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| I am making this submission as | Prefer not to say |
| Submission type | Personal |
| Organisation making the submission (if applicable) | |
| Your position in the organisation (if applicable) | |
| Consent to make submission public | Public |
| Your story | |
| 1.1 Causes and contributing factors | The causes of the fire vary from arsonist, to lightning strikes, from motor vehicles and even aircraft and careless people but the fire intensity was increased by the drought. |
| 1.2 Preparation and planning | |
| 1.3 Response to bushfires | |
| 1.4 Any other matters | SAFETY is a concern; vehicles with outdated FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS are used. It has been reported that WorkSafe NSW is to investigate the circumstances as to why a Fire and Rescue NSW truck was sent into dangerous situation without adequate fire protection. |

There need to be updated fire protection systems installed on older vehicles or these vehicles taken out of service.

Radios; The standard number of RADIOS on a NSW RFS truck is 4 but the truck can and usually carries 6 people so two of the crew do not have radios for safe communication. Some areas in NSW don't have sufficient RADIO COMMUNICATION hardware/equipment and this creates 'black spots' where back to base or to other trucks does not work. With no communication no-one knows where you are or can send help if needed.

There need to be additional radio towers or some kind of booster equipment installed and sufficient radios for all crew.

Helmets; the 'shelf life' under the Australian Standard for the helmet the NSW RFS uses and by the manufacturer is 'at least' 3 years but there are members who can't get replacement helmets unless their helmet is 10 years old.

Compensation for injury to NSW RFS members is a no fault but if the crewleader (leading hand), Incident Controller or Sector Commander (Supervisor) or the District Manager are aware that RFS members are wearing older helmets will this cause them problems if Work Cover or similar state body investigates an accident.

To overcome this, the appointed RFS Safety Officer needs to have a box of new helmets and issue these to fire fighters with older helmets. The Safety Officer also needs to take back the old helmet from the RFS member.

Respirators; there is talk in both the newspapers and the internet about the effects of smoke on fire fighters yet in NSW the RFS is resisting the push by the RFS members to purchase or obtain through their own means respirators that the RFS members believe to be better. The current respiratory protection is a disposable P2 mask. There are two groups raising money to purchase half face respirators with P2 cartridge at no cost to the RFS yet these are frond upon. Brigades and individual members are allowed to purchase items of equipment that they see a need for without interference from the RFS Head Office so why are they fighting this?

Brigades and individual members should be allowed to purchase items of equipment that they see a need for.

FUNDING for the NSW RFS and probably any other volunteer fire agency can't be accurately gauged because the volunteers pay for item that do not come out of the state budget. For example in NSW members of the RFS pay for toilet paper and cleaning equipment for use at the stations. Members buy additional equipment such as radios and other communication equipment. They pay for their own computers, printers and photocopiers for use in the station and on vehicles and the paper for printers and photocopiers. This may not sound much but look at it this way one person loses \$1 a month so what but if 70,000 people lose \$1 each that is \$70,000 a month.

There needs to be more accurate costings for the Fire Services and the budget set accordingly.

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