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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
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Subject Submission to the the committee for
Fire Service Bill

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To Committee for Fire Services Bill.docx

Hello

Please find attached my submission to the the committee for Fire Service Bill.

Please keep my name and address confidential.

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To Committee for Fire Services Bill

I am making this submission as I believe reform is required to the way the Fire Services in Victoria are structured. I have been employed as a fire fighter with the MFB for 6 years. I currently work in Nunawading and live on the border of MFB and CFA areas. I have kept this brief because to me it is very simple.

The current structure and boundaries of the Fire services are extremely out-dated. The boundaries that were drawn up long ago in no way represent the coverage that is required now. I grew up in Mooroolbark and went to High school in Lilydale and know lots of people in the area. When friends and acquaintances talk to me about my job and the fire services in general, they are shocked when they realise Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Chirnside Park, Montrose and other surrounding suburbs have no professional Fire Fighters protecting the community. These were built up areas when I was young and populations have increased significantly in my life time, however there has been no change to the boundaries under which the fire services operate. If Croydon was deemed urbanised and populated enough 60 years ago to be protected by professional Fire Fighters, then surely any reasonable person would accept the surrounding suburbs are well overdue.

During my time in the MFB I have been stationed at Fire stations close to the MFB and CFA border. From these stations I have turned out to Fire calls into the surrounding areas covered by CFA Volunteers. Although some of these turn outs have been a long distance for us into the CFA area, I can't remember a time when a Volunteer truck has physically been on scene before the MFB appliance. This includes a gas leak I attended from Croydon Fire Station which was 300 metres away from the Mooroolbark Volunteer CFA station. This inability to respond promptly by the CFA Volunteer stations is not the fault of the men and women who volunteer, but the fault of the out-dated structure we work under. This inability to respond quickly also does not meet the community's expectation. It is not unreasonable for people to expect that living in a suburb of Australia's second largest city; they would be protected by a professional full time Fire Service.

The MFB has a proud history and I am honoured to work for an Emergency Service which has such a high standing in the community. In some ways it is a shame that this reform will put an end to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, but it is the first step towards a better Fire Service for all of Victoria. There are many more reasons why this reform is good for Victoria which will undoubtedly be covered by the large number submissions you will receive. For every problem encountered to implement such a large change, there will be a solution. We are not the first state to reform our Fire Services and hope it does not take this long to adapt the next time it is required.

Until the last few years I was unaware that the Fire Services were such a political issue. Hopefully all sides of Government can acknowledge this reform is long

overdue and take the necessary action to improve the Fire Services and provide Victorians with the level of protection they deserve.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

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