



OFFICE OF THE LORD MAYOR  
HOBART TOWN HALL

Mr Jeremy Smith AFSM  
Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner  
Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services

**Via email:** [tfes@dpfem.tas.gov.au](mailto:tfes@dpfem.tas.gov.au)

Dear Commissioner Smith

Thank you for your letter and for providing the opportunity to review the TFES Position Paper outlining the proposed establishment of the State Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SFESC).

The Hobart Municipal Emergency Management Committee supports the proposed move towards a skills-based commission. This structure will enhance decision-making, reduce potential conflicts of interest, and ensure the board is well-equipped to address the complex and evolving challenges associated with fire and emergency management.

However, we believe the proposed structure could be strengthened by incorporating expertise and mechanisms that prioritise Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), and community engagement. Specifically, we recommend:

1. Including DRR and CCA expertise in the SFESC skills matrix and/or requiring a DRR and CCA focal point on the Board. This would align Tasmania with international best practices, such as outlined in the Sendai Framework, by shifting from a reactive, hazard focus to a proactive, holistic approach aimed at reducing vulnerabilities, enhancing preparedness, and strengthening adaptive capacities across communities, infrastructure, and institutions. While the Tasmania Fire Service and State Emergency Service engage in DRR and adaptation activities, these efforts are often overshadowed by immediate, operational priorities. Elevating DRR and CCA as a core focus within the Board would embed risk reduction principles into governance and strategic planning, ensuring DRR and CCA remains a sustained and integral priority.
2. Establishing a dedicated DRR and CCA advisory subcommittee. This subcommittee could provide targeted technical input to support strategic and operational planning, complementing the proposed subcommittees for volunteers and employees, as well as the State Fire Management Council.

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Such a body would ensure DRR and CCA principles are consistently integrated into decision-making and enhance comprehensive risk management across Tasmanian government agencies.

3. Embedding community preparedness within the SFESC governance framework. Regardless of the mechanism – whether through legislative responsibilities, a dedicated subcommittee, or another governance structure - it is important that these reforms consider how community preparedness can be elevated as a strategic propriety. Natural hazards such as bushfires, floods, and storms are becoming more severe, widespread, and frequent under climate change. As shown during the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires, emergency services cannot be everywhere at once, and communities must be equipped to prepare, respond, and recover independently. A whole-of-community approach to resilience is necessary to ensure that Tasmania's emergency management system is better prepared, coordinated, and supported at all levels.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. Should you wish to discuss any of these points in further detail, I would be happy to meet to explore how the Hobart Municipal Emergency Management Committee can support this important work.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Anna Reynolds

**LORD MAYOR**

**Chair, Hobart Municipal Emergency Management Committee**

Wednesday 12 February 2025