



Scott Gambino

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To Consultation/DTF@DTF

cc "io3@ufuvic.asn.au"

<io3@ufuvic.asn.au>

bcc

Subject Submission to proposed Fire Service Reform - In support

My name is Scott Gambino, I am a Senior Station Officer attached to Ballarat City Fire Station . I wish to express my support for the proposed Fire Service Reform .

My service with CFA commenced as a junior volunteer member with Birregurra Rural Fire Brigade for 5 years before transferring to Ballarat Fire Brigade for 3 years, then joining the staff ranks in 2001. I have worked at a number of integrated stations including Geelong City , Hoppers Crossing and Melton.

My current station Ballarat City is one of 35 integrated stations across the state consisting of approximately 60 career and 20 volunteer members.

Over the past 20 + years as a member of CFA, I have seen the organisation grow. Unfortunately that growth has not kept up to the needs of the community due to a number of challenges such as urban growth, in particular across outer metropolitan and regional cities .

I would like to talk about the City of Ballarat because this is where I know best and where most of my CFA experience has been drawn from, both as a staff and as a volunteer .

Ballarat City is the only staff station in the whole of the city and is surrounded by the fully volunteer brigades Wendouree, Sebastopol, Ballarat and Buninyong. The ever increasing workload on these volunteer stations has reached a point where expectations of the community simply can't be met, as well as service delivery standards. This is at no fault of the volunteers, as they have personal commitments to attend to such as work and family . These commitments make them at times unavailable to respond to emergencies both day and night .

The reform is critical for the safety of fire fighters and the community and would ensure that fire service coverage is adequate by establishing a review committee to assess which areas require full-time firefighter response (FRV) according to activity levels and risks.

On a daily basis whilst responding to emergencies we are often advised by our communications centre that these brigades have failed to respond . This not only results in a reduced quality of service to the community but also severely affects the safety of already responding firefighters .

The supporting appliance from my station , known as Ballarat City Pumper 2, responds to all calls to these brigades and only has a crew of 3 firefighters. In order for us to safely conduct a search and rescue inside a burning building we require 4 firefighters. This is CFA's own Standard Operating Procedure. The national recommendation requires 7 firefighters on the

fire-ground for safe operations to occur .

The reform would fix this by ensuring each appliance is sufficiently crewed (minimum 4 firefighters on each pumper ) and would also mean that each area, no matter where you live in Ballarat, would get adequate resources to their door within 8 minutes of making a 000 call; a standard of which is not being met in many suburbs of Ballarat .

It is so disappointing to hear of rumours and mistruths circulating in the community and media saying that the reform will "carve up" the CFA, when in fact it will allow CFA to carry out their business the way they want to without the interference of a staffed service such as Fire Rescue Victoria and vice versa.

I believe the reform will bring the Victorian Fire Service up to date and allow it to operate as a modern day service rather than an antiquated 1950s service.

Regards

**Scott Gambino Senior Station Officer**  
Ballarat City Fire Station – 1120 Sturt Street Ballarat 3350



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