



"EMSDEN, Paul"

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Amalgamation of Victorian Fire Services

I would like to address the Victorian Fire Service debate by submitting my following concerns and information.

I would like to break this into two sections:

- As a Victorian resident .
- As a professional firefighter.

As a Victorian I reside in St Helena, a suburb about 23km from the Melbourne GPO, and have so for the past 21 years.

St Helena is located just outside the MFD although it shares the same postcode as Greensborough 3088 (inside the MFD) during my first years at this address I was always amazed at the obvious differences in fire protection and response in my locality. By travel distance they are about the same although, just because of boundaries, my house is classified CFA area and therefore originally all 000 calls for a response would be only given to the CFA, adding another four to six minutes to their response because of being a volunteer station.

Over the past few years the model of response has changed greatly, Eltham is now a full time crewed station and 000 responses are assigned to both Greensborough and Eltham fire stations at the same time. This means that they arrive sooner and have more fire-fighters ready to perform their tasks safely.

Whilst I understand the complexities of the past situation my neighbours have not. Don't you think that all Victorians deserve the best response to any emergency as rapidly and safely as possible wherever they may reside?

I am sure that many good people will submit a lot of information about the greater integration of our fire services, while I think that list may be expansive, I would like to comment on one area.

Training of firefighters both professional and volunteer is a large task, spread across a vast area and many workplaces. Since our organisations inceptions, our goals have been to protect the people and minimise personal and business losses. Over time the organisations have diversified in different Government acts, industrial agreements, clothing, trucks, breathing apparatus, procedures and teaching methods and the list goes on.

To achieve this we have duplicated services that are designed to achieve the same thing.

By just streamlining us all under one banner, using similar acts of government, similar modules of governance, similar organisational work procedures, similar equipment we could stream line the training processes required in all those areas. Training is a huge initial investment in fire-fighters, and because of their breadth of information required to perform their tasks safely, is a large ongoing cost to all organisations.

Creating Fire Rescue Victoria would consolidate a large amount of this training infrastructure and material into one organisation which could then better process, and assist our country service with like training information and data at a greatly reduced cost.

In short all Victorians pay a fire service levy and should be entitled to the best response possible in the shortest period of time. Making sure that this doesn't compromise the safety of the responders, whether professional or volunteer. Training of all responders with the same information equipment and ethos would assist in an improved level of safety, at a reduced cost, for all Victorians.

Stay safe

Kind Regards

Paul Emsden

**Station Officer Paul Emsden AFSM | District Training Officer
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