

About the department

Our purpose:

To help the community to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from the impact of fire and emergency events.

Our vision:

Creating safe and resilient communities.



Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue Service
and State Emergency Service



Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) was established as a department on 1 November 2013 under the *Public Service Act 2008 (Public Service Departmental Arrangements Notice (No. 8) 2013)*.

QFES is the primary provider of fire and rescue and emergency management programs and services throughout Queensland. The department encompasses the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), disaster management services, Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES). QFES protects persons, property and the environment through the provision of effective prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) activities across a range of fire and emergency events including natural and human-induced disasters.

RFS and SES are the primary volunteer services of the department. The community-based RFS operates in rural, semi-rural and some urban fringe areas. SES is a community-based, not-for-profit, volunteer emergency service enabled by both state and local governments and sponsor partnerships.

Through service agreements, QFES also supports other volunteer groups that provide emergency response to Queenslanders, including:

- » Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA)
- » Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) Emergency Services Cadets
- » Royal Life Saving Society Queensland Inc. (RLSSQ)
- » Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ)
- » Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland (VMRAQ).

QFES' priority areas are:

- » Prevention and preparedness
- » Response
- » Recovery
- » Strategic capability
- » Business-enabling services.

In 2018–19, QFES administered an operating budget of \$702.5 million. The funding supports the delivery of essential emergency, safety and PPRR services to Queensland. In 2018–19, the department's capital program of \$6.6 million provided an investment of \$5.8 million in capital purchases and \$897,000 for capital grants to rural fire brigades and SES groups to support the delivery of essential frontline public safety services for Queensland's communities (refer to pages 22-25 for further information).

The Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA), established on 1 November 2013, provides information and communications technology (ICT), financial, procurement, asset management and human resource services to the public safety agencies including QFES, Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Office of the Inspector General Emergency Management (Office of the IGEM).

PSBA also provides ICT services to the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS).

The provision of these services by PSBA allows frontline agencies to focus their efforts on delivering critical operational services to the community.

In addition to providing corporate services, PSBA is responsible for the provision of Queensland Government air services.

PSBA is governed by a Board of Management (BoM) comprised of the QPS Commissioner (Chair), QFES Commissioner and an appointed external member. The role of Chair rotates annually in September between the QFES Commissioner and QPS Commissioner.

The Board's functions include providing leadership and oversight to PSBA and coordinating the provision of support services, and any relevant programs to support the public safety entities.

Legislation administered

In accordance with *Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 2) 2018*, QFES administers the following legislation:

- » *Disaster Management Act 2003*
- » *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*.

Our accountabilities

The main functions of QFES under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* are to:

- protect persons, property and the environment from fire and hazardous materials emergencies
- protect persons trapped in a vehicle or building or otherwise endangered, to the extent that QFES' personnel and equipment can reasonably be deployed or used for the purpose
- provide an advisory service, and undertake other measures, to promote—
 - fire prevention and fire control
 - safety and other procedures if a fire or hazardous materials emergency happens
- cooperate with any entity that provides an emergency service
- perform other functions given to QFES under this Act or another Act
- perform functions incidental to its other functions
- identify and market products and services incidental to its functions.

In addition, the Act includes functions of the SES. These are to perform:

- a) rescue or similar operations in an emergency situation
- b) search operations in an emergency or similar situation
- c) other operations in an emergency situation to
 - i) help injured persons
 - ii) protect persons or property from danger or potential danger associated with the situation
- d) other activities to help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from an event or a disaster
- e) activities to raise the profile of the SES or raise funds to support the SES in the performance of its other functions.

Under the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, the chief executive of QFES has the following functions for the administration of the Act:

- a) to establish and maintain arrangements between the state and the commonwealth about matters relating to effective disaster management
- b) to ensure that disaster management and disaster operations in the state are consistent with the:
 - i) state group's strategic policy framework for disaster management for the state
 - ii) state disaster management plan
 - iii) disaster management standards
 - iv) disaster management guidelines
- c) to ensure that persons performing functions under the Act in relation to disaster operations are appropriately trained
- d) to provide advice and support to the state group and local and district groups in relation to disaster management and disaster operations.

Queensland Government priorities

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities, launched in June 2018, outlines the government's priorities for the Queensland community.



Our outcomes

QFES' focus on creating safe and resilient communities supports the Queensland Government's priorities for the community to Be a responsive government and Keep communities safe, through a range of strategies including:

- » collaborating with communities to develop a shared understanding of their risks and empower them to have the capability to manage those risks
- » providing timely and accurate information to inform and enable communities and responders to adequately prepare for, and respond to, fire and emergency events
- » providing timely advice, reporting and support to other agencies to assist in the recovery process
- » ensuring lessons learned are taken into consideration during future fire and emergency PPRR programs
- » ensuring QFES' organisational strategy and decisions respond to future need and they are timely, accurate, evidence-based, accountable and transparent.

QFES' priority areas, outcomes and key initiatives, as outlined in its 2018–2022 strategic plan, are:

Priority areas	Outcomes	Key initiatives
Prevention and preparedness	Communities are appropriately skilled and resourced to prevent incidents occurring and are adequately prepared for, and able to mitigate, the impacts of fire and emergency events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Collaborate with communities to develop a shared understanding of their risks and empower them to have the capability to manage them. » Enhance our peoples' engagement and facilitation skills to work effectively with the community. » Ensure the department's culture values diversity and that the workforce displays inclusive leadership and behaviour.
Response	Timely, coordinated and appropriate responses are provided to fire and emergency events that minimise their effects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Continue to develop systems and strategies for a reduction of, and a more appropriate response to, unwanted alarms. » Support interoperability through establishing shared QFES policies and practices including equipment selection. » Ensure that all services within QFES can operationally support each other and complement our ability to deliver services. » Work with public safety partners to create, wherever practicable, interoperability in the delivery of services. » Provide timely and accurate information to inform and enable communities and responders to adequately prepare for, and respond to, fire and emergency events.

Priority areas	Outcomes	Key initiatives
Recovery	Appropriate relief and support are provided after responses to fire and emergency events until a managed transition occurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide timely advice, reporting and support to other agencies to assist in the recovery process. » Conduct damage assessments to inform relief and recovery activities. » Provide QFES transition planning that informs communities, government and non-government organisations. » Deliver timely and accessible recovery information to the community. » Contribute towards recovery operations by providing fit-for-purpose QFES capabilities including logistical and command and control.
Strategic capability	QFES is strategically capable and agile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Continue to create a transformational culture that promotes a shared understanding of how staff and volunteers work together professionally and respectfully. » Progress the creation of shared QFES policies, doctrine, language and concepts of operation. » Identify how existing QFES capabilities could be applied to emerging areas of need. » Ensure that lessons learned are taken into consideration during future fire and emergency PPRR programs.
Business-enabling services	QFES' business-enabling services enhance, integrate and support the department's service delivery and are compliant, authorised and fit-for-purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ensure that our organisational strategy and decisions respond to future need and that they are timely, accurate, evidenced-based, accountable and transparent. » Deliver services within the state's financial capability. » Attract and retain a talented and diverse workforce and provide safe, healthy and inclusive workplaces. » Confirm that our business processes are aligned with contemporary practice and that they legislatively comply. » Partner with the PSBA to ensure the efficient delivery of the department's corporate services, asset management, financial and human resource requirements.



**QFES Induction Forum at Kedron
Emergency Services Complex – July 2018**

Our values Our behaviour and the way we do business are guided by our values:



QFES is also committed to upholding the Queensland public service values of:



Customers first

- Know your customers
- Deliver what matters
- Make decisions with empathy



Ideas into action

- Challenge the norm and suggest solutions
- Encourage and embrace new ideas
- Work across boundaries



Unleash potential

- Expect greatness
- Lead and set clear expectations
- Seek, provide and act on feedback



Be courageous

- Own your actions, successes and mistakes
- Take calculated risks
- Act with transparency



Empower people

- Lead, empower and trust
- Play to everyone's strengths
- Develop yourself and those around you.

Our environment

The environment in which QFES operates is rapidly changing. Some of the strategic environmental factors QFES is working to address include:

- » the continuing growth in Queensland's population, combined with its diversity and geographic dispersal across the state
- » a predicted increase in the severity and frequency of natural disasters
- » changing community expectations around government services
- » changes in the volunteer landscape.

QFES responds to these environmental factors through the delivery of its strategic plan. Importantly, QFES works collaboratively with public safety agencies, local governments and other non-government and community organisations such as Red Cross, Rotary Australia and The Salvation Army, to enable it to respond to these factors whilst continuing to deliver frontline fire and rescue, and emergency services.

Further information about how QFES is responding to these environmental factors can be found in Our performance (refer pages 30-72).

Strategic challenges

QFES identified the following key strategic challenges for 2018-19:

- » climate change leading to more intense and frequent weather events with the department needing to plan to meet this increasing demand
- » changing needs of an ageing and geographically dispersed population will result in the department having to adjust service delivery to better meet community needs
- » organisational and societal challenges which highlighted the need to explore and invest in more flexible strategies to ensure that QFES has the systems in place to attract, retain and support its volunteers both now and into the future.

Information about how QFES is responding to these challenges can be found in Our performance (refer pages 30-72).

Outlook

The future focus of QFES is reflected in its strategic plan. The strategic plan provides a four-year blueprint for the department and communicates its priorities to QFES personnel (staff and volunteers), stakeholders and clients.

Key priorities for the department during 2019-20 include:

- » continuing focus on PPRR activities
- » continuing to develop a highly capable, adaptive and interoperable workforce equipped with the skills, knowledge and information to better support the community
- » empowering our people to lead meaningful engagement with our stakeholders
- » streamlining and digitalising business processes to enable effective and timely decision-making.

During 2019-20, key strategic challenges for the department are:

- » climate change leading to increased severity and frequency of weather events with the department needing to plan to meet this increased demand
- » increasing complexity and scope of the operating environment and changes in demographics and community needs requiring QFES to respond to, and adapt, its service delivery model
- » ensuring QFES' communication and information systems are secure to minimise and prevent cyber-risks.

Our locations

QFES delivers its services from seven regional locations throughout the state—Far Northern, Northern, Central, North Coast, Brisbane, South Eastern and South Western. They include:

- » 242 FRS stations
- » 1,403 volunteer-based rural fire brigades, including 487 with sheds/stations
- » 297 SES groups
- » seven fire communication centres (one located in each QFES region)
- » seven Regional Offices
- » 39 Area Offices
- » Special Operations Centre located at Cannon Hill, Brisbane
- » State Deployment Centre located at Morningside, Brisbane.

In addition, frontline staff and volunteers are trained throughout the state in various education and training facilities including the School of Fire and Emergency Services Training (SFEST) at Whyte Island and Northern Region Training and Support Complex in Townsville.

The Emergency Services Complex in Brisbane's northern suburbs houses emergency services including the QFES State Operations Centre, State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) and the Brisbane Region Fire Communications Centre (FireCom).

A list of contacts and key locations for QFES is available in the appendices of this report (refer page 132).

Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to the successful delivery of frontline services and are essential in building community capacity and enhancing community resilience. QFES has approximately 38,500 dedicated volunteers across the state in the RFS, SES, Research and Scientific Branch Volunteer Scientific Officer network, Technical Rescue Unit (TRU) and Peer Support Officers (PSOs) and Chaplains.

Rural Fire Service

Volunteer rural fire brigades provide fire management services for rural and semi-rural communities and some urban fringe areas across approximately 93 per cent of the state. In addition to responding to fires in their local area and in surrounding areas in support of other brigades and emergency services, volunteer brigades undertake a range of planning and preparation activities to ensure communities are well prepared for the bushfire season. This includes community education, hazard reduction and mitigation activities to reduce the risk from fire to people and property. The Permit to Light Fire system, which ensures the controlled use of fire across the state, is also largely implemented by volunteer fire wardens. Volunteer brigades are often called upon to assist other emergency service agencies during disasters such as floods and storms and may be deployed to assist other states during fire disasters.

As at 30 June 2019, there were approximately 33,000 RFS volunteers.

State Emergency Service

The SES is a community-based, not-for-profit, volunteer emergency service enabled by both state and local governments and sponsor partnerships. It plays a vital part in Queensland's emergency management approach and provides assistance to Queensland communities in times of disaster or emergency. The Queensland Government works in partnership with local governments through providing shared support and services that make a significant contribution to the ongoing effectiveness of the SES.

This important partnership assists SES volunteers to provide a valuable volunteer emergency service to their local communities. SES groups perform search and rescue, storm damage and floodboat operations, road crash rescue, emergency traffic management and vertical rescue, and protect persons and property from danger in disaster and emergency situations. They also perform incident management and agency support. The SES maintains a high level of cooperation and support to QPS for assistance in search activities.

The SES also provides valuable assistance to other emergency services and helps communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from an event or a disaster. Flood and storm responses form a significant part of Queensland SES activities.

As at 30 June 2019, there were approximately 5,300 active SES volunteers.

Research and Scientific Branch Volunteer Scientific Officer network

The Research and Scientific Branch consists of a core of permanent staff and a network of volunteers who respond to fire and hazardous materials incidents across Queensland. The volunteer network is a critical component of the branch's expert operational response and advice service. The network includes chemists and chemical engineers who provide prompt, at-the-scene responses to emergency incidents involving chemical hazards. These specialists are drawn from private industry, local governments and tertiary educational institutions across Queensland. During 2018-19, they attended a range of incidents including chemical reactions and spillages, discoveries of suspicious substances and fires causing hazardous materials releases.

As at 30 June 2019, there were 49 research and scientific volunteers including 44 regional based Volunteer Scientific Officers and five Queensland Health Brisbane-based Scientific Support Officers.

Technical Rescue Unit – Urban Search and Rescue

The Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) includes the Queensland Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team. This is a multi-jurisdictional, multidisciplinary USAR Team made up of full-time and volunteer members, including firefighters, paramedics, doctors, engineers, Hazmat specialists, police and volunteer canine handlers, mechanics and communications operators who respond to natural and human-induced disasters across Queensland. The volunteer network within this team is a critical component comprising doctors, engineers and canine specialists. These specialists come from private industry, local governments and tertiary institutions across Queensland.

As at 30 June 2019, the AUS-1 DART has 21 volunteers including six doctors, five engineers and 10 canine handlers.

AUS-1 team members locating casualties



Peer Support Officers

QFES is committed to providing a broad range of support functions for QFES members and their immediate family to promote mental health and wellbeing. The Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) is responsible for coordinating the delivery of peer support and counselling services for QFES.

The QFES Peer Support Program is comprised of 158 active PSOs from various roles, ranks and positions across the state. PSOs are selected and trained to support colleagues who may be experiencing work or personal difficulties. By virtue of a common working environment and shared experiences, they are equipped to provide early intervention, social support, understanding, practical assistance, and links to professional services if necessary. PSOs are involved in supporting members following exposure to critical incidents, as well as informal individual support and delivering education sessions to promote mental health and wellbeing.

During 2018–19, a total of 5,075 hours was invested in peer support activities and peer support was provided to a total of 2,881 people.

Chaplains

The QFES Chaplaincy Service works collaboratively with other QFES support services and local community networks to strengthen corporate and operational capability and ensure appropriate holistic support.

The QFES Chaplaincy Service is a statewide, locally based, people-focused chaplaincy service that nurtures and supports the spiritual needs and holistic wellbeing of all active and retired members of QFES' paid and volunteer workforce, relating to personal and work life, as well as their immediate and extended families. Volunteer Chaplains in the network across the state are available 24-hours a day, seven days a week through personal contact, incident response systems or referrals. Additional support is also available to community members who are victims or witnesses of incidents or disasters involving a QFES response.

Services include pastoral care, crisis response, counselling support, ceremonial involvement and community engagement.

At 30 June 2019, there were 21 Chaplains.



Peer Support Officer

Partners

QFES works closely with the public safety agencies—the Office of the IGEM, PSBA and QPS.

The department also has strong relationships with its partners including local governments who provide shared services and support to SES, and those in the community through volunteer groups including the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland Inc. (RFBAQ), Queensland State Emergency Service Volunteer Association Inc. (QLDSESVA), Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee and the Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association. These partnerships are vital for QFES to enhance community safety by minimising the impact of fire and emergency incidents on the people, environment and economy of Queensland.

Local Government Association of Queensland

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government in Queensland. QFES collaborates with LGAQ in relation to disaster management arrangements before, during and after a disaster event at all levels of the disaster management arrangements.

A Disaster Management Alliance Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) exists between QFES and LGAQ which establishes a strategic commitment and clear understanding of each agency's roles and responsibilities. The MoU also enables collaboration opportunities for local government to contribute to the development of disaster management policies and service delivery strategies.

Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland

The RFBAQ is a representative body for rural fire brigades. It provides information and advice to volunteers and consults with QFES on matters of policy, training, equipment, finance and vehicle safety through the RFS Strategic Working Groups.

Queensland State Emergency Service Volunteer Association

The QLDSESVA is a representative body for, and advocates on behalf of, its members. The association provides information and advice to volunteers and consults with QFES on matters of policy, training, equipment, finance and vehicle safety through the Communications Standards Committee. The QLDSESVA is a member of the national SES Volunteer Association.

Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee

The role of the Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue Committee is to provide advice to the Queensland Government and voluntary organisations involved in marine rescue activities and to investigate and make recommendations on matters referred to the committee. The committee also ensures suitable guidelines are available for the standardisation of an integrated Queensland statutory service/volunteer marine rescue capability.

The committee is chaired by the QFES Assistant Commissioner, Emergency Management and Community Capability with membership from the following agencies:

- » AVCGA
- » Department of Transport and Main Roads (Maritime Safety Queensland)
- » QPS
- » RLSSQ
- » SLSQ
- » VMRAQ.

Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association

The Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association, commonly known as PCYC, is a non-government, not-for-profit, charitable organisation that provides appropriate, affordable and accessible youth development programs and services to support young people in making positive life choices. The PCYC Emergency Services Cadets Program is delivered in partnership with PCYC and Queensland's emergency services including QFES and QPS.

For further information regarding the Emergency Services Cadets Program refer to pages 54-55 or visit the PCYC website: www.pcy.org.au

Organisational structure

As at 30 June 2019



***Regions**
 1. Brisbane Region
 2. South Eastern Region
 3. South Western Region
 4. North Coast Region
 5. Central Region
 6. Northern Region
 7. Far Northern Region
 - - - - indicates temporary
 organisational unit

Structure

QFES is comprised of the following divisions:

- » Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience
- » Readiness and Response Services
- » Strategy and Corporate Services.

The **Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience Division** is responsible for providing overall strategic leadership, direction and support to RFS and SES as well as providing strategic oversight of emergency management policy and development for the department. It also provides support through service agreements to other volunteer groups involved in emergency response.

The division incorporates the RFS and SES and the Emergency Management and Community Capability Directorate which is comprised of the Community Resilience and Risk Mitigation, and Community Capability and Volunteerism Branches.

The division is responsible for introducing innovative strategies to support community resilience and risk mitigation, the recruitment and retention of a sustainable and skilled volunteer workforce, and the application of technical expertise in disaster management capabilities and support that meet the increasing demand from more frequent and severe disasters and emergencies. It works in partnership with local governments to develop management and volunteer capability, and through the provision of high-quality services, support and advice, ensures safer and more resilient communities across Queensland.

The **Readiness and Response Services Division** is responsible for ensuring the response capacity of QFES operational staff in emergent situations as legislated in the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* and *Disaster Management Act 2003*. The division provides sustainable leadership and direction through the coordination of emergency management and fire and rescue operational activities.

The division is comprised of a skilled fire and emergency management workforce, working in partnership with state government departments, local governments and communities to improve resilience and enhance operational capacity during times of emergency.

Regional operations as well as Fire Communications, Fire Safety, Fire Engineering, Investigation and Compliance, Technical Rescue, Breathing Apparatus (BA)/Hazmat, and Research and Scientific are integral elements of this division.

The **Strategy and Corporate Services Division** is responsible for leading the department's strategic framework and vision, and driving performance and integrated capability across QFES.

The division works closely with the other public safety agencies to ensure the department's planning and policy enhances the capability of its people, and services and equipment are contemporary, agile and able to meet the service delivery needs of Queensland communities.

The division is comprised of Executive, Ministerial and Corporate Services, Organisational Engagement, Strategic Services and Human Capital Management (HCM) Directorates.

Regions

As at 30 June 2019



Queensland
Population
5,052,827*

Far Northern

Northern

Central

North Coast

Brisbane

South Eastern

South Western

*Australian Bureau of Statistics catalogue no. 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics

State

242 Fire and Rescue Stations

1,403 Rural Fire Brigades

75 SES Units

7 Regional Offices

297 SES Groups

7 Communication Centres

Far Northern

25 Fire and Rescue Stations

53 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

19 SES Units

179 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre

20 Fire and Rescue Stations

40 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

16 SES Units

179 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre

Northern

Central

38 Fire and Rescue Stations

69 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

14 SES Units

394 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre

46 Fire and Rescue Stations

47 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

7 SES Units

203 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre

North Coast

Brisbane

38 Fire and Rescue Stations

22 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

3 SES Units

29 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre

36 Fire and Rescue Stations

25 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

5 SES Units

82 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre

South Eastern

South Western

39 Fire and Rescue Stations

41 SES Groups

1 Regional Office

11 SES Units

337 Rural Fire Brigades

1 Communication Centre