



4 November 2011

The Right Honourable Neil Roberts MP
Minister for Police Corrective Services and Emergency Services
PO Box 15195, CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Minister Roberts,

I am writing with a suggestion in relation to the management of the Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) and the State Emergency Service (SES).

I am of the understanding the with the changes to the state Disaster Management Act, the role of EMQ has changed to be more focused on facilitation and advice to local governments and other agencies in addition to the caretaker role in relation to the SES.

My suggestion is simple, with the movement of disaster leadership to the Queensland Police Service I propose that you make a machinery of government change to the Department of Community Safety. EMQ should be split with the disaster management portions (mostly operations, governance, and disaster management training) and a relevant number of personnel moved to the Queensland Police Service as a non-sworn Branch of QPS (the EMQ 'brand' can even be retained but just as Emergency Management). This will make the disaster management function much more focused, will reduce bureaucracy by meaning local government and other agencies only have to go to QPS (rather than QPS and EMQ). This gives EMQ more weight being part of QPS which has (very) similar powers under the Public Safety Preservation Act to those under the Disaster Management Act. This would also bring the State Disaster Coordination Centre and Watch Desk into QPS with established shifts, experienced staff and extensive call centre arrangements etc. The current operations EMQ staff transferred could be given police rank/uniform with only powers under the Disaster Management Act and the Public Safety Preservation Act (not the Queensland Criminal Code etc) wearing a red epaulette (similar to the 'Community Liaison Officers' but appropriately remunerated) with the balance of non-operational roles simply holding civilian positions (but all in the same EMQ Branch of QPS).

The balance of EMQ as it is now (the SES component) should then be created in to a government owned corporation/entity or its own Division within the Department of Community Safety. The SES would then be a stand-alone organisation, able to make money from its Registered Training Organisation function (providing first aid, safety, chainsaw training etc) or be a better managed emergency service, be able to manage its own functions in cohort with local governments, and be able to effectively run its brand more effectively. This is similar to Royal Life Saving Australia (an organisation of volunteers). A board of directors (comprised of yourself, representatives from the QPS 'Emergency Management Branch', Department of

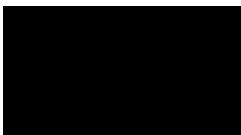
Premier and Cabinet, etc could then have direct oversight over the SES organisation which could be run by a CEO, or better still a Commissioner as with QFRS, RFS and QAS). The current SES rank structure could then be reviewed and all ranks have a direct chain of command role with civilian members doing non-operational roles (policy, administration, etc). It is the twin roles of EMQ that cause EMQ to not be as effective as it could be and separating the SES function (into its own emergency service or entity) from the disaster management functions of EMQ moving those into QPS as a new Branch is a simple yet effective move.

This will work well as it separates the operational function currently in EMQ (the SES component) from the governance and resilience functions of EMQ in relation to disaster management. These two roles do not need to be linked and would work far more effectively if separated and run as two separate groups. Integrating EMQ into QPS is logical and aligns to the previous review of the Disaster Management Act, fits with the issues highlighted by the flood commission of inquiry and will provide the SES with a more direct governance structure, chain of command, ability to be more self-aware and self-contained. This will also remove much of the bearocracy that SES groups feel with the head office of EMQ not responding to SES needs as its focus is drawn away doing its disaster management functions. The current operational structure of EMQ is simply overloaded and cannot prioritise effectively while having both functions.

This will also remove a layer of management in terms of reducing the number of managers and middle managers needed to run both organisations, you can reduce office locations as staff can move in to police stations in their relevant areas and so forth. These positions can be redistributed to strengthen disaster management in the new Emergency Management Branch of QPS or in a new, clear and logical chain of command in the new State Emergency Service division of the Department of Community Safety or as a stand-alone volunteer organisation such as RLSA.

I commend this suggestion to you for consideration in light of the QFCOI, the changes to the Act and to help make Queensland the 'smart state' you want it to be by making a logical and effective change to these functions.

Regards,



John Lesley
Redland City
Queensland

CC: Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, PO Box 1738, Brisbane QLD 4001
Campbell Newman, Leader of the Liberal National Party, PO Box 40, Ashgrove QLD 4060