

Without Prejudice

To the Fire Services Reform Bill Select Committee.

I wish to have my name and contact details; including, but not limited to, my name, email address and telephone number; suppressed (blacked out as a minimum) when this submission is published as I wish that my personal details are not be disclosed.

My name is [REDACTED] and I have been a professional MFB Firefighter for a period in excess of 25 years. During this period of employment I have been based at many Metropolitan Fire District stations including Somerton Fire Station.

I write to express my support for the proposed Fire Services Reform Bill.

- In Somerton Fire Station's area of Campbellfield/ Somerton/ Broadmeadows/ Westmeadows/ Coolaroo/ Greenvale/ Roxburgh Park/ Craigieburn/ Epping, I've seen first hand what happens when an urbanised area is not fully serviced by a professional career fire service. On many occasions I have had to turn out to Craigieburn/Greenvale/Mickleham areas with only a volunteer response and to the Northern areas of Epping, which is way beyond the turn out area of this Fire Station, because the volunteer response has been inadequate or not at all. The problems associated with this issue are particularly highlighted when an Emergency Medical Response is required. The human heart must be defibrillated within 10 minutes to achieve a successful outcome, the longer it takes, the less likely a good result can be achieved. In the MFB we can deliver this service in the time frame required. The area that I work in is heavily populated and many calls for assistance of this type are received and require a professional Firefighter response.

- Victoria's fire services boundaries have not changed significantly in 60 years. Under this outdated system, 35 areas are wrongly zoned as 'country', despite being heavily urbanised and residential. Frankston, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Craigieburn, Melton, Springvale, Boronia and Geelong are just some of the 35 'country areas'.

- These areas need to be modernised as they are highly urbanised areas as part of the reform of the fire service. A rapid 8 minute response, with 7 professional career Firefighters on two fire trucks is the minimum standard needed in highly urbanised areas.

- All Victorian, professional and volunteer Firefighters, deserve modern fire services that meet the needs of our growing communities.

To ensure the safety of all Victorians - including me as a Firefighter, I ask you to please seriously consider your support for the proposed fire services reform.

Reform of our fire services will ensure the safety of all individuals in all communities in our growing state. Additionally, it will ensure the safety of our Firefighters and stop the ever increasing and unrealistic demand being placed on volunteer Firefighters because of the enormous urban growth resulting in increased emergency calls.

I also respectfully submit that you give consideration to my request to modernise the fire service along with the introduction of presumptive legislation laws to protect fire service employees. Both are needed to be endorsed and implemented by Parliament before the commencement of the fire season. This is important to me and my colleagues.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]