



**The Country Fire Service
Volunteers Association**
"Representing the interests of CFS Members"

**Working together with
CFS REGIONAL
COMMITTEES**

BULLETIN

5th March 2015

Reference Group Meeting

Recently the Sector Reform Reference Group attended an out of session meeting with Minister Piccolo to discuss the Minister's recent announcement.

In summary the Minister announced the following:

Sector Reform

Phase 1

- Key appointments will soon be made in the South Australia Fire and Emergency Commission (SAFECOM) to look after the corporate streams of the services.
- Key leadership groups will be brought together in preparation for the appointment of a Commissioner
- Three corporate areas to begin progressive transition for April 2015 are:
 - Capability and Support
 - Volunteer services and community resilience
 - Strategic and Corporate services
- Non-operational areas from CFS / SES / MFS – like training and human resources for example – will be moved into SAFECOM
- The Chief Officer position will be retained to provide leadership in the operational stream of the three services
- The Chiefs will have reduced role with less non-operational work
- The SAFECOM Board will be retained in the short term

The Minister has made it clear that sector reform would continue.

CFSVA Summary

The Minister is required to work within current legislation, and therefore a Commissioner cannot be legitimately appointed whilst the legislation remains in its current form.

The Minister has indicated his intention to terminate the position of Chief Executive Officer of SAFECOM so that position can be taken over by the "Commissioner" (when appointed). Applications for the Commissioner's position closed on the 16th February 2015, with interviews yet to commence.

Over the last week there has been speculation in relation to the appointment of an acting Commissioner. The Minister has clearly indicated that no such appointment has been made.

The Minister has further indicated that whilst the Chief Officer positions will remain the Deputy Chief Officer positions will cease. The Minister is also seeking to fill the 3 corporate vacancies in capability and support; volunteer services and community resilience; and strategic and corporate services.

The Minister could not provide details relating to the number of senior staff from CFS / SES / MFS / SAFECOM who would no longer hold their current positions under sector reform.

The Minister still fails to justify the following:

- The rationale for appointing a Commissioner as opposed to a Chief Executive Officer.
- The justification for corporate staff to hold the title of Assistant Commissioner as opposed to Executive Director.
- The justification for a fourth branding / uniform (CFS / SES / MFS / ?)

The Minister stated that CFS / SES / MFS would become operational agencies only once administrative and support functions are transferred across to SAFECOM. This virtually cuts each agency in half, as the Minister illustrated on his whiteboard drawing. The CFSVA is extremely concerned by the splitting of CFS without due consideration to the dual role of many CFS staff and the potential lack of agency specific support available to CFS volunteers in the future.

The Minister indicated that at this stage no staff from any of the agencies had been directed to move across to SAFECOM, however as the reform process evolves the shift of administrative / training staff will occur. It is anticipated that this shift will occur before July 2016.

The most perplexing part of sector reform for the CFSVA is that the Minister is prepared to risk disenfranchising volunteers and placing community safety at risk in order to pursue a flawed process, for which no business case has been established and future efficiencies not identified. The perception that all will be worked out as the process unfolds is a serious risk and a recipe for disaster.

PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE TO REVIEW EMERGENCY SERVICES SECTOR REFORM

The Parliamentary Select Committee established to inquire into the proposed emergency services sector reform, will shortly publish its Terms of Reference

The Select Committee of the Legislative Council has been established to inquire into -

- (a) The government establishment of the Commissioner to replace Chief Officers in the proposed Emergency Services Reform;
- (b) The process involved in consultation and what consideration was given to matters raised during consultation in developing the reform proposal;
- (c) The business plan;
- (d) Cost benefit analysis and probity regarding the proposed reform;
- (e) Consideration and consultation with volunteer organisations affected by the government proposal;

- (f) The establishment of legal requirements for the Chief Officer and Chief Executive Officer of Emergency Services and SAFECOM and the SAFECOM Board; and
- (g) Any other relevant matters.

Membership of the Parliamentary Committee-

Hon R L Brokenshire (Chairperson)

Hon JSL Dawkins

Hon A L McLachlan CSC

Hon G A Kandelaars

Hon T A Franks

The CFSVA will provide further particulars in relation to the Select Committee when available.

Sonia St Alban

Executive Director

Country Fire Service Volunteers Association (Inc)

Email: sonia.stalban@cfsva.org.au