

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire service reform submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached my submission to the fire service reform bill.

Kind regards

Sam



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Dear Assistant Clerk Committees

INQUIRY INTO THE FIREFIGHTERS PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS COMPENSATION AND FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2017

I am Sam Dennis, I have been a member of CFA for 15 years (7 years as a volunteer firefighter and 8 years as a career firefighter). I currently hold the position of Leading Firefighter and UFU Shop Stewart at Wodonga Fire Brigade and live in Bright. I was appointed as a recruit course Instructor for courses 2/2016 and 3/2016 where my role was to teach and develop recruits into professional firefighters with the skills, knowledge and professionalism to perform their role. I have also received a National Emergency Medal for the role I played in the 2009 fires.

I hold the following qualifications:

- Station Officer qualified (preforming higher duties over the coming months)
- Ground Observer
- Level 1 Incident Controller
- Crew Leader structure & bushfire
- CERT IV training & assessment
- CERT IV Firefighting Operations
- Strike Team Leader
- EMR operator (emergency medical response)
- Various CFA pumper increments
- 3.4 c Tanker incremented

1 also hold the following specialist qualifications:

- Heavy HAZMAT technician
- Aerial Pumper incremented
- 19.8m Teleboom incremented
- 37m Ladder platform incremented
- Breathing Apparatus Van incremented
- Various CFA pumper
- Tanker 3.4c

I am writing this submission in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons:

Wodonga Integrated Fire Brigade is situated in North East Victoria on the Murray River and Hume highway. Wodonga has a population of 39,249, making it the third-fastest growing regional city. It is expected that Wodonga population will grow by 1.81% per annum until 2031, resulting in significant population increase. Wodonga has a range of industry and retail precincts that pose significant risk. Wodonga also has a rural-urban interface that becomes a major risk during the summer period. The Brigade responds on average to 600 calls per year, and the career firefighter are responding up to 30km out of town to provide specialist capability to surrounding communities.

Wodonga career firefighters attend all fire calls within Wodonga and support West Wodonga, Baranduda, Barnawartha, Bonegilla and Leneva Fire Brigades to fire calls in their communities. Wodonga career firefighters have 4 staff on shift 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The career firefighters at Wodonga are highly trained and aside from the normal firefighting duties preform specialist roles in technical rescue, ground observing and breathing apparatus support across the North East.

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) would be of great benefit to not only the career firefighters, but the volunteers and most importantly the community. FRV will assist with the standardisation of career firefighter training, specialist response capability, improved service delivery and better standards of equipment.

When responding to fires/incidents, it is critical that a minimum of seven firefighters are responded, so the Incident Controller can implement strategies and tactics to achieve their objectives and bring the emergency to a safe conclusion.

Currently in Wodonga this is only achieved occasionally, this then leaves the Incident Controller with a difficult decision to make. Do they commit an unsupported crew to an internal fire attack and primary search (initial search for occupants) in a dynamic and very dangerous situation, or do they wait an unknown amount of time for support to arrive with back up breathing apparatus (BA) crew for crew rescue if something goes wrong internally. To wait would mean the fire would develop, engulfing the structure and the time for rescuing trapped occupants would have passed, with a catastrophic outcome for the community.

An example of the above is at a house fire on the 02/01/2016 (at this time the manning level on Wodonga Pumper was three). Wodonga Pumper responded to a house fire on Belgrade avenue, Wodonga. On arrival the rear of the house was involved in fire. The occupier was unable to account for everyone. My Station Officer was left with a moral obligation, should he send me in, on my own to preform internal fire attack and a primary search for occupants or wait for a support appliance to arrive. In consultation with me he decided to send me in. Luckily he did this as the next arriving appliance on scene was eight minutes after us and I was able to complete a primary search, clearing the house of anyone being inside and contain the fire to the room of origin before the next appliance was on scene. If we waited eight minutes, the house would have been completely involved and totally destroyed. If there were seven career firefighters responded to this fire this difficult decision would not have to be made. Having to make decisions around the safety of your crew is not easy and can have long term impacts on the mental wellbeing of individuals. Fortunately on this occassion we achieved a good result with no one injured, but while we continue to run this system where the support is not guaranteed for various reasons, these decisions will have to be continually made and it will only be a matter of time before one of my work mates is seriously injured or killed. (Please see attachment 1 for Incident Management System details)

Currently in Wodonga, volunteers for various reasons are struggling to respond to fire calls. Family, work and other commitments take up time in volunteers lives. It is a fact of life that volunteers are not always able to respond. This is no fault of the volunteers. To have seven career firefighters responded to fires/incidents in the Wodonga area would ensure that

adequately qualified personal arrive on scene in a timely manner and that there are not any difficult decisions regarding safety of crews for the Incident Controller to make before starting to deal with the emergency. The Fire Service Reform will provide for changes in the Wodonga area that will ensure that service delivery standards (SDS) to the community are meet, volunteers won't have so much pressure to respond when they are tied up with other commitments and career firefighter are provided with the safe work systems that we deserve to preform our jobs to the high level that we do and ensure that we safely return home to our families.

To highlight how important this is in Wodonga, I have put together some service delivery standards (SDS) data from the last three months for the purpose of this submission. (Please see attachment 2 for a detailed breakdown of volunteer response failures in our service area).

Career Firefighters in Wodonga respond in 90 seconds and have three main supporting volunteer brigades being Wodonga, West Wodonga and Baranduda. There are three parts to service delivery and the relevant data from the last three months as follows:

- Respond appliance in required time;
 - Wodonga Volunteers have an 91.1% failure
 - West Wodonga Volunteers have an 87.2% failure
 - Baranduda Volunteers have an 61.5% failure
- Appliance on scene in required time;
 - Wodonga Volunteers have an 83.3% failure
 - West Wodonga Volunteers have an 72.2% failure
 - o Baranduda Volunteers have an 75% failure
- Required skills mix achieved on scene;
 - Due to system limitation I have been unable to obtain the required data to provide the same statistical breakdown. However, in my experience when an appliance gets on scene it is rare that there is a fully qualified and proficient crew to safely manage the incident.

Wodonga volunteers fail to respond any appliance to fires/incidents 37.8% of time while West Wodonga fail to respond any appliance to fires/incidents 20.5% of the time. Baranduda have been able to respond 100% of the time for their 13 turn outs. This is quiet alarming for the career firefighters located at Wodonga as they currently aren't guaranteed support within an acceptable timeframe for safety of themselves and the community. This is not the volunteers' fault, it is just a fact of life in our modern society that brigades are finding it harder to respond due to members' other commitments. This is why Fire Service Reform is so badly needed in Wodonga and Victoria.

In District 24, volunteers won't be displaced, this is a myth that has been pushed by various parties. Volunteers at Wodonga Fire Brigade will be co-located with FRV and the rest of the district will stay where their current brigade is, preforming the same role they have always done. They will not change how they respond to fire/incidents within their communities. Career firefighters will still respond to assist volunteer brigades for specialist roles as per the current response arrangements that are in place.

District 24 will not lose any surge capacity, all brigades including Wodonga will still have volunteers respond as part of strike teams to assist locally or across the state in the event of large bushfires as they have always done. I'm yet to hear of one volunteer in District 24 that has resigned due to the attention the fire service has received from media and parliament members in Victoria in the last two years. But others would have you believe there has been a mass walk out.

The Fire Service Reform allows for CFA to become a fully volunteer organisation, with additional funding to assist in developing and promoting volunteerism and ensuring that volunteerism in CFA is strengthened through better access to training and leadership programs and in-turn meeting the community expectations of CFA.

Personally the dispute around my workplace conditions of employment has dragged on for too long. My work mates, family and I have had enough of front page news articles, comments from members of parliament and other associations that have conveyed false information that is hurtful and damaging to our image in the public and not to mention the extra stress it puts on us in our day to day lives. My work mates and I preform a very dangerous job and I think we have every right to ensure that the equipment, training and systems of work that we use are to the highest standards and safest possible practice to ensure that we come home to our family's at the end of every shift unscathed.

I have attached the following documents:

- 1. CFA incident management system details of Belgrade avenue house fire
- 2. Service Delivery Standards spreadsheet





Attachment #1.

District	24	Inc No	1555404	Pir No 3	Total PIR N	Incident O	rigin	02/01/2016 11:13				
Name	e BELGRADE AV Pir Date Time 02/01											
Status	SAFE				Level 1	Size	SMALL					
Location	WODON	GA		Te	Territory CFA							
Brigade	24562 WODONGA F/B											
Туре	STRUCTURE Cause											
Мар Туре	VICMAP(SPATIAL	VISION)	Мар	Name NORTH	EAST						
Map Scale	1:20,000			Ma	o Grid 8308 J7							
MGA Zone	55 Ea	sting 4-9	913-36 No	orthing 60-018	-53 Event D	escription	STRUCT	URE	FIRE			
Prepared By	CAD Entry Date Time 02/01/2016 11:44											
Approved By	Significant Incident Archived								Archived <a>			
Notes												
CAD event: 16	60100512											

Report Date: 07/07/2017 13:32

 District
 Inc No
 Incident Name
 Incident Date
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 Total
 Entry Date
 Shift Date
 Shift Time
 Shift Type

 24
 1555404
 BELGRADE AV
 02/01/2016 11:13
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 02/01/2016 11:15
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Resource Details

Category	Resource Type	Resource Name	Count Enroute	On Scene	Returning	In Station	Out of Service	Location
FIELD CMD VEHICLE	BRIGADE VEHICLE	WODONGA FCV	02/01/2016 11:31	02/01/2016 11:37	02/01/2016 12:05	02/01/2016 12:10		
PUMPER TANKER	CFA	WODONGA PUMPER TANKER	02/01/2016 11:22	02/01/2016 11:26	02/01/2016 12:13	02/01/2016 12:19		
PUMPERS	TYPE 3	WODONGA WEST PUMPER	02/01/2016 11:18	02/01/2016 11:28	02/01/2016 12:00	02/01/2016 12:20		
PUMPERS	TYPE 4	WODONGA PUMPER	02/01/2016 11:15	02/01/2016 11:18	02/01/2016 12:25	02/01/2016 12:31		
TANKERS	2.4C	BARANDUDA TANKER 1	02/01/2016 11:21	02/01/2016 11:28	02/01/2016 11:42	02/01/2016 11:53		



District Inc No	Incident	Name Incident Date
24 1555404	BELGRA	ADE AV 2/01/2016 11:13:00
Date	Туре	Comment
02/01/2016 11:12:43	SC:	SC: HOUSE FIRE
02/01/2016 11:13:02	NA:	NA: WODONGA, WODONGA WEST, BARANDUDA
02/01/2016 11:14:51	MG:	MG: WODOP1 ACK FURTHER
02/01/2016 11:18:28	MG:	MG: WWSTP1 ACK FURTHER
02/01/2016 11:23:34	WB:	WB: CTRL - SSO BRADLEY - SF NY UC
02/01/2016 11:28:48	WB:	WB: CTRL - SSO BRADLEY - SF UC
02/01/2016 11:34:27	MG:	MG: CTRL - NA RDO OF EV AND HAVE HIM CONTACT WODOP1 MOBILE - POLICE FOR
02/01/2016 11:34:27	MG:	MG: WELFARE ISSUES
02/01/2016 11:37:18	MG:	MG: RDO 24 ACK ON AIR
02/01/2016 11:41:33	MG:	MG: CTRL - NA WODO COUNCIL MERO CONTACT WODOP1 ON MOBILE OR ATTEND -
02/01/2016 11:41:33	MG:	MG:
02/01/2016 11:44:06	WB:	WB: CTRL - SSO BRADLEY SF ST @
02/01/2016 11:46:58	NA:	NA: WODONGA RURAL COUNCIL AT 1141AH SERVICE TO PASS ON
02/01/2016 11:51:41	MG:	MG: CTRL - MAKE WWSTP1 AVAIL
02/01/2016 11:55:08	MG:	MG: CTRL - POLICE ON SCENE
02/01/2016 12:07:08	MG:	MG: CTRL - NA DHS AND HAVE THEM TO COME OR PHONE RESIDENT ON
02/01/2016 12:07:08	MG:	MG: EMILY
02/01/2016 12:09:22	NA:	NA: DHS AHACK ALL DETAILS
02/01/2016 12:13:03	MG:	MG: CTRL - PLEASE PASS ON PH

9 of 10

Attachment #2

	S Analysis	I			STA				DONG VOL			WEST W				BD	UDA	
ate	Time			Primary / S	TURN OUT	ON SCENE	TURN OUT	ON SCENE	Mins TO	MINS OS	TURN OUT	ON SCENE	MINS TO	Mins SO	TURN OUT	ON SCENE	Mins TO	Mins SC
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₩06/2017	13:31:00	1635125	STRUC	P	13:33:00	13:35:00	NR				13:39:00		00:08:00					
2 06/2017	07:32:00	1635206	STRUC	S	07:32:00	07:36:00					NR							
100/06/2017 (Occ /2017	07:51:00	1635467	NSTRUC	S	07:52:00	07:56:00			100000000000000000000000000000000000000		NR							
06/2017	21:18:00	1635567	NSTRUC	Р	21:20:00	21:28:00	21:27:00	21:31:00	00:09:00	00:13:00								
06/2017	09:14:00	1635917	ALARM	Р	09:16:00	09:20:00	NR				09:22:00	=	00:08:00					
1506/2017	11:11:00	1365926	STRUC	P	11:13:00	11:15:00	NR				11:18:00	5	00:07:00					
147 06/2017	13:35:00	1636071	STRUC	S	13:46:00	14:42:00												
(A)06/2017	17:17:00	1636094	ALARM	P	17:19:00	17:24:00	17:29:00		00:12:00		17:25:00	-	00:88:00					
06/2017 06/2017	19:31:00 17:23:00	1636380 1636507	NSTRUC	P	19:32:00	19:38:00	19:40:00	19:43:00	00:09:00	00:12:00	19:38:00	19:43:00	00:07:00	00:12:00				
1 8/ 06/2017	02:19:00		GRASS	S	17:25:00	17:29:00					17:30:00	-	00:07:00					
20/06/2017	02:54:00	1636567 1636804	NSTRUC	P P	02:22:00	02:27:00	NR			22/28/23	200000000							
22/06/2017	17:12:00	1637111	AIARM	S	02:57:00 17:13:00	03:00:00 17:18:00	03:04:00	03:08:00	00:10:00	00:14:00	03:05:00	-	00:11:00					
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29/06/2017	22:01:00	1638005	ALARM	P	22:03:00	22:05:00	22:03:00	22:06:00	00:02:00	00.05.00	18:22:00	18:22:00	00:12:00	00:12:00				
2/05/2017	13:33:00	1638627	ALARM	P	13:36:00	13:38:00	NR	22.00.00	00.02.00	00:05:00	22:08:00 NR	22:11:00	00:07:00	00:10:00				
2/05/2017	21:14:00	1630691	NSTRUC	P	21:16:00	21:21:00	21:22:00		00:08:00		INK							
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6/05/2017	16:38:00	1631211	NSTRUC	S	16:40:00	16:47:00	NR	-	00.00.00		16:41:00	16:46:00	00:03:00	00:08:00	16:46:00		00.00.00	
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25/04/2017	10:33:00	1629729	ALARM	P	10:34:00	10:40:00	NR	v3.30.00	00:60:00	00:14:00	10:42:00	2	00:00:00					
26/04/2017	08:07:00	1629833	ALARM	P	08:07:00	08:10:00	08:09:00	08:12:00	00:02:00	00:05:00	10:42:00	-	00:09:00					
27/04/2017	15:53:00	1630019	ALARM	s	15:55:00	16:04:00	00.05.00	00.12.00	00.02.00	00.05:00					16:00:00	16:03:00	00.07.00	00.10.5
28/04/2017	20:27:00	1630174	STRUC	P	20:29:00	20:32:00	NR		ľ		20:32:00		00:05:00		20:32:00	16:03:00	00:07:00	00:10:0

SDS Compliance	TO % Failure	OS % Failure	Overall SDS Compliance	Failed to respond
Wodonga Vol	91.1%	83.3%	7.1%	37.8%
Wodonga West	87.2%	72.2%	19.2%	20.5%
BDUDA	61.5%	75.0%	8.3%	0.0%
Total Jobs for April May June 2017	2nd Brigade response	%		
124	62	50%		

Turn Out Failure On Scene Failure is based on all primary calls and a turnout time of 4 mins for Wodonga Vols 6 mins for Wodonga West is based on all jobs a truck got out of the station and meet an onscene time of 8 mins or less.

WODO VOL - This figure is based on the 18 occassions they booked on scene and achieved SDS on 3 occassions.

WODO WEST - on 18 occassions they booked on scene and out of 18 times SDS compliance was achieved on 5 occassions

BDUDA - on 13 occassions Bduda made it onscene 4 times and out of those 4 times they made it onscene with in 10 mins on 1 occasion.