

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE RECOGNITION AND ADEQUACY
OF THE RESPONSES BY STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
TO EXPERIENCE OF TRAUMA BY WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS
ARISING FROM DISASTERS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 2 MAY 2012**

Members

**Mr A.P. O’Gorman (Chairman)
Mr A.P. Jacob (Deputy Chairman)
Ms M.M. Quirk
Mr I.M. Britza
Mr T.G. Stephens**

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Hearing commenced at 9.51 am

PETERSEN, MR PHILLIP LAWRENCE
Committee member,
State Emergency Service Volunteers Association,
30 Hannan Place,
Huntingdale 6110, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Thanks, Mr Petersen, for coming in this morning. I will just introduce the committee first and then I will read you some official words, and then we can get into it. Albert Jacob, member for Ocean Reef, is deputy chair of the committee; Margaret Quirk is the member for Girrawheen; and Tom Stephens is the member for Pilbara. I am Tony O’Gorman, the member for Joondalup and chair of the committee. David Worth I am sure you have met already, and Jovita Hogan is our committee staff. I have an official bit to read to you, and there are a couple of questions in it. I ask that you answer them audibly, rather than with a nod or a shake of the head, so that Hansard can record it.

The committee hearing is a proceeding of Parliament and warrants the same respect that proceedings in the house itself demand. Even though you are not required to give evidence on oath, any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

Mr Petersen: Yes, I have.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you receive and read an information for witnesses briefing sheet regarding giving evidence before parliamentary committees?

Mr Petersen: Yes, I did.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any questions relating to your appearance before the committee this morning?

Mr Petersen: No, I have not.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we start asking questions, have you any comments you would like to make or opening remarks?

Mr Petersen: I have prepared some written words just to make sure I keep my focus, and I guess questions from then on.

I am an SES volunteer with almost 30 years of SES experience. My experience includes road accident rescue, search as a volunteer in WA country and metro areas, being a local manager of a metro unit, and a trainer in a range of skills, and I have been president of our association for 10 years. As I have stated, I am representing the State Emergency Service Volunteers Association, which is an advocacy body representing SES volunteers in WA.

A search for a young boy in Kwinana in December 1990, resulting in the finding of the missing boy buried after being murdered, was the catalyst for peer support within SES. The circumstances and volunteers’ exposure to the traumatised family and constantly wailing mother deeply affected all the searchers. In what is marked as a first in SES, a diffusing meeting was consequently held at the Mandogalup community hall. It is known that one local manager felt the need and held a diffusing gathering immediately afterwards at his home, using his life skills of the Salvation Army and

national service. He was later to become one of the first of the groups of peer supporters trained in SES.

The SES was a sub-department of the Police at the time. A team made up of SES staff, volunteers and the police occupational therapist introduced the concept of peer support into SES. The first training course was conducted in November 1991, starting with 12 to 14 students, led by a clinical psychologist. Whilst the concept was not fully supported by the then SES director at the time, he did not oppose the formation of peer support into the SES. This eventually took the form of some SES staff and volunteers throughout all regions undertaking a four-day course. Only those who wished to be part of peer support and other prerequisite life experience undertook the training. The peer support process concept is having volunteers and staff skilled in diffusion, individually or as a group, and trained to identify volunteers or staff who have a situation that needs escalation to professional assistance. The peer support system acquired the SES director's support as result of the Gracetown tragedy in September 1996, when a collapsing cliff killed nine schoolchildren who were watching a surfing competition. The director actively involved the peer support team as result of the local SES involvement.

Today the peer support system is an accepted practice by SES volunteers. The subject is covered in SES induction and also in appropriate training courses, such as search, cliff rescue and road crash rescue. However, it is a perception of members in the current SES peer support team that FESA is not supporting the volunteer peer support system in the same way it has in the past. This perception is based on limited or no currency training being readily available; no training or active recruitment of new volunteers to the team; a lack of callouts to the volunteer peer support team in recent years; FESA not actively promoting the SES peer support system; and that the system is currently called the Employee Assistance Program in FESA submissions, and associated FESA processes appear to be staff-focused.

The association is aware of a couple [of members] who applied for peer support training but have not had any feedback or response from FESA. This is giving the perception that the FESA chaplaincy and welfare branch is not really interested in supporting the SES peer support system and is more focused on career firepersons. You could also gain this perception from the FESA written submission, where no mention of SES is mentioned in the first half of the submission, and only a few comments in the later part of the submission. In addition, the FESA submission states a strategic change to the peer support program, resulting in reduced support in 2006. However, it is generally accepted amongst SES volunteers that having experienced peer supporters within the volunteer ranks is a good practice. It is the volunteers' belief that this diffuses situations in the critical incident stress stage, thus preventing issues of the next stage being post-traumatic stress syndrome. This can be supported by some case studies.

The changes made by FESA in the past few years are supposedly due to compliance to a WorkSafe plan safety management system audit in 2009. It is likely the audit did not cover the SES peer support system, as there is no peer support team recall of any involvement into the investigation. The association is not aware of any of the outcomes ever been being discussed with volunteers in a meaningful way.

The association has a current perception that FESA has developed a practice of limiting or dominating communication; that FESA may well consider a presentation to some limited volunteer audiences as acceptance and a right-of-way to whatever course the FESA executive team has chosen. The association acknowledges the need for trauma counselling and education for career and volunteer emergency service workers. We also support the SES volunteers' opinion, which is an intervention system that includes their own empathic peer support volunteers supported by a team of professionals, including FESA welfare branch, the medical system and insurance.

I will not state all the case studies, but I will just give a couple of examples.

A long-time SES volunteer and local manager was identified as needing peer support. In this case, the person had been involved in a number of impacts in his life including the pressures of a marriage breakdown, issues at his employment and an abseiling incident involving a death. The volunteer found himself in a breakdown situation and seriously thinking of suicide as a solution. However, contact with his unit's peer supporter had him on an escalated path to a specialist doctor and a path to wellness. The idea of contacting an EAP, whether it was through his own employer or FESA, did not enter his head in that dark time.

A senior unit member with life skills and some appreciation of peer support training had identified unit members that required peer support. It is believed this story could be repeated several times.

SES volunteers had been searching for a missing man in the waterways at Derby. The missing person, himself a SES volunteer, disappeared when he dived into the water attempting to save his child, who had fallen overboard. His body was found by his SES colleagues and had been mauled by a crocodile. An SES staffer who was a trained peer supporter and qualified psychologist was dispatched to provide intervention. During the intervention, he identified one of the volunteers as potentially suicidal— not from the incident, but from other life issues. He was able to circumvent a potential tragedy.

Just one other case I want to add is employer pressure. I am personally aware of employer pressure to volunteers. Whilst it is not associated with trauma, it is an implied pressure to volunteers, and that is why I raise it. Direct and implied pressure generates personal conflict within volunteers. This could be repeated by many private employers to SES volunteers. I am also aware that similar experiences are shared by reserve military volunteers. There are a few socially responsible employers and state government agencies that do allow volunteers to undertake response to emergency situations. So what I am saying is that some employers do imply when you apply for a job or for promotion that your volunteer involvement in emergency services could be a complication to your career. I will close it there. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Petersen.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That was fantastically useful. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we actually have a copy of that as a submission? We will take it as a submission.

Mr Petersen: Yes, you can.

The CHAIRMAN: You mentioned peer support volunteers. Could you give us just an idea of how that operates and the training that those peer supporters go through?

Mr Petersen: Right.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a matter of extreme interest to us, because we have heard it in the US from the police in 9/11, and we have heard it from cyclone Katrina with the fireys.

Mr Petersen: I am not a trained peer supporter myself, but my understanding is that when it was being conducted, the peer supporters were volunteers amongst the volunteer ranks and those that felt, I guess, a calling to go down that path and contribute that way. Once selected, they went through a four-day training course with a trained clinical psychologist, so there was appropriate training. Now, the level of training at that level is so that they can identify groups or individuals who may be having trouble with an experience of some sort—some troubling experience. So they trained at a low level of diffusion, but they are also trained to identify if that person needs to have professional assistance, so they become the path to escalate that person through a proper clinical process. It is low level, but by being part of the team, they share the experience, they know how the volunteers think, and they have a lot of empathy for the way that they operate, and they are usually out there in the field with them at the time. If not, they are there very quickly afterwards. That is how I understand the process.

The CHAIRMAN: You mentioned diffusion a number of times. Can you explain to us what you mean as diffusion? Is that like a debriefing or is that something else?

Mr Petersen: My understanding, as it has been explained to me, is that diffusion is a process, and a debriefing could be part of that diffusion. So I use that word collectively for the number of processes. It might be a one-on-one contact and a personal liaison between the peer supporter. It might be a group where they discuss the issues. They may even discuss, “Guys, you can expect these sorts of feelings to occur: sadness, anger, all of those sorts of things. You can expect those, and if you experience those, that would be normal, but if they continue to occur, then that becomes abnormal, and then we may need to talk about that at another level.”

The CHAIRMAN: You were saying in that submission that you read out that initially the director of FESA was not supportive because of Gracetown.

Mr Petersen: Yes. I was not aware of that, but it was part of the evidence that I collected this week from a past peer supporter. But the attitude of that particular director at the time changed as a result of the Gracetown situation.

The CHAIRMAN: And the attitude seems to have changed since 2006, I think was the date you said, where the peer supporters are not being encouraged.

Mr Petersen: Yes. It is the peer support group’s opinion that since the formation of FESA, and SES involvement in FESA, their role has not been as active as it has been in the past, and their role is slowly diminishing as FESA seems to be taking on a role of career people within their own organisation who would have a role of being the first interventionists that appear, rather than the volunteers themselves.

Mr A.P. JACOB: With the recent changes to FESA, are there any sorts of signs of that changing around maybe or going in a different direction back to how it was, or do you see that continuing?

Mr Petersen: The team leader of the peer support team has advised me that they basically keep getting told that they are waiting for decisions to be made about the future of peer support in the organisation. Unfortunately, they have been waiting for quite some time, so they do not know. There is no end date or goal for a change.

The CHAIRMAN: But, from a volunteer’s point of view, the peer support is a vital part of supporting the volunteers out there in the field.

Mr Petersen: Absolutely. It is one of those things that it is hard to get statistics. Certainly, the peer support team have collected statistics over time about interventions that they have been involved in, but you never know where just the group getting together post an event—just a group diffusing-type meeting—may have resolved somebody’s issue because they then were able to identify what they could expect; as I said, the emotions of feeling low, anger and the like.

The CHAIRMAN: So could that take the form of a few beers at the back of the shed, so to speak?

Mr Petersen: Yes. It certainly could be. It could be a coffee too.

The CHAIRMAN: But a peer supporter can be there and recognise indicators that may be saying that a certain member might be having difficulties that will not be resolved by —

Mr Petersen: I understand part of their four-day training is to identify people who may be having trouble. They may not express themselves well at the time or even ask, because quite often when you are in that situation, you do not often see a light at the end of the tunnel enough to go and ask; you do not see that. So that is where the peer support is actually there on the spot, trained to identify people who are having trouble coping and to bring them out. They do that in a subtle way to bring the person out. They often use subtle methods to do it, and then make the person realise that they are having a conflict or some trouble, and then proactive remedial action can take place.

Mr A.P. JACOB: Do you see that diffusing gatherings in some ways may be a bit easier to coordinate when you are a volunteer association as opposed to career people? The reason I ask that is that volunteers ultimately are choosing to be there, whereas career people do not necessarily choose their team or even choose the hours that they are putting in.

Mr Petersen: The association itself could not provide that service because we are an advocacy group and we are volunteers, but we do support the system of having volunteers and the system of having FESA-trained psychologists working together.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Just a couple of points of qualification: the employee assistance program that is available to FESA employees is also available to your members; yes?

Mr Petersen: Yes, it is.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: And, obviously, the chaplain visits from time to time—the FESA chaplain?

Mr Petersen: The chaplain is available if requested, yes.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: And the training that you are talking about is for people who want to be peer support. As part of the general induction or training of SES volunteers, do they get any training in what we call mental health first aid? Is there a general component of the training that deals with identifying stress within yourself, or is it just the peer supporters who get that sort of training?

Mr Petersen: In the induction package for new volunteers, there is a section in the induction package that covers the availability of peer support. Several training courses revive that. So that is discussed as well, because, say, the volunteers might come across a road crash accident that might traumatise them. But what I would like and what you have suggested is the mental health preparation is probably a niche that is not covered well and where education through our system would be beneficial.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Just for my purposes, to try to work out jurisdictions and stuff, you would go to road crash incidents when there were not any VFRS people around or career firefighters?

Mr Petersen: Correct. The State Emergency Service and, depending on which town you might be in, it might be the volunteer emergency service—but there are those sorts of teams in mainly rural areas where there has not been a fire and rescue service available.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Okay. The other thing I was going to ask—you gave a lot of really good examples, and the one that comes to mind for me was the Karijini incident where there was a volunteer killed.

Mr Petersen: James Regan, yes.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes. I do not know if you had any experience of or know anything about that particular incident.

Mr Petersen: I do, from a couple of aspects. One is that there were peer supporters sent to Tom Price to do the intervention at that stage. The other one that I initiated, because I was president of the association at the time—it was the first time in history an SES volunteer had been killed in action. I felt at the time that SES volunteers were going to react badly to that and needed their own way of supporting each other, so I actually pulled together in Perth—we will call it a meeting or a service, where I had the CEO for FESA and the chaplain. So the volunteers in the metro area were collected on the Sunday morning immediately after the incident—a few days after—not only for volunteers to meet together and talk through the situation, but also to inform the volunteers about what had happened, and also from the metro area, because there are a lot of volunteers, to send a message to our country colleagues that we were there to support them. There were a number of things in that, and I felt that was a valuable exercise in doing that. As I say, fortunately for us, we have only lost one volunteer in the 50 years of SES.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: One of the things that has come out throughout our inquiries is that quite often emergency workers are either in small towns and they know the victims or, alternatively, if it is something like a cyclone or a flood or whatever, their own houses might be affected, yet they are out effectively attending to other things.

Mr Petersen: Yes.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: We have been told that that creates additional emotional pressures on the volunteers. I do not know if you want to comment on that.

Mr Petersen: I can. The emotional pressures come from two directions, I guess—wanting to contribute to their SES involvement in, let us say, a cyclone, and also concern about home. Quite often, depending on the relationship at home, there may be some negative banter coming from the partner saying, “We really need you here with us, the kids, during the cyclone, but you are down there playing”—or whatever words the partner might use. It is a personal conflict with partners, so you really do need understanding partners.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes. In other parts of the world quite often the peer support extends to the family, so that they can understand what the volunteer is going through.

Mr Petersen: I have not indicated that, but that is correct. FESA will extend the service to family, if that is required. I have not covered this, but I came across a road accident that was not an SES operation, but at the time the people who had come across the accident and tried to assist, when the Police arrived, were pushed to the side whilst the Police and emergency services took over and I identified that they would need some assistance. They had really close contact with the girl involved, and she had passed away. They had this relationship, but they were pushed aside. I asked the Police chaplain when he came along whether he could speak to those people. The thing I teach in road crash rescue—we will call them civilians—is that people who are not part of the emergency service do not often have contact to a peer support system. We advise them to talk to Lifeline and those sorts of organisations. So they supply a great community backup for those sorts of people.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Petersen, in your submission you gave us a couple of examples and you said that peer support identified a volunteer who may have been having suicidal thoughts.

Mr Petersen: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: In your experience, do you know of any volunteers who may have committed suicide due to the trauma that they have experienced?

Mr Petersen: I am not aware of it myself. I am not aware of any successful suicides, let us say that.

The CHAIRMAN: But there have been a number of attempts?

Mr Petersen: That is one case in Derby. The other case would be the volunteer where there was a combination of things. Volunteers are ordinary people. In some ways it is the mental training that Margaret [Quirk] raised, and we probably do that in a subtle way and sometimes it is black humour and the like that comes through that probably would not be acceptable in the general public, but among ourselves it is a form or a way that prepares volunteers for unpleasant circumstances—or can do, if used properly.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: One of the other issues that comes up is that it accumulates. If you attend a number of incidents, there is this accumulation that comes about from having seen a number of incidents. Are the records you keep within volunteer units sufficient so that someone can go back and identify that ‘Fred Nerk’ attended six road crashes in the last three years or whatever? Do you keep those sorts of records?

Mr Petersen: Yes; each unit is expected to keep attendance records of training and any operation.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: In some places there is a strategy to limit the hours that volunteers spend on the ground to limit exposure. If you are somewhere remote like Bidyadanga, or wherever, you do not have that luxury; the unit is there until the work is done. Is that how it works?

Mr Petersen: It used to be that way, but FESA has become more responsive. In the past a small country town may have been left like that, but there is a lot of what we call mutual support where neighbouring SES units or units from the metro area, if it is a protracted operation, will come in and assist the locals to help them through.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: One of the incidents that comes to my mind is the Warmun floods last year. Was the SES involved in that?

Mr Petersen: Yes, I recall part of the evacuation team.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: So that was an ongoing thing?

Mr Petersen: The floods of that particular year were quite extensive in the Kimberley, and in the case of the Carnarvon floods in the same year, they recorded 100 days of continuous operation as a consequence of the floods. You can imagine the volunteers would have had several conflicts there from their own time they were able to contribute to the operation. Then there is the guilt for not being able to contribute because of things like having to go to work and family responsibilities; and then just sheer exhaustion from not having a break for 100 days. I do know that in the case of Carnarvon, nearby units and volunteers from the metro area, as well as FESA staff, contributed to make that 100 days of operation, which included floods and a search in there as well.

The CHAIRMAN: Do SES volunteers go out of this particular jurisdiction? Do they attend in the eastern states if there is a major disaster?

Mr Petersen: The answer is a simple yes. In recent years there have been several operations of mutual support to interstate situations. One was for a major storm in Victoria; the other one was after a cyclone in Queensland. They are two that I can think of immediately where deployments from this State have gone to those states, and we have even had Victoria respond and help us over here in Perth during the hail storm that we had a couple of years ago. So there is mutual support between states. That is why it is important that, on a national basis, even though we are a state emergency service, that each state communicates. That is important from a training perspective so that our training is mutually agreeable and we have national standards, and from an organisational point of view.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us what the main barriers are to SES volunteers accessing counselling services and staff? Are there any barriers that get in the way or are FESA pretty good at supplying people if they are needed?

Mr Petersen: I would not say that any barriers are put up by volunteers or FESA, but probably the biggest barrier is the person recognising that they have a need to seek assistance. I guess, then, the next barrier would be having people within their own ranks being able to recognise it, so it is the mental preparation or awareness. In a lot of cases it is mainly mature, experienced people with life skills who, if they do not have the formal training, are identifying that that guy might need some peer support; he is not acting quite the way they expect him to or in a normal manner and maybe a peer support intervention is required.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: One of the frustrations I hear from time to time from volunteers is FESA's lack of willingness to listen to certain concerns. As I understand it, FESA does consult with the various volunteer organisations through a consultative committee. Is that the case?

Mr Petersen: There are a number of forums for volunteer representation within FESA. One of those is the consultative committee, so that is at the—I am trying to think of right word—high strategic level. The association is another way, and that is looking at—not operational issues, but —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: You would have a meeting with the CEO or something?

Mr Petersen: The president meets with the CEO on a quarterly basis and we meet with other staff on a monthly basis.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I am trying to find out whether there are enough avenues or you are concerned about the lack of support in terms of peer support, or other issues, that make your job harder. Does the association feel it has the conduit or route to express those concerns and they are listened to?

Mr Petersen: We feel we have the conduit.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I refer to your earlier answer to the Chairman's question when you said one of the bigger barriers is the individual. What would be some ways to address that or strategies to better tackle it or identify those individuals or encourage them to come forward and be more open?

Mr Petersen: Going back to what Margaret talked about earlier, the mental training—if I can use those words—and raising awareness about the peer support system and about the emotions you may feel and may expect. So it is making people aware that those emotions will occur; and if it was done in a way long before they are put into that situation as part of their basic training, then they would have a preparedness for that, and it is an acceptance within the organisation, which would get rid of the fear, “I am not coping here but I do not want to show it among my friends and colleagues”, so they can overcome that as well. By everybody being involved and if that acceptance is there in the organisation, they can overcome that fear.

Mr A.P. JACOB: You mentioned as well that sometimes that comes with age and maturity. Do you have a good mentor system running through as well? Do you have, maybe, older SES volunteers or those who have served and may not be as active as they were who come back into the association who get around to younger or newer members?

Mr Petersen: Among the State Emergency Service volunteers unfortunately there are a lot—when I say “unfortunately”—who are senior in their years. Trying to get youth in is another issue; that is a whole recruitment issue. There are a high number of mature volunteers with a lot of life skills from their employment or from being a Salvation Army member, in the military or other emergency services, or even a medical background. It is one of the services in which we have a whole range of people with life skills and a good mix of men and women as well. That is one of the good things about the State Emergency Service.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you know what percentage of women volunteer in the SES? Is it predominantly male?

Mr Petersen: I would go 60:40 or nearly 50:50. It varies. It has a significantly higher ratio of women involvement than any other emergency service.

The CHAIRMAN: You just mentioned recruitment. Do you have an issue with recruiting? Are your numbers dropping or do you have people clamouring to get in? Volunteerism seems to be dropping off in most areas; is it the same for the SES?

Mr Petersen: It does appear that numbers are dropping for the SES. It is an ongoing issue in some areas. Country areas are certainly affected the worst as young people move away from the towns and the base of small country towns is depleted. That is part of the reason or the strategy that FESA has that the metro volunteers assist country areas. That is the plan to handle that problem. In society generally and for volunteers across the board, emergency service volunteers are a special breed. I say a special breed because they have to respond to emergency situations at all hours, and it is risky situations. I am not putting down the CWA, but I am using it as an example.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Dire consequences if the sponge flops!

Mr Petersen: Most other volunteer organisations have a structured timetable for when a person turns up with so many hours; they do their bit and they go home. In the emergency service realm that is not the case. They can be called out at any hour to any situation from a leaky roof to a traumatic death and an at-risk situation. Therein lies the need for a very special person to be

involved. We see plenty of people come through the door who think they might want to be involved, but we are down to a quarter or a third who stick around for the long term. The good thing is that those who do stick around become really good people and part of the team. Of course, there are the other society pressures. The other common one these days is fly in, fly out. Those sorts of people do not fit into the normal structure of society to turn up to regular training and that type of thing. It makes it hard for them to be involved in a community service where regular training is part of our structure to make sure that people are trained to take on the risky situations with the least amount of risk to themselves. It takes a great deal of commitment.

Certainly there are some SES units that are doing well and other ones that struggle. I guess I would like some more proactive action from FESA. They have an expectation from the local units to try and look after themselves. Whilst they do have a youth and volunteering services branch, it probably needs to be more proactive than it is. The other thing I would like to see in society and maybe how we do this—I will not just dump it on the Government because it is not just the Government's problem, it is society's problem—we need to escalate the value of emergency service volunteers in society to the point where employers are proud to take on an emergency service volunteer in their organisation and say, "I've got this guy. I know what he's like. I know his value to society and I am willing to support him." That is not the case at the moment. I would really like to be met down the street, "Phil, you're an SES volunteer, great stuff!" That is not the way it is. Some people are like that, but I would like to change that perception in our society and, if we could do that, maybe that will overcome some of the issues we have about getting emergency service volunteers involved because they will feel, "Hey, there's great value being in the organisation. I can be trained to do certain things. It may help in my career." What I understand of generation Y, they look at it differently to how I look at it. They need to know what is in it for them. We need to market it differently.

I have these thoughts in my head, but I have to go to work and do a whole heap of other things. I cannot do everything. That is why we need some dedicated people within FESA to be proactive and to make that happen. Sure, the volunteers can do some of the stuff at the tail end because they are the ones who are going to finally talk to the new recruit and get them involved, but we do need a huge machine. I must say I am sometimes envious of the military reserve system. I know from a conference that I went to that they had issues some years ago about getting recruits, so they actually got some expert help in to look at it. Through the Australasian Fire Authorities Council conference, a lady there was talking about marketing and how we can appeal to people. In that case she talked about how they appealed to recruiting new people into the military. The Y generation do not want to know that it is a big ship puffing out funnels full of smoke and it has big cannons up the front; they want to know what is in it for them, what they are going to do and what they can contribute. That is where they need to market. We just need to shift our focus. Sometimes we talk about, "I'm giving back to society", but the Y generation is thinking differently: What is in it for me and how will I be involved? We need to look at it from that direction.

Mr A.P. JACOB: There is a *Hollowmen* episode around that.

The CHAIRMAN: I am conscious of the time. We have an earlier-than-usual start [to Parliament] today. I thank you very much for coming in. I can assure you that members of this committee have great regard for volunteers, whether they be SES, marine rescue, bushfire volunteers or from any other organisation. We have dealt with them quite a bit. I think we are still gobsmacked about the role they play in our society and the role they undertake to help government. Again, thanks for coming in. I will read a closing statement. It tells you what happens from here so that you are aware of it.

Thanks for your evidence before the committee this morning. A transcript of the hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Could you please make these corrections and return the transcript within 10 working days of the date of the covering letter. If the transcript is not

returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be introduced via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Thanks very much for coming in and talking to us this morning.

Hearing concluded at 10.34 am