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## South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission Governance Position Statement

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### **SAFECOM Governance Position Statement – Provision of Emergency Services by Volunteer, Paid and Retained Personnel**

In accordance with Sections 8 (1) (a), (b) & (e) of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005, the Commission is empowered to develop and maintain policy and governance frameworks across the emergency services sector, and to provide for the effective allocation of resources within the sector.

In the performance of these duties, the Commission accepts and is guided by the State Government policy relating to emergency service delivery from volunteer-based Country Fire Service (CFS) Brigades, volunteer-based State Emergency Service (SES) Units and fully paid and retained, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) Stations.

As articulated by the Minister of Emergency Services and confirmed in the Legislative Council Hansard of 11 September 2007, the Commission acknowledges the Government's policy that:

- a) Where a community risk profile determined by the Commission indicates that a volunteer emergency service delivery model is warranted, then those services are to be provided by the CFS and/or SES.
- b) Where a community risk profile determined by the Commission indicates that a fully paid, combined paid and retained or fully retained emergency service delivery model is warranted, then those services are to be provided by the MFS.

The Commission accepts that there may be circumstances where communities are best served by having MFS paid, combined or retained staff, co-sited and/or supported by CFS and SES volunteers.

The Commission acknowledges that in some communities, significant transition from historical service delivery models may be necessary to reflect current community risk profiles. In these instances a consultative, community-based, change management process will be implemented to ensure service delivery standards are maintained and stakeholder interests are respected and valued.

The Commission recognises that within the CFS and SES, full-time and part-time staff are employed to perform a wide range of leadership, management, training and administrative functions in support of their agency volunteers. In addition to their primary roles, these full-time and part-time CFS and SES staff also perform operational duties while maintaining the volunteer ethos of their agencies.

The Commission also recognises that there are other public and private sector agencies such as Forestry SA, the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and private companies, who employ fire and emergency service personnel on a full-time, part-time or seasonal basis. While acknowledging the significant resources that these agencies may be able to contribute to emergency situations, their governance falls outside the mandate of the Commission.

The guiding principle adopted by the Commission for resource allocation in South Australian communities is that volunteer emergency services are to be provided by CFS and SES volunteers, whereas fully or partly paid emergency services are to be provided by MFS paid and retained staff.