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04/07/2017 07:15 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
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Subject Personal submissions to the Select
Committee for Fire Services Reform

Personal submissions to the Select Committee for Fire Services Reform

From: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I respectfully request my submission be treated as **confidential**.

My name is [REDACTED] and I have been a professional MFB firefighter for the last 6 years. I am currently based at Taylor's Lakes fire station and respond to emergencies across the border between the CFA and MFB. Previously I worked with at risk children in the western suburbs and was employed as a child protection worker with DHS. Currently I am writing to express my support for the proposed fire services reform.

I have been a volunteer myself (Lifeline counsellor) and have enormous respect for the CFA volunteers I work alongside. My own home and family are protected by a volunteer brigade, and I have no hesitation commending the volunteer model where I live, because it is a low density rural area (Castlemaine). However all Victorians deserve a fire service that is structured to respond to the risks and infrastructure of the area that they live in. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas. That response time is what stops fires at their room of origin in 90% of the fires that the MFB attends. All Victorian, professional and volunteer firefighters, deserve modern fire services that are structured to meet the needs of our growing communities.

How many years should our current dysfunction be allowed to continue? Both the CFA and MFB are beset by such extraordinary levels of conflict that only structural change can address this. Moving away from EBA negotiations that attempt to mandate S.O.P.'s into our employment contracts and to a less destructive format such as Final Offer Arbitration (as used in parts of Canada and New Zealand) would dramatically improve organisational cohesion. But this, and other much needed reforms cannot be implemented while our fire service is at war with itself (corporate vs. operational and career vs. volunteer).

From my first hand experiences as a professional firefighter and as a volunteer, I can affirm the proposed reform will be good for volunteers. These reforms will give volunteers increased support and a structure that is dedicated completely to them.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a firefighter, I ask you to please support the proposed fire services reform. Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of your constituents and all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer firefighters because of the enormous urban growth

resulting in increased emergency calls.

I also respectfully submit that you give consideration to my request to modernise the fire service along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before the commencement of the fire season. This is important to me and my colleagues. I would also welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to talk to you further about my personal experiences as a professional firefighter and why this reform is so important.

Kind regards

[Redacted signature block]

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