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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
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bcc
Subject Fire Services Reform inquiry

To whom it may concern

I have been a professional Firefighter with the MFB for nearly 30 years and I am currently at Richmond Fire Station.

My job description as a Leading Firefighter is to attend alarms of fire, incidents and rescue to predominantly the metropolitan fire district. I am trained as a specialist High Angle Rescue Technician and also an Urban Search and Rescue Technician which is based at Richmond Fire Station this job description quite often takes us outside of the MFD, responding with CFA, SES, VICPOL and AV. Working alongside my CFA colleagues you can witness two services with exactly the same goals and objectives. Training and equipment is similar but variations are obvious.

The current twin Fire and Rescue Service provided to the people of Victoria has become out dated over a long period of time. I have physically observed Melbourne’s population growth and urban sprawl out to the fringes and into country areas, people looking for cheaper real estate options and also lifestyle change. This includes traditional holiday areas becoming permanently populated.

In this mix there are firefighters employed by both the MFB and the CFA who live in the metropolitan areas and travel to CFA stations and live in the country areas and travel to MFB stations.

Defined response times taken for granted within the current MFB boundaries should be made available to the populated fringe and country areas. This is a service that can be achieved by integrating existing MFB / CFA career stations with the continuation of the support from volunteer firefighters which has been a huge part of our Fire Services for years.

The one fire service model would bring into alignment the training, equipment, trucks, R and D etc making our resources more efficient and cost effective. The most relevant point is the people of Victoria would have a single fire service that would provide them a better service with a greater coverage and better response times.

The time has come to bring together two fire services which worked on a model that suited the state for a long time but is now very out dated. A modern single fire rescue service with professional and volunteers is now required to continue us forward into the years ahead.

Regards
LFF Robert Wilcox
Richmond Fire Station

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