Tasmania Fire Service
False Alarm Reduction
Consultation Paper

Tasmania Fire Service

Tasmanian Government

Introduction

Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) is the operational arm of the State Fire Commission. TFS has principal responsibility for responding to fire and other emergencies. TFS monitors fire alarms in approximately 2,000 premises.

The majority of TFS responses to alarmed premises are due to false activation or malfunction – a reason other than fire. This imposes significantly on building owners and occupiers, businesses, emergency services, and the community.

False alarms have the following impacts:

- Disruption to businesses due to building evacuation and loss of productivity.

- Many firefighters are volunteers, and responding to false alarms may unnecessarily impact their personal and work lives.

- Multiple recurrent false alarms create apathy should a real fire emergency occur.

- Responding to false alarms may delay emergency response to real emergencies.

- Responding to emergencies and false alarms increases the risk of injury to firefighters and the community.

- Financial penalties can apply to false alarms.

TFS wants to reduce the incidence of false alarms.

Subsequently, TFS has initiated the False Alarm Reduction Strategy Project (FARS) to take a holistic approach to defining the issues and to identify solutions to work with premises owners to reduce false alarms.

Reducing false alarms requires a coordinated and collaborative approach between TFS and premises owners.

An outcome of the project is to develop a False Alarm Reduction Strategy. In developing this strategy, TFS is seeking input from the community.

This consultation paper introduces a range of issues identified through a process of consultation within TFS.

TFS has identified possible solutions to the issues, and these are presented within this consultation paper.

Responses to this consultation paper will assist TFS to improve systems, business practices, and support to premises owners.

The issues on which comment is sought

1. Policy and Procedures

TFS currently has limited policy or systems regarding the management of and active reduction of false alarms within monitored premises. The lack of guidance hinders the decision-making process and support mechanism to effectively reduce false alarms.

To address this, TFS proposes to develop a suite of policy and guidelines that will provide a consistent and structured approach to reducing the occurrence of false alarms.

Question

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations on particular areas that TFS should target through the development of policy and guidelines that will support the decision-making process to effectively reduce false alarms?

2. Training of Frontline Staff

It is identified that frontline staff within TFS are not effectively equipped to provide appropriate advice and guidance to property owners when dealing with instances of false alarms.

It is proposed to develop additional training and support resources for frontline staff so that support and advice may be provided to premises owners to actively reduce false alarms.

Question

What advice and support do you require from frontline staff to take action to reduce the occurrence of repeat false alarms?
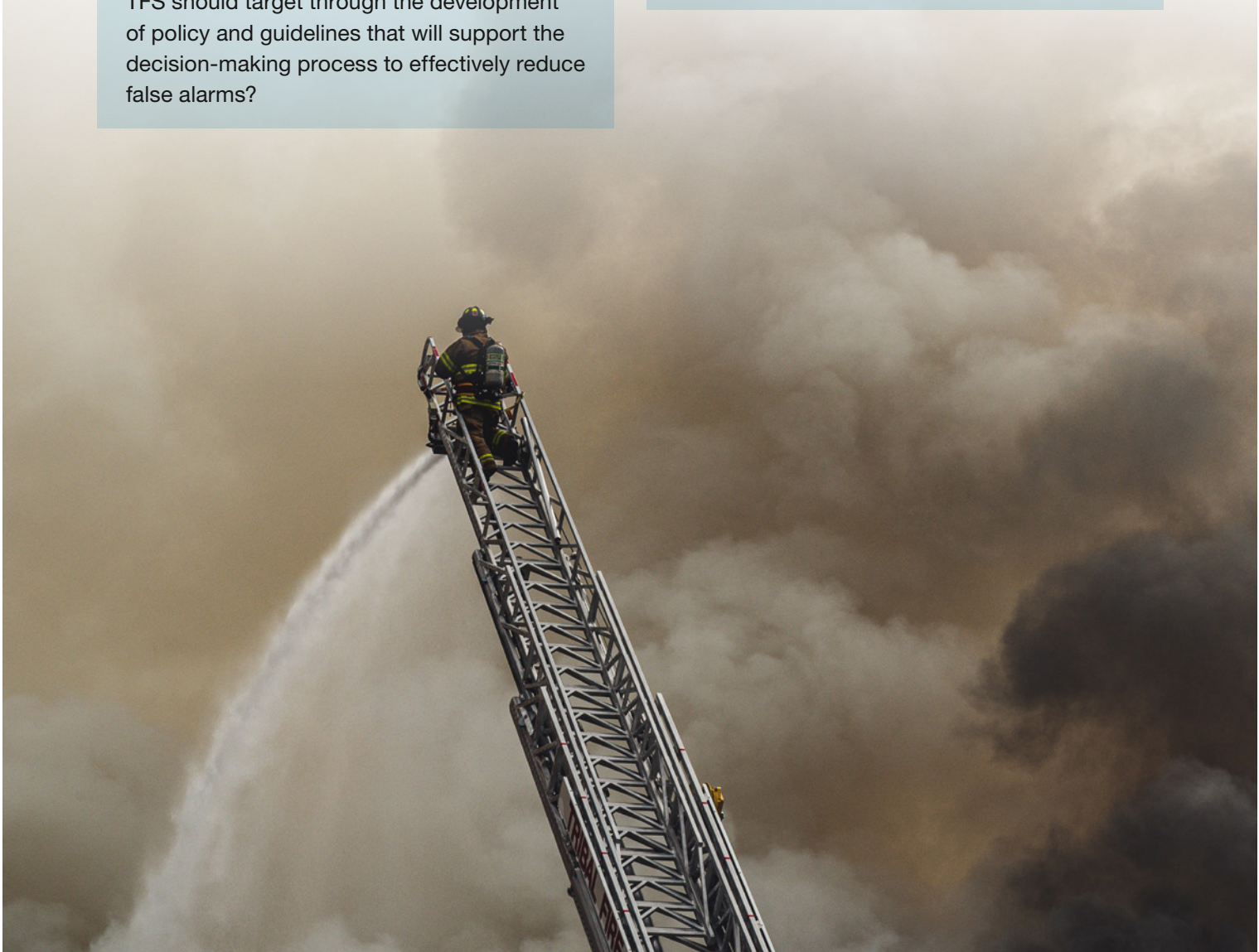
3. Education

TFS currently has limited information and education resources to guide premises owners on how to reduce false alarms.

TFS understands the importance of these materials as they underpin other false alarm reduction strategies such as charges and regulations. Education and engagement provide a proactive and collaborative approach to false alarm reduction.

TFS proposes to develop a suite of online and paper-based resources to proactively support premises owners to reduce false alarms.

Question

What type of resources would you find useful to assist in reducing the incidence of false alarms? And, what type of information do you require?

4. The Setting of Fees and Charges

A contemporary and fit-for-purpose methodology for setting network fees, monitoring fees, and false alarm charges has not been established.

TFS propose to develop a comprehensive framework for the development of fees and charges related to premises with monitored alarms. This framework and methodology will be made publicly available.

Question

What considerations do you believe should be incorporated into a methodology for the setting of fees and charges relating to premises with monitored alarms?

5. Business Systems and Practices

TFS has identified inefficiencies in the billing and support mechanisms to premises owners in relation to actively reducing false alarms in a practical and timely way.

Many of TFS' business practices in relation to the management of fees and charges related to alarmed premises are manual and inefficient.

TFS proposes to develop and utilise automated software systems to create a more efficient and effective service delivery.

Question

How might TFS be able to provide an improved service to premises owners in the payment of fees and charges related to alarm premises?

Have you any other ideas on how TFS may be able to provide a more efficient and effective service in relation to alarmed premises?

Invitations for Submission

The Tasmania Fire Service invites written submission in response to the consultation paper.

Submissions are preferred via our online feedback form:
https://www.fire.tas.gov.au/false-alarm-reduction-project-consultation-paper-feedback

Feedback can also be submitted by downloading the feedback form and emailing it to:
TFSFARS@fire.tas.gov.au

Submissions close at 11:59PM Friday, 3 November 2023.

Publishing submissions

The Tasmanian Government is dedicated to upholding transparency and openness in public consultation processes. To ensure consistency, departments follow a standardised approach when it comes to publishing submissions. This commitment aligns with the community's expectations of having access to information that informs the Government's decision-making on significant policy matters.

Results from the consultation will be published after consultation at https://fire.tas.gov.au except in cases where it is deemed not in the public interest to release the information (e.g., to protect sensitive information) or when submitters explicitly request confidentiality.

Only the organisational information (government, non-government, internal to DPFEM, or external to DPFEM) of the submitter will be published, with no personal details disclosed.

For further information, please read the Tasmanian Government Public Submissions Policy (external link).

Important information to note

1. The results from the consultation will be published, including whether the submission is from government, non-government, internal to DPFEM, or external to DPFEM.

2. In the absence of a clear indication that a submission (or parts of the submission) is intended to be treated as confidential, the Department will treat the submission as public.

3. If you wish to have your submission treated as confidential, whether in whole or in part, please clearly state this in writing at the time of submission. Identify the specific parts you want to remain confidential and provide reasons for your request. In such cases, your submission will not be published to the extent of your confidentiality request.

4. Copyright in submissions remains with the author(s), not with the Tasmanian Government.

5. The Department will not publish submissions, in whole or in part, that contain defamatory or offensive material. If your submission includes information that could potentially identify individuals, certain portions or the entire submission may not be published.

Accessibility of submissions

The Government recognises that not all individuals or groups have equal access to and understanding of information. Consequently, we are committed to ensuring that Government information is accessible and easily comprehensible to individuals with diverse communication needs.

Where possible, we encourage you to submit your comments using the online feedback form. Alternatively, you can download the form via the provided website link, complete it using Microsoft Word, and then submit it to the designated email address.

However, please note that the Government cannot assume responsibility for the accessibility of documents provided by third parties.

False Alarm Reduction Project Consultation paper