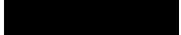




Dear Fire Services Bill Select Committee,

My name is , first and foremost I would like to thank all eight members for the opportunity to provide a submission. I am a current Leading Fire fighter with the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. I have 14 years of service, commencing my career with the MFB in April of 2003. I also spent 6 years as an active Volunteer Fire fighter with the CFA prior to joining the MFB as a professional Fire fighter.

I fully support the proposed reform to Victoria's fire service. I believe this will modernise the fire service allowing both professional and volunteer fire fighters to provide the communities of Victoria the service they need and deserve, now and well into the future.

The model we currently operate under has been long over-due for a major overhaul and has failed to keep up with the constantly changing Melbourne and Regional cities. Moving forward, if left alone, it will only get worse.

The volunteer fire fighters do a tremendous job protecting the communities in which they live and this will not change under the proposed reform as the fire service cannot exist without them. However, in many areas of greater Melbourne and regional Victoria the increased population and heavy urbanisation, along with individual circumstances that allow less and less time to devote to volunteering has increased the work load and pressure on the local volunteer fire brigades. In my own experience as a volunteer fire fighter I was a member of the Carrum CFA. This was 15 years ago and even back then Carrum was a heavily urbanised suburb on the outskirts of metropolitan Melbourne. Every year I was there the workload increased and the availability of members decreased. The pressure to ensure an adequate response was a struggle on a daily basis. Fortunately for members and more importantly the local community the brigade had the opportunity and support to merge into what is now the integrated professional/volunteer Patterson River fire station. Still being a local Carrum resident, I have witnessed the risk and workload in the area increase exponentially. Having experience as both a volunteer and professional I understand the benefits of a guaranteed response and as a member of the community with a young family I am glad for the service now available in my area in the unfortunate event we shall require it.

I support the reform to fire services because it allows for the best service to the Victorian community which, in my opinion, is the sole reason the fire service exists and should be the main point of view when considering and voting on the proposed bill. Secondary should be the needs of the fire fighters both volunteer and professional. The proposed reform guarantees that professionals and volunteer fire fighters can provide the best service to the community well in to the future by way of the many areas of support under the new structure to allow them to do so. The existing structure, if left in place, will only allow for 'band aid' fixes which would be a failure to the community.

I thank-you all again for your time and consideration. I request for my submission to remain confidential.

Regards,

