

Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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I make this submission to the committee as an individual who has participated in more than 25 years of community-based volunteering with my local Rural fire Brigade. This has included activities like Firefighting (Bushfire, Structural and mobile property), response to storm and natural disaster, community engagement and preparedness, bushfire mitigation activities and community advocacy. This participation has seen me gain insightful knowledge into many aspects of the work carried out by my local rural fire brigade, within and in the greater community, leading to an understanding of the importance of service provided to community.

With the breakup of QFES, the SES received new legislation State Emergency Services Bill 2023. The period allowed for submissions to parliamentary committee far exceeded that has been allocated by the government for Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This would lead to the belief that the government knew that this is bad draft legislation that would be unpopular.

This proposed legislation missed the opportunity to completely rewrite the legislation. The current legislation is 34 years old, and it is being amended again. The proposed legislation pits those that are held in highest esteem in the community, firefighters, against each other. The terms used throughout this proposed amendment denigrate the value of those who provide voluntary service. They make up the majority, provide service to the greatest area, and in doing so contribute a considerable amount to this great State. It is disappointing that this bad draft uses words that attach a perception of value based on whether remuneration is involved, rather than the professional standard and ethics exhibited. This bad draft legislation says that all executive positions with true powers legislated, must only be drawn from a fellowship of Fire and Rescue senior officers, leaving much of the cohort underrepresented. I believe this bad draft legislation sets up the Rural Fire Service Queensland to be a lesser part of the Queensland fire department from its onset.

I Request that this committee recommends that all amendments to the current Fire Service Act 1990 be dismissed, and a full legislative rewrite be undertaken.

Regards

Neville Bradford

Thursday 14th March 2024