

Emergency Services Associations Management Committee

Representing: Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades WA, Emergency Services Volunteers Association & State Emergency Service Volunteers Association of WA

Alex Marsden
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Dear Alex

RE WHS Model Regulation and Codes of Practice

The Emergency Services Associations Management Committee, who represent 26 000+ Volunteers from the Bush Fire Brigades, State Emergency Service, Volunteer Fire Service and Volunteer Emergency Service, are seeking a significant extension to the consultation period allocated for this critical issue.

The timeframes allocated have not allowed sufficient time for dissemination to essential stakeholders across the State, nor time for review or analysis to enable a considered response to be made by the Emergency Services Volunteer representatives.

This is based upon the following:

1. The notification regarding open public consultation only became known to the Emergency Services Volunteers Management Committee representative on the 29th of August 2012. This was in the form of advertising a workshop for those in the Volunteer and Not For Profit Sector. This workshop was to be held on the 13th of September. This meant that consideration could not be given to this matter until the 13th of September at the earliest.
2. The Volunteer and Not for Profit Workshop was scheduled for the 13th of September on a weekday at a time that was not conducive to the attendance by Volunteers who were the target audience of the Workshop. Emergency Services Personnel generally work full time and many live outside of the metropolitan area. 2 weeks' notice for the majority of Volunteers to take time away from their normal positions to attend a week day meeting is not sufficient notice.
3. Whilst the presentation was able to be attended by a minimal number of Volunteers, the volume and complexity of the information provided made the information difficult to understand.
4. As a result of the recommendations from the report in to the "Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review", the Emergency Services Volunteers have had significant involvement in a range of Public Sector Commission working groups and a range of other associated Government initiated committees. This is critical work which required a significant investment of time and energy from the Emergency Services personnel prior to the 2012/12 Bush Fire Season. This has not enabled sufficient time to be allocated to other emerging

issues, particularly those that have arisen at short notice, with limited time to disseminate, review and analyse.

The Committee acknowledges an email sent by Dr Sotear Ellis, Policy Officer from the Department of Communities (dated Sept 14 2012) indicating that “the majority of volunteering organisations in Western Australian will not be greatly affected”. This view is not shared by the Emergency Services Associations Management Committee (ESAMC) who are concerned that the proposed changes will have significant impact in the Emergency Services context, particularly given the hierarchical nature of Incident Response as well as the Management Structure within Emergency Services Brigades, Groups and Units. Many of these positions are held by Volunteers.

The ESAMC have significant concerns regarding the potential impact these proposed changes will likely have on its volunteer membership and therefore require further time to enable the appropriate subject matter experts to review the proposed changes in light of these concerns.

Yours sincerely

Donna Morgan
Executive Officer
Emergency Services Associations Management Committee

12 October 2012