

Accountability: while we have no doubt that most brigades have adequate financial management, we can see that visibility for the funding party is important. Given this is local government through the levy the accountability should be to local government through quarter accounts. It is important to get balance of reporting and increasing workload to both treasurers and councils right.

Strategic planning: most brigades do not have the resources, knowledge or capability to plan strategically. Teaching strategic planning to 1 or 2 people in each brigade would be an extremely lengthy and expensive process, but divisions should have proper business and strategic planning in place with input from the brigades. Given the sheer number of brigades any input will be limited but as financial accountability is raised and information gathered it will become clearer where funding and management gaps are.

Thought should be given to the appointment of divisional business managers, either employment or as consultants to help in the planning and implementation of these strategies as well as some basic commercial skills to brigade treasurers and first officers.

Urban Encroachment

Urban encroachment has the impact of making us more likely to be called out to road accidents or structural fires, while to some extent this is a training issue, this also has the effect of increasing the time and resources given by volunteers.

Volunteers need to be encouraged not only to train for but also to turn out to incidents this is a “whats in it for me” scenario and consideration should be given to some kind of reward for training at least. Response times for professional services can vary – in our area. There is no urban fire brigade, no SES, No ambulance. Our brigades commitment to the local community. We believe that we should attend these incidents because of our local knowledge of the community and access to certain areas.

With the above increasing demands we believe that at least the more qualified and senior members of the brigades should have some reward? Ultimately the brigade will still need to be based on volunteers as its hard to see any other way of financing. We must how ever encourage new members to join and to train for the future.

Current modem

It is difficult to see how any other modem could give the coverage currently given. The cost of sent professional fire fighter would be astronomical as pointed out in the report. We do believe however that there should be more recognition of the time and resources that volunteers give. QFRS needs to realize that not only brigades but all volunteer organization struggle to get interested people, and the harder you make membership and the more you expect of them the fewer people will get involved in the brigades.

One suggestion could be a tax credit to active officers of the brigade (those who have undergone crew leader training and above) this could be nominal

(perhaps \$100 off a car rego) and would not only have the effort of a reward but would hopefully make it likely that brigade members would volunteer for positions.

Fundings

The current funding model seems rather haphazard. Our brigade receives funding from local government levy, but we know of others that do not. We recommend to standardize the funding from local government, but the most important thing is that there must be local ownership of the funds. Centralizing collection and apportion to Brisbane would increase bureaucracy and cost, at the same time losing accountability and visibility for local councils. The levy should be kept in the brigade area that it is collected in and not pooled that brigades have to then compete against each other for funding. If you do this you discourage brigades that are prepared and willing to do extra in fund raising to go the extra miles.

As for grants and other special funding opportunities we think the fire services should make brigades aware of opportunities as they become available and also what finance is available when brigades have projects to pay for.

PPE must remain free of charge to volunteers of that are to be encouraged to wear it.

The removal of certain subsidized fire fighting equipment from the list has caused problem in rural areas. The ordering system should be changed to allow the district office to store certain items allowing brigades access to these items with less work on the secretary and treasurer.

Fire warden review

We believe that most wardens are happy with being in charge of the way fire is managed in their area and that the work load and cost incurred is minimal compared with the alternative.

As far as we are aware, fire wardens are an intrinsic part of the brigade working together with the brigade to manage the risks involved with grass fires and care of the environment.

The permit to light fire system administrated by a localized fire warden net work is by far the proven best method of fire control in QLD. The appointment of a local is paramount as this personw will have local knowledge of industry requirements and intimate local knowledge of community issues plus the added local knowledge of weather dynamics and its impact on the local area. There are roles and responsibilities of land holders and they are managed by the volunteer fire warden system through a permit to light a fire.