



Andrew Fox -Lane

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Service Bill Select Committee
submission

1 attachment



Fire Service Submission Fox-Lane.pdf

Dear Fire Service Bill Select Committee,

Please see attached my submission in support of proposed fire service reforms.

Regards,

[Redacted]
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I wish to echo the sentiments of Victoria's dedicated firefighters who seek a modernised, cooperative and effective fire service. The present system facilitates the following critical failings:

➤ **A lack of interoperability between Victoria's career firefighters.**

As a CFA firefighter based in Springvale I have attended factory fires on the MFB/CFA boundary where it was impossible for me to utilise and operate on scene equipment because of the MFB/CFA demarcation. Could I use MFB breathing apparatus? No, I'm not trained in its use. Could I find and operate essential hand tools on an MFB truck? No, as separate organisations we are blind to each other's operating procedures, fireground tactics and equipment stowage/use.

➤ **Fire service boundaries that are outdated and need urgent revision.**

Melbourne's population is booming. 2016 Census results show outer urban areas (CFA/MFB boundaries) have experienced population growth of up to 34% in the past five years (City of Wyndham.) Maintaining the status quo (boundaries drawn up in the 1950s) will exacerbate the farcicality of Melbourne receiving fire protection from two distinctly separate career firefighting organisations. My first dot point illustrates why this is a debacle.

➤ **Internal conflict.**

As a result of CFA's 'integrated' model UFU and VFBV representatives have quarrelled over organisational and operational procedures for decades. Politicians and the media have encouraged these divisions by demonising career firefighters for political gain. The drain on morale for firefighters on the ground is catastrophic. To maintain the current integrated arrangement is to condone a continued deterioration of the mental health and wellbeing of Victoria's firefighters.

The governments proposed reforms address the above concerns by:

- A single career firefighting arm that benefits from economies of scale and unified operational procedures.
- Periodic updates to fire service boundaries to secure appropriate levels of protection for urban areas.
- An enhanced CFA. Autonomy, ongoing support from career staff, additional funding and a guarantee of the continued role of Volunteers within Victoria.

I ask you to respect CFA's proud history but not at the expense of securing Victoria's future.

The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress. - *Charles Kettering*

Sincerely,

Andrew Douglas Fox-Lane, CFA firefighter, Springvale Fire Station.

Contact details: [REDACTED]