



Response to Analysis of the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services

Frequently asked Questions & Answers

Please note:

This is an extremely brief snap-shot of the CFSVA's reply to the Analysis if you require more information please refer to our response to the Analysis on the CFSVA website www.cfsva.org.au

Questions:

What is the Emergency Services Sector?

The Sector include the South Australian Fire and Emergency Commission (SAFECOM), SACFS, SASES & SAMFS.

What is SAFECOM?

SAFECOM is a government agency that oversees the financial / planning and governance aspects of the 3 Emergency Services but does not have an operational role or capacity.

Does the CFSVA support the Analysis?

There are several interpretations and proposed actions in the Analysis that we believe are not in accordance with the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (FES Act). The FES Act is the Act that provides the rules under which we operate. Having said this, there are aspects of the Analysis which we believe warrant further consideration.

What does the CFSVA see as problems with the Analysis?

Much of the Analysis focusses on the Chief Executive of SAFECOM taking a leading role and directing what occurs within the whole emergency services sector which contradicts the FES Act. Further, the Analysis seeks to shift staff from the Emergency Service Organisations (ESOs) (The ESOs are SACFS, SASES and SAMFS) to SAFECOM.

The CFSVA is concerned by this recommendation as we view it as an increase in bureaucracy and a decrease in operational staff for the ESOs, further the Analysis proposes the amalgamation of all sector budgets.

How do we see these matters affecting the SACFS?

The SACFS could lose its individual identity as our Chief Officer is no longer permitted to directly report to the Minister. We then lose our independence and control of our own directions when the finances of the sector are combined and we also lose operational capacity as staff is shifted into

SAFECOM. The overall theme of the Analysis points towards a single person leading the sector with many key functions being taken over by SAFECOM. We see this as building yet another inefficient bureaucracy.

What do we see as SAFCOM'S role in the sector compared to what is in the analysis?

SAFECOM is led by a Board of 9 people with the support of the Chief Executive. The Board should be making over-arching strategies to guide the direction of the 3 emergency services and monitor each of the emergency services finances, strategies and plans so that efficient and effective emergency response can occur.

How do we see the SACFS command structure at present compared to what is suggested in the analysis?

The CFSVA understand the reasons why SACFS has its current structure. The CFSVA believes that any discussion in relation to SACFS command structure should only take place within SACFS and be led by SACFS staff and volunteers.

Does the CFSVA support Automatic Vehicle Locator?

Yes. It has been part of the CFSVA's position statements for a several years and we see some real benefits for volunteers, particularly from a safety aspect. We must however select the right system and be funded appropriately.

Does the CFSVA support the 10 year build program?

Yes. The whole sector must work together to make long term plans so that we can put long term budget requests to government and demonstrate why a long term plan is necessary and has many benefits. By working together, more parity and understanding of standards should occur. It would also remove the when will it happen question from volunteers as they will know what the future program is.

Further, across the sector, trucks and equipment replacement program would be so much easier to manage and be up to date. It is also important to retain the servicing of the CFS appliance in the local community, as SACFS volunteers know how important it is to purchase locally and support the local businesses that support SACFS.

Is the Emergency Service sector underfunded?

Yes. Particularly SAMFS and SACFS are struggling to keep up with truck replacement programs. The \$5 million injected into Project Renew highlights that SACFS is not able to financially keep up with just basic maintenance on stations. SACFS also has serious staff shortages in regions; especially to specifically help volunteers and remove some of the bureaucratic impost. The 10 year plan concept will help provide the evidence that there is a lack of funding for capital upgrades and give government the ability to factor additional funds into forward estimates instead of having additional funding measures based on political ideals.