

"Andrew D'Arcy" [REDACTED]
07/07/2017 03:12 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc "io3@ufuVIC.asn.au"
<io3@ufuVIC.asn.au>
bcc
Subject Submission for Fire Services Bill
review

Dear Select Committee members,

Please find attached my submission pertaining to the Fire Services Bill currently before review.
Thank you

Be Well

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Fire Services Bill 2017 submission.pdf

Andrew Paul D'Arcy
CFA career fire fighter level 3

consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au

Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Services Bill Select Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

RE: personal submission relating to Fire Services Bill review.

Dear Fire Services Bill select committee members,

I write to enhance your knowledge of the current state of affairs within the fire services and how the changes set out by the Fire Services Bill put forward by the Victorian Government are viewed by emergency service providers and community members such as me.

I ask that you respect my request to keep my personal details confidential.

Presently, I hold the position of fire fighter level 3 with the Country Fire Authority. I've been on station at Mornington for almost two years now since completing my recruit training course in July of 2015. I come from a health industry background, previously completing a bachelor of physiotherapy and working within hospital and clinic settings for over ten years.

My residence in Mount Martha is a short distance to my current work location, and just so happens to be within one of Victoria's best locations, being the Mornington-Peninsula.

Below are some of the views I hold regarding: the current system; the proposed reforms; and related examples from my career within the fire services thus far. I hope that my submission affords you a greater understanding of why reforms such as have been proposed and required, and in fact are long overdue.


- Owing to the urbanisation of previously legislated rural areas that CFA's integrated brigades are currently located within, community expectations along with the funds derived from the fire services levy warrant a guaranteed response to appropriately achieve our mission of protecting life and property.
- At the present time our response to incidents is limited by antiquated agreements restricting the area within which we attend. These limitations reduce the area of Mornington's twenty-four hour career staffed station to a relatively small primary response table. This means that we are not automatically responded to incidents on the Moorooduc Highway or the Peninsula Link despite being less than eight kilometres away. It also means that while we would respond to an EMR event at my home that is three kilometres away, we would not be responded to my son's childcare facility under the same protocols even though it is only a further one kilometre down the road.

- In turn emergency service providers warrant a workplace that conforms to best practice occupational health and safety standards. Currently recognised world's best practice stipulates a need for a minimum of seven fire service personnel on the fire ground. This standard is not being met by the current system. I can recall responding to house fire in a neighbouring brigade's area that we support into where I was tasked with making entry to a garage that was alight without knowing that adequate back up was forthcoming. As it turned out a single member in a four wheel drive was the only resource deployed to this incident due to the unavailability of other members of the brigade at the time.
- Fire service boundaries have not changed since 1958 despite massive growth in areas that currently rely on a volunteer response in order to attempt to achieve and maintain an appropriate response in terms of public and emergency service provider safety. This sixty year old legislation has clearly become out-dated.
- Statistics become an unnecessary tool when you consider the plight of volunteers in this day an age within the areas of integrated brigades. How can we as a community continue to expect the necessary level of service to be delivered by volunteer members who have ever growing family and working responsibilities? I can recall many circumstances where I have attended an incident and our or neighbouring brigades have been unable to provide the adequate level of suitably qualified personnel to meet the standard practice of seven on the fire ground within eight minutes.
- The goal of the proposed changes is to enhance community and firefighter safety whilst also improving the efficiency of our systems. An amalgamated career fire service, Fire Rescue Victoria, can bring with it an opportunity to better develop training and equipment needs thus ensuring Victoria has the best practices available in terms of personnel in attendance, training, equipment and most importantly outcomes.
- These reforms set out laws to not only protect, but indeed enhance the role of volunteers. The ability of the CFA to support volunteers with the additional funding that will be provided and a management structure specifically geared towards volunteer needs will mean that engagement with both existing and prospective volunteers can be enriched.

I see many positive outcomes should you approve the inception of this bill. The role of volunteers will be secured with no effect on surge capacity, no effect on volunteer only brigades and minimal effect on volunteers at integrated brigades. Costs associated with drawn out EBA negotiations and duplicitous management, training and equipment can be reduced. Most importantly the life and property of all Victorians will be better protected.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

Sincerely



Andrew D'Arcy