



Hon Jack Dempsey MP
Member for Bundaberg



Queensland
Government

File No: SPD/00151
Ref No: 05249-2012

Minister for Police
and Community Safety

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your correspondence received on 18 June 2012, regarding the petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly: 1902-12.

I have read the request in the petition and found it is not specific in its terms. No legislative change to the Queensland fire levy, other than an annual adjustment of fees and charges for the effect of the Consumer Price Index have been proposed.

However, noting the addresses on the petition, I have taken the request to be regarding the inclusion in the existing Hervey Bay urban fire district of the area around the recently completed Craignish Auxiliary Fire and Rescue Station, and the application of the urban fire levy system to that area. I also note that of the 41 petitioners, 30 do not reside within the area affected.

The new auxiliary fire station at Craignish replaces the Plaiba auxiliary fire station and commenced operations in December 2011.

The Craignish station now provides a full urban auxiliary fire service, working alongside the 24 hour per day, seven days per week permanently crewed Hervey Bay Fire and Rescue Station and the surrounding rural fire brigades, to meet the demands for fire and rescue services in the rapidly developing Hervey Bay coastal areas of Craignish, Dundowran, Toogoom, Nikenbah and surrounding areas.

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The Craignish station operational response area overlaps the operational response area of the 24/7 permanently crewed fire and rescue station at Torquay, and forms part of the Hervey Bay 'A class' urban fire levy district, in the same manner as the previous Pialba auxiliary station.

This service delivery model is replicated in other areas in the State serviced by an auxiliary station and a permanently crewed station.

A range of consultation and communication activities had been undertaken prior to commencement of construction of the Craignish station. Those activities included the Ministerial Designation process, meetings with the Fraser Coast Regional Council and rural fire brigades in the area, and community meetings on 11, 12 and 24 February 2012. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is continuing to work with the Fraser Coast Regional Council and rural fire brigades groups to ensure an appropriate level of resources are available to the affected rural brigades.

There are some 4,700 additional properties that are now included in the Hervey urban district. Not all properties will attract the \$166.80 current levy that applies to a residence. In fact, an estimated 65 percent of properties are vacant land which currently attracts a levy of \$46.00. As these properties are developed they will be re-assessed by the local government and the appropriate urban fire levy will be applied. The changes are a consequence of delivering essential fire and rescue services to the area around Hervey Bay which is experiencing continued urban development and are consistent with similar communities throughout Queensland.

The petition provides no grounds for the purported proposed changes to the Queensland fire levy to be abandoned. Further, as advised, no legislative change to the Queensland fire levy, other than an annual adjustment of fees and charges has been proposed.

Should you require further assistance, please contact Mr Michael Prain, Chief of Staff, on telephone number (07) 3239 0199.

Yours sincerely



Jack Dempsey MP
Minister for Police and Community Safety