

Dear Members of the Committee.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the chance to have my say in the Fire Service's Review and show my full support for reform that is being proposed by the Andrews Government.

My name is Allan Kent and I have been a career Firefighter with the MFB for 30 years and have been stationed at numerous stations in Central and Northern Districts. At present, I am a Senior Leading Firefighter stationed at Greensborough Fire Station situated at 141 Grimshaw Street in Greensborough. I am qualified in all aspects of firefighting, this includes Structural Firefighting and Wild Fire. I also hold qualifications in specialist gear, Pumper Tanker, Water Tanker, Heavy Rescue and Teleboom. The heavy rescue involves being able to respond to a myriad of car accidents, flooding's, roof collapse, industrial accidents. This appliance also responds to some minor accidents like when a young child has his or her hand stuck in the plug hole of a bath or has their hand caught in the chain of a bike also if someone has injured their hand and their rings have stopped the blood flow to the finger the rescue is called to cut the ring off the finger. As you will understand it is a very diverse appliance. It also responds to any structure fire second alarm and above. This is because the rescue has more tools and equipment that is used by firefighters in gaining access to dwellings and factory or any structure. The Teleboom is an aerial appliance that is used at fires and rescues. It has the capability to perform rescues from height. Both of these appliances also respond to many varied and different calls through the normal operational week. I am also the district Health and Safety Representative. This role allows me to visit my designated work group and make suggestions to the work group on how they can improve the workplace. I have been awarded a Chiefs Commendation for a rescue from a flat fire in Preston where MFB crews were able to save the life of the resident and I have one of the first EMR certificates for successfully defibrillating and resuscitating a patient that suffered a major heart attack in North Balwyn in the early days of the implementation of the EMR role undertaken by Firefighters. Although we are not told of the outcome of the patients we treat it was gratifying to know with this certificate that the gentleman had a stay in hospital but then went home to his family.

With my current workplace at Greensborough we respond with Eltham CFA, South Morang CFA and also Plenty CFA. Plenty CFA is fully volunteer based and Eltham and South Morang are integrated stations. Our station is quite unique as our turn out area stops at St Helena Road which is only 1400 meters from our front door. If there is a fire or accident on that corner we are not responded. It is the volunteer brigade from Plenty that go along with Eltham brigade. The OIC from Plenty is in charge of the scene and has the ability to call for the gear that he or she wants. This has happened before were the OIC has been at a school fire at Apollo Parkways Primary school in Greensborough. MFB Greensborough was not included in the initial response

and did not get respond for some 45 minutes later as the OIC deemed that the MFB were not required our station is only three kilometers from the school. I believe there was a coronial inquiry into the fire. Recently there was a house fire in Cassia Close Greensborough again only five and a half kilometers from the station and with this fire Greensborough was not responded at all. Eltham and Plenty initially responded it was more than one hour the first MFB appliance responded and that was the Teleboom from Thomastown Fire Station. I felt for the owner of the house as it was a complete loss the outcome may have not changed but the nearest appliances were not responded to this fire. I am able to supply the full call history for the event if required.

There are many other situations that have taken place over the years but I do not have all the facts and would only like to share factual incidents with you that I have firsthand knowledge of.

In our area, we have a large shopping complex along with several Aged Care Facilities and some large secondary schools that have close to 1200 students at each them. Thankfully we respond with other career stations to 95% of these. I say this as I am unsure of the qualifications held by the CFA volunteers. If they are not BA trained they are unable to assist in rescue if required in a smoke-filled environment as this puts their safety at risk along with my safety as there is no one to assist me if something goes astray. All of these require a rapid response to ensure the safety of the occupants and this comes from a modern fire service. With the population growth in the urban sprawl there needs to be changes to the MFB and CFA boundaries. The borders have not changed in over sixty years with the implementation of FRV these boundaries will change for the betterment of both country and city Victoria. If we are called to a fire in Booyan Cres or that area of Greensborough. Our only access is via Plenty River Drive. This route takes us from MFB area into CFA area and back into MFB area.

With my years of service, the industrial disputes have a huge impact on morale in the service over the years the industrial situation has improved but with the implementation of Fire Rescue Victoria or whatever it may be called this will bring a cohesive effect to the service as the Firefighters will know that the best outcome will be delivered to community and to the people of Victoria be it country or urban and also the safety of Firefighters. The CFA started a campaign of Hands Off The CFA and with the changes proposed this gives them complete control of the CFA. That is what they want.

I live in Diamond Creek and the suburb is protected by volunteer firefighters. I hope that one day the residents of Diamond Creek will get the same as Eltham and some parts Greensborough residents because at present volunteers are unable to deliver the EMR role and this has proved to save life's in the community.

Once again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my submission and if you would like to contact me please feel free to do so.

Kind Regard's

Allan Kent

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