

Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Committee Secretary
Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee
Parliament House
George Street
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Bruce Wagner Submission on the Disaster Management and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024
1st Officer and Fire Warden of 40 Years with Mt French Rural Fire Brigade and a member of Agforce.

I totally support 100% the RFBAQ request that the amendments to the current fire service act 1990 be dismissed before a full legislative rewrite following the 2024 Qld State Election.

I also hope the Parliamentary Committee acknowledges and supports the Agforce call for a State Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2023/24 fire season and investigate the mistakes that were made. This would mean the Environmental Committee would also be involved.

As a Rural Volunteer Firefighter I am not qualified to fight large structural fires, hazmat incidents, or vehicle accident extractions. The paid staff at QFES Kedron and RFS paid staff have zero knowledge in how to control moving fires in rural areas.

Example 1.

I visited Table Top Mountain Rd, Beechmont in 2020 and saw first hand that 1 drip torch and a leaf blower used with rural fire knowledge could have been applied to stop that fire saving 11 homes, Binna Burra Lodge from destruction and resulting in the Government providing a private trust of \$18 million dollars out of their budget. (See Qld Hansard budget papers for details.)

Example 2.

A frustrated comment posted on Facebook from a concerned firefighter from Tara asked "Stop sending children out here. You need to have at least 1 qualified person per truck! ". This comment was later removed within an hour.

Rural Fire Brigades were originally formed so that neighbors could be equipped to assist other neighbors on rural property fires. Now you have some RFS Brigades in the South-East Region having not 1 farmer in their brigade.

We need to return to our roots and become 2 separate bodies with our own Commissioner just like the southern states of Australia.

What the Government does not understand anymore is the Volunteer side of Rural Fire. Members often lose income while they attend fires and therefore should be primarily used in emergencies only.

If you give the Commissioner power to sack members, 1st Officers, Chairmen, Secretaries etc this will eventually filter down for district inspector paid staff to also sack people. When in fact there are District Inspectors and Regional Managers who should have been removed from their positions years ago.

Everything will be public knowledge before October.

Yours truly
Bruce Wagner