a strong supporter of community events. I changed my lifestyle and made many sacrifices during the 5 years (3 attempts) to become a career firefighter but wouldn't change it for anything.

To be called a union thug, scum, and many others things is very demoralising. It has not only affected me at my workplace, but has put extra strain on my family life also. It amazes me that the people we have helped train and support can turn so nasty. The division that this has created between staff and volunteers has now reached a level that will be very difficult to repair. The morale around stations is very low and should have never come to this. We do not let these negative comments affect the professional service that we provide to the community, but can only hope that you can see that the current Fire service requires urgent attention and put a stop to all of the negativity.

I am confident that once all of the facts have been looked at, you will support the reform in its entirety.

Regards,

Troy Bormann

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