



Rachelle Poustie [REDACTED]
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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Services Reform

To whom it may concern,

My name is Rachelle Poustie and I am a career fire fighter working out of Mildura, as well as a volunteer fire fighter from a small shed in district 5 near my parents farming property.

I am writing this submission, in support of the proposed reform of the fire services for the following reasons;

In my career so far, there has been only one occasion where any volunteers have arrived on scene at a call out within our primary response area. This was late and well after the fire had been extinguished, and I believe they only arrived as the call out was for a house fire. They cannot be relied upon to respond to anything perceived as difficult, or to mundane jobs especially, and the reform guaranteeing two trucks with at least 7 firefighters, dispatched within 8 minutes, would be a step in the right direction for not just fire fighter safety, but community safety.

Volunteers are a terrific resource, but are best utilised in areas of less incidents where their normal life is not adversely affected by the need to respond. They shouldn't be expected to attend hundreds of calls a year, and as such should be a separate entity with different call out parameters and general expectations. Our training is hugely different to theirs, and the volunteers that I know from more distanced rural areas, are nothing but relieved to see professionals turning up at their incidents.

In my more personal contact with volunteers- my father being captain of our local brigade down south, I am of the opinion that volunteers will be unaffected and even strengthened by this reform. The bitterness and infighting caused by pointless tensions between staff and volunteers may dissipate when each entity is able to take ownership of their own organisation and have as much pride and separation as they would prefer. Volunteer support will be maintained with operational firefighters to assist with training, and the volunteers I have spoken to have been well aware that the reform is not going to have an impact at all on their performance or capabilities. These have been the volunteers I have been able to reach out to; and it is a shame that there are still volunteers or there being fed biased and hurtful opinions. If we were able to all disseminate information in regards to logical and factual impacts, I feel this would strengthen ties, and encourage more people to volunteer, actually increasing surge capacity and performance.

The reform will also have a positive impact on the ability of career staff to train and respond with uniformity across metropolitan areas, as suburb sprawl and growing regional areas require further resources. The metropolitan fire brigade as well as the CFA as we know it, will only be strengthened by development of a stronger organisation with the best of both. Streamlined training, uniform equipment and a sharing of staff and resources as required should save money and greatly improve efficiency.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. Hopefully this helps to build confidence in making the right decision, to support the proposed reforms and allow everyone to better do their jobs and get on with the important stuff, serving the community.

Regards,

Rachelle Poustie



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