



Our Ref: 25383
Your Ref: A585856

Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Dr Palmer

Thank you for your letter dated 14 November 2016 which outlined the questions on notice that the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) agreed to provide additional information for during the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee (CDJSC) hearing on Wednesday 9 November 2016.

The DFES responses, to the additional information requested by the Committee correspondence, follow:

1. Whether the actions outlined in the Great Southern Region Operations Plan (21 September 2015) went to the corporate leadership team for final endorsement. (See page 10 of the transcript.)

The Great Southern Region Operations Plan (Plan) was first provided for circulation on September 21 2015, however the final endorsement was provided on March 1 2016. This is of course sometime after the major fires in Esperance in November 2015. It is a conceptual plan, and many elements do not have any financial provision or approvals to date.

The Plan has not been tabled at the Corporate Leadership Team.

It is further noted that the Assistant Commissioner Country provided 'endorsement in principle subject to future R2R' (resource to risk evaluation) on February 29 2016.

In relation to the Actions outlined in the Plan:

Action 1 – Replace the Great Southern Regional Office in 2017/18.

DFES is working with the City of Albany to relocate the Albany SES. It is proposed the new SES facility would be similar in features as the Margaret River and Busselton SES buildings which are able to host Level 3 Incident Management Team. If this is achieved, the capacity of the regional office may be satisfactory, and therefore not need to be relocated.

Action 2 – Build the replacement Albany CFRS station with capacity for future increases in manning

The new Albany station is due to be completed early 2017, and planning was well underway when the Plan was written. The station has adequate capacity for future increases in manning. (it is noted in the transcript that there may have been confusion in regard this station as being one in Esperance, clearly this is not the case)

Action 3 - Establish a VFRS Brigade in Lower King in 2023

Capacity and capability building within the region is ongoing, and requires extensive discussion with the relevant LG and volunteers. The formation of a Rural Fire Service may change this Action.

Action 4 – Establish a VFRS brigade at South Coast BFB in 2020

Capacity and capability building within the region is ongoing, and requires extensive discussion with the relevant LG and volunteers. The formation of a Rural Fire Service may change this Action.

Action 5 – Allocate an additional structural firefighting appliance to Esperance VFRS in 2017

This will be subject to further consideration

Action 6 – Establish a VFRS brigade at Pink Lake BFB in 2017/18

Capacity and capability building within the region is ongoing, and requires extensive discussion with the relevant LG and volunteers. The formation of a Rural Fire Service may change this Action.

Action 7 – Co-locate Cocanarup BFB, Ravensthorpe VFRS and Ravensthorpe SES when new Ravensthorpe VFRS facility is developed in 2022.

This will be subject to further consideration

Action 8 – Co-location the Narrogin VFRS, Narrogin SES and Narrogin Central BFB in the new Narrogin emergency service facility in 2023.

This will be subject to further consideration

Action 9 – Establish a VFRS in Boddington by 2019

Capacity and capability building within the region is ongoing, and requires extensive discussion with the relevant LG and volunteers. The formation of a Rural Fire Service may change this Action.

Action 10 – Establish 4 new staff positions across the GSR Regional and District Offices through the Country Staffing Plan from 2015.

It is to be noted that there are inconsistencies in the Plan in regard the total number of proposed new staff. However if the number is based on that in a draft discussion paper dated February 2014, this paper proposed the transfer of all CESMs to DFES staff positions, and the inclusion of a staff relief component. DFES has not progressed this concept to date. However an additional support officer component has been approved for Narrogin, one Area

Officer position in Narrogin has been reclassified as a District Officer, and a Regional Training Support Officer has been appointed within the GS Region. Following the Esperance fires, DFES is exploring establishing another region, which potentially would see the Goldfields and Esperance/Ravensthorpe districts combined. This would require at least one additional Superintendent.

2. A list indicating which local government authorities have and which have not accepted identification cards. (See page 11 of the transcript.)

Due to the tight timeframe before the 'official' start of the southern bushfire season (1 December 2016), volunteer identity cards (ID cards) are being issued in a phased approach. In Phase I priority is given to volunteers within the high priority/high risk regions identified by DFES' automatic vehicle location project. As a consequence the Phase I rollout focuses on delivering a card to all volunteer services within the Great Southern, Lower South West, Goldfields-Midlands, and Metropolitan regions and the State Wide Operational Response Division.

As bushfire brigades are not DFES units, the FES Commissioner wrote to all local government authorities (LGAs) in the high priority/high risk regions offering them the option to take part in the rollout of ID cards.

As a result, as at the 22 November 2016:

- 58 LGAs agreed to the release of ID cards to their volunteers;
- 8 LGAs have chosen NOT to participate in the release of ID Cards to their volunteers;
- 12 LGAs have delayed their decision pending commitments such as harvesting and Council and other meetings; and
- 1 LGA has deferred its decision to a later date as it is conducting a recruitment drive in November.

A detailed list of the Phase I LGAs is attached.

If I can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely


**WAYNE GREGSON APM
COMMISSIONER**

23 November 2016

Att.

