

From: Benn Pigdon
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fire Services Reform
Date: Friday, 7 July 2017 3:56:50 PM

Dear Assistant Clerk Committees,

My name is Benn Pigdon, I have been employed by the Country Fire Authority since August 2012. I am currently a Leading Fire Fighter stationed at Ballarat City Fire Station and I live in Ballarat Central.

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

- Firefighter and Community Safety -
 - I consider myself extremely fortunate to work at Ballarat City Fire Station where we are able to respond two fire trucks with at least 7 fire fighters to structure fires. This allows us the personnel to conduct an internal fire fight utilising breathing apparatus in the safest possible way. That is allowing for an additional breathing apparatus crew on standby to rescue the initial crew should it be required, whilst also having the other three fire fighters controlling the incident, operating the pump as well as running hose, setting up traffic control, providing first aid etc.
 - Having two trucks with at least 7 fire fighters immediately dispatched also ensures that any rescue efforts for any individuals trapped inside a structure fire can be conducted without delay and also any damage caused to the structure is kept to a minimum.
 - Whilst we are lucky in Ballarat, a lot of career firefighters in a vast number of built up areas within Victoria work with the outdated current fire system that relies on volunteers to be available to turn out to provide the support to safely perform their job provide a high level of service to the community. It has got to the point now that this is no longer viable as people have less and less time available to volunteer for a number of reasons and therefore there is never a guarantee of the support ever arriving.

- Career Firefighter in One Service & CFA Fully Volunteer -
 - I believe that merging Victoria's career fire fighters under the one organisation is a positive reform in many ways. This would allow for a standardisation in many aspects including training, specialist response capabilities, response standards as well as equipment.
 - This reform will also allow for the CFA to once again be a fully volunteer organisation as it was intended to be allowing the organisation to focus on the recruitment, training and development of volunteers. This will be further enhanced by the increased funding provided to the CFA that was announce by the State Government.

- I think it is also important to note that these reforms are proposed for the primary response areas of the current 35 CFA career firefighter stations only. Therefore the reforms will not have any effect on volunteers.
- The Damage to Morale and Firefighter Wellbeing.
 - The proposed fire service reforms provides a positive solution to this ongoing dispute that has no gone on for way to long. This dispute and the uncertainty it has created has caused an massive drop in firefighter morale and wellbeing. I have seen many of my colleagues attitudes and enthusiasm continue to decline the longer this dispute goes on. I believe this is a massive shame as these are people that truly loved their job and loved being able to provide an essential service to the community without this uncertainty hanging over their heads.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission,

Benn Pigdon

Benn Pigdon Fire Fighter

CFA Ballarat City Fire Brigade – 1120 Sturt Street Ballarat VIC 3350



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