



"EASTE, Gary" [REDACTED]
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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Services Reform

Dear Assistant Clerk of Committees,

Thank you for taking the time in reading my submission.

My name is Gary Easte

My role in the MFB is that of an operational Station Officer at Oakleigh Fire station.

I have held this rank since 1988 and first joined the MFB as a recruit fire fighter in September 1981.

Since joining the brigade I have upgraded my basic fire fighting skill set to include: Road accident rescue:
long duration breathing apparatus: on shift trainer for operational appliances:

The landscape for fire fighters has changed dramatically since I joined back in 1981 and we have responded to this change by embracing new work practices that are beneficial to the public we serve .

1. Emergency medical response (assist AV)ongoing skills maintenance
- 2.Chemical biological radiation incidents
- 3.High angle rescue
- 4.Trench rescue
5. Urban search and rescue (building collapse)
- 6.Wild fire response (beneficial in assisting CFA volunteers)
- 7.Participating in the Fire education program that delivers an informal talk to preps and grade 5/6 students with respect to the roles of a fire fighter and safety issues in their home .
8. Water access Fire Boats (Servicing Melbourne Ports and waterways)
9. Terrorism information sessions

This is but some of the new initiatives that fire-fighters now face on a daily basis a far cry from what I faced as a junior fire fighter in the 80's.

Times are changing and the Fire Services that operate in the state of Victoria and Governments that preside over these Emergency Services need to be aligned and realise this review is not about individuals but what is best practice for the community we serve, now and into the future.

I recall when I first joined the MFB in 1981 that even back then there was a lot of talk with regard to having one Fire Service for Victoria, obviously the wheels of progress move very slowly .

Melbourne's landscape has changed as have the residential/commercial areas that are currently being served by integrated stations.

What once were quiet outer fringe communities are now basically satellite cities with all the rights and demands that residents currently expect from our emergency services within the Metropolitan Fire District.

I feel it is an injustice by our governments to expect volunteer brigades that work out of the 35 integrated stations to respond to emergency incidents that are ever increasing both in volume of call outs and diversity in their nature and still be expected to avail themselves on occasions when surge capacity is required.

These men and women have families who they would like to spend time with , and jobs that require them to attend. I'm sure when they first Volunteered to join their local Fire Brigade the station was probably a tin shed and population in the low thousands with call outs per year less than 100.

Today these same volunteers now serve communities with populations in the tens of thousands, infrastructure not to dissimilar to inner-city suburbs and emergency incidents that even paid fire

fighters have trouble coming to terms with. These people love what they do and will put their own health and well-being at risk before letting down the community they volunteered to serve. I believe by having one full time professional Fire Service (Fire Rescue Victoria)one that encompasses Melbourne Metropolitan Fire stations and the 35 integrated stations it releases the Volunteer brigades to be totally automatous , free up there members for surge capacity and better serve the more rural areas of Victoria.

Whether you're a full time fire fighter or volunteer fire fighter people always come first not politics .

Yours Sincerely
Gary Easte
Station Officer
Oakleigh Fire Station
42B Evan St,
Parkdale

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