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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

**SUBMISSION
TO THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MANAGEMENT OF RURAL FIRE SERVICES IN QUEENSLAND**

FROM

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I PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL TO THE GOLD COAST RURAL FIRE BRIGADE GROUP IN 2006. THIS PROPOSAL COVERED ISSUES THAT YOUR COMMITTEE IS NOW INVOLVED WITH IN YOUR INQUIREY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE RURAL FIRE SERVICE. THESE ISSUES 4 YEARS ON HAVE NOT CHANGED AND ARE VERY RELEVANT TO YOUR INQUIREY.

AS FIRST OFFICER AND FIRE WARDEN OF WASP CREEK RURAL FIRE BRIGADE I HAVE GRAVE CONCERNS ON THE FUTURE AND SURVIVAL OF ALL GOLD COAST RURAL FIRE BRIGADES, AS AREAS DEVELOPE THESE CONCERNS WILL ALSO EVENTUALLY AFFECT MANY OTHER AREAS IN QUEENSLAND.

- **IS THE CURRENT MODEL OF RURAL FIRE BRIGADES SUITABLE**

THE CURRENT MODEL CANNOT SUSTAIN RURAL FIRE BRIGADES WITH THE FAST GROWING POPULATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL PROPERTIES THE URBAN SPRAWLOF LARGE HOUSING DEVELOPEMENTS ADJOINING RURAL PROPERTIES.

BRIGADE BOUNDARIES ARE BEING CHANGED FROM RURAL TO URBAN.

THE NEED FOR A FORMULATED PLAN TO ALLOW FOR THE CO EXISTANCE OF BOTH URBAN AND RURAL BRIGADES IS PARAMOUNT. URBAN VEHICLES STILL CANNOT ACCESS A VAST AMOUNT OF AREAS NOW COMING UNDER URBAN CONTROL NEITHER DO THEY HAVE THE MAN POWER

- **IS THE EXISTING FUNDING MODEL INCLUDING RESOURCE ALLOCATION APPROPRIATE**

THE OPENING OF THE NERANG FIRE STATION HAS IMPACTED IMMEDIATELY ON TWO RURAL BRIGADES FINANCIAL SURVIVAL. THE ONLY WAY THESE BRIGADES CAN SURVIVE IS BY THE OTHER RURAL GOLD COAST BRIGADES AIDING THEM FINANCIALLY WHICH WILL ALLOW THEM TO STILL OPERATE IN AN URBAN LEVIED AREA. THE TERRAIN STILL DEMANDS THE NEED FOR 4X4 BUSH FIRE VEHICLES AND CREWS. WITHOUT FINANCES THESE BRIGADES WILL HAVE TO CLOSE DOWN.

A TOP UP OF FINANCES SOLELY FROM A RURAL LEVY TO THESE BRIGADES IS OF COURSE A SHORT TERM FIX. IF NOTHING IS DONE TO LOOK AT AND PUT INTO PLACE A LONG TERM FIX. THESE AND OTHER RURAL BRIGADES WILL HAVE TO CLOSE WHEN NOT IF AREAS OF OTHER BRIGADES NAMELY THE NORTHERN END OF THE GOLD COAST ARE AFFECTED IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE IN THE SAME WAY.

EVENTUALLY THE RURAL LEVIES DISTRIBUTION WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SUSTAIN THE VOLUNTARY RURAL BRIGADES WHO ARE NOW AND STILL WILL BE DESPERATELY NEEDED TO FULLY SERVICE IZONE AREAS.

FUNDING IS NEEDED TO KEEP BRIGADES FINANCIAL ALSO TO SUPPLY THE VOLUNTEERS WITH THE REQUIRED LEVEL OF TRAINING THAT IS REQUIRED TO ENABLE THE VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPLY A SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY. THE PRESENT LEVY SYSTEM WILL NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN

ONCE THE RURAL LEVIES ARE DEPLETED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE COMMUNITY WILL SLOWLY LOSE RURAL BRIGADES AS AREAS CHANGE, THE BRIGADES THAT ARE LEFT WILL LOSE VALUED VOLUNTEERS WHO WILL FAST FEEL NEGLETED. THIS IS HAPPENING NOW, WHY SHOULD VOLUNTEERS HAVE TO FIGHT TO OFFER THERE SERVICES TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY. THEY THE ON GROUND FIRE FIGHTERS AND THE COMMUNITY KNOW THE NEED IS STILL THERE. THEIR EXPERIENCE AND DEDICATION TO THE COMMUNITY WILL EVENTUALLY BE LOST AT A TIME WHEN IT IS STILL DESPERATELY REQUIRED.

AS A VOLUNTEER WITH 15 YEARS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND FIRST OFFICER AND FIRE WARDEN OF WASP CREEK RURAL FIRE BRIGADE I FEEL THE ONLY WAY THE RURAL BRIGADES ON THE GOLD COAST CAN CONTINUE TO EXIST IS BY CHANGING THE CURRENT LEVY TO AN IZONE LEVY, AT PRESENT THE URBAN / RURAL LEVY CAN ONLY BE UTILISED IN THE AREAS COLLECTED BY THAT PARTICULAR SERVICE, IT REQUIRES A CHANGE TO LEGISLATION TO ALLOW RURAL /URBAN LEVIES TO OPERATE IN JOINT OPERATIONAL AREAS.

WITH AN IZONE LEVY IN PLACE IT WOULD ALLOW BRIGADES TO SURVIVE. ENABELING ITS MEMBERS TO SUPPLY THIER EXPERTISE SERVICE AS A MATTER OF COURSE.

TO LOSE OR DEMISE THIS VALUABLE SERVICE WOULD BE VERY NEGLEGENT OF ANY ORGANISATION.

AN IZONE LEVY WOULD FINANCE MY SECOND SUGGESTION WHICH IS ATTACHED .I ORIGINALLY PUT FORWARD THIS SUGGESTION TO THE GOLD COAST RURAL FIRE BRIGADE GROUP IN 2006.WHERE FIRE LEVIES WERE BEING DISCUSSED.

A TRAINING SCHOOL PROVIDED. WHERE COURSES AND QUALIFICATIONS TO BE SUPPLIED AND ACHIEVED PRIOR TO BEING ACCEPTED AS A VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTER.

THIS WOULD ELIMINATE THE CONSTANT ROUNDABOUT TRAINING WE HAVE TO SUPPLY TO MEMBERS AT PRESENT.

**HERE ON THE GOLD COAST THE SUPPLY OF THE TRAINING SCHOOL CAN BE ACHIEVED BY UTILISING THE PLANNED GROUP HEADQUARTERS
THIS WILL PROVIDE AN OVERALL IMPROVED STANDARD.**

A CUT OFF AGE AS WELL AS HEALTH AND FITNESS REQUIREMENTS TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION. THE LIKES OF MYSELF WOULD HAVE TO GO.

THIS WILL ENSURE ANY NEW INTAKE OF MEMBERS WILL ALWAYS HAVE A CERTAIN STANDARD TO ATTAIN.

THE NEW GOLD COAST OF THE FUTURE IN MY OPINION WILL REQUIRE THESE CHANGES TO ENABLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS THE CHANCE TO PROVIDE THE ALL ROUND SERVICE THAT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE FAST GROWING GOLD COAST AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITY.

ARGUING ABOUT PRESENT DAY LEVY FIGURES OR BOUNDARY CHANGES WILL NOT ACHIEVE ANY IMPROVEMENT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER. IT IS AND WOULD BE ONLY A SHORT TERM FIX AND NOT A SOLUTION FOR THE SURVIVAL OF BRIGADES

I REALLY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHAT WE AS VOLUNTEERS AND THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE SETTING IN PLACE FOR THE FUTURE

- **How can the increasing demands on rural fire brigades be managed**

My Submission for future funding and operation of Rural Fire Brigades

AS PRESENTED TO GOLD COAST RURAL FIRE BRIGADE GROUP 2006

FROM CHARLIE SMITH FIRST OFFICER AND FIRE WARDEN WASP CREEK RURAL FIRE BRIGADE.

PERSONALLY I BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE LOOKING AT FORMING A PLAN FOR TWO YEARS / FIVE YEARS / TEN YEARS AHEAD. IF WE ARE REALISTIC ALL DISCUSSIONS TODAY ARE IRRELIVANT TO WHAT THE GOLD COAST WILL BE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. A LONG TERM ANSWER CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITH ANY SUGGESTED FIRE LEVY CHANGE THAT HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD SO FAR.

IF WE REALLY WANT TO LOOK TOWARDS BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS WE HAVE TO CHANGE HOW WE OPERATE. I SUGGEST ONE WAY AROUND THESE CONCERNS ESPECIALLY FOR THE SMALLER BRIGADES. IS THAT WE ALL COME SOLELY UNDER THE OPERATIONAL BANNER OF QFRS.

THE COLLECTION OF ALL LEVIES TO GO TO ONE ORGANISATION IT WOULD ELIMINATE ANY FUNDING CONCERNS FROM ANY BRIGADE

INSTEAD OF BEING RURAL FIRE SERVICE WE WOULD BE VOLUNTEERS WITHIN QFRA.

BRIGADES WOULD BE FUNDED AS EACH AREA DICTATES. MOST RURAL BRIGADES WILL ONLY BE LEFT WITH SMALL POCKETS OF BUSH IN THE 2/5/10 YEAR FUTURE PLAN, THE NEED TO KEEP THESE BRIGADES OPERATIONAL AND TRAINED TO A SKILLED LEVEL IS WITHOUT A DOUBT VERY NECESSARY.

QFRS WOULD SUPPLY ALL EQUIPMENT, TRUCKS ANY BA EQUIPMENT INCLUDING REPAIRS AND OFFER ALL TRAINING COURSES TO KEEP SKILLS AT A TOP LEVEL.

TRAINING TO BE STANDARDISED AND INCLUDE ALL ASPECTS OF TRAINING INCLUDING TRAINING FOR STRUCTURAL FIRES ETC. RURAL FIREFIGHTER TRAINERS WITHIN QFRA TO COMPLY WITH THE BUSH FIRE TRAINING ELIMENT.
QFRA TO PROVIDE THE APPROIATE P.P.E. FOR ALL ELIMENTS OF FIRE FIGHTING APPLICABLE TO EACH BRIGADES NEEDS.