

Statement for Senate Inquiry.

Good morning Senators, thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

Firstly I support Justin's position on the issues he has raised in his statement.

My background is that I'm a Leading Fire Fighter approaching 37 years' service. I have been stationed at the old Brisbane airport fire station, Mackay in the 80's. Temporarily in Proserpine for two tours and two years in Mount Isa until it's closure in 1991. I then returned to Brisbane's newer fire station in 1991 and am currently an operational firefighter on B watch.

I have also served as a station union delegate for 20 years and then as part of the Executive for 16 years. As Queensland BCOM and then South East Queensland BCOM I have seen most fire stations and been involved in many ASA/ARFF forums over a period spanning 16 years. My portfolio role was as delegate for Equipment and Vehicles and over 15 years this included the early fire station design working group.

I have been retired as a union official for over 4 years and have during this time actively tried locally to progress safety critical issues using ASA/ARFF processes, whilst consulting with all levels of ASA management. Successful outcomes are seldom achieved due to poor systems and processes, unnecessary red tape and empty promises from all levels of management.

I appear here today to represent myself and my operational colleagues concerns. My peers have pleaded with me to call on the senate to intervene. To correct the current mistakes arising from the poor management around safety critical issues. Unfortunately this is a long list.

Currently at the top of the list is the staffing model that allows "cross crewing" and the building of the new Brisbane station at the wrong site. Both big errors that will fail to deliver the best possible response time and resources allocation for the new runway. This therefore will immediately compromise the safety of the flying public. These issues need to be reconciled.

Correctly siting the station mitigates issues raised during the Concept of Operations by firefighting staff. Which in turn also future proofs the station against future Brisbane Airport development.

My view of "cross crewing" is simple it is WRONG. The phase one Category 10 workshops conducted at ARFFTE (Melbourne Training Academy) demonstrated that even with 17 staff or more it became apparent that we required more resources not less. AS management has been reluctant to do a full Category ten exercise with "cross crew" staffing of 14 or 11. To the best of my knowledge this has still not occurred. It is a regulated requirement that ARFF respond to various emergency incidents within an aerodrome not just aircraft hence the need for a dedicated Domestic response service.

I have previously been involved with the bow tie safety process but not a full SCARD. Brisbane staff initially involved in the "cross crewing" scard process safety work saw for the first time the process in action. All involved felt cheated and what "TRUST" we had in management that remained disappeared quickly. Our operational views and concerns were discarded, and not recorded correctly in the final document. The outcome was determined before we entered the room. We were only invited there to tick the box of peer participation. Furthermore as this became obvious all

operational staff involved said they wanted their names removed from the document. Management refused this request even though this was a grave misrepresentation of our view.

Senators, staffing will always be manipulated under a corrupted safety system, hence we ask that the NFPA and a TRA (which is line with international standards) be the process that is used to determine such decisions. Unfortunately some in management are prepared to sign off on this current safety system process. They won't be around when an incident occurs, they won't be held accountable. They won't have to deal with any of the negative impacts that may result. This Senate Committee has seen firsthand the changing of the deck chairs so no one takes responsibility and refers everything to being on notice.

Other safety concerns and issues around vehicles and the lack of them I will happily discuss if time permits. Alternatively I can provide a supplementary report. I would ask to submit an Operational Bulletin 19-001 which is management of reduced category operations due unavailability of ULFV MK8. Also after being quite bemused watching the recent senate estimates hearing on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of April. I would like to submit for evidence a couple of documents that should clarify questions being raised by the committee on the day.

In Summary here are my points.

- Safe operational manning numbers need to be legislated and the NFPA as minimum with a TRA completed is required. This is recognising International Standards as we should.
- This continued Attack on the Establishment/Disestablishment numbers needs to "stop" as it continually puts the provider ASA in a neutral position and the fire service goes backwards and it takes years to catch up again as a service.
- Safety critical issues and providing new/upgraded infrastructure as well as a modern vehicle fleet isn't happening in reasonable time frames through CAPEX program. This after Head office management assured us Accelerate would deliver change and that the safety systems do work. Evidence does not support these statements.
- CASA need to maintain independence as the regulator with the provider. There needs to be a full rewrite completed ASAP of regulations to make them current with International Standards and recommendations. This rewrite is years overdue.
- Build Fire Stations in the appropriate position that achieves best response times for runway.
- If funding is an issue ASA need to come clean, so it can be fixed. There has to be funding to meet regulations and provide a service that protects the flying public and airport.
- Finally I would like to acknowledge the EVT's (Emergency Vehicle Technicians) This group are an integral part of our service and have suffered badly under this Accelerate program.

Senators we are here to look you in the eye and answer questions and not shuffle papers and bow our heads. We believe because we live and breathe the service. We should be able to provide the answers you have been seeking.

Thanks for your time today.