

Assistant Clerk Committees
Department of the Legislative Council
Fire Services Bill Select Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE
VIC 3002

Tom Maher



Submission to the Fire Services Bill Select Committee;

My name is Tom Maher, I was a primary school teacher for 14 years before joining the CFA. I am currently a level 2 Career Firefighter based at Greenvale CFA Fire Station. I graduated from an intensive 19 week recruit course in June 2016. I am a qualified Emergency Medical Response operator.

I believe that fire service reform is a necessary step in order to adequately protect our growing urbanised regions within the state of Victoria. Locally in Greenvale, there are a number of new estates being erected resulting in continuing population growth and being on the urban rural interface, we have significant risk from grassfire and bushfire. Greenvale Fire Station provides fire service coverage to;

- Large residential areas and new housing developments
- Shopping centres
- Industrial areas and factories in Campbellfield
- Significant infrastructure (including Gellibrand hill RADAR installation, Victorian police dog squad facility and Greenvale reservoir dam)
- Major road networks (Tullamarine Fwy and Hume Hwy)
- Rail corridors
- Melbourne airport
- Local schools
- Aged and disabled care facilities
- Large grasslands
- Woodlands Park and surrounding historic area

Greenvale also provide support to our surrounding Brigades which include MFB and CFA Integrated and Volunteer stations.

Currently our minimum staffing of career firefighters is 4 per shift with a Station Officer, Leading Firefighter and 2 firefighters.

In order to conduct safe operations at a structure fire, a minimum of seven firefighters should be on scene. This would include;

- An incident controller
- Four Firefighters – trained in breathing apparatus and search and rescue (a team of two in the structure and two on standby to ensure that if there is a collapse a team is ready to rescue anyone potentially trapped in the building.)
- A pump operator to ensure the supply of water and operate the pump.
- A firefighter assisting in scene management and management of the breathing apparatus crews

At Greenvale we are fortunate to have another Integrated CFA Station in Craigieburn as well as an additional 3 MFB stations in surrounding areas that enables another appliance to be dispatched to support the Greenvale appliance.

The Volunteers at Greenvale are committed to responding as much as possible, however other important commitments such as work and family requirements make this difficult. A number of our volunteer members work some distance from the station which means that a 24/7 response is not always guaranteed. Currently we have 11 volunteer members and 7 volunteer recruits, of which only 2 are endorsed to drive the tanker.

The Volunteers at Greenvale will continue to support the career staff as they currently do, under the proposed fire services reform, which will not impact their ability to be called upon as part of a strike team for major campaign fires.

The fire services reform is long overdue and will enhance the operational effectiveness of fire stations in urbanised areas of Victoria, guaranteeing a 24/7, 90 second response in areas that have a higher call rate/urban fire risk.