

Wednesday July 5, 2017

Dear Committee members thank you for your time and the opportunity for myself to send you this submission. I am writing to show my support to Fire Services reform. May I please ask that my submission be treated as **“confidential”**.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a Station Officer with the MFB, I have been employed by the MFB for 28 years. My present position is with Operational Training at VEMTC where I am training new Recruits, I have been an instructor on MFB Recruit Courses 115, 117, 119, 120 and 121. I will also be instructing on one of the new Victorian Recruit Firefighter (VRF) Courses VRF3 starting on July 29th. I was the Assistant Course Coordinator on MFB RC121, which was the first of its kind in that of the 12 instructors allocated to the course 3 were CFA Career Firefighters. I was very proud to be involved in this course and I saw first hand the benefits the recruits obtained by enabling them to not only learn from a MFB perspective but to also get some valuable skills which the CFA instructors' were able to pass on due to the small differing intricacies between MFB/CFA. After being involved in this cross pollination of instructors I am really looking forward to being involved in the new VRF recruit program and I can only see positive outcomes to the Victorian Community.

Prior to my current role I have work at most of the fire stations in Central and Northern Districts. I also worked in the Community Education Department for 6 and half years where I coordinated the FLAMES Program, which is a fire safety program aimed at school-aged children in English Language Schools and English Language Centre's. Whilst in the Community Education Department myself and the then Multi Cultural Officer created a new program aimed at fire safety for newly arrived migrants called The Multi Cultural Facilitator Program for which we won a RACV Safety Award.

I am qualified in all aspects of firefighting including Structural Firefighting and Wild Fire, I also hold qualifications in MK3 Pumper Tanker, MK3 Teleboom and Water Tanker.

Other qualifications I have are:

- Cert4 Workplace Trainer and Assessor
- MFB Peer
- Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP) Practitioner
- Juvenile Justice Education Practitioner (JJED)
- Fit 2 Drive Presenter
- FLAMES Presenter
- Workplace Emergency Management (I deliver courses such as Emergency Response, Extinguishers, Wardens and Chief Wardens to Industry contracting to FES)

My role as a Peer in the MFB has seen myself becoming very busy over the past year or so and this is largely due to the unnecessary vilification on firefighters in

the media. I personally have found these attacks very distressing to my family and myself.

I can think of 2 examples of the uncertainties when responding to fires with CFA volunteer backup.

The first one was only around 4 years ago when I was stationed at MFB No.11 stn (Epping) and we were responded to a reported furniture franchise store with smoke and flames visible. I was first on scene and requested a higher level of response due to the building being fully involved. The 2nd appliance on scene Pumper Tanker 9 (Somerton) I requested to set up at the opposite side of the building to myself. I only had a crew of 3 including myself. The next appliance to arrive reported to me was Epping CFA, I tasked them with a job requiring the wearing of Breathing Apparatus (BA) but the told me they were not operators therefore I had to change my tactics until I got more firefighters on scene who were BA trained. This has an impact on whether an officer will send a BA crew into a structure to perform an internal firefighting attack or not due the fact I can't be sure our back up crew could assist us if required, or in fact help if we get into trouble.

The second was approximately 15 years ago when also working at MFB No.11 stn. There were many times when we were responded to calls in Epping CFA area (which by the way was still very much Urban populated back then) and we would arrived on scene and one particular night it was a house fire with one room fully involved, once again we only had 3 crew and weren't sure if we would get back up, but in order to keep the fire confined to the room of origin my officer at the time made the decision for the 2 of us to go in and perform an aggressive internal attack, which we did successfully, but unfortunately we never received a CFA volunteer appliance as back up.

I think these 2 examples show the importance of having a minimum of 4 crew on all MFB pumpers and also the certainty of CFA back up into their areas. There are many other situations that have taken place over the years but I do not have all the facts and would only like to share factual incidents with you that I have first hand knowledge of.

During my 28 years of service I have seen many CEO's come and go and I have seen the huge impact industrial disputes have had on morale in the MFB both in Operational firefighters and also non Operational staff. I fear that under the current antiquated model this pattern will only continue.

I see Fire Service Reform as a way to start fresh, boost morale and rebuild the trust that has been lost over an extensive period of animosity. I hope that you take this opportunity to modernize the Fire Service for the benefit of ALL Victorians. This is well overdue.

Yours respectfully

