



Tasmania Fire Service

Office of the Chief Officer

File No:

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry - Recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events

The Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in respect to the above Inquiry.

Given climate change projections for Tasmania and their implications for the frequency and severity of bushfires over the longer term, and recent significant bushfires in Tasmania and other bushfire-prone parts of south-east Australia, TFS has deep concerns about the capacity of fire and land management agencies to control fires under existing policy, fiscal and social arrangements and likely climate change scenarios.

While much has been learned over recent years from inquiries including those following the 2003 Canberra fires and the 2009 Victorian fires, and from the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) established in 2003, much still remains to be learned and implemented in order to ensure the Australian community is adequately prepared for and able to respond to and recover from likely severe bushfire events over the longer term.

While TFS supports the recent decision of the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM) to endorse a bid to establish a Disaster Resilience Cooperative Research Centre, it has reservations about the capacity of an all-hazards research initiative to continue the detailed research agenda for bushfire established by the current Bushfire CRC. TFS notes that Commonwealth funding for the Bushfire CRC ceases on 30 June 2013.

In particular, TFS is concerned that the essential and detailed work completed by the Bushfire CRC to date leaves significant amounts of bushfire-related research still to be done. This research gap will significantly compromise the capacity of fire and

land management agencies to respond appropriately and effectively to the changing bushfire risk occasioned both by social change and climate change.

TFS strongly supports the maintenance of Commonwealth, State and Territory funding for the foreseeable future for bushfire-focused research using the highly effective Cooperative Research Centre model. This will help ensure that essential and highly effective research products continue to inform fire and land management agency approaches, and indeed community approaches, to bushfire risk mitigation, response and recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Brown AFSM
CHIEF OFFICER

7 February 2103