



Redbank Creek Rural Fire Brigade
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The Research Director
Public Accounts and Public Works Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find attached Redbank Creek Rural Fire Brigade's submission for the Management of Rural Fire Service in Queensland.

Contact telephone number for Michael Jess 0418 710 390.

Kind Regards,

Michael Jess
Chairperson

Is the current model of Rural Fire Brigades suitable?

Group system needs to be recognised in the chain of command to be integral to the running of the fire grounds as they possess the practical experience and local knowledge that needs to be included in emergency response meeting. At the moment it is only attended by administration. At no time has group been invited to represent the on ground fire fighting.

At the present time administrators are attempting to run the fire ground. By doing so they are wasting man power and resources, due to inexperience and lack of local knowledge, and in doing so are disenchanting fire fighters.

Fatigue management is often overlooked by administration on the fire ground. On a number of occasions food and drink has not made it to the fire fighters for 12 hours plus.

Is the existing funding model, including resource allocation, appropriate?

The general funding for the day to day running of the brigade is acceptable. The resource allocation is a different issue as stated by the audit, essential safety equipment and resourcing needs are unknown to QFRS. We agree with the audit. With the lack of appropriate systems to monitor the conditions of safety equipment at present all that is required is a road safety of the fire appliance. There is no inspection audit of equipment levels or performance.

What effect is urban encroachment within brigade areas having on Rural Fire Brigades?

As areas become zones and training and administration increase to the level of urban fire fighters, volunteer members of rural brigades will start to withdraw from service.

How can the increasing demands on Rural Fire Brigades be managed effectively?

We recommend that there be a system of promotion in administration through the ranks of the brigades to provide administrators with practical experience which they currently lack at the present time.

Are the accountability mechanisms currently in place appropriate?

We disagree with the statement that revenue expenditure, assets and liability are not accounted for. They are in essence recorded and audited every 12 months. We are accountable through the group system both to council and QFRS. The group system reports on a monthly basis.

What should be the role of Fire Wardens within the Rural Fire Brigade?

We believe that fire wardens can not operate independently of fire brigades. The areas under control of the fire wardens should overshadow the brigade areas. We recommend that the fire warden must be a member of the relevant brigade and be accountable to the brigade. Fire wardens should not be appointed for life and should not be appointed by the commissioner. They should be voted in for a time period of two years, as is the case of the office bearers.

Are there any other relevant matters the committee needs to address?

Forward planning and risk management. The emergency service meetings attended by police, council and QFRS should include both SES and rural fire brigade group structure, which control approximately 21 brigades, as the biggest supplier of man power. It should also include the largest landholders in the shire which include DNR, National Parks, Forestry, Sunwater. It also should include the fire wardens.

We recommend that reviews should be undertaken of the brigade areas and fire warden areas by the relevant stakeholders and the emergency service meetings.