

To the Parliamentary Committee looking into Fire Service Reform.

This submission is confidential and I do not wish to be identified personally.

My name is [REDACTED] I am a Leading Firefighter in the MFB & currently stationed at Somerton Fire Station. I have been a Firefighter for almost 14 years.

Somerton is the most Northern MFB station. We frequently respond to fire calls into CFA area with both CFA Professional Firefighters and CFA Volunteer Firefighters and in my dealings all CFA Firefighters have conducted themselves in a Professional manner.

I personally support the Fire Service Reform because the Northern areas of Melbourne continue to grow. Areas like Greenvale, Attwood, Roxburgh Park, Craigieburn, South Morang and Epping are all still considered “Country Victoria”. These suburbs are growing at an extremely fast rate in both Residential and Industrial sectors. Unfortunately for people that live and work in these areas, they are not guaranteed a response to Fire emergencies in 90 seconds as they may have to wait for a Volunteer response which by no means is a lesser service but can be an extremely delayed response due to Work, Family, Social or other commitments of Volunteers.

Here are the Growth Statistics for the last 12 months for these Northern areas that are still considered “Country” and don’t have a Guaranteed Fire Response.

Suburb	Area	Population	Change
South Morang	Greater Melbourne	64,354	4,971
Craigieburn-Mickleham	Greater Melbourne	52,848	4,491
Epping	Greater Melbourne	42,236	3,226

This Northern Area of Melbourne has many high level risks, including Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Various Industrial sites, High density living and busy roadways that all require a Modern Fire Service and a timely response.

I live in a rural country town and personally see and hear the misinformation and harassment that has been spread by Print & Radio media along with the political parties regarding the CFA & MFB EBA in my community. Having to speak to people and give them the correct information from the misinformation that has been spread is a never ending battle. I have felt bullied, threatened and harassed by these lies and name calling. This has to stop as this campaign is having a serious effect on my mental health and I am sure it has affected MANY of my fellow Professional Firefighters. I personally have had to seek help from Medical Professionals.

The divide between Victorian Professional Firefighters and Volunteers is at an all-time low. Reform is needed to address this and the only way forward that I can see is to modernize Victoria Fire Services. ALL Victorian Professional Firefighters under 1 organisation which will hand the CFA back to a FULLY Volunteer organisation in which it started. This should then comfort all Volunteers that the UFU does not want control of the FULLY VOLUNTER CFA.

All Victorian Professional Firefighters want to keep Victoria's growing communities safe. We don't want a "turf war" or an "us vs. them battle". My job as a Firey is to keep people safe. Creating a New and Modern Fire Service will ensure that growing communities will have the most efficient response to emergencies to keep these people safe.

Regards

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