



AUSTRALASIAN ASSEMBLY OF VOLUNTEER
FIRE BRIGADE ASSOCIATIONS

November 17th 2009

Board Communiqué

The following is a report on Board activities since the Assembly Conference held in September at the Gold Coast

Gold Coast Resolution re position paper

The Board has appointed Mr Trevor Anderson PSM AFSM to develop the Position Paper as resolved at the Assembly Conference. Trevor is an ex assistant commissioner of the Rural Fire Service, and retired as RFS executive director of administration and finance in 2007. Since then he has worked as a consultant to the RFS, RFSA and the NSW Minister for Emergency Services, undertaking project work. The Board believes he is very well qualified to draft the paper which will outline a timetable and recommendations for the implementation of a professional secretariat structure.

Trevor will liaise with a working party made up of board members and Dick Irwin, CEO of Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland as per the Assembly resolution. This paper will be drafted by the end of November, and be an agenda item for the board meeting on December 9. The Board anticipates that it will be sent to all Assembly members by mid January for comment.

Board meeting with Federal Attorney General

The Board will meet with the Attorney General, the Hon Robert McClelland on December 9 in Sydney. Items of discussion will include:

- an overview of the Assembly and its aims;
- a request for firefighter representation (though the Assembly) on future national issues groups, working parties and forums as foreshadowed by the Attorney in an address to the federal parliament;
- a request for regular 6 monthly meeting with AG.

Future items for discussion may include a request for a review of the liability protection sections of each of the states and New Zealand's Acts to determine which has the strongest legislation. Each Association would then have a written opinion that could lead to ensuring the strongest possible protection for our volunteer firefighters around Australia and New Zealand.

Assembly Treasurer

Peter Olah, Executive Director of the RFSA has been appointed to the role of Assembly Treasurer until September next year. He has now received the Assembly financial records. Invoices for affiliation fees have been sent to all members, including the Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association, who have been invited to join the Assembly.

Assembly Membership Resignations

Regretfully the Volunteer Fire Brigades of Victoria and the WA Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association have declined to rejoin, as both Associations are not comfortable with the direction of the Assembly.

Driver fatigue legislation

The current position is that NSW, Tasmania and now South Australia (only CFS) have complete exemption from the driver fatigue laws and the carrying of work diaries. Victoria has partial exemption for the return journey from an incident. ACT did not introduce the legislation and WA will introduce it next year. Queensland has a 200 km distance factor.

Whilst the CFSVA in South Australia is very happy to have been granted this exemption (to be gazetted on Thursday of this week) a preferred position is that the Ministerial Council of Transport and Roads Ministers generate uniformity across Australia by ensuring that under National Road Rules each state's legislation reflects this exemption for all emergency services.

We believe this Ministerial Council meets in Perth on Thursday. Thank you to those Associations which have lobbied their relevant Ministers on this issue.

Other issues

Previous office holders of the Board have been written to thanking them for their assistance to the Assembly. Letters have been sent to the President and CEO of AFAC informing them of the changes to the Board membership. The Assembly website has also been updated with this information.

Initial discussions have been held with Ms Dianne Tynan of the NT Bushfire Volunteers Association regarding the next Assembly Conference to be held in Darwin on September 10 – 12 2010.

If you have any comments or questions as a result of this communiqué, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Board members or Wendy Shirley on wendy.shirley@cfsva.org.au mob 0427 823 656