



[REDACTED]
07/07/2017 12:50 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission For The Fire Services
Reform Select Committee -
CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

Please find attached my submission to the Fire Services Reform Select Committee.

I request that my name and identity be kept confidential please.

Regards.

	Fire Fighter South Warrandyte Fire Station – 29 Falconer Rd Park Orchards Vic 3114
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Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am currently in my first year as a career firefighter with the CFA, based at South Warrandyte station. I live in [REDACTED], and was previously a volunteer firefighter with Mernda fire brigade for four years.

I am writing this submission to share my experiences as both as a career and volunteer firefighter, and explain why I support the proposed reform of the fire services.

Volunteering on Melbourne's urban fringe, I have seen the limitation of the current fire services model. Having grown up in Melbourne's northern suburbs, I can remember when anything beyond Mill Park was just small townships with paddocks in between. Now I live in one of the fastest growing suburbs of Melbourne, with a booming population and infrastructure struggling to keep up with growth.

Despite the massive changes to my suburb, it is still classified as a 'country' area and protection for my community is based on an outdated fire services model. As proud as I am as my work as volunteer, and the great work that volunteer brigades do, I also know the limitations of this model on the urban fringe.

A large number of volunteers live locally, but have to travel into the city or across town for work, making it impossible for them to respond during business hours. This, coupled with the increased traffic on previously 'rural' roads, means volunteer brigades quite often fail to respond.

I've seen firsthand what happens when volunteer brigades not only fail to respond, but oftentimes respond and do not have the appropriate skills mix required to undertake safe operations, or alternatively bring the wrong truck because they do not have a driver. This is not a reflection on the volunteers, but the reality of living on the urban fringe. It is unfair to have to constantly rely on volunteers to maintain community protection in an increasingly urbanised area.

I applied to become a career firefighter after my experience as a volunteer firefighter. I was passionate about my work with the community, was drawn to work in emergency services and wanted to take my professionalism to the next level. I graduated my recruit course in December 2016 and immediately began work on station.

This turned out to be one to the most turbulent times in CFA history. Since beginning my new career I have seen my colleagues and profession constantly attacked by politicians; ably supported by the media and volunteers that have been unfortunately hoodwinked into supporting a political agenda.

These constant attacks have had an increasingly negative effect on my moral and that of my colleagues. Where the profession of firefighter used to be something to be proud of, I am now reluctant to tell people what I do for a living for fear of starting a political argument. The character assassination and constant slandering of career firefighters bears no resemblance to the great people I work with on a daily basis.

The constant cycle of scaremongering, political interference, fear, uncertainty and doubt need to end. I believe that the proposed reforms are the only way forward to end the mess of the past few

years. The proposed reforms will result in better outcomes for the community as well as stability to the members of the Victorian fire services; both career and volunteer.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]