



EAST TORRENS
COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE
GROUP

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Monday, 27 October 2014

The Hon. Tony Piccolo MP
Minister for Emergency Services

Re Discussion Paper – Structure Reform Emergency Services.

Dear Tony, I have been requested to forward the following comments on behalf of the Brigades in our Group.

Due to lack of detail in the document we are unsure of how Brigades and Groups will operate and be managed.

Currently we have management committees that allow Brigades and Groups to have discussion through committees to eventually put recommendations to the Chief Officer.

Under the proposed structure there is strong possibility that we would only be able to progress issues through to the Zone Manager who would also be focussing on MFS and SES departments. We are most concerned that the paid MFS and their strong union will have stronger bargaining power than those of volunteer associations.

It is unclear as to where zone boundaries will be and again there is possibility that some CFS Brigades could be part of a zone that has largely metropolitan geography and management would be highly focused on MFS needs. Also existing Groups that have established good administrative and operational procedures, and geographically located, could be split.

It seems that this reform process is being driven to achieve efficiencies but there has been no business case tabled to identify efficiencies and cost savings. If there are no efficiencies to be achieved then why embark on restructuring organisations that are already operating effectively.

I suppose our biggest concern with your proposed structure is the amalgamation of a paid organisation and a volunteer organisation/s.

We strongly agree that there should be separation of these services to ensure a strong volunteer organisation that is managed by staff who have a high degree of volunteer empathy and know how to work with volunteer structures.

We have concerns that a Zone Manager would have some difficulty in ensuring equity between paid and volunteer organisations.

Yours faithfully

Des Ford
East Torrens Group Officer