

MEETING FESA STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

OUR STRATEGIC INTENTIONS

To achieve our vision and mission and to endorse our commitment to continuous improvement in emergency service delivery, FESA programs are underpinned by three strategic intentions:

- Community-centred emergency management;
- Quality people services; and
- Sound business practices.

OUR KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

In the *FESA Strategic Plan 2005-2007*, our Board reaffirmed our three strategic intentions and identified 11 key strategic issues related to them that are to be addressed in the plan's three-year cycle.

COMMUNITY-CENTRED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

This means working in partnership with the people of Western Australia to create a safer community. It encourages communities to take greater responsibility for their own safety, to be more self-reliant and to be better prepared to cope with emergencies.

Western Australia faces many natural and man-made risks including fires, cyclones, severe storms, floods, chemical spills, vehicle crashes and marine hazards. Around the world, activity by extremist groups has also increased the risk of explosions, chemical, biological and radiological emergencies. Climate change is affecting weather patterns and increasing the frequency of natural emergencies.

Overall, there is a growing need to prepare for and manage more significant and widespread emergency events. Our greatest priority is to build community resilience and capacity to prevent, prepare for and cope with such emergencies – and so minimise their impact.

In order to achieve this, we must determine the views and needs of individual communities, and tailor our service delivery to each community's social, economic, cultural, environmental and geographic conditions.

Community-centred emergency management has four components:

PREVENTION: increasing awareness in the community of hazards and its role in minimising their impact.

PREPAREDNESS: providing and maintaining appropriate and adequate infrastructure, equipment, skilled personnel, plans and programs in preparation for emergencies.

RESPONSE: rapid and comprehensive response contains and minimises the impact of hazards and enables rescues.

RECOVERY: assistance is provided to community members, FESA employees and volunteers affected by major emergencies to help them recover from their impact.

We have three key strategies for achieving effective community-centred emergency management:

- Increased engagement, consultation, cooperation and partnerships;
- Endorsement of emergency management and emergency services legislation that reflects contemporary best practice; and
- Involvement of our staff and volunteers in community safety activities.

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT, CONSULTATION, COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Engagement and consultation

Our [All West Australians Reducing Emergencies](#) (AWARE) program engages local communities in emergency management through awareness activities, training and funding for risk management projects. In 2006-07, almost 800 AWARE activities were undertaken, including workshops, and seminars.

As part of this program, the [Western Australian Emergency Risk Management Guide](#), to assist local governments and communities in their risk management planning, was also launched during the year.

Further community training was provided through our Commercial Training Unit. In 2006-07 the Unit delivered courses to almost 3,000 participants from healthcare, manufacturing and mining organisations across Western Australia.

As part of the Community Emergency Management Officer (CEMO) project we have employed seven CEMOs and one Manager to assist local governments to meet their bush fire and emergency management responsibilities. To date we have consulted with 44 local governments about bush fire response planning.

Major reviews of emergency services, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, are continuing in Bunbury and the Shires of Busselton and Augusta/Margaret River. These focus on meeting the present and future needs of these fast-growing communities.

Indigenous communities

There has been a strong focus on engaging Indigenous communities during the past year. We had significant influence on the development of the National Emergency Strategy for Indigenous Communities: [Keeping our Mob Safe](#), and coordinated its National launch.

During 2006-07, we completed the initial draft of the FESA Emergency Management Strategy for remote Indigenous communities. Our staff have visited many Indigenous communities and conducted resource to risk reviews. We have also commenced negotiations towards the cooperative development of appropriate emergency management arrangements in 'hub' communities in the Dampier Peninsula, Bidyadanga, Nhaanyatjarra Lands and Halls Creek.

Our Safer Country program provides emergency risk management services to remote Indigenous communities and uses Indigenous language and communication where appropriate to deliver local emergency management programs across Western Australia.

Fire management training was undertaken with a number of Kimberley Indigenous communities. In addition, through an agreement with Roebourne Prison, bushfire training will be provided to inmates, who are predominately Indigenous, to allow them to take an active part in fire management and suppression when they return to their communities.

Cooperation and partnerships

We worked with the Australian Government in supporting the [Working Together to Manage Emergencies](#) program, including the Local Grants scheme and National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund.

We also worked jointly with the Western Australia Police Arson Squad and the [Queensland Fire and Rescue Service](#) to conduct a nationally accredited fire investigation training course.

Operation of the Emergency Helicopter Rescue Service, [RAC Rescue 1](#), continued through our highly successful partnership with the State Government and principal sponsor, the Royal Automobile Club of Western Australia.

Service delivery capability is also enhanced throughout the State through strategic partnerships with a range of industry and community stakeholders based on memoranda of understanding or service level agreements.

ENDORSEMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION THAT REFLECTS CONTEMPORARY BEST PRACTICE

Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Inquiry

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee conducted an inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services legislation, and its report was tabled in Parliament on 19 October 2006. The report included 88 recommendations relating to efficiency in responding to, and recovery from, fire and emergencies, risk management strategies, incident command and regulatory control. These potentially have significant implications for the structure and operation of FESA – particularly the recommendation that the 'emergency services Acts' (*Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia Act 1998*, *Bush Fires Act 1954* and *Fire Brigades Act 1942*) be repealed and replaced by a comprehensive

emergency services Act. We have been seeking feedback from the many interest groups and organisations across the State that are involved in implementing the Committee's recommendations and expect to be in a position to advise the Minister of the outcomes of our consultation early in 2007-08.

Emergency Management Act 2005

During 2006, implementation of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* continued with the gazetting of Emergency Management Districts and the appointment of Local and District Coordinators. The Emergency Management Regulations were gazetted in January 2007.

Review into Western Australian Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements (WANDRA)

We manage the WANDRA which provide financial assistance to communities affected by natural disaster. During 2007, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee made 14 recommendations regarding WANDRA. We have established a dedicated WANDRA administrator to ensure that an integrated approach is taken to implementing the WANDRA changes and that support to disaster-affected communities is improved.

Building Code of Australia

We are currently working closely with other fire industry practitioners and government agencies in the development of new building approval legislation for Western Australia. The new Building Act and supporting Regulations are expected to be drafted in 2008 with enactment in 2009. We anticipate that under the new legislation our role will focus on ensuring a risk-based approach is taken to building assessment.

New legislation to provide for the mandatory fitting of hardwired smoke alarms in existing residential buildings is also progressing. We have worked closely with the Department of Housing and Works throughout the progress of the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment (Smoke Alarm) Bill 2007* (the Bill). Cabinet approved the printing of the Bill on 30 May 2007 and it had a second reading in the Legislative Assembly on 16 June 2007.

INVOLVEMENT OF OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTIVITIES

Community safety awareness programs

During the year, we conducted a number of community safety programs to raise awareness of risks and increase community resilience to those risks. These included:

- **Storm Season Campaign** – May to September, focuses on preparedness for storms.
- **Wintersafe Program** – June to August, education about winter fire hazards and prevention.
- **Wet Season Campaign** – September to April targets residents, workers and travellers in North West.
- **Bush Fire – *Prepare, stay and defend or go early*** – October/November, raises awareness of preparedness and options in an emergency.
- **Dry Season Campaign** – May to November, addresses fire safety issues specific to the Pilbara and Kimberley dry season.
- **Smoke Alarm Campaign** – April, encourages annual battery changing and maintenance of domestic fire alarms.

Community education and activities

During 2006-07, 34 Tsunami awareness briefings were conducted in 22 locations across the metropolitan, Midwest Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley regions, including remote Indigenous communities at Lombadina and Bidyadanga.

Firefighters across the State worked with teachers to deliver the *Fire Inside Out* schools education program, which targets year 3 students. Volunteers also visited schools to promote hazard awareness.

Other community-based activities for the year included the SES *One Stormy Day* program for schools and demonstrations by RAC Rescue 1 at a range of public events. Our juniors and cadets were also active, participating in Exercise Canister, ANZAC Day, the Order of Australia Youth Reception, Perth Airport Field Exercise and Perth Fire Station Open Day.

FESA Education Centre and Museum

The FESA Fire Safety Education Centre and Museum is an important community education facility. It is currently undergoing a major redevelopment, scheduled for completion by October 2008. The new facility will include new educational exhibitions, administration and public amenities that outwardly support and enhance our vision and goals by creating a quality community engagement facility. The facility will be renamed to reflect a contemporary, all hazard approach to community engagement and learning.

The project plan has two different but equally important objectives. The first is to provide a comprehensive historical interpretation of the building and its operational history. This includes provision of a display gallery to showcase the Fire Services historical collection and a heritage trail providing interpretation for each room. This supports the Western Australian State Sustainability strategy to protect and improve community access to heritage sites.

The second component of the project is the creation the first all hazards interactive learning exhibition in Australia. This one-stop experience will offer a comprehensive display of emergency and awareness information within a provocative and innovative learning environment. The gallery space will be supported by public education programs to enhance learning outcomes for the general public, schools and targeted community groups.

During 2006-07, we participated in the Collections Council of Australia's *Community MayDay Campaign*. This initiative encourages the identification and inclusion of museums, heritage features and libraries in planning for local community disasters. Our Museum Branch also provides professional heritage advice to communities and emergency services personnel to assist in the identification and protection of local heritage in Western Australia.

In preparation of the public heritage component of the project, a complete assessment of the remnant operational fabric within the Old Perth Fire Station has been completed. This provides information for the interpretation of the building as a heritage icon and supports the Old Perth Fire Station Conservation Plan. The assessment should protect items with heritage value from future removal and/or modification.

Having recently completed the restoration of an American appliance, our Vintage Fleet Restoration Team has begun the restoration of a 1924 T-model Ford, which was a regional fire appliance in Western Australia from the 1920s to the 1950s. This appliance is a rare and significant addition to our collection. The team has also taken our vintage fleet to a range of community events.

QUALITY PEOPLE SERVICES

Our people are vital in ensuring our success through the services we provide to the community. We provide appropriate training, opportunities, recognition and support for our people and will ensure we have:

- Recruitment and retention strategies – including training and development opportunities – that attract, promote and retain the right people, who are committed to FESA, our values and our mission;
- Competent, committed leadership and management; and
- A safe and healthy work environment.

Achievement of our strategic intention of quality people services for emergency services volunteers, corporate and operational staff and emergency services cadets relies on three key strategies:

- Active development of a culture of safety and well being;
- Enhanced support, training, leadership and vocational opportunities; and
- Proactive encouragement of diversity and equal opportunity.

ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURE OF SAFETY AND WELL BEING

During 2006-07 our three-year FESA Safe program to integrate occupational safety and health management systems throughout the organisation was completed.

One of FESA Safe's key recommendations was the development of a Total Safety Culture. Implementation of this began with a trial at the Jerramungup Emergency Services Unit. Surveys before and after indicated a rise in awareness and commitment to occupational health and safety which should increase the reporting

of hazards and decrease injuries and the cost of workers compensation and personal accident claims. The concept will be trialed with a career Fire and Rescue station and if successful a phased implementation program across the whole of FESA will be undertaken.

Overall during 2006-07, there was an 11.3% decrease in injury reports from the previous year and a 46% increase in hazard reports. This trend indicates significant cultural change is having a similarly significant positive effect in reducing injury.

The number of workers compensation claims decreased by 11.1% in comparison to 2005-05. Volunteer personal injury claims fell by 26% compared to the same period, and by 37.5% compared to 2004-05.

There is also a strong focus on physical fitness. During 2006-07, 156 physical fitness assessments were requested by employees and 32 were provided with personalised programs.

ENHANCED SUPPORT, TRAINING, LEADERSHIP AND VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Support

We recognise that the key to organisational success is ensuring that our workforce is supported, motivated and trained to undertake their diverse roles. We provide support through our employee welfare programs, motivation through leadership and professional development and training through core skills programs.

During the past year our Employee Assistance Program was enhanced, and provided 458 consultations and a range of other services.

We have also taken steps during the year to increase awareness of our Peer Support Network and its resources. Seven new peer supporters have joined, making a total of 133, and they have received training, refresher courses and new information and communications materials. A new Peer Support Newsletter has been developed and networks widened to enhance activities and training.

Training, leadership and development

Major incident and applied training was active, with a 102% increase in the use of applied training facilities during the past two years.

Audit reviews against the Australian Quality Training Framework of four Districts in 2006-07 achieved 100% compliance.

During 2006-07, 113 volunteers participated in seven *Discover the Leader in You* courses.

During the year a total of 2,455 volunteer firefighters achieved competence or qualification. A new Volunteer Firefighter Training Program is now being implemented and new resource kits distributed.

The SES Training Section was active, and continued to develop a wide range of key skills training resources. In the past year, 1263 SES volunteers completed Level 1 specialist skills training, a further 260 Level 3 training. In addition, 60 SES volunteers have now achieved nationally recognised qualifications.

Our Emergency Services Cadets and Junior Cadet training programs were reviewed and endorsed by the Curriculum Council during the past year. Our Volunteer and Youth Services Branch offered a variety of training and development opportunities, including courses in Leadership and Instructional Skills, Leeuwin Ocean Adventure, Emergency Management Skills and Instructor Development.

During the year more than 190 personnel participated in our Key Organisational Skills program. A pilot group of 15 began our Frontline Management Program and 11 qualified for the Diploma in Frontline Management.

We also commenced a Cultivating Organisational Leadership program with the inaugural group of 14 commencing in June 2007.

PROACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Diversity and equal opportunity

During the past year we have increased our focus on promoting firefighting as a career to a diverse range of groups through advertising in selected cinemas as well as interstate and national publications. This resulted in an increase in enquiries from women, Indigenous people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds from 67 in 2005-06 to 76 in 2006-07.

Indigenous traineeships

We have maintained an active Indigenous traineeship program for the past seven years. Of 16 trainees, 11 have completed certificates in Business and three are still completing their studies. Two left prior to completing their studies. Three trainees remain with FESA and five are currently employed elsewhere.

Cross cultural awareness

We have developed a framework for Professional Development in Cross Cultural Awareness in order to assist our staff to deliver services in a culturally sensitive manner. We propose all staff, and particularly those working with Indigenous people, will undertake training.

During 2006-07 five Indigenous cultural awareness sessions were conducted with 69 participants.

We conducted our first interactive 'Understanding Islam' cultural awareness workshop in May. The workshop introduced participants to the history, principles and practices of Islam in Australia.

Access to Safety Information

FESA makes community safety and other information brochures available in languages other than English, Braille or by recording on request. To assist community members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds be better prepared for WA's winter storms, FESA's *StormSafe* campaign brochures were translated into nine languages other than English – Chinese, Indonesian, Polish, Croatian, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Macedonian and Vietnamese.

FESA's website facilities will be redesigned in 2007-08 to improve accessibility for all community members.

SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES

To meet our commitments to the community we must implement business practices that can be benchmarked against recognised standards of excellence. This includes managing our financial and physical resources in a competent and accountable manner while maintaining a strong customer focus.

Five key strategies for service improvement underpin our strategic intention of sound business practices:

- Equitable and adequate funding for prevention services and emergency services, with resources matched to risk.
- Continued advancements in inter-operability, coordination and collocation of emergency services.
- Adoption of an innovative approach to the application of telecommunications and information technology.
- Participation in research and accumulation of information to support evidence-based decision-making.
- Completion of a comprehensive review of legislation related to FESA and its services.

EQUITABLE AND ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR PREVENTION SERVICES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES, WITH RESOURCES MATCHED TO RISK

Equitable funding

We are continuing to refine our Resource to Risk model for allocating capital funding for buildings, appliances and equipment throughout the State.

The total Emergency Services Levy (ESL) grant allocations for local government volunteer Bush Fire Brigades (BFBs) and volunteer SES units amounted to approximately \$16 million. In brief, the ESL provided funding in 2006-07 for:

- 101 vehicles, including new and refurbished firefighting appliances;
- 14 trailers for SES units;

- 1 new facility and eight facility upgrades for SES units;
- 13 new fire stations and 13 station upgrades for local government BFBs;
- the completion of three volunteer collocated facilities; and
- an estimated \$670,000 worth of personal protective equipment/clothing for BFBs.

Improved resources and facilities

Since the introduction of the ESL, approximately half of the BFB fleet has been replaced and the percentage of appliances outside of FESA's recommended age profile of 16 years has been reduced from 30% to 15%. In addition, approximately 30% of SES primary equipment has been replaced.

Construction of the \$9.1 million Perth Fire Station project has commenced to be completed early 2008-09.

Initial funding of \$2.7 million was allocated for the planning phase of a major \$46 million project to relocate FESA Headquarters to Cockburn by 2011.

CONTINUED ADVANCEMENTS IN INTER-OPERABILITY, COORDINATION AND COLLOCATION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Inter-agency cooperation

During the year the multi-agency [State Emergency Coordination Group](#) was convened for four emergencies; the Australind Storm in August 2006, a major storm in January 2007, South West Bushfires in February, and Cyclone George in March.

Two significant multi-agency exercises were conducted during 2006-07. Exercise Northern Deployment in November 2006 tested the Western Australia Police tactical response group's response to a siege at the Dampier Port Authority. We included an explosion and building collapse to test notification, mobilisation and deployment of our Urban Search and Rescue Reconnaissance Team and Taskforce to Karratha – the first time we had done this outside the metropolitan area.

We also managed Exercise Canister in May 2007. This tested the capability of Western Australian emergency agencies to respond to a chemical biological radiological and nuclear incident. It involved 17 FRS crews, Western Australia Police forensic and tactical response groups, St John Ambulance crews and representatives from the Chemistry Centre and the Department of the Environment and Conservation (DEC).

Collocated facilities

State-of-the-art regional headquarters were established in Bunbury and Geraldton. The new headquarters allow the collocation of emergency services and include regional coordination centres and training facilities.

New volunteer collocated facilities have been completed at Manjimup, Mundaring and Toodyay. Construction is underway at Dalwallinu and facilities for Esperance, Kununurra and Derby are currently in the planning stage.

Multi-skilled units

During 2006-07, five multi-skilled VFS Units were created at Beacon, Kalbarri, Morowa, Northampton and Tammin. These units provide wide-ranging emergency response and management, including road crash rescue at Northampton.

ADOPTION OF AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE APPLICATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Western Australian Emergency Radio Network

The [Western Australian Emergency Radio Network](#) (WAERN) is a \$20 million four-year project which will provide interoperable communications during the management of emergencies. Work has commenced in four pilot regions, the Burrup Peninsula, Esperance, Warren and Mundaring, and installation of equipment at 50 WAERN repeater stations across Western Australia has been completed.

Shared Land Information Platform – Emergency Management

The [Shared Land Information Platform – Emergency Management](#) (SLIP-EM) will facilitate the integration of geospatial information for emergency management prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities across all emergency service agencies. Pilot services, accessible via the Internet or in the field, have been established to provide emergency management agencies with the most current and authoritative spatial/mapping information using the SLIP infrastructure.

The development of a new series of Emergency Services Directories is also underway. The directories provide mapping information to support emergency service operations across government. A directory for the Wheatbelt has been published and one for the South West is in development.

Improved communications

The software reengineering of our emergency dispatch system is complete. The new FESA Computer Aided Dispatch system (FCAD) is currently being tested and will be implemented during 2007-08. The new system will eventually provide statewide mapping and automatic vehicle location and will significantly improve our dispatch capability for SES and Fire Service incidents.

The Country Communications System integrates technology that controls and coordinates building alarms and volunteer notification in regional Western Australia. The system is now operational at all regional career fire stations and 30 volunteer stations.

On-line information

We recognise the importance of the internet and online services as a tool for communicating with and receiving information from our stakeholders.

During the year we enhanced the resources available on-line for prospective career firefighters, including the option of on-line application.

The first stage of a new volunteer web portal (extranet) is scheduled to be operational early in 2007-08. This will enhance on-line information provision, reduce the administrative workload for volunteer units and improve communication between volunteers and our administrative staff.

During 2007-08, our website will be redesigned to improve its accessibility for all community members.

Aerial intelligence

A significant equipment upgrade for our air intelligence helicopter, including thermal imaging camera, digital video camera, laser rangefinder, microwave down-link and mapping system, has greatly enhanced its effectiveness in supporting bush fire and other emergency management and community early warnings.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH AND ACCUMULATION OF INFORMATION TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Arson Research

A research project has commenced to profile Western Australian bush fire arsonists. Although it is estimated most bush fires are either deliberately lit or caused by human activities, little information has been available to date about arsonists. This research will be particularly valuable to us and our partners in the prevention of bush fires.

During the year we established a Bush Fire Cooperative Research Centre ([Bushfire CRC](#)) coordinator to enhance our relationship with the Bushfire CRC and share outcomes from its research programs with Western Australian firefighters. We held three interactive forums with Bushfire CRC researchers and volunteer and career firefighters, fire managers and other stakeholders on a range of subjects.

During 2006-07 we continued our ongoing joint initiative with the [Department of Water](#) to upgrade the Swan Avon Catchment Flood Warning System. Monitors based on radio telemetry and repeaters will greatly improve the availability of 'real time' data and the reliability of the system.

Integrity in the Workplace Project

A three-year research project, *Integrity in the Workplace*, a joint venture between FESA and the University of Western Australia (UWA) was completed this year. The project aimed to identify the degree of integrity, leadership and ethical behaviour that FESA employees exhibit in the workplace.

The researchers are currently analysing the data and are scheduled to report their findings in November 2007. A detailed report will be provided for our Corporate Leadership Team and a summary version for wider publication.

Evaporative Air Conditioners

Research into the risk of ember attack associated with [evaporative air conditioners](#) conducted by our Bushfire and Environmental Planning Branch and the University of Western Australia has confirmed that air conditioner pads protected by a fine aperture mesh will withstand sustained ember attack.

These findings will assist us to develop strategies to highlight the safety issues associated with evaporative air conditioners and increase awareness of the preventative measures that the community can take. It is envisaged that homeowners will be able to retrofit screens to evaporative air conditioners and that manufacturers will incorporate screens into future model design.