



Andrew Marmion [REDACTED]

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Service Bill Submission

*Andrew Marmion
Senior Station Officer
Boronia Fire Station
A Platoon*



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Fire service bill SSO marmion.docx

I Andrew Marmion, Senior Station Officer with over 30 years' service in the CFA and Stationed at Boronia Fire Station would like to provide the below statement to the Fire Service Bill Select Committee 2017.

This is a great opportunity to remove the politics out of the fire services by creating Fire Rescue Victoria and establishing the CFA as a purely volunteer organisation.

I cannot state strongly enough from firsthand experience that the current system of fire service delivery to the community of Victoria is not working and requires urgent change.

I am quite prepared to provide evidence of the failures in the current system in person if requested.

Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria

Currently Boronia career firefighters are restricted from responding with a fully trained crew of 4 firefighters to certain fire calls that are less than 2 minutes from my fire station. I have along with other officers at this station battled for years with CFA management to have this senseless situation changed. This has not changed because it is based purely on the inclination of a local volunteer captain, not what is the best service delivery for the community. There are numerous examples of where my crew of 4 firefighters with a Heavy Pumper are not being responded to fire calls that would have benefited the community to whom I am paid to serve.

The irony in this is, as an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) we have a 10 minute response foot print from our fire station and it must be understood this is not our core business. Attending fire calls is core business and yet I can't respond 2 minutes down the road to a fire call because of CFA politics. The decision of who responds to what fire calls is left up to local volunteers and CFA management to decide, not taking into account the community needs or the closest fire appliance.

If this station was within the Metropolitan Fire District it would respond to all fire calls in all directions within a perimeter of 8 minutes devoid of political influence.

To create FRV would only improve fire service delivery to all Victorians because response to emergencies would be based on the communities requirements not CFA politics.

Effect on Volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery

Creating a CFA for volunteers would allow volunteers to operate independently and allow for greater bushfire response ensuring surge capacity is maintained.

Volunteers love being in a volunteer organisation at numerous volunteer fire stations around the state and they proudly display on the fire station doors "100% Volunteer".

Again by creating a CFA and FRV would remove the unhealthy political divide that currently exists within the CFA.

Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision

The introduction of FRV would guarantee short and long term saving that would ensure the standardisation of equipment and alignment of departments such as, firefighting appliances, fire station design and communication systems, rostering systems, Enterprise Agreement, single recruit course, training facilities for urban firefighting and alignment of departments, EMR, Hazmat, Rope Rescue, Trench Rescue, Fire Investigation, HR, OHS, Payroll

Underlying policy rationale

This will ensure safer firefighting operations within the urban area of Victoria by ensuring seven professional firefighters on the fireground which will better protect the community of Victoria in these heavily populated areas.

A standard response system is currently being operated by the MFESB which is the Greater Alarm Response System (GARS) to fire calls and major incidents. This safe system of operations could function across the urbanised areas of Victoria.