

# FESA FUTURES – CREATING A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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The FESA Futures Project is our most significant sustainability initiative. Futures planning will allow us to manage a range of uncertainties that have the potential to significantly impact our operating environment. It involves considering and developing a range of scenarios and how they may require us to amend the way we deliver our services. Ongoing horizon scanning and adjustment of strategies to accommodate change is the focus of futures planning.

The project will help us to consider and address an increasingly uncertain future by identifying emerging trends and potential future operating environments. It is helping us to build thinking skills and practical tools to visualise and plan strategically and sustainably in the long term – considering not only current needs, but also the needs of future generations.

This strategic foresight capability will form an integral part of our planning process and provide the basis for future strategic plans.

To date, the FESA Futures Project team has achieved the following:

- Undertaken extensive stakeholder consultation with employees, our executives and directors, our Board, and Volunteer Consultative Committees to identify potential future threats and opportunities.
- Conducted horizon scanning with information stored in a research database for use in ongoing strategic planning.
- Developed potential FESA future scenarios based on extensive research into current and future trends.
- Integrated futures planning into strategic planning framework.

The project team specifically considered the potential impact of demographic and climate changes on future service delivery requirements.

Perhaps most significantly, the FESA Futures Project is assisting us to build an outward looking, creative, adaptive and sustainable culture among our employees, and ultimately, our organisation.

## **SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN**

The *FESA Sustainability Action Plan 2005-2007* supports a commitment to sustainability through its focus on community-centred emergency management. The plan supports our objective of working collaboratively with local communities to build their resilience and to enhance their capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Through our partnerships with local stakeholders, we are better able to understand the priorities of each community, including:

- Protection of biodiversity in local bushland, rivers, wetlands and coastal areas.
- Maintaining clean air and water.
- Safeguarding farming, agricultural, industry and business enterprises.
- Assisting local communities to build governance and decision making capacity.
- Respecting places of heritage value and cultural significance.

## **WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING**

Ongoing analysis of our workforce has continued with particular focus on operational areas and a preliminary emphasis on age and length of service. Further workforce analysis and profiling will be conducted during the coming year including reporting the results of our retirement intentions survey. This will enable us to implement strategies to ensure capability is sustainably managed.

During 2006-07, we expanded our advertising of firefighter recruit schools into selected cinemas as well as interstate and national publications in order to increase the diversity of the pool of applicants for firefighter positions. This initiative has the scope to ultimately extend to all recruitment areas.

Wider and more varied promotional activities and media have resulted in an increase in enquiries from women, Indigenous people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES**

Protection of the environment is a cornerstone of our service delivery.

We recognise the importance of the preservation of biodiversity, protection of habitats and river systems, and of urban air quality, particularly in relation to bush fire management. We strive to minimise the impact of emergencies on the environment through appropriate prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies underpinned by contemporary research.

### OUR VEHICLE FLEET IS NOW CARBON OFFSET

Through our partnership with Whiteman Park we have sponsored the planting of more than 12,000 trees, sufficient to sequester the carbon dioxide emitted from all of our 586 vehicles, making our vehicle fleet carbon neutral.

FESA contributes financially and with staff time and skills to the Whiteman Park *Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands Program* and the *Future Keepers Program*, a partnership with Ballajura Community College, Whiteman Park and FESA. These partnerships provide a direct environmental benefit in rehabilitating degraded sites, while also considering bush fire management requirements. This holistic approach addresses the long-term protection of the sites and ensures ongoing carbon sequestration.

A key feature of the project is that the plantings are in an area that is protected from future logging. They rehabilitate a degraded area, thus adding to its overall biodiversity in the long term.

The partnership with Whiteman Park has allowed FESA to meet sustainability objectives while at the same time enhancing the natural environment. As a result of the program, we have also developed a relationship with Ballajura Community College. Students assisted with tree plantings and the college has introduced an environmental education program which fosters a sense of ownership in the students through their direct connection with the bushland.

### KIMBERLEY BURNING GUIDELINES DEVELOPED

Burning in the Kimberley is a dynamic and flexible process that in the past was being undertaken with no formal guidelines. We have worked with pastoralists to develop burning guidelines based on vegetation type and fuel age. The guidelines will help the Kimberley pastoral community to better manage bush fire prevention and response on their stations and reduce the impact of indiscriminate burning practices.

A comprehensive set of burning guidelines has been developed in liaison with pastoralists and FESA fire managers to ensure that they are appropriate and meet operational requirements. They will be critically assessed against on-ground actual burning in the next Kimberley dry season.

### KIMBERLEY FIREBREAK LOCATION, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES DEVELOPED

Mineral earth firebreaks are an important fire management tool. Visits to the Kimberley revealed a significant potential erosion problem with the placement and construction of flat graded fire breaks. We worked with pastoralists to develop guidelines for firebreak location, construction and maintenance. These guidelines assist in the reduction of environmental damage whilst recognising the importance of fire prevention planning.

### CONSERVATION OF BUSHLAND WITHIN THE FESA FORRESTFIELD TRAINING CENTRE

As part of the overall conservation plan, our Training Centre site has undertaken a comprehensive flora survey of all significant vegetation as well as identification and mapping of areas affected by dieback.

Our Forrestfield facility plays a vital role in providing training in emergency rescue and management for our personnel, Western Australia Police and ambulance staff and other community members. However, few people realise the environmental significance of the Training Centre site. A significant portion of the bushland is classed as a Bush Forever site under the rating system that identifies regionally significant bushland to be retained and protected for its environmental value. We have a responsibility to protect and preserve the Training Centre site of which more than 19 hectares of 27.2 hectares is native bushland in good condition.

As part of our Training Centre expansion plans, we are updating the conservation area management plan. This is essential for future development on the site and gaining approvals for construction and clearing.

The flora survey conducted on site uncovered more than 413 specimens of the Declared Rare Flora *Conospermum Undulatum*, as well as several other priority species of significant flora for the Swan Coastal Plain. Identifying the location of these plants allows for adequate conservation principles to be applied.

Identifying dieback is also important. A phosphite treatment of the dieback affected areas and management plan aims to restrict the spread of dieback and limit its affect on significant flora and high conservation-value vegetation. To date, one hectare of priority bush land has been treated. SES training involves 'walk throughs', or mock searches, through bushland areas and managing where these occur reduces the likelihood of spreading the disease.

Signage has also been erected in the conservation areas to make staff and visitors aware of the significance of the bush land and the threat it faces.

#### ADDITIONAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Further examples of our contribution to sustainability include:

- Ongoing investment in environmental research including significant contribution and participation in the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and other local research initiatives.
- Collaboration with key stakeholders in reviewing and enhancing the environmental outcomes of the Aerial Controlled Burning Program in the North West.
- Provision of additional resources to local governments through the Community Emergency Management Officer project to assist with bushfire planning and development of emergency management plans.
- Delivery of customised programs and services for remote Indigenous communities which recognise and accommodate the capacity and special needs of individual communities, including recognising cultural practices in relation to the use of fire in the landscape.
- Provision of a legislative framework for the delivery and management of emergency services in Western Australia.
- Working in partnership with GeoScience Australia to enhance the protection and preparation of communities vulnerable to tsunamis by development and implementation of the Australian Tsunami Warning System.
- Advancing Western Australia's emergency management planning by using leading edge modelling technology to simulate and predict the impact of natural disasters on our communities.
- Implementation of a single All Classes panel contract for the refurbishment and manufacture of fire appliances. The contract offers greater flexibility in appliance manufacture, reduces risk, ensures continuous manufacturing capability, and actively supports three regional Western Australian manufacturers on a panel of six.
- Preservation and redevelopment of the State heritage-listed Old Perth Fire Station, to create an interactive educational exhibition that promotes the community safety values of FESA within a stimulating, educational and historical framework using 21st century technology.