

Jeremy Smith AFSM
Fire And Emergency Services Commissioner

Dear Jeremy

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to read 'Position Paper – State Fire and Emergency Services Commission'.

The paper is a well-articulated case for major reform of fire and emergency management in Tasmania, and the establishment of a new, and larger, Tasmanian Government organisation to manage fire and emergency services.

I make the following observations on the proposed changes:

1. Under the reforms, the function of the State Fire Management Council, and fuel management policy more broadly, will be handled by a specific subcommittee. This arrangement could work if the committee has independence to promote bushfire fuel management innovation, effectively captures the diversity of key stakeholders including members with sufficient expertise and experience to understand bushfire management holistically. The subcommittee therefore needs to include members that understand fire ecology and the need for fire management that is sympathetic to biodiversity and sustainable management of ecosystem services (air, soil, water, carbon). This subcommittee also needs to include First Nation cultural burning practitioners.
2. The escalating global wildfire crisis will continue to challenge fire managers; hence it is essential that administrative arrangements are flexible to enable rapid adaptation. The ability to establish 'additional subcommittees (e.g. risk and audit committees) or other stakeholder interest subcommittees' provides a potential for further administrative adaptation.
3. To ensure that bushfire management funding is not 'swallowed' up by the very large State Fire and Emergency Services Commission bureaucracy, it is imperative that there is transparent and fine-grained budgetary reporting on fuel management and firefighting expenditures. Such financial data are essential for understanding the comparative effectiveness of prevention and suppression of bushfires.

I look forward to working with you in helping Tasmanian's adapt to bushfires, the State's primary natural hazard.

Yours sincerely



David Bowman
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