



07/07/2017 10:39 AM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
 cc [REDACTED]
 bcc [REDACTED]
 Subject Fire Service Reform

The Fire Services select committee
 Victorian Parliament

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the fire services reform select committee.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a Leading Firefighter with the MFB with 29 years of service stationed at Newport within Western Zone.

Western Zone is a highly urbanised area that also has industrial areas and many major hazard facilities as well as shipping ports that service the petrochemical industry. My qualifications include; Ultra Large Pump ,Ship Board firefighting and ship to ship transfer courses which enable me to respond to major hazardous incidents that occur my zone.

On the 12th of October 2007, appliances from Newport and Spotswood fire stations responded for reported smoke in a small furniture factory in Yarraville.

The origin of the smoke was from a spray booth used for spraying furniture with Nitrocellulose.

Three Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus were investigating the building when a chemical reaction caused an explosion resulting in the building becoming fully involved in fire.

Two Firefighters made it outside, however LFF Zapart did not, the two Firefighters LFF Johnson and LFF Oconnell along with LFF Fincher who was standing by in breathing apparatus as per standard operational procedures entered the building to assist.

LFF Richard Zapart was found unconscious from the explosion, his breathing apparatus demand valve on his face mask had melted from the intense heat and he was unable to breath. Richard was tangled up in debris, it took the three firefighters to drag him outside. His shift mates who then with their emergency medical response training and equipment were able to resuscitate him.

Richard Zapart spent weeks in a coma, he almost bled out several times and was lucky to survive.

He sustained burns to 55% of his body and lost all of his fingertips. Richard's body is scarred and has had many operations and has suffered intolerable pain.

However Richard Zapart is a very lucky man, he was employed by the MFB an organisation where 7 firefighters respond to every fire call and where two firefighters are standing by dressed in full protective clothing wearing breathing apparatus ready to assist at a moment's notice, not only to assist colleagues but rescue the public as well.

Richard is now retired in Northern New South Wales close to his children and grandchildren, he lives a very active and normal life. He cycles goes sailing and potters around the garden.

I support the fire services reform, the Melbourne metropolitan area is rapidly growing. Firefighters and the general public deserve to have 7 firefighters respond rapidly to every alarm of fire. The nature of our work is time critical whether its road trauma, industrial accidents, chemical spills, emergency medical response, gas leaks, fire or any other emergency, having 7 on the fire ground is world's best practice.

Such a reform will provide for one manageable fire service with fully trained personnel providing a first class fire and emergency service response within Victoria, backed up by the CFA in the rural sector and some fringe areas.

If Richard Zapart was responded to the same situation with only 3 Firefighters on scene in the initial minutes he may not have survived.

I urge you to consider supporting this legislation ,and deliver the Fire service that all Victorians deserve.

I can confirm that only my name and identity remain confidential

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