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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission - Fire Services Review
Committee

Fire Services Reform Select Committee
Victoria

consultation@dpc.vic.gov.au

Dear Committee Members,

My name is [REDACTED] am a professional MFB fire fighter, based at Carlton Fire Station #03.

I write to express my personal opinion and support for the proposed fire services reform.

Fire Service Delivery

In my area, including the northern suburbs of Melbourne, I have seen first – hand the benefits of a professional and trained fire service, with a rapid 8 minute response time. This gives me confidence, when forcing entry into burning structures to conduct rescue operations, that defined, qualified and capable fire fighter support will arrive to assist me in a timely manner. This support is critical to provide a safe and effective service both for me and the community that I am delivering this service to.

Including Emergency Medical Response Delivery

I have also seen first – hand and delivered the life saving benefits of the MFB Emergency Medical Response Program. This program supports Ambulance Victoria in directly saving lives in situations which include drug overdoses, suicides and both adult and child medical trauma emergencies. The Emergency Medical Response Program is contingent on the rapid response capability that can only be provided by a professional and trained fire service. In many cases fire fighters arrive on scene before paramedics to commence lifesaving treatment for what are time critical incidents and remain on scene with paramedics to assist with patient survivability and paramedic efficiency. Not making this service available to as many Victorian community members as possible decreases their chances of survival in an emergency and the full benefit of the fire levy that they pay. The EMR capability is time critical and a volunteer system cannot necessarily guarantee the response time and capability that is required for an effective EMR capability.

The fire service reforms would ensure that these same services are rolled out to as many Victorians in similar urban areas as possible.

Effect on CFA Volunteers

Volunteers should benefit from these reforms by way of:

- Reduced requirement to attend simpler calls;
- Reduced time away from work;
- Additional training to support volunteer role through increased CFA funding;
- Greater volunteer availability for surge capacity incidents without impacting on urban fire services;
- Less burnout of volunteers from reduced urban fire services calls.
- Opportunities for volunteers and other local community members to apply for professional roles as fire fighters.

Benefits to employers of CFA volunteers

- Reduced number of unexpected call outs or absences from employees, who are also CFA volunteers, responding to urban fire calls.
- Increased lead time for employers to cater to employee absence for employees, who are also CFA volunteers, when responding to surge capacity fire calls.

Cost Efficiencies

- Reduced duplication of training services as shown already with the combined training centre at VEMTEC, Craigieburn.
- Reduced duplication of management and other administrative and support services.
- Reduced cost to the community by way of lost private assets through fire and emergency that require community support.
- Reduced cost to the community by way of lost community assets through fire and emergency that must be rebuilt and continually provided through alternative means.

Underlying Policy Rationale

Creation of local jobs through paid employment in the fire services. These jobs would be available for both local community members and fire fighting volunteers, to apply for.

Benefits to employers and the Victorian economy by reducing the lost time cost of employees who are also volunteers currently responding to urban fire calls.

Finally, I find it perplexing that community members anywhere would be in anyway satisfied to have volunteer fire fighters service their area when professional fire fighters can be made available. The same would not be acceptable in regard to government funded policing, teaching or hospital services. All Victorian community members, as well as professional and volunteer fire fighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Regards



07 July 2017

Please keep my name and identity confidential for this submission.

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