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To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
cc "a.cook@cfa.vic.gov.au"  
<a.cook@cfa.vic.gov.au>  
bcc  
Subject FIRE SERVICES BILL.docx

1 attachment



FIRE SERVICES BILL.docx

Hi,

Please find my submission attached re Fire Services Reform Select Committee.

I have marked my submission confidential, meaning it is only intended that my name and identity be kept confidential but the actual submission can be considered by the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Leading Firefighter  
Cranbourne Fire Station

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## CONFIDENTIAL

LEADING FIREFIGHTER  
COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY  
35 YEARS      29.5 YEARS CAREER      5 YEARS VOLUNTEER  
USAR / TRENCH RESCUE / ROAD RESCUE  
FIRE SERVICES MEDAL

I reside in Hampton Park and work at Cranbourne Fire Station (integrated). I have worked at Frankston, Dandenong and Doveton Fire Stations throughout my career – all integrated stations.

I will commence this submission by saying that it is with great difficulty that I have to outline inadequacies of a service that I have been involved with for more than half my life. Within my time with CFA much has changed within the organisation. This change, I believe, reflects the changes that Australian society has gone through and continues to do so. Many volunteers and integrated brigades find it increasingly difficult to attract members with time to offer a reliable degree of service (that is, turnouts). Work commitments, family pressures, ethnicity and a general apathy towards volunteering have caused many brigades to struggle with membership. Also, the increasing population growth in the outer suburbs of Melbourne has led to a need for greater turnout frequency for Volunteer Brigades which in turn has led to the necessity for Career Staff to be co-located in 35 integrated brigades.

The areas that make up the outer suburbs around Melbourne can no longer (and for some time) be regarded as country Victoria. The people that make up these communities expect a modern, efficient fire service. This is also relevant to Bendigo, Ballarat and other major rural centres that are covered by the CFA.

The problems that are occurring today within CFA include some Volunteer Brigades failing to turnout; untrained members arriving at emergency incidents such as wildfire with only qualifications for structure fires; and volunteer members at integrated stations losing enthusiasm due to Career Staff working there. All of these problems result in a loss of efficiency in attending emergency incidents, which is what we strive to improve. The Fire Services Reform will see a much better model for community safety and will meet expectations because:

- 7 Career Firefighters dispatched to all emergency calls;
- Operations will commence in a much enhanced manner;
- No longer being informed on the way to a call that the relevant Volunteer Brigade has not responded (wasting time then having to dispatch another brigade);
- Modern Fire Service operations under world best practices to improve community safety.

Working at Cranbourne Fire Station I have personal experience with the problems outlined. On occasions some of the Volunteer Brigades we support fail to respond to calls and when, or if, they arrive members are not trained to the required competencies for the incident.

As stated, I live in Hampton Park which has a fully Volunteer Brigade which at times fails to respond, but luckily this area has Cranbourne Fire Brigade to the south and Hallam Fire Brigade to the north (both integrated brigades) which support into Hampton Park. This greatly improves the coverage for this suburb. Under the Fire Rescue Victoria model both these brigades will be dispatched immediately improving Community Safety which is what this reform will achieve.

Also, by placing all Career Firefighters under the same banner (FRV) will:

- Standardise training;
- Standardise equipment and training;
- More readily cover manning issues;
- Improve community safety!!!
- Improve the processes involved with firefighter welfare (eg mental health with the advent of EMR).

Impact on Volunteers, as I see it, will be:

- The Andrews State Government has indicated that a package of many millions of dollars will be awarded to the CFA to improve appliances, equipment, stations and Volunteer welfare. This can only improve the attraction for Volunteers to become members of Brigades;
- Training will still be carried out by FRV staff seconded to CFA to train Volunteers;
- Volunteers can choose to remain in integrated stations and be supported by FRV staff;
- Volunteers not involved with integrated brigades will not be affected but will benefit from the package that the Andrews Government has pledged to them, that is, equipment, appliances, stations, training.

Yes, there will be a transition period that will throw up challenges for us all but in the end the improvement in Community Safety, the day to day running of FRV and improvements to CFA will result in a much better Fire Service model for Victoria.

As stated at the beginning of this submission, it is disturbing to say that the organisation that I have been a part of for many years is operating under restraints of an out dated model. Through no fault of Volunteer or Integrated Brigades, modern society has left CFA behind. We need to adopt a new model to ensure that the future safety of Victorian communities and the service delivery we produce is world's best practice.

This submission is written with the utmost sincerity.

[Redacted]

(Leading Firefighter, Cranbourne Fire Station)

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