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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
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Subject Submission to the Fire Services
Legislation Reform Parliamentary
Committee

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SUBMISSION TO THE FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION REFORM PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.docx

Please find attached Submission from myself Peter Renton, Station
officer, Mildura Fire Brigade.
Kind Regards,
Peter Renton

PETER RENTON
STATION OFFICER MILDURA
CFA DISTRICT 18

SUBMISSION TO THE FIRE SERVICES LEGISLATION REFORM PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

To members of the Parliamentary Committee,

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide information which I am confident you shall find useful.

I have been a career fire-fighter since joining the MFB in 1986. I was fortunate enough to be involved in an International Exchange Program in 1993 to the city of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England, where I worked for a period of 12 months as a firefighter. During this time, I made a number of observations, one of which included the fact they had 9 fire-fighters on the fire ground at that time, comprising 1 appliance containing 5 members; the second appliance containing 4 members. This structure enabled implementation of safe and comprehensive fire-fighting operations to occur. This was identified in the early 90's as a suitable number to address the risks that were presented to them. I believe 20 odd years later in a State where our population is growing at approximately 100,000 people, the requirement to have 7 career fire-fighters on the fire-ground would be a minimum standard to have the ability to implement a basic incident management structure, which should provide safety to all fire-fighters on scene at incidents.

During my career, I have also had the opportunity to work within the CFA for the last two years as a Station officer at Mildura, in District 18. Mildura is an integrated station working with 7 CFA Volunteer Brigades. My experience has been one of trying to set a framework to develop relationships which are resilient, educational, supportive and respectful of the roles we all need to fill to provide the state with a comprehensive and trusted brand that the community will feel supported and safe.

A recent example of interoperability working at its best was a fire at an almond hull storage plant, upon arrival volunteer brigade had initiated fire-fighting strategies; I worked with the Captain in trying to achieve a strategy to contain and suppress the fire which involved approximately 3 acres of almond hulls in rows of which 80% were on fire. As the incident escalated, council personnel, other agencies and Senior CFA Officers were involved. The fire took 3 days to bring under control and extinguish, in which time numerous volunteer members from around the district attended, working together with a common purpose of the safety for the community and businesses in a well-structured manner.

I have been asked by numerous volunteers, whether the impact of a restructure will be of a negative nature to their brigades, and I have been able to explain the same fire-fighting structure that exists now for volunteers will be unchanged going forward. Also, I have received feedback from numerous volunteers who feel the restructure will be a positive for their brigades, as they can see a well-structured career model will flow on and create certainty, stability and framework for their brigades. As outlined, the information being delivered needs to be of a positive and factual nature which will give certainty and provide a sense of positivity within the brigades.

PETER RENTON
STATION OFFICER MILDURA
CFA DISTRICT 18



One fire service will provide for efficiencies to be identified and implemented in turn the utilization of resources will be at the higher end of value for money, which in turn allow for savings that will provide greater development of the Emergency Services Sector.

As a Committee, it may feel like a huge decision to restructure the fire service, however change is overdue and feel confident when making your decision that there is a huge amount of positive support for one fire service which will be implemented by very capable and passionate officers and crews, who at the forefront of their thoughts is always what is best for the community they serve.

Any further questions you have of myself feel free to contact me on the number provided.

Kind Regards,

Peter Renton

Station Officer

Mildura Fire Brigade