

SUBMISSION OF DAMIAN NESTOR

1. I, Damian Nestor, Station Officer (**SO**), with the Country Fire Authority (**CFA**), of [REDACTED] in the State of Victoria, say as follows:
2. I have been employed by the CFA for 14.5 years. I currently hold the rank of SO and I have held that rank for 1 year.
3. Prior to my employment as a professional career firefighter with CFA I was a volunteer member for 10 years including a number of years as 2nd Lieutenant.
4. As well as holding the rank of SO I am qualified in a number of specialist roles including but not limited to:
 - i. Aircraft Officer
 - ii. Technical Rescue (i.e. Rope and Confined Space Rescue)
 - iii. Hazardous Materials and CBR
 - iv. JFAIP

Morale at Work

5. I feel that the morale at work has decreased during the Napthine Government (2010-2014) due to the uncertain future faced by the firefighters and the possible loss of job security.
6. I feel that the morale at work has also decreased because the CFA is failing to honour its agreements. The CFA's ongoing attempts to erode fire-fighter's terms and conditions of employment cause concern and uncertainty for CFA firefighters and their families.

Equipment and Staffing

7. The standard of equipment and operational response (including staffing) has decreased during the Napthine Government.
8. For example, following concerns being raised by the lack of training, equipment and transportation for a trench rescue response capability, the current [REDACTED] saw fit to remove Ballarat City Fire Brigade from being able to provide the service to the west of the state rather than work to fix the issues. The loss of response capability from Ballarat City means the gap has to be filled by response from the MFB and other brigades from distant areas.
9. Staffing levels are currently also not adequate to protect the Victorian Community and firefighters.
10. An example is at Ballarat City. Thirty to forty years ago the City of Ballarat had a minimum of 7 career staff on duty at any one time at two locations being Ballarat (East) and Ballarat City. In the early 1990s, staff were removed from the Ballarat (East) fire station and transferred to Ballarat City. Though attrition, the minimum

staffing levels then reduced to 5 throughout the proceeding years. Only in the last couple of years has the minimum staffing returned to 7 per shift. In contrast, the population, operational activity and required skills and knowledge have increased greatly. Add to this the reduced capacity of volunteer response and greater distances to the urban rural interface, means we regularly fail to meet any of the expected service delivery standards.

11. Ballarat City has the following appliances to respond:
 - a) 2 Heavy Pumpers
 - b) 1 Heavy Tanker
 - c) 1 Ladder Platform
 - d) 1 Hazmat (with new Heavy Hazmat yet to yet to be commissioned)
 - e) 1 BA Support appliance
 - f) 1 Ground Observer Response Vehicle (also used as our specialist rescue transport vehicle)
12. Both the new Heavy Hazmat and BA Support appliances have no accommodation and sit permanently out in the weather.
13. All these appliances must be staffed by the 7 firefighters we have on duty.

Interoperability

14. I have experienced issues arising from the lack of interoperability between the CFA and MFB and would like to see increased interoperability between the agencies.
15. This could occur by combining CFA career staff and MFB into the same service to cover all major provincial localities. This would allow the CFA to maintain a volunteer only service to cover the remaining areas, including smaller townships and locations, with the ability to call on specialist response services from the other service as required.
16. This alignment would ensure that service delivery in these areas are standardised and increases interoperability between the agencies allowing both agencies to provide an improved service delivery to the community.

Senior Management

17. There is a disconnect between Senior Management in the fire services and their employees as a result of the fact that senior management have little understanding of the real issues and stress factors facing the staff out in the field during their day-to-day work.
18. Especially in the light of the Fiskville saga, and as a result of the matters mentioned above, I have lost trust and confidence in senior management and that this trust and confidence is likely beyond repair.



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Damian Nestor

Date: 10 August 2015