



**RURAL FIRE BRIGADES ASSOCIATION**  
**QUEENSLAND INC.** ABN. 37 417 474 709

## General Manager

### Annual Report

### September 2014

The true value of the RFBAQ as an organisation that lobbies on behalf of all RFB's has been best exemplified by the outcomes achieved since September 11, 2012 when a plan for the closing down of 8 Rural Fire Service regional offices and the loss of 57% of Operational Staff was released.

The RFBAQ worked closely with State and Local Governments, the media, key stakeholders, RFB's and volunteers to have this decision not only reversed, but then evolve into the commencement of a review into the Rural Fire Service in Queensland. This review was headed up by Ted Malone MP, Member for Mirani and received bi-partisan support from all political parties.

The RFBAQ was represented throughout the community meetings of the Malone Review team by our President, Mike Garrahy AFSM.

As an acknowledgement of the importance of the Rural Fire Service to all Queenslanders, the State Government then elevated Ted Malone to the position of Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers and has also announced that Rural Fire, SES, Volunteer Marine Rescue and Coast Guard will be led by a Deputy Commissioner for Emergency Volunteers. Bryan Cifuentes was appointed to this position on Monday, 16th June 2014.

The true value of this lobbying activity goes well beyond the saving of regional offices and staff positions, as it truly shows how an Association can effect fundamental and positive change through consultative and collegiate negotiations.

## **More, Better, Different, Less**

Since the re-defining and restructure of the business arm of the RFBAQ that commenced in early 2012, there have been many profound systemic changes in the way this organisation meets the market.

More, Better, Different, Less will be the internal drivers of the RFBAQ's business arm for the next 12 months, as we focus on testing our current processes to ensure that we are running efficiently and effectively. This refining and testing process is about fine tuning what is a tested business model and having all Association employees strive to ensure that our Art Union and donation customers receive excellent service.

With a contact centre that generates 29,000 connected telephone conversations a week and produces 43,800 mail pieces per Art Union, we are constantly being measured on our performance.

## **Double monthly grant allocation**

This financial year will see an increase in our budgeted monthly grant allocation. This budget will be double that of the 2013/2014 financial year, furthering the need of the State Executive to identify where grant monies to Brigades should be allocated and targeted.

With \$264,000 allocated towards direct brigade support through the monthly grant process, this funding is in addition to Brigade Specific Donations.



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## **2015 Queensland State Election**

The 2012 State Election saw for the first time the RFBAQ work towards political parties in Queensland developing policies for supporting volunteer firefighters.

Whether it be Labor, Liberal or National; the major political parties in NSW, Victoria and South Australia all release comprehensive policies for volunteer firefighters leading up to a State election.

The RFBAQ questionnaire and fact sheets that were distributed to candidates and political parties achieved a number of implemented promises from the Government, and the upcoming election presents an opportunity for the RFBAQ to support all political parties in Queensland in developing Rural Fire Brigade policy statements that will for the first time in Queensland ensure that the support and wellbeing of 35,000 volunteer firefighters who defend 93% of Queensland.

I believe that this state election cycle will provide rural fire brigade volunteers with the best opportunity to emplace guaranteed ongoing political support for all Rural Fire Brigades and RFB volunteers.