



06/07/2017 03:53 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Services Reform Submission

Please note: My name and identity within this submission is confidential.

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm currently a Leading Firefighter based at Frankston Fire Station. I have worked as a firefighter within the CFA for 5 years, before that, I worked for Forest Fire Management. I have worked within the Victorian emergency services for 11 years. In this time I have seen the valuable contributions that career and volunteer members provide on numerous occasions.

I take my hat off to volunteers for giving up their time to provide a service to the community. However, the reason we need these changes is that time doesn't stand still. The environment we live in is constantly changing and evolving. The fire services need to change and evolve with the communities they are part of so that we can provide the services our communities expect and do it in a safe manner.

I have been to fires in the suburbs surrounding Frankston where the current model means that if volunteers fail to respond initially (which does happen), only 2 career staff (myself and one other) are initially on the scene to deal with the situation. This can remain for 5-10 minutes. A lot can happen in 5-10 minutes.

I recently went to a reported fire in a roof in a neighbouring volunteer brigades area. We were first on the scene in a neighbouring brigades area, 2 firefighters to manage the incident, if this was a going job this would mean 2 firefighters would initially be responsible for:

1. Overseeing and coordinating the operation
2. Running the pump and all external operations (searching for hydrants, organising hose, traffic management, first aid, isolating power and gas services, among many other tasks)
3. Locating and extinguishing the fire
4. Search and rescue for any possible casualties

The neighbouring brigade did eventually get on scene with a further crew of 3 to assist with the job, which luckily ended up being just a minor electrical fault. Of the crew that turned up, only one of them turned out to have structure fire training and he had a beard, which means he couldn't wear a breathing apparatus, therefore we couldn't use him to assist in any search and rescue or internal firefight if required.

Another job I recently attended involved a boy with his leg stuck in a handrail at school. We (the CFA career staff) were able to free his leg from the handrail safely and quickly. When the volunteer rescue provider got on scene halfway through the job, rather than be relieved we were able to free the young boy, were more concerned that we hadn't waited and allowed them to do the job. We need to remember who the customer is in all of this. It is the community! Time and time again I've had to stand by and wait for the volunteer rescue providers to turn up at accidents to start extricating people from the vehicle. Even though we have rescue equipment and skills to begin operations.

These are a couple of many examples out there that indicate why we need these reforms.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

[REDACTED] **Leading Firefighter**
Frankston Fire Station

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