

RESPONSE

QUEENSLAND'S OFFICIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MAGAZINE

EDITION 10



SES WEEK 2016

AWARDS HONOUR QUEENSLAND'S TOP SES VOLUNTEERS

STATE RECOGNITION:

BUSHFIRE 2016:

ON THE JOB:

QFES AT PREMIER'S AWARDS

CONFERENCE BUILDS PARTNERSHIPS IN BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT

FIREFIGHTERS HONoured FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

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ON THE COVER
SES Groups took part in the Central Region SES Rescue Challenge in Rockhampton in November, testing scene management, leadership and decision-making, rescue techniques and casualty management.

Photo: Andrew Wyatt.

RESPONSE is a bi-monthly magazine produced by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' Media, Communication and Engagement Unit. Contributions and feedback are welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity and clarity.

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FOREWORDS



Katarina Carroll

Commissioner

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Welcome to the final edition of *Response* for what has been a very busy 2016.

I would like to acknowledge the recent appointment of Minister Mark Ryan MP to the Police, Fire and Emergency Services portfolio. I look forward to working with Minister Ryan, and I would like to also take this opportunity to thank Minister Bill Byrne for his service to QFES over the past year.

It has been a big year for the department. In January, I set out my goals for QFES for 2016. After a lot of hard work by the Executive Leadership Team — supported by business areas and teams across QFES — I am proud with what we have achieved together.

With the PSBA review implementation process complete, we are now 'One QFES' — one department made up of many services and many capabilities, working with our many partners to deliver effective emergency management capabilities across the state.

We have realigned our priorities and are moving away from being a response-focused department to one that ensures equal emphasis on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities.

While there is still work to be done, much of the work developing the new QFES capability map, governance framework and departmental structure is nearing completion. Owing to heightened operational requirements at this time of year, coupled with the Christmas and New Year break, the new QFES structure will be released in early 2017. This will provide a solid base for our strategic direction to take shape in the new year, and I speak in more detail about this on the next page.

Operationally, this is a busy time of year for QFES. Storm and bushfire activity is increasing across the state and is forecast to continue well into the new year.

These events are a timely reminder of the importance of being well prepared; both as frontline emergency responders and as members of the community with our own homes, businesses, and families to protect.

I would like to thank the QFES workforce, paid and volunteer and their families, for their continued hard work and commitment to the department and the communities we serve; and our emergency management partners for their support in 2016.

I wish you a safe and happy festive season, and I look forward to working with you all in 2017 as we continue to work together to build safer, more resilient communities in Queensland.



Mike Wassing

Deputy Commissioner

EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the QFES workforce, paid and volunteer, for all the work and support provided throughout the year, including the current fire season, and for all of the work achieved in preparation for our severe weather season. The efforts undertaken, working closely with local government, Emergency Management and our broader communities, is sincerely appreciated.

Taskforce Action, a joint initiative to support the RFS and SES, has entered its final stage with a number of key projects transitioning to business as usual. I would like to thank Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson, the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland Inc., the Queensland State Emergency Service Volunteer Association and all those involved in developing and implementing a number of great initiatives to support our volunteers.

I am also pleased to announce new technology support to enhance operational reporting and communications for SES volunteers, with real time job tasking information through TAMS, the SES Task and Management System.

The QFES Office of Bushfire Mitigation was also established earlier this year, targeting priority wildfire risk areas and mitigation activities to protect Queensland communities. In this area, we have achieved terrific results thanks to the great work of brigades and supporting regional RFS and Fire and Rescue personnel as well as our land management agency partners. In addition, a major review of the QFES 'Permit to Light Fire' system and how we can better support our fire wardens is underway.

I would also like to thank everyone who participated in the QFES 2016 Volunteer Survey. A key objective of the department is to empower volunteerism by recognising, respecting and valuing our volunteers, by actively engaging and involving volunteers in decision-making, and by embedding volunteerism as a key capability of QFES. The responses collected in the survey will be invaluable in the development of the QFES Volunteerism Strategy and Valuing Volunteers Initiatives moving forward.

After such an eventful year I would like to sincerely thank you all for everything you have done and continue to do, and ask that you take the time to look after yourselves and those around you, especially your family and friends. Wishing you all a merry Christmas and all the best wishes for 2017.



As this year draws to a close, it's timely to reflect on what QFES has achieved in the past 12 months and, more broadly, since it was established as a single government department on 1 November 2013.

Reviews and inquiries in the preceding years identified how our operational divisions and supporting businesses could improve their performance and also pointed to potential benefits in developing better partnerships with other agencies in the emergency management sector and with the community.

Making changes to a large, complex organisation is not easy. That's why one of my first priorities was to appoint the deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners and executive directors — forming the Executive Leadership Team — to plan and lead the necessary transformation of QFES to achieve this.

This core group has since signed off on a range of important milestones — the capabilities required to deliver our services have been mapped, a new governance framework developed and supporting

policies are being written. The new structure will be released in early 2017 and, once implemented, will align individuals to their identified capabilities.

A new Human Capital Management system is being delivered to ensure our workforce, both paid and volunteer, has an integrated career path from induction through every step of their involvement and career with QFES.

At the core of the new QFES is recognition and empowerment of our volunteers. The RFS fuel and maintenance funding is just one practical example of this. The Volunteerism Strategy, which is under development, will further highlight our renewed commitment to our volunteers.

There is, of course, no point in driving change if our most important resource — our people — are not 'on board' and clear about their role in this process. The same

applies for our stakeholders, partners and the community.

That's why we have also developed a range of communications and engagement tools for use by everyone from the executive to the frontline, and in our back office support areas, for us to work better with our many partners and the community.

The re-establishment of this magazine is one example of this. A pilot of engagement tools in South Western Region is another, as is the QFES Office 365 package being rolled out to all QFES volunteers to connect them to the QFES email network.

In saying this, it is also important we all understand where QFES is heading — which is clearly articulated in the QFES Future Directions document released earlier this year — and what our role is in the department's transformation.

Now that much of the QFES structural work is done and the department is ready to implement our new direction, it is a prime time to reflect on the bigger picture.



A summary of how the transitional changes made to date all fit together is outlined in the following four pages.

I encourage you to read this so when the new QFES structure is released for implementation in the new year you will understand your role and be part of the broader transformation of our department.

This is an exciting time for us all at QFES as we work together, with our partners and with the people of Queensland to create safer and more resilient communities.





Changing world

During the 1960s and 70s when the Australian car manufacturing industry was thriving, drivers lined up to purchase the much-loved Holdens and Fords.

During the ensuing decades, as consumers turned to imports, local manufacturers struggled to compete. Despite its high quality product, the industry closed with knock-on effects flowing down the supply line.

Change of this kind has always been present, but in the fast-paced world we live and work in today, the speed, impact and sources of disruption have increased.

Digital disruption, climate change, terrorism, geo-political instability and other factors are challenging government, industry and communities worldwide to adapt to challenges previously unimagined.

The emergency management sector is not immune to change.

Queensland's Disaster Management Act clearly spells out that QFES must be ready and equipped to help the community prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from not only natural disasters, but also man-made ones.

Strategic planning in the emergency management sector has traditionally been based on lessons learnt from previous disasters and focused on preparing to respond to known threats.

As unfolding disruption leads to an increasing number of never-before-seen emergency and disaster scenarios, traditional planning and operational models need to evolve.

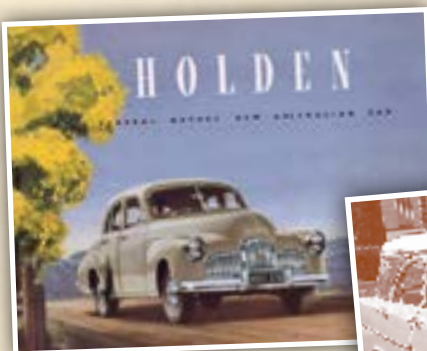
In Queensland, the 2013 Malone Review of the Rural Fire Service, the 2013 Keelty Review of Police and Community Safety, the 2014 Allison Review and the 2015 Public Safety Business Agency Review all identified where emergency service agencies were not keeping pace with change.

In response to these reviews and the broader disruption across society, in its 2016 Future Directions document QFES outlined the steps it is taking to transform how emergencies are managed across Queensland.

The QFES workforce is proud of its past performance and is highly respected within the community.

The need for change is not criticism of that workforce, but rather acknowledgement of a need to change the products and services QFES delivers for Queenslanders.

Those products and services can be defined as capabilities.



Images: Wikimedia Commons / Bidgee © Scragg (R)

CAPABILITIES

QFES has mapped the capabilities it needs to meet legislative responsibilities, government priorities and community expectations.

These capabilities are not just for day-to-day operations but are also required by QFES to grow, adapt and excel as a government department.

There are four groups of capabilities:

- Strategic
- Service delivery
 - » prevention and preparedness, response, recovery
- Operational support
- Business support.

However QFES is constrained by:

- a finite budget
- a capped number of full-time-equivalent paid workforce of 3256
- a volunteer workforce of about 42,200.

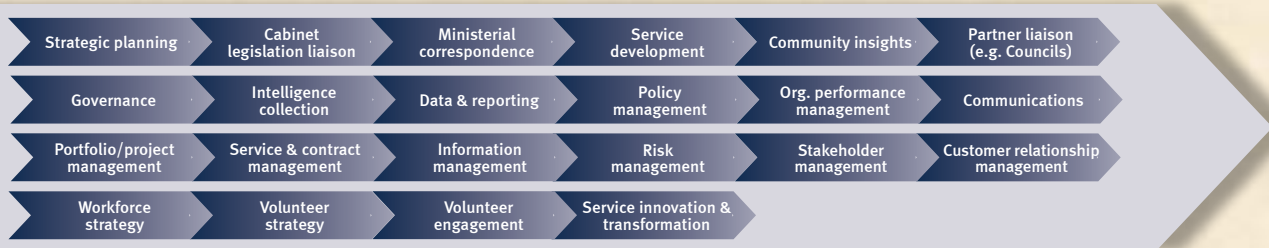
STRUCTURE

The old QFES structure was unable to deliver the identified capabilities within the constraints of the workforce size and QFES budget.

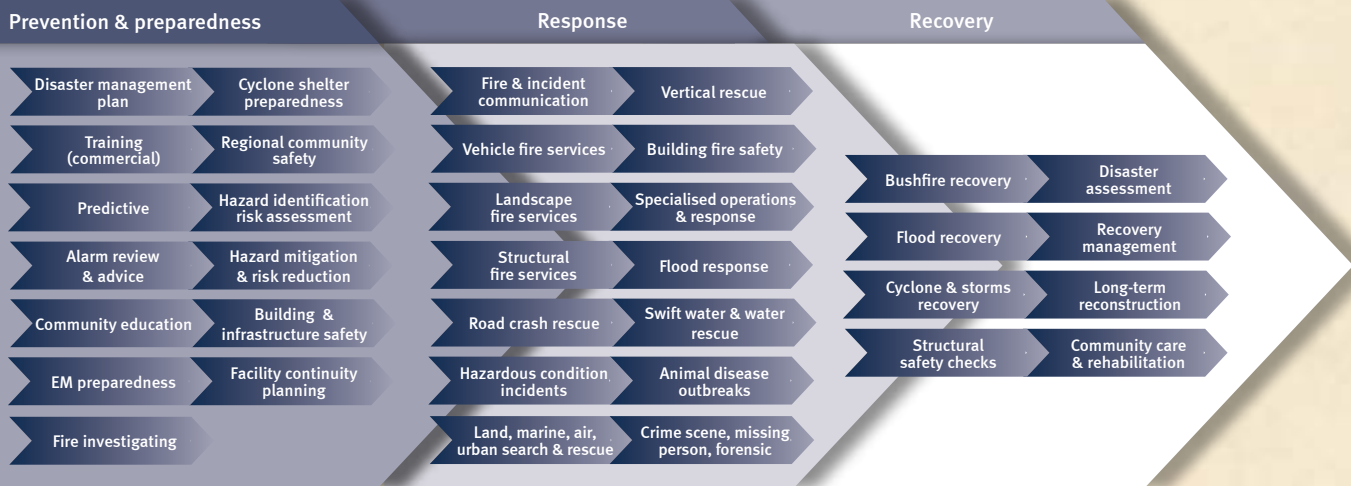
So, a new QFES structure has been designed. It aligns individuals to the identified capabilities and maps how work areas interact to deliver services within these constraints. Some individuals and business areas will change their roles and the way they work together as QFES undertakes this transformation.

A new QFES governance framework has also been developed to guide how the structure operates.

STRATEGIC capabilities



SERVICE DELIVERY capabilities



OPERATIONAL SUPPORT capabilities



BUSINESS SUPPORT capabilities



GOVERNANCE

Governance is the set of responsibilities, practices, policies and procedures used by the QFES executive and workforce to:

- drive strategic direction
- ensure objectives are achieved
- manage risks
- use resources responsibly
- ensure accountability at all levels.

The new QFES governance framework guides decision-making, day-to-day operations and year-on-year strategic direction.

The QFES workforce, stakeholders and the community can access the governance framework to help them understand how QFES makes decisions and provides them a way to influence how QFES operates.

While governance guides decision-making and the big picture, policy forms part of governance and drills down to give the workforce tools and practices for delivering their individual capabilities and those of their work area.

POLICY

Policy gives a clear direction aligned to strategic objectives and legislation.

QFES policies and procedures describe how to deliver public safety within legislation and public policy according to codes of practice, strategic plans and frameworks.

Policy also directs how individuals interact with one another, the community and QFES' partners.

To enable a high-level policy to be applied across a large and complex department like QFES, each policy's intent is broken down to explain in detail how it can be applied at any level, time or place.

PERFORMANCE

The department monitors and assesses its performance at the strategic, operational and individual officer levels.

Strategic performance is assessed against the key performance indicators in the QFES Strategic Plan. It can also be measured against government commitments, the Ministerial Charter of Goals, targets set in the national Report on Government Services, Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authority Council (AFAC) measures, and a range of whole-of-government reports.

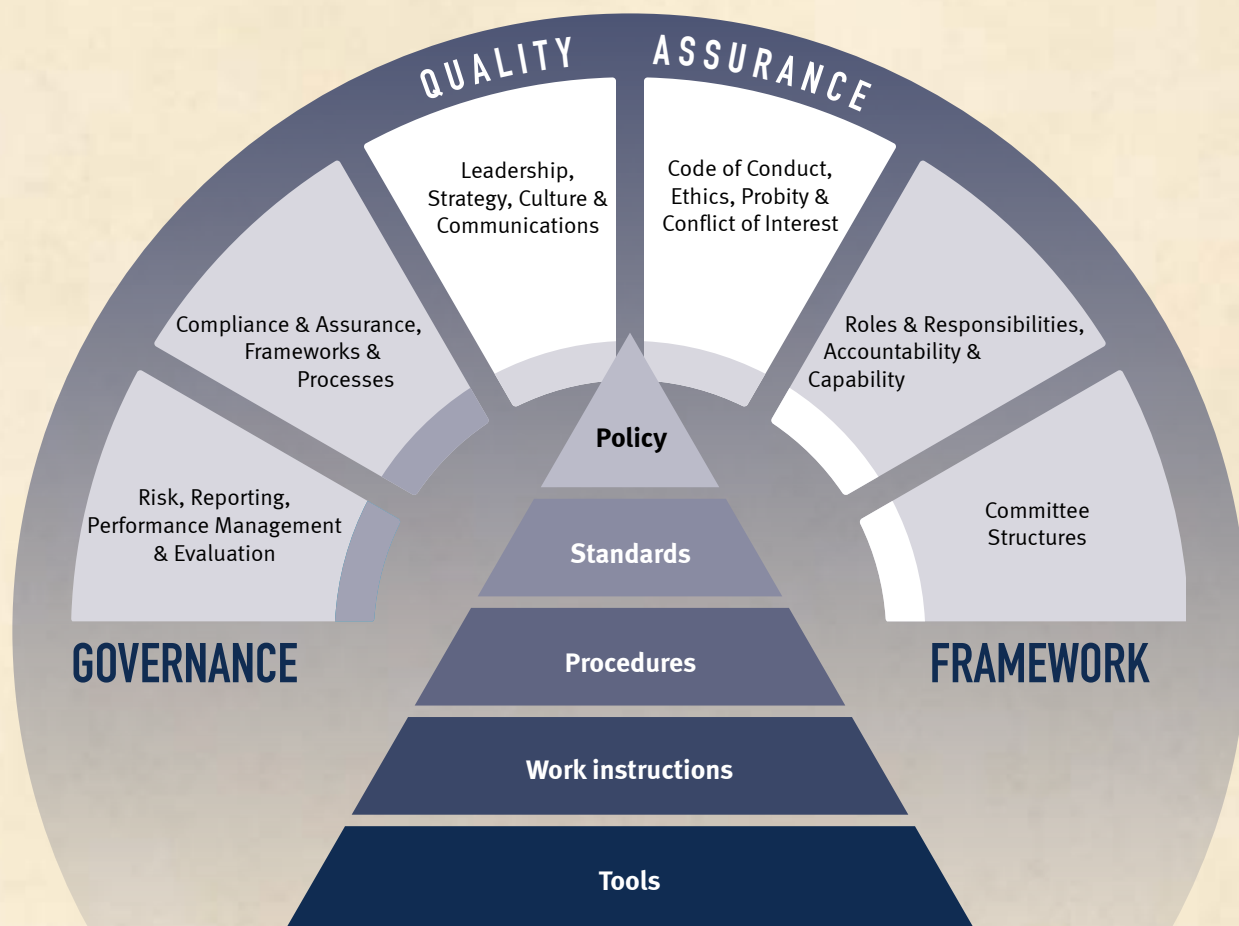
Operational performance assesses a business area's contribution to the QFES strategic directions and objectives.

Staff performance is assessed against agreed individual performance and development plans, and enables staff and supervisors to:

- assess achievements
- identify required improvements and learning and development opportunities
- formally approve any agreed actions.

Executive performance is assessed against an annual Executive Performance and Development Agreement.

The new QFES governance framework guides decision-making and provides context for implementing policy.
The policy hierarchy typically includes standards, procedures, work instructions and tools.



By monitoring its performance QFES can strategically plan and improve where needed, or adapt and re-arrange its capabilities to meet emerging trends.

These strategic adjustments to capabilities will flow on to the structure, governance, policy and ultimately ensure the department continues to meet government and community expectations.

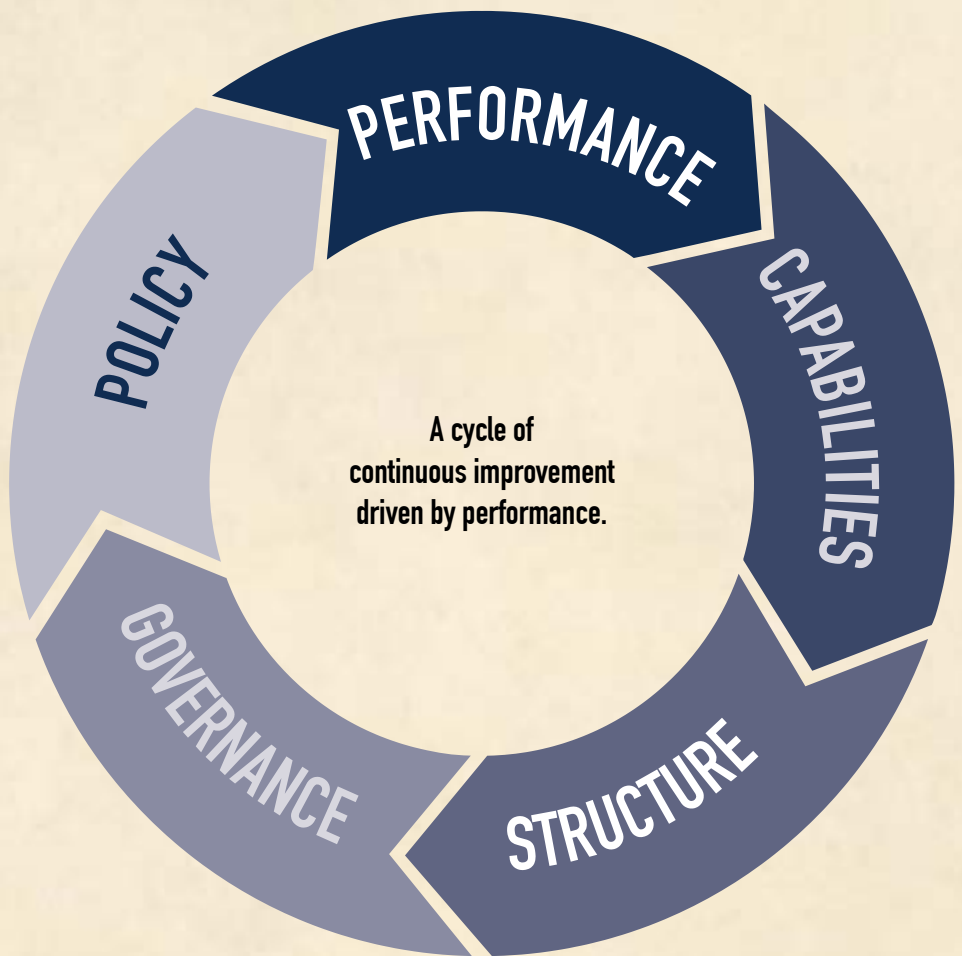
QFES is not changing because it has a new leadership team.

It is changing to meet emerging local and global challenges. Its workforce will do this by delivering a new set of capabilities.

While the workforce is technically accomplished and able to adapt and deliver the new capabilities, the existing structure needs to change to support the workforce.

This change goes beyond transactional or transitional change. It requires a commitment from all of the workforce and its leadership to transform how they deliver services to the people of Queensland.

As QFES transforms to a robust leader in the emergency management sector, it will earn the authority to steer its future direction.



Phase	Action	Cultural change
Transactional	Using new software to perform a regular task	Low
Transitional	Sharing an office and resources with another business area	Medium
Transformational	Acquiring or sharing work (capabilities) of another business area	High

ONE QFES. MANY SERVICES. MANY CAPABILITIES. MANY PARTNERS.

Working to deliver emergency management capabilities across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Finalists – QFES North Coast Region and Cherbourg auxiliary firefighters for the Revitalising Fire and Rescue program in Cherbourg.



QFES honoured at Premier's Awards

The dedication and professionalism of QFES frontline officers and emergency service partners has been recognised at the 2016 Premier's Awards for Excellence awards ceremony held in November.

QFES Far Northern Region and partner agencies involved in the emergency response at the Ravenshoe café explosion in 2015 won the prestigious 2016 Premier's Award for Excellence in the category of Performance.

The group of agencies involved in the response working alongside QFES were QPS, QAS, Queensland Health and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

On 9 June 2015, a four-wheel drive vehicle struck the side of a café on the main street of Ravenshoe. The ute punctured a large gas cylinder and drove it through the wall of the kitchen, causing a large explosion and fire inside the café. More than 20 people were injured, many critically, and two people died in hospital in the days following the incident.

Multiple emergency service and state and local government agencies worked together, assisted by members of the Ravenshoe community, to provide comprehensive response and recovery services on the day and for many months afterward.

At the awards ceremony in Brisbane, Acting Assistant Commissioner John Bolger, Inspector Greg Livingstone, Acting Inspector John Lindsay and Captain Robert Doyle received the award on behalf of QFES Far Northern Region.

Commissioner Carroll said QFES was honoured to be recognised alongside its partner agencies for their efforts at Ravenshoe.

"This award acknowledges the men and women who responded that terrible day and who continue to provide recovery support to the community more than a year later," Ms Carroll said.

"Firefighters, partner agencies and the local community faced a shocking and difficult situation with courage and commitment, and it is thanks to their actions that the victims were tended to and the fire extinguished as quickly as possible."

Also recognised as a finalist in the Customer Focus category was QFES North Coast Region, Auxiliary Captain Cameron Bond and Cherbourg auxiliary firefighters for their work revitalising fire and rescue services in Cherbourg.

Through community engagement and by working with partners locally and within the Queensland Government, QFES addressed a significant service delivery issue in Cherbourg and established a robust local auxiliary fire service. The program continues to deliver real and ongoing benefits to the community on multiple levels.

Winners – QFES Far Northern Region, one of five agencies awarded for their response to the Ravenshoe café explosion in 2015.





UQ and QFES team up to future proof building fire safety



The University of Queensland (UQ) and QFES have joined forces to conduct a large-scale experiment measuring the behaviour of fires fuelled by cross laminated timber (CLT) materials.



CLT is an engineered wood product that is increasingly used in mid- to high-rise building construction in Australia. As a relatively new product, there is a lack of reliable and accessible data available to the fire safety industry about the fire performance of the product.

In September, a laminated timber enclosure fire experiment was conducted by UQ in collaboration with QFES and industry stakeholders at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy at Whyte Island.

QFES' Fire Engineering Unit and Tactical Training Unit provided advice to UQ researchers throughout the design phase of the experiment and assisted during the construction and execution of the test.

The experiment involved a CLT compartment being fitted with approximately 220 sensors before being set alight. The sensors recorded data from ignition through to extinguishment and cooling times to allow quantification of the effect of fire on the material.

A key test in this experiment was whether CLT products contribute more fuel to a fire than traditional building materials, the main safety concern here being longer-burning fires and larger, more hazardous fire plumes.

A single, upper storey façade was constructed above the compartment and fitted with sensors to allow researchers

to measure heat flux data to better understand the potential for floor-to-floor flame spread.

QFES Community Safety Capability Branch Director Lindsay Hackett said the research project was a significant example of joint industry collaboration for the advancement of community fire safety.

"This project was an important opportunity for QFES to share expertise and resources and work with industry to ensure fire safety design development keeps pace with emerging technologies and construction approaches," Mr Hackett said.

"QFES will continue to work with UQ on the next phases of research into laminated timber building construction for high-rise buildings."

The experiment was part of the UQ research project Constructing the Future of Housing, led by Professor Jose Torero Cullen, Dr Angus Law, Ms Kathryn Humphreys, and Dr Cristian Maluk, and funded under a research grant from the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts.

QFES established a Memorandum of Understanding with UQ in 2013 to support the university in its fire research programs while UQ supports QFES in educational programs.



QFES Assistant Commissioner Specialist Capability and Planning John Watson with project partners at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy.

Community partnership gives old alarms new life

An initiative of the QFES Alarm and Accounts Receivable Management (AARMs) team will see hundreds of decommissioned Alarm Signal Equipment units (ASEs) donated to the Kingfisher Recycling Centre at the Aspley Special School in Brisbane.

ASEs are installed in more than 7000 buildings across Queensland that either elect or are prescribed by law to have a direct turnout from fire crews in the event of a fire.

These small red boxes send an immediate signal to Firecom if an alarm is activated, ensuring crews respond in the shortest time possible. They also record detailed information specific to each location including data on unwanted alarms and alarm or fire detection system faults, which is collected and analysed by AARMs so that they can work with building owners to find solutions.

ASEs are critical for the safety of hundreds of thousands of people that live or work in monitored buildings every day. The units

are routinely replaced to ensure they are in optimal working order.

The AARMs team oversees the installation, operation and replacement of ASEs across the state and, until recently, had been storing hundreds of old ASEs no longer fit for purpose.

In September, a new partnership was established between AARMs and the Aspley Special School which will see the units given new life through the school's Kingfisher Recycling Centre.

The recycling centre has operated since 1983 offering vocational training and work experience for students with disability from around Brisbane to develop valuable life and employment skills.

With the help of volunteers, students will strip each ASE and all reusable parts — including plastic, copper and other metals, antennas and electrical wiring — will be sold with all proceeds going back into the school.

AARMs Executive Manager Tim Moran said the initiative provided an ideal solution.

“The sheer number of old ASEs and the fact that they contain a lot of valuable electrical and other materials meant we needed to find an appropriate way to dispose of them,” Mr Moran said.

“By handing them over to the Aspley Special School’s recycling program we are not only reducing the impact on the environment but also giving back to our community — it’s win-win.”



“ we are not only reducing the impact on the environment but also giving back to our community.”



QFES Chaplains Workshop

The QFES Chaplaincy Support Service has grown in capacity and capability in recent years. In October, 19 chaplains attended the inaugural QFES Chaplains Workshop on the Sunshine Coast.

The three-day workshop was opened by Lieutenant-Colonels David and Sandra Godkin of the Queensland Salvation Army. Special guest speaker Senior Chaplain Major Lyndsay Smith of Fire and Rescue NSW also addressed attendees, sharing from his extensive training and 13 years' experience in emergency service response.

Other speakers included 10 presenters from QFES who covered a range of topics, including

QFES' Our Future Direction document, safety and wellbeing, PTSD, critical incident response, engaging with people in crisis, peer support, Firecom operations, moral injury and repair, SES volunteer work and understanding QFES culture and operations.

QFES State Family Support Chaplain Genne Bryant said the event was a chance for chaplains to share ideas, experience and knowledge.

"Our chaplains operate in all regions of Queensland providing pastoral care and support to people coping with all manner of incidents and situations," Ms Bryant said.

"The workshop was a valuable opportunity for chaplains to meet face-to-face — many for the first time — to hear about the important

work others are doing and to learn from each other."

The Chaplaincy Support Service is available to all active and retired members of QFES' paid and volunteer workforce, as well as their immediate and extended families and victims or witnesses of incidents involving QFES.

QFES chaplains are on-call 24-7 and may be contacted personally or through commanders or Incident Controllers — details are available on the Gateway by contacting State Senior Chaplain Dennis Bryant on 0412 771 727 or dennis.bryant@qfes.qld.gov.au

People outside the department who wish to access the QFES Chaplaincy Support Service can be referred by a QFES member.



New QFES Medal released

The new QFES Medal has been unveiled — the first medal to be released as part of a suite of redesigned departmental medals.

Replacing the Diligent and Ethical Service Medal (DESM), the QFES Medal is awarded to eligible members of the QFES paid and volunteer workforce in recognition of 10 or more years' exemplary service and an ongoing commitment to ethical standards, diligence and personal integrity.

QFES Medal Clasps are awarded to medal recipients upon completion of each additional 10 years' service at the same high standard.

The new medal comprises a circular antique bronze medallion ensigned with the QFES crest, and a blue ribbon featuring six vertical stripes of white and gold.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said the new medal represents a united QFES.

"I am very proud to release the QFES Medal as it truly reflects our department, values and our workforce," Ms Carroll said.

"Other QFES honours and awards are currently being redesigned to include the QFES crest, and I look forward to announcing their release soon."

The SES Meritorious Service Medal is still available to SES members and mirrors the purpose and intent of the QFES Medal. SES members are able to nominate for either the SES Meritorious Service Medal or the QFES Medal.

Individuals who have previously been awarded a DESM or SES Meritorious Service Medal will continue to receive the respective award clasps upon completion of each applicable period of service.

For more information about the new QFES Medal or other medals, including eligibility and the nomination process, an updated Honours and Awards booklet has been produced and is available by searching 'Honours and Awards' on the QFES website or by emailing

QFES.HonoursandAwards@qfes.qld.gov.au

Bushfire 2016

Connecting Science, People and Practice

The two-day Bushfire 2016 conference was held in September to connect fire scientists with on-ground fire operators from around Australia and foster strong partnerships in bushfire management.



Pictured above L-R: CEO Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC Dr Richard Thornton, QFES Superintendent James Haig, QFES i-Zone Officer Tim Collingwood, Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC) Fire Management Officers Bruce Bunkum and Wayne Simpson, MBRC Natural Areas Officer David Horne and QFES Inspector Peta Miller-Rose. Photo courtesy Nadine Anderson, RFS.

The conference, hosted and coordinated by the SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium, included 78 presentations across 10 themed symposia that covered topics such as fire ecology, community engagement, traditional custodian fire projects, intelligent fire planning and fire management research.

More than 330 people from every state and territory of Australia attended Bushfire 2016, including some of Australia's leading fire scientists and emergency service fire specialists. The conference had a prominent Indigenous land and fire management focus and a strong Indigenous attendance.

QFES Acting Deputy Commissioner Peter Jeffrey gave an opening address on day two, and emphasised the importance of collaborative partnerships for effective bushfire management.

"Like many agencies in jurisdictions around Australia and the world, QFES is increasing its focus on mitigation in the prevention and preparation phases of bushfire management," Mr Jeffrey said.

"This mitigation effort is not one where QFES is seeking to go it alone, rather we recognise the critical nature of our partnerships with land management agencies, community groups and other key stakeholders and the importance of knowledge sharing at forums such as this."

Also among the presenters was QFES Predictive Services Unit Manager Andrew Sturgess who spoke about the use of predictive services across the disaster management decision-making cycle including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Andrew's colleague Ben Twomey spoke about the QFES fire spread decision support system, SABRE Fire. QFES Bushfire Mitigation Executive Manager

James Haig delivered a presentation with Julian Selke from the Department of Transport and Main Roads about coordinated agency models for improved roadside fire management.

After the conference closed, attendees participated in field trips to North Stradbroke Island or the Sunshine Coast. Each field trip examined local fire management and research projects and the impact of fire on various vegetation types.

Host of Bushfire 2016, the SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium, is a network of land managers and stakeholders committed to improving fire and biodiversity management outcomes, supporting and disseminating fire ecology research, facilitating partnerships between key stakeholders and building the capacity of land managers and private landowners in south-east Queensland. It is supported by 19 different organisations, including QFES.

QFES was a silver sponsor of Bushfire 2016.



Photo courtesy Nadine Anderson RFS



Photo courtesy of Craig Weldon SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium

➤ For more information about the conference, visit www.fireandbiodiversity.org.au/bushfire-home



Prepare to stay safe

The QFES If it's flooded, forget it advertising campaign was launched in November. This storm season, we are asking Queenslanders to take a few minutes to think about their options — well before the weather turns nasty.



Research conducted by QFES shows the 'If it's flooded forget it' message resonates well with the community and has led to positive behaviour change, but some drivers are still not acknowledging the risks involved in driving through floodwater.

This year the campaign continues to target those deliberate risk-takers, while giving other drivers — who might end up in dangerous situations simply through a lack of planning — the tools they need to keep themselves and their families safe.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said this year's message **Prepare to stay safe** encourages people to have a

plan in place so they can stay off the road when flooding is imminent.

"Drivers come up with many excuses for pushing their luck and driving on flooded roads," Ms Carroll said.

"Whether it is needing to pick up the kids, or just wanting to get home as quickly as possible; too many Queenslanders are making poor decisions and driving when other options are available.

"You can prepare for the kids to be safe by having someone to phone who can collect them, you can prepare to stay at work while the storm passes; think ahead about other things you can do to stay safe.

"Sometimes you'll need to just wait it out. It's a small price to pay compared to risking your life and those of others.

"While our swift water specialists are well-equipped and highly-skilled, often they are putting themselves at risk to save someone who shouldn't be there."

Queenslanders should take the extra step and evaluate whether they need to go out at all during heavy rain or flooding.

The 2016–17 advertising campaign will run until 31 May next year and include television, online and social media advertising.

➤ For more information or to find out how you can 'prepare to stay safe' visit www.qld.gov.au/floodedroads



Brisbane firefighters recognised for outstanding service

In November, six firefighters from Petrie Fire and Rescue Station were honoured for brave and exceptional actions that saved the lives of four Queenslanders.

QFES Petrie 525A and 525Y crew members Station Officer Brian Lemke, senior firefighters Sean Walker, Matt Lane and Gavin Irwin, and firefighters Nathan Plunkett and Ryan Draper were awarded the QFES Commissioner's Unit Citation for their skill and courage during a swiftwater rescue in May 2015.

During a major severe weather event, the crews were called to a scene in Burpengary where a car had been washed from the road by floodwater and was partly submerged with two people trapped inside. Using a line, personal flotation devices and an inflatable work platform the occupants were safely removed from the vehicle to an area where they could be assessed and treated by QAS.

The crew were told by the rescued people that another person was trapped inside a vehicle further downstream. The crew located the vehicle and safely retrieved the driver.

Deputy Commissioner Mark Roche said the operation was particularly challenging.

"Heavy rain, thunder, lightning, fast flowing water and underwater hazards created a difficult and dangerous environment to conduct these rescues," Mr Roche said.

"It is thanks to the six crew members' brave and efficient actions that all three people were safely rescued, avoiding what could have been a tragedy."

Deputy Commissioner Roche also presented Station Officer Brian Lemke with a

Commissioner's Commendation for Notable Action for his skilled actions during a call out to assist QPS with a person police were negotiating with on the roof of a local shopping complex.

"When negotiations broke down, Station Officer Lemke's quick thinking and immediate actions saved the person's life," Mr Roche said.

"Thank you and congratulations to each of these men for their exemplary service and commitment to protecting the community."

The awards were presented during the official opening of the new Petrie Fire and Rescue Station and attended by Police, Fire and Emergency Services Minister Mark Ryan.

QFES' winning touch

A team of Mackay firefighters have won the annual Mackay Police and Emergency Services Touch Football charity competition for the second year in a row.

More than 130 players from QFES, QAS, QPS, Mackay Base Hospital staff and members of the local media took part, with 12 teams taking to the field to compete in the A-Grade and B-Grade division competitions.

QFES reigning champions Team Inferno will retain the trophy for another year after winning the A-Grade division grand final 6-5. The game — against a combined QFES, QPS and QAS team from Airlie Beach — was a close one, with the winning try scored with just 30 seconds remaining.



In their first competition together, QFES' Team Blaze also made the grand final in the B-Grade division but were beaten 8-4 by the QAS Heart Stoppers.

Both QFES teams comprised firefighters from the Mackay and North Mackay Fire and Rescue Stations and members of their immediate family.

Station Officer Matt Geiger said the event was an important one for emergency service workers in the Mackay District.

"The day is a great opportunity for members of all emergency services in Mackay and district to get together for some friendly



competition and join forces to raise funds for some great local causes," Mr Geiger said.

"The event has been running since 2012 and every year we raise money for a different charity; this year player registration fees and raffle ticket sales raised \$1,888.00 which has been donated to support a Mackay QPS member whose young son has been undergoing treatment in Brisbane for leukaemia."

Special thanks to QPS Senior Sergeant David Parnell from Mackay Police Station for driving this important multi-agency event and to all those involved in making the day a success.

Team QFES shines at AP&ES Games

After a week-long competition on the Sunshine Coast, the 16th Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games came to an end in October with Team QFES putting in an outstanding performance.

At the final whistle, QFES athletes had claimed a swag of medals as well as the prestigious AP&ES Games Emergency Services Shield.

Team QFES' 150 strong contingent of athletes were among 2500 athletes to compete in the Games, with representatives from around Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea.

In an enormous team effort, QFES athletes collected 47 gold, 32 silver and 21 bronze medals from sports events including triathlon, mountain biking, cross-country, equestrian, basketball and badminton among many others.

QFES dominated in a number of events, with star athletes Karen Bradley and Andrea Fox swooping up eight and three individual gold medals at the track and field events respectively. Bruce Smith was unbeatable in the pool, taking home five individual gold medals in the swimming.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll said Team QFES had represented the department to the highest standard.

"As well as the terrific results our athletes achieved on the field, the camaraderie, team spirit and enthusiasm of our members was great to see," Ms Carroll said.

"This event was a chance for police and emergency service personnel from right around Australia and the Pacific region to come together in the spirit of healthy competition, fitness and friendship and I am pleased that QFES has been an official partner."

Of all competing countries and Australian states and territories, the combined Queensland police and emergency services medal tally topped the leader board with 317 gold medals, followed by NSW with 229 gold medals.

The 17th Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games will be held in Perth, Western Australia in 2018.



PICTURED CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TRACK AND FIELD EIGHT-TIME GOLD MEDALLIST STATION OFFICER KAREN BRADLEY; QFES FIREFIGHTER AND CROSSFIT GOLD MEDALLIST MATTHEW SAUNDERS WITH SUPPORTER, AUSTRALIAN CROSSFIT CHAMPION KARA WEBB (PHOTO: DETECTIVE ACTING SGT NATALIE BENNET QPS); QFES INSPECTOR CAMERON HERBERT, GOLD MEDALLIST IN THE TRIATHLON AND ROAD RACE HALF-MARATHON EVENT (PHOTO: ANDREW WESTON); WOMEN'S SURFING GOLD MEDAL WINNER AND SUNSHINE COAST FIREFIGHTER SAMANTHA THORNTON (PHOTO: DETECTIVE ACTING SGT. NATALIE BENNETT QPS); TRACK AND FIELD MEDALLISTS, FIREFIGHTER ANDRA FOX AND SES PROGRAM SUPPORT OFFICER DANNI SEGELOW (PHOTO: ANDREW WESTON); FIREFIGHTER DANIEL SKELLERN WITH COMMISSIONER CARROLL AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE GAMES (PHOTO: DETECTIVE ACTING SGT. NATALIE BENNET QPS).

More photos page 32

SES Week winners announced



The dedication and commitment of Queensland's top SES volunteers were highlighted during this year's SES Week celebrations, which ran from 15–23 October.

Exceptional members, groups and units were recognised at regional awards ceremonies throughout the week, with regional winners heading to Brisbane as finalists for the SES Week State Awards ceremony on 23 October.

Central Region finalist and Emerald SES Group Leader Nichole Phillips received the coveted Minister's Cup for Queensland SES Member of the Year for her continued commitment, passion and dedication to the SES.

Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing said Nichole had been pivotal in helping the Central Highlands SES Unit continue to grow and strengthen.

"Nichole runs multiple training sessions every fortnight for Emerald SES Group members, as well as other groups in the unit, requiring an enormous commitment of Nichole's time and energy," Mr Wassing said.

"Thanks to Nichole's efforts, membership of the neighbouring Blackwater SES Group has improved significantly and the unit as a whole has benefitted from her contributions to fundraising and community activities."

South Eastern Region's Ipswich City SES Unit won the Assistant Commissioner's Shield for Queensland SES Operational Response of the Year for their outstanding work in support of QPS during a search for a missing Ipswich teenager at Collingwood Park in January and February this year.

SES Assistant Commissioner Peter Jeffrey said throughout the 10-day operation, SES volunteers provided essential equipment and services including land and water searches and welfare support to searchers and the missing teen's family.

"Although this search had an unfortunate outcome the SES was able to provide some closure to the family and they conducted themselves in a highly professional and efficient manner," Mr Jeffrey said.

North Coast Region winner Bundaberg Regional SES Unit won the Commissioner's Cup for Queensland SES Unit/Group of the Year.

"The Bundaberg Regional SES Unit has improved many of their business processes through innovation, collaboration and communication," Mr Jeffrey said.

"This work has seen their relationship with local government strengthen, helping them to acquire new equipment such as phones and three new trailers."

With thanks to Ashleigh Bond

More SES Week photos pages 33–34.

FINALISTS Minister's Cup SES Member of the Year:

- Far Northern Region – Peter Ottone
CARDWELL SES GROUP
- Northern Region – Nicole Bradley
TOWNSVILLE SES GROUP
- Central Region – Nichole Phillips
EMERALD SES GROUP
- North Coast Region – Brian Lowe
BIGGENDEN SES GROUP
- Brisbane Region – Nicholas Dunn
BRISBANE OPERATIONS SES GROUP
- South Eastern Region – Kristie-Lee Kolbee
IPSWICH SES GROUP
- South Western Region – Stephen Long
MILES SES GROUP

FINALISTS Commissioner's Cup SES Unit/Group of the Year:

- Far Northern Region
WEIPA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE GROUP
- Northern Region
TOWNSVILLE CITY SES UNIT
- Central Region
CLERMONT SES GROUP
- North Coast Region
BUNDABERG SES UNIT
- Brisbane Region
BRISBANE CITY SES UNIT
- South Eastern Region
IPSWICH CITY UNIT
- South Western Region
WALLUMBILLA SES GROUP

FINALISTS Assistant Commissioner's Shield Operational Response of the Year:

- Far Northern Region
WUJAL WUJAL ABORIGINAL SHIRE SES UNIT
- Northern Region
MOUNT ISA CITY SES UNIT
- Central Region
ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL SES UNIT
- North Coast Region
SOUTH BURNETT REGIONAL
- Brisbane Region
MORETON BAY REGIONAL SES UNIT
- South Eastern Region
IPSWICH CITY UNIT
- South Western Region
WESTERN DOWNS REGIONAL SES UNIT



CELEBRATE



QFES thanks Energex, Ergon and Powerlink for SES equipment boost

SES volunteers at an official equipment handover event in Brisbane.

The generous support of Queensland’s three government-owned power companies has seen \$200,000 worth of equipment delivered to frontline SES volunteers over the past 12 months.

Under the Energex, Ergon and Powerlink SES Equipment Program, 83 SES Groups across the state received a total of 158 pieces of equipment, including ladders, pole saws, generators, chainsaws, stretchers, emergency lighting equipment and other tools to help the SES provide essential support for the community.

Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing thanked the three energy providers for their ongoing commitment to the SES in Queensland.

“The disaster response equipment provided to SES Groups by Energex, Ergon and Powerlink this year has

been a welcome addition to frontline emergency toolkits,” Mr Wassing said.

“SES volunteers are on call 24-7, ready to help their communities whenever they are needed; these ordinary people — with families, jobs and commitments like anyone else — give up their time to be there to lend a hand when people are doing it tough.

“It is great to see that the incredible contribution SES volunteers make in Queensland is recognised and valued.”

Powerlink CEO Merryn York said the program aimed to make it easier for the SES to provide essential services to communities in need.

“A well-prepared and well-equipped SES will enable the response to the types of events we have here in Queensland to occur more quickly and to be more effective,” Ms York said.

Energy Queensland (Energex and Ergon) CEO David Smales said Energy Queensland was pleased to partner with Powerlink to deliver the 2016 SES Equipment Program.

“We’re very proud to be involved in this important partnership,” Mr Smales said.

“It is a tangible way we can work together to deliver on our commitment to help keep our community safe.”

SES volunteer the face of a resilient Australia

Central Region SES volunteer Bob Jeacocke has been immortalised in this year’s winning portrait in the 2016 Resilient Australia National Photography Award.



Bob Jeacocke and Karin Calvert (Karin Calvert Photography www.karincalvert.com) with Karin’s winning portrait entry.

The Resilient Australia Awards is a national program sponsored by the federal Attorney-General’s Department, recognising efforts to boost community disaster resilience across Australia.

Freelance photographer Karin Calvert’s portrait of Bob Jeacocke won the Resilient Australia photography category at the Queensland awards before being chosen over finalists from each state and territory to win the National Photography Award.

In February 2015, Karin was on the ground in central Queensland covering Tropical Cyclone Marcia and the recovery efforts of effected communities. Later that year, she returned to Yeppoon to photograph some of the people she met and to find out how they had carried on after the devastating event.

Karin said her winning portrait of Bob is from an exhibition of 20 of her images permanently on display in Yeppoon honouring the resilience of that community.

“I chose the image of Bob to enter in the Resilient Australia Awards because, to me, he epitomises ‘resilience’,” Karin said.

“Bob is a 42-year member of the SES; he has experienced personal challenges and come through them.

“To be a part of the community in that capacity for so long and then for something like Cyclone Marcia to hit — he just epitomises the term and it shines in this portrait. “

The awards were announced in Melbourne by the federal Minister for Justice Michael Keenan. Of the three awards categories, two of the National awards were won by Queensland finalists, with the Sunshine Coast Council’s online Disaster Hub (www.disaster.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au) winning the 2016 Resilient Australia Award.

Far Northern Region

A new Far Northern Region Capability Coordination Hub (CCH) is now up and running to promote a 'One QFES' community engagement approach in the region.

The focus of the CCH will be to link all QFES services and support them to embrace strategic engagement to target communities at risk and apply appropriate remedies to mitigate that risk.

The CCH will also play a key role during operations, working with Public Information Officers and helping to provide situational awareness, local intelligence and cultural awareness to VCEs and other QFES personnel deployed within the region.

Bushfire Safety Officer Jacqueline Gibson, iZone Officer Joe Torrisi and Community Engagement Officer Chris Wegger make up the CCH team — with thanks also to Acting Bushfire Safety Officer Matthew Eckhart for his involvement to date.



In October, Certificates of Acknowledgement were presented to Saibai Island Rural Fire Brigade members Marcus Warusam, Nathan Tabuai, Poey Akiba, Ian Akiba and Lewis Aniba in recognition of the crew's response to a structure fire they attended in December last year.

The crew provided external fire attack as well as exposure protection and were successful in preventing the fire from spreading to the adjoining properties. This was a major achievement for the dedicated Saibai Rural Fire Brigade and resulted in significant reduction in what had the potential to become a catastrophic event for the Saibai Island community.

The certificates were presented on behalf of Acting Assistant Commissioner Far Northern Region John Bolger by Saibai Divisional Councillor Keri Akiba from the Torres Strait Island Regional Council and Station Officer Conor Maguire.

Saibai Island is part of the Torres Strait Islands archipelago and is one of Australia's most isolated and remote locations, lying approximately 3km from the Papua New Guinea coastline.



Far Northern Region Emergency Management Coordinator Mandy Duke and RFS Area Training Support Officer Jamie Haskell recently visited the remote Indigenous community of Aurukun on the western coast of Cape York Peninsula to train local emergency management personnel and meet with members of the Aurukun Shire Council.

During the visit, Mandy provided disaster management training to Aurukun Local Disaster Management Group members and Jamie delivered an induction to the Aurukun Rural Fire Brigade on the operation of firefighting appliance AURUKUN 51.



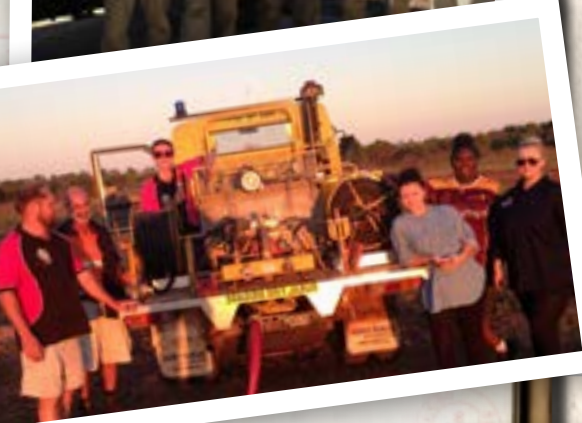
Northern Region



In late September, staff from RFS Charters Towers conducted training with Normanton Land and Sea Rangers, Mornington Island Rural Fire Brigade members and the recently re-established Wellesley Island Ranger Group.

As part of the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Smithburne Rural Fire Brigade, the Normanton Land and Sea Rangers conducted a roadside burn on behalf of the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Delta Downs.

New members of the Mornington Island Rural Fire Brigade started their Firefighter Minimum Skills training and appliance induction while the Wellesley Island Rangers (part of the Gulf Regional Aboriginal Corporation) completed paperwork to join the Mornington Island Rural Fire Brigade.



In October, the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) Queensland 2016 State Awards were held at Brisbane City Hall to announce the winners of a number of award categories including PCYC Emergency Services Cadet of the Year.

Of three regional finalists, the top prize this year went to Hughenden cadet Stuart Anchen who has shown outstanding leadership and dedication in his cadet role, and is also a committed volunteer with the Hughenden SES Group, signing up the day he turned 16.

PCYC Emergency Services Cadets Matthew Maher of the Cooroora unit and Hayden Morris of the Inglewood unit were finalists. Congratulations to each of these cadets on this fantastic achievement.



The Charters Towers SES Group celebrated SES Week this year with a sausage sizzle and community open evening, with a number of members of the public coming in to say hello and have a look around and several people asking about joining.

However, the highlight of the night was the official handover of a new all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and training room to the group by Aaron Harper MP, Member for Thuringowa. Local Controller Wally Thomasson was on hand to accept the keys to the ATV and to take control of the training room.

A huge thank you to Wally and his crew for all of their hard work to arrange such a memorable celebration of SES Week — in particular to Wally who put in the hard yards applying for funding from numerous sources to get the ATV and the training room. Thank you also to the Charters Towers Regional Council for their assistance organising the training room and for supplying a trailer for the ATV.



Central Region

In September, two three-day regional technical rescue workshops were held with candidates training at two locations, Rockhampton Fire and Rescue Station and the blow hole at Rosslyn Bay Marina near Yeppoon.

The workshops were attended by level two rescue technicians from Mackay, Rockhampton and Gladstone, and were designed to strengthen skill sets in vertical rescue and confined space rescue, providing valuable scenario-based training not normally possible while on shift.



QFES firefighters were on hand at the 2016 Pink Ribbon Charity Fair held in Mulherin Park, Mackay Harbour on Sunday 16 October to help raise funds for cancer research.

Crews from Mackay Fire and Rescue Station and the North Mackay auxiliary crew provided fire safety information, equipment demonstrations and fun for the kids, including a visit from Blazer and rides on Lil' Squirt. QFES attendance was well received and appreciated, and even occasional heavy showers couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of the crews or the crowds at this important community event, which is held annually in memory of local woman Marilyn Wilson.



Rockhampton RFS Brigade Training and Support Officer Tracey Charles — who is also an RFS volunteer, auxiliary firefighter and SES volunteer — and her horse Snoopy were among 150 QFES members who took part in the Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games on the Sunshine Coast in October.

Tracey and Snoopy were entered in a number of events for the Queensland Equestrian Team who competed at the Queensland State Equestrian Centre in Caboolture. The pair placed second in the Showmanship Halter class and fourth in the Hunter in Hand class.

Tracey was so proud of super Snoopy, who is only new to events of this nature and they both did extremely well to achieve such great results.



North Coast Region



A North Coast Region Emergency Services Community Expo was held on 15 October at Sunshine Coast Stadium, concluding the Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games. The free event promoted the region's emergency services to around 1000 members of the community.

Demonstrations and exhibitions from 26 different emergency service agencies and organisations kept the crowds busy, with highlights including a road crash rescue simulation, an urban search and rescue demonstration and an SES land search. Also popular was a presentation about canine CPR and how to evacuate pets safely, and a passport activity that required people go to different displays and answer questions about community preparedness and safety to have their 'passports' stamped. Full passports then went into a draw for a number of great prizes announced on the day.

Photo: Little Champ Photography.



Congratulations to the more than 60 Sunshine Coast firefighters who were recognised for their dedication and service at an awards ceremony in Maroochydore in November.

Particular commendation goes to officers from Gympie Fire and Rescue Station who received the Commissioner's Unit Citation for their response to a tragic house fire in Monkland on the morning of 27 June 2016 in which a young girl lost her life. Firefighter Steve Evans and auxiliary firefighter Ben Christensen were also presented with the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery for the same incident.



QFES North Coast Region members, as part of the Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee (QTCC) with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), spent a week in November travelling around the region holding QTCC Weather Outlook sessions for disaster management stakeholders in Murgon, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Noosa.

In Murgon, Bundaberg and Maryborough, sessions were also held for members of the public and were a great opportunity for the community to hear from QFES and their local government about what is happening locally around disaster management, preparedness and planning activities. BoM representatives also spoke at the sessions, providing local weather information and showing attendees how to navigate the BoM website. At Maryborough, Deaf Services Queensland and an AUSLAN interpreter were also present to convey the information to Deaf and hard of hearing audience members.

Brisbane Region

Recently the Professional Development Unit delivered heavy vehicle rescue training to stations with Kilos, Limas and those that attend a larger proportion of heavy vehicle rescues.

The course focuses on the basic construction and dangers of trucks and buses, and identifying issues relating to these when responding to a heavy road crash rescue incident. It also covers safe lifting and stabilisation techniques for heavy vehicles with candidates taught how to identify the best lifting methods, lifting points and how to identify and isolate suspension. Training scenarios included basic situations where a person had been run over and pinned beneath heavy vehicles, as well as more difficult and complex situations. All who attended gained a significant amount of information and skills in this area.



In November, Pullenvale Fire and Rescue Station opened its engine bay doors to the public for a station open day.

The theme for the event was 'the life of a firefighter', giving the local community an insight into the day-to-day life of a firefighter and the equipment and facilities available at Pullenvale Station.

The open day was run by the Pullenvale crew with the assistance of appliances 502B and 502I from Roma Street Station. Also present representing QFES were members of the Moggill SES Group and Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade.

Attendance on the day was high, with around 250 people of all ages visiting the station. Many were keen to get information about bushfire and the severe weather season and to take a closer look at the station which they had driven past so many times over the years.



In 2015, QFES Training and Emergency Management decided to participate in the MS Moonlight Walk to help raise funds to help find a cure for Multiple Sclerosis and 'Team FireFlies' was born.

Word has spread of this great initiative and this year the FireFlies have expanded to 27 team members, the majority being QFES staff.

The 2016 MS Moonlight Walk was held on Friday 21 October and was a huge success with more than 4400 people participating. Team FireFlies raised more than \$4900 ranking them 19th top team earner.

Team FireFlies would like to thank everyone who sponsored them in this year's Moonlight Walk.





MYTH

RIPS ONLY TAKE THE LIVES OF POOR SWIMMERS

#donrisktherip

There are many MYTHS about Australia's beaches...that it's only tourists who get caught in rip currents, that it's people who are weak swimmers that get taken out, or that experienced swimmers can always spot a rip. FACT: Only 15% of people who drown in rips are international visitors. FACT: It's young men aged 15-39 who are most at risk of getting caught and dying in a rip. FACT: Two out of three people who think they can identify rips, can't.

Swim between the red and yellow flags.

Visit beachsafe.org.au or download the app to find out what you don't know about rips.



South Eastern Region

QFES members were among more than 100 attendees at the South Eastern Region Preparedness Seminar in Beenleigh in October.

The seminar was a chance to join with our emergency services colleagues, along with other disaster management representatives from the Bureau of Meteorology and local and state governments, to share knowledge and plan for the upcoming storm season in Queensland.



The job of a firefighter is so much more than saving cats stuck in trees — but some days it just happens that way.

In November, Loganlea firefighters were called to assist the RSPCA rescue a frightened feline who had climbed a little too high and couldn't get down. Crews used a telescopic link stick to coax the cat out of the tree and into a makeshift net.



Earlier this year, South Eastern Region farewelled Peta Miller-Rose.

Peta's impressive resume listing her outstanding contributions to Queensland communities continues to grow. From the early days as a volunteer firefighter to her most recent promotion to Inspector and Manager Bushfire Safety, Peta has left an indelible mark on South Eastern Region. Peta's work with the Volunteer Community Educators program has provided not only the region but the whole of Queensland one of the best community engagement strategies QFES has seen. For this amazing work, Peta was awarded the AFSM in January 2014.

While we are sad to see Peta leave the region in a full-time capacity, she continues her service as both an auxiliary firefighter at Beaudesert and a volunteer firefighter at Birnam.



Assistant Commissioner Neil Reid is proud to announce the appointment of five station officers to South Eastern Region.

Congratulations Station Officers Sean Wulff, Karen Bradley and Wayne McGregor of Logan Command, and Station Officers Tim Burchmann and Leigh Grayson of Ipswich Command.



South Western Region



In November, Officer Cadets from Royal Military College Duntroon in Canberra were deployed to St George under ‘Operation Dragon’s Lair’ as part of their final year of training to graduate as commissioned officers of the ADF.

To meet the operation’s objectives, the Balonne Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) was approached to assist, and subsequently St George SES were also enlisted to help the ADF in developing capabilities of these future leaders.

The tasking over the weekend 5-6 November required the deployment of a number of ADF and SES members by flood boat to undertake a search for a person lost along the Balonne River. SES involvement allowed the ADF members (both staff and officer cadets) to further expand their knowledge on the capabilities of the SES in Queensland and also the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements, in particular how they as officers from the ADF may be called upon to help the civilian community during disaster operations. It also provided SES crews from across the South Western Region a better understanding of how military units work in conjunction with the SES during events.



The Toowoomba Emergency Services Day was held in October with emergency services and support and recovery agencies coming together to promote connectedness, disaster resilience and preparedness in the community.

QFES was joined on the day by Inglewood and Tara PCYC Emergency Service Cadets, the Toowoomba Regional Council, QPS, QAS, Surf Lifesaving QLD, RSPCA, Toowoomba Fire Brigade Historical Society, Lifeline, Red Cross and St John Ambulance.

With more than 1200 members of the local community in attendance, this event was a great opportunity for residents to meet and talk with emergency service agencies and support organisations to better prepare themselves and their families for disasters and emergency events. A big thank you goes out to all QFES members who participated in organising and preparing for the day as well as everyone who attended on the day to engage with the community.



The Toowoomba MS Swimathon was held in November, with teams taking part in a 12-hour swimming relay to raise money for people living with MS.

Highfields Fire and Rescue Station auxiliary firefighters, Toowoomba Fire and Rescue Station level two swiftwater rescue technicians, Firecom staff and South Western Region’s QFES Chaplain teamed up with QAS staff, LifeFlight and QPS to form the Emergency United team, who raised a combined total of more than \$9000 to rank as the number one fundraising team for the event. All involved put in a huge effort with pre-event fundraising and in swimming on the day; congratulations on a great result for a great cause.



Emergency Management

2016–17 Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee Pre-Season Briefings

Each year during October and November, to assist the state to prepare for the severe weather season, the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and QFES, under the auspice of the Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee (QTCCC), coordinate and facilitate pre-season preparedness seminars around Queensland.

The briefings are an opportunity for disaster managers, emergency services and other interested parties from across the state to hear from key state agencies, the BoM and other invited organisations who provide updates on agency activities, new policies, services and preparations for the upcoming severe weather season.

Pre-season briefings were held in Townsville, Cairns, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Beenleigh, Charleville, Emerald, Rockhampton, Mackay, Murgon, Tewantin, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Mount Isa.

QFES provided a seasonal review and information about preparations at the State Operations Centre (SOC) and the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC), the Disaster Management Portal, risk frameworks and river schematics.

Other presentations were delivered by: the Department of Housing and Public Works; the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services; the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation; the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; Queensland Health; the Queensland Reconstruction Authority; and local governments.



Pre-season visits to regions

During October and November, staff from the State Operational Coordination Branch (SOCB) met with QFES regional FRS, RFS, SES and Emergency Management members involved in disaster management to provide updates on recent activities undertaken in the SOC and the SDCC.

These important workshops provided key information on a variety of topics including the State Natural Hazard Risk Assessment and Register, SDCC Watch Desk roles and responsibilities, confirmation of Requesting and Authorising Officers roles for Emergency Alert, Total Operational Mapping, the Disaster Management Portal and new initiatives and processes that have been incorporated into the SOC such as the Operations Cell.

The workshops also included a presentation by Dr John Rolfe from the SOCB on situational awareness for Incident Controllers (ICs) and Commanders. Sessions provided an insight into factors that can affect the decision-making process, including time and risk pressures, and importantly triggers that ICs will recognise and strategies they can implement to mitigate these factors.





“When you’re a rural firefighter the learning never stops”

When Jade Pilgrim returned home to Queensland after six years working as a ski instructor, she wanted to volunteer to reconnect with the people in her community. Now, she is a QFES volunteer firefighter, passionate about community engagement and proud to call the Rural Fire Service her extended family.

—By Saskia Tigchelaar

On her first day as a member of the Bli Bli and District Rural Fire Brigade in November 2015, Jade remembers feeling more than a little daunted at the thought of becoming a firefighter.

“When I signed up with the RFS I knew I had the values and attitude of a strong team member and volunteer but my background had very little to do with fire, so naturally I had some reservations,” she said.

“I knew, though, that in time and with the support of my brigade and area staff I would learn the basics of the role and, sure enough, that has been the case.

“One of the best things about being a rural firefighter is the learning never stops.”

Determination and belief in her own ability has been a defining aspect of Jade’s life; at just 15, she spent a year away from her family on student exchange in Germany. Later, after developing a keen interest in skiing during a high-school trip, Brisbane-born Jade moved solo to New Zealand at the age of 18 to pursue a career as a ski instructor. She stayed for two seasons before heading to the Australian ski fields for a further two years and then on to Switzerland.

In 2011 Jade came home, later settling on the Sunshine Coast to begin a Bachelor degree in Business Marketing majoring in Management.

“Returning to Australia after such a long time away, I felt disconnected to where I lived,” she said.

“For me, volunteering was a way to help me connect with people and contribute to my community.”

Very much a people person, the RFS’s strong focus on community engagement has been a perfect fit for Jade.

“I think as a volunteer, we are real people, it’s a real service that we deliver — we should be getting out and talking to real members of the community about their awareness, understanding and expectations of the RFS,” she said.

“We are here to help people, but we need to know their expectations.”

Especially rewarding for Jade is getting kids involved in bushfire safety.

“As a ski instructor you talk to a lot of people, especially young people, and I really missed that,” she said.

“When I went on a school visit with my brigade, I loved it — I love talking to children and getting them engaged with what we do; it’s a great feeling.”

In just one year with the RFS, Jade can’t imagine a future doing anything else.

“The more I learn about fire, the service, the people and the community, the more it just feels like an obvious life decision for me,” she said.

Jade describes the past 12 months as a whirlwind — she has immersed herself in the RFS and jumped at every opportunity that has come her way.

In August, she was selected as a delegate to attend the Women and Firefighting Australasia Conference, and welcomed the chance to meet other women in fire and emergency services from diverse backgrounds who share a common interest. She was also invited to attend and represent North Coast Region at the 2016 RFS Youth Forum.

“When I joined the RFS, I had no idea that in such a short space of time I would be so fortunate to have experienced so many highlights — being a member of my brigade is a highlight in its own right, without having all of these fantastic opportunities for development and contribution as well.”

Such is her passion for the role, Jade intends to pursue post graduate study in the field of emergency and disaster management. In particular, her interest is in community and volunteer engagement and establishing the gap between needs, wants and expectations and actual QFES service delivery.

Speaking to Jade, it is clear that in the RFS she has found her place and the connection with community that she set out to achieve.

“Being an RFS volunteer is like having an extended family — not just within your brigade, but the service as a whole and even interstate,” she said.

We’re more than volunteers.

We’re more than a team.

We’re a family.





»»» Bunnings BBQ back to support emergency services volunteers «««



Bunnings will be holding the annual Aussie Day Weekend fundraiser again next year to raise money for the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service.

Across the state, 54 stores including three new stores in Mount Gravatt, Toombul and Bundamba will be holding BBQs with all funds going to nominated SES Groups and RFS Brigades.

At this year's events the Queensland community raised more than \$100,000 which contributed to more than \$497,000 generated nationally.

Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing commended Bunnings for their long-standing commitment to supporting emergency services volunteers.

"Bunnings has been holding fundraising events for SES and RFS now for seven years," Mr Wassing said.

"For a number of these years, we have also been working together locally to deliver important preparation messages to the Queensland community relating to major weather events.

"It is encouraging to see this ongoing commitment to our volunteers and community safety, and we look forward to working with Bunnings for many years to come."

On the Australia Day weekend in the new year, save a few items on your 'To do' list so you can drop down to your local Bunnings store and buy a snag in support of Queensland's emergency services volunteers.

Thanks to Leah Hornibrook

Recco partners with the RFS



Closeburn Rural Fire Brigade volunteer firefighters Mark Boddington and Neil Parish with Repco Retail Business Development Manager Amina Murchie and Store Manager Steve Fernando.

QFES is proud to announce a new community partnership between the RFS and auto retailer Repco.

The partnership will see Repco supporting the RFS through fundraising in all of their Queensland stores, with the funds providing financial support to RFS programs which support brigades and volunteers and, in turn, help ensure the safety of our communities.

RFS Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson welcomed the opportunity to team up with Repco, and thanked the auto retail chain for their commitment to supporting the volunteers who support the people of Queensland.

“The RFS is supported by the Queensland Government and by local governments throughout the state who together provide a range of vehicles, equipment, personal protective clothing and training,” Mr Dawson said.

“But, community fundraising in support of local brigades and volunteers is vital for the delivery of many of the important services and programs RFS brigades provide.

“With more than 70 store locations throughout Queensland, this significant partnership with Repco will make it easy for people to directly support their local brigades through instore fundraising.”

Repco General Manager Strategic Marketing Prasan Kumar said Repco is proud to partner with the RFS.

“Repco is highly respected throughout the community, providing expertise and quality products to millions of customers in their local areas every year to keep them on the road and safe,” Mr Kumar said.

“It is important to us that any partner of Repco has the same level of trust and also goes that extra mile in the community. We believe the RFS is the ideal partner.

“Both Repco and the RFS have a shared focus to deliver high-quality services to the local community with a particular emphasis on safety, and I look forward to working together to develop ongoing opportunities to better support the Queensland community.”



Photo: Andrew Weston

Photo: Andrew Weston

Photo: Andrew Weston

The 16th Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games were held in October, with 2500 athletes from police and emergency service agencies from around Australia and the Pacific taking part.



QFES Curriculum Development Officer Damian Roache visited historic O'Hara's Pub at 9-11 Ground Zero in New York City, adding the QFES and SES badges to the hundreds that adorn the walls in a show of international support for the NYFD and NYPD.



Northern Region's annual Cyclone Sunday was held in Townsville's Strand Park in November with more than 6000 members of the public turning out to learn more about how they can be better prepared for cyclone season.



SES Week 2016 was held 15-23 October with awards and celebrations held in each region in the lead up to the SES Week State Awards, where Queensland's SES member, unit and operational response of the year were announced (see story page 17).



The Central Region SES Rescue Challenge in Rockhampton in November tested scene management, leadership and decision-making, rescue techniques and casualty management. Photos: Selina Neill, Mackay SES Unit.



QFES firefighters, auxiliaries, SES and RFS members were on hand for the opening of Schoolies Week on the Gold Coast to chat to school leavers and hand out lanyards with tips to stay safe.






RFS crews have had a busy start to bushfire season with hot, dry weather around much of Queensland and heightened bushfire conditions forecast to continue. Pictured here is firefighting activity in Central, North Coast and Brisbane Regions.



SES Week 2016

Follow us on social media and share your photos with us:

-  @QldFES
-  Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - QFES
-  @qldfire

(L-R): Pat Feltham and Dean Welsh (Redcliffe SES), R&DWS President Warwick King, John Pearce (Redcliffe SES)

Gone but not forgotten

The Redcliffe SES Group has paid tribute to past volunteers with a new honour board displaying recently rediscovered commemorative plaques.

Earlier this year, the Group discovered a number of brass plaques at their Portwood Street base acknowledging past volunteers' service to their community and to the SES.

To give the plaques the deference and prominence they deserve, the members went to their neighbours, the Redcliffe and District Woodcraft Society, to ask if a polished board could be provided.

The society has a history of providing generous support to the Redcliffe SES, having crafted a number of model homes depicting the various types of roof design the SES encounters responding to community calls for assistance.

Society president Warwick King used a piece of Queensland silky oak cut from a tree felled many years ago at nearby Burpengary.

The finished board was formally handed to Redcliffe SES members Dean Welsh, Pat Feltham and John Pearce and now hangs in the Group's training room, in memory of those Redcliffe SES members who have gone before.

Thanks to Graham Davis, Redcliffe SES Group



QFES Facebook page passes 200,000 Likes

The QFES Facebook page passed 200,000 Likes in November — that's more than 200,000 people sharing important information, photos and support, and joining our online conversation since the page's inception five years ago.

Building community resilience is key for QFES in the work we do and the services we deliver. The partnerships we make and input we receive via our Facebook page helps us to achieve this — but we couldn't have done it without your help.

The support and involvement of the broader QFES community — people around Queensland who play their part in connecting with our messages and sharing important information — has been enormous and it continues to grow.

Everyone who has sent through content, photos, post ideas and provided responses has contributed in a big way to this major milestone. To each and every person who has contributed — thank you.

QFES Media relies on our people on the ground to send through information for social media content and is always looking for story ideas and images. Remember, we're only a click of a message or email away.

If you're not one of the 200,000+ members of our online community, what are you waiting for? Like and follow us on Facebook to be part of the conversation that supports safer, more resilient Queensland communities and us all working together to support each other.

PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE.



Prepare to take the heat out of bushfire season

Queenslanders know all about floods and storms, but what about bushfire?

Bushfires can affect anyone in Queensland and with bushfire season underway, it's important to prepare now to protect yourself, your family and property against bushfire.

You don't have to live in the bush to be threatened by bushfire – just close enough to be affected by burning material, embers and smoke.

It's too late to start planning as the fire is approaching. So here are some things you can do now so you're better prepared this bushfire season.

Act, so your family and property are safe

Preparation is vital when it comes to reducing the threat and severity of a bushfire. An unprepared property is not only at risk itself, but may also present an increased danger for neighbours.

Look at the simple things you can do, like mowing the lawn regularly and removing combustible materials like dry leaves and branches in gutters and yards to reduce your risks.

Create your Bushfire Survival Plan today

Having a Bushfire Survival Plan in place, just in case, is one way you can protect your family and home well in advance.

Your plan outlines if you will leave early or stay, lets you know what you'll need in an emergency kit or evacuation kit, and the actions you will take.

To find out more about preparing for bushfire season and to prepare your Bushfire Survival Plan visit

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au



Prepare for a short distance to be a high risk

Before things turn nasty
PREPARE TO STAY SAFE



Get the tools you need at
qld.gov.au/floodedroads

