



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2017-2021

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1. Commissioner's Foreword



In the future NSW will experience more days of extreme fire danger and fires will burn with increasing intensity placing the community under greater risk. During these conditions our ability to conduct firefighting operations becomes limited, and the focus of our efforts is the primacy of life. During fire events the community's prior preparedness and resilience is critical to their survival. This is where the function of community engagement provides crucial support.

Every year we are reminded of the effect fire has on communities. In recent years we have seen the devastating fires across NSW in Coonabarabran, Queanbeyan, Blue Mountains, Shoalhaven and Port Stephens. We should also never forget the tragic impact of the 2009 Black Saturday bush fires in Victoria where 173 people died.

One of the key messages coming out of these disasters is that we have to continue working closely and collaboratively with the community. This comes with its own set of unique challenges.

'Community' is complex. Across NSW the community is both dispersed and diverse based on their backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. This means there is no silver bullet approach. We need to better understand the community, particularly those that are most at-risk and vulnerable, and in partnership develop tailored solutions to enhance their resilience.

The Service has employed collaborative new techniques to work with communities over recent years. The introduction of Community Protection Plans has been one key development, where locals play a key role in identifying areas, assets and people at risk, and identifying ways of protecting them. This approach empowers communities to make informed decisions and build resilience.

We have also been innovative through our implementation of the Behavioural Insights approach to the Guide to Making a Bush Fire Survival Plan. Beginning by recognising how people change behaviour, we have tailored our approach to deliver very simple resources that have a big impact on the individual's behaviour, preparedness and community resilience. Now we can say that most people in bush fire prone areas have a bush fire survival plan, and that is an important milestone.

Our volunteers are the engine room of community engagement in the service. They are at the centre of everything we do and have been developing and implementing community engagement activities for many years. It is as a result of their work we have such a strong foundation to build on over the coming years.

The Community Engagement Strategic Directions 2017-2021 establish how the NSW RFS will continue to enhance the role of community engagement, better support and develop our people, and deliver evidence based and tailored programs and resources for the benefit of the NSW community.

I've said it before and I'll say it again, community engagement is NSW RFS core business - intrinsically linked to our operational response, our information and warnings, and mitigation works.

I encourage you all to be a part of the implementation of these Strategic Directions. Start a conversation with your Brigade members. See how you could contribute to preparing your community. When the fire inevitably comes, we are all thankful for your efforts to prepare a community. It helps save lives.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Fitzsimmons', written over a horizontal line.

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM

2. Introduction

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the lead combat agency for bush fires in NSW. For over 100 years we have been a significant part of the history and landscape of NSW. Working closely with other agencies we respond to a range of emergencies including structure fires, motor vehicle accidents and storms that occur within rural fire districts.

The NSW RFS is widely acknowledged as the largest volunteer fire service in the world. Members of the NSW RFS are trained to very high levels of competency to ensure they know what to do in an emergency and to work with the community to enhance their resilience.

The Service aims to reduce the likelihood and consequence of fires occurring. This involves comprehensive risk management programs to reduce bush fire hazards, reduce fire ignitions and the development of regulations for bush fire prone areas.

Community engagement is one of the risk treatment options employed by the Service to risks associated with bush fires and develop community resilience.

The Service has a proud history of innovative community engagement activities largely delivered by volunteers throughout its history. It enjoys a strong and trusted relationship with the community that it has developed over decades of consistent engagement and delivery of outstanding services which it continues to maintain and value.

The Service works collaboratively with a range of partners across Australia to collaborate and continuously improve best practice in the field of community engagement including allied emergency services, State and Commonwealth Governments, and our peak body the Australian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC).

Our work aligns not only with our NSW RFS Corporate Plan but also national and international strategies including the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Resilience (UNISDR) through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Commonwealth Government's National Strategy for Disaster Resilience.



3. Purpose

The purpose of the Community Engagement Strategic Directions is to ensure our activities are coordinated and focused to reduce risks in at-risk and vulnerable communities in a consistent, timely and professional manner.

The Directions also aim to enhance collaboration between staff, volunteers and the community to ensure information sharing and feedback is encouraged to continuously improve, refine and validate our directions in community engagement.

These Directions have been primarily developed for our members to establish a best practice framework for how we develop, implement and evaluate community engagement activities. It outlines key activities required to deliver the framework as well as the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers across the service.

It also provides an insight into our approach to community engagement for key stakeholders and operational partners. Community engagement is multi-disciplinary requiring strong and effective partnerships with other government bodies, non-government agencies, the commercial sector and the community itself. We aim to grow these relationships through genuine collaboration to meet the expectations of our members and the community.

By implementing these Strategic Directions through a range of activities we aim to:

- Establish common understanding of the role and function of community engagement
- Ensure all stakeholders understand and support the direction and initiatives of community engagement in the NSW RFS
- Deliver an evidence based framework for development and implementation of community engagement programs
- Identify and leverage existing opportunities for effective community engagement
- Ensure expectations are managed and that stakeholders understand the prioritisation of community engagement resources to deliver the greatest benefits for the community
- Ensure all feedback is received and incorporated where appropriate to support continuous improvement processes

4. Strategic objectives

Community Engagement is a core function of the NSW RFS. The development of these Strategic Directions is intended to reinforce our alignment and integration with the broader NSW RFS governance and corporate planning process.

Although the Service and the community are geographically dispersed, from a range of cultures and backgrounds, performing a variety of roles and offering different skill sets, opinions and perspectives we are united as NSW RFS members. We as community engagers are part of One NSW RFS.

We share a vision to provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of community-based fire and emergency services.

In order to achieve this vision, we align with the NSW RFS mission: To protect the community and our environment we will minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies by providing the highest standards of training, community engagement, prevention and operational capability.

We believe in the values of mutual respect; adaptability and resourcefulness; one team, many players, one purpose; integrity and trust; support, friendship camaraderie; community and environment; and knowledge and learning.

As community engagers we share a responsibility to continuously improve the quality of our engagement activities for the benefit of the community's resilience to stressors such as fire and other emergencies. The development and implementation of these Strategic Directions form part of that process and align with the NSW RFS Corporate Plan through the following key focus areas:

- Coordinated Bush Firefighting and Prevention
- Community Resilience

By focusing our efforts on the following Directions and implementation of their associated key actions we aim to achieve an outcome where communities are enabled to take responsibility for fire preparedness, prevention and actions during fire activity:

- Strategic Alignment
- Develop and Support our People
- Everyday Engagement
- Targeted Engagement
- Resources to Risks
- Demonstrate Effectiveness

Further information on these Directions and their associated Strategies is in Section 11.

5. Challenges

The NSW RFS operates in a complex and dynamic environment and culture. Consultation with staff, members and stakeholders has identified some key aspects that impact on community engagement that needed to be considered in the development of these Strategic Directions.

They include:

- The outlook for fire in Australia indicates that we will experience increasingly frequent days of extreme fire danger and fires burning with increasing intensity in the future. This may limit the effectiveness of both offensive and defensive firefighting strategies placing greater emphasis on information, warnings and public liaison and engagement functions to prioritise primacy of life.
- The NSW RFS will face increasing demands as an emergency service agency both operationally and as a communicator with the community expecting high level and frequent information.
- The NSW RFS is a unique public service agency given that 99% of our members are volunteers responsible for implementing the vast majority of community engagement activities. We must support our volunteers while delivering essential services.
- The NSW community is both dispersed and diverse. Therefore, they experience different risks and need to take different preparedness measures to reduce those risks. They require tailored communication and engagement approaches to maximise effectiveness.
- Tailored resources and tools to engage consistently with targeted communities have previously been unavailable resulting in members developing their own and increasing workload.
- Implementation of any new initiative should minimise administrative burdens on already time poor members.
- Community engagement is an evolving discipline that in constantly changing and the Community Engagement section has experienced high turnover of staff over recent years resulting in shifting agendas and approaches perceived by members as instability.
- NSW RFS internally is generationally, culturally and linguistically diverse and may not have access to or be confident in communicating with the community through some channels.



6. Stakeholders

The NSW RFS has a diverse range of stakeholders. We communicate and engage with the NSW community, representative groups, government, peak industry groups, operational partners, the media and our members.

In community engagement, our stakeholders assist us to better understand community's context, identify emerging issues, create new partnerships, and draw on their knowledge and expertise to co-design solutions that better protect the community and our environment, and minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies.

Internal	External	Operational partners
NSW RFS members - volunteers and staff	The broader community	Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW)
Senior brigade members	At-risk and vulnerable communities	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
Group Captains and District SMTs (Senior Management Teams)	High risk facility staff	Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC)
	Community representative groups	Forestry Corporation of NSW
District Staff	Minister for Emergency Services	NSW Police Force
Regional Staff	Office of Emergency Management	NSW State Emergency Service (SES)
Regional Managers	Department of Attorney General and Justice	NSW Ambulance
HQ Staff	MPs - State and Federal	NSW Health
HQ Managers	Local Government NSW and local councils	Defence
Directors	Other State and Territory Governments	Transport for NSW
Executive	Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA)	Bureau of Meteorology
Commissioner	Community Engagement Consultative Committee	Office of Emergency Management Recovery Function
	NSW RFS members representative groups	Functional Areas (Energy, Telecommunications, Water)
	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC)	
	Bushfire and Natural Hazard Collaborative Research Centre (BNHCRC)	
	Emergency Service peak groups	
	Insurance industry	
	Tourism industry	
	Industry groups	
	NGOs and service providers (eg Red Cross, Anglicare etc)	
	Other Government Authorities	
	Other associations (Farmers Association, Country Womens Association etc)	
	Media agencies and providers	
	Charities and Sponsors	

7. Participation Spectrum

The level of stakeholder participation depends on the impact our engagement activities has on them organisationally or personally. Participation of and by stakeholders may range across a spectrum from informing to partnering and empowering.

Those who have most interest or the greatest stake in our engagement activities are encouraged to partner with us to develop appropriate strategies, activities and resources and to assist with our strategic objectives to benefit the community.

We use the following participation spectrum to outline the kind of stakeholder engagement we undertake to address the needs and responsibilities of stakeholders. This has been developed for the NSW RFS context from the International Association for Public Participation's IAPS Participation Spectrum.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<p>Aim: Keep stakeholders informed by providing clear, and accurate information</p>	<p>Aim: Keep stakeholders informed and obtain feedback and input</p>	<p>Aim: Work with stakeholders to ensure issues and aspirations are reflected in communication and engagement strategies, activities and resources</p>	<p>Aim: Partner with stakeholders in decision-making and development of communication and engagement strategies, activities and resources and incorporate advice and recommendations</p>	<p>Aim: Stakeholders take on their role and responsibility in communicating and engaging so it becomes business as usual and community members are supported to implement their decisions</p>
<p>Methods: Announcements via public website, social media, internal communication channels, media releases, Bush Fire Information Line, and through community events, street meetings</p>	<p>Methods: Evaluation surveys, stakeholder meetings, social media and online forums</p>	<p>Methods: Stakeholder meetings, workshops, committees, sharing learnings, stakeholder surveys, risk management planning, fireground networking, phone trees, pager network, SMS, letterbox drops</p>	<p>Methods: Meetings, After Action Reviews, fireground networking, sharing learnings, working groups, project representation, consultative committees</p>	<p>Methods: Debriefs and After Action Reviews to share lessons learned and highlight key issues, deliverables and initiatives. Using One NSW RFS Tool Kit for members and supporting personal and property preparation for the community.</p>
<p>Stakeholders: Members, community and external stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholders: Members, community, operational partners and other external stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholders: Members, community, operational partners and external stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholders: Members, community, external stakeholders and operational partners</p>	<p>Stakeholders: Members and community</p>

8. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to successfully implement these directions through the community engagement (CE) business model a clear understanding of the structures, processes and responsibilities is critical. Key roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

Role

LOCATION	FUNCTION	RESPONSIBILITY
NSW RFS COMMISSIONER AND EXECUTIVE		
Headquarters	Strategic	Lead and establish the strategy and plans for the NSW RFS
NSW RFS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SECTION		
Headquarters	Capability Development	Manage the implementation of the CE strategic directions, drive strategic partnerships and lead collaborative opportunities, support Regions, Districts and Members to implement CE activities and monitor effectiveness
RFSA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE		
Service Wide	Consultative	Represent the membership in a consultative forum to support the implementation of the CE strategic directions
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE		
Service Wide	Advisory	Provide technical advice to the CE Team on the development and implementation of CE activities aligned with the strategic directions
HEADQUARTERS DIRECTORATES MANAGEMENT AND STAFF		
Service Wide	Planning	Work collaboratively with the CE Team to integrate best practice communication techniques across all interaction opportunities
REGIONAL STAFF		
Region	Planning	Work collaboratively with both HQ and District Staff to ensure a five year District Community Engagement Plan is developed and implemented
DISTRICT STAFF		
District	Operational	Develop the District Community Engagement Plan that informs the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan and support their implementation
DISTRICT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
District	Planning	Support the development and implementation of District Community Engagement Plans
DISTRICT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BRIGADES AND TEAMS		
District	Operational	Implement targeted CE activities (community interventions and community development) in accordance with the District Community Engagement Plan
BRIGADE FIREFIGHTERS AND MEMBERS		
Brigades	Operational	Implement CE activities in accordance with the District Community Engagement Plan as well as conducting everyday engagement consistent with best practice policies, guidelines and procedures

9. Community Engagement

9.1 What is community engagement?

Community engagement in the NSW RFS is:

“A process incorporating a range of activities designed to achieve behavioural change that minimise the impact of bush fire and other emergencies.”

Behaviour change is commonly viewed as a process; gradually migrating people through a stages of contemplating their personal risks, through consideration of possible actions to mitigate those risks, then the implementation of actions and their maintenance over time .

While there are some techniques that can shortcut this process to encourage more timely behavioural change, most community engagement conducted by the NSW RFS focuses on particular stages of the behavioural change process, with the objective of ‘nudging’ people along the pathway towards sustainable and beneficial change.

In order to minimise the impact of bush fire and other emergencies and deliver greatest return on investment, statewide campaigns aim to increase the proportion of the community who recognise their risk and promote contemplation of possible actions. These are supported locally where community engagement resources are prioritised to facilitate engagement activities with at-risk or vulnerable communities. In this context, vulnerability has two aspects:

- **Susceptibility** - the degree to which individuals and communities are exposed to hazards
- **Resilience** - the communities coping and adaptive capacities to hazards

Community engagers endeavour to identify those who are most susceptible and enhance the resilience of those who are most at-risk should they be exposed to hazards.

Although everyone in the community has a responsibility to prepare for and take action to protect and support themselves from bush fire and other emergency risks, enabling vulnerable individuals requires specific tailored preparedness advice, support, interventions, warnings and information.

Examples of at-risk communities in the NSW RFS context include ageing residents, multicultural communities, indigenous communities, school children, transient residents, or residents without access to motor vehicles. These communities are also examples of target audiences or ‘segments’ in a community engagement context.

Across different segments the perceptions, motivators and barriers to adopting any specific behaviour will vary significantly based on their context. Therefore, tailored engagement strategies, programs and resources implemented locally are critical to maximise their likelihood of success.

9.2 NSW RFS Community Engagement Framework

Achieving behavioural change in the community to encourage greater preparedness for the inevitable impact of fire requires the cumulative impact of three critical success factors and three enabling principles to successfully deliver best practice community engagement that changes behaviour.

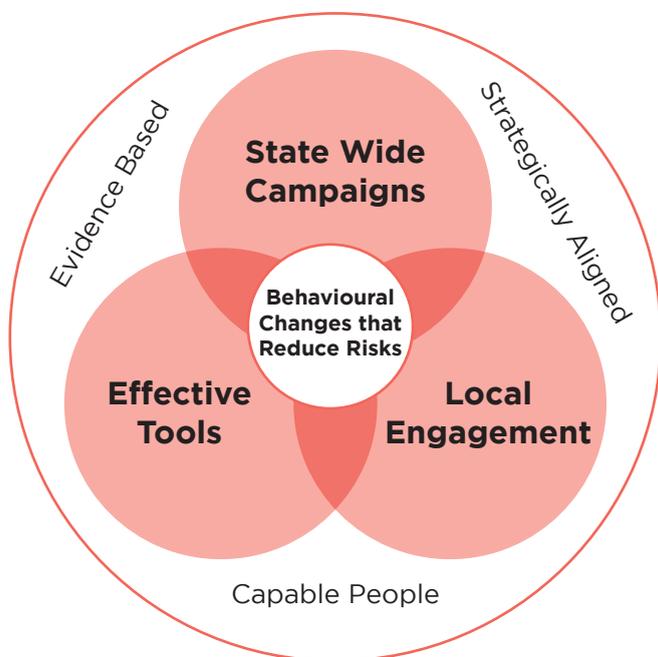


Table 3: The NSW RFS Community Engagement Framework

Critical Success Factors

Effective Tools: Well informed and designed strategies, programs and resources maximise the likelihood that they will firstly be utilised by our members and communications partners, and secondly influence the target audience to take action.

State Wide Campaigns: Provide a foundation to ensure bush fire as a hazard remains represented in the community, promotes contemplation of personal risk, and primes the community for subsequent engagement either locally or through alternate channels.

Targeted Local Engagement: Supported by state wide campaigns and effective tools that can be tailored to local context, targeted local engagement is critical, highly trusted and influential interaction that empowers local communities to identify, mitigate and effectively respond to their own risks.

Enablers

Evidence Based: We research to inform interventions, test them and monitor their effectiveness.

Strategically Aligned: Our approach and practice is consistent and supported across the Service.

Capable People: Our people are prepared and empowered to implement community engagement.

10. Community Engagement Tactics

In order to support individuals and communities along a pathway of behavioural change community engagers employ different tactics and communication techniques. These tactics are tailored and targeted to address different communities and may be implemented sequentially over time to gradually 'nudge' individuals towards a state of enhance preparedness and resilience.

Some tactics such as behavioural interventions or community development may be delivered to a targeted audience at the right time and 'shortcut' the process to change behaviours. One example of this is during a fire event, a well communicated warning may prompt the desirable behavioural change by providing the right message, and the right time, to the right person.

TACTIC	BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVE	EXAMPLE PROGRAMS	COMMON CHANNELS/ ACTIVITIES
Public Awareness Campaigns	Overcome pre-contemplation, apathy and ignorance through the personalisation and recognition of risk	I Am Fire Campaign	NSW RFS Website Digital / Social Media
		Grass fire campaign	Print Advertising Radio Advertising
Community Relations	Engage with individuals in contemplation and encourage preparation for behavioural change by reinforcing risks and providing simple options for action	Get Ready Weekend	Town Shows Brigade Displays
		Guide to Making a Bush Fire Survival Plan	Street Meetings Gumtree Meetings
Behavioural Interventions	Support individuals to take specific actions that will reduce their risk through a number of streamlined resources, activities or processes	My Fire Plan App	Targeted tools such as Apps Household Inspections
		Fire Permits	Streamlining and leveraging existing processes
Community Development	Empower communities to continuously maintain preparedness behaviours and collaboratively manage their own risks to enhance collective resilience	Hotspots	Meetings and Forums
		Firesticks	Community training
Public Liaison	Provide critical information and warnings to individuals during a fire event to minimise impact	Bush Fire Information Points	Fireground networking Bush Fire Information Line
		Information and Warnings	Community newsletters Major Fire Updates
			Fires Near Me App

11. Directions

Through consultation with the community, volunteers, staff and leadership the following directions have been identified as being priorities to improve community engagement and outcomes for the community between 2017-2021. These directions are supported by strategies and actions to ensure we achieve our objectives.

11.1 Strategic Alignment

Through effective consultation, collaboration and partnership we will develop and implement strategies that promote alignment across the service, promote best practice and support innovation to enhance community resilience.

Strategies

- Implement and communicate the Strategic Directions
- Review Service Standards, Policies and Guidelines
- Establish and enhance strategic partnerships

11.2 Develop and Support our People

We will develop our people through a streamlined training program and provide ongoing support through professional development opportunities to ensure they are capable of implementing best practice programs that effectively influence individuals during every interaction.

Strategies

- Review and streamline training pathway and programs
- Deliver Community Engagement Forums to promote strategic alignment
- Deliver the ACEFA Conference to promote innovation and best practice

11.3 Everyday Engagement

By identifying and enhancing existing processes that interact with the community we will maximise the opportunities to influence individuals through the application of behavioural insights.

Strategies

- Identify and leverage existing engagement opportunities
- Apply behavioural insights lens reviews
- Promote engagement competency and consistency across the Service

11.4 Targeted Engagement

We collaboratively develop community engagement resources that target at-risk communities and test their effectiveness through the systematic application of a behavioural insights framework.

Strategies

- Implement and refine the TESTER behavioural insights framework
- Develop Community Engagement Strategies for at-risk community segments
- Promote local Teams to implement targeted community engagement activities

11.5 Resource to Risk

By analysing available data and incorporating local knowledge through a consistently applied framework we will consider social risks across the community and prioritise treatment options including community engagement to address those most at-risk.

Strategies

- Deliver Community Risk Profiles for each district to inform planning processes
- Support development of Community Engagement Plans
- Improve community engagement integration in Bush Fire Risk Management Planning

11.6 Demonstrated Effectiveness

Through a layered monitoring and evaluation framework built on a foundation of rigorous pilot testing we will understand and demonstrate the effectiveness of community engagement activities to change behaviours that promote preparedness and enhance resilience.

Strategies

- Streamline reporting processes through Guardian
- Integrate community engagement metrics into regular state-wide surveys
- Enhance post-fire research methodology and reporting

12. Implementation Plan

Action items are key activities that must be delivered during the course of the next five years to implement the Directions and Strategies.

DIRECTIONS	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	Corporate Plan Ref#	
1. Strategic Alignment	1.1 Implement and communicate the Strategic Directions	1.1.1 Communicate Strategic Directions to key stakeholders	X	X			5.3	
	1.2 Review Doctrine	1.2.1 Review Community Engagement Service Standard	X				2.1	
		1.2.2 Review relevant CE policies, procedures and guidelines		X			2.1	
	1.3 Establish and enhance strategic partnerships	1.3.1 Lead and contribute to AFAC, BNHCRC and Industry Forums	1.3.1.1	X	X	X	X	6.1
			1.3.1.2	X	X	X	X	6.2
			1.3.1.3	X	X	X	X	5.3
			1.3.1.4	X	X	X	X	5.3
2. Develop and Support Our People	2.1 Review and streamline training pathway and programs	2.1.2 Review and transition CSA into online and face to face modes	X				4.3	
		2.1.3 Review CSF including options to increase frequency of delivery		X			4.3	
		2.1.4 Review the CLO program to ensure relevance to operational requirements			X		4.3	
	2.2 Deliver Community Engagement Forums	2.2.1 Refine approach to regional forums to promote strategic alignment			X		X	4.3
		2.2.2 Deliver Community Engagement Forums biannually			X		X	4.3
	2.3 Deliver ACEFA Conference	2.3.1 Refine ACEFA Conference to promote thought leadership and innovation	X			X		4.3
		2.3.2 Deliver ACEFA Conference biannually	X			X		4.3
3. Everyday Engagement	3.1 Identify and leverage existing engagement opportunities	3.1.1 Deliver a review to identify existing potential engagement opportunities	X				3.1	
		3.1.2 Conduct behavioural lens reviews to support continuous improvement	X	X			3.1	
		3.1.3 Deliver Get Ready Weekend	X	X	X	X	3.1	
	3.2 Promote engagement competency across the Service	3.2.1 Enhance focus on engagement fundamentals in foundation training			X	X		2.1
		3.2.2 Improve integration of community engagement into OpO Program			X	X		4.3
	3.3 Promote consistent key messages across the Service	3.3.1 Establish community engagement protocols to support quality interactions				X	X	2.1
		3.3.2 Introduce mechanism to focus activities on specific key messages				X	X	2.1
		3.3.3 Deliver resources to support tactical implementation of key messages				X	X	2.1

DIRECTIONS	STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	Corporate Plan Ref#	
4. Targeted Engagement	4.1 Implement and refine the TESTER behavioural insights framework	4.1.1 Deliver a toolkit to support implementation of the TESTER framework	X				3.3	
		4.1.2 Develop knowledge and skills of staff to implement TESTER framework	X	X			3.3	
		4.1.3 Conduct a trial of TESTER framework applied to one at-risk community	X				3.3	
	4.2 Develop Community Engagement Strategies for at-risk communities	4.2.1 Deliver at least 2 Community Engagement Strategies annually			X	X	X	3.2
		4.2.2 Deliver programs aligned to each community engagement strategy	X	X	X	X		3.2
		4.2.3 Pilot test each program to provide proof of concept and effectiveness	X	X	X	X		2.3
	4.3 Develop local capability to implement targeted programs	4.3.1 Promote development of district CE Teams for targeted engagement			X	X	X	2.2
		4.3.2 Deliver Implementation Workshops to develop required specialist skills			X	X	X	4.3
	5. Resource to Risk	5.1 Deliver Community Risk Profiles for each district to inform planning processes	5.1.1 Conduct a review of available data and define optimum format of Profiles	X				5.1
5.1.2 Develop process to develop profile and integrate local knowledge			X				5.1	
5.1.3 Deliver 1 Community Engagement Profile per district aligned to BFRMP review			X	X	X	X		2.2
5.2 Support development of Community Engagement Plans		5.2.1 Deliver guidelines and templates to develop Community Engagement Plans	X					2.2
		5.2.2 Integrate community engagement plan and risk profile consultation processes			X	X	X	2.1
		5.2.3 Enhance members engagement in community engagement plan development	X	X	X	X		5.3
5.3 Improve community engagement integration in Bush Fire Risk Management Planning		5.3.1 Contribute to Bush Fire Risk Management Planning policy review	X					2.1
		5.3.2 Provide practical support for the use of community risk profiles in planning			X	X	X	5.1
6. Demonstrated Effectiveness		6.1 Streamline reporting processes through Guardian	6.1.1 Inform Guardian development considering reporting by members/staff	X				2.3
	6.1.2 Effectively communicate the introduction of Guardian to members/staff		X	X			2.3	
	6.2 Integrate community engagement metrics into regular state-wide surveys	6.2.1 Refine and conduct regular state-wide surveys to monitor preparedness	X	X	X	X		2.3
	6.3 Enhance post-fire research methodology and reporting	6.3.1 Review and enhance methodology and logistics of post-fire research	X					2.3
		6.3.2 Deliver annual post-fire research report to monitor behaviour during fire events			X	X	X	2.3

13. Evaluation

We need to know what good engagement looks like in order to evaluate if we are effectively contributing to the achievement of the NSW RFS vision of providing a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service.

Key elements of good community engagement are:

- Two-way communications
- Listening at all levels of the organisation
- Feeling that our opinions count
- Access to useful and evidence based resources and accurate, timely and reliable information
- Developing relationships through involvement and consultation
- Face-to-face interactions as much as possible
- Fostering a culture where people are valued and recognised
- Working individually to perform well and collectively for wider strategic goals
- Understanding what we're trying to achieve and promoting our shared purpose
- Being able to see the results of our work
- Having opportunities to share lessons learnt
- Having opportunities to learn and develop

The Community Engagement Section will review the Community Engagement Strategic Directions 2017-2021 regularly to ensure our strategic objectives, directions, key actions, roles and responsibilities remain current.

To ensure continuous improvement we will establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness of our community engagement activities. We will measure this effectiveness through a variety of related ways including:

- Pilot Testing – we will rigorously test new programs and resources to establish ‘proof of concept’ before scaling their implementation
- Local Reporting – we will monitor the reach of our community engagement to understand how many interactions we are achieving with the community through different tactics and programs
- State-wide Monitoring – we will regularly conduct statewide surveys to monitor and identify trends in preparedness behaviours across the community
- Post-Fire Research – we will engage with those impacted by fire to understand what behaviours they had undertaken prior to and during the fire event and identify any motivators or barriers to those behaviours to support continuous improvement processes.

Governance for the Community Engagement Directions will also include planning and quarterly reporting against the action items outlined in Section 12. These are aligned to Key Action A1 of the NSW RFS Corporate Plan 2014-2021 (2017/18 Update) Complete 2017/18 Key Actions of the 2017-2021 NSW RFS Community Engagement Directions Strategy.

New initiatives and success measures will be identified every two years to coincide with the Community Engagement Forums and the implementation plan updated accordingly.

14. Feedback

Stakeholder feedback and input is essential in the development and implementation of the 2017-2021 NSW RFS Community Engagement Strategic Directions.

For communications to be effective it must be two-way. This includes surveys, feedback loops, online engagement, forums and workshops, input into planning processes, working groups and consultation committees.

All feedback can be forwarded to community.engagement@rfs.nsw.gov.au or contact Anthony Bradstreet, Manager Community Engagement on 02 8741 5412 or Anthony.Bradstreet@rfs.nsw.gov.au



15. Related Documents

This strategy has linkages with the following documents:

- *United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Resilience*
- *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience*
- *NSW 2021 – A Plan to make NSW Number One*
- *NSW RFS Corporate Plan 2014-2021*
- *One NSW RFS – Communication and Engagement Strategy*
- *Service Standard 4.3.1 Community Engagement*
- *Service Standard 1.4.5 Social Media*
- *Service Standard 1.4.6 NSW RFS Websites*

Further reading on Community Engagement that has helped informed these Strategic Directions include:

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- **David Halpern, Owain** (2015) *Service and the Behavioural Insights Team; Inside the Nudge Unit – How small changes can make a big difference*. Penguin Random House, London.
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- **Peter O'Neil** (2004) *Developing a Risk Communication Model to Encourage Community Safety from Natural Hazards*. Available: citeseerx.ist.psu.edu

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