



06/07/2017 06:24 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF  
cc  
bcc  
Subject Fire Service Reform Submission

Hello, my name is Ben Witte, and I am emailing my thoughts on the proposed Fire Service reform and how they are long overdue in my opinion and experience. Victoria is about the only state left in the country that doesn't operate on a similar model to the one proposed. There are currently multiple fire stations that have been well and truly enveloped into Melbourne's urban suburbs, being Point Cook, Caroline Springs, Werribee just to name a few out west. These stations still operate under the umbrella of the 'Country Fire Authority', but have not been a country stations for decades. They too also are still operating as a co-located volunteer station. There are a myriad of simple issues that should not impeding our career fire staff in those area's across the MFB and CFA. Some of which are because the Country Fire Authority is a 'Country' service, they still operate on an analogue radio frequency to ensure radio coverage for crews. Whilst the metropolitan crews use digital, and the 'Country' career staff surrounded by mobile and MMR radio towers have to rely on outdated analogue radio. There is so much interference on analogue radio they are regularly almost inaudible to crews. So to combat these issues the CFA crews have been provided 'One' portable digital radio to communicate with MFB crews, which is far from sufficient.

The cost savings of merging the career services together would be substantial in the long run, being able to equip both staff with the same equipment, conduct the same training and alleviate fire ground issues of incompatibility for the career staff at the same time.

These area's are well and truly urbanized enough to require a fully career staffed fire service. The residents within these area's are all paying a Fire Service Levy expecting a reliable prompt turn out in case of emergency. If I was living in this area and unfortunately had to wait the extra minutes for a volunteer brigade to turn out whilst my house was on fire I would question seriously what I am paying for. Especially as it cant be guaranteed that the crew which arrives may not even all be trained in Breathing Apparatus and cant conduct an internal fire attack, all but condemning my property. Please consider these issues and modernize Victoria's career fire services and bring them into line with the rest of the country.

regards

Ben Witte [REDACTED]