

SUBMISSION OF ANDREW MARMION

1. I, Andrew Marmion, Senior Station Officer (**SSO**) with the Country Fire Authority (**CFA**), [REDACTED] in the State of Victoria, say as follows:
2. I have been employed by the CFA for 27 years. I currently hold the rank of SSO and I have held that rank for approximately 5 years.
3. As well as holding the rank of SSO I hold the following qualifications:
 - i. Level 3 Logistics Officer
 - ii. Rescue Operator, Ladder Platform, Long Duration Breathing Apparatus (BG 174), Confined Space Rescue, Trench Rescue and Ground Observer
 - iii. OHS Representative
4. I also serve as the UFU OHS Coordinator and have done for 15 years and represent the UFU on the following committees:
 - iv. Member of Standards Australia Committee Firefighters Personal Protective Equipment (SF049)
 - v. Shop Steward
 - vi. Fire Station Design, Appliance Design, PPE / PPC, Station Wear, Health and Safety and Interoperability

Morale at Work

5. I feel that the morale at work has decreased during the Napthine Government (2010-2014). There is a clear lack of support for professional firefighters in the role we perform from upper management. This evident in the operational arena where we are underutilised, with CFA Management allowing volunteer brigades respond to fire calls that we could have responded to.
6. The CFA also continuously failed to consult in good faith and continue to take actions such as building new appliances without consultation and with little regard to the needs of firefighters or OH&S requirements.
7. In three cases that I am aware of the CFA in fact purchased new appliances that could not even fit inside the stations that they were purchased for. These types of situations arise because senior management in the CFA feel that they do not have to honour the enterprise agreement and consult with firefighters.
8. This continuous failure to consult in line with their obligations under the Enterprise Agreement reduces morale at work and the trust firefighters have in Senior Management.
9. In relation to station wear, CFA management have deliberately delayed the roll out of station wear to firefighters. When it was finally rolled out to firefighters, the CFA in their wisdom, decided to issue to non-operational employees. Issuing firefighter

uniform to non-operational personnel I feel devaluates the position of a firefighter and highlights to me how little senior management value the work that we do as professional firefighters in the CFA. The CFA treats professional firefighters like second class citizens, making us feel like necessary evil.

Equipment and Staffing

10. The standard of equipment and operational response (including staffing) has decreased during the Napthine Government.
11. An example of the standard of operational response being affected by staffing numbers was an incident I was responded to on 30 July 2015. This was a structure fire in The Basin fire district. Both Boronia Fire Station, where I am stationed, and the Basin Volunteer Brigade, were responded to this incident. The Incident involved a double garage attached to house fully involved. As the officer on the appliance I arrived on scene with the two other firefighters on my appliance and awaited support from the volunteer brigade. The Basin is known for having delays in response particularly during working hours. It took approximately 8-10 minute for extra support to arrive and this was in the form of the Bayswater Volunteer Brigade. However they only had two firefighters on their pumper meaning the numbers I had on scene were still not sufficient.
12. The Basin Volunteer Brigade did eventually arrive on scene 1-15 minutes after the initial call however their appliance was crewed by three volunteer members. This meant that I did not have sufficient numbers to carry out safe operations for some 10-15 minutes and having the support of volunteer firefighters also complicated matters as I was not aware of their skills and competencies meaning I had real concerns about what jobs I could deploy them to do.
13. In this instance we could have had support from the closest MFB station, Croydon Fire Station which would have given me 4 professional firefighters on scene, faster than the volunteer Brigades however the response tables do not allow me to call on this response, as I am supposed to seek support from the closest brigade even though I know that their response time will be unknown.
14. This is only one example among many others of a similar nature.
15. Staffing levels are also currently also not adequate to protect the Victorian Community and firefighters. As previously stated, in additional to an array of other examples, firefighters respond to such a variety of calls with only 3 on the pumper. This is a safety risk to the firefighters and to do the Victorian community. We are placed under immense pressure from the general public, however, our staffing levels limit our response. As an incident controller I am meant to be managing the incident but with only 3 firefighters I have to do it all, including dragging hose.

Interoperability

16. I have experienced issues arising from the lack of interoperability between the CFA and MFB. As a result of the interoperability issues, we use different equipment. For example, we use a different hose and different radios. This is unsafe and an expensive cost to the community. The majority of fire appliances are also extremely different between the two agencies.
17. Increased interoperability could occur by combining the CFA and MFB as one fire services with three different arms – Urban, Rural and Forestry – or as a minimum urban fire service. This would save the tax payer significant dollar value every year. It seems unreasonable that a person who lives in the MFB fire district pay less in the fire service levy than a person living in CFA area.

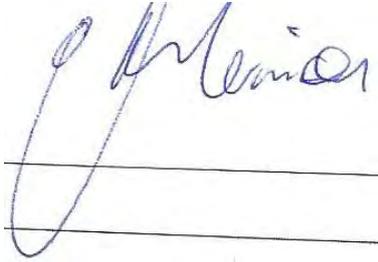
Senior Management

18. There is a disconnect between Senior Management in the fire services and their employees as a result of the fact that they are so volunteer focused and are not interested in improving operational issues. The CFA H/Q management always deflect issues back to the districts to deal with.
19. There is no clear direction from CFA HQ. For example, there is not a standard eight minute response for all pumpers with professional firefighters. This direction should come from the Chief Officer, however, they leave it to a local level which creates mass disharmony
20. I believe that as a result of the matters mentioned, I have lost trust and confidence in senior management. There is no clear direction and many middle management people openly make comment about the direction of the CFA.

Other

21. The location of CFA fire stations is such a waste of community money they are often close to MFB boundaries, or close to other CFA stations, many examples or the CFA use satellite stations to cover up deficient response in the area.
22. For example, approximately 2 years ago the CFA built a new Rowville Fire Station. Rowville is now a integrated station meaning it has professional firefighters on station 24 hours a day and also has a volunteer capability. Scoresby Volunteer Brigade is some 5 kilometres from Rowville but instead of merging these two Brigades the CFA insists on an inefficient use of funds by continuing to support Scoresby as a separate fire station. The CFA is now looking at replacing the Scoresby Volunteer Brigade which will cost them some \$3 to \$4 million dollars. This cost could have been saved by merging these stations 2 years ago.
23. There is also a point to be made in relation to Road Accident Rescue (RAR). This function is only performed by a very small number of CFA Fire Brigades within the country area of Victoria. within the MFB fire district this role is performed totally by the MFB. Rescue equipment is carried on over 30 Heavy Pumpers within the CFA area but professional firefighters who often have the competency are not allowed to

use this equipment as CFA Management is not willing to pursue a change in the RAR arrangement within the country area of Victoria.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A Marmion", is written over two horizontal lines. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

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Andrew Marmion

Date: 9 August 2015