

ASSETS, PREMISES AND FUNDING OF THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

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RFS Volunteer Hollisdale & Pappinbarra
Brigades

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Reference: Assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service submission

Attention: Alison Buskens and Leon Last

I would like to make a formal submission to this enquiry.

I have been an active RFS volunteer for 7 years and have over the years realised that the RFS could function more efficiently and be more supportive of its volunteers in relation to how the funding is distributed to areas and what is in fact funded.

Hollisdale and Pappinbarra Brigade (like hundreds of other brigades) are in a remote rural area on the Mid North Coast and we face challenges that our town brigades don't face.

Brigades in these types of areas are disadvantaged by distance and impacted by no mobile reception in many places. This means the new Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) in the trucks do not work and we are at a distinct disadvantage. Brigades in mobile range have access to important information that other brigades don't have.

There is apparently a satellite being discussed that will assist remote brigades but this is several years away from being available.

The last data panel that was installed in the trucks was only used for 2 years before it was superseded. Was this a waste of funds? I feel it definitely was.

The other area where all brigades are burdened is that we have to fundraise for items such as; **toilet paper**, **water bottles** for crews on trucks that are on scene for 12-hour shifts in horrendous heat, no food supplied on the fire ground for crews that have 2 minutes notice to be at the fire station and no idea on how long they will be at the incident. **Cleaning supplies** are also not supplied. We have to fund raise for these basic items. Why I ask you could they not be supplied?

You may think that the rural RFS volunteers are only active in the Fire Season but this is not accurate.

Our year is busy with training new recruits, doing property visits to ensure we are familiar with the roads and access limitations, Get Ready Days, education and up skilling and fundraising.

Water and food are supplied only when a Section 44 is declared and then the food is a soggy egg and lettuce sandwich at worst and at best a salad and meat roll. I feel that better catering should be provided in this situation, we have earned it!

Funding can be spent more efficiently and new equipment and technology should be fit for purpose prior to being installed.

Active RFS volunteers should not have to pay the Emergency Services Levy that is being reformed at present. This levy should not be a burden to RFS volunteers that are already doing the lion's share of the work voluntarily when disasters strike.

Thank you

Lisa McLeod