



RFSA

Rural Fire Service Association

NSW Rural Fire Service Association Incorporated
www.rfsa.org.au
headoffice@rfsa.org.au

PO Box 845, PENRITH BC NSW 2751
Phone 02 4722 2122
Fax 02 4722 2144

MEDIA RELEASE

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RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION CALLS ON THE REES GOVERNMENT TO COME CLEAN OVER ITS PLANNED SUPER MINISTRY

The RFSA (Rural Fire Service Association) today called on Premier Nathan Rees to come clean over his government's planned Super Ministry, quoting from a document instructing the NSW Commissioner of Police, Mr Andrew Scipione, to take total control over the NSW Rural Fire Service.

RFSA President Brian McKinlay said that the NSW government has not told the whole truth about the Super Ministry which will seriously impact over 70,000 NSW volunteer fire fighters.

"We have seen a letter from Mr John Lee, the Director-General of the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, instructing the NSW Commissioner of Police to fully take over the budgets, corporate and strategic services of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

"Under the terms of that letter, the NSW Rural Fire Service and its 70,000 volunteers will become fully-owned subsidiaries of the NSW Police Force.

"Therefore, the statement made by the Minister for Emergency Services, Steven Whan, that there will be no changes to the NSW Rural Fire Service is incorrect. It is clear that the NSW Government is not telling the whole truth," Mr McKinlay said.

Mr McKinlay highlighted that the Rees Government has overlooked the fact that volunteer fire fighters in NSW are an unpaid workforce, who can not and must not be treated like public servants. He said the wilful destruction of this volunteer base will leave NSW taxpayers with a bill that they can not afford to pay.

"Despite our very positive discussions with the Minister for Police, Tony Kelly, to come up with 'meaningful solutions', it appears that the NSW government may not be prepared to follow through.

"This plan will ultimately dislocate 70,000 volunteers, a significant proportion of the State's rural population. Unlike the NSW Police Service, the NSW Rural Fire Service is heavily funded by non-State Government sources such as local government, the insurance levy and direct fund raising by volunteers, supported by their local, rural and regional communities," Mr McKinlay said. END

For media enquiries and photos contact: Karin Krueger, KDK Media on 02 9979 3718 or 0419 991 267.

About the RFSA

The RFSA (NSW Rural Fire Service Association) is the Association representing NSW's 70,000 rural fire fighters. The RFSA's president is Brian McKinlay and newly appointed Executive Director is Peter Olah. See www.rfsa.org.au

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