



Kane Arlow [REDACTED]  
06/07/2017 02:08 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
cc  
bcc  
Subject Fire Service review

Good afternoon,

My name is Kane Arlow and I am a Leading Fire Fighter with the MFB where I have been employed as a career fire fighter for the past 6 years. And I can be contacted on this email address or on my mobile number of [REDACTED].

I write to you to express my support for the proposed fire services reform and I would like to express my gratitude to you for allowing me to express my personal experiences and opinions regarding the fire services bill and the reform.

My family and I have lived in Greenvale for the past 10 years and have firsthand experienced the sharp increase in population in my area. I have found that the population of Greenvale, and surrounding suburbs of Roxbrough Park and Cragieburn have increased significantly. Of note, Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. 60 years ago the suburbs of Greenvale, Cragieburn, Roxbrough Park, even Gladstone Park and Tullamarine were nothing but farming land with a handful of houses. We see the same population growth and urban expanse in areas such as Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong. However, according to long out-dated fire service boundaries these are all considered country areas that do not currently have an adequate fire response. We see logical progress in almost every aspect of suburban and population growth planning by the government. We see new roads, extra schools, new hospitals to address population growth.....why not with our Fire Service?

A very important consideration in this day and age is the high level of combustibility of components used to build modern furniture and houses has exponentially increased how quickly fire spreads, resulting in a significant shortening of the necessary time-frame required for fire-fighters to arrive on scene. We routinely drive up to 13km into Plumpton. Having a guaranteed 2 truck turnout into these now built up areas will significantly increase the safety of residents in these areas. The fire services reform would ensure this happens with a rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career fire-fighters on two fire trucks as the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

These reforms are not aimed at attacking volunteers, or saying that they don't do a fantastic job (which they do), It is about getting firefighters responded in the most timely means possible. It is also very unfair to expect a 100 percent response from volunteers. Unfortunately due to family and life commitments the volunteer model simply doesn't work well in built up areas where time is critical

I have spent the last two years of my MFB career at St. Albans fire station where we protect a densely built up and populated area. We attend a large variety of calls most common of which are house fires, car fires and emergency medical responses. St. Albans fire station is currently on the CFA/MFB boundary and as such we also turn out to calls to CFA volunteer areas such as Caroline Springs, Taylors Hill and Plumpton. We attend calls with volunteer fire-fighters on a regular basis and from personal experience I found volunteers and career staff have worked well together at all times. At large grass fires which I attended, the volunteers' skillset allowed them to contribute to bringing the incident under control in an incredibly timely manner.

Unfortunately I have seen first-hand what happens when the volunteer brigades are unable to respond. Earlier this year there was a structure fire in Plumpton, where there was no volunteer response, save for a single manned tanker. Caroline Springs Pumper tanker had to travel the very limits of their turnout area to attend the fire. As a result their immediate area of Caroline Springs wasn't covered, they were forced to leave that fire (when it was under control) in the hands of the single volunteer tanker to attend a firecall with our truck. Luckily that call was a false alarm, so it wasn't time critical for them to get there. With the new model there will be more trucks available, and a move up truck ready to fill in the station immediately when the stations truck is attending a firecall. But it is a prime example as to why the boundaries need to be adjusted to suit the growing nature of Melbourne.

Most importantly the MFB have been involved with the **Emergency Medical Response (EMR)** program since 2004. Through this program, all MFB fire-fighters are fully trained to perform CPR, administer oxygen and defibrillate patients. This enables us to work alongside paramedics to revive patients that are in cardiac arrest due to heart attack, trauma or drug overdose. Our rapid response means we often arrive on scene prior to paramedics and our early involvement helps save lives. In the last three months I have personally attended three EMR calls to patients in full cardiac arrest, that through our training and early intervention, were given a second chance at life. This does not happen in all CFA areas, and definitely not volunteer areas. Why should densely populated areas such as where my family and I live not have access to this? Volunteer fire-fighters have always played a crucial role in Victoria's rural communities and will continue to do so. The employing of all career fire-fighters in the one fire service will have no impact on volunteer turnout or surge capacity. Career staff will continue to work together with volunteers to make Victoria safer. The reforms to the fire service will allow career staff from CFA and MFB to standardise our equipment, trucks and training which will result in us working even more efficiently than what we currently are. The reforms will also allow volunteer brigades to greatly benefit from increased funding to allow greater recruitment, training, equipment and stations across the CFA. But most importantly it will bring up to date a frighteningly out of date Victorian fire services boundary and provide the necessary Fire response to the many people living in the now highly urbanised suburbs that were predominantly farming lands when the fire boundary were drawn up.

Kind regards

Kane Arlow

[Leading Firefighter/MFB/St. Albans]

Sent from my iPhone