

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 8 August 2017 6:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: CONFIDENTIAL - FIRE SERVICES REVIEW

Dear Select Committee,

My name is [REDACTED] and my view and opinion is based on the following experience in emergency services:

[REDACTED]

- A volunteer firefighter with CFA and employee [REDACTED]
- I am a volunteer fire fighter at an integrated CFA fire station

[REDACTED]

- A paid up member of the United Firefighters Union
- A participant in the local community [REDACTED] over many years

The current restructure I must say has reached a disappointing state of affairs and should be abandoned.

The State of Victoria has held up the integrated model of the CFA for decades to interstate fire services and the rest of the world.

Now we are abandoning it in the interests of an EBA that I fear will be the beginning of the end for the fire services as we know it and will be a long journey however eventually the cost of the emergency services will be too expensive and eventually we will be forced to follow the overseas model and contract out the service. This would be a sad day.

At Brigade the other night a MFB firefighter [REDACTED] he spoke with respect about the volunteer firefighters having to know this to back up the career firefighters. We are depending on you when we are at another call etc.

Craig Lapsley spoke to the Brigade a few weeks ago and allayed our fears about the restructure and the brigade (vols) abandoned a crisis meeting to separate from the station and are now continuing on alas that is not the conclusion many others are reaching.

The restructure achieves nothing but distrust and the undermining of surge capacity and Brigade turn out capability at an integrated station that I belong too.

We have terrorist attacks overseas and a real threat at home and we are undermining our emergency response capability to placate ego's and power. Disgusting!

I have experienced firsthand the power and intimidation that has been part of MFB culture [REDACTED] and it is no way to treat people, this is the culture that will overwhelm CFA career firefighters as they join FRV despite many good people in MFB and sadly will lead to a very different relationship with volunteers which creates a threat to our community safety and engagement and ultimately the status of firefighters in the community which is declining due to this bickering.

What to do?

Abandon this restructure which really just changes labels and focus for two fire services and creates distrust and will compromise response eventually. Revisit what the Fire Chiefs tried to do in the early 1990's and create one combined fire services with career firefighters as your core and volunteers as back up and support and a fundamental part of the urban Brigade response capability. In other words take the CFA model to the MFB and retain the integrated brigade as our population grows to give us the flexibility we need to strengthen an all emergencies brigade capability e.g. volunteer brigades are already taking on the huge commitment of EMT already which compliments career fire fighters.

If the challenges are on the boundary between the two agencies then an interim saving solution may be to create a standalone region that is on the boundary and would therefore make up all integrated stations and stabilise the current situation. Then move toward a "one fire service for Victoria". I agree we must change to embrace the challenges of this modern world however we must fundamentally preserve the integrated model and expand that approach to ensure we can protect our communities regardless of what colour shirt we wear or what the badge on our upper arm represents.

I wish you well with this review.

None of the current factions government, UFU, VFBV, career or volunteer deserve to have the behaviour of the last three years sanctioned by moving forward with this current dysfunctional and divisive restructure. To approve it in the current form is to condone the behaviour of the last two years and that would just be wrong.

Lastly it is a malaise of modern day politics that the presumptive legislation has been coupled with this restructure bill.

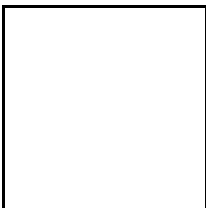
Please show leadership inspire confidence send a message to the people that government has a conscience and will in fact govern for all people. Separate these bills and ensure the legislation is fair and just for both career and volunteer firefighter as they have both been exposed to the toxins, trauma and health risks.

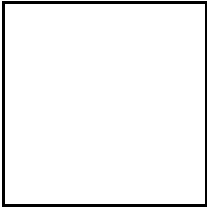
Yours truly,

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