

Fire Service Review submission



5/7/2017

Proposed Fire Service Reform

To whom it may concern,

Before you begin reading my submission I respectfully ask that my name and identity be kept confidential.

I am writing to you today to throw my support behind the proposed Fire service reform. But before I explain my reasons why I think that these reforms are necessary and long overdue in the state of Victoria let me tell you a bit about myself.

I began my career in the CFA as a volunteer stationed at Rosebud, on the Mornington peninsula. In the 18 months I spent as a volunteer firefighter I completed my "minimum skills" training as well as my Self-contained breathing apparatus training (SCBA). While there I attended numerous fires and incidents working alongside the Professional firefighters stationed there. After months of hard work and persistence I was accepted into the CFA as a Professional Firefighter on the 19th of August 2013. I then spent the 16 weeks at Fiskville completing my recruit course. Since then I have worked at several stations around the state including Traralgon, Craigieburn, Springvale and now holding a position at Dandenong Fire Station. During my time as a Professional Firefighter within the CFA I hold the following qualifications/competencies:

- Qualified Firefighter (completed a recruit course and 3 years of on the job training).
- Heavy Pumper endorsement.
- Aerial Pumper endorsement.
- Breathing Apparatus/PE endorsement.
- 3.4c Tanker endorsement.
- 3.4d Tanker endorsement.
- EMR Operator.
- Thermal Imaging Camera operator.
- Monitor hazardous atmosphere endorsement.

Since I have come from both sides of the organization I have understanding of what is expected from a Volunteer Firefighter and what is expected from a Professional Firefighter, and I can tell you the training and expectations are not the same. For example my minimum skills training as a volunteer consisted of 2x2 day courses which culminated in a written exam and a small practical assessment (eg bowling hose, shipping a standpipe). Whereas my "minimum skills" for a Professional firefighter consisted of a 16 week (Monday to Friday) live in recruit course where I was assessed constantly, then 10 weeks on station training and only once the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the brigade deemed me to be of a suitable standard

Fire Service Review submission



I would be signed off. The argument that the training is the same for both Professional and Volunteer is just nonsense. This unrealistic comparison of Volunteer Vs. Professional only continues throughout the CFA. I have attached a document that is widely used within the CFA career ranks as it lists the Modules that an individual needs to complete, in conjunction with an assessment to progress to the next rank. For example a Leading firefighter needs to complete all of the modules (columns 1 to 5) and then pass an assessment. The “equivalent” rank of a Volunteer Firefighter is a Lieutenant and the only requirement they need is to be voted in by their peers and complete wildfire firefighting qualifications (Q0002A). All you need is one qualification, no experience or any minimum skills levels. Clearly, the standards of training between the two are nowhere near the same.

Over my years within the CFA I have witnessed countless times where for whatever reason the communities we serve have been let down by the unrealistic demands placed on Volunteers. We no longer live in a society where our employers will release volunteers from their work commitments when the pager sounds, we no longer have people working close to the brigades where they volunteer from, the majority of members commute to work. These factors themselves reduce the standards of service to our communities. Something needs to change and I know that the proposed changes will be a good thing for all Victorians. One such example of this is when I was working at Springvale, on the 18/11/2016 a man walked into the CBA Bank and set himself alight with approximately 50 people inside. Immediately Springvale, Dandenong Pumper 2 and Noble Park (Noble Park, a wholly volunteer brigade), were automatically responded. We were on scene within 90 seconds, Dandenong Pumper 2 was on scene within 5 minutes. Noble Park failed to respond within their allotted 8 minutes of response time. This required a further appliance to be requested increasing the demand for the already stretched crews. The initial BA team on scene rescue 26 people that were still inside the bank. This was done in zero visibility in a high stress environment. The scene outside was frantic with several people with severe burns with one Firefighter administering First aid **by himself** until the next appliance arrived to assist. As the incident progressed Noble Park eventually turned up **30 minutes** later with no structural firefighting qualifications, i.e. **no SCBA qualifications, no search and rescue competencies and wearing incorrect PPC** and with a member who could only hang around for 10 minutes. Does this sound like a system that is providing the best service to the community?

I also feel that it is important to enlighten you on what Firefighting looks like in the 21st century as a few things have changed since the 1950's. Firstly I would like to state that fuel loading within our homes has changed dramatically, the amount of content hasn't increased but what products are used to make them have changed considerably. Nowadays our homes are filled with synthetic products not natural products that used to fill our homes. These synthetic products burn a lot faster than they used to. A CSIRO study in conjunction with NSW Fire & Rescue (I have placed a link below) found that a room will 'flashover' (everything in the room ignites) within **2-3 minutes of ignition**. In the 1950's the time for a fire to reach 'flashover' was **17-20 minutes after ignition**. In reality what that means is that by the time a Volunteer Brigade gets and arrives to the station a fire has already developed fully and 'flashed', by the time they arrive on scene (approximately 10 minutes from ignition, if at all) the house is well and truly engulfed

Fire Service Review submission



What a Professional Firefighter needs to complete as a minimum to progress to each rank (excluding assessments):

Operational Staff Skills Profile – by Rank						
Recruit / Firefighter 1	Firefighter Level 2	Firefighter Level 3	Qualified Firefighter	Leading Firefighter	Fire Officer 1	Fire Officer 2
Recruit / Firefighter 1 – core 1.01 Health & Fitness 1.02 Preparation & Maintenance of Equipment, Appliances & Facilities 1.05 Occupational Hazards 1.07 Personal Protection 1 1.08 Occupational Stress 1.16 Casualty Assistance 1.22 Fire Agency Awareness 1 1.23 Work Team Communication 1.24 Writing Skills for Work Cert II in FF Ops – electives 1.04 Driving Vehicles 1 1.05 Alerts & Spotlights 1.09 Map Reading 1 1.10 Building Structures 1 1.11 Fire Suppression 1 1.12 Water Behaviour 1 1.13 Fire Suppression 1 1.13A Water Suppression 1 1.14 Search & Rescue 1.15 Breathing Apparatus (Open Circuit) 1.17 Emergency Care (Certificate) 1.19 Communication Systems Cert III in FF Ops – core 2.02 Inspect & Test Equipment 2.03A Emergency Life Support 2.07 Occupational Hygiene 2.24 Fire Agency Awareness 2 Cert III in FF Ops – electives 2.03A Drive Vehicles on Road (Legislation) 2.05B Operate Life Support Equipment 2.06 Personal Protection 2 2.19A Salvage & Overhaul 2.19B Ventilation 2.16 Dangerous Substances 1 2.26 Fire Science – Intro B	Firefighter Level 2 – electives 1.20 Complete Skills 1.21 Workplace Communication Cert III in FF Ops – core 2.04 Operate Pumps 2.25 Present Information (Public Education) Cert III in FF Ops – electives 2.08 Operate Vehicles (A) 2.20 Specialist Appliances (I)	Firefighter Level 3 – electives 2.08 Detection & Suppression Systems 2.09 Building Evacuation Systems 2.12 Fire Behaviour (CFA) 2.21 Fire Powertrain 1 2.26 Wildlife Behaviour 2 2.29 Wildfire Suppression 2 2.33 Map Reading 2 (CFA)	Qualified Firefighter – electives 2.10 Meteorological Vetting & Air Handling 2.11 Building Structures 2 (CFA) 2.13 Fire Suppression 2 2.22 Administration 1 2.30 Innovation Methods for the Fire Industry	Leading Firefighter – core 3.01 Occupational Health & Safety 3.09 Workforce Trainer Category A 3.11 Public Speaking 3.15 Supervising Teams Cert IV in FF Ops – electives 3.04 Emergency Operations 3.05 Building Fire Safety 1 3.14 Leadership	Fire Officer 1 – core 3.10 Working Methodology 3.12 Dealing with Conflict 3.13 Negotiation Skills Cert IV in FF Ops – electives 3.07 Dangerous Substances 3.18 Wildlife Suppression 2 3.21 Introduction to Law 3.23 Wildlife Behaviour 3 3.24 Meetings Diploma in FF Mgmt – core 4.02 Pre-Incident Planning 1 4.03 Operational Management 4.04 Incident Control System – Agency Specific 4.07 Fire Prevention 2 4.11 Communication 1 4.15 Leadership & Team Management Diploma in FF Mgmt – electives 4.10 Administration 2 4.15 Public Relations A	Fire Officer 2 – core 4.12 Interviews Diploma in FF Mgmt – electives 4.08 Building Fire Safety 2 4.17 Introduction to Budgeting 4.18 Human Resources Management 1 4.20 Fire Law Adv. Dip in FF Mgmt – core 5.04 Incident Management Skills 5.09 Team Performance Adv. Dip in FF Mgmt – electives 5.07 Communication 2
FF1 ASSESSMENT		LFF ASSESSMENT		FO1 ASSESSMENT		OC ASSESSMENT

CFA Career Planning Guide
Operational Staff Training Framework – by Rank

Fire Service Review submission



Hyperlink to “flash over” documentary:

<https://youtu.be/u1WRTQaOnFs>

Chart from the Australian bureau of statistics website:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1301.0~2012~Main%20Features~Population%20size%20and%20growth~47>

7.3 POPULATION, By state and territory(a)(b)									
30 June	NSW '000	Vic. '000	Qld '000	SA '000	WA '000	Tas. '000	NT '000	ACT '000	Aust.(c) '000
1960	3 832	2 857	1 496	945	722	344	26	52	10 275
1970	4 522	3 445	1 793	1 158	991	388	79	131	12 507
1980	5 172	3 914	2 266	1 308	1 269	424	118	224	14 695
1990	5 834	4 379	2 899	1 432	1 613	462	164	282	17 065
2000	6 486	4 741	3 562	1 505	1 874	471	196	315	19 153
2005	6 756	5 049	3 995	1 553	2 017	486	206	330	20 395
2006	6 816	5 127	4 091	1 568	2 059	490	211	334	20 690
2007	6 905	5 221	4 196	1 586	2 113	493	215	341	21 072
2008	7 015	5 327	4 309	1 604	2 177	498	221	346	21 499
2009	7 127	5 447	4 425	1 625	2 244	503	226	352	21 952
2010	7 222	5 540	4 506	1 644	2 291	507	229	359	22 300

(a) Includes estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population from 1961 onwards.
 (b) Prior to 1971, estimates of the population were based on the number of people actually present in Australia. From 1971 onwards, the concept of estimated resident population (ERP) was introduced. See explanatory notes of [Australian Demographic Statistics](#) (3101.0) for more information.
 (c) Includes Other territories (Jervis Bay territory, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands) from 1998 onwards.
 Source: [Australian Historical Population Statistics](#) (3105.0.65.001); [Australian Demographic Statistics](#) (3101.0).

