

Louca, Chrisoula (DCS)

From: Freeman, Peter (CFS)
Sent: Tuesday, 21 October 2014 12:02 PM
To: DCS:Minister Piccolo
Cc: Grantham, Cliff (DCS); Karanikos-Mimis, Spiro (DPC); Hoppo, Peter (DCS)
Subject: Comments on the Emergency Services Sector Reform Discussion Paper
Attachments: Sector Reform Comments.docx

Good morning
Attached please find my comments on the Emergency Services Sector Reform Discussion Paper. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Regards
Pete

Sector Reform Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Emergency Services Sector Reform Discussion Paper. I will put forward suggestions that relate to my role as CFS Web Design Manager going forward in a new structure.

Background

Prior to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, web services for CFS were delivered via SAFECOM's IT Helpdesk. MFS, SES and SAFECOM websites were also administered from SAFECOM IT, with administrative staff in those agencies creating and adding content to a common Web Content Management and a part of their functional role.

Funding was provided to CFS to create the CFS Web Design Manager position which was filled in February 2011. Since that time CFS has continued to improve its website and integrate online information tightly with the CRILMSON operational system to provide automated information to over 5,000,000 sire visitors in 2013/14.

Statistics indicate that the CFS website receives the most visits of any Government website, and post fire danger season research indicates the website is the number one source of information for the community during bushfire emergencies.

Current Structure

Web and Social Media in CFS comprises a single FTE in the Media and Communications Unit, which sits alongside Community Engagement to make up Information Operations.

This structure has proved to be very effective in providing timely and consistent information to media outlets and the community by associating the media and communications and web roles closely, allowing easy and rapid collaboration on content for the CFS website and social media communications channels.

Social Media/Website Co-ordinator

The Social Media/Website Co-ordinator is an after hours operational role providing information to the community, answering queries and amplifying CFS key messaging. This role differs from most operational roles in that communication with the community is ongoing, not just when the State Co-ordination Centre is activated. The dynamic nature of the web and social media communications requires a good knowledge of CFS operations and key messaging. Day to day, the role works closely with the State Public Information Co-ordinator and State Media Co-ordinator roles. The position is shared on a rotating roster by the CFS Web Design Manager

with 3 additional staff from other functional areas. One staff member is rostered per week in this role throughout the year.

Proposed Structure

The positioning of Web and Social Media in a combined agency is critical in maintaining and building on the trust CFS has generated via its online communication channels. CFS has invested significant time and resources into online communications, to the point it is the sector leader in the use of web technologies and social media communications.

The positioning of online communications with other media and communications functional roles in the Media and Communications Unit has proved most beneficial, improving lines of communication between staff, allowing quick communication of critical information to the community, and rapid technical improvements to online communications based on feedback from staff in immediate contact with media and the community.

The other agencies, SA MFS and SA SES, would benefit in a combined Strategic Communications Unit scenario, in that they would benefit from the technical resource currently residing in CFS. Agency content managers could seek technical advice in a more informal team-based fashion, rather than the Helpdesk support arrangement currently in place.

It should be stressed that content specificity should be maintained in any combined Strategic Communications Unit going forward. The functions of this Unit might comprise:

Media and Communications

- CFS (2 FTE)
- SES (1 FTE)
- MFS (1 FTE)

Web Management

- CFS (1 FTE)
- SES (1 FTE)
- MFS (1 FTE)

Social Media

- CFS
- SES
- MFS

Marketing communications

- CFS (1 FTE)

The above outlines a combined functional approach that reflects all the communications channels currently employed by the emergency services agencies while retaining the deep knowledge of each agency's operational focus and key messaging on which the community bases its trust of emergency services.

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