



Your details

Mr

Title

First name

Stefan

Last name

King

Submission details

I am making this submission as

Emergency services personnel

Submission type

I am making a personal submission

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Basic Firefighter RFS

Consent to make submission public

I give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

I am ex Navy (32 years) and joined RFS 3 years ago and served in two campaign fires in the Shoalhaven. Most recently the Curranwan Fire of Dec 2019 - Jan 2020. I had approx a dozen 12 hour shifts, serving the Cudmirrah Berrara RFS Brigade.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.3 Response to bushfires

An obvious problem constantly manifested was the disconnect between the Brigades ability to provide crews and HQ demand. I accept that the FCC cannot demand a turnout from a volunteer organisation but there needs to be a starting point for the operational requirement that can enable a Brigade Captain to create a 'Command Intent' for his(her) Brigade. Our brigade was a bit chaotic in trying to align crews to two trucks, particularly where the shift is over 12 hours (typically 14-16 hours with travelling time). This effectively precluded a 1 in 2 rotation unless two trucks were deployed during the overlapping travel time.

It would be far more efficient to have shorter shift durations of about 8 hours, and would enable crews to endure long stints in better condition. The 16 hour shifts were just ridiculous and exhausted members too early and rendering less fit, older members unable to continue. This put more pressure on those remaining.

Suggestion: The Brigade Captain should set a rhythm of crews that can be sustained over a period set by FCC (say two weeks). With a clear rhythm/requirement against available trucks members can submit their availability which the Captain then firms into crews. In doing so he can share the load, match people with shift and frequency preferences and match crew skill sets etc. this can then be submitted to FCC to give them some sense of what capabilities will be coming online for each shift, and each Fire front. This will prevent the problem of crews not being released at the end of normal shift times. It will also reduce crews waiting time sitting around waiting for a tasking. It won't be perfect and lots of give and take will still be needed but it will at least set a start point for the creation and demand for crew capability.

1.4 Any other matters

Our brigade, and I am sure many others, have far too much money in their accounts now (donations). It is likely to be misspent and create a wasteful scenario where that money can be better used at a State level to purchase major equipments. You need to get on top of this quickly. To date I doubt the HQs have done anything useful with the annual audits of the brigades but I suggest you quickly starting asking for 12 month expenditure forecasts against money held. I am happy to speak in person about these issues and the failings of brigade Governance in general. ()

Supporting documents or images
