



[REDACTED]
07/07/2017 03:03 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc [REDACTED]
bcc
Subject Submission to Fire Services Reform
Committee

1 attachment



fire services submission daniel legge 070717.docx

To Assistant Clerk Committees,

Please find attached my submission to the Fire Services Reform Committee.

Could you please treat my personal details as confidential due to the nature of my employment.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

7th July 2017

To: Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Service Bill Select Committee

Re: Submission to the Fire Services Reform Committee

NOTE: I wish for my personal details contained in this submission be treated as confidential due to my employment status

I am a career fire fighter currently stationed at Eastern Hill fire stations but have worked in most of the MFB stations in the North Central Metropolitan Fire District including a number of stations that turn out with CFA stations both integrated and fully volunteer.

Having the good fortune of working in the MFB I can depend on having a support truck dispatched to every fire that I attend which ensures there will be a minimum of 7 properly trained fire-fighters on scene within minutes. What this means in reality is that when I'm on a truck with only two others (an officer and a driver/pump operator) I can have the confidence to get to work knowing backup will be just around the corner if not already there by the time entry is made. This means I can do my job quicker and safer and ensures that the best possible outcome in that scenario can be achieved.

Without timely backup by properly trained professionals I would have been put in enormous danger at a number of jobs that were time critical and involved a rapid early internal attack. In these contexts seconds and not minutes can be what counts.

I want to see changes put through because I want to ensure my CFA colleagues get the same standard of backup as I get. The only way we (as a whole fire service) can offer the level of protection the community expects and deserves is if we have the backup we need. We aren't heroes, we're just here to do a job and we all want to be able to do it as well as we possibly can and as safely as we possibly can.

The volunteers in the CFA do a fantastic job, but people would be naive to assume that they are capable of providing the same level of protection that a full time professional service does in built up urban environments.

I've worked at Broadmeadows, Somerton, Epping and Greensborough which all turn out with various CFA volunteer brigades. Although they always do their best, I've been involved in numerous jobs

where we have relied on them but they either haven't arrived or didn't have sufficient training to help (such as not holding a breathing apparatus ticket so they can't enter a burning building). Not only does this put us at risk but it decreases the odds for a favourable outcome for any people and/or properties involved.

The public don't know the difference; they see a red truck and people running around working hard regardless. They don't know whether one truck should have been there 5 minutes earlier but that a closer brigade failed to respond. They don't know that the fire-fighter rolling out more hose really should be a part of a backup crew attacking the fire but can't because he/she isn't qualified. They don't know that their house could have been saved.

But we do.

We don't say to the person whose house has burnt down that had they lived 100 meters to the south, there would have been twice the resources in half the time and that fire would have been contained to the faulty hot water service. We don't say that to them because it could only add to their trauma.

But we are saying it now.

On behalf of these people and behalf of the people in the future that will call on us to provide this service these reforms must but progressed to ensure that the level of protection my family receives living in Northcote is offered to those communities whose risk profile equally demands 7 fire fighters on scene in 8 minutes.

People living in Epping (north of Cooper St) deserve the same peace of mind and protection as those living in my suburb. And the firefighters working there deserve the same backup to do their job safely as I do.

Amalgamating the professionals from the CFA with the MFB and re-establishing a board with the authority to review the delineation of country/city boundaries will be an enormously positive reform.

I hope this piece of legislation is given very serious consideration as the potential improvements to fire-fighter safety and public station will be enormous. Conversely if this opportunity is missed and these reform are put in too hard basket, this will be to the detriment of all involved as many of the serious issues which have stagnated over the recent history in the fire services will continue to perpetuate.

[REDACTED]

Qualified Fire Fighter Eastern Hill Fire Station D platoon