



Tasmania Fire Service

Office of the Chief Officer

Mr Todd Buttsworth
Second Clerk-Assistant
House of Assembly
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Todd

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO STATE FIRE COMMISSION

As invited by the chair of the parliamentary committee, I am writing to provide clarity to statements made in evidence, in particular by the UFU Secretary, Mr Greg Cooper.

Mr Cooper made statements that are either unsubstantiated or incorrect on some occasions. In particular:-

- He suggested that my comments in relation to Forestry resourcing "...was probably making people not worry about it" My response to that question was underpinned by evidence in the numbers of Forestry assets including contractors that we utilised in the recent fire season. Whatever we asked for from Forestry was provided and for Mr Cooper to suggest "they are all gone" is incorrect.
- He suggested that the Fire Rescue NSW (FRNSW) people were untrained, this is false, we requested and were provided with qualified firefighters out of Sydney who were very experienced in structural firefighting and offensive fire attack (referred to by Mr Cooper as 'painting'). We also requested that these firefighters were Rescue trained. To suggest that the training is vastly different and that bushfire management is much easier than structural firefighting is also very misleading and incorrect. It is true an induction was required and our operational officers responsible for this induction told me personally that this would be achieved to a satisfactory standard within 2 hours, this was underway until the UFU bans were put in place.
- Mr Cooper stated that the reason the FRNSW firefighters were sent home is because "the overtime ran out" this is incorrect. I cancelled the deployment solely due to the UFU work bans.
- Mr Cooper also stated that bringing in other firefighters was alright as they were bought in as "part of an industry Brigade" This is not the case and has never been. All firefighters deployed to assist interstate are done so under the *Agreement for Interstate Assistance* which outlines all obligations, responsibilities and expectations including 'employment' arrangements. This is exactly the methodology employed to request and deploy the FRNSW firefighters.

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- I appreciate this information will not have a great bearing on the committee's findings, however I felt compelled to make these observations about un true and unsubstantiated statements which I believe were simply an attempt to justify the actions of the UFU.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Freeman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gavin Freeman AFSM
DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER

5 April 2016