



Matt Dolling [REDACTED]
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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Services Reform

Dear Select Committee members

My name is Matt and I have been a professional CFA firefighter for 7 years. I am currently based at Frankston fire station.

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

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 Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential.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.

An example of where the system is failing and too reliant on volunteer firefighters is, our minimum manning is 5 firefighters to serve and protect not only the city of Frankston but also to support into our neighbouring brigades. Our main firefighting appliance the heavy pumper is manned by 3 firefighters with our Teleboom specialist aerial appliance manned by 2 firefighters. This specialist aerial appliance responds to all our support calls but can also be responded anywhere in the state. Anytime this appliance goes out to support our neighbouring brigades it leaves 3 professional firefighters for the city of Frankston if no volunteers respond, which mid-week while most people are at work is the norm. To add to that the 2 firefighters that man the Teleboom also respond the tanker for bushfire scenarios, the PE Van, which has specialist rescue gear and refilling BA cylinders capability. Anytime that happens it leaves our Teleboom aerial appliance off line and not able to be responded as no volunteer firefighters have increments to operate this appliance. This is very dangerous situation as the only other aerial appliance in the Southern Metropolitan area is in Dandenong and it will then have all Southern Metro as well as the whole Mornington Peninsula to cover. A recent example of our Teleboom having to go off line and unable to be responded was on our 2nd nightshift two weeks ago when our PE Van was requested to fill BA cylinders at a unit fire in Rye. The volunteers failed to respond so the Teleboom crew responded it and our aerial appliance was off line for 3 hours until we returned. If we had applinaced based manning as opposed to station based manning this issue would be resolved as the proposed FRV would do. Also while at the Rye fire filling cylinders I spoke to the Rosebud career firefighters who were first on scene and had used their first BA cylinder, gone out and changed to their 2nd cylinder before the first volunteer firefighter arrived. I am not anti-volunteer, but you can never be sure if they will turn up or if they do what skills they may have. If there were people trapped at that Rye unit fire or if it was at a nursing home where you have many residents who cannot walk and no extra firefighters respond or take 10 or 15 minutes you would have many casualties. In this day and age built up urban areas should have better fire coverage then the system we

currently use. The 7 career firefighters that would be responded under FRV would go a long way to address this.

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.

Thanks for your time.

Regards

Matt



Matt Dolling Leading Firefighter

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