



Adrian Pederick MP
Member for Hammond

House of Assembly **5th August 2014**

Fire and Emergency Services

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:31 :07): I rise today to speak out about the proposed reforms to our emergency services sector and the government's response in regards to the Holloway Review of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005. I note the very reliable information given to me that the Minister for Emergency Services sent a letter dated 27 July 2014 to volunteer associations, allowing any feedback on the proposed steering committee as to the next stage of the reform process, with comments to be received no later than 5pm on Sunday 3 August 2014.

Well, that's not bad! We have got about three days to review and respond. Obviously, no mail can be delivered on the weekend, so you have to wonder about the level of consultation there in regards to the proposed reforms that the Minister for Emergency Services is putting out there.

I am informed in regards to this reform that this means that the Metropolitan Fire Service will be well and truly covered and their jobs will be safe. They do valuable work in our community—not just here in the city of Adelaide but in Murray Bridge and other regional centres. However, the volunteer associations and the volunteers feel that they will have to justify their jobs. How many volunteers will we lose in this overarching bureaucracy that will be developed as part of this reform process?

This reform, I am told, has the potential to cost \$13 million to rebrand all these organisations, including the Country Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and the Metropolitan Fire Service, if this reform goes ahead—and the people involved are not using the word 'reform' but are using the word 'amalgamation'. What happens to SAFECOM in this process, which is already the overarching organisation in regards to policy planning, governance and resource allocation for our fire and emergency services?

Where is the consultation? I note there have been some so-called consultation meetings in the Adelaide Hills. I know there was one at Mount Gambier. The problem is a lot of volunteers have not been given access to any of these so-called consultation meetings. I note there was not one in my electorate. I just ask: is this is cost-cutting by the government?

What about all the volunteers—the well over 12,000 CFS volunteers alone, of which I am one? When do they get a chance to be part of this so-called reform/amalgamation? It sounds like cost-cutting.

Where is the paper trail of the meetings and briefings held? I am told that, when the minister holds these meetings, he has a whiteboard. He scrawls up some ideas of what is going on. He does not like photos being taken of what is on the whiteboard, and then it is wiped off so there is no record of what has been said at the meetings.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a point of order.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Given that the member has not attended one of these meetings, I suggest—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No point of order.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I appreciate your protection. I have had very good advice from people who have attended these meetings. Obviously the minister is a little sensitive. I will note that the Metropolitan Fire Service currently does not have trained staff to manage incidents such as bushfires and storm damage, certainly in the bush areas.

I would like to pay my regards to our Country Fire Service and our SES volunteers. Obviously the CFS evolved from a long and complex partnership between volunteers and local government to meet community safety needs. The CFS response has expanded beyond rural firefighting into road accident rescue and general emergency response, especially where there are no other emergency services.

The volunteer members of the CFS are fundamental to emergency management in South Australia and their value and importance is recognised and highly regarded by the South Australian community. Volunteers and the commitment they bring to the community delivers professional fire and rescue services, and remains the core strength of the CFS. SES volunteers also have a major commitment in road crash rescue, vertical rescue, air search observation, and a whole range of other issues. The biggest problem we have is that if this amalgamation goes ahead, where do the people of the Country Fire Service and the State Emergency Service go—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

Mr PEDERICK: —to an overarching body to complain if there is an issue with their functions under what the minister has proposed?