



Adrian Bryan [REDACTED]
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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
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Subject Submission by Adrian Bryan

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to you today in regards to the proposed changes to the fire service proposed by the state government. I'm a senior station officer with the CFA station at Ocean Grove. We have approximately 25 staff that work here and about 35 volunteers of which approximately 15 are highly active operational members.

I have been a professional firefighter since 2002 and a volunteer prior to that since 1996. I also completed 4 years with Victoria Police and believe I have a little bit of insight into the emergency services.

Thanks for reading this I and I hope I can assist you in making a decision to vote in favour of changes to the legislation that we currently work under.

In my response area of the Bellarine Peninsula we at Ocean Grove respond to approximately 450 calls a year which is expected to increase with the introduction of EMR (emergency Medical Response) soon. We respond to our own primary turnout area and support into 8 sole volunteer brigade areas. We have been doing this since July of 2013. I came to Ocean Grove in April of 2013 in a role as the integration officer to establish the station for career staff. For many many years there had been rumour and innuendo about when staff would work out of ocean grove and what effect it would have on the peninsula.

When I first arrived I was faced with a significant amount of animosity towards staff as the perception from nearly all the volunteers on the peninsula was one of a takeover and their role ceasing to exist. Some of the things I heard were that we don't want staff coming to our area, and we have been fine for decades without your interference.

My initial role was to speak to the 9 brigades and dispel some of the myths about a takeover and try to explain how the situation occurred in other parts of the state. I had previously work at Geelong City for 10 years and had been involved with volunteer brigades for a long time. To cut the story short three years down the track I don't believe that you would find many if any volunteers on the peninsula who don't think having career staff respond to their brigade area is a bad thing. Over time through our professional approach to community safety, fire fighting and volunteer interaction the local volunteers came to realise that we would arrive and offer to assist them. We would perform mentoring roles and give guidance and when no longer required by the volunteer incident controller we would return home. No different to how things happened prior to our arrival only now the volunteers had extra assistance to perform their vital role with a trained professional present at the job.

The role of volunteers on the Bellarine peninsula is of vital importance. It is our role as

professional career fire-fighters to assist where possible in making our volunteers better incident controllers, better man managers and to provide a high level of response capability.

Where I think all this is important is due to the fact that the proposed changes to the fire service will have no bearing on how the volunteers of the Bellarine Peninsula do their business. Their vital role will continue next week, next year and well into the future. The volunteers will have trained professional career fire-fighters present at their jobs to offer guidance and assistance no matter what the employer badge on our shoulders says. It creates a safer larger response capacity to calls on the Bellarine Peninsula.

It's taken a long time to build such positive relationships on the Bellarine that I for one will not allow them to be diminished or tarnished in any ways by political opinion or personal gain. Any change in legislation that take our fire service out of the litigious industrial environment we have found ourselves in for my entire time as a career firefighter is a positive outcome.

These proposed changes will create a safer fire ground for me and the people I respond with. Knowing we have a second professional guaranteed crew enroute to help is extra safety for everyone. The role for the volunteers will not change and if the second crew is not required they will be turned around and sent home, exactly as it happens today. That's what they get paid to do.

Response boundaries have not changed in 60 years nor the model that we work under. When the CFA act was written career staff did not exist, yet this document is still used to govern the fire service today. Areas of country Victoria in 1958 are no longer country today. These changes will bring our state into a current modern fire fighting environment to see us well into the future and take some of the overwhelming demand away from our hardworking volunteers. These legislative changes will meet the ever increasing needs of our community.

My job is important to me and so is my health. Having said this I also ask that you put your full support behind the presumptive disability legislation proposed by the state government. It puts a clear future in place for myself, my family and everyone in the greater fire fighting community of Victoria. This legislation is necessary and just.


Thanks for reading.

I would be more than happy to chat further if you wish.

Kind regards

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