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Songer, Rachael (DCS)

From: Rachael Songer
Sent: Tuesday, 21 October 2014 10:12 AM
To: DCS:Minister Piccolo
Subject: ES Reform submission
Attachments:

Dear Minister,

Please find attached my submission in response to the proposed structure for the Emergency Services as outlined in A SAFER COMMUNITY – a Discussion Paper that was released on 16 September 2014.

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you as a volunteer of both the State Emergency Service and Country Fire Service to provide my comments in response to the proposed structure for the Emergency Services as outlined in *A SAFER COMMUNITY – a Discussion Paper* that was released on 16 September 2014.

I had commenced the below replay prior to the release of the proposed model at the roundtable on 13 October. I felt it was still worth submitting this as is, as at the very least helps confirm parts of the proposal.

Setting the Boundaries

To enable educated comment on what Tier 4 office will look like I feel it is important to picture what area each Tier 4 office would look after. As mentioned in the discussion paper there is an opportunity to align regional boundaries with state administrative areas, zone emergency management or SAPOL local service area boundaries. I believe that aligning to the zone emergency management boundaries (hereafter Zone) will provide the most impact and cost benefit moving forward from this process.

The State has invested heavily in conducting risk assessments for the 10 State Hazards as identified in the State Emergency Management Plan. To date around seventy five workshops have been undertaken focusing on the risk assessments and risk treatment process across all hazards and Zones. This work will result in a both an overarching State Emergency Risk Register and a localised Zone Emergency Risk Register. By aligning to the Zone boundaries the new Tier 4 offices will be able to work towards the identified risks without having to spend new additional resources to adapt the information to suit the new structure.

The move to Zone boundaries also provides a good spread within each Zone of Country Fire Service (CFS) brigades, State Emergency Service (SES) units, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) stations and Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) flotillas in coastal areas. This collective of Emergency Services will be referred to as SAFER Units for the remainder. As an indication of the spread please see the below table for the distribution of SAFER Units within each Zone.

TIER 5						
Emergency Management Zone	CFS STATIONS	SES UNITS	MFS STATIONS	VMR FLOTILLAS	TOTAL SAFER UNITS IN ZONE	
Eyre & Western	55	11	2	2	70	
Far North	17	12	1	1	31	
Yorke & Mid North	87	14	5	4	110	
Barossa	22	1	3	0	26	
Murray & Mallee	53	8	4	0	65	
Limestone Coast	42	7	1	0	50	
Hills Fleurieu & KI	37	6	1	4	48	
Northern & Western Adelaide*	6	7	10	2	25	
Southern & Eastern Adelaide*	22	5	9	1	37	

*To allow best use of resourcing Northern Adelaide and Western Adelaide Zones have been merged as have Southern Adelaide and Eastern Adelaide Zones.

The alignment to Zone boundaries will also have a flow on to CFS Groups which are also included at the Tier 5 level. The volunteer positions held within a CFS Group generally include a Group Officer and Deputy Group Officer who provide direct incident management support for Brigades. A Group

Training Officer that provides training support for Brigades & the Group in organising courses with the next Tier level and setting overall training direction for the Group. Finally there is a Group Admin Officer that manages the finances of the Group & Brigades and also the all-important paper trail for the Group. Some larger groups have held additional Group roles previously; however the roles listed are common across all.

For the purpose of this submission I have used the principles of Span of Control to have 6 Brigades within a Group, which would give the following number of Groups within the proposed Zones.

Emergency Management Zones	CFS STATIONS	CFS Groups
Eyre & Western	55	9
Far North	17	3
Yorke & Mid North	87	15
Barossa	22	4
Murray & Mallee	53	9
Limestone Coast	42	7
Hills Fleurieu & KI	37	6
Northern & Western Adelaide	6	1
Southern & Eastern Adelaide	22	4

What should Tier 4 Look Like?

To ensure there is adequate support to the frontline, or Tier 5, SAFER Units I propose that each Tier 4 Office should include the following positions:

Zone Manager	This position would provide overall leadership, management and command of resources within the Zone. This position would also have operational capabilities enabling them to manage or support incidents at a Zone level.
Emergency Management Officer (EMO)	This position would work with LGA and other stakeholders to address the risks and outcomes from the Zone Risk Assessments.
Community Safety Officer (CSO)	This position would run community safety programs within the zone such as HeatSafe, FloodSafe, StormSafe, Prepare Act Survive, Smoke Alarm battery campaign etc with the support of volunteer presenters. They can also be used to help with general recruitment & promotion of volunteers for the zone.
WHS Officer	This position would conduct workplace audits, HIRM investigations and risk assessments on new plant/equipment that units wish to purchase. This person would also provide training to SAFER Units in Critical Incident Stress Prevention and if appropriate provide

psychological first aid to members as a part of the Peer Support program.

Operations – Fire

This position would manage response planning in areas like Urban & Rural fire, HAZMAT etc for the Zone. They would also support the EMO with addressing items identified on the Zone Emergency Risks Register. This position would also have operational capabilities enabling them to manage or support incidents at a Zone level. This may initially be restricted to Fire related incidents until their knowledge/skills expand to cover SES tasks.

Operations – SES

This position would manage response planning in areas like Extreme Weather (Heat & Storm), Flood, USAR, Marine, and Specialist Rescue for the Zone. They would also support the EMO with addressing items identified on the Zone Emergency Risks Register. This position would also have operational capabilities enabling them to manage or support incidents at a Zone level. This may initially be restricted to Fire related incidents until their knowledge/skills expand to cover Fire tasks.

Admin Officer

This position would provide first point of contact support for SAFER Units on business, finance and administrative matters. To ensure there is adequate support provided, I have proposed there is an Admin Officer for every 30 SAFER Units in the Zone.

CFS Training Staff

This position would provide frontline 'on the ground' training & training support to Groups & Brigades in CFS skill sets. They would support MFS/SES trainers with the delivery of common skill areas. It is important to note that as they are working directly with volunteers the majority of this positions work will be outside of normal business hours. This position would also have operational capabilities enabling them to manage or support incidents at a Zone level. I propose that for every four Groups there is a CFS Training Staff position.

SES Training Staff

This position would provide frontline 'on the ground' training & training support to Units in SES skill sets. If as a part of the Reform, VMR becomes a part of SES then this position would also look after the training needs of the Flotillas. They would support MFS/CFS trainers with the delivery of common skill areas. It is important to note that as they are working directly with volunteers the majority of this positions work will be outside of normal business hours. This position would also have operational capabilities enabling them to manage or support incidents

at a Zone level. I propose that for every six Units (and Flotillas) there is a SES Training Staff position.

MFS Training Staff

This position would provide frontline 'on the ground' training & training support to Stations in MFS skill sets. They would support CFS/SES trainers with the delivery of common skill areas. This position would also have operational capabilities enabling them to manage or support incidents at a Zone level. I propose that for every four Stations there is a MFS Training Staff position.

With the breakdown of SAFER Units into the Zones as discussed in the previous section and the proposed staffing numbers as discussed above, the workforce of each Tier 4 Office would look like:

Emergency Management Zone	TIER 4											TOTAL ZONE STAFF (not incl increase for VMIR)
	CFS Training Staff 1 per 4 Groups	SES Training Staff 1 per 6 SES units	SES Training Staff 1 per 6 SES/VMR units	MFS Training Staff 1 per 4 Stations	Emergency Management Officer	Operations Planning - Fire	Operations Planning - SES	Community Safety Officer	Admin Officer 1 per 30 SAFER units	WHS	Zone Manager	
Eyre & Western	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	13
Far North	1	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
Yorke & Mid North	4	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	17
Barossa	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Murray & Mallee	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	13
Limestone Coast	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	11
Hills Fleurieu & KI	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	10
Northern & Western Adelaide	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Southern & Eastern Adelaide	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11

For the zones that do not have enough of a particular service to warrant a specific staff member, they could share a resource with another zone until such time as that services presence increases in the area.

For example a SES Trainer would be shared between Barossa and Northern Adelaide, and a CFS Trainer would cover both Northern and Southern Adelaide Zones. For the MFS, the Trainer appointed to the Eyre & Western zone would also attend to the Station in the Far North, while the Trainer in Murray & Mallee would also cover the Stations in both the Limestone Coast and Hills Fleurieu & KI zones.

Not only will these positions and this structure ensure there is a continuation of knowledge and experience that covers each Services unique identity and culture, but it will also ensure there is adequate support for members moving forward. This was mentioned frequently throughout the consultation process by members of the CFS & SES as a big concern for them.

Where could Tier 4 Offices be located?

There are currently emergency service headquarters facilities located in all but one of the proposed zones which could be used to house the new Tier 4 elements. This may reduce the cost and time

needed to implement the proposed changes however it is worth noting that some facilities may need an overhaul to accommodate the numbers proposed in the previous section.

These locations are also near the current SA Police Local Service Area headquarters and other state and local government agencies.

Emergency Management Zone

	Possible Location
Eyre & Western	Port Lincoln Shared Emergency Service Facility
Far North	CFS Region 4 HQ, Port Augusta
Yorke & Mid North	SES North Region HQ, Port Pirie
Barossa	CFS Region 2 HQ, Willaston
Murray & Mallee	CFS Region 3 HQ, Murray Bridge
Limestone Coast	CFS Region 5 HQ, Naracoorte
Hills Fleurieu & KI	CFS Region 1 HQ, Mt Barker
Northern & Western Adelaide	SES Operations Centre, Netley
Southern & Eastern Adelaide	MFS Command Station at Salisbury currently being built

How can consultation be maintained or strengthened in a single organisation with three frontline services?

The concern I have with the move to a single organisation is the voice that would be given to non UFU members. As I understand the proposal the MFS as an identity will stop at a Station level which would mean that current MFS members above the Station Officer ranking would in theory work for the Department not MFS. Would this then mean that they are no longer eligible to be members of the UFU or will staff from CFS & SES who are currently not eligible to join the UFU now be able to in the model.

The reason for the concern is the result of seeing what has happened with our interstate colleagues as they have gone through similar processes. The staff positions have almost unilaterally been given to UFU members which not only loses a lot of tacit knowledge and experience in managing non-urban incidents but it has led to less support to volunteers and demoralisation and ultimate resignation of those that volunteer to help their communities.

While there will be an ACO responsible for volunteer services and advocacy at a State level, I feel it is also important to have Zone level representation as well. Currently SES and CFS have a UMAG and RVMC in each Region that is attended by the volunteer leadership of each service. This is an important function that should continue as it enables the volunteers of each service to help steer the direction of the Region and overall service. The chair of each of these representational groups then sits on the State group to pass on the views of their respective groups.