

Name	Have your say
Helen & Wade Rockliff	<p>We have done some brief calculations on our own situation using both proposed funding models in the draft TFES bill, & it quickly became apparent that neither option is fair on Tasmanian primary producers.</p> <p>Based on our AAV (Kentish Council), currently we pay \$286 per year fire levy. Under the proposed option 1, we would be paying \$2,208 (a 672% increase), while under option 2 we would pay \$1,104 (a 286% increase). These figures are clearly outrageous, & yet another impost on our industry that is already under huge pressure from rising input costs.</p> <p>Minister Felix Ellis said on ABC radio recently that the govt plans to abolish the fire service levy on business insurance premiums, & that will offset the increased costs to business owners of the proposed reforms. Well, we paid \$113 fire service levy on this year's insurance premium for our farm, so the abolition of that will come nowhere near compensating us for the massive increases the state govt has proposed.</p> <p>We have urged all our fellow primary producers to provide feedback to the state govt before the closing date 11:59pm Friday 1st December 2023. We have also asked the TFGA to take a stance on behalf of all members & the wider rural farming community.</p> <p>We have indicated in our personal feedback that we believe the fire levy should be calculated on assessed risk. The govt needs to recognise that we & many other farmers have our own fire fighting systems in place, along with our own regular fuel reduction plans. In addition, many farmers will often assist the Tas Fire Service with our own infrastructure & machinery, & access to water from our farm dams, to fight fires. On top of all that, many of the country volunteer fire brigades & SES personnel are made up of local farmers, out there helping to protect the wider community.</p> <p>As farmers, our situation & preparedness is completely unlike, & not comparable to, the risk from the "urban creep" into volatile native bush. In the 120 years our family have owned this farm, not once have they needed to call the Tas Fire Service for an out of control fire. In general, farmers are very serious about mitigating fire risk on their own property, & whilst we acknowledge & appreciate the great work done by our Tas Fire Service, we do not believe that primary producers should bear the majority of the brunt of fire levy reform.</p> <p>Finally, Minister Ellis has stated in the media that the fire levy needs to increase by around 5% - which means these rate hikes proposed of 700% and above are ridiculous & totally out of proportion.</p> <p>We hope that Minister Ellis & the state govt realise & acknowledge that they have made a huge error of judgement in calculating these reforms, & see that they need to go back to the drawing board & consult with all ratepayers, including our rural farming communities, before presenting a revised proposal</p>