

# Our performance

This section reports on the priority areas and key initiatives of the QFES Strategic Plan 2018–2022 and is a sample of the department’s performance highlights from 2018–19. It is not representative of all work undertaken during this period.



## Operation Synergy

## Priority area

# 1. Prevention and preparedness

### Outcome

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.

### Key initiatives

- » 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.

### Measures of success

- » Percentage of households with operational smoke alarms
- » Percentage of buildings inspected and deemed compliant at first inspection
- » Percentage of high-risk localities with at least one bushfire mitigation activity completed
- » Percentage of statewide SES volunteers that meet minimal operational training requirements

**Refer to the Key performance measures on pages 26-29 for 2018–19 data.**

## Building fire safety

QFES provides critical fire safety advice to building certifiers on both the technical and practical components of building fire safety. Building certifiers are required to seek QFES advice as part of the building approval process detailed in the *Planning Act 2016* and *Building Act 1975*. Advice includes the assessment of building plans prior to construction for the suitability of fire safety installations, and onsite inspections to ensure compliance and correct installation to the agreed design upon completion of the building.

Building fire safety activities for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 include:

- » fire investigation inspections (580 structures)
- » Building Approval Officer assessments (1,967) and inspections (1,765)
- » structure inspections by Safety Assessment Officers (958).

The Better Regulation Strategy, which includes the Regulator Performance Framework, recognises the actions and performance of regulators in implementing, administering and enforcing regulations plays a significant role in achieving the policy objective of regulation, as well as reducing the regulatory burden on businesses, including small business and the community.

To maximise the effectiveness of the framework, commencing in 2018–19, regulators are required to report annually the extent to which they are implementing the model practices in the framework and to outline plans for future improvements of their business practices. The QFES Regulator Performance Framework 2018–19 Annual Performance Report is included in the Appendices, refer pages 120-127.

## Combatting combustible cladding

The QFES Cladding Support Unit continued to work with other agencies, including the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the Department of Housing and Public Works, to mitigate issues with combustible building cladding through identifying, assessing and rectifying at-risk buildings in Queensland.

The unit forms part of the Non-Conforming Building Products Audit Taskforce established in July 2017 following the fatal Grenfell Tower fire in London (June 2017) and the Melbourne Lacrosse Tower fire (November 2014).

As of 1 October 2018, new laws applied in Queensland requiring all building owners of a class 2-9 building (refer the Building Code of Australia), of a type A or B construction, to register their building and complete a combustible cladding checklist.

The taskforce is conducting a statewide review into all class 2-9 buildings in Queensland that possibly have Aluminium Composite Panel (ACP) cladding fitted, ranging from unit blocks to hospitals and healthcare facilities.

If an in-scope building is fixed with ACP cladding, the building owner is required to register the building on the Safer Buildings website ([www.saferbuildings.qld.gov.au](http://www.saferbuildings.qld.gov.au)). From information supplied by the building owner, the Cladding Support Unit coordinates the appropriate region to undertake an Operational Risk Audit and works with the building owner and building management to develop minimisation strategies including upgraded QFES operational response and building evacuation plans.

As at 30 June 2019, QFES has conducted 251 Operational Risk Audit inspections which have resulted in 81 buildings having an upgraded initial response.

The Cladding Support Unit continues to work with building developers and other industry stakeholders by providing agency referral advice on building applications to ensure the Queensland community and QFES firefighters have the safest possible built environment to live and work.

The 2018 Commissioner's Award for Excellence—Customer Focus was awarded to the Cladding Support Unit for its significant contribution to the Non-Conforming Building Products Audit Taskforce, ensuring safer communities through mitigating fire risks involving combustible cladding.

## Illegal and unsafe budget accommodation

Fire safety is a priority for QFES with inspectors continuing to identify illegal and unsafe budget accommodation buildings (BABs). BABs are buildings including boarding houses, backpacker or other hostels, guesthouses, share-houses or similar, where six or more persons have shared access to a bathroom or sanitary facilities and do not form a common household.

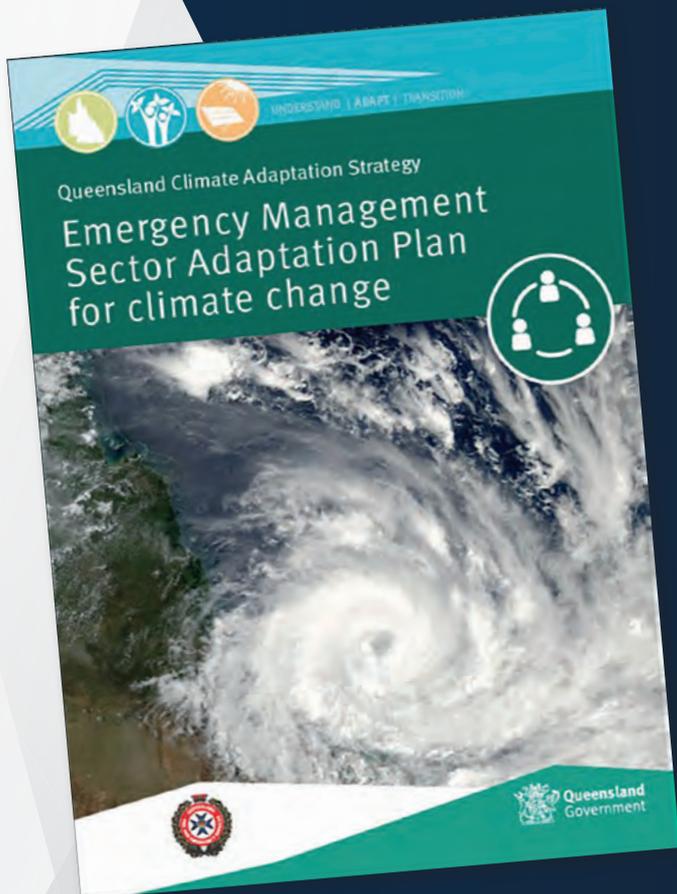
Under the *Building Act 1975*, BABs are required to have fire safety mechanisms in place such as fire safety management plans, emergency lighting and early warning systems. QFES officers conduct joint inspections with local government to identify buildings operating as BABs.

During 2018-19, QFES conducted 373 inspections of 189 premises suspected of operating as illegal and unsafe BABs. These activities resulted in:

- » 82 Requisitions by Commissioner issued to reduce the risk
- » 25 Notices by Commissioner issued to improve fire safety within the premises
- » 30 Infringement Notices issued for breaches of fire safety, totalling \$43,018 in fines.

The QFES Compliance and Prosecution Unit manages all enforcement and prosecution action against operators of BABs that do not meet the minimum fire safety standard requirements. The unit also assists regions with covert surveillance and targeted inspections where illegal and unsafe accommodation practices are suspected.

QFES is also part of a Horticulture Workers Interagency Group where representatives of agencies attend horticultural worker information sessions in seasonal worker localities. QFES officers provide accommodation fire safety information and advice to the typically transient workers at these information sessions.



## Planning for climate change

The summer of 2018–19 was the hottest on record for Australia. The extreme heatwaves and bushfires that occurred across Queensland are a clear indication QFES is facing unprecedented challenges in understanding and responding to the impacts of natural hazards in a changing climate.

The *Emergency Management Sector Adaptation Plan for climate change* (EM-SAP) was launched in September 2018 under the broader Queensland Climate Change Response which outlines the commitments and actions that will be taken by the Queensland Government to transition to a low carbon, clean growth economy and to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

The EM-SAP, developed by QFES in partnership with the Department of Environment and Science (DES), and the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF, Griffith University) seeks to foster 'An adaptive emergency management sector that is fully engaged with the risks and opportunities of a changing climate, building resilience together with the communities of Queensland.'

The plan identifies eight sector-specific priorities and 32 actions, existing climate adaptation activities, and current knowledge gaps and barriers to adaptation for the emergency management sector. It has subsequently been adopted by the State Disaster Coordination Group which is initiating a Climate Change Working Group supported by QFES to implement the EM-SAP.

Additionally, QFES established its own Climate Change Working Group in April 2018 that includes representatives from its three services and business units. The aim of the working group is to provide an advisory role for the BoM to ensure QFES takes a comprehensive approach to addressing issues related to climate change. The department's working group met four times in 2018–19.

The QFES Climate Change Working Group developed a QFES Position Paper for Climate Change which was published in October 2018 ([www.qfes.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au)) and will inform a future Climate Change Action Plan under Strategy 2030. QFES firmly '...believe[s] better decisions on climate change now, will improve our ability to deliver the right services in the right locations for Queenslanders, well into the future.'

QFES has also been proactive at a national level through the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) on its Climate Change Group which also released a consistent climate change position in October 2018.

QFES has commenced incorporating climate projections into the Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework (QERMF) with the publication of the *Queensland State Heatwave Risk Assessment 2019* (SHRA) ([www.disaster.qld.gov.au](http://www.disaster.qld.gov.au)). Released in June 2019, the assessment represents the most comprehensive analysis of future climate risk undertaken for a natural hazard risk assessment in Queensland. It is underpinned by a robust scientific basis enabling all stakeholders including state agencies, disaster management groups, infrastructure owners and town planners to understand, plan for, and reduce the risk from heatwaves. The SHRA was coordinated through a working group led by QFES, Queensland Health and DES.

During Queensland Climate Week (2–8 June 2019), QFES held an event on 3 June 2019 called *Rising to the Climate Change Challenge - An adaptive emergency management sector is engaged with the risks and opportunities of a changing climate*. The event was addressed by the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services and provided an overview of the current climate change science and proactive action being undertaken by the Queensland Government, and specifically QFES, across the emergency management sector. Key programs and projects were showcased as part of the proceedings including EM-SAP, QERMF, SHRA, Strategy 2030 and the Climate Change Action Plan.

Three QFES staff attended the Climate Reality Training Program, held during Queensland Climate Week, where they had the opportunity to hear from global experts on climate change, including former Vice President of the United States, Al Gore, and learn how to promote and enable effective climate change action.

## Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework

QFES led the development of the QERMF, endorsed by the Queensland Disaster Management Committee in August 2017, as the state approach to disaster management risk. The risk assessments conducted through the QERMF directly support risk-based planning within Queensland's disaster management arrangements. As of June 2019, QFES has conducted 52 QERMF risk assessment workshops with a QERMF Local Government Forum to be held on the future direction and maturation of the framework scheduled for July 2019.

QFES works on climate change for disaster management with the expertise and scientific data of DES, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Bureau of Meteorology, and Geoscience Australia. In 2018–19, QFES, DES and Queensland Health partnered to complete the SHRA to assist all stakeholders at each level of Queensland's disaster management arrangements to understand current and future heatwave risk potential across all sectors of Queensland's communities and economy.

Similarly, QFES has developed the State Earthquake Risk Assessment (SERA) and accompanying Tsunami Guide for Queensland. These high-level reports act as foundational earthquake and tsunami risk assessments for Local and District Disaster Management Groups and relevant state agencies. The reports provide a comprehensive overview of earthquake and tsunami risk for Queensland. The reports are expected to be released by 31 July 2019.

QFES is also leading a significant body of work, through the QERMF, to understand the impact of climate change on future tropical cyclone occurrence. The Severe Wind Hazard Assessment for Queensland (SWHA-Q) will provide the information and capability required to determine the potential physical impacts of future severe tropical cyclones (under the influence of climate change) on Queensland communities and enable all levels of Queensland's disaster management arrangements to develop long-term strategic risk treatment strategies. The SWHA-Q is expected to be completed in June 2020.

The QERMF team was awarded the 2018 Commissioner's Award for Excellence—Innovation for embracing new and innovative ideas in the development of the QERMF.

## Queensland State Disaster Management Plan

The *Queensland State Disaster Management Plan 2018*, prepared in accordance with section 49 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* and released in October 2018, describes disaster management arrangements for the effective management of disasters in Queensland. The aim of the plan is to enable Queensland to mitigate the effects of, prepare for, respond to, recover from and build resilience to disaster events.

QFES worked with QPS (lead agency) as part of the State Disaster Management Plan Recrafting Steering Committee to develop the plan with the then QFES Commissioner as Chair of the committee.

## Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience

QFES is partnering with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) to implement the *Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2017*. Implementation is being progressed through the *Resilient Queensland 2018–21* framework utilising a regional resilience pilot program. The aim of the program is to deliver and evaluate regional resilience strategies and action plans for defined areas and determine their suitability for statewide rollout.

These pilot programs are located in central west Queensland (incorporating the Longreach Disaster District) and the Fitzroy River and Mary River catchments. QFES engaged in the reporting period with a wide range of stakeholders in each of the pilot areas to identify key priorities and maintain alignment to Queensland's disaster management arrangements and the QERMF.



## Commercial training partnerships

The QFES Training and Emergency Management (TEM) Branch manages the commercial activities of QFES by generating community and industry resilience opportunities. TEM delivers fire safety and awareness prevention and preparedness services to the Queensland community, interstate entities and fosters partnerships internationally.

TEM has working relationships with a number of major commercial partners providing highly specialised fire-related services and consultancies. These partnerships demonstrate an ongoing commitment to providing innovative business solutions that provide benefits to the community either directly from specialised training or indirectly by QFES' collaborative engagement activities.

Revenue generated as a result of these community and industry collaborations provide QFES with continuous improvement opportunities.

### Highlights for the reporting period include:

- » the management of outdoor advertising billboard structures at 28 fire stations across the state with QFES campaigns broadcast, as part of the agreements, when advertising lease arrangements are not in place
- » a continued partnership agreement with Glencore (Mount Isa Mines Ltd) from September 2018 for five years, to supply a comprehensive aboveground fire and rescue response capability 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is a historical partnership dating back to 1989. The current day arrangement forms a response capability which QFES shares with Glencore to support the town of Mt Isa and surrounding districts

- » the establishment of a two-year MoU with Refrigerated Warehouse and Transport Association of Australia (RWTA) in June 2019. RWTA represents companies from the Australian Cold Chain industry. Under the MoU, the RWTA markets and promotes TEM to deliver the 'RWTA Ammonia Emergency Management Training Program' (based on QFES hazmat training) to Cold Chain industry companies at a fixed rate
- » the provision of training to the Norfolk Island Fire Service in July 2018 under a MoU with Norfolk Island Regional Council. TEM conducted courses in Respond to Aviation Incidents (Specialist), Fire Team and Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS)
- » the delivery of overseas commercial training including:
  - two TEM trainers travelled to Fiji in March 2019 to assist with the delivery of Incident Management System and Working in an Emergency Operation Centre training to members of the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance. The upskilling of trainers enables them to return to their nation and instruct others on systems and processes to operate within an Emergency Operation Centre, contributing to making Pacific Island Nations self-sufficient in disaster management.
  - two accredited training courses in AIIMS to Porgera Joint Venture in Papua New Guinea in September 2018 in support of the MoU with the Papua New Guinea Fire Service.

## Community Insights

The annual Community Insights Survey, launched in 2018, takes an all hazards approach and delves into understanding community risk perception and awareness, preparedness levels and steps taken, and community understanding and expectations of QFES services.

Survey results are collated into a dashboard enabling the data for the whole state to be viewed or filtered by QFES region, respondent age, home age and ownership status. The interactive nature of the dashboard enables more specific analysis to identify areas that require targeted community education and campaign activities to build community preparedness and resilience into the future.

The 2019 Community Insights Survey is expected to be conducted by 30 September 2019.

## Community safety education programs

Community safety education programs aim to assist members of the public in preventing, preparing for, and responding to fire and emergency events.

Education programs conducted include:

- » **Operation Knock Knock:** on 15 September 2018, QFES led a multi-agency, statewide community engagement operation, involving more than 1,000 staff and volunteers, to help people understand their local risks, know how to prepare for them, and connect with their local community. In partnership with local governments, Australian Red Cross, SLSQ, VMRAQ, the QRA and QPS, the door knock reached over 7,700 people.
- » **Home Fire Safety:** this campaign is timed around winter when there is typically a peak in the number of house fires. For example, in 2018–19, QFES attended 1,853 house fires across Queensland with 428 occurring in the winter months. The campaign encourages residents to prepare their home for a quick escape, discuss their escape plan and practise it. The campaign runs from early June to late August each year with advertising on social media, radio and digital channels.
- » **Queensland's Great Escape:** a public event held online on 28 June 2019 provided an opportunity for individual households to rehearse an evacuation and be prepared if a fire occurs.

For more information refer [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/fireescape](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/fireescape)

### Operation Knock Knock



- » **Smoke alarm legislation:** the public safety campaign ran from August to October 2018 focussing on the smoke alarm legislation which commenced on 1 January 2017 with specific messaging to introduce and build awareness of the legislative changes. The campaign encompassed statewide radio, catch-up TV, search engine marketing, social media advertising and editorials on a popular real estate website.

For more information refer [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/community-safety/smokealarms](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/community-safety/smokealarms)

- » **If it's flooded, forget it:** this campaign reminds Queenslanders of the dangers of driving through floodwater and asks people to consider that their decision will affect others.

Research conducted in May 2018 found six per cent of Queensland drivers continue to drive through floodwaters. These drivers are most likely to be aged 18–39, drive either a 4WD or ute and drive long distances every week. As a result of the research, the 2018–19 campaign focused on the cohort of drivers who self-assess the risk of driving through floodwaters.

For more information refer [www.floodwatersafety.initiatives.qld.gov.au](http://www.floodwatersafety.initiatives.qld.gov.au)



- » **Bushfire Safety:** the campaign focused on Queenslanders acknowledging the constant risk of bushfire with the message *A perfect day can turn into horror in a moment*. The campaign ran from 5 August to 3 November 2018 to educate Queenslanders about bushfire safety. It encourages those living close to bushland to prepare their properties and complete a Bushfire Survival Plan. Advertising included regional radio, billboards, social media and direct mail-outs to those in at-risk areas.

The 2018 campaign was reviewed in December 2018. Overall, the campaign performed well with community attitudes towards bushfire safety and preparedness having remained steady since the previous research conducted in December 2017. The campaign is likely to have contributed to maintenance of individual bushfire preparedness levels.

For more information refer [www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/bushfires](http://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au/bushfires)

## E-contact

Building community resilience is key for QFES and engagement via its social media platforms helps to achieve this. Social media enhances interaction between QFES and Queensland communities enabling QFES to provide the community with timely safety messages and warnings.

During 2018–19, followers on the QFES Facebook page increased by more than 66,000 to in excess of 316,000 followers. QFES' 2,730 Facebook posts were shared more than 100,000 times, attracted more than 400,000 likes and 90,000 comments, and reached more than 64 million people. A notable mention was a post in April 2019 about safety messaging and toxic canisters which reached 268,000 people, attracted 1,700 likes and 470 comments, and was shared more than 2,200 times.

QFES increased its presence on Instagram with followers more than doubling from 7,000 to 17,500. QFES activity on Twitter in the same period reached 13.9 million people with the International Firefighters' Day tweet reaching more than 32,000 people alone.

## Research and development

Research and development is an increasingly significant part of the national emergency services agenda. Research and development provides many operational and strategic benefits. It challenges paradigms, fosters innovation and offers evidence and options to enhance practice, improve services and deliver outcomes. QFES strongly values the contribution research and development makes to the department's ability to help the community prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from the impact of emergencies and disasters. QFES participates in research and development activity across the department in areas such as firefighting, climate change and disaster management.

Under a MoU with the University of Queensland, QFES and the university continued to work on the Tall Timber Buildings research and development project. QFES is a partner organisation in the project Australian Research Council Research Hub for Advanced Solutions to Transform Tall Timber Buildings. The research is aimed at further understanding the benefits and limitations associated with the use of timber in multistorey buildings. QFES' involvement in this project includes large-scale fire experiments at the SFEST. The project is due to be completed by 31 December 2019.

### Flashover fire conditions testing the timber's fire performance



The Simulation Analysis-based Risk Evaluation (SABRE) is a decision support framework created to enable bushfire intelligence products. SABRE was employed successfully during the November-December 2018 bushfire emergency where its six-day preparedness and incident response tools, including probabilistic fire spread predictions, played an important role in key decisions. The SABRE tools spanned tactical response at the Incident Management Team level, Incident Control Centres, Regional and State Operations Centres and also up to and including the State Disaster Coordination Group and the Queensland Disaster Management Committee.

As at 30 June 2019, SABRE had 6,896 users, the majority of who are RFS brigade officers. SABRE users are also located within a number of local governments and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

QFES also conducted development on a fire spread simulation tool called 'Spark' written within the CSIRO's open framework. Phoenix is a fire spread simulator currently in operational use within QFES. Spark is a fire spread simulator under development to perform similar functions to Phoenix, however it uses a different software architecture. Spark can potentially provide QFES with more options to tailor and enhance features and capabilities more easily and transparently using the latest scientific research into fire spread simulation. Both of these simulator tools

have the potential to feed fire spread prediction data into SABRE for value added analysis and deployment of decision support intelligence tools.

QFES also played an important role in enhancing the disaster management sector's understanding of psychological and emotional preparedness for disasters. QFES was a partner with the Bundaberg Regional Council and Central Queensland University in research that investigated what psychological and emotional preparedness means to communities, what prevents people from engaging with disaster risk and how best to communicate risk when people's physiological responses to an overwhelming threat disrupt the best-laid preparations and plans. This research was published in the October 2018 edition of the Australian Journal of Emergency Management.

QFES will continue to grow its research and development capability with a new research framework and governance arrangements that support alignment of the department's research expertise with strategy, within QFES and across the emergency and disaster management sector.

## Smoke alarm legislation

Smoke alarm legislation introduced on 1 January 2017 mandates that all Queensland domestic dwellings have interconnected photoelectric smoke alarms installed in each bedroom, in hallways connecting bedrooms and in the exit pathway on every level of the dwelling, over a staged period.

Key stakeholders including government departments, industry bodies, suppliers, retailers, installers, advocacy groups and trade and QFES representatives participated in a forum in March 2019 to gather ideas to better inform Queenslanders of the smoke alarm legislation. A focus of the forum was the 1 January 2022 compliance deadline after which owners of domestic dwellings who enter into a lease, renew an existing lease or enter into an agreement to transfer the land to another person will be required to comply with the new smoke alarm legislation.

The forum discussed ways for industry to help disseminate key messages and improve standards, performance, compliance and enforcement, affordability and incentives and implementation timeframes.

QFES is working with industry stakeholders and representatives from the forum to disseminate the smoke alarms message as part of its public awareness campaign.

For more information refer [www.qfes.qld.gov.au/community-safety/smokealarms](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/community-safety/smokealarms)

# Bushfire prevention and preparedness

Bushfire prevention and preparedness is a shared responsibility in Queensland, primarily resting with landowners and land managers for hazard reduction. QFES is the primary agency for hazard mapping and the department leads and coordinates bushfire mitigation programs. QFES is also the primary response agency for fires in Queensland.

QFES conducts Operation Cool Burn where bushfire mitigation activities, such as hazard reduction burning, fire break or fire trail works and targeted community engagement, are coordinated across the state annually. Operation Cool Burn is a period of heightened mitigation activity, generally held from the beginning of April to the end of August, but hazard reduction burns, fireline/break maintenance and community education occur year-round.

QFES has matured its relationship with its partners during Operation Cool Burn, enabling the focus to be on shared community priorities for the protection of life and property.

QFES works alongside partners in Area Fire Management Groups established in all RFS areas in Queensland to gather intelligence before identifying high-risk areas and prioritising mitigation activities.

Risk mitigation activities also occur at other appropriate times of the year with the responsibility for risk mitigation resting with the owner (landowner or occupier) of the hazard.

The historic level of prescribed burning, including Operation Cool Burn, coordinated and conducted by QFES has been informed by the longer-term fire weather typically experienced in Queensland. However, the bushfire event in November and December 2018 (refer pages 56-57) was a compound event comprising a rare combination of climatic conditions that meant usual planned burning efforts were less likely to have had an effect.<sup>1</sup> Prescribed burning is not always a feasible option and has less impact on the severity of fire impacts when conditions are extreme.<sup>2,3</sup> However, prescribed burning is often the only practical hazard reduction option to achieve the scale and effect required for Queensland. Climate change is increasing the length of bushfire seasons which limits the opportunities for prescribed burning.

Operation Cool Burn 2018 commenced on 1 April 2018 and continued through to 16 August 2018. Due to the seasonal outlook, targeted mitigation activities were supported by significant media efforts to heighten community awareness of bushfires and the need to prepare for the upcoming season.

Operation Cool Burn 2019 commenced on 1 April 2019 and will continue through to 31 August 2019, unless varied for climatic or operational reasons. The Bureau of Meteorology is predicting a dry and warm winter for many parts of Queensland, which means an early onset of the bushfire season is possible. The focus for 2019 is on improving community preparedness.

1. Bureau of Meteorology, 'Special Climate Statement 67 – an extreme heatwave on the tropical Queensland coast', Bureau of Meteorology, 2018, p. 14, <[www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/statements/scs67.pdf](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/statements/scs67.pdf)>, accessed 2 January 2019.

2. CSIRO, 'Bushfires in Australia, CSIRO Submission 09/355 prepared for the 2009 Senate Inquiry into Bushfires in Australia', Parliament of Australia [website], July 2009, p. 9, <[www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=3d4e5dd5-9374-48e9-b3f4-4e6e96da27f5](http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=3d4e5dd5-9374-48e9-b3f4-4e6e96da27f5)>, accessed 13 December 2018.

3. B. McCormick, '2002-03 Bushfires: Is Fuel Reduction Burning the Answer? (Parliament of Australia Current Issues Brief no. 8)', Parliament of Australia [website], 2002, <[www.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/cib/2002-03/03cib08.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/cib/2002-03/03cib08.pdf)>, accessed 16 December 2018.



## Land use planning for bushfire

QFES continues to provide expertise in support of the *State Planning Policy - state interest guidance material Natural hazards, risk and resilience for bushfire*. Land use planning review activities for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 included:

- » Planning Schemes and Amendments (eight)
- » State Assessment and Referral Agency Requests and development approval advice (16)
- » Environmental Impact Statements (10)
- » Ministerial Infrastructure Designations (five)
- » Regional Planning Reviews (two).

QFES, in partnership with the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, continued to draft revised technical guidance titled *Bushfire Resilient Communities* to support the abovementioned state interest guidance material. Consultation garnered significant interest which will see the refinement of the technical material continue into 2019–20. QFES concurrently commenced a review of the methodology for Bushfire Prone Area mapping in conjunction with the CSIRO.

At the 2018 Premier's Awards for Excellence ceremony held in November 2018, the QFES Commonwealth Games project team was awarded for their exceptional contribution to public safety during the 2018 Commonwealth Games—a joint win in the category of *Performance*.

The project team also received the 2018 Commissioner's Award for Excellence – Performance and Commissioner's Outstanding Award.

## Building community resilience

Resilient Australia Queensland Award and Resilient Australia Awards recipients, the *My Resilient Community* project, are achieving results in building community resilience. The project team, comprised of officers from QFES, QPS and Moreton Bay Regional Council, developed a toolkit to help isolated areas that were often difficult for emergency services to get to quickly, and support them in working together and planning for a range of disasters including bushfire, storm, flood and cyclone. The toolkit focusses on assessing and mitigating risks and identifying and using community strengths, resources and skills. This includes identifying an evacuation point and vulnerable members of the community and collating

key contacts and other vital information. The project is facilitated by the local government and, as a stakeholder, QFES assists by providing advice on fire behaviour and maps of local regions.

The original project involved four communities in Moreton Bay including Moreton Island. Further expansion is proposed into Central and North Coast regions with eight local governments identified to take part in the project.

## Supporting inclusion and diversity

Queensland has an increasingly diverse population which QFES considers in the development and delivery of its programs and services in order to build safe and resilient communities and ensure community preparedness for disaster events.

In May 2019, QFES released its Inclusion and Diversity Policy to provide direction to QFES personnel on the requirements for how QFES engages with communities and partners and how the QFES workforce engages with each other.

### Highlights for the reporting period include:

- » the launch of Emergency Services Cadets Groups in Charters Towers, Hinchinbrook (Lucinda) and South Burnett (Nanango). The Emergency Services Cadets Program endeavours to build community resilience through the fostering of the next generation of emergency services personnel
- » assisting members of the deaf community or people who have hearing impairment to install specialised smoke alarms through the Smoke Alarm Subsidy Scheme managed by Deaf Services Queensland. In 2018–19, 370 deaf and hard of hearing smoke alarms were provided. A total of 2,329 have been provided (as at June 2019) since the commencement of the scheme in June 2013
- » supporting the ability for RFS and SES volunteers to transition from operational roles to support roles enabling older people to remain active and help their community prepare for emergencies and disasters
- » providing Auslan interpreters when broadcasting fire and emergency safety information
- » supporting the CareerTrackers programs with the sponsorship of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as interns (four) enabling them to gain valuable skills and experiences in the areas of legal, media, talent development and psychology support
- » implementation of the Allies of Inclusion program which builds a visible network of QFES staff who are committed to a workplace culture that is fair, equitable and inclusive. The program involves QFES personnel as agents of positive change contributing to safe, healthy and inclusive workplaces where everyone feels welcomed, accepted, valued and embraced.

# Case study

## Stanwell/Gracemere Fire

The Stanwell, Kabra and Gracemere areas are primarily grazing land, however some pastures were suffering from a grass disease<sup>4</sup> and conditions were generally dry. Although Gracemere had not been drought-declared<sup>5</sup>, the town received well-below average rainfall in 2018<sup>6</sup>.

On 25 November 2018, the Rockhampton Regional Council area was amidst an extreme heatwave with the temperature reaching 41.5°. In Stanwell, a previously extinguished fire on private property reignited on 26 November 2018 and QFES assistance was requested. A fire ban was issued for the Rockhampton local government area from 1.00am on 27 November 2018.

On 28 November 2018, under catastrophic conditions, the fire quickly became uncontrollable. Aircraft were used for water bombing and to collect information for predictive modelling. These aerial assets were available due to QFES' arrangements with the National Aerial Firefighting Centre. Preparations for the 2018 bushfire season enabled access to the largest aerial firefighting fleet ever used in Queensland.

By the afternoon of 28 November 2018, the fire was advancing in the direction of the town of Gracemere and its approximately 11,300 residents<sup>7</sup>. The combination of low humidity, below average rainfall, dry pastures, above average temperatures and very high winds created an ideal environment for the fire's rapid spread.

QFES Fire Behaviour Analysts used predictive analytic modelling software to map the potential path of this fire in partnership with other agencies. In this case, the Bureau of Meteorology provided predictive weather information which QFES used to produce the overlays within simulation products. The modelling showed the fire was likely to impact the Gracemere township, particularly from ember attack, by 5pm that day.

At 3.16pm on 28 November 2018, QFES advised evacuating the town was necessary to prevent loss of life. Thousands of residents heeded the advice and chose to leave.

The predictive analytics imagery was released to the media to support a greater understanding of the need for evacuation. The predictive analytics produced on this fire also allayed concerns that the fire could potentially impact Rockhampton. The analysis conducted by the QFES Fire Behaviour Analysts indicated the fire would not impact Rockhampton, therefore preventing unnecessary disruption of the community from evacuation.



Intensive aerial water bombing by including the Large Air Tanker along with on the ground fire crews, worked to slow the fire. Continuous use of predictive modelling allowed both aircraft and ground crews to be deployed to maximise effectiveness.

Later that evening, it was still not safe for evacuated Gracemere residents to return to their homes. Residents who chose to stay in their properties rather than evacuate, called for emergency assistance during the night.

At 9am on 29 November 2018, the risk was downgraded and residents could return to their homes, but were told to remain alert. One house was reported to be lost as well as a number of sheds and outbuildings.

4. A. McCosker, 'Grass disease causes pastures to die before graziers' eyes', ABC Rural News [website], 2018, <[www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2018-04-13/grass-dieback-shocksgraziers/9603082](http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2018-04-13/grass-dieback-shocksgraziers/9603082)>, accessed 10 January 2019.

5. Queensland Government, 'Drought Declarations', The Long Paddock [website], <[www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/drought/drought-declarations](http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/drought/drought-declarations)>, accessed 11 January 2019.

6. Bureau of Meteorology, 'Monthly Rainfall: Gracemere-Lucas St.', Bureau of Meteorology [website], 2018, <[www.bom.gov.au/jsp/ncc/cdio/wData/wdata?p\\_nccObsCode=139&tp\\_display\\_type=dataFile&tp\\_stn\\_num=039049](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/ncc/cdio/wData/wdata?p_nccObsCode=139&tp_display_type=dataFile&tp_stn_num=039049)>, accessed 11 January 2019.

7. 2016 Census Stats Gracemere', Australian Bureau of Statistics [website], <<http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census/services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC31230>>, accessed 10 January 2019.



Aerial waterbombing near Gracemere  
Source ASHJO Photography

## Priority area

# 2. Response

### Outcome

Timely, coordinated and appropriate responses are provided to fire and emergency events that minimise their effects.

### Key initiatives

- » 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.

### Measures of success

- » Percentage of disaster management training participants with enhanced capability
- » Response times to structure fires
- » Response times to mobile property crashes
- » Response times to landscape fires
- » Percentage of building and other structure fires confined to room/object of origin
- » Rate of unwanted alarm activations per alarm signalling equipment

**Refer to the Key performance measures on pages 26-29 for 2018-19 data.**

## Working to reduce unwanted alarm activations

QFES responds to approximately 18,000 unwanted alarm activations from monitored fire alarms systems per year. Unwanted alarms have a negative impact on firefighters and the wider community by increasing safety concerns for fire crews and the public, disrupting the community and industry, creating complacency and imposing unnecessary costs to attend these incidents. Reducing unwanted alarm activations ensures that the department can more effectively manage priority emergency responses and resources.

Under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*, QFES charges for attendance at unwanted alarms to encourage building owners or occupiers to be continually proactive in managing fire alarm systems.

At 30 June 2019, QFES had 7,640 installed alarm connections and responded to 17,514 unwanted alarm activations from monitored fire alarms systems in 2018-19. The total number of incidents attended by QFES in 2018-19 was 73,363, this means that 24 per cent of all incidents were unwanted alarms.

QFES worked extensively with the building industry and building owners and occupiers to further reduce the number of false/unwanted automatic fire alarms, especially those with high numbers of automatic alarm callouts. Increased awareness is being achieved through:

- » a combination of pre and post construction activities with building designers and owners/occupiers
- » direct advice to owners of those buildings identified as having a high alarm frequency



**Fire on North Stradbroke Island**

- » the development of the pragmatic test that involves practical cooking and hot shower simulations to prove the strategies outlined in the QFES guidelines work to minimise or eliminate unwanted alarms with 173 pragmatic tests conducted on 108 buildings with a pass rate on first testing of 89 per cent.

This ongoing work with the building industry has resulted in a continued reduction in the number of false/unwanted automatic fire alarms per Alarm Signalling Equipment connection from 3.7 in 2005–06 to 2.3 in 2018–19.

## **Aviation capability**

In support of operational preparedness, some major changes, enhancements and investment in QFES' aviation capability occurred in 2018–19, positively altering the operating model of aviation within the department.

The most significant shift has been an increase in the number of National Aerial Firefighting Centre contracted aircraft engaged for the bushfire season from three contracts located at Archerfield airport to eight contracts divided between Toowoomba and Bundaberg airports. Historically, the Bundaberg area and surrounds have seen a large volume of high-risk incident response which now benefit from aircraft within closer proximity.

The purchase and development of a hangar at Toowoomba Regional Airport, officially opened in September 2018, has provided the QFES State Air Operations Unit with a hub for operations outside of busy Brisbane airspace for training and innovation support. It also provides coverage across a greater landmass.

The 2018–19 bushfire season demonstrated the value of these investments for fire suppression, intelligence gathering and situational awareness.

## Capital works program

Most new and ongoing capital initiatives to support QFES' operational capability are delivered by PSBA. This includes fire and emergency services facilities, fire appliances and communications equipment.

QFES continues to be responsible for delivering operational equipment and information systems development to support the provision of fire and rescue and emergency management services throughout Queensland.

Significant capital works initiatives were progressed or delivered during 2018–19 including:

- » **completion of the:**
  - replacement auxiliary fire and rescue stations at Childers and Richmond and an upgrade at Dirranbandi
  - upgrade of the permanent fire and rescue station at Mount Ommaney
  - upgrade of the permanent fire and rescue station and communications centre at Rockhampton
  - RFS and SES complex at Howard, collocated with the police station
  - upgrade of the Horn Island collocated RFS and SES facility
  - Charleville area office refurbishment
- » **continuing the:**
  - replacement auxiliary fire and rescue station at Rathdowney
  - replacement combined area office and rural fire and SES facility upgrade at Mount Isa

- » **commencing work on the:**
  - replacement auxiliary fire and rescue stations at El Arish, Esk, Gracemere, Kilkivan, Wooroolin and Yarraman
  - replacement permanent fire and rescue stations at Bracken Ridge and Chandler
  - new permanent fire and rescue stations at Pimpama and Yarrabilba
  - infrastructure works for the south western region headquarters and replacement of the permanent fire and rescue station at Charlton
  - upgrade of the permanent fire and rescue stations at Loganlea and West Logan
  - Weipa emergency and disaster centre
  - upgrade of the QFES communications centre collocated with QAS in Cairns
  - new emergency services facility at Maleny.

## Fleet management

During 2018–19, QFES and PSBA established a Joint Fire and Rescue Fleet Management and Maintenance Taskforce to address issues affecting operational fleets and provide detailed oversight of the replacement build program and the maintenance of vehicles. The taskforce will ensure an appropriate number of operational and safe appliances are on the road and in service. Where possible, the taskforce will predict potential issues and address them in advance.

A Five-Year Building Program has been developed to ensure the FRS and RFS fleets have a regular annual procurement and build to provide better budget management and replacement programs.

Key initiatives include the temporary expansion of the Eagle Farm workshop; a new facility to replace the Eagle Farm workshop which will come on line in 2021; progressing the QFES fleet build; planning and maintenance priorities; the engagement of external suppliers to assist with capacity to meet unscheduled workloads; and selection of a workshop system/solution.

QFES continues to deliver fit-for-purpose appliances which included 50 new FRS appliances and 119 replacement appliances for RFS in 2018–19.



## Government Wireless Network onboarding for SES

The SES Communications Onboarding Project will deliver critical communications improvements to the SES. The project, which commenced in October 2018, will transition the SES to the Government Wireless Network (GWN). The GWN is a fully integrated, secure digital radio communications network that emergency service personnel in South East Queensland use to communicate mission critical information.

Additionally, several activities were undertaken to uplift and provide the SES with improved radio communications in those areas outside the GWN coverage area.

The SES operates on several different technologies and networks, often without the provision of individual radios for those responding. These initiatives will enable all QFES services to operate on the same communications network as other emergency services in South East Queensland and ensure the SES across the state has access to existing QFES UHF (ultra-high frequency) infrastructure.

Upgrading communications technology will reduce issues such as analogue radio congestion, coverage blackspots and allow ageing radios to be replaced.

## Radio/Communications Taskforce

The Radio/Communications Taskforce was established in January 2019 to investigate and identify technical and user issues with radio communications, analyse and evaluate these issues, and deliver a report with high-level advice and solutions.

The taskforce engaged with the workforce, subject matter experts and external contractors to explore, analyse and consolidate information to better understand the issues to ensure the continued safety of firefighters and the community.

In June 2019, the taskforce commenced comprehensive, independent testing of the radio network and equipment. The results of this testing will allow QFES to better understand some of the issues raised by the workforce and the current uncertainty of precise information on this matter.

A final report is expected to be delivered in August 2019.

## Improving road safety and response times

QFES' response times continue to be strengthened by the statewide roll-out of the Emergency Vehicle Priority (EVP) system. The EVP system detects emergency vehicles with lights and sirens approaching enabled intersections and changes the traffic light to green before the vehicle arrives, if safe to do so. The system halts traffic coming from different directions in more natural patterns, improving safety for road users and ultimately cutting minutes off emergency response times. EVP-equipped vehicles on the Gold Coast show travel time reductions by up to 26 per cent.

During the reporting period, road safety was further enhanced and response times reduced with the ongoing roll-out of the EVP system in Gladstone, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Rockhampton. These regional centres join Bundaberg, Cairns, Mackay, South East Queensland, Toowoomba and Townsville where the traffic management technology is already in place.

At 30 June 2019 there are more than 2,470 intersections and 153 fire appliances across Queensland fitted with the technology.

The system has attracted a number of awards at a state, national and international level.

## Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (drones)

In December 2018, Brisbane and Far Northern Regions completed a two-year Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) trial which highlighted the successful use of RPAS, also known as drones, for QFES operations. These trials resulted in RPAS being approved as a new QFES capability in early 2019.

QFES has developed a state, regional and functional area RPAS framework for QFES to integrate an RPAS capability into business-as-usual operations. The framework encompasses the regulatory regime, safety and operations, and is proportionate to the level of RPAS risk. It also identifies and addresses the challenges posed by the use of RPAS and supports the increasing range of RPAS operations and applications. The framework also provides governance to protect, monitor and enforce suitable RPAS use.

The use of RPAS will enhance QFES' ability to maintain situational awareness and collect intelligence to assist with informed decision-making. RPAs were successfully used before and after Tropical Cyclone Owen (December 2018) at Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw, Severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor (March 2019) at Lockhart River and during the monsoonal flooding (January – February 2019) in Far Northern Queensland. The information and intelligence that has and will continue to be provided to QFES and other agencies will ensure more effective and efficient operations across a range of incidents including lost person searches, disaster assessments, assisting in difficult terrain rescues and fire investigations as pre and post community impact assessments.



## Swiftwater floodwater rescue

The State TRU manages the ongoing development of Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue Technicians across the state, in addition to providing competency maintenance training workshops for existing technicians and operators.

The TRU conducted two Swiftwater Rescue Level 2 courses during 2018–19, resulting in 28 personnel successfully completing the course. At 30 June 2019, there are 410 Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue Technicians within QFES. The unit also conducted eight refresher competency skills workshops on the Tully River providing training for 156 personnel from regional locations.

The Level 1 Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue training package was reviewed in the reporting period to enable it to be delivered to all auxiliary stations and volunteers from SES and RFS as required. The re-written training package is now identified as Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue (SR) – 1 (Land) and provides the appropriate level of operator skills to conduct swiftwater rescue from a river edge or other dry position.

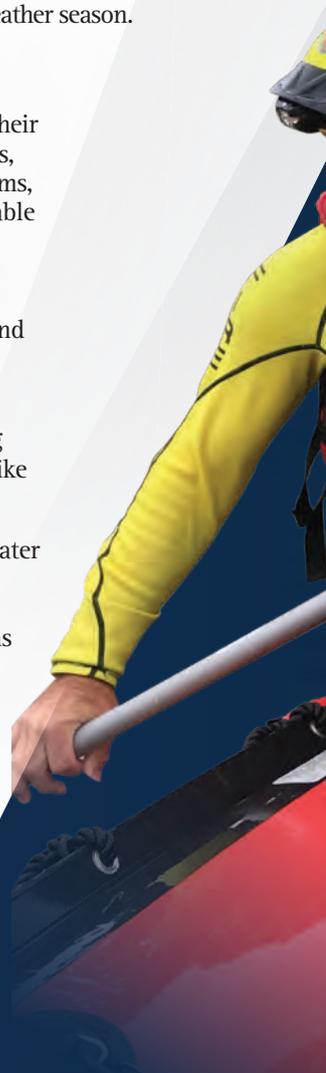
In addition, QFES purchased 99 Level 1 Swiftwater Rescue kits which have been distributed to regions for training and equipping of auxiliary stations and identified RFS brigades and SES groups.

In December 2018, Brisbane Region Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue Technicians participated in a swiftwater training exercise held at Wivenhoe Dam to ensure they were prepared for the severe weather season.

The exercise enabled the technicians to prepare and train in real swiftwater environments. The technicians practised their skills in the areas of self-rescue techniques, 'throw bagging' and setting up rope systems, casualty handling in the water and inflatable rescue craft. More complicated systems were also set up simulating the recovery of casualties, with foot entrapments and casualties on top of submerged vehicles and clinging to trees.

The skills developed during the exercise included swimming in swiftwater, reading hazards in the water and technical skills like paddling and flip drills.

During the severe weather season, Swiftwater Rescue teams also assist with support for medical emergencies, evacuating and relocating residents and resupplying towns with food and medication.



## Motorised swiftwater rescue capability

The evolution and introduction of the QFES Motorised Swiftwater Rescue Craft (MRSC) capability continues to strengthen with an additional nine motorised craft purchased in 2018–19. This brings the number of motorised craft available for use during the 2019 severe weather season to 26. These new motorised craft are distributed across all QFES regions and extend the ability of swiftwater rescuers to reach stranded individuals in distant locations or in rapidly flowing water situations. This Australian first initiative has developed since 2015–16 to a point where MRSC operations in swiftwater incidents are now considered to be general business.

Training has continued with an additional 24 personnel completing the two-week training course in 2018–19, bringing the total number of MRSC trained personnel at 30 June 2019 to 90 including 12 senior instructors. Training initiatives have included MRSC personnel travelling to Tasmania to access the sustained water flows required for effective and productive training. This training option was investigated as a result of the inability to guarantee water flows in other training locations within Queensland.

Prior to the commencement of the 2019 severe weather season, each region will have three motorised craft with the State Deployment Centre housing an additional four craft for training and deployment.





## Watch Desk

On 7 July 2018, the QFES State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) Watch Desk officially celebrated 10 years of operation.

The Watch Desk is responsible for ensuring all SES requests are coordinated and actioned, assisting with SDCC staff training and exercises, contributing to policy and planning, and forming a core part of the Operations Cell during SDCC activations.

Watch Desk officers inform, support and liaise with emergency management stakeholders such as local governments, state agencies and disaster management groups to provide alerts and assist with PPRR activities.

The operation of the Emergency Alert System in Queensland, a community messaging tool used during times of imminent threat from disasters and emergencies, has been a significant function of the SDCC Watch Desk since 2009.

During 2018–19, the Watch Desk created 153 Emergency Alert campaigns, compared to 14 campaigns in 2017–18. The campaigns were focused as follows:

- » 68 flood-related
- » 56 fire-related
- » 15 water-infrastructure related
- » 11 cyclone-related
- » three water spouts.

There was also a 29 per cent increase in the number of weather warnings sent (3,617) from the Watch Desk to relevant stakeholders and the Watch Desk also assisted in tasking and monitoring over 10,000 SES jobs, an increase of 64 per cent compared to 2017–18.

## National Fire Danger Rating System

QFES continues to support the National Fire Danger Rating System review and development of the system, as a member of the AFAC Board and with the provision of input through the AFAC Predictive Services Group.

The intent of the review is to build a more contemporary science-based fire danger rating model which takes into consideration a broader range of vegetation types across the country, thereby providing a more accurate fire danger rating to communities.

QFES contributed to a number of meetings as a member of the group reviewing the forest fire behaviour table.

## Local governments and the SES

The SES is funded by state and local governments, sponsors and community donations. QFES works with local governments across the state to ensure and enable SES unit and group capability. As the SES plays an integral role in supporting local governments' disaster response capability, the development of a MoU between QFES and each local government is a way to clarify the relationship.

The MoU was developed in collaboration with several local government Disaster Management Officers and brokered through the Disaster Management Network Forum facilitated by the Office of the IGEM. The MoU highlights the partnering arrangements between QFES and local governments for the management and support of the SES and details responsibilities for funding and support arrangements. This ensures the delivery of an effective emergency service that contributes to a safer more resilient community.

As at 30 June 2019, 58 out of 75 local governments have signed the MoU.

In 2018–19, the Queensland Government distributed \$1.65 million across each local government with active SES units or groups as part of the SES annual local government subsidy. This funding is provided to assist local governments in offsetting administrative and operational costs as a result of supporting their local SES.

In October 2018, at the LGAQ Annual Conference, resolution 56 was passed: *That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Queensland Government to wholly fund the State Emergency Service from existing funds received from the Emergency Services Levy with appropriate budget allocation and governance arrangements.*

The complexities of this matter are under consideration and local governments, SES volunteers and other key stakeholders will be consulted prior to determining the best course of action.

## Supporting our volunteers

Within Queensland there are approximately 38,500 volunteers supporting QFES in delivering frontline services, building community capacity and enhancing community resilience. QFES' volunteer workforce is comprised of RFS and SES volunteers, Research and Scientific Branch Volunteer Scientific Officers, AUS-1 DART volunteers, PSOs and Chaplains (refer pages 14–16 for further information).

These volunteers dedicate thousands of hours to providing invaluable support to their communities with training and preparedness and operational response. Consistent with the Volunteerism Strategy, QFES has invested substantially in improving conditions and access to information for volunteers that will support greater community capability into the future.

During the reporting period, QFES progressed initiatives to support its volunteers including:

### Taskforce Catalyst

Taskforce Catalyst was formally established on 16 July 2018 to drive progress and change within the SES to strengthen frontline capability and integration for QFES.

The taskforce concluded in January 2019 having engaged and consulted widely with key stakeholders such as the QLDSESA, SES Volunteer Consultative Committee, LGAQ, SES volunteers and QFES personnel throughout the state.

The outcomes of the taskforce include:

- » allocation of equipment and training to SES volunteers for Swiftwater Rescue Level One
- » the development of a Leadership Development Framework which will assist in identifying enhanced leadership training requirements for SES members

- » a review of SES Training Pathways and the development of a more flexible Train-the-Trainer model for SES volunteers
- » the development of an SES Volunteer Community Education Program in alignment with the RFS to enhance QFES' community education within local government areas.

In addition, in October 2018, the Queensland Government committed to a one-off boost to the 2019–20 SES Support Grant which aims to assist local governments in providing high quality emergency and disaster management services by supporting the activities of the SES. The available funding more than tripled from \$320,000 to \$1 million to provide grants to local governments for SES facility upgrades and vehicles.

### Volunteer recognition

During National Volunteer Week, held 20 to 26 May 2019, QFES highlighted the vital role its volunteers play in keeping Queensland communities safe, with the unveiling of an Emergency Service Volunteer Pin. QFES volunteers were among the first to be presented with the pin which will also be available to Australian Red Cross, VMRAQ, AVCGA, SLSQ, RLSSQ, Local Ambulance Committees and PCYC members who have served for more than 12 months.

The Emergency Service Volunteer Pin, which will be presented annually to eligible volunteers, features a simple yet strong and vibrant design to capture the spirit of volunteering through inclusivity. The centre symbol represents the Maltese Cross as a direct link to the Queensland badge design. The four arms of the cross traditionally represent faith, justice, temperance and fortitude and for the pin, they also acknowledge the value of each individual volunteer and the services they collectively provide to the community.



### Operation Convergence

## Celebrating volunteers

RFS and SES weeks are an opportunity to recognise and praise the selflessness, hard work and commitment of volunteers and staff around the state who support them, so they can undertake and deliver their critical work in Queensland communities.

Events, including award ceremonies and open days were held in the regions across the state to highlight the dedication and commitment of those who volunteer to help keep Queensland communities safe.

SES Week was held 20 to 28 October 2018 with the theme *enhance, train and excel* where the focus was on the work SES volunteers do in training, ensuring they are equipped to help the most vulnerable members of the community.

RFS Week will be held from 1 to 7 September 2019. RFS Week 2019 will celebrate 70 years of the RFS, recognising the dedication and commitment of its volunteers, looking back on the history of the Service and the events, milestones and people.

In 2019, the RFS celebrates its 70th Anniversary, marking 70 years since the first rural fire brigades were officially registered. The following brigades are celebrating 70 years of dedication to the Service:

- » Glass House Mountains
- » Lagoon Pocket
- » Byfields
- » Kandanga
- » Thangool
- » Gordonbrook.

## Grant support to community groups

The QFES Grants Unit continued to provide support to SES groups and units to identify, plan, apply for and complete grant applications. QFES provided support with 40 grant applications from SES groups applying through programs external to QFES. The unit worked with the QFES Hazard and Risk Unit to extend support to Local Disaster Management Groups. Five grant workshops were delivered in the reporting period providing grant information to assist SES, RFS and Local Disaster Management Groups.

## Interstate/international deployments

Due to protracted or complex operations, QFES may be requested to deploy officers to participate in intrastate, interstate or international deployments as a member of a QFES Strike Team or taskforce for the purpose of an emergency response. Deployments can be an opportunity to gain personal and professional development including learnings around fire management and resourcing systems, as they often involve an integration of QFES permanent, auxiliary, civilian and volunteer staff and resources. International deployments provide an opportunity to share knowledge with fire service professionals across the globe. Depending on the nature of the emergency, an inter-agency response may also be required.



**Gold Coast RFS Striketeam receiving briefing 2018**

## Deployments during 2018–19 included:

### United States of America

**Incident:** Wildfire

**Period of deployment:**

August – September 2018

Eleven QFES personnel joined 188 fire specialists from across Australia and New Zealand to help the United States battle ravaging wildfires in 14 different states.

With approximately 89 active fires burning more than 375,000 hectares, QFES' emergency response to the wildfires was critical in assisting United States firefighters. QFES facilitated many roles including managing tactical implementation and resources at the fire front, structure protection and responsibility for fire ground personnel.

### Canada

**Incident:** Wildfire

**Period of deployment:**

August – September 2018

Two QFES fire behaviour analysts were deployed to join an international contingent of fire specialists fighting wildfires in British Columbia and Ontario. The analysts assisted local crews and other international agencies predicting how the fires may spread and how best to combat them.

Canada experienced more than 90 wildfires, with more than 5,000 active fires affecting more than 850,000 hectares of land.

### Tasmania

**Incident:** Bushfires

**Period of deployment:**

January – February 2019

More than 40 fires burnt almost three per cent (approximately 200,000 hectares) of Tasmania in January 2019, nearly all were ignited by lightning storms on 28 December 2018 and 16 and 29 January 2019. QFES deployed 58 personnel to the Tasmanian fires. The roles QFES staff undertook were Incident Management Team functional roles, Air attack supervisors, Predictive Services and support to the National Resource Sharing Centre and AFAC.

### Victoria

**Incident:** Bushfires

**Period of deployment:**

February – March 2019

In early March 2019, Victoria experienced at least 380 bushfires with the vast majority caused by lightning. An estimated 70,000 hectares of land burned with significant fires raging in Bunyip State Park and around Licola, Dargo, Gippsland, and Yinnar South.

Seventeen QFES personnel were deployed including six Fire Behaviour Analysts and one representative to support the National Resource Sharing Centre and AFAC.

The Fire Behaviour Analysts were integrated in Incident Control Centres in Gippsland where they worked with the Country Fire Authority, Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria, and Victoria Police, as well as representatives from private plantations.

The analysts provided specific advice to the planning section and Incident Management Teams about fire behaviour, fire spread, intensity and spotting, supporting firefighter safety, enabling positioning of crews, and providing the ability to determine whether offensive or defensive suppression strategies were more likely to be safe and effective in fighting the fire.



Canada deployment

## Exercises

QFES personnel participate in exercises to increase their competency levels in major, joint agency and small routine incidents through hands-on training. Exercises enable testing of factors including:

- » interoperability across QFES services
- » ability to liaise with external agencies
- » appropriate response and operational procedures
- » communications plans
- » response times
- » suitability and effectiveness of equipment and personal protective equipment
- » operational preparedness.

### Examples of exercises conducted or that QFES participated in include:

- » a continuous 48-hour field exercise, conducted by the AUS-1 DART, during August 2018, to reclassify the team as an internationally Classified Heavy USAR team under the auspices of the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG).

This five yearly re-classification exercise was overseen by international classifiers from classified INSARAG rescue teams and resulted in the AUS-1 DART maintaining the prestigious classification as a Heavy USAR team. The multi-jurisdictional Queensland DART continues to be a world leader in USAR operations and mentorship in the international community.

- » an international deployment exercise to the United States of America (USA) from 2-9 June 2019. The AUS-1 DART combined with personnel from New South Wales DART (AUS-2) and federal government representatives from Emergency Management Australia and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to participate in Exercise Shaken Fury at the Mascatauck Urban Training Center in Indiana. The combined Australian DART deployed a team of 60 personnel to the USA, including 30 AUS-1 DART personnel.

This exercise was a full-scale deployment of the combined Australian team to a simulated earthquake event at the Muscatatuck site, utilising the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) C17 transport aircraft to uplift and return the 60 personnel and 14 tonnes of equipment. The exercise was the first time any Australian USAR team had deployed and participated in an international field exercise.

The exercise proved the capability of the Australian USAR deployable capability and builds on the Australian capability to provide assistance to devastated communities in the local, state, national and international environments. The exercise reinforced the ability of all responders to work together.



CAPEX 2018 Tropical Exposure

### AUS-1 DART team successfully reclassifies

In August 2018, the Queensland DART was successful with its reclassification exercise, maintaining international recognition as the AUS-1 DART team.

- » a multi-agency operational exercise known as Exercise Grey Sandpit was held in Warwick on 26 July 2018. During the exercise, QFES personnel joined emergency service workers from QPS and QAS to respond to a simulated major building collapse following a gas explosion. With the first responding vehicle calling for assistance, all services were activated and tasked with responding to the developing disaster. RFS and SES volunteers and USAR specialists worked rapidly as a team to safely extract all casualties from the rubble.
- » an Australian government-led capability exercise held at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy over six days in October 2018. Specialist chemical, biological and radiological response teams comprised of specialists from the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. Approximately 300 personnel and visitors participated each day during the Counter Terrorism Capability Exercise (CAPEX) 2018 Tropical Exposure.

The CAPEX theme used four principles as a basis for scenarios: detect, exploit, attribute and defeat. The training incorporated current and emerging threats using chemical, biological and radiological materials drawn from across the globe.

- » a multi-agency and multiple venue disaster management discussion and planning exercise known as Exercise Loci Spatio was conducted in August 2018. This exercise involved a hypothetical 5.5 magnitude earthquake impacting on the Maranoa Regional Council area with widespread damage and disruption to its infrastructure, essential services and the public. This simulated scenario impacted the Maranoa Local Disaster Management Group, its Local Disaster Coordination Centre in Roma and the four Local Emergency Coordination Committees in Yuleba/Wallumbilla, Surat, Mitchell and Injune. A total of 58 participants, including 10 QFES personnel from three regions, were involved in the exercise across five different locations for a period of three hours. The exercise was the first of an ongoing series of planning, reviewing, training and testing sessions that will assist the regions prepare for, respond to and recover from possible significant events in the future.



## Support to volunteer marine rescue services

The Queensland Government supports approximately 35,000 marine rescue volunteers through service agreements with various marine rescue organisations. QFES, on behalf of the Queensland Government, administers the service agreements. Volunteer marine rescue encompasses AVCGA, RLSSQ, SLSQ and VMRAQ.

Financial support is provided to the volunteer marine rescue organisations, under the Volunteer Marine Rescue Support Package, to assist in the delivery of water safety programs, white water rescue, helicopter support and blue water search and rescue capabilities.

The Service Agreements for VMRAQ and AVCGA concluded on 30 June 2019 with new Service Agreements renewed from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019. Negotiations for the period beyond 31 December 2019 are expected to commence in September 2019.

The Service Agreement with RLSSQ also concluded on 30 June 2019 with a new three-year service agreement commencing on 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022.

The Service Agreement with SLSQ is in place until 30 June 2020.

## Blue Water Review

In Queensland, the AVCGA and VMRAQ provide volunteer marine rescue services with 21 coastguard flotillas and 26 volunteer marine rescue squadrons.

The *Review into Volunteer Marine Rescue Organisations in Queensland* was released on 16 January 2019. It examines and identifies key issues in the provision of marine search and rescue services by AVCGA and VMRAQ which need to be considered to ensure volunteer marine rescue has a sustainable and strong future.

Following the release of the report, a working group was established and chaired by QFES. The working group includes members of AVCGA and VMRAQ as well as key stakeholder organisations such as Maritime Safety Queensland, QPS, QAS, SLSQ and the Queensland Recreational Boating Council Inc.

The working group has formed a vision for the future of the volunteer marine rescue sector, along with other recommendations, which are under consideration. An implementation plan is expected to be finalised by November 2019.

At this stage, there has been significant support for the review across the sector. The Blue Water Review Working Group will continue to engage the sector.

## Supporting our youth and building safer communities

### Emergency Services Cadets Program

The Emergency Services Cadets Program is aimed at young people aged 12 to 17 who want to volunteer, help their community and learn emergency response and leadership skills. The program is delivered in partnership with the PCYC. Participating emergency services include QFES, QAS, QPS, Red Cross, AVCGA, SLSQ and VMRAQ.

There are 17 cadet units in operation at Biggenden; Bowen; Charters Towers; Childers; Cooroora; Hervey Bay; Hinchinbrook (Lucinda); Hughenden; Mackay; QPS Academy at Oxley; Redland City; South Burnett (Nanango); Tara; Toowoomba (Highfields); Torres Shire (Thursday Island); Wolffdene; and St Laurence's College, a school-based group in South Brisbane.



Discussions are underway in several communities to assess the feasibility of opening new cadet units in Cook Shire (Cooktown – July 2019) and Tablelands (Herberton – late 2019).

Highlights for 2018–19 include:

- » 654 young Queenslanders were actively involved in the program supported by 202 adult leaders and 133 active emergency services members at 30 June 2019
- » the launch of three new units – Charters Towers, Hinchinbrook (Lucinda) and South Burnett (Nanango)
- » QFES and PCYC signed a new three-year service agreement from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021 for the provision of the program. The service agreement will see expansion of the number of cadet units to 25 by 2021 and QFES will increase its in-kind support to cadet units with the provision of training and participation in youth development activities with an emergency services focus
- » a three-year MoU was established between QFES and PCYC to support the delivery of Certificate II in Public Safety (SES) to cadet unit members
- » the program delivered 105 community projects such as PCYC events, Emergency Services Open Days and Expos, community clean-up days and ANZAC Day – equating to more than 8,500 hours of community volunteering.

### **Fight Fire Fascination program**

The Fight Fire Fascination (FFF) program is a free, confidential and voluntary educational program designed to support parents and guardians with their efforts to educate their children about fire. The program is based on a belief that children and young people can learn skills to remain safe from fire. This is achieved through a series of visits to the home by specially trained firefighters.

The program is available to children and young people aged between three and 17 who have been involved in at least one concerning fire incident. It works in partnership with schools, mental health services and other community agencies to ensure children and families are supported and receive assistance to develop fire safety skills.

At 30 June 2019, there were 37 trained practitioners across the state. During 2018–19, there were 133 FFF enquiries received and actioned by QFES with 23 related to Restorative Justice Conferencing under a working arrangement with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

### **Road Attitudes and Action Planning program**

The Road Attitudes and Action Planning (RAAP) program is delivered in high schools by operational firefighters. RAAP is a practical lifesaving road safety awareness program for young drivers.

At 30 June 2019, there were 174 program presenters located throughout Queensland.

Highlights for 2018–19 include:

- » delivery of 317 presentations in Queensland schools and education facilities to approximately 54,000 students
- » delivery of the program throughout Queensland including RAAP tours to schools in regional areas such as Chinchilla, Miles and Tara.

## **Best rescue team in the country**

Twenty teams from all over Australia, New Zealand and Asia competed in the Australasian Rescue Challenge in Warragul in July 2018 with the Far Northern Region combo Road Crash Rescue team crowned the best rescue team in the country. The team is comprised of six firefighters from across five stations including Port Douglas, Cairns and Mareeba and a paramedic from the QAS.

Rated against technical, medical and leadership skills and scored by judges from all over the world, the team came fourth overall and first in Australia.



Deepwater, November 2018

## Bushfire season Operation Synergy

The 2018–19 bushfire season, known as Operation Synergy, officially commenced on 1 August 2018 and continued through until 10 January 2019. The name was chosen to reflect the outcome produced when all areas of QFES and its partners collaborate effectively during operations.

The 2018–19 bushfire season was extraordinary, though follows a general trend of an increasingly warm climate. The compounding fire weather conditions and resulting fire behaviour during the bushfire season, particularly during November 2018, had not been seen in Queensland at a similar scale. During Operation Synergy, 2,611 fires burnt more than four million hectares of land.

An unprecedented number of Emergency Alerts were issued for bushfire during this period totalling 53 for the state, with a further 1,984 Bushfire Community Warnings issued.

Air support was provided throughout the season by 72 aircraft. At the peak of the fire activity, 49 aircraft were airborne simultaneously.

QFES also used its extensive predictive fire modelling capability to inform planning and management of

these fires. More than 700 products were developed and disseminated to crews on the ground to support firefighting efforts including Fire Spread Predictions maps and SNAP Reports, which provide a summary of fire behaviour and fire weather estimates.

The peak period of ‘anomalous’ high temperatures extended from 24 to 28 November 2018, fuelling widespread fire events that totalled more than 1.4 million hectares between 22 November and 6 December 2018. QFES’ efforts to protect the community during this peak period included more than 3,000 volunteers and staff who worked day and night to protect lives and property. Efforts to protect the community would not have been possible without the invaluable support provided by more than 1,200 personnel from every state and territory in Australia.

For the first time in Queensland, the Bureau of Meteorology’s Forest Fire Danger Index reached over 130 for the Rockhampton area seeing the ‘catastrophic’ category triggered for a number of hours in Central Region. The CSIRO notes that: ‘an index of 100 means that fires will burn so fast and hot that control is virtually impossible’. Extremes such as these had not been experienced or managed by Queensland communities or emergency responders previously.

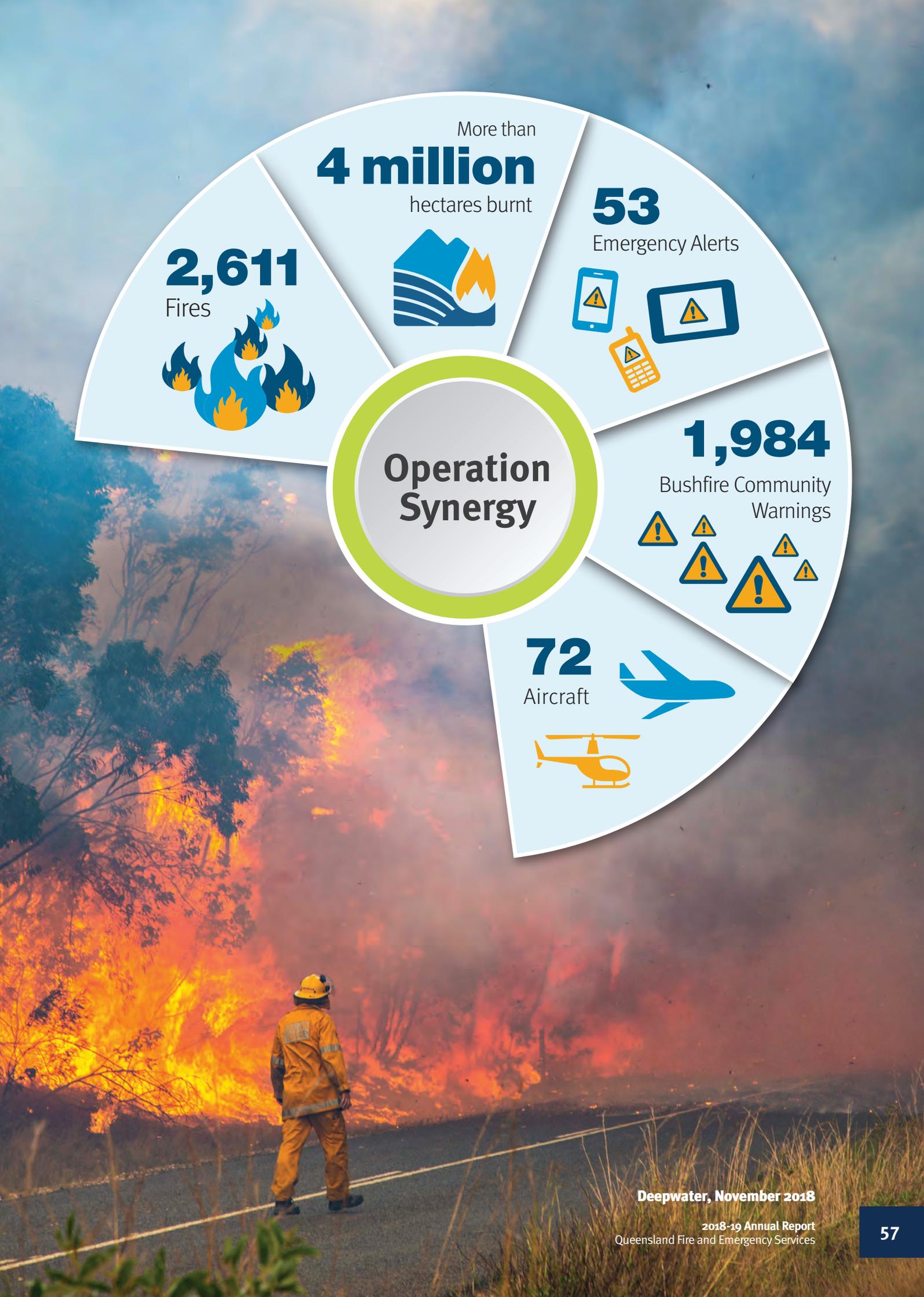
The potential for elevated fire conditions was identified by QFES and preparations were well underway for the seasonal circumstances. Even though QFES was aware of the potential, the particular compounding conditions during late November and December were unexpected.

The mission for Operation Synergy was a unified approach with all stakeholders to achieve the mission objectives of:

- » protection of life – emergency responders and community
- » provision of public information and warnings
- » protection of critical assets
- » protection of community and agricultural assets
- » conservation of environment.

Despite conditions ranging up to catastrophic Fire Danger Ratings, the mission objectives were achieved and significant potential losses were prevented. Key to the protection of lives and homes was QFES’ preparation including the support and involvement from the public, QFES’ interoperability with its partners such as aerial capability, and advances in fire behaviour analysis and prediction. QFES also invested in research to improve bushfire mitigation and response.

Following Operation Synergy, a debrief program was specifically designed and implemented to better appreciate QFES’ efforts during the bushfire season and identify opportunities for improvement through gathering evidence, data and feedback with almost 5,000 observations collected.



More than  
**4 million**  
hectares burnt



**2,611**  
Fires



**53**  
Emergency Alerts



**Operation  
Synergy**

**1,984**  
Bushfire Community  
Warnings



**72**  
Aircraft



Deepwater, November 2018

# Severe weather season

## Operation Convergence

The 2018–19 severe weather season, known as Operation Convergence, officially commenced on 1 November 2018 and continued through until 30 April 2019. The name was chosen to reflect the requirement for convergence of capability which is scalable and adaptable to meet the needs of community, achieved through leadership and proactive engagement across community, government and not-for-profit organisations including public/private partnerships.

As the fires abated in December 2018, the first major cyclone of the season, Tropical Cyclone Owen (December 2018) menaced areas around the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York. Tropical Cyclone Owen was a long-lived system that moved from the Coral Sea into the Gulf of Carpentaria and back again, reaching cyclone intensity on two occasions. Torrential rain was experienced in Halifax where an Australian record fell on 16 December 2018. The Bruce Highway was cut north of Ingham and two rescues occurred. Sugar cane crops were impacted and hundreds of chickens were lost to flooding.

Soon after Tropical Cyclone Owen disappeared, Tropical Cyclone Penny formed (December 2018), making landfall along the west coast of Cape York Peninsula near Weipa late on New Year's Day 2019, uprooting trees and flooding local roads. Following landfall, Tropical Cyclone Penny tracked in an easterly direction across Cape York Peninsula and emerged over the Coral Sea on 2 January 2019. The remnants of Tropical Cyclone Penny tracked back towards the Queensland coast over the next few days and the system once more made landfall near Bowen on 9 January 2019 with heavy rainfall occurring.



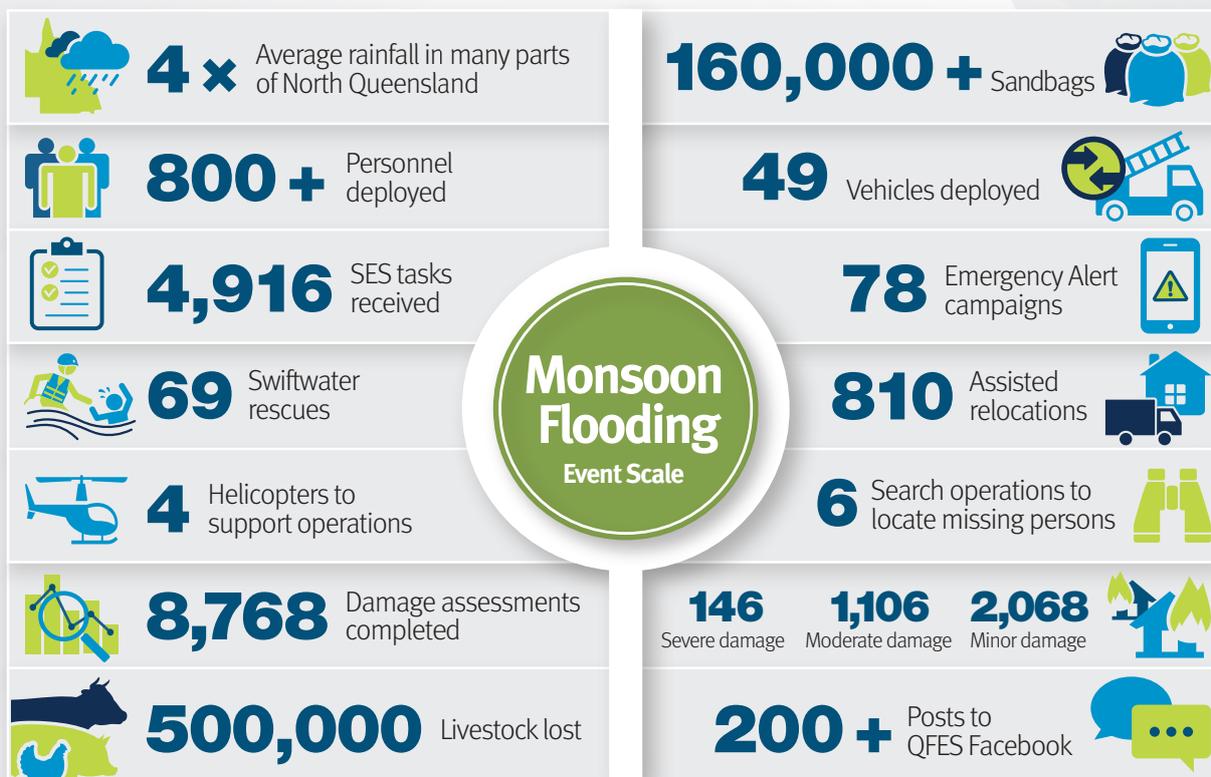
Townsville, February 2019

On 21 January 2019, a burst of monsoon westerlies formed the monsoon trough where a number of low centres were initially present around Cape York. The monsoon trough brought torrential rain and thunderstorms about the Mossman and Daintree areas. Rapid onset, major record flooding occurred in the Daintree River as a result. A tropical low, formed in the monsoon trough, moved slowly south west into Gulf country and stalled from 31 January 2019 to 5 February 2019. Concurrently, the monsoon trough, which extended from the low east into the Coral Sea, was also nearly stationary in the Cardwell area. During this time, periods of torrential rain occurred both near the tropical low over northwest Queensland, and to the south of the monsoon trough over the Herbert and Lower Burdekin District, in Townsville and surrounding areas.

Long-standing records were also broken on the east coast, with locations including Townsville receiving more than their average annual rainfall in a week. Major flooding occurred in the region and the Ross River Dam reached almost 250 per cent capacity. Over 3,000 properties in Townsville were flooded before the system moved towards the northeast and continued to weaken until 8 February 2019 when it



Ross River Dam, Townsville  
February 2019



### Summary of the Scale of the Monsoon Flooding Event 25 January to 14 February 2019

was last discernible. Three deaths occurred during this flooding event which are under review or investigation by appropriate authorities. QFES offers its sincere condolences to all those affected.

Many locations in the northwest areas of Cloncurry, Julia Creek and Richmond received well over the average annual rainfall in under a week, breaking long-standing records. The Flinders River at Richmond broke the 1974 flood level and record flooding occurred over a wide area. Over 500,000 livestock perished as a result of the floodwaters, significantly impacting graziers at an estimated cost in excess of \$1 billion.

Also during this period, Tropical Cyclone Oma developed, intensifying into a Category 2 system on 11 February 2019. Tropical Cyclone Oma continued to strengthen and reached Category 3 on 16 February 2019. Tropical Cyclone Oma caused alarm in South East Queensland as the Category 2 system tracked south and then west in the Coral Sea. Some forecasts suggested it could make landfall near Brisbane but eventually it tracked back out to sea. The system generated large waves and powerful surf from the Capricornia coast to northern New South Wales, along with strong winds along the southeast Queensland coast.

An embedded tropical low on the monsoon trough in the Coral Sea tracked towards the Cape York Peninsula and quickly intensified into a tropical cyclone. Severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor made landfall on 19 March 2019 south of Lockhart River as a Category 3 system. Severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor tracked across the far north of the Cape York Peninsula and generated heavy rainfall. Severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor re-intensified to a Category 4 over the Gulf of Carpentaria before making landfall south of Port McArthur in the Northern Territory. After making landfall, the system weakened and tracked south, producing widespread heavy falls from western to central Queensland, extending into southern and south eastern parts of the state, with some areas experiencing their highest March daily rainfall on record.

The one in 100 years rainfall produced by the monsoon trough in the northern areas of the state during January and February 2019, highlighted that this was no ordinary wet season. However, work undertaken by QFES ensured service and operational preparedness prior to the severe weather season, enabled QFES to support Queensland communities to manage the impacts of the disaster events.

# Case study

## Interstate support

### Overview

As devastating bushfires swept through much of Queensland from November to mid-December 2018, QFES personnel worked tirelessly day and night to respond to the unprecedented fire activity. With every region in Queensland experiencing fire activity, resources were stretched with fatigue of personnel a factor for consideration.



### What happened

QFES contacted the National Resource Sharing Centre and made a formal request for assistance for interstate resources to support the ongoing firefighting operations in Queensland. The request was for both crews and Incident Management Team roles. The request was approved by the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee and a total of 1,202 personnel plus additional aircraft and equipment deployed to Queensland.

The National Resource Sharing Centre maintains the Arrangement for Interstate Assistance which is the basis for sharing fire and emergency service resources across state boundaries and between Australian states and territories and New Zealand.

Career and volunteer firefighters mobilised to help local response activities, with New South Wales RFS providing additional support, deploying across the border with their appliances.

Interstate support was utilised in all areas across the state, from strike crews to Incident Management Team personnel and specialist roles such as fire behaviour analysts and fire investigators.

The ability to rotate interstate personnel into response activities provided the ability to rest local personnel and manage fatigue.

Response efforts on North Stradbroke Island were multi-jurisdictional with support provided by personnel from South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria.

### Conclusion

Although observations indicate improvement opportunities in the way QFES manages interstate assistance for future operations, the support provided by interstate crews was invaluable to the response. There is opportunity to strengthen logistics processes for the request, management and tasking of interstate personnel in preparation for future receipt of interstate assistance.

Interstate deployments provide deployees and local crews with the opportunity to share skills and knowledge. There is great benefit to see how other agencies and jurisdictions operate with the opportunity to leverage processes that may be applied on their return from deployment.

In January-February 2019, a number of QFES personnel were able to reciprocate the support and assistance provided by other jurisdictions by deploying to Tasmania to assist crews battling blazes in intense heatwave conditions.

## Priority area

# 3. Recovery

### Outcome

Appropriate relief and support is provided after responses to fire and emergency events until a managed transition occurs.

### Key initiatives

- » 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.

### Measure of success

- » Number of damage assessments undertaken by QFES

**Refer to the Key performance measures on pages 26-29 for 2018–19 data.**

## Bushfire Rapid Risk Assessment

During 2018–19, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, with assistance from QFES, piloted a Bushfire Rapid Risk Assessment as a part of an interstate multi-disciplinary, multi-agency capability deployed to Agnes Water in late December 2018. The assessment, which focussed on the Eurimbula and Deepwater National Parks, identified 24 risks to cultural heritage values, biodiversity, flooding and erosion, built assets and tourism. Treatments to the value of \$1.86 million were determined and have assisted with immediate stabilisation and informed the long-term recovery needs of the area.

## Damage assessments

QFES continues to manage and improve the damage assessment capability within QFES for community recovery following severe weather events.

The upgraded damage assessment program is based on iPad technology and provides an instant record of damage as the data is collected from the field. Trained DART personnel collect damage assessment data to ensure data aligns with the damage assessment data dictionary that is consistent across AFAC partners.

During 2018–19, a total of 9,489 damage assessment surveys were collected by QFES which is a significant increase from 2,020 in 2017–18. The 2018–19

increase is due to the monsoon flooding event which occurred in January–February 2019.

In conjunction with the QRA, QFES continues to provide follow-up assessments of damaged locations at specific times following significant events. QFES also provided assistance to QRA on two occasions during the reporting period to conduct follow-up damage assessment data collection in the aftermath of Severe Tropical Cyclone Trevor (March 2019).

The damage assessment capability is being supplemented by the introduction of an additional data collection program called Impact Note. This program has been developed for use by staff and volunteers in the early aftermath of a severe weather event to provide early indications of damage in their local areas. The early collection of damage data enables the appropriate and strategic deployment of Damage Assessment Teams to areas of greatest need, resulting in the best use of resources for the community. Impact Note will provide an early damage heat map and will be available for use by staff and volunteers without the need for specific training. The integration of damage assessment and Impact Note provides an operational link between permanent and volunteer personnel, working as one service in support of the community.

A total of 173 Impact Note surveys were collected by QFES during 2018–19.

## Disaster Assistance Response Team

QFES maintains a DART comprising over 350 trained staff. The DART is a multi-skilled, multi-jurisdictional team consisting of staff from FRS, QAS, QPS (Canine Unit) and PSBA and includes volunteer doctors, canine handlers and engineers.

The DART is internationally deployable as a 75-person team for earthquake incidents and is flexible and agile enough to provide response and recovery, and command and control capability in a vast array of severe weather and flood events. The team can deploy as small swiftwater response or damage assessment teams of two to four personnel, through to the full-scale deployment of a 75-person taskforce as needed.

In June 2019, the AUS-1 DART combined with personnel from the New South Wales DART (AUS-2) and federal government representatives from Emergency Management Australia and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to participate in an international deployment exercise, known as Exercise Shaken Fury (for further information refer page 52).

## Flexible Habitat

QFES maintains a deployable flexible habitat tentage system that is available for deployment to emergency and disaster events. The flexible habitat is deployment-ready on a semi-trailer at the State Deployment Centre with the capacity to house 70 people on stretchers in the tentage system. This capability is supplemented by two additional tentage systems in the QFES USAR caches.

The flexible habitat is used in response and recovery activities in Queensland and interstate as necessary, providing QFES with a base of operations for community response, or providing emergency shelter for affected communities.

During 2018–19, the flexible habitat was deployed for operations and event support at:

- » Agnes Waters during Operation Synergy bushfire response
- » Townsville during East Coast Tropical Monsoon response
- » Rockhampton during the SES State Disaster Challenge.

## Transition planning

During 2018–19, QFES continued to work with local governments to review their local disaster management plans to ensure efficient transition planning from response to recovery coordination.

Post impact, QFES undertakes damage assessments to gather information about the number of homes and other buildings damaged which supports phase one of recovery planning (for further information refer page 61).

QFES also assists with transition planning through representation on appointed Recovery Committees. A QFES officer may also be appointed as a State Recovery Coordinator to assist in coordinating the recovery and reconstruction efforts of government and non-government agencies in the affected areas.

## Priority area

# 4. Strategic capability

### Outcome

QFES is strategically capable and agile.

### Key initiatives

- » 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 PRRR programs.

### Measures of success

- » Percentage of staff that recognise that the department has a shared QFES approach to service delivery
- » Percentage of staff that understand how their work contributes to organisational objectives

Refer to the Key performance measures on pages 26-29 for 2018-19 data.

## Lessons management framework

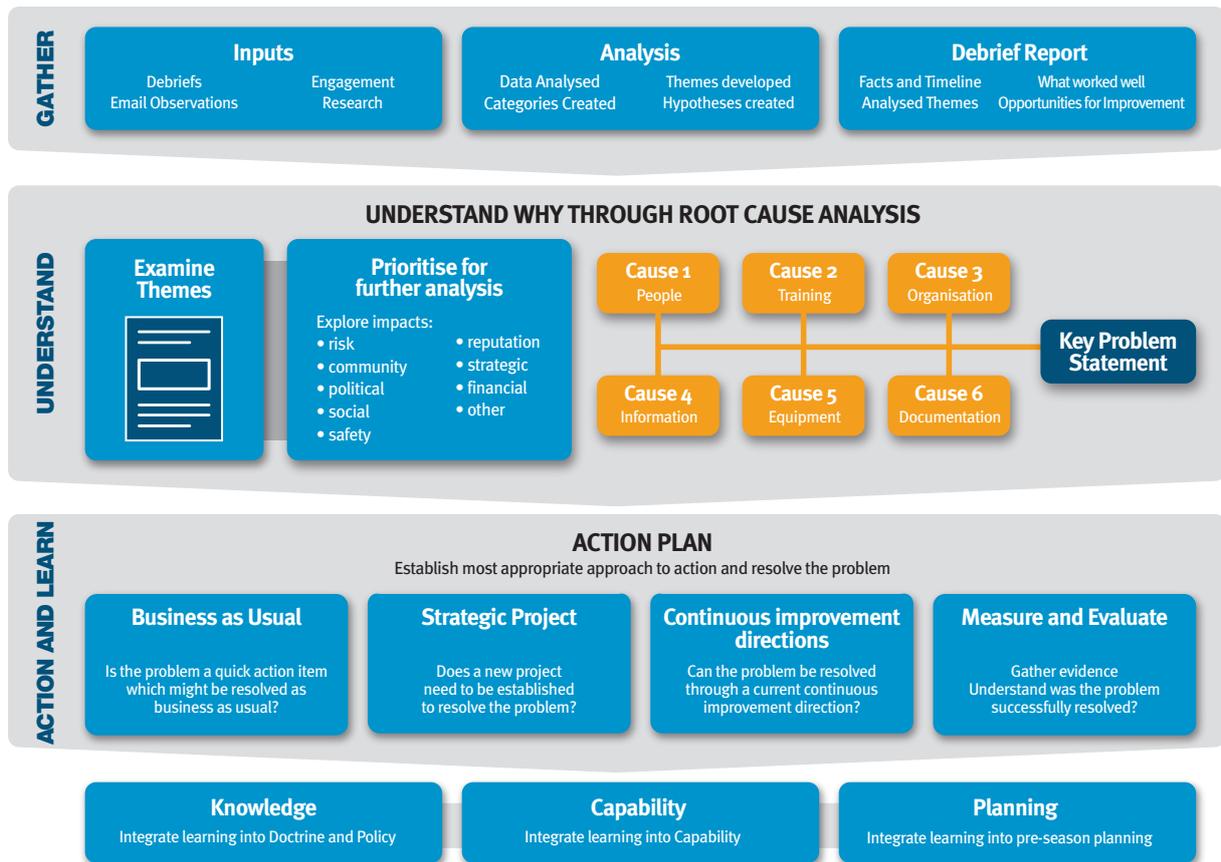
During the reporting period, QFES introduced a Lessons Management Framework to enable continuous improvement through learning. The process allows for the scalability of local solutions implemented at the local level through to broad scale solutions implemented as formal strategic projects.

A new debrief and lessons management process has been developed to help the department adapt to meet the needs of staff, volunteers, stakeholders and community as a result of operational activity.

The debrief and lessons management process provides QFES personnel with the opportunity to contribute to the continuous improvement of QFES, to ensure the department develops, adapts and transforms to meet the needs of the workforce, stakeholders and the Queensland community.

The new process was implemented following Operations Synergy and Convergence resulting in significant learnings and opportunity for improvement for QFES.

## Lessons Management - Review and Improvement Cycle



## Service delivery model

The QFES integrated service determination model (ISDM) is a place-based approach that is focused on engagement with partners and community to co-design QFES services and resources based on the unique risks and hazards faced by the local community.

The ISDM was approved by the BoM in late 2018 and is being further developed to focus on engaging with partners and community to apply an evidenced-based approach to QFES services and tailor resourcing to be co-designed to adapt to the unique risks and hazards faced by the local community. A component of the ISDM is the QFES Human Capital Optimisation Matrix which has been developed to ensure QFES applies a consistent approach to the allocation of resources across the state.

## Legal status of rural fire brigades

The *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* provides delegated powers to rural fire brigades for the purpose of conducting their operations. However, the legal status of brigades is far more complex. A review was undertaken in 2017–18 to gain a better understanding of the impact the current legal status has on brigades with the findings of the review to be used to develop solutions and strategies that will support a modern rural fire service into the future.

The Legal Status of Rural Fire Brigades final report was produced in August 2018 documenting findings and opportunities to improve stakeholder understanding of the impact and limitations of the current legal status of brigades. As a result of the report findings, statewide staff awareness sessions have been undertaken with RFS scheduled to commence awareness communication with rural fire brigades in 2019–20.

## Working for Queensland survey

The Working for Queensland (WfQ) survey is an annual survey which measures Queensland public service employees' perceptions of their work, manager, team and organisation. The survey is conducted by an independent provider and facilitated by the Public Service Commission.

The 2018 survey, undertaken in September 2018, provided an opportunity for QFES staff to have their say and make a difference, and provide insight into the QFES workforce and the issues that matter to them.

The results indicate that 86 per cent of participants are proud to tell others they work for QFES and 82 per cent are satisfied in their current job. There were positive improvements in the perception of leadership, innovation, learning and development, workplace culture and inclusiveness.

QFES continues to utilise the insights provided from the survey each year to formulate action plans and continue to improve and develop as a department.

The 2019 survey is scheduled to be undertaken in September 2019.

## Priority area

# 5. Business-enabling services

### Outcome

QFES' business-enabling services enhance, integrate and support the department's service delivery and are compliant, authorised and fit-for-purpose.

### Key initiatives

- » 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.

### Measures of success

- » Total expenditure as a percentage of the approved operating budget
- » Level of satisfaction with QFES as a workplace as indicated by workforce survey results
- » Percentage of volunteers satisfied with the experience of volunteering for the SES
- » Percentage of volunteers satisfied with the experience of volunteering for the RFS
- » Agency engagement levels
- » Completion rates for compulsory workplace training

**Refer to the Key performance measures on pages 26-29 for 2018–19 data.**

## Fiscal sustainability

The QFES Fiscal Sustainability Review was completed in March 2016, providing 12 recommendations to support QFES to achieve sustainable fiscal performance.

Since that time, QFES has embarked on a range of projects in response to the recommendations including embedding a new governance framework in 2017, implementing a Procurement Policy and conducting a financial sustainability review of the SFEST in 2019. QFES also finalised a Fiscal Sustainability Strategy 2019–2023 and Fiscal Sustainability Implementation Roadmap 2019–20 in June 2019.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure QFES can:

- » meet its present and future financial commitments
- » position itself for unforeseen changes to future income
- » ensure continuity of service delivery to the community into the future.

The strategy will be delivered through the Implementation Roadmap which outlines the activities QFES will implement in 2019–20.

## Governance framework

A review of QFES governance committees was undertaken in 2018 to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of structures established in 2017. The review found that there had been significant improvements since implementation including:

- » mobilising committees
- » development of a committees' relationship matrix
- » development of the committee threshold document
- » support network for secretariats
- » a mature functioning Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (ARCC).

The review also provided recommendations to enable QFES to deliver the next step of change for corporate governance to address the findings and associated recommendations set out in the Fiscal Sustainability Review (March 2016).

## Safety for children (Blue cards)

Queensland is recognised as having one of the strongest working with children check systems in Australia. This system is continuing to be strengthened with a series of reforms.

QFES personnel are dedicated to keeping Queensland communities safe and this includes the youngest and most vulnerable – our children.

The usual functions performed by many QFES personnel fall within regulated employment under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*; meaning that approximately 30,000 personnel are required to hold a current blue card.

Blue cards are one of a range of measures in place to protect children, along with the government's 'No Card, No Start' system which comes into effect in early 2020. QFES has a legislative and shared responsibility to achieve the government's commitment.

Progress to date includes:

- » the establishment of a QFES Safety for Children Working Group
- » ongoing consultation with industrial unions and industrial associations
- » preparation of QFES' strategy, policy and procedures and other support resources.

Blue card application lodgement commenced in June 2019 for existing QFES personnel required to hold a blue card.

# Strategy 2030

*Strategy 2030 reflects the expectations of Queenslanders for modern emergency services.*

In a fast-paced, ever-changing world, it is imperative that the fire and emergency services provided to the Queensland community are contemporary, relevant and of the highest standards. To achieve this, QFES must ensure it understands the needs and expectations of the community.

Strategy 2030, launched in June 2019, was informed by conversations with staff and volunteers, communities and partner organisations. A series of workshops and focus groups considered the impact of a range of global trends on fire and emergency services over the next 12 years.

Strategy 2030 reflects how QFES proposes to meet the future challenges and realise the opportunities that will be present in Queensland through to 2030.

Strategy 2030 is a significant step to advance QFES to keep pace with change, positioning the department as leaders in fire and emergency services and ensuring that QFES continues to be a trusted and reliable frontline service that is also innovative, responsive and forward facing.

The five guiding principles of Strategy 2030 are embedded across governance, risk, planning and performance mechanisms to further support and ensure alignment and execution.

To achieve the vision of Strategy 2030, QFES is embarking on a transformation journey which includes a series of projects and strategic initiatives to deliver a future QFES (refer Continuous improvement directions and Strategic initiatives on pages 68-70 for further information).

Strategy 2030 can be accessed at [www.qfes.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au)

**Capable communities**  
Local solutions to local problems achieve sustainable outcomes. We will focus on working with communities to develop knowledge and practical skills to maximise capability to prevent or reduce the impact of emergency events and to speed recovery.

**Adaptive**  
Building adaptive capacity with the community, the organisation, and the emergency and disaster management sectors will enhance our collective ability to manage the unexpected. Together we will build trust to learn, adjust and anticipate.

**Interoperable**  
All parts of the system are able to work together effectively, in a coordinated way, and can connect to neighbouring systems when needed. We will support individual parts or systems to complement each other for a seamless whole, without duplication or gaps.

Our people  
**Guiding Principles**

**Sustainable**  
Economic, environmental and social sustainability go hand in hand to contribute to a capable and adaptive Queensland. We will live this principle by maintaining value-for-money capability that minimises our impact on the environment and reflects community need.

**Intelligence**  
The community, our partners, and our people are empowered to make decisions with greater confidence. We are uniquely positioned to collect, analyse and interpret a range of information, integral to better decision-making about emergencies in Queensland.

## C4I Foundations Review

The *C4I Foundations Review*, undertaken by retired Major General McNam AO, and finalised in August 2018, identified how QFES could deliver contemporary command, control, coordination, communications and intelligence (C4I) information capabilities. The intent of the review recommendations was accepted and referred to QFES leaders for implementation through the continuous improvement directions.

## Continuous improvement directions

QFES leaders and key stakeholders from across the state worked collaboratively to establish a continuous improvement agenda to support Strategy 2030 and its associated strategic initiatives.

Extensive engagement highlighted the following continuous improvement priorities:

- » implementation of functions to enable state directorates to provide standards and strategy whilst enabling regions to deliver services within communities
- » enhance QFES' C4I capability by strengthening the command and control capability through strengthened collaboration and communication
- » define the strategic role of the State Operations Centre, Regional Operations Centres, Incident Control Centres and Emergency Operations Centres
- » enhance communications devices to further support operations
- » build on the QFES culture to enable effective operations
- » develop a common operating picture to enable decision-making.

These priorities will be implemented through key strategic initiatives which align with the Strategy 2030 guiding principles and other business-as-usual work.

## Strategic initiatives

The key strategic initiatives under Strategy 2030 are:

### Digital Transformation Strategy

QFES has embarked on a journey of Digital Transformation to align people, technology and information, and to empower and equip QFES personnel, stakeholders and the community to do new things, in new ways, to rapidly meet evolving demands and expectations.

Digital transformation is a process of shifting the organisation to new ways of thinking and working using digital, social, mobile and emerging technologies. The ongoing program, which began in late 2018, involves changing leadership approaches, introducing new thinking models, and encouraging and sustaining innovation. The focus for 2019 and towards 2030 is to increase the use of appropriate technology to improve the way QFES personnel, clients, suppliers, partners and stakeholders work together.

### Engagement Strategy

The Engagement Strategy, approved in June 2019 following a department-wide consultation process, delivers on QFES' commitment to achieve accepted outcomes through engagement with its people, partners and communities. Implementation of the strategy includes a range of projects to improve engagement such as:

- » auditing of the current engagement landscape
- » reviewing policy, procedure, doctrine and governance arrangements
- » developing consistent engagement training which is customised to different needs
- » establishing new communications and engagement platforms
- » developing a consistent approach to engagement planning and documentation
- » building engagement case studies, updating materials and creating a toolkit
- » developing a platform to improve visibility of QFES engagement at the local, regional and state levels
- » establishing a network of QFES personnel with key engagement responsibilities.

The strategy recognises QFES personnel are highly trusted within their local communities and therefore well placed to tailor engagement.

By using a place-based approach, QFES can ensure stakeholder engagement is about matters that are important to them and are delivered through suitable channels at appropriate times.

The strategy also promotes a coordinated approach including aligning engagement efforts and sharing and pooling information and resources.

Evaluation of engagement activity is designed to cover local, regional and state levels. Local and regional communication and engagement plans will prompt for engagement evaluation as part of the process which will inform Regional Engagement Plans and the Annual Engagement Strategy ensuring evaluation is occurring at all levels through the department.

The strategy is available at: [www.qfes.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au)



## Knowledge Environment

The Knowledge Environment creates an environment that supports QFES in its delivery of services to Queensland through clearly defined capabilities with the following initiatives:

- » a set of eight baseline capabilities and a capability assessment model to access, develop, plan and evaluate QFES' service requirements and ensure it is able to meet service needs into the future has been developed.
- » the establishment of a knowledge framework that provides knowledge-sharing in part, through strategic, operational and tactical policy and doctrine. The doctrine is informed by data, lessons and performance information which generates knowledge to drive improved strategy, innovation and capability.
- » a learning environment through lessons management which supports ongoing development of capability, policy and doctrine, and improved service delivery (refer Lessons management framework on pages 63-64).
- » the establishment of elements of assurance which underpin the integrity of decision-making on capability through functions such as internal audit, external reporting and the Enterprise Portfolio Management Office.

The combination of initiatives which make up the Knowledge Environment will be implemented in stages across 2019-20.

## Service Alignment Plan

The aim of the Service Alignment Plan is to strengthen QFES' local capacity to ensure adequate support, resources and local decision-making and that QFES' regional service delivery considers a place-based approach.

The plan is being defined taking into consideration engagement on the continuous improvement directions and the other key strategic initiatives with QFES personnel.

On 8 April 2019, QFES moved to a new organisational model to enhance operational capability, improve efficiency and give more autonomy to regionally-based QFES personnel to make locally appropriate decisions.

The model sees regional leaders for FRS, RFS and SES and Business Operations report directly to a regional Assistant Commissioner. State-based Assistant Commissioners and their support staff will continue to play an important role in providing strategic oversight and guidance to ensure support and consistency across the state.

In addition, from May 2019 the State Operations Centre and Regional Operations Centres maintain a 24-hour capability. There will be one chain of command, a strengthened lessons learned process, improved training and exercising, and visibility of all resources. This active oversight will ensure a seamless escalation to response when major incidents occur.

## Strategic Investment Plan

The Strategic Investment Plan will support QFES in developing a robust framework for identifying and prioritising investments to support decision-making and contribute to fiscal sustainability. An interim Strategic Investment Plan will be delivered in 2019-20. The interim plan will align with the QFES Fiscal Sustainability Strategy 2019-2023 and the relevant principles of the broader Queensland Government's fiscal strategy.

Continuing work on the development of a Strategic Investment Framework and subsequent Strategic Investment Plans will also align with other significant initiatives underway including capability modelling and service alignment.

## Legislative review

Since November 2013, QFES has undergone a period of reform and transformation. While organisational and strategic change has occurred, the legislation which supports QFES and its operations has remained relatively the same.

QFES commenced reviewing portfolio legislation in the reporting period to identify opportunities for improvements to the legislation, with an initial focus on addressing technical issues within the legislation. The review will ensure QFES is in the best position to meet the existing and emerging needs of Queensland communities.

QFES is reviewing the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*; *Fire and Emergency Services Regulation 2011*; *Disaster Management Act 2003*; and *Disaster Management Regulation 2014*; and a number of other Acts that impact on the way QFES does business.

## People and Culture Strategy

QFES is dedicated to continuously developing its organisational culture. Ongoing cultural development will be a key enabler to delivering on Strategy 2030 and the department's future vision.

The QFES People and Culture Strategy, expected to be released in 2019-20, sets the strategic vision for culture. The strategy will be supported by a Culture Framework which will provide guidelines, principles and a revised process focusing on a more mature approach to continuous cultural development for QFES. The framework is expected to be finalised by 31 December 2019.

## Volunteerism Strategy

The QFES Volunteerism Strategy, launched in October 2018, aims to create contemporary volunteer models which reflect best practice, innovation and social trends across volunteerism and embed these models in the QFES culture and ethos.

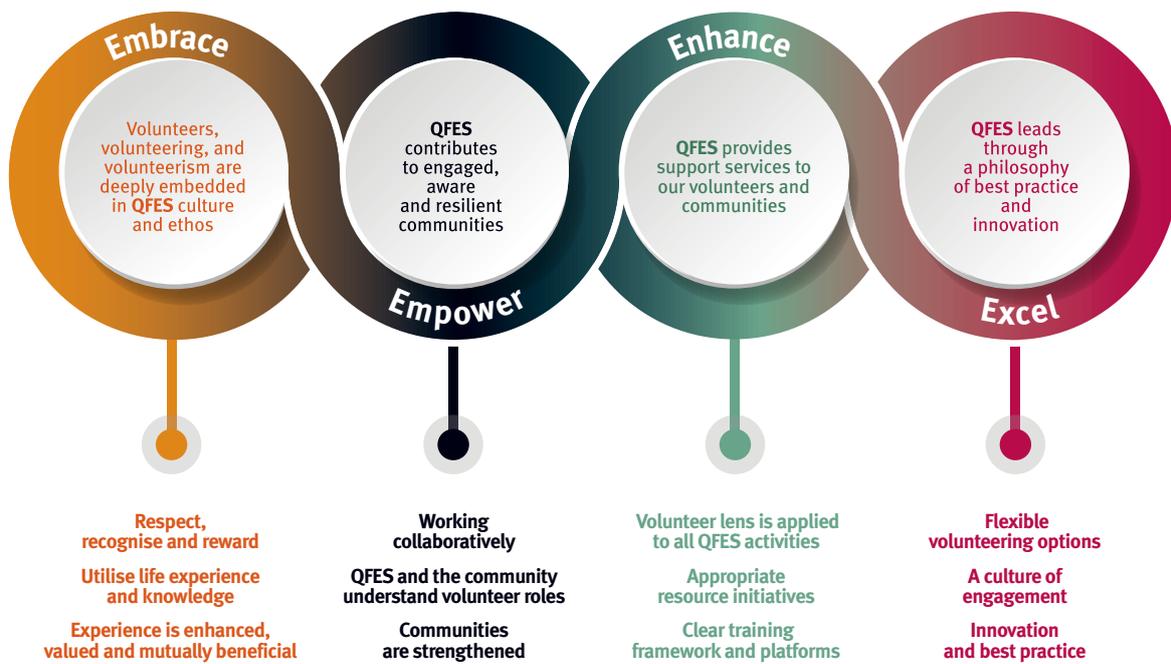
The strategy sets out the strategic priorities and guiding principles for the development of a contemporary and robust volunteerism model for QFES.

The strategy establishes a framework for the application of a 'volunteer lens' across all QFES activities and seeks to incorporate the value of volunteers, volunteering and volunteerism into the future of an integrated QFES. The priorities will guide the development of a future volunteer workforce that is sustainable, capable, more closely connected to its local community and better able to adapt to organisational and societal changes.

QFES is developing an implementation plan which establishes actions based on data collected during consultation with volunteers at the Volunteerism Strategy roadshows held across Queensland. These workshops also engaged QFES state office business units, state services, QFES Regional Leadership Teams, local governments and other stakeholders, both internal and external, to help put solutions into action through the implementation plan.

The Volunteerism Strategy Implementation Plan will identify the strategies to foster inclusivity and recognition. One way this has been achieved is with the introduction and presentation of the Emergency Service Volunteer Pin, launched by the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services on 21 May 2019 during National Volunteer Week (refer page 49).

The QFES Volunteerism Strategy is available at [www.qfes.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfes.qld.gov.au).



## Emergency Management Levy

The Emergency Management Levy (EML) provides around 75 per cent of funding for QFES to provide a wide range of vital emergency and disaster management services across Queensland. QFES services that benefit from the EML are provided by paid and volunteer staff to help Queenslanders before, during and after emergency and disaster events. The owner of land classified as prescribed property must pay the levy.

Under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* and subordinate legislation, the Commissioner is responsible for determining the boundaries of a levy district and the class of that district.

Levies are set by the *Fire and Emergency Services Regulation 2011* and vary according to the classification of the property and class of a district in which the property is situated.

During 2018–19, levy boundaries in the fast-growing greater Ipswich and Toowoomba areas were reviewed following consultation with stakeholders including rural fire brigades and property owners. Changes to the boundaries took effect from 1 July 2019. There were no changes to rural fire brigades servicing these areas, nor their operational response activities. Reviewing the levy boundaries and making sure the levy is applied correctly ensures residents continue to receive world-class fire and emergency services.

## Enterprise Portfolio Management Office

QFES established an Enterprise Portfolio Management Office in 2018–19 to provide governance, assurance and a mechanism for the monitoring of strategic projects. The Enterprise Portfolio Management Office uses Prince2 methodology as a baseline to provide advice and guidance on managing projects and reports to QFES management on the progress of active projects. Through standardising project management processes and procedures, while simultaneously providing continuous development through formal, experiential and social learning, QFES is developing a good practice business environment for the management of key projects. This approach will ensure investments and decisions are made and projects delivered that meet the requirements of a modern fire and emergency service.

## Volunteering for Queensland survey

The QFES Volunteerism Strategy aims to embrace, empower and enhance QFES' volunteer workforce. An important way to do this is by listening to volunteers' voices and using feedback to inform the future.

The 2019 Volunteering for Queensland survey was held in February – April 2019 and was open to all QFES volunteers, with more than 2,500 volunteers completing the survey. The survey is conducted biennially and assesses volunteers' satisfaction and seeks feedback on workplace environments, how QFES works together, and how QFES supports and engages with volunteers. The survey was undertaken through independent survey platform Qualtrics.

The results indicate that 96 per cent of volunteers intended to continue volunteering with QFES and 82 per cent would recommend being a QFES volunteer. There was also a 13 per cent increase in volunteers believing there had been positive changes in culture over the past two years.

Results are being presented across the state and will continue to inform the QFES future direction through action planning processes that will guide the department as it improves and develops.



## New approach to innovation

The QFES Planning, Research and Innovation Unit has been participating in a six-month States of Change learning program since April 2019, run by Nesta an international not-for-profit innovation organisation based in the United Kingdom.

The training program is designed to strengthen innovation capacity across governments and develop the next generation of public innovation learning. Ten government departments and agencies from around Australia and New Zealand are participating in the program.

The innovation approach adopted by the department will be to focus on a small number of key business challenges each year and to work with subject matter experts to understand why the issues are occurring and to identify options to trial. Solutions that have been successfully piloted and approved will then be implemented by the department.

In 2019–20, the department will:

- » continue to progress an innovation project to reduce the volume of unwanted fire alarms in consultation with first responders, business partners and clients
- » establish an innovation and research governance function to oversee and direct this work
- » develop and implement an innovation and research framework.

## Service agreements with PSBA

The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) report *Delivering shared corporate services in Queensland Report 3: 2018–19* tabled in Parliament on 27 September 2018 included a recommendation to customers of shared corporate service providers to ensure Queensland Government's shared service providers are delivering value for money now and positioned to successfully deliver into the future.

QFES acknowledges the recommendations of the QAO report and is committed to driving the effectiveness and efficiency of corporate services delivered by Queensland Shared Services and PSBA through proactive engagement, quality process inputs, collaborative improvement initiatives and effective monitoring of service level agreement performance.

As at 30 June 2019, the following service agreements with PSBA are in place:

- » Asset and Procurement Services
- » Finance Services
- » Frontline and Digital Services
- » Human Resources.

QFES is undertaking an annual review of the service agreements and service catalogues to assess if the department's needs are being effectively supported.

## Document and records management

As part of the department's goal of building organisational information management capabilities, QFES is progressing plans to implement a solution to support the department with managing its documents and records. An enterprise wide electronic Document and Records Management System (eDRMS) will enable QFES to maximise the value of documents and records with consistent and timely capture and compliance management.

The department anticipates a number of benefits from the new system including improving accessibility, reduction in duplication and promoting information-sharing across the department. The eDRMS solution will also enhance life-cycle management of records by automating controls governing information security and disposal.

## Information management

In August 2018, QFES commenced maturing its Information Management and Information Security environments drafting associated policies and frameworks.

QFES will continue to mature its Information Management Framework and Information Security Management System to enable the business to perform its key capabilities and work towards Strategy 2030 aspirations.

## Payroll system

QFES is scheduled to transition to the Aurion payroll system in February 2020. Aurion is the whole-of-government payroll system and will replace QFES' ageing and unsupported Lattice system.

This transition required all QFES staff to be aligned to a consistent pay cycle and in April/May 2019, QFES aligned its operational officers' and auxiliary officers' pay cycles to corporate public servant pay cycles in preparation for the 2020 go live.

## White Ribbon Accreditation

In May 2019, QFES achieved accreditation as a White Ribbon Australia workplace. The accreditation recognises QFES' commitment to preventing violence against women, supporting employees affected by domestic and family violence, and promoting a safe and respectful workplace for all.

# Supporting those in need

QFES personnel continue to provide support for causes and people in need in many ways including raising awareness and fundraising activities. Events in 2018–19 include:

- » **QFES Regional Challenge 2018:** This challenge pitched region against region (including State Office), over a three-month period to see which region could raise the most funds, with \$8,000 being donated to the Children's Hospital Foundation and the provision of support to the Children's Hospital Foundation's 'City Blitz' leading into the Channel 9 Telethon fundraising.
- » **Climb for Cancer:** In June 2019, emergency services personnel, including QFES, QAS and QPS, raced up 37 floors of Brisbane's Waterfront Place and raised funds for the Mater Hospital Climb for Cancer with more than \$15,000 raised.
- » **Bike 4 Burns:** The seven-day tour started on 15 May 2019 in Bundaberg and travelled south through Biggenden, Goomeri, Nanango, Crows Nest, Clifton and Ipswich before finishing at the Queensland Children's Hospital in South Brisbane. In its thirteenth year, the annual ride raises awareness and funds for research and treatment for children suffering from burns and injuries through the Queensland Children's Hospital Foundation. This year's 50 riders from QFES, QAS and QPS raised approximately \$55,000 for the cause.



- » **Hummingbird House:** The Public Safety International Women's Day event held on 8 March 2019 celebrated the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women across the world. The event also raised \$33,000 in support of Hummingbird House, Queensland's only children's hospice, supporting children affected by a life-limiting condition and their families.
- » **Darkness to Daylight:** participation in the 110km event in Brisbane on 29 to 30 May 2019 supporting domestic and family violence. QFES had a record number of walkers and runners and raised more than \$3,500.

