



Mike Howard [REDACTED]

06/07/2017 04:09 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: fire services submission.

1 attachment



FIRE SERVICES BILL.docx

From: Mike Howard
Sent: Wednesday, 5 July 2017 8:31 PM
To: io3@ufuvic.asn.au
Subject: fire services submission.

LFF Mike Howard AFSM
South Melbourne Fire Station
[REDACTED]
Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

FIRE SERVICES BILL – SELECT COMMITTEE 2017

As a professional fire -fighter for approx. 34 years with the MFESB, I am very concerned about the current fire service boundaries, I have seen minimal if any change to the current boundaries during my career. The boundary changes proposed bring better alignment of professional fire cover to protect life and property as a result of the urban sprawl.

I am imploring you the 'Fire Services Select Committee' to view all information available and in particular SDS times for Volunteers response in Urban areas of Melbourne.

The urban areas of Melbourne aside from the current integrated stations outside of current MFESB boundaries should not be any less protected than metro Melbourne.

I am requesting you to support the proposed legislation changes to address what many see as an unacceptable situation.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I am a 34-year professional Leading Firefighter based at the MFESB breathing Apparatus / Hazmat Station – (South Melbourne)- Fire Station number 38 with extensive experience in the field of breathing apparatus, cylinder maintenance and testing. Current Test station manager for the MFESB Hydro test station since 1993.

ACTIVITIES AND HONOURS

- MFB recruit training course completed 28th September 1984
- 12th June 1987- snorkel course completion
- 27th November 1987 - Long Duration BA course completed
- 4th August 1989 - hale pump course completed
- 1990 - completed training course for Approved signatory for Hydro test scheme
- 1992 Certificate of approval for approved signatory issues
- January 1993 - NSCA level strength coach completed
- 1993 - manager role for Hydro test station MFB
- 4th June 1996 - low profile ladder course completed
- 14th June 1996 - Magirus ladder course completed
- 1994 - fitness leaders course completed
- 1994 - Ladder platform course completed
- In 1996, I received a Chief Fire Officers - certificate of commendation for my role in the hosting of a key event during the successful 'world police and fire games' - also received a diploma of honour from the world governing body IFBB
- In 2000, I played a key role in the selection and evaluation of the MFB's replacement breathing apparatus sets- Drager
- In 2000 –Certificate II, Certificate III in firefighting operations
- In 2000 - Certificate IV in firefighting supervision
- Sat on the development committee for our airline trolleys currently in use
- Played a role in the development of the MFESB – compressor pod project.
- Nominated for AFSM in 2003 due to my role as the test station manager for the MFESB's hydro test station
- In 2009, I was invited by SAI Global to participate on the rewrite of the Australian gas cylinder code - AS 2030 and AS 2030.5
- 2012- I drove the development of cylinder filling safety for all BA service trained fire fighters in the MFESB.

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ACTIVITIES AND HONOURS (cont.)

- 2016 -Team leader for the BA cylinder purchase - CFA /MFESB as part of inter-operability agreement breathing apparatus replacement project Part 1 \$3,000,000+ project
- 2017 – participated in the technical and servicing subcommittee for part 2 of Inter-operability breathing apparatus replacement project for CFA /MFESB, the State of Victoria - \$10,000,000 + project

SUPPORT OF REFORM

Prior to 70's a special advisory panel advised on the MFB/CFA boundary - It was disbanded – in the 1970's, this advisory panel provided expert opinion to the boundary re alignment– purpose, to realign the boundary to keep up with urban sprawl – therefore ensuring fire cover by professional fire services as the city of Melbourne grew in size.

ROYAL COMMISSION 2009

After the 2009 Royal Commission a recommendation was made for the appointment new role of a fire commissioner for Victoria (newly named Emergency Services Commissioner) - the commissioner was not given the powers like his equals in other states – to re align the boundaries. No other group or individual was ever tasked with this role. The boundaries have been relatively unchanged since the 1970's

VOLUNTEERS FIREFIGHTERS

Volunteer fire fighters for some time have had a much greater workload placed on them to provide this service. CFA was never originally formed to do fire suppression in Urban areas (CFA is a rural fire service) – (so much so that 60% of Metro Melbourne is protected by CFA).

Whilst I fully support the role of Volunteers (state of Victoria cannot do without them) it has become apparent that they struggle in many areas to deliver the appropriate level of service in the urban areas of Melbourne, these growth corridors were never intended to have a volunteer service.

However, in an urban environment with a large volume of calls an appropriate and timely response cannot be guaranteed, this fact is evident in call data where 'failed to respond' and 'delayed' responses are common. Failure to meet those standards of response does not meet community expectations, puts lives at risk and increases damage to property resulting in economic loss.

This is not an attack at the skills or professionalism of Volunteer firefighters but simply a reality of a Volunteer response in a high risk urban environment and it is unacceptable that this risk has not been mitigated.

In saying that there is absolutely nothing in these reforms that will stop Volunteers responding to emergencies as they do now whether rural or urban.

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VOLUNTEERS FIREFIGHTERS (cont.)

In fact, the CFA -a volunteer organisation setup for rural fire cover now covers 60% of urban Melbourne. This occurs because the fire cover provided by the MFSEB due to this boundary has not changed for almost 70 years.

The people of Victoria deserve to have the same levels of fire cover as those in metro Melbourne and your support will assist in making this happen.

This submission is not a us vs them scenario, just my personal view and observations that has been ignored by successive governments in the past until now.

SUMMARY

- **Boundary has not changed for almost 70 years.**
- **Commissioner was not given the power to realign the boundaries**
- **CFA -a volunteer organisation setup for rural fire cover now covers 60% of urban Melbourne**
- **Failed to respond' and 'delayed' responses are common by volunteer brigades in urban areas.**

LEADING FIRE FIGHTER MICHAEL HOWARD AFSM

REGISTERED NUMBER 3715

SOUTH MELBOURNE FIRE STATION