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### **Volunteer firefighters object to proposed cost-cutting plan. 07/03/2007. ABC News Online**

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200703/s1865277.htm>]

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## **Volunteer firefighters object to proposed cost-cutting plan**

Volunteer firefighters have criticised the ACT Government's plan to streamline the Emergency Services Agency (EA).

Instead of having their own chief officer, the four services of the EA will now answer to two deputy commissioners.

The ACT Fire Brigade, the Rural Fire Service and the SES will all answer to one deputy.

Pat Barling from the Volunteer Fire Brigades says the new acting deputy commissioner is an urban firefighter, who will not understand volunteers.

"We're fairly furious about this," he said.

"This is just a single-fire service. It's something we rejected outright. It's never going to work.

"The biggest losers, apart from the volunteers, is the Canberra community.

"Bushfire fighting is a very specific skill set required and there's 450 volunteers in the act have that skill set.

"They are just being discarded and replaced by an urban oriented focussed fire service."

The Government says the changes will save money for front-line firefighting, and it will consult with volunteers to explain the changes.

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