

Hon Corey Wingard MP



**Government
of South Australia**

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20EMS0209

Mr Warren Hicks ESM
Chair
South Australian State Emergency Services Volunteers' Association

By email: susan.caracoussis@sa.gov.au

Dear Mr Hicks

Warren

Thank you for your correspondence received on 21 February 2020 regarding the Analysis of the South Australia's Fire and Emergency Services, September 2019 (the analysis).

I was surprised to read that your representative association was not aware of the analysis. It was my understanding that Mr Dominic Lane AFSM presented the paper to the SAFECOM board on 18 December 2019. I understand your representative, Ms Caracoussis was present at that meeting and aside from raising some minor grammatical errors, did not take issue with the paper. At the time of presenting the paper to the SAFECOM board Mr Lane noted that he welcomes any opportunities for ongoing discussion and consultation with all staff and volunteer, employee and union representatives.

Regrettably I must express my disappointment in the action of the South Australian State Emergency Services Volunteers' Association (SESVA) to continue to use the public arena to air apparent grievances. Time and time again, instead of meeting with me or my office and focusing on a positive working relationship, your association appears to prefer to communicate via the media. Whilst there will be times that we will not agree and compromises may need to be reached, the current bullish approach from the SESVA is not productive.

Since coming into government in March 2018, the SESVA have been instrumental in selecting new leadership for our emergency services. New leadership which, early on in my term, the SESVA identified to me was needed.

In April 2019 Ms Caracoussis, on behalf of the SESVA, provided her unanimous support and recommendation to me for the appointment of Mr Lane as the Chief Executive of SAFECOM. This support was echoed by the CFS Volunteer Association (CFSVA) and the United Firefighters Union.

Please be assured that I take any allegations or bullying extremely seriously. Whilst I do not need to point out the risks associated with wide ranging allegations of 'bullying attitudes', I encourage you to provide any specific instances of bullying to my office so that they may be properly and thoroughly investigated.

It is only the SESVA and the CFSVA who appear to be prophesying an emergency services model in South Australia of a Commission with a Commissioner.

Finally, I understand there to be some conjecture and misinformation circulating with regard to a solution to the previous Government's inconsistency between paid staff and volunteers with regards to work injury entitlements. As reported in the *The Advertiser* on 15 February the Government has released a proposal to allow the state's 15,000-plus volunteers, including from the SES suitable and reasonable compensation. Whilst the Government is ready to implement the proposal immediately, I am advised that the CFSVA are seeking legal advice prior to providing their agreement.

Yours sincerely



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27 / 2 / 2020