



## **Commissioner's message to staff and volunteers ESA COMCEN PROJECT UPDATE**

Work continues to implement reforms to the ESA Communication Centre (ComCen). The reform creates a 'one ESA ComCen' model, meeting the needs of four operational emergency services, and matching ComCen resourcing to meet demand so we can improve our services to the community.

The ComCen project is being progressed through the ComCen Project Board and is supported by the newly established ComCen Working Group. The Working Group is facilitated independently and has representation from all four of ESA's Operational Services. The Working Group is developing a framework for the implementation of the call-taker / dispatch model for which we have been funded.

The new model will be based on a system similar to the one practised by the ACTAS since 2008, which is credited with supporting ACTAS to maintain the best emergency response times in the country for six years in succession, despite demand growing by over 25% during this period.

Consultation will continue and we are very keen for this to occur through existing forums such as the Workplace Consultative Committee and the Joint Consultative Committee.

The next phase will see the initial deployment of six existing experienced call-takers to start observing, and working with firefighters. This will eventually see call-takers working 24/7 to start familiarising themselves with answering calls for our urban and rural fire services and the ACTSES. We are also currently recruiting additional call-takers and dispatchers.

As part of the transition to the 'one ESA ComCen' model, work has commenced to move positions from ACTAS to the Risk and Planning area. This will not impact on existing Public Benevolent Institution exemptions under the current taxation rules. We are also currently exploring options, in consultation with staff, to introduce fit-for-purpose uniforms for those working in ComCen.

In the past, the ESA has used firefighters from frontline operations to manage fire and storm/flooding calls. However, once provided with appropriate training, the use of ESA call-takers and dispatchers in the ComCen will free up these qualified firefighters go back to working in frontline operations.

A restructured ComCen will also be resourced on a tiered model of staffing which aligns resourcing to meet demand over a 24 hour period. The patterns for demand, including daily and seasonal pressures, will be carefully modelled so that the optimum ComCen resourcing levels are maintained at all times.

As part of our ongoing reform we will continue to make better use of our Computer Aided Dispatch technology to facilitate the provision of information between services and external agencies such as ACT Policing, as well as the timely release of incident alerts and updates, updating relevant websites, and providing information to the public. Implementing these improvements will enhance our delivery of real-time alerts and warnings to the community.

The ComCen Project Board will continue to update you on the work they are undertaking to achieve the reforms. These changes continue the progress we have already made towards our mission of working together to care for and protect our community.

Dominic Lane  
ESA Commissioner  
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