



### Disclaimer

This submission points of opinion, views and conclusions are mine alone and are not in any part views expressed by Samford Rural Fire Brigade or that of the Samford Rural Brigades Management Committee.

I am currently an active fire fighter as a member of Samford Rural Fire Brigade. For the past ten years my role with the Brigade is that of Brigade Training Officer I also hold the rank of Crew Leader.

My civilian employment is Engineering Purchasing Officer for a large company (Coca – Cola Amatil) based at Richlands Queensland. Last financial year I was responsible and accountable for over 33 million dollars of CCA's budget. As my employee is a public company and listed on the share market I have a great understanding of Budgets, Capital for Projects Large+ Small, as well as Audits and Accountable for finances under my control. I have obtained a Diploma in Business Management with Deakin University.

### Brigade Funding

Currently Samford Rural Fire Brigade has three main methods of funding

- Collection of the Fire Levy through the Morton Bay Regional Council
- Donations from members of the public and local businesses
- Control burns for local residents & Department of Defence Enoggera facility

### So how is the money managed by Samford Brigade?

The Samford Brigade has a Management Committee that has been in place for a number of years.

This Committee seeks input and suggestions from all members of the Samford Brigade. This goes into and forms part of the five year business plan, this plan is reviewed on a yearly basis.

From this business plan small sub committees are formed to work on larger capital items ie the replacement of vehicles. I would like to point out Samford Brigade has four fire vehicles and one trailer. The building of the Fire Station and extensions to the station with the new kitchen and training room which also acts as Incident Control Centre ICC for major Incidents. This equipment and facilities has been funded by Samford Brigade and the local community with token funding coming from QFRS. Audit of all our Brigade costs is completed by a local Accountant annually; these professional fees are paid for by Samford Brigade. A copy of each Audit Report has been given to Rural Operations Caboolture District Office.

***As you can see "Brigade Funding" and the management" of all monies is within the accordance with the structure and regulations set out in Brigade Manual which forms a vital part in how our brigade is structured to operate under the QRFS.***

## **Taking of Funds**

We have been approached by a paid Officer from QFRS and he attended the Samford Brigade general meeting with a proposal of pooling all funding collected on the Brigades behalf from the council to be managed by the Caboolture group this proposal did not go down well with all the members that attend this meeting. The logic he stated was that some Brigades did not have ample revenue with limited residents and that this has an impact on the amount of fire levy collected by the council on their behalf resulting in funding well below their operating cost. It was also the fact that some Brigades did not have the appropriate expertises or manpower in the management of public moneys.

## **Resource Allocation**

Samford Brigade has a core group of approximately 35 active trained experienced fire fighters I must also highlight the Management Committee that is made up long standing locals with broad expertises. Our Brigade is a very well equipped and maintained facility and equipment that meets legal obligation set out by QFRS, Work Cover, Council and State Government requirements some examples are all electrical appliances in the station and on the vehicles are tagged and tested. All vehicles have Road Worthiness Certificates (RWC) issued yearly these Certificates are forward to Caboolture District Office.

## **Call Outs**

It is of late that I have seen a reduction in our Brigades call outs. We have been limited to attend RTC Road Traffic Crashes we appear to only be responded to incidents if the nearest Urban Brigade (Arana Hills) is already on a call. The majority of these accidents involve motor cycles on Mount Glorious Road. We have been attending accidents for several years and have a good repour with other emergency services. When on scene we assist QAS, preserve the scene for QPS Forensic Investigation Unit apply Kitty Litter at any oil to prevent any more accidents.

To retain Urban truck/s off the run for that could capably be handled by local Brigades is a waste a resources & funds

We have been told this is due to a new call out system is at fault had it been operating for some time with this problem and is just now on the table as a discussion point now after almost 12 months.

We have just been told that a decree from the Commissioner that Breathing Apparatus (BA) IS NOT TO BE CARRIED ON ANY RURAL TRUCKS. Is this removal of another piece of vital equipment driven by the cost or some talk of late is a push from Urban Officers Union? The training and operation of this equipment is carried by QFRS and our members meet industries high standards.

It is my opinion that the focus of our resources not being used efficiently as well as removed is due to the majority of senior Rural Offices coming from a Urban back ground, taking work from their fellow Urban Officers they have very little trust or respect of volunteers competencies and abilities other then grass fire fighting.

It is my belief that the Rural Senior Officers are just going though the motions to advance their own careers and in no way care about the best resources they have the manpower of the volunteers.

## Conclusion

It is my belief if a Brigade can not function and operate safely due to funding requirements the organisation QFRS has a need for this Brigade to remain operational it has several options available

- Obligation to seek additional Government funding and take over the running cost
- Assist with financial training and Mentoring smaller brigades ensuring it not lip service
- Clear guide lines and policies for the use any funding
- Development of living business plans for each Brigade
- Any misappropriate of funds and the police should be informed

I am apposed to any of our Brigade funds being pilfered off to prop up any Brigade that has been mismanaged. This will reward poorly managed Brigades and deprive local residents of services and resources for which they have paid for and should be entitled to.

Every Brigade is different to say that because of mismanagement or lack of funds to take them from any other Brigade is just out absolute theft from the local community.

We should be involved or at least informed of any Fire Calls or incidents in our area of operations.

The removal of any equipment and tasking including Breathing Apparatus (B.A) or attending Road Traffic Crashes (RTC) is opposed

All changes made by Commissioner and senior officers need to be in writing and clearly state the reasons why and benefits for the community and volunteers.

The appointment of many former Urban Officers to decision making role in our organisation is having an impact on how we operate. Their lack of understanding of the ethos of what make people volunteer is detrimental to not only all Brigades members, the community and the state.

Each Brigade and group should complete performance reviews on paid staff yearly.

I am not opposed to Officers transferring to Rural Operations if they are the right person for the job but they must be willing to commit or at least try and work with volunteers. If they receive two poor performance reviews (two years) they should be returned to urban operations and or dismissed.

Final comment of the government declares that they value the work carried out by all volunteers is continued is basically lip service and as for Queensland Fire & Rescue Service / Queensland Rural Fires being one has a long way to go with the current "us and them" mentality driven by the senior officers on both sides of the QFRS .