

I write this submission to express my views concerning the latest CFA reforms, my reflections are primarily based from the perspective of someone who is quite new to this career and consequently I believe I speak from a balanced perspective.

Service Delivery Standards:

Firstly we here the phrase "Service Delivery Standards" thrown around a fair bit, so what does this really mean to the average person? I have previously worked in a professional industry where customer service is paramount and keeping a high level of customer service is a necessity in order to be competitive in today's dynamic service industries.

Joining the fire service and successfully becoming a CFA career fire fighter is perhaps the second proudest moment I have celebrated in my life, to that of having children and being married.

After spending my first year in the job I must be honest, I was blown away with some of my observations and perhaps took a while to digest these thoughts until I understood the political arena a bit more that I now work in. I was quite perplexed and thrown back when on 2 occasions our appliance had stops put in by regional brigades, for whatever reason they did not want us to turn out to the incident in question which on these occasions were major structure fires. I remember sitting in the appliance and over the radio I could hear gas bottles exploding and ammunition going off, the fire had engulfed machinery shed on a farm in a town called Garvoc. After our SO negotiated with the RDO it was then deemed necessary to turn out, this was about 12 minutes (approximately) after the pager message. Now getting back to "Service Delivery Standards", with this example I now ask the question "are we as an organisation providing the best level of customer service to our community? Who essentially are fee paying customers!

The second point I would like to make is that I respect any person who gives up there time to volunteer for anything be that surf lifesaving, army reserves, CFA etc. to value add regarding community needs, hats off. However I do draw a line when personal agendas get in the way of protecting lives and property. My point is simple, when a mechanic is repairing the brakes on your car and you drive that car in excess of 100 km/h (with your family on board) you would expect that that person can demonstrate the competency standards required to perform that task, that he or she has the qualifications necessary to perform the task in a safe and competent manner.

Fire fighting is no different, the bottom line is regardless emotional and political views we need to provide to the community with:

- A safe fire ground with a least 7 career fire-fighters dispatched to an incident in urbanized areas. This improves efficiencies in saving life and property.
- Fire-fighters with the appropriate skill sets/competence to perform the tasks required, e.g. enough certified BA operators to enter a structure.

Conclusion:

These reforms are fundamentally important and a necessity to future proof to cater a growing population in Victoria. The time to move is now.