

Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

While the Amendments are a move in the right direction, there could be more capabilities that the RFSQ could take on, not just bushfire suppression and prevention in other states; the volunteer fire services do more than bushfire suppression and prevention. They also respond to structure fires, including internal firefighting, not just putting water in from the outside. Road traffic accidents do rescue as well as general land rescue. While I understand that not every rural fire brigade would be able to do this, many could and, in some cases, have the capacity to do so. This can help the community these brigades are in to reduce property loss and loss of life. This is not to remove fire and rescue or other emergency services but to supplement manpower and skills when the brigades are not dealing with bushfires. For example, we can look at the NSW system where both NSWRF and FRNSW turn out to do jobs together and support each other with members of both services having the same qualifications and skills to do that job and help to keep costs down and reduce the time that appliances are at that job and fatigue in the crews as volunteer crews and step in and take over. We can also look at other states like Victoria and South Australia, which have similar systems for their fire agencies. We have Tasmania, where volunteers and paid staff provide the same service. I have been a volunteer with the NSW RFS for the last twenty years, including holding rank for 12 years, and I have seen how volunteer members can supplement other agencies in emergencies and bring skills from their field of work as well. I feel that RFSQ could do more than suppress and prevent bushfires, and the Amendment to the bill could facilitate this.