



"Mick Renshaw"

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
 cc  
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 Subject Fire Services Select Committee 2017 -  
 Submission from Michael Lindsay  
 Renshaw

Michael Lindsay Renshaw



I wish to place this submission to the Fire Services Select Committee 2017

I am an MFB Leading Firefighter just coming up to 30 years' service.

For the later part of my service I have been stationed in the Eastern suburbs turning out regularly with CFA volunteer crews.

I have Brigade qualifications in Road Accident Rescue, Trench Rescue, Urban Search and Rescue, Industrial Rescue, Long Duration Breathing Apparatus, Teleboom, Pumper Tanker, Water Tanker and many other Appliance Qualifications.

Other outside Qualifications include Cert IV Outdoor Education, Swiftwater Rescue, Advanced Instructor and Guide in Whitewater Canoe and Kayak, Workplace Trainer and Assessor.

Being a member of an Emergency Service as a Professional/Career Firefighter is a very complex situation and unless you are involved or work in it on a full time basis you cannot understand the complexities that it presents.

The training is very intense and involves numerous skill sets that an outsider never sees, I keep hearing that the Volunteers are trained to the same level, this is not possible in a volunteer environment. As Career Firefighters we have been trained from the beginning through a vigorous Recruit Course then ongoing Continuation Training for another 4 years then a Retention Course to ensure you are meeting the standards required and after that numerous ongoing skills maintenance programs and extra skills and appliance training as you progress through your career. Even coming up to my 30 years' service with the MFB I am completing drills and training almost every shift I am on all the while still turning out to Fires and Incidents.

That brings me to another point in that a majority of the Community and I hate to say it but a lot of Politicians still do not know the various incidents that the MFB attend and manage, I have been appalled at the lack of information that has been published in this area. Numerous politicians and media have shown utter ignorance in pushing and advertising false information out to the public without the correct knowledge/information being provided, criminal in my eyes.

Another misleading headline thrown out there is that this is a Union takeover of the Fire Services, how utterly false.

We require a Union because as an Employee of an Emergency Service we need to be able to have a say in the Health and Safety of our workplace which is also the environment which the Community is in. I

have seen countless CEO's come in to shake up the organisation mostly in the name of saving money, well I hate to tell you but you can't skimp on dollars when it comes to the best reliable rescue gear and protective equipment when trying to protect the public from harms way. Time and time again they have tried to take the easy road which would be to the detriment of ours and the communities safety. It is only through the Union and its members(us the Firefighters) that we have managed to keep our heads above the water and fight for the Health and Safety of the Firefighters and Public.

I am in an interesting position in that I live 4 days a week in Boronia and 4 days at Mt Buffalo in the North East Alpine Region of Victoria.

I mention this as living in a remote area of Victoria I am more than aware of the need for an efficient, well equipped, qualified and skilled emergency service to service the areas I live in.

I am so dismayed and hurt by the goings on over the past 3-4 years of constant harassment , bullying and total bastardry that has been directed at Career Firefighters from the Governments both State and Federal and the Press.

The lies, deception and misleading information have been criminal and hopefully will be addressed at some stage in the form of legal retribution for the hurt, disrespect and psychological harm that has been inflicted upon us.

I have witnessed the no shows of CFA Volunteers to calls in their own areas on numerous occasions and when they have been on scene and offer assistance it is regular to not to be able to utilise them as they don't have Structural Firefighting or Breathing Apparatus Qualifications which is a double edged sword as it means the scene is hazardous for them and then we have no back up if needed.

A lot of what I am hearing from the Volunteers is that if the Urban Areas are expanded to include more Career Firefighters they will not get to attend as many fires or incidents as the Career Firefighters will beat them to a majority of the calls, is this not a positive for the Community?

The outer rural areas will have the same protection from the CFA Volunteers they currently have.

Response times are paramount for any fire or emergency incident, it cannot come down to turf wars or getting beaten to scenes.

I have attached a link to a recording regarding an interview with an SES member which beggars belief but this is the general trend of what I keep hearing.

[https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/file/SES%20R.A.R.%20False%20Claims%20on%20ABC.mp4?token=AWx1YrwpsostCTzJMt33iUA1nsvnrwR6cxX80QI2a\\_I7krk9k8atFHkeCv2WS46XwF-ApCarc50bOszT37PeXzpdhtD9sS\\_rTFCfvrdCKQEYKxd7ieLwc6xjGkYGWqv-cng7loDwiujzqycnthnYFctmW28MtTKWwc31B8qWjn1gNIRLQzl6ngym85DaOsdgagM](https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/file/SES%20R.A.R.%20False%20Claims%20on%20ABC.mp4?token=AWx1YrwpsostCTzJMt33iUA1nsvnrwR6cxX80QI2a_I7krk9k8atFHkeCv2WS46XwF-ApCarc50bOszT37PeXzpdhtD9sS_rTFCfvrdCKQEYKxd7ieLwc6xjGkYGWqv-cng7loDwiujzqycnthnYFctmW28MtTKWwc31B8qWjn1gNIRLQzl6ngym85DaOsdgagM)

I also keep hearing untruths as to MFB not being qualified in Bushfires and not having the vehicles capable, this is totally untrue we are trained in Wildfire and a large number of us have experienced being sent out on strike teams and our Pumper Tankers are more than capable in urban and rural areas when

needed.

Another furphy thrown around is not having local knowledge, well local knowledge is a nice to have but it is the training that is the important part, a number of MFB and CFA Career Firefighters live or have lived in rural areas and our outside interests are also diverse, I have extensive experience in the outdoors being a guide in remote areas and having travelled extensive areas of Australia in both tracked and untracked, utilising navigation, weather and survival skills, all coming into play out in the field.

If the CFA volunteers believe we don't have local knowledge and shouldn't be utilised in Strike Teams or Surge capacity for these reasons they should have a good look at themselves as it means they should not be utilised in Surge Capacity as they will be sent to any area in the state thereby losing their 'local knowledge' advantage!

I have been involved in a number of Strike Teams over many years including to Sydney and our skills and equipment were proven to be exemplary.

Again the turf war syndrome and worrying timing issues being highlighted by the CFA volunteers need to be removed from this whole equation and what is best for the community is what matters and that is a timely response by qualified crews with appropriate training, equipment and Firefighters to allow the incidents to be managed in a safe efficient manner thereby Protecting Life and Property to the best of their ability.

Regards

Mick Renshaw