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Preface,

I have served as a Volunteer Fire Fighter in several brigades since April 1999. Also, as a trainer, consultant in Fire and Emergency Management in Tasmania and Victoria since February 2012.

In this time, I have witness and experienced situations where the current intent of the Fire Service act do not reflect current workplace requirements and technological advances.

Addressing the issues paper.

1, Should the purpose of the legislation more accurately reflect the range of activities undertaken?

*Yes, as clearly stated there has been an evolution of TFS and its roles it now plays in the community. The legislation clearly has not kept pace with this.*

2, How should legislation validate the delivery of the current range of non-fire services that communities and government expect TFS to deliver?

*Yes, this should be more reflective of the current roles and responsibilities that the TFS currently undertake.*

3, Do TFS firefighters have a role in Emergency Medical Response and, if so, should that role be reflected in legislation?

*Yes, most TFS officers and a percentage of volunteer members have first aid training and are supplied with its associated equipment. This equipment is not just used on the fire ground for fellow members and officers but for use in the public domain as well by officers and members.*

4, Should the State Emergency Service be included in the new legislation and removed from the Emergency Management Act?

*Yes, only if this it has a provision for it to be removed if the government of the day chooses to do so.*

5, Should a statement of commitment to volunteers be included in the new legislation and, if so, who and what should it cover?

*Yes, A clear statement that without the commitment of volunteers the State Government would not have the resources financially and human to cover gap that would be there if there were none.*

6, Should the legislation provide PWS and forest officers with appropriate legislative authority to undertake fire control work and reflect contemporary Tasmanian practice in relation to Inter-Agency Incident Management?

*Yes, they must insure the clear line of jurisdictional control in incidents and appropriate handover protocols.*

7, Should the State Fire Commission remain as a Statutory Authority?

*Yes.*

8, Should the State Fire Commission have the role of a governing Board?

*Yes, this will need to be reviewed to minimise directions from the state service that are not conducive to maintaining the core business of the TFS.*

9, Should members of the Commission be appointed as representatives of their organisation or on the basis of skills/knowledge that they possess?

*The current makeup of the commission from the volunteer's side are based on experienced members already. It is unlikely that this would change, a change would only affect the non-volunteer component of the board.*

10, What should be the State Fire Commission's role and function and should it include the strategic policy setting and administrative oversight of the State Emergency Service?

*Yes, this would enable better co-operation and co-ordination between the organisations.*

11, What structural arrangements would best allow the Commission and TFS to achieve their objectives while operating in a departmental environment?

*Have the all three organisations TFS, SES and POLICE appoint two representatives to meet on a 6 monthly basis to discuss current and future needs to ensure all three agencies or working to a common objective and not pulling on opposite directions. They must include representatives from volunteers and operational staff.*

12, How should the Chief Officer be appointed and to whom is he responsible?

*The Chief Officer should be appointed by the "The Commission" and report to the Minister responsible.*

13, Should it still be specified that the Chief Officer is to have expertise and experience in fire service administration and in the management of fire-fighting operations?

*No, the TFS has evolved to be far greater than those core functions and the successful candidate should also reflect this.*

14, How should potential tensions between the roles and accountabilities of the Chief Officer TFS, the Director SES and the State Controller be best resolved?

*Make the distinction between each agency and their capabilities to be clearly defined. Have the Director of the SES report to the "The Commission".*

15, What is the appropriate role and function of the SFMC and what should the relationship be with the State Fire Commission/TFS?

*The role of the SFMC should not change but it should be amalgamated into the "The Commission" as a sub branch that is not separate to.*

16, What is the appropriate membership of the SFMC and should the membership be prescribed in legislation?

Membership should consist of all stake holders that a prescribed burn would be implemented by (volunteers must be included) and jurisdiction that would be affected by controlled burns or out of control vegetation fires. This would need to be included in legislation.

17, Should the State Fire Management Council have the power to appoint permit officers?

*No, it should be either done by "The Commission" or the Chief Officer.*

18, Are the Fire Management Areas and the composition of the Fire Management Area Committees still appropriate?

*Yes, they still reflect the current requirements.*

19, What opportunities exist to streamline Fire Management Area Committees with Emergency Management Committees?

*Ensure that each FMAC and EMC in the areas of the state are meeting at least once a year. It may be applicable to have one state wide strategic meeting held at time when the demand of such services is not as great?*

20, Should fire and emergency services be funded through a single mechanism? If so, what is the appropriate model?

*Yes, council rates and any vehicle that requires a registration to be on the road in Tasmania.*

21, Should SES centrally manage and fund its volunteer unit facilities, its fleet and its operational expenses?

*Yes, this would better serve it volunteers and staff.*

22, Should any new legislation bind the Crown?

*Yes it should.*

23, How should response, command and control arrangements be handled in new legislation?

*This should be undertaken in a way that provides consistency across the country and what is based on best practice. Experience must be a governing factor and it needs to also have provision for skills transfer. This will enable a suitable pool of skilled people to be called upon instead of relying on a limited few. A minimum state-wide level must be maintained.*

24, Should the Chain of Command be included in legislation with accountabilities included?

*Yes, to enable better accountability.*

25, Should endorsement of Incident Controllers be legislated? Making it clear that all emergency responders present at an incident are in all respects subject to the Incident Controller's direction or should Incident Controllers be endorsed through policy?

Yes, to enable a clear purpose and direction this is used across all agencies.

26, Are the provisions relating to the establishment and composition of brigades still appropriate?

*No, they need to be reviewed due to population increase and extra responsibilities that are now required of brigades.*

27, Should Industry Brigades be recognised in legislation and have the ability to assist in emergency response outside the industry boundaries?

*Yes, as they may have equipment and personnel that can be used in times of emergencies where current resources maybe unavailable in a timely manner.*

28, Should the Act be amended to specify these activities are exempt from the provisions of the LUPAA?

*Yes, this should be reviewed to enable a clear definition of when its for fuel reduction or other purposes and who it to conduct these.*

29, Are the provisions relating to the declaration of Total Fire Bans still appropriate?

*No, there needs to be more accountability for those who break them and create a fire risk to the community.*

30, Should Community Education be an explicit function of The Commission/TFS and should it include the SES?

*Yes, it should also include the SES.*

31, Is it still appropriate that TFS issues permits to install, maintain or repair fire protection equipment?

*Yes, this also should be amended to include a requirement to include correct programming of Fire Indicator Panels to accurately describe the location of the activated device eg "Concealed space above RM23" not just say "Concealed Space". The A4 fire panel plans that are also at the Fire Indicator Panel must also accurately describe the building and also have*

*room references and zone/device numbers in a specified font and size that are easily interpreted by TFS personnel and onsite staff.*

32, Should there be a whole of government Emergency Evacuation System that deals with all threats, not just fire risks, in the built environment?

Should prescribed buildings be categorised by risk potential?

*Yes, in respect to building safety. There is too much emphasis placed on operational crews and building safety staff to facilitate, observe practice evacuations and dispensations to silence occupant warning systems. This issue can be addressed by having these conducted by certified "individuals" that have been assessed and certified by TFS Building Safety and are deemed to be competent in this area. They also are required to be recertified every twelve months. When a suitably qualified individual is unavailable this could be still conducted by a TFS operational crew or a representative of building safety. This process to observe evacuations should not be stopped as puts an added emphasise on building owners and occupants to be aware of building dangers and how to safely evacuate. When this is not enforced a level of complacency begins to happen as has been identified in many coroner reports from across the country. Property can be replaced easily whereas life not so easy.*

*All code colours should be included in the approval submission to the TFS as under the Australian Standards 3745 – 2010 and 4083 – 2010 not just the Code Red and Orange.*

*Risk potential should be included in the provision of emergency plans.*

33, Are the current levels and structure of penalties appropriate?

*No, as the level of non-compliance and competency level of Fire and Emergency Training and Emergency Plans across the state testifies to this fact.*

34, Are there other offences that should be considered for inclusion in new legislation?

*Yes, any activity that poses an unacceptable risk to life and property.*

35, Are the current protection from liability provisions appropriate?

*No, this must also include they current responsibilities of the TFS and any supporting agency that is assisting in their operations.*