



Colin Smith [REDACTED]

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
cc  
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Subject Fwd: Scanned Document attached

1 attachment



06072017211536-0001.pdf

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,  
Please find attached my submission for the Fire Services Reform Committee

Kind Regards

Colin Smith



Number of Images: 2

Attachment File Type: PDF

Device Name: ApeosPort-V C2275 T2

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Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

My name is Colin; I live in Panton Hill, a small rural township and work at South Morang Fire station.

I have been a volunteer in the Panton Hill Fire Brigade for 20 years this year and I have been a career firefighter for just over a year.

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

I believe all career firefighters should be employed in one fire service to better serve the community of Victoria. This will allow for the standardisation of training and equipment. Currently the MFB and CFA have a different recruit course which means there are two differently trained fire services working together on one fire ground. The two services use different radios to communicate with, which has the potential to cause a safety hazard on the fire ground. There are also differences in the type of trucks, pumps, equipment and layouts between the 2 services.

Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this system there are 35 areas which are wrongly zoned as country, despite rapid growth which has led to them becoming heavily urbanised and residential. Some of these areas include Dandenong, Craigieburn, Springvale, Geelong and South Morang where I work.

These areas need to be modernised as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid response with 7 professional career firefighters on 2 trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

It is getting a lot harder to attract members of the community to become volunteers at their local station. People no longer work in the same towns where they live and find it harder and harder to give up work and family life to join the local fire brigade. Current members in these grow areas also find it hard to drive to the station in an acceptable time for a turnout, with the extra traffic and congested roads particularly during peak hour and school run times.

As a volunteer I do not believe members will leave the CFA if it becomes a volunteer only service. I personally think that the volunteers are a lot stronger than the media or the politicians have given them credit for. For the majority of brigades there will be no change. They will still have the same structure and support in place with the help of Administration support officers, Operations Officers, Managers and the Chief Officer. I also believe that the volunteers within intergraded brigades will become stronger with greater self-management and have more of a sense ownership. If there hasn't been a mass exit of members during this period of intense fighting from all sides and uncertainty why would they leave once the matter has been settled and everyone knows where they stand.

The most important part is that this reform will not stop members from all services, career or volunteer from working together on the fire ground during an emergency incident as has been the case during this whole dispute. This fact has been lost on the media and some parliamentary members but it's something that I am really proud of.

All Victorian career and volunteer firefighters want and strive for a modern professional fire service that meets the needs of our growing communities that we serve to protect.

Reform of our outdated fire services will ensure the safety of our communities in our growing state. Additionally it will ensure the safety of our career firefighters and help ease the increasing and unrealistic demands being placed on our volunteer firefighters in our urban growth areas which are experiencing a massive increase in emergency calls.

I respectfully ask that you give consideration to taking this great opportunity to reform and modernise our states fire service for the benefit of all Victorians along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect all firefighters.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person or to talk to you about my experiences as a career or volunteer firefighter and why this reform is so important.

Kind regards



Colin Smith

Colin Smith. Firefighter

South Morang Fire Station – 875 Plenty Rd South Morang Vic 3752

