

Your details

Submission details

I am making this submission as

Other

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public

I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

Thank you for the opportunity.

I was a volunteer member of two NSW Rural Fire Service Brigades ([redacted] and [redacted] Volunteer Organisation Support - based at [redacted]) during 2014 to early 2020. My past 35 year professional career in nursing included emergency work, recruitment, performance management; with academic qualifications in psychology and post graduate health administration.

While I observed capable, skilled and professional RFS members (both volunteer and paid) I noted several areas that I believe have let this vital emergency service down.

1. Full time permanent positions not filled, some filled on temporary basis and volunteers being asked to fill in. This erodes the performance of the organisation - duties not carried out, staff in state of uncertainty and an atmosphere

of despair with poor performance.

2 Paid permanent staff not having adequate training and supervision. Unprofessional performance observed (personal activities being conducted in work time, indiscreet conversations, lack of situational awareness (e.g talking loudly in an open plan emergency operations room), tasks not being carried through.

3. Staff - volunteer and paid - not demonstrating situation awareness with regard to health and safety - e.g attending work places while displaying signs and symptoms of infections (influenza, gastro-intestinal tract).

4 Training. I was interested in learning radio operations skills but found the training ad hoc and inconsistent.

I did raise these issues (verbally and in writing) within the organisation but my concerns were disregarded. I was told I was being 'picky', and should 'just work around' them. In one training session the paid, experienced trainer made a disparaging comment about another emergency service which sent staff home if the member was ill.

I reiterate that I observed and worked with skilled and dedicated people in the RFS who provided leadership of the highest calibre. I hope the NSW government and RFS leadership will use the Inquiry to respect those people and the NSW community, and improve the Service as demands and expectations grow.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#).

Supporting documents or images
