

Submission to The Fire Services Review 2015.

31 August 2015.

Background.

I have been a volunteer Fire fighter with The CFA for 49 years. I was a Brigade Lieutenant for almost thirty years, and served one term as a Deputy Group Officer.

Submission.

Given that South East Australia is considered to be one of the three most fire prone areas in the World! And after twenty years of well below average rainfall one could argue that the **State of Victoria is the most fire prone area in the world.**

It would be reasonable to assume that fire detection and fire suppression in The State of Victoria would run like a well-oiled machine. However this is no longer the case!

It used to be that detecting and fighting fires was the top priority for our Fire Fighting agencies, but instead we now have OH&S and Fatigue Management heading the list. **With fire detection and suppression taking third place!**

In Recent years we have seen grass fires on flat land allowed to remain out of control because the responding Fire Brigades are not trained in how to deal with a grass fire, and the OH&S mentality takes over. So we now have a fire fighting agency that is afraid to fight a fire. Stories of crewed CFA tankers being parked for hours on the side of the road while there is plenty of work they could be doing in the nearby fire area, do nothing for the credibility of CFA in the wider community.

In recent years the powers of the Chief Officer of the CFA have been substantially reduced. We are now at the point where CFA is just another Government Department, with the Chief Officer constantly looking to Spring

Street for his instructions. The powers of the Chief Officer of CFA should be reinstated, as a matter of urgency.

Review of vehicle fleet.

Recently DELWP have conducted a review of their vehicle fleet.

It would be a good idea if CFA were to conduct a similar review as the current issue four wheel drive tankers being supplied to rural brigades in hill country are too large to be of much practical use. Not to mention, that in order to comply with current exhaust emissions, the tanker exhaust sometimes operates at several hundred degrees C ! One wonders how many fires will be started by these vehicles during their life. It would seem logical that fire fighting vehicles should be exempt from this ridiculous situation.

Phil Searle.

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