



06/07/2017 01:30 PM

To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Service Reform

06/07/17

Secretary,

Below you will find my submission to the Fire Service Select Committee. I wish for my name and identity to remain confidential due to my employment with the MFB but the submission itself can be considered within the committee. Thank you.

Re: Fire Service Reform Bill

To the Fire Service Select Committee

My name is [REDACTED] and I am writing to you as an MFB firefighter of over 4 years to ask for your support for the proposed fire service reform.

This reform delivers Volunteer Firefighters a new training ground at Ballan, over 100 million dollars towards training, station and equipment upgrades. It delivers presumptive legislation for occupational cancers for ALL firefighters. It also puts to bed claims of the United Firefighters Union trying to takeover or control Volunteers. I am yet to hear any factual negatives against this reform. In fact with people like Craig Lapsley, Steve Warrington and Greg Mullins driving and overseeing the changes I trust that we have the opportunity to give Victoria the two world class fire services they deserve.

Both Volunteer and Career firefighters have blatantly been used for political points over the last 4 years (my only years of employment with the MFB) and it is time that it was put to an end. The stress and anxiety caused to all firefighters and their families along with the slanderous relentless attacks on career firefighters have absolutely changed my perception of the job I joined. As a committee I don't doubt that you can see this has been dragged out by people with a vested interest in seeing any changes fail.

No firefighter Volunteer or Career joined to become a political pawn.

The current fire service model is outdated and has stagnated. With the Turnbull governments legislation it has now ground to a halt. The long standing issues with our fire services will not be resolved without proactive action and change for a state that is in the middle of a population explosion.

The states fire services are long overdue for change and while emotion and alleged lack of consultation are being used as barriers to change I haven't seen any factual information on how this change is not positive.

Below is an excerpt from this week's Herald Sun.

The Census 2016 figures released on Tuesday morning reveal Melbourne will overtake Sydney by 2050 as the most populous Australian city — with an average of almost 2000 new residents moving here each week.

And since 2011-

- * *The City of Melbourne's population grew by 45 per cent, up 94,000 to 136,000*
- * *There was a 34 per cent growth in Wyndham in the city's west, up 56,000 to 220,000*
- * *The Surf Coast-Bellarine Peninsula was the highest growing regional area, up 18 per cent*
- * *Bendigo's population grew by 9.6 per cent, while Ballarat's population grew by 8.6 per cent*
- * *Melbourne was the third-fastest growing region in Australia, up 12 per cent*

Kara Irving, AAP, Herald Sun

The census also reports that Victoria is growing at a rate of over 100,000 people per year for the last 3 years.

On top of these census results the Australian Bureau of Statistics lists 7 of the top 10 growth areas in Australia as being in Victoria.

Cranbourne East, South Morang, Epping, Point Cook, Craigieburn-Mickleham, Truganina and Melbourne itself. The common theme from this is that all these growth areas outside Melbourne are still classified as country and protected by a fire service which has had no significant structural change for 50 years.

Even Matthew Guy described population growth as the "*biggest issue facing the state*" and also said

"State Governments can't stick their heads in the sand any longer, Liberal, Labor, ... it doesn't matter, it is time to start confronting the issue." 3AW

As a committee I respectfully ask that you consider the facts placed in front of you and not emotion. While it has been a brutal and testing time for all firefighters career and volunteer I am heartened to see the response from many volunteer brigades across the state who have reacted with optimism to what a restructure would provide to their

communities. Apart from the 35 integrated stations there will be no change. This fire service reform has been positively received by career and volunteer firefighters and for many including myself is seen as light at the end of the tunnel.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]