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Our Ref: 04566-2018

07 MAR 2019

Dr Jane Thomson  
Secretary  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee  
[Rrat.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:Rrat.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Dr Thomson

Thank you for your email of 11 December 2018, regarding the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee's (the Committee) Inquiry into the provision of rescue, firefighting and emergency services at Australian airports. I also thank you for providing an extension to the closing date for submissions until 8 March 2019.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) appreciates the importance of maintaining maximum protection for passengers, emergency services personnel and the community.

Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (ARFFS), as defined in the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998, are required at airports providing an international service or any other airport which services more than 350,000 domestic passengers per year. ARFFS is provided almost exclusively by Airservices Australia.

As Australia's most decentralised state, Queensland is serviced by approximately 190 airports. Of these, Airservices Australia provides a full-time ARFFS service at nine airports.

QFES has an existing Memorandum of Arrangement with Airservices Australia, providing the supporting operational arrangements for specified airports and the delineation of the roles and responsibilities between services. QFES also supports close collaboration with airport operators to support ARFFS services including joint exercises, emergency planning and skills training. In larger airports, particularly Brisbane, these arrangements extend to substantial responsibility for business precincts within the airport boundary.

At smaller regional airports, which may not be required to maintain an ARFFS presence, QFES may be the sole provider of firefighting and emergency services. This may not include a constant presence and services may be delivered by volunteer units in remote localities.

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- 2 -

However, QFES undertakes collaborative planning activities at the local level with respect to these facilities through the development of Local Action Plans and Emergency Plans to ensure an appropriate local response to incidents involving aircraft.

QFES' response to airport incidents is further informed through doctrine and procedures maintained by QFES and contained in Incident Action Guides and Tactical Guides. These documents provide practical direction to firefighters when attending an airport incident and encompass a broad range of safety issues and a consideration of potential environmental concerns. Further, as the first point of contact in the event of an airport incident, QFES maintains a number of Communications Directives to inform the response of Fire Communication Officers.

In this context, during the inquiry into the standard of firefighting responses at Australian airports, I encourage the Committee to consider any potential resource impacts a recommendation to amend ARFFS standards may have on state and territory fire and emergency service authorities and the services they provide to local communities.

Should you require any further assistance, please contact Adam Stevenson, Executive Director, Executive, Ministerial and Corporate Services on telephone

Yours sincerely

Katarina Carroll APM  
**Commissioner**