



James Boyd [REDACTED]  
06/07/2017 11:30 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
cc  
bcc  
Subject fire service reform

Dear committee members

My name is James Boyd and I have been a professional CFA firefighter 10 years. I am currently based at Frankston fire station.

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

- In my area of southern metropolitan region of the CFA
- I've seen first hand what happens when the integrated fire service model no longer works and Victorian communities are left at risk in regards to not only fire but specialist rescue response.

As a Fire fighter with the CFA I have witnessed and been involved in many instances where the responding brigades and appliances have had inappropriate numbers of firefighters and also under skilled firefighters respond to emergencies. Creating lengthy delays and unsafe working practises ensuing from these issues.

As a Firefighter and a crew leading LFF on Frankston's Teleboom I have been responded to house fires with 2 crew on the teleboom to support in volunteer areas where 1 volunteer has turned out their Tanker and when they arrived on scene that member did not have a BA qualification. This has also happened to me where a volunteer pumper has responded with 3 crew and not one has had a BA endorsement. So at that job I was the incident controller I had 1 BA operator a house fire.

The practise of not having minimum crew numbers or minimum crew skills sets when responding to incidents continually puts everyone at risk. Volunteers, staff and the community. It is in my opinion an irresponsible action where the service is hoping that appliances turn out to emergencies and hope that the members on those trucks have some skills to combat the incident.

I have also have had countless circumstances where volunteers have been tasked at an incident and they have proved on so many occasion that they are not competent for that task. Which has delayed the task or it simply does not get done. This is an inherent problem with volunteers, not having the same amount of time to put in to attain all the required skills and also retain those skills through training and use operationally. Don't get me wrong, I value the work and effort they put in, but over the service, in my experience there are very few that actually can competently perform tasks required of them at structure fire and urban style incidents. I hope there is a restructure and that these issues get addressed in the future CFA.

Road accident rescue is another area that is seriously letting down the Victorian community and needs reform. Skilled staffed appliances with a 90sec response time need to be utilised to extricate victims within the golden hour if they are going to have a good chance at survival. Waiting for a volunteer service who in my experience (seen first hand over many incidents) are slow and undisciplined jeopardise the chance of survival of people in car accidents is not acceptable. The only current excuse is ego's.

There needs to be no ego's when it comes to providing rescue services, it need to be practical based on shortest wait times, skill and competency.

- Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'.
- These areas need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised areas as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.
- All Victorian, professional and volunteer firefighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a firefighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of your constituents, and all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

I also respectfully submit that you give consideration to my request to modernise the fire service along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before the commencement of the fire season. This is important to me and my colleagues.

I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to talk to you further about my personal experiences as a professional firefighter and why this reform is so important.

Kind regards

James Boyd

LFF CFA Frankston – and concerned resident of Mount Martha Victoria.

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