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07/07/2017 04:46 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject CONFIDENTIAL Submission to Fire
Services Reform Select Committee

1 attachment



Submission.pdf

To the members of the Fire Services Reform Select Committee ,
Please find attached my submission for your consideration .

Please note, this submission has been marked as confidential because I would like my name
and any identifying information to be kept confidential . However, I am happy for the content
of my submission to be made available for your consideration .

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7 July, 2017

Fire Services Reform Select Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne
Victoria 3002

Dear Members of the Fire Services Reform Select Committee:

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a Qualified Fire Fighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). I have been a fire fighter with the MFB for over 14 years.

I am writing to you to address how important I believe a reform of the Victorian fire services are. Changes to the current model are vital to ensure that all Victorians are given the best fire and rescue coverage possible as well as protecting the health and safety of fire fighters.

The current fire services have remained relatively unchanged since the 1950s, while the state's population and urban sprawl has continued to grow at a rapid rate. Areas that would previously have been zoned rural have now become heavily urbanised. This has meant larger structures such as shopping centres, business hubs, schools, hospitals and high-rise buildings making up our built environment. Melbourne has also become a city of higher density living and in conjunction with this we have seen an increase in traffic congestion.

As this growth has occurred, both the MFB and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) have struggled to keep up so that we now have a model where parts of metropolitan Melbourne aren't serviced by an urban fire fighting service, such as the MFB, and are instead serviced by volunteer CFA brigades. This has placed extra demands on a group that traditionally were not trained or expected to combat the kinds of incidents that occur in an urban environment. They are also at the disadvantage of not always being able to respond in a timely manner, or they may not have enough members to crew an appliance, especially during normal business hours.

Victorian residents deserve better than this, particularly as they are now paying a levy with the expectation that when they need the fire services, they will get a swift response from a group of highly trained individuals who can help them in their time of need. This was one of my key motivators when I made the decision to give away a highly paid corporate life and pursue an occupation which makes a difference in people's lives.

Sadly, over the last few years, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain my motivation due to the continued attacks on my chosen occupation. I can't think of many other occupations that have

to continually justify themselves and their conditions to other family members, friends and members of the public. Nor are there many occupations that are constantly discredited by certain political parties and media publications that seem to get away, without sanction, with quoting and publishing misleading information. This has led to my family and I at times, feeling depressed about my career and future. I know I'm not alone in feeling this way.

The proposed reform to the fire services is well and truly overdue in my opinion, but is an opportunity to improve public safety, improve health and safety on the fire ground for fire fighters and hopefully provide a new beginning for all Victorians.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

Sincerely,

██████████

Qualified Fire Fighter

Footscray Fire Station