

Fire Services Reform Bill Submission  
Leading Firefighter Adrian McCarthy  
Frankston Fire Station (CFA)

I have been a Career Firefighter for 7 years and also a Volunteer member for 10 years.

I am writing to you to express my support for the proposed fire service reform.

In my area of Frankston I have seen firsthand what happens as a result of areas within metropolitan Melbourne and larger regional centres not having the adequate fire service coverage it requires due to the outdated fire services structure within Victoria. For example in Frankston earlier this year I attended a building fire at the Commonwealth Offices Building on Davey Street. I was the driver of the Frankston Teleboom (fire truck) as part of a crew of two. We were the first truck on scene and were the only crew on scene for some time. During this time we had to take control of the fire incident, undertake all fire ground operations including aerial operations with the Teleboom (ladder truck) and deal with the employees from the involved building evacuating onto the street. Incidences such as the above where a crew of two on a truck are the first arriving truck to a complex incident is unacceptable and dangerous to the community, firefighters and other emergency service personal. During my time as a CFA Firefighter in Frankston instances such as the said have not been a one off occurrence.

I believe that the proposed restructure will help to avoid such incidences as above by providing better resourcing to a new professional service and more funding to a fully volunteer CFA service. There will be a newly formed culture within the new professional fire service which will bread a strong working relationship between volunteers and professionals and lead to a better protected Victoria.

Victoria's Fire service boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Geelong, Springvale and Boronia are just some of the 35 country areas. These areas need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised areas.

As part of the fire service reform a rapid 8 minute response with 7 professional firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

Reform of the fire services will ensure the safety of communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the ever increasing an unrealistic demand being placed on our volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

Thank You and Regards,

Leading Firefighter Adrian McCarthy  
Frankston Fire Station

