



General Manager

Annual General Meeting Report

For September 2019

I started writing this annual report for the RFBAQ and it was very negative, I had a list of what is failing the brigades and reasons behind them, all backed up with FTE figures and sticking points.

Then I realised that the report I was preparing would have been the annual report for QFES.

So, I started again and looking through the lens drawn from our constitution found that over the last 12 months the RFBAQ has certainly met the objects of the Association.

Objects

The objects for which the Association is established are: -

- 1. To consider and make representation in matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of Rural Fire Brigades and Brigade Members.*
- 2. To provide financial assistance and support to Rural Fire Brigades and their Brigade Members.*

With \$2,000 Buy Local Brigade Grants, 100 x Communication Grants to Brigades, RFBAQ Hardship Grants and the Standard RFBAQ Grant the RFBAQ has supplied more equipment to more brigades than ever before.

In addition to items purchased for brigades, the majority of the objects of the association is to make representation on behalf of brigades and brigade members to improve the environment that allows them to adequately defend their communities. This has been a year of fighting off determined attacks on brigade autonomy and power and the 1st Officer.

Why are Rural Fire Brigades formed? Mine was by a group of landholders coming together to meet the local risks that were evident in their community. There was a fire and no-one else came. Risk of bushfire, structural fire, car accidents or anything else that those people who went on to form the brigade thought was a potential or actual risk to their community.

This is not just in Queensland; every state or territory has over the last hundred years seen brigades formed by local communities coming together. Well before centralised fire services were created and a variety of government structures were formed there were tens of thousands of brigades formed and operating and defending their individual and wider communities.

The interesting thing about this evolution is that no matter the flavour or type of government or structure of fire service body, the brigades all evolved separately yet all ended up looking remarkably the same.

Why Governments and fire services cannot look at this simple fact and then develop a support system that embraces individual brigade differences and community needs is a reflection that fire services work from a platform of structured and uniform service delivery, not embracing the community aspect of brigade needs. The reason why the brigade exists in the first place.

In essence a brigade is a social entity that was formed to provide a service to its community, not a transposed service delivery platform that meets the reporting needs of a central entity.

The Legal Status engagement with brigades across Queensland reaffirmed brigades support of this independence and rejection of erosion of brigade's rights.