

29th October 2014

Hon Tony Piccolo MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Government of South Australia
GPO Box 668
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Mr Piccolo,

Re: South Australian Emergency Services Sector Reform

I refer to your letter of 6 October 2014 and thank you for the opportunity to comment. I apologise for the late reply.

I am conscious that any comments made by AFAC are comments made regarding the future of AFAC member agencies. As such, noting that the SA Government is committed to sector reform, AFAC will restrict comments to national issues rather than commenting on the detail of the proposed reform.

AFAC makes the following observations:

1. AFAC, the national council for fire and emergency services has maintained excellent relations with the SA MFS, SA CFS and SA SES. All three agencies have made significant contributions to the industry overall. I refer to the collaboration model (attached) and the existing opportunities taken up by SA agencies to be engaged with the national agenda. AFAC would be very reticent to see that relationship reduced with the proposed sector reform and while noting that functions are proposed to centralise under one agency, AFAC would argue strongly that engagement with the national council continues at existing levels. Indeed, AFAC would argue that it has a strong mandate and success in collaboration across agencies and could assist the new entity in this regard. AFAC would be less effective if the current level of engagement reduced as a result of the proposed sector reform.
2. The industry has as its highest level guidance the Strategic Directions for Fire and Emergency Services 2014-16. This was endorsed by all AFAC agencies, ANZEMC and the previous Standing Committee on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM). AFAC alerts the reform agenda to the Strategic Directions document that outlines national values and priorities for the sector. This may assist in future deliberations regarding sector reform.
3. AFAC notes the proposed ACO functions in the organisational chart. It understands the intent but struggles to rationalise the combining of Volunteer Services and Community Engagement. Volunteer Services presumably are focussed on serving and supporting the extensive volunteer workforce that nationally makes up 88% of the emergency service workforce. These functions are very different from Community Engagement, perhaps beer

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titled 'community resilience' which presumably would be focused on engaging with, and improving community awareness of, readiness for natural disasters.

4. While perhaps seemingly of little significance, AFAC notes that the proposed agency head will be titled Chief Officer. While AFAC acknowledges the attachment to the term in SA, perhaps the ACO level could be Chief Officers. All mainland states refer to the State emergency service chief as Commissioner and this would appear of benefit to the individual once appointed and the State.
5. Finally, AFAC is conducting its national conference in Adelaide next year in September 2015. 1800 attended the conference in Melbourne in 2013 and this is considered the single largest event facilitated by AFAC annually. SA agencies are already well engaged and it would be important that the existing level of commitment was maintained and indeed increases as the conference nears. The AFAC Conference will present an excellent example to showcase the new reform as well as being a significant economic benefit to the State.

I enjoyed meeting you recently at the SA SES function and if AFAC can assist further in any regard, please do not hesitate to call (03 9419 2388 / email: stuart.ellis@afac.com.au)

Yours sincerely,



STUART ELLIS AM
Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: Strategic Directions
AFAC Collaboration Model