

SUBMISSION OF JOHN CHURCHILL

1. I, John Churchill, Leading Firefighter (**LFF**), with the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (**MFB**), [REDACTED] the State of Victoria, say as follows:
2. I have been employed by the MFB for 40 years. I currently hold the rank Leading Firefighter and I have held that rank for over 20 years.
3. As well as holding the rank of Leading Firefighter I hold the following qualifications/memberships:
 - i. Station Officer
 - ii. Senior Firefighter
 - iii. Certificate IV
4. I have also received the Long Service Award.

Morale at Work

5. I feel that the morale at work has decreased during the Napthine Government (2010 – 2014) because of the actions of the government and senior management of the MFB. I feel that my work as a firefighter is not taken seriously and I do not feel valued. This affects my morale and makes me suspicious of the government's plans for professional firefighters.
6. The attempt by the MFB to set aside the Enterprise Agreement also lowered the morale in the workplace. We do not trust the brigade's senior management because of their attempt to take away our conditions. our morale is at an all time low. As previously noted, we do not feel that our work is valued. Otherwise they would not be attacking us in court and in the public arena.

Equipment and Staffing

7. I feel that the standards of equipment and operational response (including staffing) have decreased during the Napthine Government. When the MFB tried to turn us out to EMR calls by ourselves when senior management tried to close certain appliances according to weather conditions.
8. I feel that staffing levels are currently also not adequate to protect the Victorian Community and firefighters. The manning on most appliances is three. This does not allow us to safely or efficiently extinguish fires or save lives. To do EMR is extremely exhausting with only three men.

Interoperability

9. I have experienced issues arising from the lack of interoperability between the CFA and MFB. Turning out with understaffed volunteer stations does not allow us to fight fires or save lives efficiently or safely.

10. I would like to see increased interoperability between the agencies achieved by formulating one fire service for Victoria, with one standard practice and equipment procedure.

Senior Management

11. I believe there is a disconnect between Senior Management in the fire services and their employees because they believe our conditions and staffing numbers should be reduced. They are not on the fireground and are disconnected to our reality.

12. Management has belittled our work and abilities, via court and the media. As a result of the matters mentioned, I have lost trust and confidence in senior management. I believe there is no way to repair the relationship. The only way to repair the relationship is to have the senior management members involved in the actions mentioned be removed from the brigade, in order for us to move forward.

Other

13. I have been in the Brigade for forty years and through many disputes. I have never felt more devalued. The senior management statements have left me in no doubt about how they feel about my efforts as a firefighters, and how little they value me as an employee. This has left me suspicious, disappointed and angry. I feel that unless senior management involved are terminated, the brigades culture will forever be burdened.



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John Churchill

Date: 16 August 2015