



Paul Sustek [REDACTED]
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To Consultation/DTF@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Fire Service review

Dear Committee,

My name is Paul Sustek, I live in Mentone, and I am employed as a Leading Firefighter with the Country Fire Authority.

I began my career in emergency services in August 2011 as a CFA recruit Firefighter training at Fiskville, graduating later that year, with my first post to Point Cook Fire Station, relocating to Boronia Fire Station in early 2013 for four years, and am currently serving out of Patterson River Fire Station as of February 2017.

My previous career was in retail with the family business, serving the community of Bentleigh for near on 20 years, providing assistance to the locals with their home renovation/decorating needs. I had no volunteer background at the start of my new journey, so was a blank canvas with my fire service delivery views, but my upbringing of serving the people was always going to transition with me.

And so after 5+ years of firefighting, my view of our fire services is this.

We can do better and we must do better.

Now I'm not taking away from volunteers and the great work they do but the CFA system was established in the late 50s. Times have changed and we need to move with them. Melbourne, and Victoria, its infrastructure and its people, have grown considerably, yet our fire service is stuck decades behind.

Ultimately our customer service is lagging.

I talk to friends, family and people at interface locations of their expectations for fire service delivery, and when you explain to them what they're getting, people are amazed that so much in Melbourne is still considered country and that their fire service is not guaranteed.

So as a service we must change, and this is where your decisions can make a change

for the better.

We need to take this opportunity to do the right thing for Melbourne now and into the future.

For Victoria now and into the future.

Because ultimately its the people of the state that are missing out.

There is also the safety and livelihoods of firefighters on the fire ground.

Too many times we are exposed to situations where service numbers are not guaranteed.

Again, it's something we can change. We can do better. We should change .

Not taking away from the great work volunteers do, they give their time freely and are a great asset but they can't be guaranteed to be there at all times. They have family commitments, they have work commitments and that means they're not available at times when we need them.

Our service needs an overhaul to provide a better service model to the community and a safer working model for firefighters.

I hope my views contribute a small part in forming a positive view to the change to Victorian fire services that we so greatly need.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Sustek