



16 August 2018

By Email  
Act.Review@fire.tas.gov.au

Dr Felicity Novy  
Project Manager - Review of the Fire Service Act 1979  
**TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE**

Dear Dr Novy

### **Review of the *Fire Service Act 1979***

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issues raised in the *Issue Paper – Review of the Fire Service Act 1979* dated June 2018.

PF Olsen Australia a wholly owned subsidiary of the PF Olsen Group; the largest independent forest manager in Australia and New Zealand. We manage of 250,000 hectares of land across southern Australia, including 52,000 hectares of land in Tasmania. Approximately 30,000 hectares of the land we manage in Tasmania is hardwood plantation.

As a forest manager, one of the key risks we manage for our clients is wildfire. PF Olsen Australia operate a Forest Industry Brigade in Victoria and two in South Australia. We also have fire suppression capacity in Tasmania, Western Australia and New South Wales, but do not have industry brigades in these states as there is no clear mechanism to form industry brigades. We have highly trained and experienced firefighters in our staff and contractor base, and we run a number of purpose built heavy duty fire tankers and quick attack fire units across Australia.

We do not intend to address all the questions raised in the *Issues Paper*, but provide the following responses to questions that have the most relevance to us as a forest manager.

#### **Question 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?**

We firmly believe that all people, including employees of Sustainable Timbers Tasmania and the Parks and Wildlife Service undertaking fire control work should have legislative authority (and protections) to undertake fire control work.

This also applies to employees and contractors of private forestry companies such as PF Olsen Australia. This is further discussed in our response to Question 27.

**Question 16 – What is the appropriate membership of the SFMC and should the membership be prescribed in legislation.**

PF Olsen Australia notes that private forestry is a significant land use in Tasmania and recommends that the private forestry industry continues to be represented on the SFMC.

**Question 27 – Should industry brigades be recognised in legislation and have the ability to assist in emergency response outside the industry boundaries.**

PF Olsen Australia strongly advocates that the industry brigades be recognised in legislation. We note that the issues paper states that *“it was thought that Industry brigades derived no benefit from registration.”* From our perspective as a forest manager operating in different jurisdictions across Australia both with and without Forest Industry Brigades, there are significant benefits from registration of an industry brigade. These benefits vary slightly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, due to differences in legislation and regulations, but include:

- A clear understanding of the powers and indemnities that apply to employees and contractors of forest owners and managers when assisting in fire suppression. At present, it is unclear which, if any of the powers and indemnities available under the Act would apply to an employee or contractor of a forest management company assisting in fire suppression.
- Improved integration of forest industry crews within the incident management structure, resulting in improved firefighter efficiency and safety.
- Improved cooperation and coordination between the forest industry and emergency management authorities across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

There are also benefits to Tasmania Fire Service from having industry brigades. These include:

- Improved integration with the private forest industry at fires.
- Improved access to specialist knowledge and experience from within the private forest industry.
- Standardised training, equipment standards across industry brigades and TFS.

It is important that industry brigades have the ability to assist in emergency response outside the industry boundaries (i.e. on land not managed by the industry brigade.) From both a forest manager’s and the general communities’ perspective it is better for an industry brigade to respond to a fire threatening their estate and assist in suppressing it before it impacts rather than having to wait for it to impact on their estate prior to being able to assist in its suppression.

We point to the CFA’s model of industry brigades as an excellent model for how Forest Industry Brigades could function.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to further discuss any of the points raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely,

**PF OLSEN (AUS) PTY LTD**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Rymer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Stephen Rymer**

*Regional Manager - Tasmania*