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06/07/2017 01:36 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Confidential Submission

1 attachment



Fire Service Review.docx

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 6 July 2017 1:31 PM
To: 'consultation@dpc.vic.gov'
Subject: Confidential Submission

Please find attached my "Confidential" submission for my name and address only.

Regards.

[Redacted signature block]

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This email and any attachment may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient you are not authorised to copy or disclose all or any part of it without the prior written consent of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board.

I [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] do hereby request that my statement be submitted to the Fire Service Review, my name and address be kept confidential.

I'm currently the Senior Station Office on A platoon at Fire Station Number 2, West Melbourne, Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB). I have been with the MFB for 3 years commencing on the Victorian Fire Services secondment program and now a permanent employee.

Prior to commencing in my career path in the emergency services, I was with the CFA as a junior member in 1985-87 with the Langwarrin Fire Brigade, it was these formative years that helped me to understand the complex nature of being a volunteer.

In 1988 I enlisted with the Australian Army and was fortunate to gain an opportunity of working in the Army Fire Service, this involved various duties similar to those in an professional urban fire station and which gave me the opportunity to work with local volunteer fire brigades in NSW.

I reconnected with the CFA in 1994-95 when I volunteered with the Bayswater Fire Brigade for that time duration during my military service.

I discharged from the Military in 1999 and joined my local volunteer fire brigade in Carrum, to continue to serve and share in the camaraderie that I found volunteering creates.

It was during this period that I commenced employment with the Department of Sustainability and the Environment (DSE), now DEWLP, as a Project Fire fighter in 2000, I had worked in various parts of the state whilst still continuing to volunteer with the Carrum Fire Brigade.

In 2002 I joined the Staff ranks of the CFA, it was during this time that I first noticed a change of attitude and acceptance of my membership. When the Brigade was responded I was very much one of the first members on the appliance, living behind the station also helped with the turnout times. I undertook leadership roles in training and mentoring younger members of the Brigade.

On Sundays the Brigade would carry out the cleaning duties, on one particular Sunday I was assisting with the cleaning and instructed a member that had come late to assist with the last task of the morning, the toilets, that member didn't want to do the cleaning as a result left the station. I was then informed by a person in the Brigade Management team that "**No Staff was going to tell his Volunteers what to do**" and that I was not welcome in the brigade.

I had been a member of the volunteer ranks in some form or another since 1985 and resigned that day, to this day I have a collective total of 32 years of service to the Victorian Fire services and still believe that this type of attitude is not wide spread,

however this type of harassment and condescending attitude to the staff has continued throughout the years, and I have experienced first-hand.

I had formed strong relationship during these times which still continue today within the volunteer ranks at Patterson River Fire Brigade, this Brigade was formed after the amalgamation of Carrum and Chelsea in 2006.

In 2011 I was promoted to the rank of Station Officer I was appointed to the relieving platoon at Patterson River Fire Brigade. After working all over the state I was very happy to be returning to the home station where my professional career commenced. I was especially looking forward to assisting the volunteers to development their own skills and knowledge in the craft of fire-fighting and to assist those members that wanted to make fire-fighting a career, just as the staff had done for me, many years earlier.

Unfortunately there were still some of the old members in the brigade at that time that had made it their mission to undo all the good work that been done to implement a change in the CFA and the Brigade for the future, this resulted in an untenable work place for many staff and as result many moved on quickly to other stations. It is this unwillingness to adapt and change within the developing requirements of a modern fire service that will see Victoria less affective and/or efficient in the emergency services sector, something which we used to be leaders in.

I truly believe that fire service reform is not only needed but very long overdue, but paramount. Consideration should be given to the globalization of our communities, this will bring more complexities of which would not otherwise seen in outer suburban areas. This should then become a focal point for emergence management and security, will these complexities become beyond the capabilities and competence of the training framework of the local volunteer fire brigade to manage on their own?

I strongly believe that this review is needed to chance the current operational structure of the Fire Services in Victoria, the amount of duplication is staggering.

- In total 4 varying types of fire service in the state, 3 government types and 1 private.
- 3 governing boards, each with a very hefty cost associated with it.
- 3 Chief Officers and each with a cost to the state.
- At one point 2 fire training colleges, both doing the exactly the same thing, training fire fighters for Victoria.
- 3 different systems to purchase equipment, such as personal protective equipment, radio equipment and vehicles, a very costly exercise in triplicate.

For far too long now people with narrow a minds and only their own interest at hart have been trying to manipulate those in power to keep the Victorian Fire Services as they have been since the 1950's, old and antiquated, they have done this only to appease those individuals. I truly believe that the integrated model is a flawed, to ask two very different working groups to understand what motivates the other is problematic, and to the mix the interference of a working document like the EBA, will only help to worsen that working relationship further.

Victoria is the only State to operate the "Integrated Fire Brigade" model, if this was world best practice, then why hasn't it been adopted all over the country.

Regards

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