



ABN 68 300 116 092

27 October 2023

The Hon. Felix Ellis
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management
Tasmania Fire and Emergency Service Bill
GPO Box 123
Hobart TAS 7001
FES.Reform@dpfem.tas.gov.au

Dear Minister,

RE: TASMANIA FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL

At its ordinary meeting held Tuesday 24 October 2023, George Town Council resolved that:

“Council opposes the draft Tasmanian Fire and Emergency Service Bill 2023.”

In determining its position on the Bill, Council expressed a number of concerns including:

- Inadequate engagement with the local government sector;
- Lack of data to support claim of ‘fairer’ funding models of fire service levy;
- Significant rise in levies for rate payers (in some cases greater than 1000%) adding pressure to cost of living and placing additional financial burden on industry, small business and farmers;
- Uncertainty of a reduction of insurance premiums and whether it adequality offsets increase in levy (The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) estimates NSW Emergency Services Levy adds about 18% to home premiums and 40% to business cover – how does this translate in Tasmania?);
- Will the increase in levy result in increased insurance take up? (the ICA claims the amount of state taxes paid by NSW insurance customers is nearly three times that of Victorian policyholders, contributing to an estimated 13% of households being uninsured, which is double the rate in Victoria – how will this translate to Tasmania?);
- No apparent consideration for health and wellbeing of customer facing local government staff who will have to interact with hostile rate payers because of the increased levy;
- Lack of proactive communications from the government resulting in the proposed levy increase being labelled ‘massive council tax rises’ in the media (Examiner, Friday October 20, 2023, p6).

Council welcomes reform aiming to provide for more effective emergency services for better the protection of Tasmanians, their property and their and livelihoods, however strongly opposes the proposed mechanism in which the funding is to be raised. Council implores the Government to broaden its consultation and engagement efforts, extend timeframes for consultation and amend the draft Bill to reflect a fairer funding model for all.

Yours sincerely,

Shane Power
General Manager

