



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**



Freedom of Information Information Statement

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1. OUR VISION

Resilient Western Australian communities that work together to build capacity and capability to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

2. OUR MISSION

To improve community safety practices and provide timely, quality and effective emergency services, in partnership with local communities and emergency management partners.

3. LEGISLATION ADMINISTERED

3.1 Enabling Legislation

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) was established on 1 November 2012 and operates under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*.

Under Western Australia's emergency management arrangements, DFES has been designated as the 'hazard management agency' for a number of hazards/emergencies.

DFES achieves this by working in partnership with the community and other agencies to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

DFES administers the following Acts along with associated subsidiary legislation:

- *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998* (the FES Act)
- *Bush Fires Act 1954*
- *Fire Brigades Act 1942 and*
- *Emergency Services Levy Act 2002*

3.2 Minister Responsible

The Minister for Emergency Services is responsible for DFES.

4. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF DFES

4.1 Organisational Profile

To meet the evolving needs of the community, DFES recognises that its structure must remain flexible and be reviewed regularly to support its role, its strategic intentions and its programs.

DFES comprises:

- Career Fire and Rescue (CFRS),
- Fleet and Equipment Technicians,
- Public Service and Government Officers,
- State Emergency Service (SES),

- Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services (VFES),
- Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS), and
- Volunteer Marine Rescue Services (VMRS).

DFES also supports local governments in administering, training and funding the Bush Fire Service (BFS) and the participation of young volunteers through our Emergency Services Cadets and junior programs. DFES is also responsible for the service level agreement for Surf Life Saving Western Australia's 5,000 volunteers who provide a range of essential services to the beach going community.

4.2 DFES Management

DFES' corporate structure comprises five commands that coordinate and deliver agreed services.

- Office of the Commissioner
- Operations
- Capability
- Corporate Services
- Governance and Strategy

Further details on DFES' corporate structure can be found within the Annual Report.

The Corporate Leadership Team (the CLT) includes the FES Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Executive Directors and Assistant Commissioners. The role of CLT is to set strategic direction and govern the delivery of effective and efficient frontline services.

4.3 Advisory Committees / Groups

Office of Bushfire Risk Management

Early in 2012, the Minister formally established the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM), which facilitates greater information sharing and coordination between State government agencies, local governments and communities involved in the management of bushfire related risk. OBRM reports directly to the FES Commissioner.

Office of Emergency Management

The OEM, which was formerly the SEMC Secretariat, was established on 1 December 2016 as a result of the recommendations of the *Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire* by Euan Ferguson AFSM.

The OEM's key role is to provide support to the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) in delivering on its strategic goals across *Risk, Capability, Impact, Engagement and Governance and Support*.

The SEMC is Western Australia's peak emergency management body.

For more information about the OEM, please visit <https://www.oem.wa.gov.au/>

Advisory groups also include:

- Volunteer Advisory Committee
- Volunteer Marine Rescue Service (DFES)
- State Emergency Service
- Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
- Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service

4.4 Annual Report

The DFES annual report provides up to date information in regard to:

- the corporate structure of the department,
- the functions of the department,
- the impact of our functions on the community,
- the processes which exist to enable the community to participate in the formulation of policy,
- the legislation administered, and
- the performance of our functions.

<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications/Pages/annualreports.aspx>

5. EFFECT OF DFES' FUNCTIONS ON THE PUBLIC

5.1 Overview

DFES's primary role is to support communities to stay safe by raising awareness of the risks, helping them to prepare for emergencies and providing response services to reduce the inevitable impact of emergencies.

The focus for DFES for the next 4 years, and longer term to 2028, will be to:

- build our capacity to learn from post incident reviews and research,
- address ongoing cultural challenges to maximise cooperation and interoperability with emergency management partners,
- continue to improve genuine consultation and inclusion of volunteers, communities and other key stakeholders in determining how to best manage local risks,
- build the capacity for change and innovation across our organization, and
- continue to improve transparency with regard to decision making, accountability and governance.

5.2 Functions

DFES supports services to bush and structural fires, incidents involving hazardous materials, floods, storms, cyclones, road crash rescues and a range of search and rescue call outs.

The FES Commissioner is the Hazard Management Agency in Western Australia for:

- Fire

- Hazardous materials incidents
- Floods
- Cyclone
- Storm
- Earthquake
- Tsunamis, and
- Landform or structure collapse.

Shared responsibilities with other agencies include:

- Weather warnings
- Arson Reductions
- State Operations Air Desk
- Search and Rescue
- State Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service

DFES also undertakes wide-ranging prevention and preparedness programs and assists the community with recovery after emergencies.

5.3 Emergency Services Levy

The Emergency Services Levy is a primary funding source for the DFES.

The ESL is a fair and equitable funding arrangement based on property ownership and the type of fire and emergency services available to that property. The type and location of services made available across Western Australia are in turn based on ongoing risk analysis undertaken by DFES and local governments.

For the purpose of the ESL funding arrangements, every property in Western Australia is classified into one of the following five ESL categories:

ESL Category	Emergency services available	Properties located in
ESL Category 1	A network of metropolitan career Fire and Rescue Service stations and the SES.	Perth metropolitan area
ESL Category 2	A career station plus volunteer Fire and Rescue Service brigade and the SES.	City centres of Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Mandurah.
ESL Category 3	Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service brigade with the availability of a network of career fire stations OR bush fire brigades with the availability of a network of	The periphery of the metropolitan area.

	career fire stations AND the statewide SES network.
ESL Category 4	Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service brigade OR a Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services unit with breathing apparatus OR a bush fire brigade with breathing apparatus AND the statewide SES network. 98 regional towns.
ESL Category 5	The statewide SES network and generally a bush fire brigade. All other areas of the State.

For more information:

<http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/emergencyserviceslevy/pages/default.aspx>

6. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DFES'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT

DFES has Volunteer Advisory Committees that provide advice or assistance to the FES Commissioner on matters relevant to the operation or administration of the emergency services Acts.

An important part of successfully managing change is the involvement of operational personnel and the development of systems and structures which support response. Volunteer involvement in assisting DFES with managing change is facilitated through the establishment of various volunteer advisory groups. Volunteer Advisory Groups that have been established to fully understand user requirements for the development of functional specifications include:

- Volunteer Vehicle Advisory Group
- Volunteer Personal Protective Clothing and Uniform Advisory Group
- Volunteer Operational Equipment Advisory Group
- Volunteer Pathways Advisory Group

A consultative / participative approach is preferred when policy is being developed.

6.1 Community Feedback

DFES has a public email facility provided on DFES's [website](#). Public input is also available via the usual Ministerial, political and parliamentary processes.

6.2 Participation in the Performance of DFES' Functions

The performance of many of DFES's functions can be hazardous and should only be attempted by persons with appropriate training/competencies, equipment (including personal protective clothing and equipment) and support.

DFES encourages members of the public to be pro-active in helping their communities by:

- becoming an emergency services volunteer – a range of operational and support roles are available for people with different capabilities, and
- taking all appropriate steps as individuals in relation to emergency prevention and preparedness. This might involve tasks such as the installation of smoke alarms or firebreaks, clearing leaves from house gutters or following recommended safety practices.

Information Statement

7. KINDS OF DOCUMENTS USUALLY HELD BY DFES

Document	Description	Access available	Web Access
Administration records / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Financial records / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Fleet management / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Personnel, Training and Occupational Health records / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Volunteer records / database	Personal information	FOI Access only	
Fire Incident Reports / Operational Management Database	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
Fire Investigation Reports	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
SES Operational Database	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
Operational reports / procedures	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
Plan Vetting records / database	Building submissions / plans	FOI Access only	
DFES Publications	Annual Report, Strategic Plan, journals, newsletters, CD-ROMs, brochures	Public access by appointment. WA State Library – Battye also hold. Most are available on website. Brochures provided free of charge.	www.dfes.wa.gov.au
DFES Museum and Education and Heritage Centre / Database	Board minutes, occurrence books, regalia and memorabilia	DFES's Educations and Heritage Centre is open from 10am to 3:00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and admission is free. The Centre is closed on Public Holidays. Please check the opening times for Christmas school holidays, as the Centre closes for several weeks at this time.	https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/schooleducation/fehc/Pages/default.aspx

Detail on the kinds of documents -

- Administrative and personnel records – including policies, procedures, committee minutes, internal circulars, job description forms, selection and recruitment material.
- Operational – fire incident reports, fire investigation, wildfire investigation reports (may include photographs), incident information, standing administration procedures, standing operational procedures, SES operations database reports and plan vetting documentation.
- Periodic and reference publications by DFES – including annual reports, strategic plans, customer service charter, magazines and reference material relating to fire and emergency services issues.

These documents can be divided into the following categories:

1. The kinds of documents that can be inspected

The kinds of documents that can be inspected at DFES under a written law other than the FOI Act (whether or not inspection is subject to a fee or charge).

DFES is not aware of any documents, which fall into this category.

2. The kinds of documents that can be purchased.

“A Centenary of Service – Fire and Rescue Service of Western Australia 1899-1999”.

Training material such as Bush Fire Awareness, Bushfire Modules to external providers such as TAFE Colleges, recoup of cost for learner guides for modules provided to like agencies such as the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions..

Fire District Boundary maps for the metropolitan and country areas and other maps as requested.

3. The kinds of documents that can be obtained free of charge.

With the exception of the publications referred to in (2), all of DFES's periodic and reference publications fall into this category. A list of such publications is included on the DFES website.

8. PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

Copies of publications may be obtained by contacting the DFES Media and Public Affairs team by email, media@dfes.wa.gov.au or by visiting the Emergency Services Complex, 20 Stockton Bend in Cockburn Central.

Publications can be made available on request in alternate formats.

A copy of DFES's latest Annual Report and other information concerning the Department is also available on the website – www.dfes.wa.gov.au

9. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCEDURES AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

DFES aims to make information available promptly and at the least possible cost to an FOI applicant. Whenever possible, documents will be provided outside the FOI process. If information is not routinely available, the FOI Act provides the general public with the right to apply for documents held by DFES and enables the public to ensure that personal information in documents is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.

9.1 FOI Applications

Applications may be lodged (together with applicable fee or charge) in the following ways:

In person **FOI Coordinator**
Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Emergency Services Complex
20 Stockton Bend
COCKBURN CENTRAL WA 6164

– OR –

By mail **FOI Coordinator**
GPO Box 1174
PERTH WA 6844

- In some instances DFES may request proof of your identity.
- Your application will be dealt with as soon as practicable (statutory maximum time limit within 45 days) after it is received. However, where necessary, extensions may be obtained.
- If you are seeking access to a document(s) on behalf of another person, then DFES may require written authorisation from the person you represent.
- Further information can be obtained from DFES's FOI Coordinator (Ph (08) 9323 9381).
- The *Freedom of Information Act 1992* may be purchased from the State Law Publisher, 10 William Street, Perth Ph (08) 9321 7688 or by viewing the electronic copy on the FOI Commissioner's website: www.foi.wa.gov.au or email: info@foi.wa.gov.au.

Applications to either gain access to a document, amend personal information or have a previous FOI decision regarding access to, or amendment of, a document reviewed have to:

- be in writing
- give enough information so that the documents requested can be identified
- give an Australian address to which notices can be sent, and
- be lodged at DFES with any application fee payable.

Applications will be acknowledged in writing and the applicant will be notified of the decision which will be made within 45 days. However, DFES makes every effort to notify the applicant of the decision before the end of the permitted period.

An "Access Application Form" is available from the FOI page on the DFES website – <https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/Pages/foi.aspx>

9.2 FOI Charges

Fees and Charges

- The application fee is currently \$30. If necessary, DFES may impose a charge for processing the application.
- Applications seeking personal information or amendment of personal information are free of any fee or charge.
- If charges apply, DFES will send you a statement of payable charges. Currently, where a processing charge applies, the current breakdown of fees is as follows:

Personal Information (about you personally)

Free (no application fee)

Non-Personal Information Only

\$30.00 application fee

\$30.00 p/hr of staff time processing charge (if number of pages is greater than 50)

\$30.00 p/hr of staff time photocopying time (if number of pages is greater than 50)

\$ 0.20 p/photocopy (if number of pages is greater than 50)

\$0.60 per photograph

For impecunious applicants or those issued with a prescribed pensioner concession card, the charge payable is reduced by 25%.

Where required, charges must be paid in full before access to non-exempt documents will be permitted.

9.3 Access Arrangements

Access to documents can be granted by way of inspection, or in the form requested. DFES prefers to provide copies of documents sought.

9.4 Viewing Documents

If documents are to be made available for viewing, those documents may be viewed at DFES's library on the ground floor of the Emergency Services Complex, on weekdays, between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm. A fee may be charged for the supervised viewing of non-personal documents.

9.5 Notice Of Decision

As soon as possible, but in any case within 45 days, the applicant will be provided with a notice of decision. The notice of decision will include details such as:

- the date the decision was made
- the name and the designation of the officer who made the decision
- if the document is an exempt document, the reasons for classifying the matter exempt - or the fact that access is given to an edited document, and
- information on the right to review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

9.6 Refusal Of Access

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision made by DFES are entitled to ask for an **internal review** by the agency. An application for an internal review needs to be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of decision. The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the review within 15 days.

If the applicant disagrees with the result of the internal review, then an application can be made to the Information Commissioner for an **external review**. An application for external review should be made within 60 days of receiving notice of the internal review decision.

10. AMENDING PERSONAL INFORMATION, INCLUDING CONTACT INFORMATION

This relates to applying to DFES for correction or amendment of any documents containing personal information.

The application must be in writing and give as much information as can be shown how or why DFES's records are inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading. If DFES decides to amend the information it will usually alter the record, or add a further note in relation to the record. DFES must inform the applicant of its decision, and reasons, together with the applicant's right of review if the applicant is not satisfied.