

Good morning,

*I am a Station Officer with the MFB and currently I am working within the Emergency Management Department. I have been an operational firefighter and officer with the MFB for the past 16 years. I have been actively employed as both a Heavy Road Rescue operator and Urban Search and Rescue technical for the much of my time within the MFB. I have completed numerous road and industrial rescues, many involving multiple fatalities. I have responded to numerous medical responses and structure fires, again these incidents have unfortunately involved many fatalities. I was also deployed with the Victorian Task Force in response to the Christchurch earthquakes in New Zealand. I am very disappointed with regards to the ongoing industrial disputation and politicisation of fire services reform. I believe that I have served my community well in some very difficult incidents. I ask that the elected leaders of the community that I continue to serve take positive actions to end this industrial disputation.*

*I strongly support the fire services reform being considered by this committee. These reforms are well overdue and will greatly enhance the provision of fire services within Victoria. I also believe that the establishment of a Victorian Fire Services Commissioner would significantly improve the management of major fires within Victoria. The current Emergency Management Commissioner's scope and span of responsibilities is too wide. A Victorian Fire Services Commissioner would provide appropriate focus and management to major fire and rescue events within Victoria and the State's national responsibilities. Victoria's professional fire and rescue capabilities are among world's best practise, however without a dedicated Fire Services Commissioner to provide focussed leadership and strategic guidance these capabilities will not keep pace with the community's needs.*

*I work in a residential area that requires a modern urban fire service. The population growth and increased urbanisation within Melbourne has been enormous during my period of employment within the MFB. The number of high density apartments (and the number of occupants within each apartment) has grown each year. The number of firefighters and appliances have not changed since my employment within the MFB. There has been no reform completed to address the needs of this community change.*

*I live within the mutual aid area of the current MFD. I have lived in this CFA area for the last 17 years and relied on CFA volunteers for adequate emergency response during this time. My home location is considered by all my neighbours to be a suburb of Melbourne. My neighbours, and indeed the majority of the local community, are surprised to learn that any calls for the fire brigade is reliant in part on the availability of volunteers. Many persons within my local community have commented that they expect a fire response that is equal to other urban suburbs of Melbourne. My family needed to call 000 for an ambulance twice during early 2000s. Because I lived 500 metres outside of the MFB area my family did not receive assistance from the MFB under the EMR response capabilities. Again, my family and neighbours were shocked to learn that the levels of fire services were dictated by a boundary established on Melbourne's urban size in the 1950s.*

*Again, I strongly support the fire services reform being considered by this committee.*

Regards

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