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 Pakenham
Fire
Brigade



ABN 39 255 319 010

28th August, 2015

Mr O'Byrne
Fire Services Review
Level 19
121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr O'Byrne

Re: Fire Services Review 2015

Pakenham Fire Brigade was established in 1995. It was formed after the amalgamation of the Pakenham Urban (formed 1929) and Pakenham Rural (formed in 1943) Fire Brigades. We became an Integrated Brigade in 2013. There are currently 79 Operational, 13 nonoperational and 26 Junior Volunteer members.

Prior to Integration Pakenham Fire Brigade responded to some 450 calls per year.

Pakenham Fire Brigade embraced Integration with enthusiasm. We see the opportunity this provides us is enormous. The Staff at Pakenham not only respond in the Pakenham Township, but provide support to the whole Cardinia Shire. Something that we believe is somewhat unique. They are supporting 16 Brigades and have been an integral part of our team.

We wish to emphasize the value and importance of Volunteers in Pakenham. The Volunteer Charter signed by the then Premier, Ted Baillieu MP in 2011 emphasises that the CFA recognises the commitment of Volunteers. "The CFA shall provide its services and support to Volunteers subject to the following principles..... Recognise and acknowledge the value of the time that Volunteers provide to CFA and ensure that Volunteer time is used to maximum advantage."

We understand a need for a review of the Fire Services within Victoria and acknowledge that it is important for all agencies to operate cohesively especially during Large incidents and Campaign fires. Whilst we support these aspects, we would like to write to you about how Integration has worked for us and how well the Staff and Volunteers work together at Pakenham with very minimal disruption.

As mentioned earlier, Pakenham were attending some 450 calls per year. This was putting significant strain on the Volunteers. With Staff coming to Pakenham, we have now dropped down to a much more manageable level as we are no longer responded to Non-Emergency calls. We also now no longer respond to support calls as the staff respond to these.

We have found that the support that the CFA Staff Firefighters have provided the Volunteers has extended to Training Nights as well. We train together on not only Fire Ground Practices and Drills, but Team work and Team Building to ensure we remain as one.

With the current climate and the obvious push towards one Emergency Service, we would welcome MFB Staff to experience the hospitality and teamwork that Integrated Stations such as Pakenham have. We realise that MFB aren't currently exposed to the Integrated Model but feel that they would be pleasantly surprised with the model.

We feel that we are qualified to address these issues as they are happening to us. We are living this right now. We think that the Integrated Model works extremely well. To change any part of that model would be attempting to fix that which is not broken.

We hope that our voice is heard and taken into consideration. We thank you for looking into providing support for Volunteer Fire Brigades with Staff Supporting to ensure viability in providing cost effective Emergency Services for all Victorians.

Yours sincerley

Marlene Jones
Secretary