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The Hon Tony Piccolo MP
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2 October 2014

Re: A SAFER Community – A Discussion Paper (16 Sept 2014)

Re: The Emergency Services Levee

Minister

Reading the disappointingly innuendo filled and volunteer biased discussion paper has prompted me to provide a small amount of 'detail clarity' around current and ongoing circumstances that are, for some reason, apparently controlled by Volunteers, in this case, the Country Fire Service (CFS) staff and CFS volunteers.

My previous email imploring that 'the detail' be looked at by those soon to be empowered to enact the reform and to ensure a successful review gives me concern after reading the review.

For Information and 'clarity'

(I agree the detail is at a very 'low level' and difficult to gain clarity on as very few people have the depth of knowledge required but isn't the low level detail what trips up the best intent?)

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) gazetted Fire Districts throughout the State have (mainly) not been updated in many decades to reflect community expansion and public safety. (Those areas that have been revisited have taken years of effort by MFS staff to get amended.)

Reasons; apathy, 'patch protection', bias one Agency against another, 'blocking tactics', cost, all manner of other 'delays'.

To effect changes, agreement must be sort from CFS management who in turn 'consult' all affected rank and file members in all CFS Groups and Brigades around the boundary to seek agreement for change. (I understand 'consultation' is a 'buzz' word but where does public safety come in the 'wants' or 'not wants' of individuals?)

A SAFECOM Sector agreement was previously reached whereby the 'closest, fastest, most appropriate' resource was to be responded to Incidents. (Unfortunately no parameters were included so the intent is accurate, the result is less so.)

On both sides of the 'boundary', specifically the metropolitan Adelaide area, in some limited areas, both MFS support CFS into CFS area and CFS support MFS into MFS area. (The CFS support into MFS area is purely political as MFS staff and resources are available 24/7/365).

For noting and clarification when considering 'closest, fastest, most appropriate', specifically CFS Brigades.

- Volunteers must continuously have enough members to consistently provide the service to the community
- Volunteers must travel from home or work to the fire station

- They then must wait for the correct number of additional qualified members to arrive, (specific 'drivers', specific 'pump operators', specific 'breathing apparatus operators'), before driving the vehicle out of the fire station
- Travel time to the incident
- Volunteers do not guarantee a response, (MFS does)
- No 'agreed' method for both 'time penalty' ('manned' against 'unmanned' fire stations) and 'distance' has been agreed for SACAD response planning.
- Thus, supporting stations in a 'backup' list are commonly inaccurate, ('white' over 'red' trucks and like bias abound)

With the above 'dot pointed' information and the paragraph before the dot points referencing MFS support into the CFS area; why would volunteers be actively refusing MFS resource support? (As well as attempting to remove current MFS support in a large number of southern metropolitan suburbs,

Is this the volunteer biased model for reform the 'Discussion Paper' is supposedly proposing?

Is this the current and proposed increased public safety risk that 'bias' and 'patch protection' imposes on the community?

This is currently the 2 levels of service the community is unknowingly provided while paying their Emergency Services levee.

One side of the road is provided a 24/7/365 from MFS, the other side of the road is provided a 'best effort', 'double the arrival time on scene' to incidents from CFS by refusing support from closer MFS vehicles.

As clarification of the discussion paper bias and other statements that show complete lack of public safety and understanding of 'risk' based response;

Page 13. 'Operations', the incredible innuendo the MFS rank is provided from 'weet bix' boxes on seniority, not 'skills, qualifications, accreditations, experience' as apparently is only available and relevant to volunteers.

Page 13. The '**WHAT WE HAVE HEARD DURING THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS**' that includes a statement, 'Over responding (tree down example)'

That is a clear statement of 'expertise' after the fact. All responses to incidents are 'risk' based, a 'tree down' on a main road is a clear 'life threat' requiring the closest, fastest, most appropriate response, it also, due to politics, requires the 'lead' Agency involvement, hence, multiple responders.

A 'reform' controlling 'body' should include concerns along the lines of the below factors as well as 'who gets what budget'

2 levels of service provision yet everyone pays the same percentage of levee

The political fallout if the above was widely known

Current and increased public risk, basically down to the 'colour' of the fire truck

Processes for change, ie decision makers that make and actually carry out decisions on valid and unbiased reviews of 'statements' made by all relevant input

The over servicing of fire stations (infrastructure, vehicles, equipment), where community development has over-run the previous 'rural' areas, is it a risk to have volunteer fire stations or 24/7/365 crews, or 'forced' support into CFS areas against political 'volunteer' appeasement

Where the CFS and SES are committed to major long running events, it's ok to require MFS help when volunteers are exhausted but refuse assistance when it doesn't suit.

It may appear that I'm a volunteer 'knocker', far from it, like everyone else in the State I value the work provided by volunteers, but after reading the 'discussion paper', the innuendo appears to be a reform focussed on an emergency services sector bias towards volunteers in which; the public still receives 2 levels of service in the densely populated areas, volunteer organisations still have 'sway' over 'truck colour' against public safety, leadership bias towards volunteers to 'keep everyone happy', keep costs down and retain volunteer services and try to reduce the reduction in volunteer numbers.

I do hope I'm wrong and I've continuously misread the intent of the document, or maybe the reform is only looking at the 'top end' and the 'detail' at the coal face continues to be 'overlooked'.

No doubt my comments may be 'hotly' contested in some areas if released, but as the MFS SACAD systems subject matter expert, I 'see' the coal face in great detail as I develop and implement required SACAD 'response plans' and know the information to be accurate for the Sector.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Moir', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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