



13 February 2025

Mr. Jeremy Smith
Fire & Emergency Services Commissioner
GPO Box 1523
Hobart TAS 7001

tfes@dpfem.tas.gov.au

Re: State Fire & Emergency Services Commission – Position Paper Feedback

Dear Commissioner Smith

Thank you for the opportunity for the George Town Council to provide feedback on proposed reforms to the State Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SFESC).

It is clear from the Position Paper provided that the Tasmanian Government will pursue the establishment of the SFESC as a Statutory Authority with a skills based board.

George Town Council wishes to establish for the record that it supports the position provided by LGAT in its previous submission in that Local Government representation should be retained in any new structure given the critical and significant role that it plays in supporting fire and emergency efforts and operations.

Not only does Local Government play a critical role in the collection of the Fire Services Contribution it also has an important role in delivering support through individual Municipal Emergency Management Plans and Emergency Recovery Plans, Municipal Emergency Management Committees, active participation in Regional Emergency Management Committees and working with the TFS and State Government agencies on protecting the States critical infrastructure assets and community assets through fire abatement activities.

Additionally with regard to George Town Council, it makes a significant financial contribution to support the operations of the SES in George Town.

With regard to what has been outlined in the Position Paper, George Town Council offers the following points for your consideration.

1. The rationale around the skills based board being key in the establishment of the SFESC is well understood. In the proposals current form, the importance and argument for this could be considered to be diminished given such a reliance of the need for two skills based Advisory Sub-Committees as outlined in the drafting instructions to develop the TFES Regulations.

It appears that there will be a significant dependence on the two Advisory Sub-Committees and the heavy lifting that they are likely to be doing with regard to work directed by the SFESC and recommendations and advice that they may also have to provide.

On this basis it is reasonable to conclude that with the establishment of a Board of Directors of 9 people on the SFESC, underpinned with two skills based Advisory Sub-Committees (albeit in the current absence of their Terms of Reference), this may be considered as to be excessive in the context of the efficient operation of Statutory Authorities in the pursuit of efficiency and reform.



2. We expect that in developing the Articles of Operation and Terms of Reference for both the SFESC and its supporting Advisory Sub-Committees, significant consideration is given to the principles driving the Tasmanian Government Business Governance Reform review and subsequent Plan
3. With regard to the establishment of Terms of Reference for the Advisory Sub-Committees and their operational responsibilities and relationship to the SFESC, consideration should be given to ensuring that the regulations stipulate the SFESC must consider the recommendations of the sub-committees as opposed to receiving them. In the interests of visibility, consideration should also be given to publishing any recommendations provided by the Advisory Sub-Committees.
4. George Town Council considers it important that Local Government representation with the relevant experience and skills connected to fire and emergency activities and effective inter-government relations, should be supported by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner on the SFES or within Advisory Sub-Committees at a minimum.
5. While our Council absolutely supports the pursuit of diversity representation across community and government, it believes that the Secondary Considerations listed in Attachment 2 – Example Skills Matrix should not be a consideration, when the primary driver of change is to establish a skills based approach.

This is particularly important as the SFESC's future function will be to make critical planning, resourcing and strategic decisions that will have a significant impact on the safety and wellbeing of Tasmanian residents.

Council welcomes the opportunity to present its view, and I trust the information provided to you is helpful in consideration of these important matters of fire and emergency management.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SP', is located below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

**General Manager
Shane Power**