

Strategy 2030

Strong future. Stronger together.



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Foreword..... | 3 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Strategic direction..... | 5 |
| Navigating the road ahead..... | 6 |
| Guiding Principles | 6 |
| Capability | 7 |
| Strategic capabilities to take us to 2030..... | 7 |
| Service delivery model..... | 8 |
| Participatory strategy design | 9 |
| Contributors..... | 10 |
| Exploring the future of emergency services | 11 |
| Our preferred future..... | 13 |
| Guiding Principles | 15 |
| Capable communities: Guiding Principle One | 15 |
| Interoperable: Guiding Principle Two | 15 |
| Intelligence: Guiding Principle Three | 16 |
| Sustainable: Guiding Principle Four | 16 |
| Adaptive: Guiding Principle Five | 17 |
| Glossary..... | 18 |
| Key contributors..... | 19 |
| Organisations participating in a scenario planning workshop | 19 |
| Written submission for Strategy 2030 public consultation | 199 |
| Organisations providing written submission | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Community focus group locations | 20 |
| Key references | 21 |
| Key references informing Strategy 2030 | 21 |
| References for scenario planning | 22 |

Foreword

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

It is my honour to present Strategy 2030, which will ensure Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) can adapt to meet the future needs of Queenslanders before, during and after emergency and disaster events.

Strategy 2030 sets out five guiding principles:

1. **Capable communities:** local solutions to local problems achieve sustainable outcomes.
2. **Interoperable:** all parts of the system are able to work together effectively, in a coordinated way.
3. **Intelligence:** the community, our partners and our people make decisions with greater confidence.
4. **Sustainable:** economic, environmental and social sustainability go hand in hand for a capable and adaptive Queensland.
5. **Adaptive:** building adaptive capacity with the community, the organisation, and the emergency management sector will enhance our collective ability to manage the unexpected.

In the fast-paced, ever-changing world we live in, 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. That is why QFES invited its partners, staff, volunteers and community members to participate in feedback about the future.

We listened to Queenslanders about what QFES is doing well, and what we could do better, through a program of horizon scanning, scenario planning, community engagement activities, research and analysis.

This feedback underpins Strategy 2030 and has created a shared vision where we have mapped out the future principles in partnership.

I am proud that QFES is known to deliver trusted and reliable services to Queensland and I want to maintain that reputation well into the future. We are determined to embrace the challenges and opportunities that our exciting future offers.

We are delighted to launch Strategy 2030 to engage Queenslanders in strengthening collective emergency and disaster management over the next decade. Together, we can advance Queensland’s priorities and support stronger communities.

The Honourable Craig Crawford MP
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

Introduction

“In this strategy, we look ahead to a strong, connected future.”

Strategy 2030 was created to ensure our direction considers a range of global trends and responds to the needs and expectations of Queenslanders.

That’s why we have worked with communities, our partners and our people to develop Strategy 2030. Together, we designed our preferred future. This strategy outlines how QFES needs to position itself to provide effective services to the state’s future communities.

The department has always had a proud reputation of delivering trusted and reliable fire and emergency services to Queensland.

To ensure we continue to support the liveability of Queensland, QFES needs to be a leader in innovative thinking and adapting to the state’s changing service delivery environment.

Strategy 2030 has been informed by many conversations with our staff and volunteers, communities, and partner organisations. We conducted a series of workshops and focus groups to consider 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 our service to keep pace with change. This crucial work will position the department as leaders in fire and emergency services and ensure that we continue to be a trusted and reliable frontline service that is also innovative, responsive and forward facing.

I look forward to working with you on making the aspirations of Strategy 2030 a reality. Each of us has a role to play in connecting Queenslanders for a strong future, whatever challenges may face us.

Katarina Carroll APM

Commissioner

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Strategic direction

Strong future. Stronger together.

Strong communities are safer communities. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has a proud history dedicated to making Queenslanders safer. Recognising the value of prevention and preparedness, our staff and volunteers have informed and educated communities for many years.

The next step in our evolution is to work alongside Queenslanders, connecting people with the knowledge and services they need for strong communities.

Together with our partners, we will focus on supporting communities to develop practical skills and build emergency management capability.

We will continue to respond with our expertise and equipment when events are greater than a community's capacity to manage. Great people working together delivers great outcomes.

We will seek every opportunity for interoperability across the emergency management sector and beyond, to enhance the adaptivity and sustainability of the system.

Acknowledging our changing operating environment, we will continue to join our partners in strengthening emergency management in Queensland and Australia.

We will work towards a service delivery model that creates local community value, based on need. It is only through collective action that we can achieve our vision for a strong and connected Queensland that is capable and adaptive when faced with a wide range of emergency events.

Through connecting people, embracing volunteers and empowering communities, we can strengthen Queensland to rise to any challenge the future may bring.

Navigating the road ahead

A strategy is a set of guiding principles and integrated choices that, when communicated and adopted, generate a desired pattern of decision-making.¹

The guiding principles in this strategy have been developed from an understanding of community expectations, our authorising environment and the challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

By applying these guiding principles to our everyday decision-making, before, during and after emergencies, we will navigate to our preferred future together.

Our guiding principles will help us find the right way to get to our destination, while our strategic capabilities will help us prioritise the areas we must excel in as an organisation to get there.

Our organisational values of respect, integrity, courage, loyalty and trust will influence our daily interactions and personal choices.

Guiding Principles

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

¹ Adapted from Watkins, M.D., Demystifying Strategy: The What, Who, How, and Why, Harvard Business Review, Sept 2007, <https://hbr.org/2007/09/demystifying-strategy-the-what> and <https://rogerlmartin.com/>

Capability

“It’s about those relationships and partnerships. Not duplicating.”
Focus group participant

Capability is when we combine our resources in the most effective way to reduce harm to people, property and the environment.

Our strategic capabilities will allow us to deliver exceptional public value in a complex, interconnected world. They will enact our guiding principles.

Strategic capabilities are in addition to the core capabilities that have historically supported our success. Core capabilities are our operational abilities needed to deliver our main services.

QFES capability is used in partnership with communities before, during and after an emergency incident or disaster.

Strategic capabilities to take us to 2030

Communication & engagement

Successful communication and engagement is critical for all we do. To get the best from our other strategic capabilities, we must first excel in communication and engagement. Our approach is people-centric.

Capability integration

To lead in our field, our ability to integrate capability across our complex sector is vital. By contributing our strength in capability integration, we can help the sector to maximise the impact of our joint efforts.

Strategic & operational intelligence

Our analytic capabilities, whether producing intelligence for an operation or for our organisation, give us all the edge to make good decisions. Intelligence enables us to anticipate and adapt.

Service delivery model

Community-driven, centre-guided, regional franchise.

The community is at the centre of everything we do. Our model is people-centric.

Demand for service is driven by community need, assessed in collaboration with communities.

Together, we will understand community capability and risk profiles to identify which QFES capabilities are needed.

Organisational risk and governance enable service delivery prioritisation on a state-wide basis.

Direction stems from organisational strategy and policy to support regions delivering the right services in the right locations.

We will maintain surge capacity at a state level, to ensure we are ready for the unexpected.

Participatory strategy design

“An emphasis on training children...at primary school level. That’s where the change of attitude comes.” Focus group participant

We believe those who have a stake in the future, should help to shape it. In developing this strategy, we had many conversations with our staff, volunteers, our partner organisations, academia and community members across Queensland. We also commissioned research reports that included insights from community members, staff and volunteers.

We found there are widely-held expectations that QFES will work in partnership with the community and emergency sector organisations.¹ There is a strong desire for locally-led decision-making.²

Our research showed that expectations varied for when emergency services should provide assistance to respond or recover.² While some people acknowledged services might not be available to everyone at the same time during a large event, others felt that help should be provided regardless of the event size.¹

We found that timely, accurate information to help people make more informed decisions was a consistent expectation of those we spoke to.³

Importantly, there is a desire for information to be locally-relevant and meaningful to the recipient.^{2,3} Concern for travellers, new arrivals and others unaware of local conditions was also voiced.² Ultimately, the message was about QFES empowering people to make informed decisions.^{2,3}

There was a general willingness of communities to be involved in their safety and protection, but hesitation about their ability and knowledge to do so effectively.³ Research tells us building resilience must be a long-term agenda, where lifelong value can be created by educating children from a young age.^{3,3}

Our community insights survey showed that only 44% of respondents felt they were prepared for a storm and just 28% for a structure fire.⁴ We must improve on these numbers and see more of our community feel confident and capable to manage a range of hazards that may confront Queenslanders.

When respondents were asked to choose, 66% of respondents preferred that QFES provided skills and knowledge to increase self-reliance rather than responding whenever and wherever an emergency or disaster event occurs. The majority (88%) believed they had personal responsibility for preparing for emergency and disaster events.

¹ Bearman, C, Every, D, Final Report on Community Expectations of Emergency Services: A Document Analysis, Central Queensland University and Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, 2018.

² Tippet, V, Community Expectations of Emergency Services: QFES Community Workshops 2018, Queensland University of Technology and Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, 2018.

³ Rashid, M, Ronan, KR, and Gallard, JC, Teacher-facilitated child-centered disaster resilience education program: a study in Bangladesh, AFAC18, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, 2018.

⁴ Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Community Insights Survey, Queensland Government, 2018.

Contributors

102: Horizon scanning workshops

Staff, volunteers, academic partners

88: Unstructured interviews and group meetings in QFES regions

Staff and volunteers

20: Scenario development workshop

Staff, volunteers, academic partners

78: Scenario planning workshop

Staff, volunteers, academic partners, sector organisations at local, state and federal levels

88: Community focus groups

Community members and small business owners at seven locations

34: Written submissions (three different question sets)

Staff, volunteers, partner organisations

2,257: Community Insights Survey

Community members

31: Draft Strategy 2030

Public consultation staff, volunteer, academic and partner submissions

Exploring the future of emergency services

“We are going to experience a very great changing world in the next 10-20 years. The young people need to grow up knowing that they will see a lot of disasters that our generation didn’t see. Preparedness is one of the main things.” Focus group participant

We often expect and plan for the future to be much like history. Learning from the past is important, but we must also acknowledge the future is unlikely to be a reliable extension of our present.

The fourth industrial revolution brings a pace of change that challenges the traditional planning practices of the last century. Many of the drivers of change have uncertain outlooks and complexities at local, regional and global scales. Yet, we must make decisions and investments today that will influence our capability and capacity for decades to come.

We can’t predict the future, but we can anticipate a range of possibilities to better prepare. That’s why QFES included futures thinking in the development of Strategy 2030. Futures thinking involves exploration of the weaker signals of change; the things we know and talk less about.

When we think about what might shape the way we live and work in Queensland, we often think about climate change, technology and ageing populations.

We must also consider how we grow as a community with the influence of changing attitudes to equity, diversity and inclusion. Our level of trust in systems and institutions is also complex and shifting. With a downward trend in social cohesion,¹ it is critical that we increase our efforts to connect and strengthen our communities.

There has been much written on the future role of government and the impact of changing community expectations. It is suggested that government should move away from providing solutions to instead enabling them, to co-creation of services with communities, and to personalised service delivery.^{2,3}

The trade-offs between privacy, security and personalised service are among the many factors that shape our world and our experience of it. While parts of our everyday living seem untouched by time, many are noticeably different across a decade. Sometimes in unexpected ways.

A decade ago, we would not have anticipated the disruptive business models that have seen transport and accommodation services provided by technology companies. When we look at longer time scales and across our entire society, we see uneven shifts in how the future plays out. Though technology is the

¹ Markus, Andrew, Mapping Social Cohesion, the Scanlon Foundation surveys 2017, Monash University, 2017.

² Public Participation in Government Decision-Making, Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 2017.

³ Gov2020: A journey in to the future of government, Deloitte, 2015.

obvious driver of varying levels of benefit to global communities, change in attitudes have brought volatility in global politics.

Using a structured approach, like horizon scanning and scenario planning, we can push past our everyday thinking. We can account for the subtle signals that the future may not be as we expect. When we consider a wider range of drivers of change, our plans are less likely to be disrupted by the unexpected.

Our preferred future

Vision: A connected and capable Queensland in the face of emergencies and disasters.

In 2030, there is a sense of community connectedness in many locations. A collaborative effort and investment by private and public sector organisations in place-based service design has been important in building community cohesion. Less connected communities are strengthened by our tailored advice and services.

Many Queenslanders are prepared as individuals and members of a community, to manage and recover from a wide range of emergency events. Volunteers, volunteering and volunteerism are deeply embedded in our culture and ethos.

Young people play a significant role in building disaster resilience in the community by sharing their knowledge of emergency and disaster management from education or training.

QFES connects people with the right knowledge, practical skills and resources to strengthen capability and adaptive capacity at a community level.

Diverse and talented individuals are welcomed in to our organisation to contribute their skills, knowledge and time in flexible ways. Our people are our most valuable asset and their safety is our priority. We recognise that great people working together will deliver the best outcomes and make a positive difference every day.

We play a lead role in sharing organisational knowledge and expertise to empower Queenslanders to be part of the emergency management system. Most Queenslanders are very knowledgeable about the hazards that may impact them where they live, work and travel. Our individual and collective planning and preparation means we are also well positioned to cope with unexpected events. Together, we anticipate and adapt.

All of Queensland has a role to play in striving for capable and adaptive communities. Environmental, social and economic sustainability are widely supported across the private and public sectors making investment in adaptation indisputably value-for-money.

Our expertise in emergency management, and with complex and cascading weather events, is an essential component of the Australian and international capability. We use our core capabilities to manage consequences across a broad range of emergency events, community shocks and stresses

We are future-focused, continually scanning the horizon to ensure our organisation adapts to the evolving needs and expectations of the community, the sector and the government. Our commitment to environmental sustainability means we continue to reduce our carbon footprint in economically viable and socially acceptable ways. Our fleet, buildings and equipment are energy efficient by design and use.

Climate science continues to be integral to our strategic decision-making. We adapt as part of a system that aims to minimise climate-related impacts to people and places. QFES is influential in safe and resilient building design and urban planning. We are thought leaders in public debate and policy setting for public safety in Queensland and across Australia.

Data sharing is fast, seamless, secure and reliable - allowing anyone with a need to know about an emergency event to rapidly understand the situation. Best-available intelligence is shared in a way that supports people to decide on the right actions for them in the circumstances.

Automation of systems is used to improve safety for our people and our communities, and to provide faster assistance and more relevant services.

Guiding Principles

Capable communities: Guiding Principle One

“I think there’s a need for continual education. What you need to do and how you can assist. I think people want to feel constructive and be able to assist.” Focus group participant

Local solutions to local problems achieve sustainable outcomes. We will focus on working with communities to develop knowledge and practical skills to maximise capability for empowered participation before, during and after emergency and disaster events.

Taking a strengths-based approach, we will work with communities to understand the ability of the local networks to manage events. The service delivery needs of a locality will be informed by community risk, capability, capacity and adaptivity. These factors will differ across time and place, but by prioritising our collective efforts according to local need, we can improve the liveability of Queensland for everyone.

Interoperable: Guiding Principle Two

“It should be a multi-agency response. Assets from any service or country can be used whenever they’re needed.” Focus group participant

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 complex world requires an integrated system of people, knowledge and equipment to amplify our capabilities across our organisation, the community, government and our non-government partners.

Boundaries and borders do not define the limits of our work. We understand our role through continuous engagement and contribute to the extent of our authority, ability and community need.

Intelligence: Guiding Principle Three

“...seamless sharing of information via a common operating picture will assist in ensuring a highly coordinated response.” Council submission

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.

In a data rich environment, high-quality analysis allows us to make sense of information and deepen our understanding of a situation or topic, whether operational or strategic. Only then can we produce actionable intelligence.

Benefiting from the best-available intelligence takes skill in communicating messages in a way that is meaningful and easily understood by the recipient. Our communication of intelligence must be timely and targeted.

Sustainable: Guiding Principle Four

“I expect they’re taking advantage of technology and streamlining. Finding efficiencies through interoperability. I’d like to see bureaucracy shrinking rather than growing. They need to be financially sustainable.” Focus group participant

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

Sustainability means balancing the costs and benefits to our society, environment and economy. To do this, we must understand what our communities value. The intangible costs and second and third order effects of our choices cannot be overlooked.

Adaptive: Guiding Principle Five

“...the resources of training the average farmer or the average household is a brilliant spend. You’re better able to manage your own property.” Focus group participant

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

The systems we live and work in are rarely static. When parts of systems flex or shift together, there is reduced friction. Adaptive capacity is key to minimising the shocks and stresses that can result when parts of a system move in ways, places, or at times we cannot foresee. Adaptive systems remain strong in novel circumstances. Adaptivity contributes to resilient communities, organisations and an emergency management sector.

Glossary

Drivers of change: an aspect of the world that may shape the way we live, work or recreate.

Capability: the collective of people, organisation, information, systems, training, equipment and doctrine (POISTED) to enable the development and use of an operational effect to reduce harm to people, property and the environment.

Connected: association or relationship between separate entities.

Integrated: various parts or aspects are linked and coordinated.

Intelligence: value-added information providing context and meaning to support decision-making.

Resilience: a system or community's ability to rapidly accommodate and recover from the impacts of hazards, restore essential structures and desired functionality, and adapt to new circumstances.

Service delivery: providing the activities resulting from the application of one or more capabilities to meet a need.

Strategic capability: capability required to enact the guiding principles.

Key contributors

Organisations participating in a scenario planning workshop

- Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC)
- Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre
- Central Queensland University
- Council of the City of Gold Coast
- Department of Defence
- Department of Housing and Public Works
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Education Queensland
- Fire Protection Association Australia
- Logan City Council
- Maritime Safety Queensland
- Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management
- Police Citizens Youth Club
- QSuper
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (staff and volunteers)
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Rail
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority
- Queensland University of Technology
- Royal Life Saving Society Queensland Inc.
- Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland Inc.
- South Burnett Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Western Downs Regional Council

Written submission for Strategy 2030 public consultation

- CQUniversity Australia
- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Department of Education
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- GIVIT
- Gladstone Regional Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Ports North
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services staff & volunteers
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority

- Royal Life Saving Society Queensland Inc
- Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland Inc
- Seqwater
- Sunshine Coast Council
- University of Queensland

Organisations providing written submission

- Brisbane City Council
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Council of the City of Gold Coast
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- Mackay Regional Council
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (staff and volunteers)
- Ports North

Community focus group locations *

- Longreach
- Cairns
- Gladstone
- Bundaberg
- Goondiwindi
- Logan
- Newmarket

* Focus group participants were recruited by an independent market research company and may have resided in surrounding localities

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Back Page

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