



# RURAL FIRE DIVISION

The Rural Fire Division (RFD) will decentralise and improve rural fire management, lead increased mitigation activities and strengthen relations with the State's bushfire volunteers.

Importantly Bush Fire Brigades that fall under local government will continue to operate under that structure.

The main components will be:

- The Office of Bushfire Risk Management
- A Bushfire Centre of Excellence
- Bushfire Risk Management Planning
- Volunteer relations



The division will be one of four command structures within the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and will build a stronger bushfire culture within the department.

An Executive Director will lead the division and report directly to the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner.

The division meets the intention of the Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry by bringing together the many aspects of rural fire management and creating a greater focus on the input of the State's volunteers and strengthening collaborative efforts.

## RFD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is responsible for overseeing the State's rural fire management, which includes greater mitigation and bushfire risk planning as well as strengthening volunteer relations and training.

The Executive Director will chair a new State Bushfire Advisory Council, which will include broader representation from volunteers and other peak bodies involved in bushfire management.

## OFFICE OF BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT

The Office of Bushfire Risk Management will continue to focus on collaborative rural and regional fire management across government agencies, local government and non-government organisations.

It will lead greater bushfire risk management planning throughout Western Australia and oversee the treatment of bushfire risks.

A new interdepartmental working group, chaired by the office, will also make sure that State agencies and departments are working effectively together to address bushfire mitigation efforts.

## BUSHFIRE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

A significant development under the Rural Fire Division will be the creation of a Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

The centre will focus on best practice and develop bushfire policy in collaboration with volunteers and bushfire science researchers and practitioners.

It will be a place of high-level training that will be led, in many cases, by volunteers and supported by the continuing delivery of technical training at the local level.

Research into bushfire risk management planning and prescribed burning practices will be coordinated through the centre.

It will become a centre for volunteers and broader bushfire communities to learn from each other and from the science of bushfire management.

Career firefighters will also be given the opportunity to undertake enhanced training and bushfire management at the centre.

## BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Since it began as a trial in 2014, the funding for bushfire risk management planning has been expanded from 16 local governments to 27.

Many local governments have progressed to the treatment stage of those risks and increased funding for mitigation will assist in facilitating those treatments.

The new division will lead greater resourcing for bushfire risk management planning and oversee an expanded Mitigation Activity Fund for the treatment of those risks as endorsed by the Office of Bushfire Risk Management.

The division will also provide technical support to local governments and other agencies in addressing bushfire risks to local assets and conducting prescribed burning.



## VOLUNTEER RELATIONS

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is embarking upon significant structural change to become a holistic agency that focuses on prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery functions.

As part of that restructure, and to complement the division, Volunteer Support Officers will be based in the regions and Volunteer Liaison Officers will be established within the Office of the Commissioner.

The officers will support the Volunteer Advisory Committees in their functions and help facilitate communication between all volunteers, DFES and government.

A Ministerial Volunteer Advisory Forum will also be held yearly for volunteers to raise issues and concerns directly with the Minister for Emergency Services and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner.

Bush Fire Brigade volunteers will maintain their structure under local government, including operational matters.

All bushfire volunteers will be able to have greater input into rural fire management through the new division, the liaison officers, committees and forums.

For more information, visit [www.dfes.wa.gov.au/rfd](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/rfd).

