



Strategic Directions

Achievement Report

2020



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From the CEO

It is my pleasure to provide the annual *AFAC Strategic Directions Achievement Report for 2019–20*.

The Strategic Directions provide guidance to fire and emergency services to ensure activities focus on supporting resilient communities, trusted response, credible and timely information, effective governance and research utilisation. They ensure emergency management agencies are positioned to better meet challenges of changing community needs and expectations, an ageing and diverse population, changing climate, natural disasters, national security, and the impacts of a pandemic. Effective management of fire and emergency services to address these challenges will lead to greater community confidence, trust and support.

This 2019–20 report delivers in the same format as previous years. It demonstrates through case studies the work that has been completed in the last 12 months by all jurisdictions in conjunction with AFAC members and our partner agencies. This is just a sample of initiatives undertaken, rather than an exhaustive list of all work relating to the different Strategic Directions. Together these initiatives support a more disaster resilient Australia by demonstrating a level of national capability, based on operational readiness and underpinned by the most current qualifications and standards available, lessons management and research utilisation.

The work undertaken by AFAC and its members goes to the heart of the overarching principles articulated in the Strategic Directions: Primacy of Life, Trust and Confidence, Interoperability and Accountability.

The Strategic Directions have become fundamental to the work of fire and emergency services. A shared commitment, a unified vision and focus in achieving the Strategic Directions, have ensured our sector is well placed to serve our communities well as we progress.

I extend my thanks and gratitude to all AFAC members, other emergency management agencies and industry for the commitment and collective achievements during the year.

Stuart Ellis, AM
Chief Executive Officer, AFAC

2020

Acknowledgments

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) expresses gratitude to all members and affiliate members for their commitment to delivering on the fourth *Strategic Directions Achievement Report*.

AFAC acknowledges the staff within agencies who shared their own case studies. In the fourth report, this has included examples from Tasmanian Fire Service, Department of Fire and Emergency Services Western

Australia, South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, New South Wales State Emergency Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, South Australia State Emergency Service, Fire and Rescue New South Wales, Rural Fire Services New South Wales and Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Services. These contributions have ensured the final result is wide-ranging and reflective of the work undertaken by the fire and emergency services industry.

Background

Strategic Directions for Fire and Emergency Services in Australia and New Zealand 2017–2021 was endorsed by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) and the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council (LCCSC) in 2016.

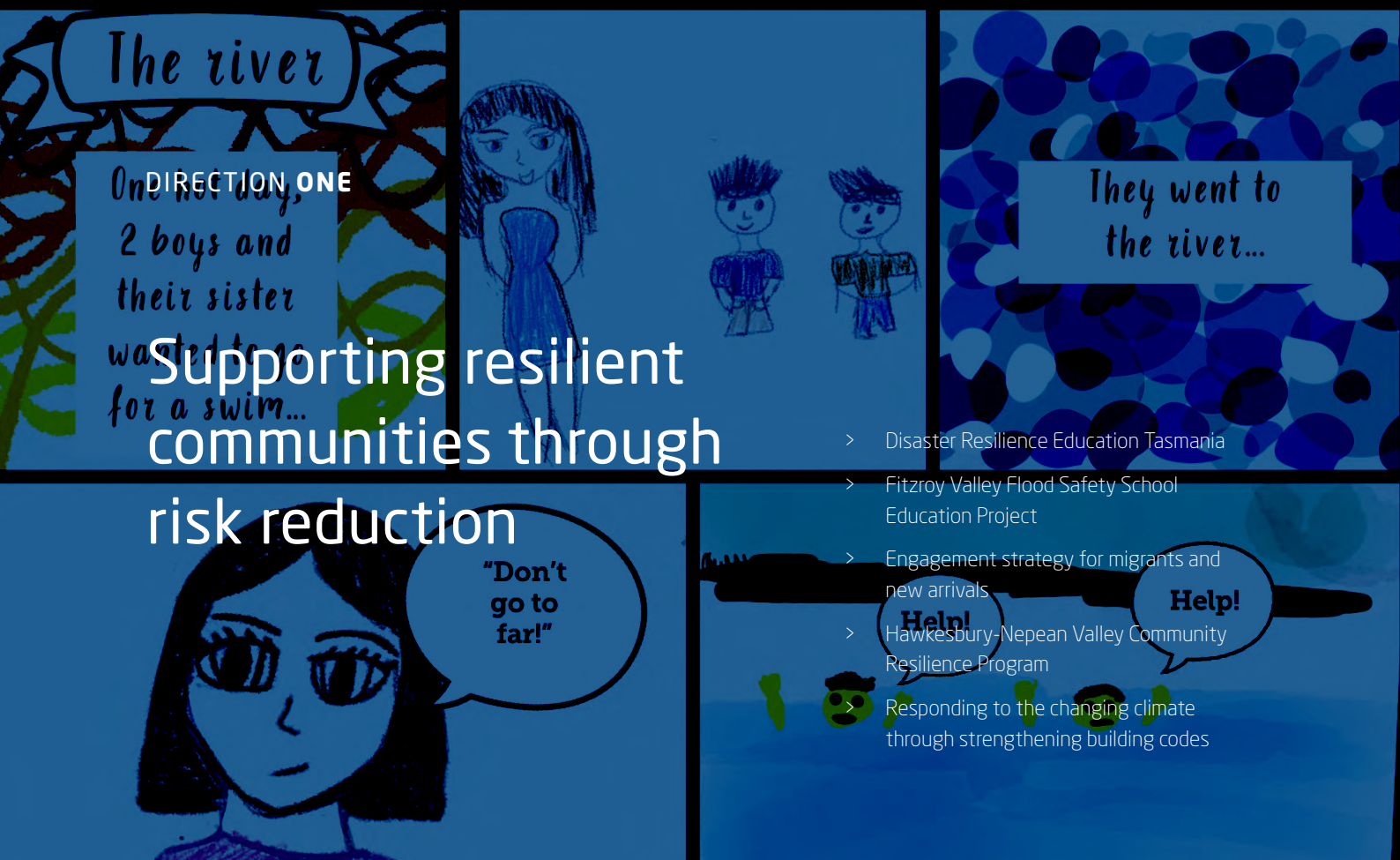
The Strategic Directions consist of five priority areas that reflect a shared vision and joint commitment to safe and secure communities in Australia and New Zealand.

THE FIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS ARE:



The expectation within the AFAC National Council is that the Strategic Directions will be considered in the development of each agency's strategic plan. Together with states and territories and the Australian and New Zealand governments, the priorities are shaping the future of emergency management.

AFAC is proud to present the 2020 *Strategic Directions Achievement Report* to Ministers who have responsibility for law, policing and emergency services. This report provides examples of industry and jurisdictional activities in support of the Strategic Directions.



Supporting resilient communities through risk reduction

AFAC member agencies work to support resilience through the provision of a broad range of risk reduction activities to reduce the impacts of emergencies and disasters on communities.

AFAC member agencies are transforming in response to community expectations and needs and have taken a more proactive approach to disaster risk reduction.

AFAC member agencies develop and deliver a range of strategies designed to reduce risk whilst also enhancing community resilience. By operationalising the practice of risk reduction to enhance resilience, strategies are based on the following principles:

- > Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a strategy to enhance disaster resilience.
- > Partnering with communities on risk reduction initiatives will optimise the resilience of communities and enhance recovery.
- > Strategies and approaches build on existing community strengths and capacity and facilitate connectedness through participatory approaches.
- > Strategies acknowledge shared responsibility for DRR between emergency management agencies, other organisations, communities and individuals and seek to develop and utilise partnerships.
- > Risk reduction and resilience building is a shared responsibility across sectors and communities.

- > Strategies are underpinned by sound research and practice. AFAC members collect data and use this to inform their approach and continuously improve.

The industry is aware of inherent disaster risks and the need to provide advice, education and information to the community to mitigate those risks. Once policy, planning decisions, construction options, compliance requirements and individual choice have been determined, the focus turns to preparedness and risk reduction with and for the community. At the same time the industry has a standing capability for response to any residual risk, should an emergency still occur.

The industry is not solely responsible for reducing risk or supporting resilient communities. It is, however, one of the sectors collectively responsible for supporting the achievement of those goals. In that context, a range of risk management and mitigation activities and services specifically to help communities better understand risk and take appropriate action to mitigate and manage that risk are delivered.

A range of approaches and strategies are utilised to enhance public safety. These include community education, community engagement, community development, partnership development, legislation, building codes and standards, influence and advocacy for innovation and improvements, and broader risk mitigation activities and initiatives.

Photo – Youth developed comics to promote floodwater safety as part of the Fitzroy Valley Flood Safety School Education Project. Credit: DFES

Disaster Resilience Education Tasmania

INITIATIVE DRIVER – To increase understanding of and resilience to hazards and disasters through the education curriculum in Tasmania.

AIM – Disaster Resilience Education Tasmania, DRET (www.disasterresiliencetas.com.au), is a teacher-delivered disaster risk reduction and resilience education package that features natural hazards information, activities, quizzes and resource links where students explore disaster resilience concepts of flood, storm and bushfire emergencies in Tasmania.

DRET forms part of the Tasmania Fire Service's (TFS) Disaster Resilient Schools project which has assisted schools to meet the UNESCO *International Comprehensive School Safety Framework* of Pillar 1: Safe Learning Facilities, Pillar 2: School Disaster Management and Pillar 3: Risk Reduction and Resilience Education.

FEATURES – The five lessons of DRET link to the Australian Curriculum for students in Years 5 to 8 in the learning areas of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Geography, Science and Health; general capabilities of Literacy and Personal and Social Capability; and the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability.

The resource's development consultation with educators, parents and emergency service stakeholders indicated that parents, students and educators were interested in disaster resilience education but felt there was inadequate resources available. Nine teachers, one home educator and 192 students reviewed lesson plans and tested the online resource in their classrooms. Student feedback during testing phase included: 'It got me thinking so it's pretty good', 'I think the questions are good because it really makes you think' and 'It is good because it helps us be less vulnerable'.

OUTCOMES – DRET empowers students to play a critical role in increasing disaster hazards knowledge, awareness and preparedness in their households, schools and within their communities.

Fitzroy Valley Flood Safety School Education Project

INITIATIVE DRIVER – The Fitzroy Valley has been identified as a high-risk location for flood-related injury and death due to its adverse weather events resulting in flooding. Children regularly swim and play in flooded waterways meaning programs to educate children about flood and river safety are integral to improving their safety.

AIM – This project is a partnership between Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) in Western Australia. The aim is to build the resilience of children in the Fitzroy Valley to flooding, improve their ability to respond to flooding disasters and equip them with the knowledge and skills to prevent flood-related injury and death. Fitzroy Valley is a remote community and the focus is on creating culturally and geographically appropriate resources for Aboriginal children.

FEATURES – The specific program objectives are to:

- Increase children's knowledge of safety around floodwaters.
- Improve children's awareness of river safety and safe locations for swimming and aquatic activity in their local community.

- Improve children's swimming and aquatic rescue skills to enable them to respond appropriately to an emergency.
- Reduce unsafe behaviours such as swimming and playing in floodwater.

The project includes:

- Development of flood safety educational resources by local school children for use in the classroom and wider community.
- Development of a River Safety Skills Program delivered by qualified RLSS staff. Participants will acquire a range of rescue and survival skills that teach them to be safe in and around inland waterways and negotiate survival situations.

OUTCOMES – Early indicators are showing that there has been an increase in children's knowledge of safety around floodwaters with their involvement in the development of a flood safety educational resource. When combined with the River Safety Skills Program which is due to be delivered at the end of 2020, it is expected that DFES and RLSS will see a decrease in unsafe floodwater behaviours.

Engagement strategy for migrants and new arrivals

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Adelaide has become the home of many refugees and migrants. The range of nationalities and the number of new arrivals is growing year by year.

AIM – The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (SAMFS) strives to provide accurate and understandable home fire safety information and to strengthen connections with these communities.

FEATURES – SAMFS has instigated a program of fire safety presentations to TAFE English language classes in metropolitan and regional centres using language appropriate presentations supported by props. SAMFS also attend open days at TAFE campuses.

Fire safety presentations have also been delivered to private English language educators.

Prior to COVID-19, SAMFS attended Australian Refugee Association meetings, contributed to training at the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia and attended suburban multicultural community events.

Home fire safety brochures are available in 19 languages and other educational materials are designed to suit readers whose first language is not English.

New arrivals have been invited to SAMFS stations for Harmony Day and other festive events to demystify the emergency services. These family friendly events have proved very popular with the invited guests.

OUTCOMES – The priority of the SAMFS has been to deliver understandable home fire safety education to multicultural communities, particularly new arrivals. By educating the community with a variety of methodologies, SAMFS has endeavoured to keep the community safe while building a positive profile of an emergency service organisation.

Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Community Resilience Program

INITIATIVE DRIVER – *Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy (Flood Strategy)*.

AIM – Increase community resilience in the region with the highest flood risk in New South Wales (NSW).

FEATURES – The *Flood Strategy* aims to reduce the flood risk in the valley now and into the future. It includes an outcome focussed on creating an ‘aware, prepared and responsive community’ that is ‘better able to respond to flood risk, reducing risk to life and the impact on the community’.

The Community Resilience Program helps meet this outcome, and is being delivered by NSW State Emergency Service and Infrastructure NSW with many project partners. It comprises 19 projects within three streams:

1. Broad flood awareness and preparedness activities
2. Outreach for communities of concern (i.e. people most at risk of floods)
3. Education and engagement for young people and their schools.

OUTCOMES – Since 2017, a significant amount of activities have been delivered with 37 project partners and more than 300 participating organisations. The program is scheduled for completion by late 2020.

To date, it has strengthened and extended agency and community networks and has increased the capacity of councils and community services to prepare for and respond to floods. It has delivered a flood awareness mapping tool, geography curriculum resources, educational videos and a public safety campaign.

Research in late 2019 shows the community is now more aware and prepared for floods than it has been in a long time. A whole program evaluation in 2020 will inform recommendations for future work and resourcing.

Responding to the changing climate through strengthening building codes

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Increasing risk to the built environment caused by extreme weather events due to the impacts of climate change.

AIM – Building codes in Australasia and internationally need to adapt to account for the changing intensity, duration and frequency of extreme weather events due to climate change. This work aims to strengthen building codes and standards so that the built environment is more resilient to future risk.

FEATURES – The work identifies the need for greater collaboration between climate scientists, regulators, and public and private sectors to develop comprehensive strategies that address the changing risks in the built environment.

These collaborative opportunities include identification of future risks, development of international building resilience guidelines including the relationship with land use planning, supporting research initiatives, improved communications to support a common understanding of risks, and the expansion of risk and impact analysis to include resilience initiatives and alternative approaches.

OUTCOMES – Building code developers and research organisations from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States (CANZUS) have launched the Global Resiliency Dialogue, a joint initiative to inform the development of building codes that draw on both building science and climate science to improve the resilience of buildings and communities to intensifying risks from weather-related natural hazards.



Photo – Building code developers across the world are collaborating to enhance built environment resilience to intensifying climate-related hazards. Credit: AFAC

Providing trusted response and facilitating the transition to relief and recovery

- > Fire and Emergency Aviation Training and Assessment Framework
- > AFAC National Resource Sharing Centre – interstate and international deployments during 2019–20 season
- > Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Operational Leadership and Crisis Management Masterclass Series
- > Introduction to Emergency Management Leadership Program
- > Coordination of Large Air Tanker airbase facilities nationally

The practice of emergency management incorporates the framework of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR), underpinned by the principles of risk management – where the risks to life, property and the environment from a range of hazards are identified and appropriate measures taken to address them.

Fire and emergency service agencies provide the best incident management services. This includes responses before, during and after the event, expert advice and advocacy for community safety outcomes.

Through the shared commitment by the industry to provide a trusted response, practitioners and technical experts are working to review and develop new operational doctrine which outlines the method for the provision of incident and disaster management and interoperability. They foster and promote the sharing of case studies, emanating from the delivery of their services. There is a commitment to undertake analysis of emerging trends and to provide advice and guidance on information and data requirements to best capture agency activities and performance.

The AFAC National Resource Sharing Centre continues to broaden and facilitate a coordinated national approach to resource sharing to sustain large-scale bushfire emergency response efforts over extended periods such as during the 2019–20 Black Summer season.

There is a continued focus, in all the Directions on incorporating knowledge and research into the practice of emergency management. It is important that such research is available so that practitioners and technical experts can keep pace with contemporary expectations and requirements.

Associated with this Direction, AFAC and AFAC members continue to work in partnership with Pacific Island nations, The Pacific Community (SPC) and Australian and New Zealand Governments to support a coordinated capability development approach that strengthens interoperability and capacity of disaster and emergency management agencies across the Pacific.

Photo – 599 US and Canadian fire personnel deployed to assist during the Australian 2019–20 bushfire season. Credit: AFAC NRSC

Fire and emergency services reliably respond when required by –

Fire and Emergency Aviation Training and Assessment Framework

INITIATIVE DRIVER – National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) and the AFAC Learning and Development Directorate.

AIM – Originally created in 2011, the *Fire Aviation Training and Assessment Framework* (FATAF) sets out nationally agreed roles and training requirements for agency personnel who manage and support aviation operations. It enables a nationally consistent approach for ensuring personnel are competent to perform aviation roles, specifically those defined in the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS).

The FATAF required revision to reflect a fast changing operational and regulatory environment, accommodate new aviation capabilities, and maintain compatibility with the Australian system for Vocational Education and Training under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

The new, refreshed FATAF will now be known as the *Fire and Emergency Aviation Training and Assessment Framework* (FEATAF). The Framework reflects the increasing use of aviation in the all-hazards, all-agencies environment.

FEATURES – The new FEATAF defines the nationally agreed standardised roles for personnel managing, supervising and supporting aviation in fire and emergency management operations. Twelve new units of competency have been drafted for the new aviation roles and five current units of competency have been updated in line with the associated roles. After review and comment from the NAFC Aviation Working Group, the material has been provided to Australian Industry Standards (AIS). AIS is responsible for ensuring the material is nationally reviewed by industry more broadly. This will ensure there has been a robust and rigorous approach to training and assessment for the new and current aviation roles.

OUTCOMES – It is widely recognised that a national all-hazards approach to the training and assessment of aviation roles in fire and emergency management is required to underpin effective management of aviation resources and to facilitate the sharing of resources across the country.

Reviewing and finalising training requirements for aviation roles is necessary for progressing the future development of online training and the application of simulation in aviation training.

AFAC National Resource Sharing Centre – interstate and international deployments during 2019-20 season

INITIATIVE DRIVER – A national approach to resource sharing is critical to sustain large-scale bushfire emergency response efforts over extended periods. This was essential during the 2019–20 Black Summer season.

AIM – To coordinate the timely movements of resources across interstate and international borders in the form of firefighter, incident management and aviation personnel, and enhance situational awareness to provide a national response to Australia's bushfire emergency.

FEATURES – The 2019–20 bushfire season saw the largest interstate and international deployments of fire and emergency personnel ever to have been mounted in Australia.

From September 2019 to March 2020, the AFAC National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC) maintained a national situation room and duty officer capability, and provided deployment managers to affected jurisdictions, to assist in coordinating interstate and international movements and tracking of resources. AFAC member agencies deployed a total of 56 personnel in NRSC deployment manager and support roles, and 20 personnel were

deployed as duty officers to the AFAC NRSC Office.

Over the course of the campaign 6,386 interstate personnel deployed under the auspices of the AFAC NRSC across the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Queensland (QLD), South Australia (SA), New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (VIC) in the course of hundreds of individual deployments. International deployments included 599 personnel from the United States and Canada deployed across NSW, VIC, SA, ACT and 320 personnel from New Zealand deployed across NSW, QLD and VIC.

OUTCOMES – These deployments were key to affected jurisdictions being able to maintain operations in the face of an extraordinary bushfire season in both length and impact. The AFAC NRSC demonstrated its value as a national capability to coordinate personnel deployments from interstate and overseas, and relationships between AFAC member agencies, and Australasian and North American partners, were deepened and strengthened.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Operational Leadership and Crisis Management Masterclass Series

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Disaster management training, education and capability development is a key element of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) responsibilities and commitment to Queensland (QLD) disaster management stakeholders. The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience is committed to building capability through professional development across the range of stakeholders who play a role in effective disaster management, and has worked closely under contract with QFES to support this area of work.

AIM – The masterclass series develops and enhances the capability of disaster managers and supports the effective performance of their roles. Masterclass sessions extend learning and build on other QLD disaster management training. Participants typically include those with roles as Local Disaster Management Group Chair, Local Disaster Coordinator, Local Recovery Coordinator or District Disaster Coordinator.

FEATURES – Three key masterclasses have been developed and tailored under the umbrella of the

Operational Leadership and Crisis Management Masterclass Series. These include:

- > High Consequence Decision Making Masterclass
- > Leadership in Disaster, Crisis and Adversity Masterclass
- > Coordinating Teams Operating in Disaster Masterclass.

Two of these masterclasses have now been delivered by expert facilitators across 10 different locations in QLD for more than 450 participants.

OUTCOMES – Participants indicated high levels of satisfaction and skills enhancement from training. Feedback indicates that the masterclasses have, among other benefits, challenged ways of thinking, validated current practices and provided new tools for emergency managers, and encouraged higher order thinking, resulting in deep learning.

Introduction to Emergency Management Leadership Program

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Shortage of emergency management trained volunteers and leadership training.

AIM – The program was designed to support operational leaders, current or aspiring, who manage others in operational emergency management contexts in the public sector and to develop our leadership capability.

FEATURES – The Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience partnered with the South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) and ACIM Solutions to provide 25 scholarships to SASES volunteers working in the emergency management sector to undertake nationally accredited training in leadership. The tailored skill set comprised of three units of competency from the Diploma of Public Safety (Emergency Management) PUA50119.

OUTCOMES – Due to COVID-19 the program was turned into an online course in which participants tuned in for a one-hour session each week for approximately eight weeks.

With very few volunteers trained in emergency management, the program looked to upskill volunteers who work well in the incident management space, but may not completely understand the requirements of emergency management, including the need to support both organisational and community planning, and decision making.

The first group have successfully completed the program, including nine regional volunteers. The second group to undertake the program also completed in July.

By targeting volunteers from regional areas where the shortage is more prominent, the SASES and communities will benefit by having more personnel capable to work in an emergency management role.

Coordination of Large Air Tanker airbase facilities nationally

INITIATIVE DRIVER – To support the operations of four additional Large Air Tankers (LATs) procured for the 2019–20 fire season.

AIM – To ensure that strategically located airbases that had not hosted LATs previously were updated with equipment and processes to host and load LATs and that these processes were largely streamlined across different airbases.

FEATURES – Airbase facilities in place to support the operations, efficient mixing and loading of retardant into the aircraft, ready for timely drops over fires.

OUTCOMES – In January 2020, the Australian government provided \$20 million short-term additional funding to procure the services of four additional LATs. The package included funding in a co-contribution model to upgrade airbase facilities in Perth, Adelaide, Bundaberg, Canberra and Hobart, and provide additional

items to New South Wales and Victoria, so that the additional large aircraft could be hosted and/or more efficiently loaded with retardant. These improvements widen the geographical areas across the country where LATs can provide aid in response to fire in the 2019-20 season and beyond.

Through the AFAC National Resource Sharing Centre, The National Aerial Firefighting Centre recruited two short-term project officers to support the local agency staff in their planning for these upgrades and drive consistency in processes. Base infrastructure, mixing equipment and loading facilities were put in place to improve LATs timely response to fires. Streamlining across airbases ensures the ongoing ability for LATs to be redeployed to other airbases and shared between jurisdictions.



Photo – Four additional Large Air Tankers were procured to respond to the 2019–20 bushfire season. Credit: CFA

DIRECTION THREE

The source of credible and timely information

- > National bushfire simulation capability
- > Active fire surveillance – identifying hotspots
- > Towards an Australian Warning System
- > Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Common Operating Picture 2020
- > 2019–20 New South Wales bushfires

Fire and emergency services are committed to providing credible and timely information to enable individuals and communities to make appropriate, informed and timely decisions. Response by emergency services is not always possible, particularly when the scale of the disaster may overwhelm response efforts.

To address this, the industry has focused on the development of new operational capabilities to keep the community well informed before, during and after events, acknowledging that this output is as important as operational response.

Technology is maximised, including data and provision to mobile devices, to rapidly advise and warn the community about emergencies that are likely to impact them. New technologies support dispatch of resources in a more timely and efficient way.

Fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand have collaborated to establish a database of personnel who are qualified and available to deploy

interstate and internationally on mutual aid missions, enhancing national capability to manage the largest emergencies and promoting Australia and New Zealand's role as good global citizens supporting international partners in times of need.

Working closely with other agencies such as the Bureau of Meteorology, the industry incorporates predictive forecasts, warnings and available intelligence, including local knowledge and historical information, to develop warnings messages that identify the likely impact of the hazard on communities. The intent is to provide consequence based warnings, inclusive of key safety messages, to empower communities to take action to increase safety and minimise loss of life.

This is underpinned by investment from the industry in the development of predictive models which can provide the best available advice based on existing information.

Photo – CSIRO Spark simulator running on the Giblin River fire in Tasmania, using 4 of the AFDRS models (including non-burnable). Credit: CSIRO-Data61

National bushfire simulation capability

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Simulating the spread of fire is a powerful tool for those managing land and fire. It supports the planning of proactive activities, such as prescribed burning, to target the most strategic areas for fuel reduction and support the planning of suppression strategies during bushfire events. Bushfire simulation has been integrated into a range of land and fire management agency decision-making functions. Substantial benefit is expected to be achieved by developing a truly national bushfire simulation capability where agency-specific applications are scalable for national use.

FEATURES – The structured effort to work toward a national bushfire simulation capability has been progressed by:

- supporting the Phoenix simulator currently operating in many jurisdictions
- commissioning a cost-benefit analysis to inform investment decisions
- developing national business requirements with the assistance of state government fire agencies

- reviewing existing bushfire simulators, to assess their suitability for national implementation
- working towards a high-level terms of agreement with CSIRO Data61 for the development of the CSIRO Spark simulator
- building a staged strategic plan laying out a road map for future development.

OUTCOMES – The cost-benefit analysis has found that the benefits of a national bushfire simulator were substantial, being at least ten times the estimated cost in investment. Fire agency business requirements for bushfire simulation have been developed and endorsed by the AFAC Predictive Services Group. On 29 April 2020, the AFAC Council endorsed the strategy for building a national simulator capability based on Spark, integrating the latest in flexible software design with up to date data and fire behaviour models covering most Australian vegetation types. Negotiations are underway with CSIRO Data61 with the aim of making the system available to all agencies to use for operational and related purposes on an ongoing basis.

Active fire surveillance – identifying hotspots

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Situational awareness is critically important in managing fire in the landscape. This includes knowing when and where new fires start, and being able to monitor the direction and speed of spread of ongoing fires. This Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC funded project through RMIT University recognises the need to have high-resolution satellite-based fire detection capability to complement ground and aerial capabilities to ensure the best advice is always available to incident management teams.

AIM – To provide 24/7 near real-time information on new fires and active fires across Australia.

FEATURES – Using data feeds from the geostationary Himawari 8 satellite, the technology provides critical information that can:

- identify new fire starts
- track the edges of ongoing fires
- identify fires starting from embers ahead of the fire front.

Using satellite data ensures information is always available, even when aircraft are unable to fly due to adverse fire or weather conditions, or during the night. This continual flow of inputs is of great assistance in improving the situational awareness of the fire manager.

OUTCOMES – The active fire surveillance technology has been piloted by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service (RFS), and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Both RFS and DELWP have shown that the data provided through this technology is a game changer, providing continuous and near real-time data. Following this successful pilot, the technology will soon be made more broadly available through Geoscience Australia's Digital Earth Australia.

Towards an Australian Warning System

INITIATIVE DRIVER – In October 2017 the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee (CCOSC) identified warnings as a national priority and committed to establishing a nationally consistent three-level warning framework across multiple hazards.

AIM – A significant social science research project was conducted with Australian communities to establish a sound evidence base. The research identified strong community support and a compelling case for a nationally consistent three-level warning framework using a nested model with associated calls to action and consistent application of colours, iconography and warning names.

FEATURES – The Australian Warning System includes a number of elements:

Warning level names – To build upon the existing warning framework for bushfire, the levels of ‘Emergency Warning’ and ‘Advice’ will be used. There has been considerable research effort and subsequent discussion about the name for the middle level, which is subject to further research.

Call to action statements – The research supports the establishment of action-oriented statements to give the community a clear action to reduce their risk from a hazard. A suite of call to action statements will be used together with the warning level name (eg. Emergency Warning – Evacuate Now).

Warning order – The proposed order for warnings will be: warning level, hazard type (location), call to action (eg. Emergency Warning, Bushfire (Noosaville area), Leave Now).

Spatial display – A set of nationally agreed icons that show the escalating hazard type within the scaled colour palette of yellow, orange and red is under development.

Applicability to other hazards – The proposed Australian Warning System is designed to be used for bushfire, flood, cyclone, heatwave and extreme weather, however it can be adapted to other hazards.

OUTCOMES – A nationally consistent warning system for Australia with a common set of data standards. This will address current inconsistency in warnings across jurisdictions which particularly impacts border communities.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Common Operating Picture 2020

INITIATIVE DRIVER – As a result of lessons identified from unprecedented bushfire events in Queensland in 2019–20 and 2018–19, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) recognised an opportunity to enhance shared situation awareness, active oversight and proactive decision making within its Incident Control Centres and Regional Operations Centres.

AIM – To develop a scalable Common Operating Picture (COP) enabled by Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) as a critical tool in the development and maintenance of situation awareness and as a basis for operational decision support at all tiers within the QFES command, control, coordination, communications and intelligence environment.

FEATURES –

- Field observation and cognitive task analysis interviews during the 2019 bushfires.
- System design based directly on incident management decision support requirements.
- The GIS platform on which the COP is based is capable of providing situation awareness across scalable large geographical areas of interest and

adapting to future system procurement choices as the utility of this body of work is the capture of the psychological fidelity of operational decision makers.

OUTCOMES – A minimal viable QFES COP was trialled by Central Region in December 2019 and introduced across all QFES regions during 2020.

There are several advantages to the design and methods undertaken:

1. identified realistic task requirements in an operational setting so the data is more meaningful
2. collected and verified data from officers with direct knowledge of the skills needed
3. clearly established the importance of key decisions and planning
4. aided in articulating cognitive elements that are otherwise difficult to articulate
5. provided information about decision making and cognition from the perspective of the people performing the task
6. identified cognitive elements that are central to expert performance of the task.

2019-20 New South Wales bushfires

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Community preparedness and response.

AIM – To inform and engage the community, so that people at risk of fire take action to reduce their risk.

FEATURES – Development of new products to communicate risk to affected communities, high demand for public information, community engagement initiatives.

OUTCOMES – Development of new warnings products in a dynamic environment, including the publication of fire spread prediction maps to communicate increased fire risk across a large part of New South Wales (NSW).

Development of clear and concise communication tools, such as tourist leave zones, to ensure tailored information to communities likely to be impacted by fire.

A record level of community preparedness, with the proportion of people having some form of plan for what to do during a fire increasing from 30 per cent in 2009 to nearly 80 per cent during the 2019–20 season, due to long term engagement and awareness activities.

Community uptake of warning products reaching record levels, with 2.7 million downloads of the Fires Near Me NSW app, and 110 million page views of the NSW Rural Fire Service website.

Based on house loss data on previous fire events, the loss of life would have been in the vicinity of 150 human lives. While 26 people died during the NSW fires, including three firefighters and three aircrew, public information and warnings were a critical component of protecting life.



Photo – Community uptake of warnings products reached record levels during the 2019–20 NSW bushfire season. Credit: NSW RFS

Effective governance and resource management

- > AFAC Doctrine
- > Fire and Rescue New South Wales new laundry process for firefighter personal protective clothing
- > The AFAC Pacific Partnership Group Strategy 2020-2023
- > Valuing Differences to Enhance State Emergency Service Operational Capability
- > Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Service COVID-19 Planning, Preparation, Response and Recovery Framework

Prolonged periods of drought compounded by a severe and intense 2019–20 fire season that destroyed significant areas of the Australian landscape, damaging public and private infrastructure and devastating wildlife have challenged the resilience of our communities, all levels of government, our people and first responders. COVID-19 has stretched the Australian community even further and we are now experiencing unprecedented events that are testing our global community, national and international government policies and resource arrangements, and our ability to be agile in an environment that is characterised by uncertainty and significant risk. The events experienced in Australia and New Zealand over the past 12 months have reinforced the importance of effective governance arrangements in both the public and private sector. They have strengthened the need for responsible and justifiable resource management, the criticality of working together and sharing expertise and resources.

AFAC member agencies recognise that their greatest asset is their people. Our agencies represent a workforce of 288,000 personnel. 254,000 are registered volunteers, 34,000 are paid staff in career roles and 6,000 are retained or part-time staff.

A diverse and geographically dispersed workforce requires optimal human resource management strategies, industry-wide workforce planning and targeted capability development. To meet the needs of a geographically dispersed volunteer workforce requires innovative, targeted and flexible strategies for their recruitment, engagement and retention. AFAC members recognise this need and work with volunteer associations to share their expertise in this field.

Emergency management is inherently risky and managing a large workforce requires an evidence-based approach to issues of national and international importance. Data to inform decision making, the creation and review of national and international standards, worker health and safety, and mental health and wellbeing are all key priorities for the fire and emergency services. While the AFAC member agencies operate within legislative and regulatory arrangements, they share their collective knowledge and expertise by collaborating to achieve consistent outcomes that reduce duplication of effort and ensure the safest possible environment for the community and personnel.

AFAC Doctrine

INITIATIVE DRIVER – AFAC Doctrine is one of AFAC members' most important intellectual property assets. The suite of sector-agreed, evidence-based doctrine is vested as the official view of the AFAC National Council and is central to supporting AFAC's Strategic Directions.

AIM – AFAC Doctrine supports AFAC members in defining accountabilities and practice against which AFAC members can measure their organisational performance. By aligning research to organisational strategies, doctrine can define best practice and support learning, knowledge management, succession planning and benefit organisational culture.

FEATURES – The AFAC Doctrine collection comprises over 100 evidence based publications and includes positions, guidelines and training resources. Doctrine is classified as either capstone, fundamental, procedural or technical.

OUTCOMES – In 2019–20 AFAC delivered:

- Five doctrine proposals:
 - Dry Hydrants Guideline
 - Fire Brigade Intervention Model Manual
- Fire and HazMat at Marine Incidents Guideline
- Thinking Requires Knowledge Creation
- Waste Management Facilities and Fire Safety Guideline
- Five new doctrine completed:
 - Aerial Appliance Strategy Guideline
 - Fire Brigade Intervention Model Manual
 - Flood and Severe Weather Community Safety Position
 - Resilience Through Risk Reduction Position
 - Urban Search and Technical Rescue Canine Capability Guideline
- Three revised doctrine:
 - Aerial Ignition Operations Position
 - Management of Remotely Piloted Aircraft at or Near Fire and Emergencies and Prescribed Burning Operations Position
 - Photovoltaic Array Systems Guideline

Fire and Rescue New South Wales new laundry process for firefighter personal protective clothing

INITIATIVE DRIVER – There is a need to allow firefighters to bag and tag after every fire incident knowing that they will always have immediate availability to clean personal protective clothing (PPC).

AIM – The aim of the project is to provide an accredited laundry process that is custom built for Fire and Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW) needs and specialises in the cleaning and disinfection of all firefighter PPC in line with National Fire Protection Association 1851 cleaning standards.

FEATURES – The feature of the project is to always have a set of clean PPC for firefighters. Firefighters will not be assigned two sets of structure PPC for their personal use. Instead firefighters will be allocated one set of structure PPC and the station will have a cache of

additional structure PPC based on the station's garment size profiles. Once a firefighter attends an incident and bags and tags their gear, they go to the structure PPC cache, get a clean set, and using a supporting Laundry App will scan the barcode of the cache structure PPC. This will notify the laundry provider to replenish the station's structure PPC cache with the same size. In addition, firefighters can access structure PPC caches from neighbouring stations.

OUTCOMES – This modern and more strategic use of data will lead to better maintained, inspected and readily available clean structure PPC. Firefighters will also be able to adapt to body size changes within the cache. This new process provides an important part of FRNSW's commitment to safety and wellbeing of firefighters.

The AFAC Pacific Partnership Group Strategy 2020-2023

INITIATIVE DRIVER – AFAC and AFAC members work in partnership with Pacific Island nations, The Pacific Community (SPC) and Australian and New Zealand governments to support a coordinated capability development approach that strengthens interoperability and capacity of disaster and emergency management agencies across the Pacific.

AIM – To present AFAC Pacific Partnership Group’s strategic engagement in the Pacific region.

FEATURES – The *AFAC Pacific Partnership Group Strategy 2020–2023* provides a high-level description of AFAC member’s collective engagement in the Pacific, by working through Pacific Island in-country partnership mechanisms, and ensuring alignment with Pacific frameworks, and the Australian and NZ government’s humanitarian and development nexus. It aims to describe AFAC’s work through the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA), Pacific Islands Fire and Emergency Services Association (PIFESA), and the

twinning partnerships, while recognising broader linkages that may be possible into the future.

It describes the capability and technical expertise of AFAC members, and the efficiencies of utilising AFAC member agencies to support disaster preparedness and humanitarian programs in the Pacific.

AFAC supported the establishment of PIEMA. The focus for the PIEMA Project for 2019–20 is to continue to progress the Emergency Management Roadmaps, which are country level needs analysis led by Pacific agencies for identified relevant countries.

OUTCOMES – AFAC members and their Pacific partner agencies continue to collaborate beyond their bilateral partnerships and support one another across the whole AFAC Pacific Partnership Group, PIFESA, and PIEMA memberships. The Emergency Management Roadmap process has already identified priorities for several Pacific Island nations which will become planning and implementation priorities now and into the future.

Valuing Differences to Enhance State Emergency Service Operational Capability

INITIATIVE DRIVER – In October 2018 AFAC State Emergency Services (SES) Operations Group members agreed to develop AFAC Doctrine with a specific focus on diversity and inclusion to support the growth of operational capability. This provided SES agencies nationally to lead in an area of importance for the industry by sharing with others the successes and lessons from existing programs and initiatives, noting historical barriers to inclusion with respect to operational roles.

AIM – The aim is to showcase how SES is working to build an inclusive culture, by embracing the value of bringing people from different backgrounds and different points of view to work together.

FEATURES – Through documented SES case studies, guidance is provided on strategies and learnings that may assist the broader fire and emergency services industry to support existing efforts at improving greater diversity and inclusion across all AFAC member agencies in relation to – LGBTQI+, Indigenous, religious and spiritual diversity, cultural and linguistic diversity, gender and disability services.

Each chapter explores:

- > definitions and appropriate language
- > case studies on current SES programs, initiatives, projects
- > practical and transferrable ideas, programs and initiatives from the case studies that can be used by wider audiences and agencies to develop and implement their own programs
- > lessons learnt
- > consideration of best tools to enable the appropriate community messaging in the interests of human welfare.

OUTCOMES – *Valuing Differences to Enhance SES Operational Capability* that will become a valuable reference for senior managers on the implementation of diversity and inclusion programs. It will provide guidance on how to be a volunteer employer of choice and ‘what to do, and what not to do’ and current examples and perspectives providing insightful reflections.

Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Service COVID-19 Planning, Preparation, Response and Recovery Framework

INITIATIVE DRIVER – COVID-19 pandemic.

AIM – Maintain service delivery a safe operating environment during a pandemic.

FEATURES – Principles-based response plan with consideration for required adaptability and flexibility in dynamic and uncertain times.

Principles of the framework:

- > reduce opportunities for the spread of COVID-19 within the Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (ARFFS) workforce
- > ensure ARFFS service provision meets demand
- > reduce operating costs commensurate with the reduction of operating revenue
- > guide the recovery of regulatory compliance post event
- > define the escalation and de-escalation phase of ARFFS Operations Response Plan
- > outline recovery planning for a safe and efficient return to business as usual.

The framework is the responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer of ARFFS with oversight by the Executive General Manager of ARFFS and the Executive Leadership Team of Airservices Australia.

OUTCOMES – The impact of COVID-19 on the Australian aviation industry is unprecedented.

Airservices Australia's mission is to provide safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible services that are valued by the aviation industry and community.

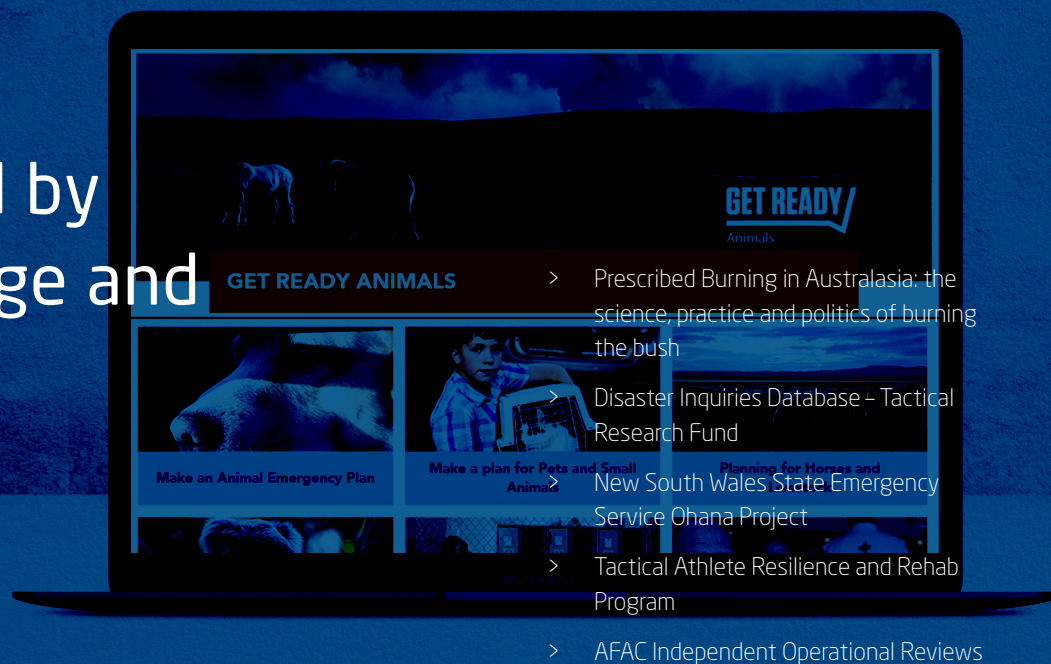
The Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Service COVID-19 Planning, Preparation, Response and Recovery Framework provided the governance, plan and framework for ARFFS to continue to provide those services and protect the sector assets during an unstable and uncertain period.

The outcomes achieved included little or no impact to service delivery across all regulated locations with no breaches of regulated safety practise or impacts on the health, safety and welfare of its personnel.

The framework's principles provided the continued guidance and options for staff to react to any escalation of services as the aviation sector increased its activity or any potential COVID-19 related illness in ARFFS and Airservices Australia customers or personnel.

DIRECTION FIVE

Informed by knowledge and research



AFAC agencies value, create, share, and use a range of evidence and knowledge derived from research, experience, or observation.

The Research Committee of the AFAC Board provides strategic guidance to AFAC Council about research needs. Under the Committee's stewardship, AFAC has, for the first time, a register of research. A register of member agencies' recent, current and planned research was developed this year.

A strategic analysis of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, AFAC future research proposals and AFAC's Strategic Directions has led to an agreement on five national research themes of:

- > shared responsibility and community engagement
- > communicating risk and understanding the benefits of mitigation
- > climate change
- > predictive services, data and warnings
- > adapting agency capability.

The national doctrine developed by members' agencies as AFAC Doctrine, the Handbook Collection developed by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) as well as the many public safety training products are

all informed by research where relevant and by evidence from experience. Care is taken to acknowledge and document the source of information so that it is properly valued.

A comprehensive professional development program supports learning to deepen understanding and help create knowledge. The signature national event, the AFAC conference, is a partnership whereby researchers, practitioners and policy makers actively share and learn, and now also includes the AIDR Australian Disaster Resilience Conference, which extends our collective reach to broader audiences. AFAC hosts forums, workshops, seminars and webinars.

AFAC has a powerful role as a collaboration facilitator and knowledge broker. AFAC's 34 Collaboration Groups are communities of practice. One of these, the Knowledge, Innovation and Research Utilisation Network (KIRUN) is closely aligned to the delivery of this Strategic Direction. Their flagship achievement last year was the 2019 Lessons Management Forum and expert support for the *Lessons Management Handbook* published by AIDR.

Photo – Animal emergency preparedness helps to keep pets, livestock, wildlife and humans safer during hazard events. Credit: NSW SES

Fire and emergency services are informed with knowledge and research by –

Prescribed Burning in Australasia: the science, practice and politics of burning the bush

INITIATIVE DRIVER – During large bushfire events, the topic of hazard reduction or prescribed burning comes under the spotlight as a silver bullet for preventing devastation to properties and communities.

AIM – These conversations naturally focus on the role on prescribed burning to reduce the risk to people and property. However, the use of prescribed burning in managing the landscape can be carried out for multiple objectives and planning and implementing burns must consider its use for ecological, cultural and economic benefits as well.

FEATURES – Published by AFAC in conjunction with the Centre of Excellence for Prescribed Burning, *Prescribed Burning in Australasia: the science, practice and politics of burning the bush* examines these themes. The book was released on 28 May 2020.

OUTCOMES – The book brings together the science, evidence and expert opinion around the use of prescribed burning across three themed chapters:

- > ‘Different Things to Different People’ sets out the social context of burning in Australasia; policy setting, social and cultural concepts of place and the role and limitations of academic research.
- > ‘Evidence Led Objectives’ looks at significance of effects of prescribed burning with in-depth reviews around fuel hazard reduction and its effectiveness, forest carbon, water supply, biodiversity and escapes.
- > ‘Expert Opinions’ presents competing views amongst leading experts, practitioners and policy makers about how fire should be used in the landscape.

Disaster Inquiries Database – Tactical Research Fund

INITIATIVE DRIVER – AFAC recognised a need to have a strategic overview of the many hundreds of recommendations that have followed post-event inquiries and reviews of disasters and emergencies in Australia. This led to a proposal, and subsequent support of the Tactical Research Fund through the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC.

AIM – The project sought to analyse the many reports and identify coherence of findings over time. This project aimed to generate a high level and comprehensive description of the major recurrent (or not) categories of findings across multiple post-event reviews, and assess the degree to which these findings have been or are being matched by attention and reforms within Australian fire and emergency service organisations and others.

FEATURES – In 2017 this project undertook a review of major emergency incidents since 2009. It developed a taxonomy to apply to the findings and recommendations of reviews and identified major themes. Research found that the themes with the most recommendations were:

- > doctrine, plans, standards and legislative reform
- > land use planning, development, building codes and regulation of building and refuges
- > community warnings and communication
- > emergency management agency organisation, management and authority
- > incident management teams.

OUTCOMES – A core element of this project was the publication in 2020 of a comprehensive and user-friendly database of recommendations from post-event reviews and inquiries that can inform agencies’ own lessons identification practise now and into the future. The database can be used to compare similar recommendations between inquiries, themes and jurisdictions and to follow inquiries across jurisdictions, years and types. The Disaster Inquiries Database can be downloaded from the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC website to suit user needs.

New South Wales State Emergency Service Ohana Project

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Recognising the need to engage animal owners to plan for their animals in emergencies.

Recent bushfire operations saw over 12,000 animals registered at evacuation centres or animal safer places in New South Wales. This highlights that planning for animals in emergencies is crucial, and that community safety expectations now demand animals are managed effectively in an emergency response.

AIM – Understanding of motivators and barriers to keeping people and their animals safe in emergencies.

FEATURES –

- > Review of public information messaging to ensure consistency of communications across agencies, to prevent confusion and increase understanding by animal owners.
- > Centralised, sustainable information through the Get Ready Animals website as a single point of information, including resources developed across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
- > Engagement of high-level animal related stakeholders to champion community planning and preparedness, including promoting the website, sharing resources, and proactively supporting animal emergency planning through protocols, training and member engagement.
- > Review of evacuation centre auditing processes to

ensure inclusion of animals and proper resourcing to support animal owners during operational response.

OUTCOMES –

- > The Get Ready Animals website www.getreadyanimals.nsw.gov.au features information from 10 trusted websites and holds all project and other resources, freely available to all stakeholders.
- > Thirty social media tiles focusing on key messaging for use on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and as public information resources.
- > *Animal Emergency Plan on a Page* planning tool available in a range of formats including online, downloadable PDF, or as an insert for newsletters and pamphlets, Emergency Grab and Go Bag for Pets, poster as a visual engagement tool.
- > Community resilience building fact sheets.
- > Public information messaging around emergency management of animals before, during and after an emergency was reviewed and final messaging is being developed by Animal and Agriculture Services Functional Area.
- > Review of evacuation centre auditing processes, focussing on facilities available to animals and their owners.

Tactical Athlete Resilience and Rehab Program

INITIATIVE DRIVER – Firefighting is a demanding occupation which presents unique challenges from a functional, physiological and psychological perspective. However, a number of studies have shown that firefighters have a level of physical fitness unable to compensate for the highly physical demands of firefighting due to declines in fitness in years following entry (National Fire Protection Association, 2016). There is also a strong evidence behind the need to proactively promote psychological resilience amongst the firefighting population. As such, there has been a call from researchers and fire agencies alike for increased awareness surrounding the benefit firefighters (occupational athletes) may obtain from health interventions, training and rehabilitation programs utilised in elite sporting systems.

AIM – The purpose of this pilot project - delivered in partnership between Fire and Rescue New South Wales, South Sydney Football Club, the iCare Foundation and Employees Mutual Ltd. - is to utilise high-performance injury prevention and management models from the

South Sydney Football Club. The program aims to support firefighters in their efforts to build individual resilience, durability and recovery from work related injury.

FEATURES – The program features a 2-hour induction session for prospective crews, a 12-week proactive resilience stream and a 6-month comprehensive and holistic rehabilitation stream.

OUTCOMES – While the unprecedented bushfire season and COVID-19 pandemic have interrupted the sample size for the resilience stream, the feedback to date has been extremely positive with 438 proactive conditioning sessions undertaken. Preliminary evaluation by the University of Technology Sydney has revealed early signs of positive physical and psychological outcomes, however the limited data set needs to be acknowledged.

Within the rehab stream, return to pre-injury duties rates are significantly enhanced when compared to other avenues of rehabilitation (86 per cent vs 30 per cent), with significant cost saving associated with the claims.

AFAC Independent Operational Reviews

INITIATIVE DRIVER – The fire and emergency services sector is frequently, and rightly, subjected to scrutiny in the form of inquiries and reviews after major incidents. It can, however, be a challenge for reviewers with no knowledge of the sector to understand the real issues when analysing how an operation has played out. AFAC Independent Operational Reviews allow scrutiny to be carried out by industry experts who are independent of the agencies being reviewed.

AIM – To identify and disseminate lessons from major incidents by using the AFAC network to source teams that can carry out independent, expert reviews of significant operations and provide targeted recommendations based on industry knowledge.

FEATURES – In 2019-20 three reports were produced following AFAC-led reviews. A review team led by Deputy Commissioner Mal Cronstedt of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Western Australia undertook an Independent Operational Review of the management of the 2018–19 bushfire season on behalf of the Tasmanian Government; a team led by Mr Neil Cooper of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service undertook a review of

the management of the New Zealand Tasman fires of February 2019; and a team led by then Assistant Chief Officer Daniel Austin of the South Australian Country Fire Service carried out a peer review of the East Victorian fires of 2019 using a lessons-based methodology, supported by the 'EM-Share' online platform, on behalf of Emergency Management Victoria.

The contrasting methodologies used in these reviews demonstrated the ability of the AFAC professional network to access industry experts from across the country with the capability to conduct both lessons management based activities as well as more traditional forms of review.

OUTCOMES – In each case a formal report was provided to the commissioning body containing recommendations to support continuous improvement (in the case of the Tasmanian and Tasman reviews) and lessons identified to support ongoing organisational learning (in the case of the East Victorian review).



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