



JUNE 2018

NORTH WEST AND MIDWEST WA LEARN ABOUT NEW RURAL FIRE DIVISION

It started nearly two months ago, but after six regional legs, thousands of kilometres and nearly two hundred brigades, units and groups later, the inaugural Rural Fire Division tour has finally come to an end. At least in the regions, that is. Next off the rank is the peri-urban fringe.

In the last two parts of the tour, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Francis Logan MLA, Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM, Rural Fire Division Executive Director Murray Carter and Acting Chief Superintendent John Tillman visited the Pilbara, Kimberley, Midwest and Gascoyne regions.

Emergency Services Minister Francis Logan said the tour had not only been a great opportunity to explain in person how the new division would work, but also to hear from volunteers about their ideas and any potential concerns.

“The feedback following the announcement of the new division has been overwhelmingly positive and the feedback has been really constructive,” he said.

“This is unprecedented reform and historic investment, so it was really pleasing to hear from volunteers that we had struck the right note.

“Of course, there’s a lot to do, but judging by the response from the many meetings we’ve had, it’s clear we are on the right path to improving bushfire management across emergency services and other government agencies.

“I want to thank again all those people that gave up more of their valuable time to meet with us and for everything they do to make our communities safer.”



The Minister for Emergency Services visiting the Northampton crew



FES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM said “This is just the beginning of our consultation and we look forward to getting out again as the work of the new division continues to develop.”

RFD Executive Director, Murray Carter echoed these comments, saying “Our team has been set up to help drive on-the-ground improvements for volunteers and their communities. It has been great to hear first-hand about where we can best focus our early efforts.”

The North West tour included local volunteer groups from Newman, Exmouth, Karratha, Port Hedland, Broome, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Kununurra.



Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services



South Hedland and Nickol Bay Volunteers

Acting Chief Superintendent John Tillman, who was on the North West tour, said that there was a lot of interest in learning about the new Bushfire Centre of Excellence particularly the benefits it will bring to WA in building and enhancing rural fire capability.

Mr Tillman also commented on the good work of the brigades, “A number of brigades proudly highlighted the bushfire mitigation work they carry out to protect their communities and look forward to benefits communities will receive from additional funding announced for crown land mitigation,” he said.



Visit to the South Hedland Volunteers



A great picture from up in Kununurra



Executive Director Murray Carter in action explaining the new division

During the North West tour, the Minister and FES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM had the honour of taking part in the official opening of the Nickol Bay Bush Fire Brigade station and the new \$1.2m Newman SES headquarters.



Newman SES local manager Connie Reed with FES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM, Emergency Services Minister Francis Logan MLA and Shire of Pilbara President Lynne Craigie

The Newman SES purpose-built facility can also act as a level three incident controller centre for significant emergency situations in the area. The SES crew put on a warm welcome with a great afternoon tea including a slushy machine, which, as the locals say, is a must in the Pilbara, and a first-time SES cake.



The final regional tour took place in the Midwest and Gascoyne regions with visits to Geraldton, Northampton and Carnarvon.

The crews gave up part of their Saturday to hear about the division and graciously played host at their facilities.

The Member for the Agricultural Region Laurie Graham MLC and Member for Pilbara Kevin Michel MLA also joined the tour at various stages.



FES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM and Minister Logan discussing the new changes and meeting volunteers

The Midwest-Gascoyne visit marked the final leg of the regional Rural Fire Division tour that started on 13 April with three days through the South West, several days across the lower and upper Great Southern, four days through the Wheatbelt, and three days across the Pilbara and the Kimberley (Broome to Kununurra), finally finishing with the Mid West and the Gascoyne.

Thank you to all the volunteers across the State's emergency services who gave up more of their valuable time to hear about the new Rural Fire Division, and to the DFES officers and staff across the State who helped organise the tour.

For any queries or further information, please contact the Office of the Commissioner at commissioner.office@dfes.wa.gov.au.

To view all the images from the Rural Fire Division tour, please visit the Minister for Emergency Services' [Facebook Page](#).