

President: Paul du Boulay
Executive Officer: Max Osborn



30th September 2011

Mr AP O’Gorman MLA
Chairperson
Community Development & Justice Standing Committee
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr O’Gorman

Re: Enquiry into the recognition and adequacy of the responses by State Government Agencies to experience of trauma by workers and volunteers arising from disasters

On behalf of the members of the WA Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association (Inc), thank you for the opportunity to make the following observations.

Generally FESA’s Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) section are endeavouring to address this situation. The support of FESA’s Chaplain, Ron Wingate, and the services provided by the Welfare Coordinator Anneliese Smith and her colleague Robert Kingma is outstanding, but under resourced.

FESA’s Peer Support system was once recognised as a world leader and best practice, however at this time is completely dependent upon a few dedicated volunteers with little or no formal support or backing from FESA.

The only barriers to accessing assistance services are, in the most part, distances to be travelled and the availability of suitable counselling services.

We are in discussions with FESA regarding the future of the Peer Support system, and hope to see this very worthy system revitalised and expanded.

Members of FESA’s OSH unit are providing stress management information sessions to VFRS Brigades. This initiative was driven by the WAVFRSA, however it requires more clinical psychologists and personnel trained in this field. Currently, the only trained psychologist FESA employs is the Welfare Coordinator Anneliese Smith.

The stress management information sessions must be presented by experts in this field and one psychologist to cover 95 Brigades across the length and breadth of the State is unmanageable.

As Volunteers Firefighters We Do **WHAT** We Can **WHEN** We Can **WHERE** We Can
and to the **VERY BEST OF OUR ABILITY**

Pre-planning and training activities are under constant review by this Association via representatives on Training Activity Groups and Training Management Groups.

The responsibility for budgeting and covering the costs of these services are provided and met by FESA.

In response to the other questions raised in your correspondence, these are the sole responsibility of FESA, with consultation with the Association.

Should you require any further information, or clarification of the above, please do not hesitate to contact the Association's Executive Officer Max Osborn on 08 9478 4922 or 0427 800 038.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul du Boulay'.

Paul du Boulay
Association President