



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

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# NSW RFS ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

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## KEY FOCUS AREAS

# NSW RFS Corporate Plan

The NSW RFS Corporate Plan identifies six Key Focus Areas.

- One** People Property and Environmental Protection
- Two** Coordinated Bush Firefighting and Prevention in NSW
- Three** Community Resilience
- Four** Our Members
- Five** Organisational Capability and Sustainability
- Six** Partnerships and Collaborations

These six Key Focus Areas are addressed through the following Strategies and Key Actions with the aim of achieving the stated Outcomes.

## Strategies

- S1 Manage the expectations and capability of the community, volunteers and staff for improved levels of awareness and readiness to act
- S2 Continue to employ technology and systems that meet organisational needs
- S2.1 Continue to manage and quantify risks to improve community safety
- S3 Continue to develop data collection and management tools, intelligence gathering and forecasting capability for evidence based and opportunistic decision making
- S4 Continue to improve organisational diversity through inclusive and flexible membership ensuring the volunteer culture remains core to our business now and into the futureS5  
Continue to engage in a broad range of member training and development, increasing adaptability to unfolding events
- S5.1 Continue to develop and implement organisational health and safety programs that improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our members
- S5.2 Continue to increase knowledge and awareness of NSW RFS governance arrangements
- S5.3 Use new and existing infrastructure, technology and systems to increase efficiency and effectiveness

- S6 Use compliance controls to ensure good governance, including the management of corporate operational risk
- S6.1 Further increase accessibility, usage and integrity of organisational data through greater co-ordination and integration of data management systems and processes
- S7 Continue to engage in effective collaborations within the organisation, with other agencies, local community, local, national and international government

## Key Actions 2015/16

- A1 Implement new public awareness campaign
- A1.1 Provide the community with information to improve preparedness for bush fires
- A2 Identify Bush Fire Risk Plans model and processes
- A2.1 Meet obligations under NSW 2021 in regard to Hazard Reductions
- A2.2 Enhance strategic fire trail network
- A3 Complete the NSW RFS Fire Danger Rating Trial Project
- A3.1 Seven additional districts connected to the centralized dispatch system
- A3.2 Review and consider the recommendations in the National Review of Warnings and Information 2015 report
- A4 Update the Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan and associated documents

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

- A4.1 Meet obligations under NSW 2021 in regard to the Secondary School Cadet Program
- A5 Further develop members through a planned program of health and fitness initiatives
  - A5.1 Expand blended learning delivery with supporting systems ready for implementation
  - A5.2 60 Additional people undertake the Operational Officer Program
  - A5.3 Continue education on behaving ethically supported by organisational systems and processes
  - A5.4 Consult and implement the uniform Brigade Constitution
  - A5.5 Maintain the currency of information provided to Members on NSW RFS governance arrangements
- A6 Plan, design and construct remote area firefighting training centres
  - A6.1 Undertake a pilot of the use of Large Air Tankers and evaluate their applicability and options for future use in NSW
  - A6.2 Continue to implement the Fire Control Centre and Station build program
  - A6.3 Continue to implement standard business processes for site management plans across the State
  - A6.4 Review firefighting fleet alignment with operational risk management
  - A6.5 Review bushfire PPE to ensure current and future needs of the NSW RFS members are addressed
  - A6.6 Continue to ensure that risk treatments, for critical and high risks, are embedded in directorate, section and district plans
  - A6.7 Implement GUARDIAN with an off-the-shelf solution
  - A6.8 Implement intranet replacement project to schedule
  - A6.9 Commence statewide radio terminal re-programming
  - A6.10 Identify new NSW RFS Headquarters site and design facilities
  - A6.11 Refine systems and processes to improve data integrity

- A7 Establish a dynamic directory detailing partnerships and collaborations
- A7.1 Expand inter-agency co-operative learning and development opportunities

## Outcomes 2015/16

- O1 Communities are enabled to share responsibility for fire preparedness, prevention and actions during fire activity
- O2 Enhanced Bush Fire Risk planning, leading to improved treatment strategies
- O3 Improved intelligence gathering for detection, response and community warnings
- O4 Membership better reflects the local community
- O5 Members are better able to meet the needs of the community
- O5.1 Members are better able to meet governance and government requirements
- O6 The NSW RFS has fit for purpose systems and infrastructure
- O7 Improved emergency service outcomes through partnerships and collaborations

### Alignment with State Priorities

In September 2015 the NSW Government announced a new planning framework based on 30 State Priorities including 12 Premier's Priorities. These new priorities are being taken into consideration and inform the 2016/17 planning cycle.

While the State Priorities replaced the 2021 Goals, during 2015/16 the NSW RFS continued to track its progress against the targets established in the 2015/16 Plan. These targets include:

- Hazard reduction - see Key Focus Area Two.
- The Secondary School Cadet Program - see Key Focus Area Four.
- Neighbourhood Safer Places - see Key Focus Area One.

# KFA One

## PROTECT PEOPLE, PROPERTY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The NSW RFS protects lives, property and the environment in a proactive and ecologically sustainable manner.

The community relies on the NSW RFS for timely and relevant information and warnings about incidents to make informed decisions.

### Corporate Objectives

All levels of leadership provide effective emergency management

Effective people and property protection programs

Sustainable environmental protection practices

Timely and relevant information and warnings

### Key Actions for 2015/16

A3.2 Review and consider the recommendations in the National Review of Warnings and Information 2015 report

- A national review of Warnings and Information was conducted in 2014/15. The NSW RFS needed to determine how it measured when compared to the findings of the review. To achieve this a working group was established to review and oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

While there were no significant changes required to NSW RFS processes, a number of improvements were identified, mainly to the display of information and warnings on the NSW RFS website.

These improvements have been incorporated into the 2016/17 Corporate Plan.

*Also included in this Key Focus Area were initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Neighbourhood Safer Places, enhancing incident management coordination and increasing State Mitigation Support Services.*

- The NSW RFS has 998 identified Neighbourhood Safer Places which were inspected prior to the start of the bush fire danger period  
Please see Appendix 1.2 for further details
- The Service's cohesive approach to fire suppression during incident management enables the NSW RFS to protect the community better. Prior to the fire season a state-wide exercise was undertaken to further develop multi-agency coordination
- State Mitigation Support Services exceeded their targets with a total of 793 jobs completed and 5,109 kilometres managed

## KFA Two

### COORDINATED BUSH FIREFIGHTING AND PREVENTION IN NSW

The NSW RFS drives effective multi-agency risk planning prevention strategies and response arrangements.

One of the many planning strategies for bush fire suppression is an adequate access network for firefighting vehicles and appliances to be able to protect the community and its assets.

Effective campaigns designed to raise public awareness are also essential to the prevention and early detection of incidents.

#### Corporate Objectives

Policy and planning frameworks to lead coordinated bush firefighting and prevention

Mitigation works, hazard reduction and community engagement are prioritised in line with risk plans

Effective performance and measurement of prevention, mitigation and bush firefighting strategies

#### Key actions for 2015/16

- A1.1 Provide the community with information to improve preparedness for bush fires
- A2.1 Meet obligations under NSW 2021 in regard to Hazard Reductions
- A2.2 Enhanced strategic fire trail network

- Provide the community with information to improve preparedness for bush fires

Using the results of extensive community research conducted following the 2013 NSW bush fires, a new three-year public awareness campaign was developed and implemented.

This campaign focused on educating the community about the level of risk of bush fires and steps that could be taken to reduce that risk.

The campaign resulted in an increase in the proportion of people who correctly assessed their level of risk from 24 percent to 36 percent, and increased the number of people who had discussed their bush fire plan from 52 percent to 66 percent. Levels of preparation also increased from 38 percent to 50 percent.

The Service's major state-wide community engagement event, Get Ready Weekend, saw more than 400 brigades take part in September 2015.

The 2013 research was also used to inform a review of NSW RFS bush fire preparedness materials, including the new MyFirePlan website and an update of the Bush Fire Survival Plan.

A dedicated guide to Working with School Communities was also developed, in addition a new Household Assessment Tool and an online Bush Fire Prone Land tool, allowing NSW residents to more easily assess their risk of fire.

➤ Meet obligations under NSW 2021 in regard to Hazard Reduction

Hazard reduction remains a high priority for the NSW Government and is a major program that contributes to the protection of lives, property and the environment.

The NSW RFS continued to track its progress towards these targets. While the Key Action is behind target for the year, overall it is on target to meet the five year rolling average.

Unseasonable rainfall throughout the year which significantly impacted hazard reduction activities.

A total of 285,401 hectares were treated by hazard reduction works. This exceeded the target of 187,041.

A total of 131,388 properties have been protected by hazard reduction works. This was below the target of 148,793. This is an increase of approximately 14,000 properties protected compared to last year.

The NSW RFS and other agencies utilised every opportunity to undertake hazard reduction activities where suitable weather conditions allowed.

Please see Appendix 1 for further details

➤ Enhanced strategic fire trail network

The focus of this project is to develop strategies, frameworks and tools that contribute to a strategic approach to an enhanced fire trail network. An enhanced network will facilitate the coordinated management of bush fire mitigation and suppression activities.

The NSW Government is in the process of introducing legislation to give the NSW RFS powers to create and improve a standardised and integrated Fire Trail Network across NSW. The Bill to implement the legislation has been passed through parliament and once the Fire Trail Standards are in place, the NSW RFS will request that the legislation be assented. This is expected to occur before the end of 2016.

Work within NSW RFS has so far included:

- The drafting of a discussion paper to analyse the current situation and potential solution.
- Appointment of a Strategic Fire Trails Manager with recruitment undertaken to appoint additional Fire Trail Specialist Staff.
- A Cabinet agreement to a series of measures to enhance the strategic fire trail network.
- A draft Bill to make the necessary legislative changes which is scheduled to be presented to Parliament in August 2016.

# KFA Three

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The NSW RFS enables people to be resilient and well-equipped to withstand the impact of bush fire and its consequences.

The main initiative in this Key Focus Area was the implementation of a new public awareness campaign aimed at increasing community engagement for bush fire preparedness, and planning for bush fire protection.

This campaign helps deliver the NSW RFS Corporate Plan objective of 'effective people and property protection programs' and having 'communities in bush fire prone areas act on their understanding of the shared responsibilities of resilience'.

More specifically the public awareness campaign aims to address some key problems highlighted by recent research.

### Corporate Objectives

Communities in bush fire prone areas act on their understanding of the shared responsibilities of resilience

Empowered communities take actions based on informed decisions

Risk based land use and planning arrangements, programs and resources

### Key Actions for 2015/16

A1 Implement new public awareness campaign

➤ Implement a new public awareness campaign  
A new public awareness campaign was developed and implemented ahead of the statutory bush fire danger period. Consisting of coordinated television, radio, online and print advertising, the campaign aimed to increase the level of preparation in the community.

During the campaign the following results were achieved, as measured by post-campaign research:

- Increased the proportion of people who correctly identified themselves as at risk from bush fire from 24 percent to 36 percent
- Increased the number of people who had either made a bush fire plan or discussed a plan with their family from 52 percent to 66 percent
- Increased the proportion of people who have taken some action to prepare their home from 38 percent to 50 percent.

All campaign objectives were exceeded, despite the 2015/16 bush fire season being relatively benign in NSW.

This Key Action is closely aligned to A1.1 Provide the community with information to improve preparedness for bush fires which is referenced in KFA 2 Coordinated Bush firefighting and Prevention.

# KFA Four

## OUR MEMBERS

The NSW RFS fosters a safe working culture, actively promotes a diverse, flexible and adaptive membership; and values and appropriately recognises the contribution of our members, both staff and volunteer.

Initiatives in this Key Focus Area strengthen the NSW RFS workforce; they include the continued implementation of site management plans across the state; implementation of a uniform brigade constitution. Defining a range of health and fitness initiatives for members. An update to the Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan, a review of the blended learning options available to our members and continuation of the Secondary School Cadet Program.

### Corporate Objectives

Safe, supportive and inclusive culture and practices

A diverse, flexible, adaptive and sustainable Membership that is representative of the community

Informed, engaged, capable and valued members

### Key Actions for 2015/16

- A4 Update the Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan and associated documents
- A4.1 Meet obligations under NSW 2021 in regard to the Secondary School Cadet Program
- A5 Further develop members through a planned program of health and fitness initiatives
- A5.1 Expand blended learning delivery with supporting systems ready for implementation
- A5.4 Consult and implement the uniform Brigade Constitution
- A6.3 Continue to implement standard business processes for Site Management Plans across the state

- Update the Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan and associated documents

The first Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan (2010-2015) documented actions to enhance both the staff and volunteer workforce in the coming decades.

Since the plans implementation a number of significant achievements have been made.

The aim of the Next Generation Workforce Plan 2016-2021 was to identify outcomes that are important to the NSW RFS' capacity to meet future workforce challenges with a focus on what we want to achieve in the next five years.

The plan was updated and approved on 1 June 2016. The 2016-2021 plan sets the key actions for the 2016/17 planning period. These key actions have been incorporated into the relevant business plans.

Further details about the Next Generation Workforce Plan can be found on page 39.

- Meet obligations under NSW 2021 in regard to the Secondary School Cadet Program

The secondary school cadet program provides Year 9 and 10 students (in a range of public and private schools) with an insight into fire safety and prevention while developing practical life skills and an appreciation of community service and volunteerism.

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The NSW RFS continued to track its progress towards the targets. The target was for an additional 4,000 students to progress through the Secondary School Cadet Program by 2015/16.

This target was met last year with 4,164 students completing the program. During 2015/16 an additional 811 students completed the program bringing the total to 4,975 students.

- Further develop members through a planned program of health and fitness initiatives

Following on from the recommendations of the Fitness of Firefighters Audit 2014, an ongoing program of health and fitness initiatives designed to continue the positive development of members was to be undertaken.

To address this Key Action a Health and Fitness Initiatives Working Group was established and the Health and Fitness Initiatives Plan 2016-2021 was developed and approved.

The 'Get Healthy at Work' program and outcomes linked to manual handling were not fully completed during 2015/16. These and additional developments under this initiative will continue into 2016/17.

Please see page 38 for further details.

- Expand blended learning delivery with supporting systems ready for implementation

Members of the NSW RFS are trained in a broader variety of functions than ever before. To increase the ease of access to training for all members, traditional face to face and paper based training is being converted to online modules where possible. Online training can be accessed at any time convenient to members with practical training taking place as much as possible in the workplace or at brigade level. This conversion requires a system linking online learning, practical training and various databases.

The transition of all mainstream qualifications will be on-going in the coming years as the NSW RFS moves towards a comprehensive online blended learning system. During 2015/16 the Safety Induction and Volunteer Induction were used for testing and a 'soft launch' of the system. A further 21 modules from Basic Firefighter are scheduled for launch in August 2016.

- Consult and implement the uniform Brigade Constitution

The Brigade Constitution review will provide NSW RFS with a uniform model Constitution and a consistent approach to brigade management. The revised Constitution will ensure brigades operate within current legislation and reduce the opportunity for misinterpretation.

The draft Service Standard, Brigade Constitution and Brigade Management Handbook was released for consultation period which closed on 11 January 2016. In addition the following occurred:

- Livestream briefings to NSW RFS members were delivered, with a total of 2,345 views and 1,131 unique views.
- 104 submissions were received during the consultation period which contained more than 700 individual comments.
- The Brigade Constitution Review Working Group met to comprehensively consider the feedback and draft a number of amendments.

Given the proposed amendments to the Constitution and the work required to complete the Brigade Management Handbook, the implementation date was extended to 1 October, 2016.

- Continue to implement standard business processes for Site Management Plans across NSW

Site Management Plans (SMPs) are the means by which we collect and maintain the necessary information about the hazards, risks and controls at NSW RFS fixed work sites. SMPs will be implemented into each of the 2,200 NSW RFS fixed sites through several phases over four years and is expected to be completed during 2016/17.

Regional Services the Health, Safety and Welfare team and Districts work together to ensure that data is up to date, accurate and validated against the documents held at each site.

During the year SMPs commenced in:

- 84 percent of all fixed facilities
- 71 percent of rural fire brigades stations

The target for the current year was met and is overall on target to meet the 2016/17 completion date.

# KFA Five

## ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The NSW RFS builds capable and ethical leadership at all levels of the Service; promotes an organisational culture of reflection, learning and evidence-based decision making; builds and promotes good corporate governance practices and principles and effectively manages assets and facilities to ensure local needs are met.

This Key Focus Area covers a wide range of programs, such as appropriate human resourcing and education, governance and the capacity of the NSW RFS to meet the needs of the people of NSW.

### Corporate Objectives

Resource allocation model based on enhanced risk profiles

Organisational capability anticipates and responds to service delivery requirements

Effective leadership, governance and business systems

### Key Actions for 2015/16

- A2 Identify Bush Fire Risk Plans model and processes
- A3.1 Seven additional districts connected to the centralised dispatch system
- A5.2 60 Additional people undertake the Operational Officer Program
- A5.3 Continue education on behaving ethically supported by organisational systems and processes
- A5.5 Maintain the currency of information provided to members on NSW RFS governance arrangements
- A6 Plan, design and construct remote area firefighting training centres
- A6.1 Undertake a pilot of the use of Large Air Tankers and evaluate their applicability and options for future use in NSW

- A6.2 Continue to implement the Fire Control Centre and Station build program
- A6.4 Review firefighting fleet alignment with operational risk management
- A6.5 Review bush fire PPE to ensure current and future needs of the NSW RFS members are addressed
- A6.6 Continue to ensure that risk treatments, for critical and high risks, are embedded in directorate, section and district plans
- A6.7 Implement GUARDIAN with an off-the-shelf solution
- A6.8 Implement intranet replacement project to schedule
- A6.9 Commence state-wide radio terminal re-programming
- A6.11 Refine systems and processes to improve data integrity

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Identify Bush Fire Risk Plans model and processes

The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) is responsible for the Bush Fire Management Planning framework which includes the development of a model Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP).

BFRMPs are developed by local Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) to protect assets including communities, buildings and infrastructure as well as culturally and environmentally sensitive locations. This initiative is being undertaken on behalf of the BFCC.

Significant work was undertaken on the development of models and tools to support improved risk assessment. The review is currently on target for the agreed project time frame of two years.

Achievements include:

- NSW RFS personnel were trained in 'Bayesian Networks'. This training provided the NSW RFS with specialised knowledge to elicit the parameters for contributory elements for the models.
- Presentations and workshops held with internal and external stakeholder groups, including the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and Standing Subcommittee.
- The development of hazard modelling.
- Testing of the new Bush Fire Risk Management Plan methodology.
- Seven additional districts connected to the centralised dispatch system

A centralised dispatch system provides a modern, uniform incident response system that is efficient, leads to faster response times and the allocation of more appropriate resources.

The NSW RFS commenced integrating districts into the centralised dispatch program prior to the 2012/13 fire season. Two districts, Mid North Coast and Warringah-Pittwater, were involved in phase one of the Centralised Dispatch Trial. During the reporting period another three districts participated in the expansion and these were Shoalhaven, Orana and Tamworth.

The 2015/16 targets for this Key Action were not met. The other scheduled districts were delayed to ensure that the technical infrastructure, optimal operating requirements and the NSW RFS assistance request processes in place, were working successfully. The delayed districts which are due to be brought online in 2017 include Lake George, Hawkesbury, Cumberland, Canobolas, South West Slopes and Riverina.

- 60 additional people undertake the Operational Officer Program (OpO)

The OpO program promotes a flexible and decentralised workforce through recruitment, retention and development of candidates as part of the Service's approach to building a highly capable and agile workforce.

It was envisaged to recruit 20 members through each of the three levels of the OpO program. In line with *Government Sector Employment Act* requirements the recruitment was a merit based selection with 51 personnel selected.

- Continue education on behaving ethically supported by organisational systems and processes

Behaving ethically requires an ongoing commitment beyond setting policies, standards and procedures. The NSW RFS recognises the cultural importance of ethical behaviour and how continued education plays a role in ensuring the ethical culture remains present in the workplace.

Continued education will help to enhance the Service's ethical framework and provide guidance on key elements.

Three volunteer pilot programs on Code of Conduct were held with positive feedback received. In early 2016/17 a report will be provided to the Senior Executive outlining the proposed implementation strategy of the volunteer training program. Code of Conduct and Ethics training for staff will continue as business as usual.

A review of the Fraud and Corruption Control Plan was undertaken in the reporting period. Five Corruption Prevention workshops were held, facilitated by the Independent Commission Against Corruption with a total of 114 staff trained.

- Maintain the currency of information provided to Members on NSW RFS governance arrangements

The NSW RFS has an ongoing commitment to support its members in making a positive contribution to the Service's corporate governance arrangements.

Members require access to current information that reflects a best practice approach to governance. Governance arrangements compliment compliance requirements and support the overall performance of the Service.

During the reporting period a range of activities were undertaken to maintain the currency of information to members on NSW RFS Governance arrangements.

The Corporate Governance Statement was updated and published in November 2015. This update was based on the 2015 update of the Audit Office of NSW Governance model.

To align with Treasury Policy Paper 15-03 regarding the risk management aspect of corporate governance, a Chief Risk Officer was appointed and a range of Governance awareness sessions were presented to members.

- Plan, design and construct remote area firefighting training centres

The focus of designing dedicated firefighting training centres is to provide the NSW RFS with infrastructure to support specialised training. Once completed, remote area firefighting training can be undertaken. This training will have a primary focus on winching capability from helicopters.

During the year suitable locations were researched with the aim of building four regionally based Remote Area Firefighting (RAF) training centres. They are likely to be located in Central West, Southern and Northern regions.

The fourth centre will cater for bush fire demands within Western Sydney, making it more convenient for volunteers to obtain or maintain their accreditation.

Tenders were prepared and released for the design, construction and installation of the simulators within the training centres.

- Undertake a pilot of the use of Large Air Tankers and evaluate their applicability and options for future use in NSW

Through the National Aerial Firefighting Centre the NSW RFS has been monitoring emerging capabilities to assess the technical and economic aspects of large fixed wing airtankers.

A two year trial of Large and Very Large Air Tankers (LAT and VLAT) is being conducted to evaluate and assess the suitability of these aircraft for conditions within NSW.

The NSW trial will be important in assisting to build a business case for the engagement and accessing the appropriateness and capability of these aircraft.

Year one of the two year trial was successfully completed. Achievements included:

- Deployment of the LAT and VLAT to incidents in NSW, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Indonesia.
- Extension of the LAT and VLAT contracts.
- A preliminary report.
- Finalisation of contracts between National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) to engage

the LAT and VLAT, including contract commencement dates.

- Negotiations commenced to continue the use of the RAAF Richmond base for the upcoming fire season.
- Continue to implement the Fire Control Centre and Station build program

This four year program of work includes the provision of Brigade Stations and New Fire Control Centres (FCC).

During the year construction commenced on three new FCCs located in Bathurst, Coonabarabran and the Liverpool Range.

An agreement was reached to build a new FCC facility for the Northern Tablelands Team at Glen Innes.

More than 60 new and 40 upgraded rural fire stations were provided across the State including in Namoi Gwydir, Mid North Coast, Orana, Canobolas, Bland Temora, Bathurst, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Northern Rivers, Far South Coast, Lower Western, Mid Lachlan Valley, Sutherland and Shoalhaven Rural Fire Districts.

- Review firefighting fleet alignment with operational risk management

The NSW RFS identified that a new resource allocation model is required and should be based on an enhanced risk profile.

To meet both organisational policy and external government planning requirements, an 'optimum' and 'maximum' firefighting fleet profile is required. The first component of the review was to develop a methodology and strategy to establish these profiles for the NSW RFS.

A detailed report outlining a strategic model and methodology consisting of a nine step approach is being compiled. It aligns initiatives currently underway within the Operations and Executive Services Directorates. More work will be undertaken next year to refine the methodology. This will include the use of metadata sourced from geospatial data from Bush Fire Risk Management Planning as well as other built environment and demographic geospatial data.

The capture of data for bush fire risk analysis has been integrated with geospatial mapping and bush fire behaviour modelling (Phoenix) including the F.I.R.E. D.S.T. (Fire Impact and Risk Evaluation Decision Support Tool).

- Review bush fire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure current and future needs of the NSW RFS members are addressed

The new PPE will improve the wellbeing of the

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

firefighters by providing increased safety and comfort while delivering an optimised level of fire protection. The garments will be better suited to modern firefighting they will have a more ergonomic design and high-tech fabric that is lighter, more comfortable, functional and durable.

The PPE will reduce the firefighter's heat stress and fatigue related to the metabolic heat release of the garments. The fabric is more durable delivering cost savings attributed to the longevity of the garments.

During the reporting period a PPE Working Group was established consisting of volunteers and staff drawn from the Infrastructure Services Consultative Committee. This Group worked through a series of design options and material options based on the predetermined standards outlined in AS/NZS 4824. Field trials were undertaken using three different fabrics in a new design.

Feedback indicated that further work was required for female sizing. A consultant specialising in female PPE was engaged and the Working Group increased to include another twelve female participants. The trial female PPE has been constructed and will move to field tests in 2016/17. An assessment of fabrics and flame impact testing has occurred. Further work will be undertaken during 2016/17 with the new PPE to go into production for delivery during 2017/18.

- Continue to ensure that risk treatments, for critical and high risks, are embedded in directorate, section and district plans

Embedding risk treatments into the business planning process contributes to the integration of the Service's key governance components, in particular risk management, planning, budgeting, reporting and internal controls. In accordance with best practice, NSW RFS is compliant with Treasury Policy tpp 15-03 and alignment to ISO 31000. Embedding risk treatments into the planning processes enables risks to be managed more effectively.

As part of the NSW RFS integrated approach to its corporate governance arrangements, the risk and planning teams continued to work closely together, with risks considered at all stages of the planning process. Risks and risk treatments are embedded into business plans and an action plan put in place for all critical and high risks. Action plans provide greater detail on the treatments that are being undertaken to control the risk and identify a lead business unit.

The annual review of all risk registers was completed providing the opportunity to update the status of risks to reflect changes in the operating environment and activities over the last 12 months, finalise the assessment and evaluation of any new risks. Any changes to the risk register were confirmed.

- Implement GUARDIAN with an off-the-shelf solution

GUARDIAN provides a spatially enabled workflow capability that addresses all risk assessments and treatments carried out by the NSW RFS and other agencies. It is a more appropriate product than the outdated BRIMS, which it replaces and will better meet organisational needs.

Extensive consultation was undertaken with key internal and external stakeholders in the development of the business requirements for a bush fire risk management system. Contracts have been awarded and delivery is on schedule to meet the go-live date of 30 June 2017.

- Implement intranet replacement project to schedule

The NSW RFS currently operates a number of online services for members including MyRFS and staff intranet.

A need has been identified to replace the staff intranet and improve the MyRFS website. This ensures a modern approach to information management across the organisation, while also meeting current guidelines on accessibility.

Stakeholder workshops were conducted with members throughout the state to identify tools which would benefit volunteers and staff. An options report was provided, enabling an implementation decision to be made. Work on this will continue during 2016/17.

In addition to the member website project, the NSW RFS moved the Service's public website to a new cloud-based platform. This has resulted in increased capacity and redundancy, particularly during emergency events.

- Commence statewide radio terminal re-programming

Radio communications are an essential and integral component of NSW RFS operations. NSW RFS has approximately 12,000 P25 Private Mobile Radios (PMR) and Government Radio Network (GRN) radios in operation. Under the NSW Government 400MHz Spectrum Harmonisation Initiative, all NSW government agencies were required to switch their radio operations to the government harmonised spectrum by 2015.

The purpose of this project was to service and update the P25/GRN radio terminals as a result of the above changes. This change incorporates updating the software, firmware and channels information in the terminals along with re-tuning the radio terminals.

On 12 May 2016, the NSW Government announced

changes to local government arrangements across the state. Some of these changes affect the programming of the radios therefore this project cannot progress further until council amalgamations have been finalised. A NSW RFS Working Group has been established to ensure a clear transition to the new arrangements.

By 30 June 2016 all achievable work had been completed including a profile for the radio devices.

➤ Refine systems and processes to improve data integrity

This key action aims to improve data integrity across the Service by firstly compiling a central inventory of the Service systems and data and then confirming custodial responsibilities. Any opportunities to consolidate and/or integrate data will be considered as part of the refinement of systems and to reduce duplication. It is envisaged as part of this refinement key data assets will be transitioned into better controlled and managed environment.

Any changes resulting from the refinements will be communicated to all relevant members with training provided as required.

The review of Data Management arrangements in the NSW RFS has been undertaken. The type and volume of data that NSW RFS is required to manage to support its operational and corporate functions has increased significantly in recent years. This review was undertaken with cross organisational consultation and included a detailed review of relevant government polices and consideration of leading practice in data management.

The outcome was a proposed organisational framework for the management of data and recommendations for key actions for the framework implementation. These recommendations will be implemented in 2016/17.

# KFA Six

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The NSW RFS works with its partners to influence the national agenda in relation to emergency services and develops mutually beneficial local, national and international strategic alliances to raise and strengthen the NSW RFS profile.

Programs under this Key Focus Area also include working on inter-agency learning and development the Head Office relocation project and the Fire Danger Rating project.

### Corporate Objectives

Influence the emergency management direction through partnerships

Partnerships and collaboration are identified and pursued

Business and sponsorship opportunities generated with the commercial sector

### Key Actions for 2015/16

- A3 Complete the NSW RFS Fire Danger Rating Trial Project
- A6.10 Identify new NSW RFS Headquarters site and design facilities
- A7 Establish a dynamic directory detailing partnerships and collaborations
- A7.1 Expand inter-agency cooperative learning and development opportunities

- Complete the NSW RFS Fire Danger Rating Trial Project

This national collaborative project is to incorporate contemporary science into the fire danger rating framework to provide more accurate and nuanced predictions of bush fire risk. This will, in turn, better inform decision makers in their efforts to prevent and respond to bush fires.

This incorporated:

- Parallel testing of seven Fire Behaviour indices throughout the Bush Fire Danger Period, with the trial completed.
- Preparation of a report comparing performance of the indices and presentation of a paper at Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference in Melbourne.
- Development of a proposal for a national prototype, protocol and database to be hosted by NSW RFS for the 2016/17 fire season.

Nationally, the NSW RFS:

- Provided input in the development of project plans for the national project.
- Attended workshops in Adelaide and Canberra.
- Contributed to proposals presented to the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC) and Law Crime and Community Safety Council (LCCSC) leading to the investment of \$1.5 million for next phase of the project

The NSW RFS Fire Danger Rating Trial project has been completed.

➤ Identify new NSW RFS Headquarters site and design facilities

NSW RFS Headquarters and State Operations Centre (SOC) currently occupies leased premises in Carter Street, Lidcombe. NSW Planning & Infrastructure has recently released the 'Carter Street Urban Activation Precinct' for Lidcombe, which will provide a blend of housing, offices, retail services and regional parklands.

This means that the NSW RFS Headquarters and SOC must re-locate. The existing lease expires in November 2018. Government Property NSW has advised it will not be renewed. The NSW RFS is currently working with Crown Lands investigating alternative sites.

The NSW RFS has undertaken a facilities survey, a location analysis, and an Expression of Interest process for a new building.

In the reporting period, the NSW RFS worked with Property NSW and Treasury. Tender evaluation commenced with two vendors being short-listed. Those vendors have provided detailed initial design whole-of-life costing and indicative time lines for occupation. The NSW RFS has engaged external assistance to ensure probity and process in regards to the final selection.

The initial work station design has been undertaken.

Final financial assessments are being undertaken with a view to determine the final and single successful vendor. Internally NSW RFS has developed a project board and have recruited a Project Officer.

➤ Establish a dynamic directory detailing partnerships and collaborations

During 2015/16 a directory detailing partnerships and collaborations was made available on the NSW RFS intranet. This directory provides visibility of all partnerships across the NSW RFS, providing an improved ability for working collaboratively and sharing knowledge.

It is anticipated that the dynamic directory will form part of the new NSW RFS Intranet. It will be easy to search, update and add to and will give greater visibility of our key stakeholder relationships and contacts. Subject matter experts will be required to provide input into the collation of the directory to ensure that it is comprehensive.

➤ Expand inter-agency cooperative learning and development opportunities

During the reporting period programs were identified and a trial program was run, with multi-agency participation at all relevant events.

The Multi Agency Leadership Program (MALP) is coordinated between Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Ambulance, NSW SES and NSW RFS. Other agencies invited to attend including Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (in northern border regions); Marine Rescue Australia; ACT RFS/ Ambulance/Fire and Rescue; National Parks and Wildlife Services and Forestry Corporation NSW.

To date eight MALP programs have occurred with 169 attendees. External agencies are also running their own programs using NSW RFS material.



**The *Southern Belle*  
DC10 arrived in NSW in  
October 2015 as part of a  
two-year trial of Large and  
Very Large Air  
Tankers.**