

SES Review



State
Government

Local
Government

Community

“Sustaining the SES - Partnering for Change”

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13 March 2020

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PUBLIC**Executive Summary****I. Introduction**

The review of the SES arrangements was prompted by a motion agreed at the 2018 annual meeting of the Local Government Association of QLD. In short the intent of this motion was for the State to assume full funding and governance of the State Emergency Service. In reality the motion is a tipping point reflecting years of frustration with arrangements that are viewed by local governments as lacking clarity and inequitable. Perusal of many previous reviews (O’Sullivan 2009, Floods Commission of Inquiry 2012 and Keelty 2014) indicate concerns regarding the State – Local Government SES partnership, and shortcomings in managing and developing the SES capability, have been longstanding.

The review undertook significant consultation in forming the views that are reflected in this report. In addition to meeting with many Queensland and interstate stakeholders, 51 Councils were consulted, I met with over 450 SES volunteers, 489 volunteers responded to an online survey, and 25 individual submissions were received. I am most grateful to the many people who took the time to provide me with a range of perspectives.

The arrangements in themselves are complex, and the level of diversity of Queensland’s Councils compounds this complexity. It was apparent that changing funding and governance arrangements would of itself be insufficient to overcome the many shortcoming identified. So the review has attempted to set a pathway to a long term strategic outcome where there is sustainable funding to develop a more capable SES, and where there is clear delineation of responsibilities, authorities and expectations between QFES, local government and volunteers.

II. Why Change

Local governments were keen to see a change to the arrangements, and surprisingly, the desire for change is not based purely on financial considerations. As previous reviews highlighted the arrangements are generally confusing. This represents a risk for the public through less than effective disaster response, an operational risk for the volunteers, and a reputational risk for QFES and local government. The major drivers for change can be summarised as.

- Councils’ level of support to the SES is highly variable and the SES capability state-wide is highly disparate. Some units are well funded and supported, others are struggling with poor facilities, low numbers, ageing equipment and minimal management oversight.
- With QFES having responsibility for the people and councils owning the assets, the arrangements are both confusing and highly risky.
- Councils’ disaster response capability and the expectations of their support to the SES is ambiguous and not subject to clear legislative guidelines. Similarly, the command, control and tasking of SES groups and units is imprecise and subsequently misunderstood.
- The way council is assisted with some SES funding through grants and subsidies negates effective long term financial planning and reduces the value-for-money of funds committed to sustaining and building SES capability.

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- The balance of QFES funding applied to the SES does not seem to align with the state-wide risk profile and propensity for cyclone/storm/flood events (resources to risks).

III. Stakeholder Views

The consultation with councils was instrumental in forming the views of this report. The majority of councils expressed the views that substantive change was required but wished to retain their SES connection and have some influence over the local disaster response capability. A lesser number were supportive of change but not did not agree that major change was required. At either end of these views, a small number of councils were seeking total withdrawal from any SES connection and a smaller number did not want any change as they were content to fully support the SES.

The basis for the council views can be summarised as

- The SES were seen as another emergency service agency (such as Police and Fire) and should be funded and managed accordingly
- A desire for clarity around the expectation of councils' disaster response role, and the interaction with the SES regarding authority and support, particularly around equipment, capability, tasking, and direction.
- Removal of the potential risk arising from the dual asset ownership vs volunteer responsibility situation.
- A more equitable partnership for those councils who have a substantial SES capability.
- Better consultative mechanisms with QFES and delineation of responsibilities.

Volunteers also expressed a variety of views on the current arrangements and the need for change that were in many ways consistent with council views. In most cases volunteers were supportive of change if it would improve the sustainability of the SES and consistency of the support they received.

However, there was concern that a centralised 'one-size fits all' arrangement may see rationalisation of SES facilities; also that local context, knowledge and experience in building appropriate local disaster capability and managing responses would be disregarded by QFES. State-wide the disparate SES capability was obvious to volunteers who were keen to reduce this disparity. In particular volunteers expressed significant frustration with the generally poor IT, computer and mobile communications support which are key to their administration, training and tasking.

IV. Future Arrangements and Costs

Should the State wish to take on greater funding and governance responsibility for the SES then various options are available. The attributes of any future model should mitigate the current shortcomings and be relatively simple to administer. A new model will need to delineate responsibility and authority between the State and local government, clarify the disaster response expectations of local government while also recognising their important local role and local knowledge. The aim for volunteers is to increase support, build a more sustainable capability while reducing disparity across SES groups state-wide. Whichever options are chosen structural changes to governance, support and consultative mechanism within QFES must be embedded.

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Example funding models at opposite ends of the spectrum of options are:

- The State fully funding the capability and directly supporting the delivery of the SES service. While the most costly option it ensures that the State is wholly responsible for the support and sustainment of the SES removing many of the irritants in the current arrangements. Extensive staff support will be required to manage these arrangements (locally, regionally and in Kedron) and consultative structures formalised to manage the State – local government relationship.
- State and local government sharing the funding and sharing the responsibility for the SES service delivery through formal agreements. The least complex example of this approach is the NSW model where local government are required to provide facilities to house the SES and the State funds all other aspects of SES support. The State would lease the facilities at a nominal (peppercorn) rent and become the single risk owner for SES activities. As identified above staff support and consultative structures will be needed.

Brisbane City Council firmly believe no change is needed and wish to keep the current arrangements. As they are sanctioned under their own legislation this is possible but formal agreements to guide SES doctrine, command and control and deployment of Brisbane SES out of area in major disaster will be required.

Establishing an accurate comprehensive cost of the SES is difficult. If moving to a new model the costs can be substantial - staff, equipment, capital facilities and operational. Any change will be a five to six year project with the costs in the mature arrangements varying between an **additional** \$30M to \$62M (19/20 FY costs) depending upon the model chosen.

V. Key Observations

1. **An Ongoing and Wicked Problem.** Previous reviews highlighting the shortcomings in the shared arrangements are a potent indicator for change. But change remains a wicked problem given the diversity of interests and capability. Policy changes agreeable to most stakeholders that avoid perverse outcomes will be difficult to negotiate.

2. **Council Perspectives on Motion 56.** Most councils agreed changes to the shared partnership were warranted but the scope and extent of the change necessary was the point of divergence. Some wanted a part in the future SES support framework but most wanted to ensure that local government still had a voice in disaster response capability needs and priorities. Brisbane City Council wanted to remain apart from any new arrangements.

3. **Disaster capability and council responsibilities.** The lack of guidance to councils' on their disaster response capabilities and responsibilities leads to highly disparate capabilities across the state. Resources don't always mitigate the risk profile. The State, with most of the levers at its disposal, and should determine SES capability as an integrated part of the state-wide response capability.

4. **Asset Ownership and Risk.** With councils' responsible for the SES assets and the State responsible for the volunteers it is a confusing and illogical situation fraught with risk. Conflicting policies, minimal common standards and limited auditing of equipment maintenance are all apparent. No single entity has holistically, either the authority or wherewithal, to manage the continuum of risk across the SES sector and it is an area that should raise significant concern.

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5. **Financial Management and Costing.** SES funding is highly dispersed across the three levels of government, the private sector and the community. Establishing a true cost is challenging. The current funding arrangements work against long-term financial planning, negate the ability to use economies of scale, and are administratively unwieldy. The result is reduced cost effectiveness and missed opportunities for capability enhancement.

6. **SES Local Controllers.** The legislated functions of local controllers bring weighty responsibilities seemingly incompatible for a volunteer and their authority is not clearly documented. Those in paid roles are in an invidious position being paid by one entity but responsible to another. There is nobody between the Commissioner QFES (CQFES) and a local controller, with the delegations to ensure legislated responsibilities are being met. The local controller is a single point of failure and the lack of support a significant risk.

7. **SES Roles and Functions.** As SES roles evolve there is no guidance for councils on which evolving roles could or should sit under their purview and future funding is ad hoc. Similarly, the management of specialised SES capability and its location does not seem to be subject of any gap-analysis or state-wide coordination. The legislated requirement to advise SES Units (and inform councils) of their functions is being overlooked.

8. **An SES Operational Concept.** Clarifying SES functions is a necessary precursor to structural changes. An SES Charter and Operational Concept would do much to clarify command and control, tasking and the authorising environment. It provides the starting point to ensure structural and funding changes are coherent with strategic outcomes.

9. **Communications and IT Connectivity.** It is incongruent that key aspect of SES capability (trained, equipped, responsive) relies primarily on council provision of communications and information technology; and in some areas the support is very poor. This is an area of State responsibility where improvements and consistency would bring significant benefits in capability and SES volunteer morale.

10. **Capability Priorities** Both volunteers and councils fear the State applying a ‘one size fits all’ model where local knowledge and priorities based on experience and context is disregarded. Changes to the arrangements could incorporate a formalised mechanism for consultation and feedback between QFES and local government. Matters to do with SES capacity, capability, and capability planning could be a standing agenda at Local Disaster Management Group meetings.

11. **Comprehensive Change – Implementation and Governance Structures.** Unravelling the current arrangements and moving to a new model will be a time consuming and complex task requiring complex negotiation. Managing the expectation of councils and the SES will be crucial, requiring a disciplined and extensive communications effort. It will be crucial that enabling elements are in place before attempting to implement any changes and that there is wholehearted commitment, including resources to the change. Not fully committing is inviting failure.

12. **Managing Arrangements with Brisbane City Council.** BCC is strongly resistant to changing the arrangements. If arrangements are to change BCC could be separate to the rest of the State as they are covered by their own legislation. This will require a separate negotiated arrangement and high-level relationship building.

13. **Funding and Governance Models.** The key funding model questions are a fully or partially funded model, and which entity would be responsible for managing and supporting the delivery of the SES capability. A partially funded, shared service delivery model is attractive. Councils would provide the SES facilities and the State fund all other SES costs.

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Local governments' understand future development planning and are well versed in leasing to different types of entities. Where council-run services are beneficial they could be utilised under contract arrangements.

14. **Legislative Change.** A comprehensive review of relevant legislation could be considered. Depending upon the way forward, specifically it will be required to establish councils' responsibilities and determine the bespoke Brisbane city arrangements. The separation into two Acts has resulted in an authorising environment lacking clarity with significant accountabilities unsaid, and opens the way for the avoidance of responsibility.

15. **Resources to Risk Balance.** Given the predominance of cyclones, floods and storms in the State's risk profile, a strategic review of QFES' funding allocations against risks could be considered. When introduced the intent of the Emergency Management Levy was that it would fund all Emergency Services but this does not appear to have occurred and there is a seeming imbalance in current allocations.

VI. Conclusions and Key Decision Points

There is a general sense amongst most stakeholders that change is needed, although there are various perspectives on what that change represents. The projection of the future disaster landscape suggests a need for an improved, more deployable and better integrated SES capability. Under current arrangements the State is unable to influence change to the extent necessary to achieve this outcome. The many shortcomings identified in this review represent significant risks that potentially impact volunteers, councils, the State and communities. These are cogent and forceful arguments to undertake reform.

Change though will be complex, time consuming and require a persistent and wholehearted commitment. If a decision is made to undertake reform it is a one-way road and the arrangements, if un-picked, cannot be reconstituted. Stakeholder engagement at all stages and a comprehensive strategic communications plan will be essential.

Some early high-level decision points are seen as;

- The role of the SES in the State Government's future vision for the emergency services sector.
- What level of change is seen as acceptable and manageable for Government?
- What funding model best meets this vision?
- Further analysis of the costs of the model and the supporting/enabling structures.
- Negotiation with LGAQ on the intended funding approach and councils' SES capability needs (but as part of an integrated State capability) .

A strategic communications plan will need to be in play from the outset. Simultaneously it is suggested a small initial project team be mobilised to scope and develop a project plan, including component areas of effort, key information and data needs, enabling structures, project team skill sets, and broad timeframes.

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State Emergency Service Review

Sustaining the SES – Partnering for Change

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” – Albert Einstein

1. Introduction

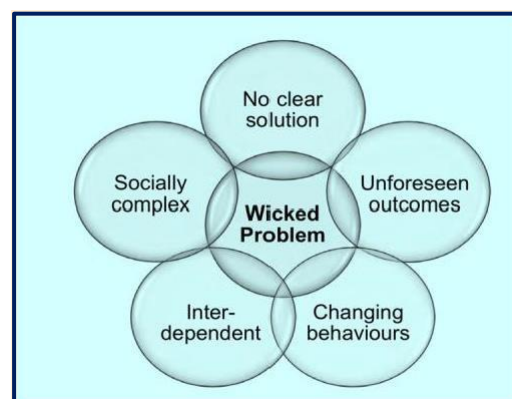
1.1 The review of the State Emergency Service in Queensland was undertaken over the period September 2019 to February 2000. This report is the result of my consultation and observations with many stakeholders over this period.

1.2 The Terms of Reference for the review are understandably broad allowing me to canvass many issues within the broad remit of emergency management and related State – local government arrangements; capability, resourcing, governance and operational response.

1.3 I am indebted to those who freely contributed their time, ideas, and support in this endeavour. The review canvassed a breadth of issues, from the detailed and tactical to the broad and strategic, and gathered numerous insights and concerns from a wide range of stakeholders. Given the extent of issues that were identified a separate report for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (the Department) will be provided. This has been identified as an appropriate mechanism to highlight issues concerning the State Emergency Service that are more specifically relevant to the Department and within their purview to consider.

1.4 The report represents the summation of a multiplicity of viewpoints reflective of the diversity of the Queensland landscape where there are large variations across local government; capability and capacity; geography; population; and, risk profiles. This diversity represents a significant challenge in attempting to distil these various views into a set of coherent policy options for Government consideration. There is an understandable desire to put local interests first, sometimes at the expense of a broader state-wide perspective; distance from major urban centres and a sense of isolation being a key factor in this attitude.

1.5 No single option is likely to meet the preferences of the majority of stakeholders - in this regard the search for conceptual neatness and policy purity is likely to be illusory, and compromise will be inevitable. A policy direction agreeable to the majority of stakeholders that avoids unintended consequences will be difficult to negotiate. In policy terms it is the epitome of what is often described as a wicked problem.

Figure 1 – Wicked Problems

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1.6 While this review had its genesis in a Local Government of Queensland Association (LGAQ) motion, this motion was really the tipping point. The Queensland SES arrangements are described as a partnership between the State and local government. However, the arrangements are an irritant that has become increasingly aggravating over the past decade or more. In a sense there is little new in this review. Most of the key issues have been raised previously by reviewers far more eminent than me, and there is an unsettling synergy with this report and reviews over the previous decade.

1.7 This review represents a new opportunity to surface these views and reinvigorate consideration of how greater clarity and sustainability can be brought to a sector that contributes greatly to the well-being and safety of the Queensland community.

1.8 For clarity in reading this report the following is offered.

- The terms council(s) or local government are used interchangeably to refer to all local government authorities within Queensland.
- Where the term State Emergency Service (SES) is used it refers specifically to the volunteers of this organisation.
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) paid staff are described in terms of their particular specialist stream (e.g. QFES SES or QFES RFS).
- ‘SES Unit’ is a collective term for all the SES in a particular local government area (LGA). The SES Unit is comprised of a number of SES Groups that are based on a geographic region, locale or town/suburb.
- The term ‘sector’ is used to describe the broad scope of activities and stakeholders involved in the interaction between local government, SES, QFES and other agencies in responding to disasters or managing crisis events.
- The term ‘State’ refers to the authorising agency or entity above the level of local government – in most cases the Department, ie QFES.
- The term ‘arrangements’ is used generically to describe the current model where SES support and funding is a shared responsibility between State and Local Government.

2. Review Background and Intent

2.1 I was engaged to undertake this review in August 2019 and commenced the review on 9 September. The Terms of Reference are at Annex A. The timeline for the review and consultation program is at Annex B. The review examines the arrangements between the State (represented by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services), Queensland local government authorities and the State Emergency Services who provide a community-based capability to respond to incidents and disasters.

2.2 The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) held their annual conference in June 2018. Arising out of this conference the following motion (Motion 56) was adopted by the members.

‘That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Queensland Government to wholly fund the State Emergency Service from existing funds received from the Emergency Services Levy with appropriate budget allocation and governance arrangements.’

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2.3 The motion was passed with an 87% majority vote indicating *prima facie*, widespread support for the motion. The advocacy of LGAQ and the Government’s informal response to this motion led to discussion between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the LGAQ. LGAQ President Mark Jamieson met Minister Craig Crawford MP (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) in March 2019 and further consultation between QFES and LGAQ followed. This led to an agreement that an external and independent consultant would be engaged to explore what the ramifications of the LGAQ motion were for Councils, for the SES and for disaster management and disaster response capability¹ in Queensland.

2.4 Both Councils and QFES recognise the current arrangements are not ideal. The funding of the SES in Queensland is not the subject of legislation and has become one of ‘accepted practice’, albeit the level of ‘acceptance’ of this arrangement has waned in recent years. The term “shared’ responsibility between the Queensland Government and councils has been the mantra to describe the mechanisms for financing the service. That financial support is supplemented by corporate sponsorship, donations and the fundraising efforts of SES members.

2.5 The LGAQ motion is the manifestation of many years of frustration. While the LGAQ motion has given rise to this report the period of gestation has been long term and slowly evolving, underscoring the challenges in the SES arrangements. This report discusses in detail the history of the SES and the incremental and iterative way it has evolved. This historical background is important in understanding why there are different perspectives on the SES / council relationship and levels of SES support.

2.6 With the LGAQ motion 56 as the underlying background, the intent of this review has been to understand the issues in the current arrangements that are of most concern to councils and determine options that provide for a sustainable future SES model. Deliberately the review shies away from making definitive recommendations. The diversity and disparity across the sector and the need to provide flexible options for Government abate the requirement for specific recommendations. Importantly the review has been mindful of the dangers of unintended consequences in policy or organisational and structural changes. This is particularly relevant to changes that impact volunteers or which could in any way degrade the capability of the SES to support their communities in disasters and crisis events².

2.7 The resultant review:

- reports on the range of council views on the LGAQ motion and preferred options or approaches;
- provides observations on the key shortcomings, risks and vulnerabilities in the current arrangements;
- identifies a possible future end state and potential realistic pathways to achieve this objective; and,

¹ It is important to note that disaster management and disaster response operations are distinct activities. See QFCI Final report Mar 2012 Section 15.5.1 P 406/407

² According to the QLD Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) a disaster is characterised by the seriousness of the event and is one ‘that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community recover from the disruption’. Conversely, in terms of this report a crisis event is more localised and may not sit within the QDMA ‘event’ definitions ie road crash rescue, land search etc.

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- proposes different funding and governance models with associated risks and opportunities.

3. Desired Outcomes

3.1 While the review has been prompted by dissatisfaction with the current arrangements it would be remiss to limit the focus to solving just this issue. A desired strategic outcome of this review is an improvement in the whole-of-state capability and capacity to respond to widespread disasters that stretch the State's resources. With the potential for future disaster events to be both cascading and compounding, local resources will need State and sometime interstate supplementation³. The SES can and should be a major contributor to such events as a deployable state-wide capability. Local government, with its grass-roots community connection, should continue to be involved in local disaster management and response. The outcome this review is seeking includes:

- establishing a sustainable pathway to better SES support;
- clarity around the command, control and coordination of SES groups;
- improvements to liaison and consultation between the State and local government that delineates responsibility and enhances community safety; and,
- A more capable SES, with groups who are able to contribute seamlessly at the local, state and national levels.

4. Review Methodology

4.1 The review outcomes are strongly influenced by the information and perspectives gained during extensive consultation with stakeholders. For example, 51 councils were consulted, most in face to face meeting and a few via telephone conference. Over 450 SES volunteers were consulted directly in 32 different meetings and 489 responses to an online survey were received. QFES executives and QFES SES staff freely gave their time and importantly educated me on the history of the current arrangements. Given the time available to conduct the review and the challenges of distance and transport options, it was not possible to visit all councils and volunteers.

4.2 As I gained greater understanding of the sector the questions for councils became better focussed to explore different conceptual approaches and potential pitfalls. After the initial six council consultations a series of questions were forwarded to councils as a primer to stimulate discussion in advance of the consultation sessions.

4.3 A key question in council consultations was how the specifics of the LGAQ motion were interpreted. The majority of councils interpreted the motion as seeking greater funding from the State for the SES, and that the State enact appropriate governance arrangements for the **State's** management of the SES. A smaller, but still significant number of councils, were of the view that the State should fund the SES with the funding funnelled through the auspices of councils. The reference to 'governance arrangements' was to ensure councils focussed the SES funding appropriately on SES capability.

4.4 Other key subjects explored during council consultations included:

³ Advice from the QLD Reconstruction Authority is that over 50% of LGAs in QLD have had 3 or more disaster events since 2017.

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- The risk profile for the region versus the capability available to mitigate the risks (risk to resources) and how the capability needs are assessed.
- The extent to which the SES are seen as a component of the council's disaster response capability.
- The relationship between council, the SES and QFES staff.
- Points of contention in the current arrangements.
- Preferred funding arrangements and funding models.
- Risks and opportunities in changing the current arrangements.

4.5 SES groups and QFES staff in the regions were also consulted during the state-wide visit program. These included general group meetings, and one-on-one discussions with rank and file members and both paid and volunteer executives. The SES volunteer online survey has provided a valuable source of feedback and the key thematic issues of concern to volunteers are identified at Annex C. Individual submissions to the review numbered 25.

4.6 The review also took heed of a number of previous reviews that have relevance to the current arrangements. They included amongst others, the 2009 O'Sullivan Review of Disaster Management Policy and Legislation in Queensland, the 2012 Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (QCFI), the 2013 Police and Community Safety Review (PACSR) (Keelty), and the 2018 QFES initiated C4I Foundations Review (McNarn).

4.7 Having undertaken broad based consultation a range of conceptual models and an outline framework for the report was developed. Further consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders and interlocutors previously identified for their astute observations and broad perspectives. This second round of consultations checked the veracity of my observations and the practicality of various models.

5. Historical Context

5.1 To understand the current SES and council relationships it is necessary to tell the story of the SES' evolution and the various reviews and structural changes over the past two decades.

5.2 In response to the January 1974 Brisbane floods the Queensland Government Cabinet re-designated the Queensland Civil Defence Organisation as the Queensland State Emergency Service. From the passing of the State Counter Disaster Act in 1975 the SES initially grew in a barely perceptible incremental and iterative manner. As one person with long experience with the SES described; *'it grew from a small base with requests to councils that were initially a minimal commitment. For example, an SES request to council for the loan of a vehicle or somewhere to park a vehicle, then a request for a carport or shelter for the vehicle, then a request for a shed to store equipment and so on increasing incrementally to the present day'*.

5.3 As councils became more interwoven with the SES the Queensland Government moved to establish some process around the arrangements. In 1997 the Government issued a 'Protocol with Local Government to establish their respective roles and responsibilities with regard to the Queensland Disaster Management System and the State Emergency Service'

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5.4 The 2003 Disaster Management Act enshrined a responsibility for local government to ensure they had a disaster response capability and also acknowledged the establishment of the SES.

5.5 Further efforts to formalise the SES arrangements occurred in 2005. LGAQ entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Government’s Department of Emergency Services. For some time the LGAQ had been promoting councils’ role in supporting the Local Government SES Volunteers and its shared role with State Government in the provision of funding, training, equipment, administration, and management of these units. This led to the formation of a Disaster Management Alliance seeking to ensure improved community safety and increased community resilience.

5.6 LGAQ agreed to promote and support the uptake of a range of responsibilities by local government, one of which was to ensure appropriate community involvement, and that local resources and arrangements were in place to provide disaster relief and recovery services to communities.

5.7 The 2009 O’Sullivan report ‘Review of Disaster Management Legislation and Policy in Queensland’ further reinforced the importance of the State – local government partnership in ensuring SES effectiveness. However, it also identified confusion remained around expectations and responsibilities between the State and local government in relation to the SES. This report suggested a Memoranda of Understanding between State and local government be progressed as a way of ensuring local government’s commitment to support and funding of the SES continued.

5.8 Subsequently, a draft Memorandum of Agreement entitled ‘A Partnership for the Management and support of the State Emergency Service’ was developed by Emergency Management Queensland in consultation with LGAQ. However, it was left to councils to determine whether they wished to sign this memorandum.

5.9 Move forward to the flood events of 2010/11 and the resulting Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (QFCI). Chapter 15 of this report dealt with the emergency response to the flooding highlighting issues of relevance to this report. Section 15.5 dealt specifically with the SES and was generally critical of the SES operational command and control (C2) arrangements. In the broad it noted a significant lack of clarity, and confusion around issues of accountability, responsibility and authority in the command, control, and support of the SES by the various entities that were involved in SES activities. Some specific issues raised in this report included:

- A highly variable level of support (both financial and staff) provided by councils to their respective SES.
- Only nine out of 73 councils had executed the Memorandum of Agreement arising from the 2009 review.
- Some councils believed they had a claim over SES volunteers by virtue of the funding and resources that the councils provided.
- The funding of the SES was not the subject of legislation, but broadly accepted mechanisms for financing the service had developed over time between the State Government and local councils who shared the responsibility.

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- Councils, whilst not obliged to support their SES units, provided funding as an obvious way of meeting their requirement under Section 80 Disaster Management Act 2003⁴.

5.10 In sum, and in something of an understatement as a precursor to this review, the QFCI observed *‘However, investigating whether structural changes should be made to these arrangements in the longer term would be desirable’*⁵.

5.11 In 2013 Mr Mick Keelty AO PSM undertook the Police and Community Safety Review (PACSR) entitled ‘Sustaining the unsustainable’. This report also has significant relevance to the deliberations in this review and reinforced the issues of command, control and support highlighted previously.

5.12 When referring to the frontline capability of the SES, Keelty commented (p 144) that *‘the overall issue of funding the service (particularly cost sharing arrangements between State Government and Local Governments) is one, which will require considerable work into the future to ensure a sustainable capability. Currently there are significant differences across the state in terms of the ability of local government to support local SES units, either financially or in kind.*

*The issue of ‘ownership’ of the SES is one that will require ongoing work between State and Local Government.’ and, ‘Oversight and support in terms of training and equipment is provided by the state through Emergency Management Queensland. However, the issue of command has the potential to be a key source of friction. The Review team recognises that the strength of the SES and its volunteers is **their dedication to delivering services in support of their local community**’⁶.*

5.13 Following the PACSR, Emergency Management Queensland, the SES and the Disaster Management stream transitioned into the newly formed Department of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

5.14 As the previous paragraphs indicate the issue of the State and local government support, funding, and command and control of the SES has been a contentious and festering issue for decades. The sector has been influenced by external environmental changes including; growing community expectations for support in disasters; councils’ budgets coming under greater scrutiny; tighter legal frameworks regarding paid and volunteer staff (WHS requirements) with consequent increased training demands; and, technological advances particularly around information technology and information exchange. Yet the financial and governance arrangements of the sector have remained basically static.

5.15 With Councils agitating for changes in the arrangements a motion was first tabled at the 2017 LGAQ State conference which became the LGAQ advocacy action plan item 69:

“Local Government seeks engagement with councils as part of the Queensland Fire and

⁴ At least 50% of councils consulted did not view the SES as an essential ingredient that assisted them meeting their legislated responsibilities.

⁵ Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Final report March 2012 Section 15.5 Page 406

⁶ Sustaining the Unsustainable – Police and Community Safety Review Aug 2013 Section 5 Page 144

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Emergency Services review of the State Emergency Service⁷ to clarify the role of local government and match councils' financial contribution to the SES with appropriate levels of control”.

5.16 A refinement to the motion was passed at the 2018 LGAQ State conference. This was Motion 56, and has been the catalyst to bring many of the issues raised in previous reviews to the forefront – but in this case with local government at the forefront pushing for change. To quote one stakeholder “*we had to do something as Government wasn't listening to us!*”

5.17 During the course of this review another LGAQ motion impacting this report was also adopted. This motion stated:

‘That the LGAQ lobby the State Government to:

- *Fully fund the operations of the SES; and*
- *That councils be compensated for their investment in SES assets.”*

5.18 Given that this motion came after the direct council consultations had concluded its ramifications were not specifically explored. The question of compensation for assets (second dot point above) should the State take full funding responsibility was part of general conversations around funding models and implementation of any new arrangements. Most Councils indicated a degree of flexibility in negotiating this issue if the State determined to assume full funding responsibility for the SES. This issue is discussed further at paragraphs 7.4 - 7.5.

6. The Case for Change

6.1 Given the concerns raised in numerous previous reviews and inquiries about the State/local government/SES arrangements there is a strong historical case for change, irrespective of the level of support for the LGAQ motion. The legislative requirement under the Disaster Management Act for councils to maintain a Disaster Response Capability⁸ provides an overarching context for discussion. Views varied amongst councils as to whether the SES were perceived as an essential component of meeting this legislative requirement or whether they were only an adjunct to a council's extant capability. High level consultation confirmed there was no intent to alter legislation pertaining to local government's disaster response requirements. The scope and limit of councils' responsibilities in disasters is a threshold issue for this review – for example do councils' responsibilities go only to ensuring access to the home's front gate, or go further to supporting impacted individuals on private land; or is the latter a state responsibility? Greater clarity around council responsibility in disasters is essential in moving forward.

6.2 It is noted however that not all councils consulted were of the opinion that change was necessary – a few were of the view that the arrangements were generally working well and a smaller number advised they would resist any change. However, as discussed further in Section 7 most were of the view that change to a varying extent was necessary. So what are the current thoughts and issues that are seen as the contemporary drivers for change in the arrangements?

⁷The review mentioned became QFES' 'Taskforce Catalyst' which had a broad intent to improve capability and support to the SES

⁸ Disaster Management Act Part 5 Section 80

PUBLIC**SES Capability – Disparate and Diverse**

6.3 SES capability is heavily dependent upon the funding provided to the SES groups. This funding comes from a combination of State support (uniforms, PPE, training and some equipment), direct council support, grants from the State, grants from private organisations, occasional grants from the Commonwealth, and SES groups' Support Unit's fundraising activities. Where SES groups are well-funded with good equipment and facilities, and supported by strong proactive leadership (both SES and council), the SES units are generally in a strong position. However, State-wide there is a large disparity in the capability of SES units. Even within local government boundaries there is significant disparity in capability and resources between SES groups in different locations in the same local government region.

6.4 The amount a council contributes to the SES does not appear to have a strong foundation in objective metrics or an assessment of capability against risk. In most cases funding is seemingly based on three key principles – what has historically been funded, the strength of relationships (and strength of leadership in key positions) between the Council and the SES, and the value the council perceives they get from the SES.

6.5 There is no central guidance or state-wide consistency about what is an appropriate level of capability and therefore an appropriate level of funding. Councils are left to determine their own risks through the Queensland Emergency Risk Management Framework⁹ (QERMF) but (anecdotally) this framework has been very poorly received and not widely implemented. QFES' staff capacity to impel a risk based approach is also limited. And the guidance under legislation¹⁰ is relatively limited about the level of capability that councils should have in order to meet their legislated responsibilities. There are advantages in legislation being imprecise or ambiguous, but in this situation it results in councils' adopting different approaches and highly variable SES funding across both QFES regions and the State more broadly.

6.6 The situation is further clouded by the interlinked and, to a degree, the overlapping nature of the various emergency service agencies response activities. For example in responding to flood and storm damage it is the norm that other agencies such as RFS and QFRS will also respond where the need is apparent. Other capabilities external to the State can also be drawn upon – Defence, other State assets for example. Councils only directly support the funding of one element of the state-wide capability. So it is unreasonable to expect them to determine what level of capability (represented by the SES) is needed to either lead or complement the capabilities of other agencies over which they have no influence or visibility.

⁹ QLD has taken the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) and developed their own system – the QERMF. This according to many small and medium sized councils is far too complex and intensive for them to implement.

¹⁰ Disaster Management Act Section 80 (2). *'disaster response capability, for a local government, means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government's area.'*

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6.7 Annex D offers a spreadsheet showing the variations in council funding as a ratio of net rate revenue to net SES expenditure based on 2016-17 figures. While these figures represent only a very coarse indicator (and they may not be totally accurate) they highlight a large disparity. ¹¹ Net expenditure on the SES as a percentage of net rate revenue for the 2016-17 financial year varies from a high 7.8% for one council to 0.054% for another council. Relating this example to dollars, one council with a net rate revenue of almost \$4 million spent \$361k on their SES unit whilst a council with a net rate revenue of \$417 million spent \$225K on their SES unit.

Table 1

Council Type	Net General Rate Revenue (all figures approximate)	SES Net Expenditure	Net expenditure on SES as a percentage of Net Rate Revenue
Large urban LGA in SE of State	\$417m	\$225K	0.054%
Large Regional Coastal LGA	\$106m	\$516k	0.49%
Medium sized Coastal LGA	\$50m	\$484k	0.99%
Medium sized rural LGA	\$21m	\$61k	0.29%
Small rural LGA	\$10.5m	\$223k	2.22%
Small rural remote LGA	\$4m	\$361k	7.8%

6.8 This disparity in capability leads to a number of perverse outcomes:

- Councils with well-funded SES (and who are seen as capable groups) often see SES from their LGA deploying out of area to support other councils in disasters or State agencies during critical incidents (for example Queensland Police Service for land search)
- There is an increased cost and administrative burden in understanding what capability is represented by each group, and low capability groups receive most of the attention from QFES staff in trying to lift their capability.
- Volunteer dissatisfaction rises amongst volunteers as they look with envy across local authority boundaries at well-resourced and active SES groups.
- Scarce funds are not always being used in the most effective way i.e. those who lobby hardest get the funds, not necessarily where the funds will have the most impact in mitigating risk.
- In times of major or prolonged disasters more capable groups are regularly called upon to deploy, risking burn-out of these volunteers¹². It also results in the

¹¹ Figures based on 2016-17 FY fr; From QLD Local Govt Comparative Data (<https://www.dlgma.qld.gov.au/resources-ilgp/plans-strategies-reports/local-government-comparative-reports.html>) and figures provided by local governments to LGAQ in 2018. It is acknowledged that most councils have other revenue sources in addition to rates but Net Rate Revenue is chosen as figure common to most councils and as an indicator of an LGA's population.

¹² Disaster fatigue and reduced resilience will be challenging given the increasing regularity of recent events. (Robert Glasser – ASPI Report “Preparing for the Era of Disasters”)

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concentration of disaster experience across a smaller number of volunteer units/groups and is de-motivating for groups who do not get regularly deployed.

- Councils with limited capability can rely on the support from other SES groups or other emergency agencies during a significant event. Ultimately the only real incentive for a council to increase its SES support is a political one – the fear of a community backlash.

Managing Volunteerism

6.9 Another aspect strengthening the case for change is the ability to manage volunteers in a manner that enhances both recruitment and retention. Academic reviews and literature suggest that particular skill sets are required if organisations are to gain the best from and for their volunteers. It could be surmised that a single line of responsibility with dedicated volunteer management specialists could create improvements in SES recruitment and retention.¹³ SES recruitment efforts for example are seemingly piecemeal, with minimal consistency and coherency across the State.

6.10 Opportunities to gain a greater SES profile and boost recruitment in the aftermath of disaster events is rarely taken up because of the diffuse responsibility for the SES – would such a campaign be led locally, regionally or from the State. QFES' Volunteering Strategy also talks of opening up flexible volunteering options. Undertaking such an approach is hampered by the current arrangements because there is no single entity with overarching responsibility and authority to influence both outwards to regions and internally across QFES matrix management structures.

Asset / Equipment Ownership

6.11 Asset ownership and responsibility is an issue that was regularly raised by councils. Numerous examples were cited by councils regarding the confusing, illogical, and inequitable arrangements for SES equipment. While greater clarity around responsibilities has been achieved through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State and councils this is a far from ideal; it does not diminish the incongruity in the arrangements and not all councils have signed the MOU. Some examples are cited below to demonstrate the risks in the arrangements and why they are seen by some councils as a major rub point. The review does not suggest the examples cited below are widespread but they were cited with such regularity that they indicate the need for a different approach. Further, they should not be interpreted as being critical of either councils or the SES – both are doing the best they can within the constraints of current policies, physical resources and limited time.

Example 1. Boats and vehicle management. Vehicles are generally procured by a council (sometimes supported by non-recurring grants) and owned and maintained by them. QFES provide the vehicles SES livery, and register and insure the vehicle. For boats and trailers, QFES procure the vessel and register it and the trailer. The boat and trailer are then provided to the council who then own, insure and maintain the asset. A further complication is that there is not necessarily alignment between the provision of a vessel, and the SES for whom the vessel is being provided having a vehicle of the weight and capability to tow the boat.

¹³ 'When Joining Is Not Enough, Australian Journal of Emergency Management, from a paper presented at AFAC Mar 2018

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Example 2. Small portable equipment. SES groups may conduct their own fund raising through SES Support Groups. Sometimes funds raised are used to buy more equipment (chainsaws, generators, lighting for example). Councils have limited control over what is purchased (although QFES has approved equipment standards) but council then own the asset and have a responsibility and liability for ongoing maintenance and are expected by the SES unit to replace the equipment at its end-of-life.

Example 3. Information technology(IT) and communication equipment support is a mixed responsibility that does not align with responsibilities for tasking/activation, human resource (HR) support and data management, and training. For example, SES training is a QFES responsibility but councils provide the IT systems and equipment that enable much of the training (a significant amount is on-line). Most SES tasking originates from either the QFES watch desk in response to a 132500 call or from Firecom. While QFES provide the IPADs to manage the Tasking and Management System (TAMS) council provide mobile phones and pagers to SES Executives to enable activations.

Example 4. Provision of Flood Boats. QFES provide flood boats to council in a ‘gifting’ arrangement. Councils then bear the cost of maintenance, depreciation, and insurance. Several examples were provided of councils not being adequately consulted on whether a flood boat was really needed.

Example 5. Asset Use versus Ownership. A council was precluded from using a flood boat (which under the MOU it owned), for a mosquito vector control program. This was at a time when forecast weather conditions had negligible chance of the vessel being needed for an operational activity. They owned it but they couldn’t use it!

6.12 There are a number of ongoing and significant ramifications arising from the incoherent approach to SES equipment. It is an issue the majority of councils considered, as a minimum, where greater clarity was essential.

6.13 Under the current arrangements there is no clear ‘risk owner’ if something goes wrong. Councils are responsible for the equipment and its maintenance and QFES responsible for ensuring the volunteers are trained appropriately to operate the equipment. This is a real and potentially significant risk for both parties

Hypothetical - Who is responsible? A volunteer returning from an activity driving a vehicle (owned by council but registered and insured by QFES) towing a flood boat has an accident and injures a third party. Is it the fault of the driver and a lack of training, or is it an issue with maintenance on the vehicle and/or trailer? Should the volunteer be following council guidance in terms of fatigue management or following QFES procedures?.

6.14 While most councils recognised that the council owned all the SES equipment (even that bought by SES Support Groups¹⁴ or gifted to the Unit/Group) most advised they were not

¹⁴ SES **Support** Groups are independent small financial entities established to support and enhance local SES Groups’ capability.

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able to conduct regular stocktakes due to work pressures and relied upon their local controller to manage the maintenance and auditing of equipment. Other ramifications related to this asset/tasking dichotomy include:

- While QFES produces approved equipment lists these are not always followed and instances have occurred of equipment not being fully ‘fit for task’ being acquired.
- The responsibility for ensuring equipment is fully maintained and ready for deployment generally falls to the local controller. In the majority of councils this is a volunteer.
- Without strong governance and oversight there is the potential for misappropriation of equipment or the inappropriate use of equipment.
- Good practice (and common courtesy), should mandate that councils are advised when their equipment and assets are being deployed out of area but this does not always occur. There have also been instances of councils refusing to allow their vehicles deploying out of area in support of a state-wide disaster response.

Strategic Financial Management

6.15 For smaller councils who provide only a relatively modest level of funding for their SES the manner in which funds are dispersed creates difficulties in developing a strategic long term financial plan to support the SES. Funding support comes from a variety of sources and at various times. QFES provides a recurrent subsidy based on the number of volunteer groups in a particular council area. This amount does not require any application. QFES also provides a second funding source for the SES, a support grant, which requires an application from council.

6.16 There are numerous other sources of non-recurring grants which invariably require an application process. These sources of funding are provided from a range of both government managed funds and private organisations and institutions. The Community Gambling Benefit Fund provided \$300,257 to SES organisations in 2016-17. An example of a private institution is Aurizon’s Community Giving Fund which provided \$28,378 to SES Groups in the same year. A perusal of QFES Grant data base indicate the SES, through councils, applied to 23 different organisations for funding grants in 2017-18.

6.17 Given the many and varied grant sources, QFES provides staff within Kedron to support the SES and councils in the grant process. QFES staff admit there are some grants that become available of which they are not aware, illustrating the diversity and complexity of the funding environment. The seemingly random nature of the timing of these grants and their success rate is a challenge for councils to develop long term budgets. It can also be an administrative burden to support the development of an SES grant application for an amount that is relatively small, and then ultimately be unsuccessful.

6.18 Grant applications are meant to be sponsored through councils to ensure appropriate oversight and visibility. While this occurs in most instances, through administrative oversight or for some particularly unique grants this process has occasional failed. Examples were cited of SES groups being successful with grants of which councils’ were not aware, but which came with an expectation of a co-funding commitment by the council.

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6.19 The overall funding and grant arrangements are considered to be relatively inefficient. They do not promote effective and considered financial management, the administrative effort applying for grants in some cases is not worth the reward, and they pit councils against one another in a competitive sense. If councils are to continue funding the SES, a dedicated, consistent funding stream at an appropriate quantum would allow this to be included in council's capital management and asset replacement programs and improve efficiency.

SES Local Controllers

6.20 The position and authority of SES local controllers under the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Act (1990) is something of a paradox – a volunteer having legislated and weighty responsibilities. Under the Act there are only two people cited as having any responsibility for SES – the Commissioner and the appointed Local Controller. The McNarn Review (drawing on the Floods Commission of Inquiry) reiterated concern for this situation in noting *“the absence of any clear command structure above the level of the SES Local Controller”*¹⁵

6.21 Local controllers in the majority are volunteers but they have significant responsibilities under legislation and the position is potentially a single point of failure in local disaster response. The capability of local controllers to effectively and diligently undertake their responsibilities represents a significant risk for both the State and council. Under legislation the SES Local Controller is to:

“maintain the operational effectiveness of the unit by ensuring—

(a) the unit's members have the necessary skills to competently perform their roles within the unit; and

(b) the unit's equipment is maintained in an appropriate condition; and

*(c) the unit performs its functions and other activities in a way that is consistent with departmental or local government policies about the performance of the functions and activities.”*¹⁶

6.22 When viewed through the prism of community well-being and safety these are onerous responsibilities. Ensuring the readiness of capability to respond to disaster events, as well as undertaking and oversighting (especially in terms of operational risk) certain high risk activities (vertical rescue, flood boat operations etc) is a major role that draws significant accountabilities. For somebody who may be a volunteer in a local government area with substantial SES assets it is a busy and demanding role. To provide an example of the value of the functions, Redland City Council undertook an assessment of the work value of a local controller with responsibility for over 200 volunteers. This was assessed as a Local Government Level 7 position which would attract a salary in the Redland area of approximately \$90k-\$100k.

¹⁵ McNarn 'Foundations of C4I Review' Section 4.13.3

¹⁶ QLD Fire and Emergency Services Act section 135

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6.23 In large councils some local controllers are paid. I am aware of approximately seven local controllers who are paid sums equivalent to a full time wage. Local controllers who are paid for their services are managed and reimbursed through a range of different processes and arrangements. These include:

- Fully paid positions as a local controller and wholly integrated into council staffing arrangements.
- Positions that combine part time council responsibilities and part time local controller responsibilities
- Local controllers who are paid an honorarium – from a relatively small amount (\$5000) up to the equivalent of a full time wage (\$85,000)
- A local controller who is a QFES employee, but for whom the council reimburse QFES for the costs of that person.

6.24 Local controllers who are in paid position can also find themselves in a position of command and control (C2) tension and ambiguity. They are being paid by one entity – council, but are responsible to another entity - QFES. This situation further exacerbates the confusion around command, control and coordination responsibilities where local government own the assets but have no authority to task the SES. Where local governments pay their local controller they understandably feel they should have a level of say in their work priorities and SES activations. Where relationships are good these potential points of friction are actively managed through the local controller being ‘responsive’ to local government concerns while remaining ‘responsible’ to QFES.

6.25 In terms of SES tasking, this C2 ambiguity is exacerbated by a poorly defined QFES command chain and the lack of a definitive statement regarding the authority of the local controller. The position of QFES SES regional managers is not entirely clear in terms of their autonomy and authority and the delineation of responsibilities between QFES Regions and Kedron is blurred. This results in highly variable support and guidance to local controllers. Limited staff, large distances, travel budget limitations are further contributing factors. But local controllers are key positions, and it seems incongruous that volunteers would have this level of responsibility for legislated functions, yet in many cases the support they can draw upon is limited.

6.26 It was generally observed that local controllers were enthusiastic and motivated but sometimes daunted by the extent of the role and effort required. However, the notion of making all local controllers paid positions at a rate appropriate to the scope of the task was generally not supported. If paid, they considered their equivalent ‘volunteer status’ with other non-executive SES would be diminished leaving them in an untenable situation.

6.27 There are no formal processes (directives, delegations or formalised and legislated positions) to ensure there is appropriate support and oversight of local controllers; and so the Commissioner has no assurance through a formalised and accountable process that his or her legislated responsibilities are being met. This could be achieved through legislative or regulatory change as recommended by the McNarn Review¹⁷. Another approach to achieve a similar outcome may be through a Commissioner’s formal delegation to regional SES staff. Such an approach would have the added advantage of providing greater clarity to the role of regional QFES SES staff, and embedding them formally in the command chain with

¹⁷ McNarn Foundations of C4I Review Section 4.13.12

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appropriate authorities. This approach would need to be supported by an operational concept document that outlines authorities, responsibilities and the SES chain of command.

Cost of Ownership

6.28 It is difficult to determine the true cost to Queensland of the SES. SES funding comes a range of sources: direct from local government, from federal and state grants, private fund grants, direct philanthropic gifts, and from SES Support Group fund raising. No one authority has a definitive figure for the cost of the QLD SES.

6.29 The LGAQ sought data from local government authorities on a range of financial aspects of the SES – operating expenses, value of infrastructure, capital repairs, maintenance, depreciation, IT etc. While this gave a broad indication, most councils agreed that it may not be the whole picture and there may be aspects not fully costed (for example, support to local controllers and group leaders by council disaster management officers and administrative staff, IT support, SES facilities maintenance etc). As such this figure could underestimate the true cost by a significant margin. A similar change process with NSW SES supposedly resulted in the total SES cost being approximately 50% higher than anticipated. A report by KPMG on the Emergency Management Levy (EML) also noted that the costing data in the LGAQ survey was probably at the low end of the true costs.¹⁸

6.30 While work is underway to bring a greater level of discipline to the management of SES Support Groups and the way they raise and disperse funds, it is not possible to determine what has been spent by these groups in supporting their SES members. Also, it is not clear the extent to which the expenditure by the support group was essential to boost or maintain capability.

6.31 There is no definitive figure for the cost of the SES. What capability does the SES represent and what are the priority risks that the capability is intended to mitigate, locally, regionally or state-wide? Without answering these questions there is significant exposure to the relatively scarce funds being, at best used inefficiently, or at worst wasted. Financial issues and the cost of the SES capability is explored further at Section 10.

QFES-Local Government Memoranda of Understanding

6.32 QFES has developed Memoranda of Understanding in an attempt to formalise the collaborative partnership between local government and the State and clarify the responsibilities of both parties.¹⁹ A copy of the current MOU template is at Attachment 1. Whilst theoretically a reasonable approach to resolving some of the confusion around responsibilities and funding it has not worked as expected. It is not a legal document and is not binding on either party.

6.33 To the end of November 2019 only 56 out of 75 councils had signed the MOU. Very few councils have gone further and worked with QFES to develop the supplementary document (a Schedule A) that is key in detailing the principles for implementing the MOU.

¹⁸ KPMG EML review 13 Mar 2019 Appendix A page 45

¹⁹ This has also been in response to issues outlined in the 2012 QFCI and the 2013 PACSR

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Some councils have sought amendments to the standard MOU to individualise them for their own needs and circumstances, resulting in slight variations between councils. Since the passing of the LGAQ Motion 56 the resistance of some councils to signing the MOU has reportedly increased.

6.34 The MOU in the broad is a worthwhile document but it has a number of shortcomings in its lack of detail and undefined requirements. While this vagueness allows a degree of interpretation it can also be disadvantageous in trying to influence SES capability improvements. Without clear definitions and metrics either party to the MOU can determine their own level of commitment to meeting the intent of the document.

6.35 The wariness of some councils to sign the MOU and the variance in already signed MOUs is symptomatic of a shared partnership that is not operating effectively.

Strong relationships enhance effective disaster response

6.36 The Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements rely on strong cooperative relationships across all levels of government and the community. Historically the SES was a key link through which QFES and local government interacted on a day to day basis. Since the structural changes that created QFES and disbanded Emergency Management Queensland this link is tenuous at best even though flood and storm related events are the most common.

6.37 Responding to flood and storm damage is viewed as a primary SES function. It is also the area where there is the greatest expectation that local government will maintain a capability and therefore the SES remains a key point of interaction between the State and local government in disasters. While storm and flood response is a key function for the SES, there is no recognition of their skills, through them being nominated as the lead agency or hazard owner. Comparison of data on disaster event damage costs starkly highlight that floods and storms are the most costly events for Queensland (see paragraph 6.51) yet no agency with specialist experience has the responsibility for response coordination. Despite this risk profile the SES stream within QFES has arguably the lowest profile, negligible authority, and certainly receives the least financial allocation.

6.38 The three way nexus between volunteers, the State and local government which should be the key relationship is at a low ebb. The strengthened QFES regional structure and the limited numbers of QFES SES staff has contributed to this nadir. The seemingly arbitrary separation of QFES Staff into SES and Disaster Management (DM) streams²⁰ and their separate functional lines of command also contributes to a degree of confusion across many councils as to their points of interaction with QFES. In sum, QFES are falling short in what should be a significant effort to maintain the important collaborative State/local government relationship, and the current QFES organisational structures are not functioning in a manner that support the strengthening this relationship.

²⁰ When EMQ was disbanded and QFES established EMQ staff were given the option of moving into either DM or SES specialists roles.

PUBLIC**SES Roles**

6.39 It became clear in the numerous consultations that the understanding of the roles and function of the SES varied markedly – amongst local councils, amongst other tasking and emergency service agencies and even amongst the SES themselves. Core functions are articulated in legislation but these are not comprehensive and legislation is not something regularly referred to by many. Certainly there is a lack of clarity around which agency will be performing certain roles or who has the lead for certain functions. From the public perspective they just want a ‘uniform’ to assist. From the SES’ perspective they feel a number of roles that have traditionally been allocated to them are being taken over by other agencies seeking to reinforce their own relevance and profile. However, as demands for different types of support activities during disasters increases, the SES are finding new roles. An example is the current use (and growing demand) of SES teams in air base operations supporting the re-filling of firefighting aircraft.

6.40 At the margins, the nature of the SES’s roles and functions is evolving as the response to disasters becomes more integrated and technical. One of the issues for local government in supporting the SES with equipment is the changing nature of SES roles and functions. The SES’ core roles and functions remain but depending upon the availability of response agencies in certain regions some of these are being subsumed by other agencies and new requirements are emerging. These changes are based on geographical considerations, changing population density and demographics, changing leisure trends, and either strengthening or waning capacity in SES units and groups.

6.41 No matter the cause, for local government it remains a challenge as to how and whether they adapt to changed funding requests from the SES based on evolving roles and functions. Is the new funding request adding to a capability that sits within the generally accepted (but not articulated) purview of local government or is it a State Government responsibility. For example if an SES unit was to request a new piece of equipment to better assist it with undertaking air base support operations, is this a State or local government responsibility?

6.42 Under the Act²¹ the Commissioner QFES must determine and advise each SES Unit of their functions. Under section 138(3) the Commissioner must consult local government in this process but there is no linkage to an initiating process for identifying and funding the capability for new functions. The process of advising an SES Unit of their functions (Section 139 of the Act) appears to have been overlooked for some time.

6.45 Unless local government representatives or officials have a very close relationship with QFES and the SES they are generally in dark about the evolving SES roles. This places them in an invidious position regarding funding (and contributes to some views that perceive the SES as poor value for money). There is no articulated SES charter that includes a vision or mission. I would contend there is a need for such a document and an associated concept of operations. Such a document is intended for both the SES and external audiences. It would;

- clarify what can be expected of the SES capability;
- identify the SES’ core and supplementary functions;
- potentially allocate lead responsibility to the SES; and,

²¹ Qld Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 Section 138 and 139

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- clarify authorities, and command, control and coordination arrangements both within QFES and with local government.

6.46 Understanding and agreeing the parameters of the SES' functions is an essential precursor to any analysis of the ideal governance and organisational structures needed to manage and improve the SES' operational capability. This approach follows a management mantra – “form follows function”. After which the appropriate resources can be applied.

Learning Lessons

6.47 Another shortcoming of the current dispersed and disaggregated arrangements is the lack of an organic or effective process for dissemination of information and innovation across local governments and SES units. In response to disasters there is the standard review or inquiry to identify lessons learnt. But during business as usual there are limited mechanisms for transferring good ideas between councils, between SES Units, and even between QFES regions.

6.48 During the consultation phase it became apparent that innovative ideas around recruitment, retention, equipment, training and IT were being managed at the local, and occasionally the regional level. But these good ideas which may be relevant and useful for other local government authorities and SES Units were rarely being disseminated state-wide. In some cases this was due to a lack of understanding of the process or lack of easy IT connectivity; in others it was deliberate strategy as a means of gaining recognition or kudos before the ideas were disseminated.

6.49 The relatively individualistic and ad hoc manner in which the SES are supported state-wide, and the sometimes competitive nature of local governments is a key factor. It results in an inability to take a state-wide perspective to consistently identify, consider, and respond in a timely manner, to innovative enhancements being undertaken at the local level to capability, processes, training and governance. QFES' unwieldy bureaucratic processes, organisational structures, and the lean QFES SES staff numbers are also a contributing factor. Various examples were provided of volunteer-initiated innovative solutions to their problems or issues that withered due to inertia in QFES.

6.50 While not a specific remit of the Inspector General Emergency Management, it would seem that the auspices of this office could have a greater role in strategically driving the capturing of innovation and enhancement. Section 16C of the Disaster Management Act lists the Inspector General Emergency Management (IGEM) functions under which such a role would seem to fit. The IGEM Assurance Framework also recognises the importance of this knowledge transfer “*The Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) encourages all stakeholders to actively implement the Framework and share (emphasis mine) innovative ideas and knowledge with other entities to achieve Key Outcomes*”²². Advice from IGEM staff is that a “Disaster Managers Network” was established as a way of sharing information and ideas but it was not widely accepted or utilised and it has proven largely ineffective.

²² IGEM Emergency Management Assurance Framework, Endorsed Jun 2019, P16

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Balancing Resources to Risks

6.51 The SES was conceived initially as a capability to respond to flooding disasters. While the current climatic conditions see an emphasis on fires the maintenance of an SES capability that retains storm and flood damage response as a core capability is crucial. Over the past decade to 2016 flooding comprised 66% ²³ (see Figure 2) of the total annual economic cost of disasters in Queensland (with cyclone, storm and hail damage comprising the remainder). The Deloitte Access Economic review undertaken for the Australian Business Roundtable from which this data is drawn also notes in Chart 2.2 of this report the composition of this cost of which insurance costs represents only a small part.

Figure 2 . Total average annual economic cost of natural disasters (2007-2016) ²⁴



6.52 Given the propensity of floods and storms in Queensland the social impacts from such events have had an effect on a greater proportion of the population than other events. Early action by the SES has the potential to significantly mitigate some of the social impacts of such events. Yet according to the KPMG EML Review the combined (local government and State) spend on the SES equates to \$4.80 for every \$100²⁵ spent on Fire and Rescue. The average for other states is 2.3 times this amount (and this figure is further compounded by Queensland's higher incidents of floods, storms, cyclones). A comparison of disaster event types, activations of the SOC and SDCC, numbers of people dislocated from their homes due to floods/storms, disaster costs etc, are all indicators that suggest the current balance of resources to risks may be not well aligned. A strategic examination to determine whether the State's resources are being applied in a manner that mitigates the greatest community risk would be justified.

²³ http://australianbusinessroundtable.com.au/assets/documents/ABR_building-resilience-in-our-states-and-territories.pdf. Deloitte Access Economics Review

²⁴ KPMG QFES EML Review page 17, also drawn from Deloitte Access Economic Review above. Note this is total economic cost

²⁵ KPMG QFES EML Review Appendix B

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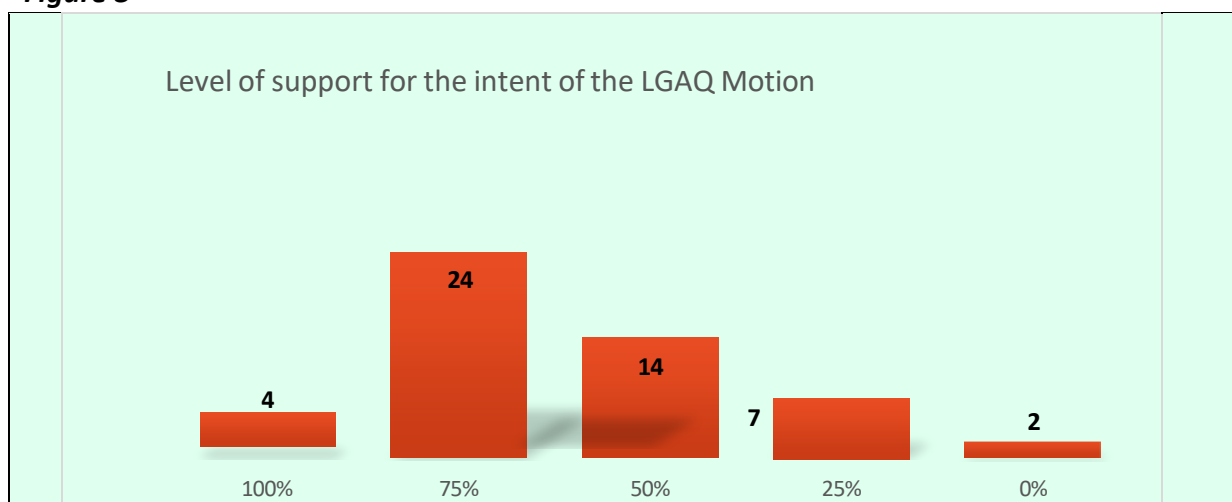
7. The Local Government View.

7.1 In conducting the review, 51 councils out of 75 with SES Units were consulted. The greater part of this consultation comprised face to face meetings. While leading the consultation I was also supported by a senior QFES SES staff member and a senior LGAQ Staff member who arranged and facilitated the meetings. Meetings were held with either a combination of elected representatives and council staff, or just council staff.

7.2 There were some differences noted between the views of elected representatives and the views of senior council staff. Predictably, representatives were more aware of the political dimension of possible changes, whereas officials had a view that often reflected the budget bottom line as the key determinant of their views. For this reason, where meetings were held with council staff only it was important to understand whether the elected officials’ view had been sought and whether they were being represented by the staff.

7.3 The views of councils consulted were somewhat divergent. A number of common themes and concerns were apparent and these are discussed further below. A common strategic conversation was around the role (and limits) of local government in disaster response. A number of arguments were put forward that the SES were no different to other emergency service agencies – Police, Fire and Rescue, and Ambulance; and they should be managed accordingly. Countering views considered supporting the SES was valuable on two fronts: it was viewed as an element that showed their commitment to meeting their legislated disaster requirements; but also just as importantly it was seen as going beyond disaster response, to being morally responsible civic support, through a program that supported community well-being, resilience, building social capital, and empowerment.

Figure 3



- 0% - The arrangements are working well. Happy to continue as is and don't want any change
- 25% - The arrangements could be improved. Council wants to remain fully engaged and happy to continue to support SES but recognise State should play a greater role.
- 50% - Arrangements need overhaul. Imbalance in the partnership at present. Council also recognises risk in moving too far one way. Happy to continue to support SES but not at present level. A bit of 'wait and see' to understand the future model.
- 75% - The arrangements are significantly broken and cannot continue as is. The State must play a far greater role in oversight and funding. Council happy to support SES but to the minimal extent necessary to support community and retain this connection. Would like to retain some capacity to influence long term priorities and SES capability.
- 100% - Local Government should not play any role in support and oversight of SES. It is a State responsibility just like FRS, RFS, Police. They see minimal risks either (politically or in operational capability) moving to a fully funded/managed State model

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7.4 The council views on the motion generally can best be described as an offset bell curve along a continuum where fully supporting the motion is at one end of the scale and full opposition to the motion is at the other end. Figure 3 represents this graphically in a broad sense.

7.5 It is acknowledged that there are greater nuances involved than can be represented on a such a simplistic and broad graph. However, it provides a simple illustration of where councils are positioned. In short, the vast majority of councils recognise the arrangements have, to varying degrees, shortcomings that need to be addressed through greater state support and intervention. The divergence of views is around what is an appropriate level of State funding and concomitant changes to the future governance and administrative arrangements. The following paragraphs represent council views groups into themes.

Lack of Clarity

7.6 Most councils felt the current arrangements lacked clarity leading to confusion around operational tasking, operational capability, and financial support. Certainly looking from the outside there is a misalignment between the accountability for the SES, the responsibility for their tasking and support, and the authority(s) providing the resources.

7.7 The legislated requirements add no clarity. It is left up to council's to determine what is an appropriate level of capability to discharge their legislated responsibilities. The potential for public pressure or backlash during and after a disaster event is but one potential driver for councils. Councils are strongly embedded and linked to their community and many believe they have an obligation to support their community. Beyond its disaster response role the SES provides a significant but intangible benefit through building social capital, social development and community cohesion. But a number of the tasks which the SES undertake sit outside what is an accepted broad remit of council responsibility. Certainly storm and flood damage are perceived as a key council responsibility. But are land search, vertical rescue, air base operations, for example, functions that sit comfortably as activities that council should be supporting with funding?

7.8 The issue of command and control of the SES continues to be a point of contention. A few councils consider that as the primary funding entity then they are the ones to command and task the SES. QFES contends that they have the C2 responsibility through legislation. This C2 confusion is not new. As noted in the QFCI *'The evidence before the Commission concerning the command and control of the SES reveals there is much confusion among those with an interest in the activities of the SES'*²⁶. Changes to QFES' organisational structure with a strengthened regional arrangements have not assisted in clarifying the command and control of the SES. The role and authority of the QFES SES personnel in the State HQ at Kedron in regards to policy and doctrine is also unclear with Regional staff interposing in this area.

7.9 A number of examples relating to this confusion around tasking were cited. Many of these are a result of both SES/local controllers and councils' lack of understanding or incorrect interpretation of policies. Examples included; some councils not permitting their vehicles and equipment to leave the local government area; refusal to allow an SES Flood

²⁶ QCFI Section 15. Page 406

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boat to deliver mail and supplies to families isolated by flood waters; SES refusing to take urgently needed radios to an adjacent Local Government Area; and, differing interpretation regarding the appropriateness of using SES personnel for parking and traffic management at major events.

Asset Ownership and Cost

7.10 Some Councils expressed concern around the SES assets and equipment. These concerns include:

- SES Groups purchasing equipment using donated funds and then councils being expected to maintain and replace the equipment at its end of life. Resulting in further maintenance overheads for councils.
- Council not being able to utilise equipment that they nominally own in situations where the asset will not be needed for an emergency response or training.
- The considerable staff effort needed to oversight asset management, auditing and maintenance.
- Volunteers do not always make the connection that local government manage the facilities, and are not always diligent in reporting issues of maintenance, or workplace safety to council officers. This leaves councils at risk should an accident occur.
- Equipment ‘gifted’ to councils may incur a significant maintenance, registration and depreciation cost.

7.11 The blending of responsibilities for maintenance, insurance, ownership etc. also creates significant challenges to effective fleet management, with both operational and cost implications. In sum many councils saw the situation with SES asset ownership as ‘odd’ with no upside. They own the assets but cannot use them, the SES use the council’s assets but they don’t own the SES and cannot task them, and councils wear the cost of maintenance, depreciation and replacement.

Centralised Control

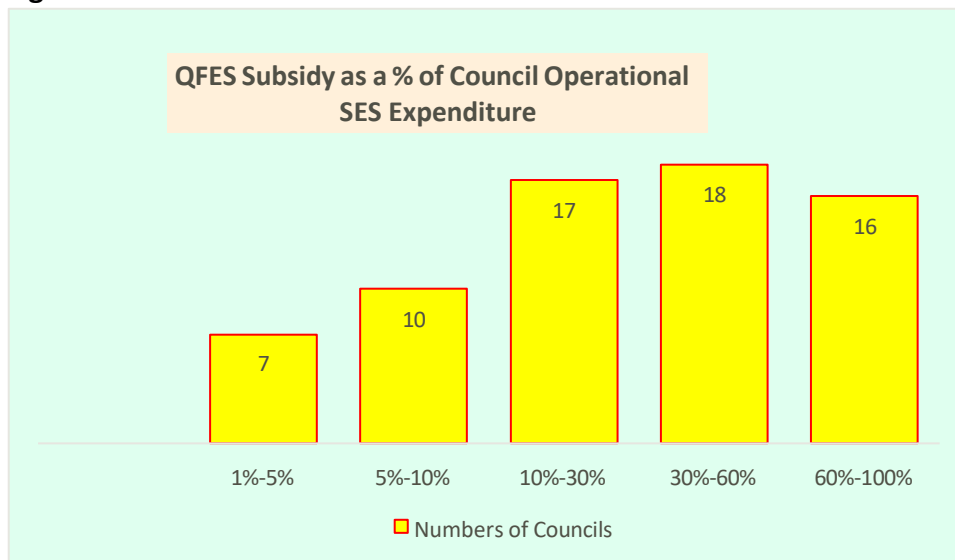
7.12 A common theme amongst a number of councils was concern about losing the ability to determine priorities for their disaster management and response capabilities. Councils were realistic about the extent of their influence but felt they had at least a moral case to express a view based on their financial commitment to the SES capability. This view was strongest in councils more distant from Brisbane. These councils felt they were best placed to determine what they needed to respond to disasters. And expressed concerns that remote decision making would not take into account local knowledge and local context. Centralised control of the SES from Kedron, or even regionally, was seen as posing a risk to the maintenance of an essential capability without council being able to influence outcomes and priorities.

7.13 There is also an economic base for some of these concerns. The inclusion of SES in council activities adds a level of scale that for small councils may make certain activities (such as vehicle maintenance for example) more economically viable. If these arrangements were to be managed on regional basis or even centrally from Brisbane it may mean the loss of employment and local capability in small remote communities.

PUBLIC**Inequity in the partnership**

7.14 The relationship between local government and the State has been described in various documents and statements as one of a shared responsibility. However, many councils felt that the arrangements were not equitable. They considered local governments were covering the majority of the costs of the SES capability and that the State was providing only very limited funding. While this view may have some veracity it sometimes conveniently ignores the support provided by QFES in terms of uniforms and personal protective equipment (assessed at \$1000 per volunteer), training costs, specific equipment costs, and operational deployment expense reimbursement.

7.15 However, it is true that some local governments are covering the majority of SES operational costs by a significant margin. But it is also true that for some smaller councils the subsidies and grants provided by the State represent the significant part of the funds they allocate to their local SES. The data in Figure 4 **does not** include costs for facilities infrastructure. This can be a significant amount²⁷ but during consultation it was also noted that many councils accessed a range of Federal and State grants to offset the cost of new (or refurbished) facilities.

Figure 4.

7.16 Figure 4 shows the value of the recurrent QFES SES subsidy as a percentage of the expenditure for various councils. For example for 7 councils the subsidy represented up to 5% of what they expended on the SES operational expenses – for 16 councils the subsidy represented between 60% and 100% of their SES operating expenses.²⁸ Of note these figures do not include the support grants which in the past were bid for each year, nor does it include other state, federal or private grant sources. If these were included it would further shift the balance between funding support and operational expenses. While there can be some margin

²⁷ 2016/17 figures supplied to LGAQ suggest the value of council owned land and building assets being used by the SES at approximately \$63M.

²⁸ Figures taken from data supplied to LGAQ for 2016/17 FY. (Not a complete set as no data from some smaller councils and most indigenous councils not included)

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for error expected in these figures, they would suggest that for many councils the level of ‘inequity’ in the partnerships is not as great as perceived. SES costing matters, including the overall QFES contribution, are further discussed in paragraph 10.

Tasking

7.18 A number of local governments expressed or displayed some confusion around the command and control of the SES. A few councils felt that they should have a C2 function over the SES they support and actively looked to assume that role. Other councils expressed confusion over what they could ask the SES to do, who had authority for approving SES activities and what are the principles that determine the types of activities that are appropriate. As the link between councils and QFES has widened there is some confusion around appropriateness of SES tasks. Longstanding customs around tasks, approvals, and processes have been accepted as fact without verification. The C2 confusion is also represented in Section 6 as a case for change

Consultation

7.19 The extent of consultation and interaction between council and QFES, both at the regional and State level was highly varied and attracted some criticism. Some examples are included below to illustrate some of these concerns

- An often commented upon situation was regarding the provision of flood boats. Some councils complained about a lack of consultation, and felt the boats were being foisted upon them without a valid argument that the asset was needed to meet a capability gap. The boat then becomes a financial burden for the council.
- Some councils expressed concern that there were no formal processes to advise council if the SES they were supporting were being tasked out of area and taking council assets, particularly vehicle and boats with them. Advice to council in these situations seemed to be a matter of good relationships rather than an ingrained requirement.
- QFES taking operational decisions (particularly during fires) to evacuate people and close certain areas without any advice to council.
- The interaction between QFES and councils at the regional level was varied with some councils having almost no visibility of QFES SES staff and their role. For many councils their only connection to QFES was through their allocated Emergency Management Coordinator, not the QFES SES Regional Manager or the QFES SES Area Controllers. In many instances this seemed to further distance the SES from the council and exacerbated council’s poor understanding of the SES’ roles and activities.
- Future consultation and the ability to influence decisions on capability priorities was cited as a concern. Some councils felt history showed that QFES would make decisions regardless of council knowledge and context and this would continue in the future. Local knowledge and expertise would be ignored unless structural and cultural changes were enacted.

PUBLIC**Community Connection**

7.20 Some councils who felt they had a very strong community connection were hesitant in fully endorsing the LGAQ motion. This stemmed from a fear that this connection and the face to face interaction between councillors and the community, facilitated through a strong volunteer organisation, would be diminished. Other councils did not see this as a significant concern and opined that retaining the ability to provide community safety and well-being through an effective SES was the key outcome - the mechanism for delivering this outcome was irrelevant. They considered that capability should be managed centrally the same as for other emergency services.

Value for money

7.21 The question for a number of councils was the value for money that the SES represented. As previously indicated the SES capability is quite varied with some units and groups struggling for members and/or having very limited operational capability. One council quite critical of the arrangements and fully supportive of the motion considered their SES relationships were strained and they perceived very limited 'value for money' from the SES. However, they freely admitted that if they had better relationships and perceived the SES were better value for money then their view would be different.

7.22 As a general observation there was a corollary between the strength of the leadership and depth of relationships (both SES and council staff), and the level of SES capability in the local government area; where the former was poor, it seemed the SES capability was limited and struggling, with the obverse applying. Good relationships also ensured council had visibility of the diversity of SES roles and therefore a positive view of their value for money.

8. The SES View

8.1 As much as volunteers were advised that the intent of the review was to ensure the Queensland SES as a whole ended up more capable and more sustainable, inevitably there exists concern over what the outcome of this review will mean for volunteers. Well equipped, well trained and well supported volunteers is at the pinnacle of what the support from three directions State, local government and local community aims to achieve.

8.2 A wide range of views were provided during the course of consultation. The key concerns of the SES as to this three-way relationship are discussed below. As previously identified, SES issues of a lesser and tactical nature will be included in a separate report for the Commissioner QFES to consider.

Centralised control and potential rationalisation

8.3 Many volunteer groups, and particularly those who had strong relationships with local government, expressed concern if funding and governance were to be managed centrally by QFES. They believed it would inevitably mean a rationalisation (read closure) of some SES groups, redistribution of assets and equipment and the loss the 'community element' of the SES. They did not have faith in QFES to provide the ongoing level of support necessary for

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them to undertake what they see as vital roles. The number of QFES SES staff in the regions is minimal and SES volunteers project what they see as current lack of support into a future where greater support will be needed but not provided.

8.4 Similar to council concerns, volunteers also perceive that requirements unique to their location will be overridden by a ‘one size fits all’ model. The value of local knowledge will not be acknowledged and centralised direction from Brisbane will result in less than optimal local capabilities and responses.

Inconsistent Application of Policies and Processes

8.5 Across regional and even local boundaries there is growing divergence in the interpretation and application of many policies and procedures established by Kedron. This is probably a product of a number factors; the QFES regional model and the desire by some senior executives to establish their regional authority; out of date policies; QFES SES staff numbers both regionally and in Kedron being insufficient to provide appropriate levels of oversight and support; and local councils’ interposing themselves into SES operational and administrative matters.

8.6 There are some advantages in allowing a level of flexibility to account for regional or local conditions. However, SES units who interact across these boundaries notice the differences and sometimes a level of tension ensues. It is also clear that past practices quickly become established fact, they are very difficult to eradicate, and often transpose to other areas as the established and accepted processes. As the saying goes, ‘its more difficult to get an old idea out of someone’s head than a new idea in’. It is important for the health of the organisation to have consistent approaches using agreed outcomes and a strong principles-based approach in the first instance, rather than regulatory based methodology.

Variability in Support

8.7 State-wide there is huge variability in the level of support afforded SES Units. Even within local government areas there can exist an ‘us and them’ syndrome. SES Groups express frustration at these inconsistencies and perceived lack of support. They view it as a lack of respect for their functions and failure to value the time that they commit to supporting their communities. It tends to create a ‘first and second eleven’ where well equipped and vibrant SES groups are regularly activated or deployed. This in turn provides a greater incentive for new volunteers to join and further strengthens the particular SES group, while others wither due to a lack of activity.

IT and Communication Challenges

8.8 Good internet connectivity and computer systems are crucial for SES members to be administered, to train, and to be activated. Internet connectivity is almost invariably provided through local government support arrangements. Associated computer devices are generally provided either through councils, through grants, or through individual group fund raising efforts. A constant refrain from SES groups, particularly those in rural areas was that poor connectivity and outdated devices and software severely hampered them in providing an effective service.

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8.9 The dispersed nature of the SES capability means that the great majority of SES business is conducted online; training, procedural and policy updates, senior management communiques, personnel administration etc are all advised through online services. Yet the capacity and capability to receive this information is variable at best and in some cases minimal. Examples of SES groups using second hand laptops running software systems that are no longer supported were commonplace. While the SES people are a QFES responsibility it seems somewhat absurd that providing the infrastructure necessary to communicate with them is left up to councils.

8.10 QFES provide IPADs for tasking of the SES through the TAMS software. However, mobile phones for SES Executives or on-call SES volunteers are sometimes provided by Councils. Many instances were cited of SES Leaders using their own phones (and data allowance) for SES related activities; and in many cases this was accepted as the norm in order to ensure the continuing functioning of the SES.

Role Clarity and Activation Processes

8.11 Many volunteers felt that their functions were being subsumed by other emergency service agencies. This was seen as encroaching on traditional SES roles and diluting the SES' value. The more this occurred then the more some councils perceived less value in the SES believing that other agencies, who are fully funded by the State, had assumed greater prominence. Similarly a number of tasks undertaken by the SES often had no visibility within council (e.g. land search) further exacerbating a council/SES divide in the minds of many volunteers.

8.12 Many volunteers commented upon the changed activation arrangements with FireCom desk officers now assuming a greater role in tasking emergency service agencies to a broader range of incidents. Local controllers and SES Group Leaders felt they were spending wasteful time in trying to educate FireCom staff on SES capabilities, locations and appropriate tasking, as well as wasting resources when both the SES and other agencies have activated to the same incident. This issue is one that will be considered in more detail in the QFES separate report.

Training

8.13 SES training was an issue common to every consultation forum. For simple skill-based tasks it was often considered overly bureaucratic and ponderous. For higher level requirements such as leadership and management, or incident management and planning, it was either not available or inaccessible. The technical and administrative structures delivering and supporting training are not working effectively with, for example, a large backlog in completion and issuing of competency certificates.

8.14 The training organisation seems unresponsive to the priorities of the operational managers and is wedded to a purist training management approach that embeds all training (including simple core competencies) under an RTO framework. This issue is further expanded in the separate QFES report.

PUBLIC**9. Comparative Arrangements in other States**

9.1 The Queensland arrangements for the governance, funding and organisational structure of the SES are unique in terms of the three way State-local government-SES relationship. In no other States do local government have responsibilities in the disaster arena, nor are they enmeshed in SES funding and support in a manner similar to the Queensland arrangements. Annex G outlines a comparative analysis of other State SES arrangements.

9.2 The Department of Fire and Emergency Services in Western Australia is the closest in terms of organisational structure. No States have a partnership funding model similar to Queensland. Victoria had such an arrangement until 2016 but it had become increasingly unwieldy and the State stepped in to remove the ‘dollar for dollar’ funding arrangement that had applied.

9.3 In other States the SES have both individual authorities and collective authorities not considered in Queensland. In general terms in NSW and Vic, the SES as a collective are the “Control Agency” for storm, flood and tsunami. In most other States SES officers have varying degrees of authority as Authorised Emergency Service officers (or similar terms) under their Acts with a range of authorities, rank dependent.

10. Cost of the SES Capability

10.1 Determining the total cost of the SES capability is no simple matter. A number of sources have been utilised in attempting to distil a figure which goes close to representing the financial resources allocated to the SES state-wide. The veracity of the figures discussed below are impacted by the following:

- The extent to which Councils have been able to cost all the ‘in kind’ support to SES units that may not be attributed to overall SES costs. This may include such things as grounds maintenance on SES buildings, internet connectivity which is part of council’s overall internet costs, additional staff effort liaising and consulting with SES local controllers for example.
- Grants provided to councils from Federal grant sources. For example the Department of Regional Development et al has a range of grants (Stronger Communities, Building Better Regions etc).
- Land values and the depreciated value of buildings which may vary significantly over time.
- The amount contributed by SES support groups to their SES Unit from public fundraising activities.
- Public and private grants to SES Groups not captured by QFES Grants Team.
- The accuracy of the cost attribution of QFES and PSBA shared services that contribute to SES capability – training, uniform services, IT support, fleet management etc.

10.2 The KPMG EML review has been a useful document providing a secondary source of information on costing and budgetary matters. This review has provided a degree of confidence that the figures discussed below are close to the best approximations available. This review has also prompted consideration of number of other factors when determining a way forward:

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- The small amount the SES receive as part of the overall QFES budget – \$16.3 M compared to the total budget (FY 17/18) of \$688.2M and an EML revenue of \$511M²⁹.
- The minimal amount spent on SES both compared to both other States spend, and relative to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).³⁰
- In the current QFES strategic budget planning process the SES priorities for future capability needs seemingly get negligible consideration or priority.
- In 2013 the Emergency Management and Fire and Rescue Levy (later renamed as the EML) was introduced into Parliament³¹ as an extension of the Urban Fire Levy with the intention that it would fund **all** Emergency Services.

10.3 In assessing the cost of the SES, the only council data available (supplied by councils at the request of the LGAQ) was for FY 2016/17. These figures have been adjusted to align with QFES supplied data for 2018/19. The figures in the Table 2 do not include capital building costs and land value which are represented separately. As a best estimate the following funding sources comprise the cost of the SES capability:

Table 2 – 2018/19 SES Costs (all figures rounded)

Type	Operational Expenses	Comments
Local Government	\$17.9M	No figures for Ipswich, Maranoa, McKinlay and Winton Councils - another \$0.5 - \$0.75M could be added. Data is shown as 'net cost' but not able to be verified. 4% inflation increase applied to 2016/17 LGA figure \$16,409,900
QFES total grant and subsidy	\$2.47	QFES Support Grant was increased to \$1M for this FY
QFES SES direct operating costs	\$17.21M	
QFES SES indirect and shared service costs.	\$6.95M	Estimates of costs attributed to SES from QFES and PSBA shared corporate services (fleet management, IT services, training etc)
Other Grants	\$0.46M	Non-QFES grants such as the Community Gambling Benefit Fund
Expenditure from Fund Raising/Gifted amounts	\$0.5M	Estimated maximum determined after discussion with QFES staff.
QFES SES Gift Fund	\$0.25M	
Total	\$45.19	
LGA Margin for error +/- 50%	\$8.95M	
QFES Margin for error on attributed shared service costs + 10%	\$0.7M	
Estimated for unaccounted Grants.	\$0.3M	
Contingency variable	\$9.95	

²⁹ KPMG QFES EML review p6

³⁰ Ibid p50

³¹ https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/hansard/2013/2013_06_06_WEEKLY.pdf

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10.5 If the State is to contemplate more direct funding and governance there will be a requirement for a QFES re-structure and staff increase to take up the support currently provided by council staff. Whichever future financial model is adopted QFES SES enhancement will be necessary to sustain the SES volunteer capability and strengthen council relationships. There is little point in shifting financial responsibility and oversight from local government to QFES without the enablers (people, management and data systems, and governance) in place to minimise risks and ensure capability is enhanced. This may take the form of better administrative support to local controllers, closer liaison with Local Government, local contracts for maintenance of equipment and IT support, development of state-wide tender/purchasing arrangements and development of auditing/management systems for tracking and maintenance of assets.

10.6 For example if QFES takes on responsibility for vehicles and boats what is the staffing full time equivalent (FTE) needed to manage this additional burden? Even at current staffing levels SES volunteers consider they are poorly supported by QFES. A comparison of paid staff to volunteers across different jurisdictions is offered in Table 3

Table 3

State	Volunteer Numbers	Staff FTE	Ratio	Comments
NSW ³²	9110	355 FTE	1:26	
Vic ³³	5225	225 FTE	1:23	
SA	1700	63 FTE	1:27	Assessed base on FTE to salary calculations
QLD	5900	94 Direct FTE	1:63	
		130 FTE	1:45	Includes an assessed 36 staff for shared services (Corporate, IT, Training, Logistics, etc)

10.7 The figures for NSW and Victoria represent agencies who have full oversight of the SES as statutory entities. While comparisons in this space can be specious, the difference is significant and can only be partly explained by the local government role in supporting the SES. Comparatively, the distances involved in supporting outlying SES units across Queensland as opposed to other States would suggest a need for more paid staff support to the SES. If QFES was to take on full responsibility for funding and governance of the SES the experience of other states indicate a significant staffing increase would be needed.

10.8 While academic literature on the number of paid staff to volunteers has no direct correlation in this sector some inferences can be drawn. As a general rule in not-for-profit enterprises various articles suggest a ratio of between 1:15 to 1:30, depending upon the type activities being undertaken and the level of risk involved. For QFES to reduce the staff to volunteer ratio to 1:30 would require approximately 60 more staff. On an average FTE cost of \$110,000 this would equate to \$6.6 million.

10.9 An indicative funding spread for the financial years 20/21 to 24/25 is shown at Annex F. Given the inaccuracies likely to be apparent in the SES cost estimates these figures are a

³² NSW SES Annual Report 2019 <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au>

³³ VIC SES Annual Report 2018 <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/documents>

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‘best guess’ only to provide a guide to the funding quantum that could be required for a number of funding models. The figures for QFES FTE are similarly only an assessment based on; assessed current shortfalls in QFES SES support; information gleaned from the experience of other States in undertaking SES transformation; and, personal judgement.

11. Pathways and End State

11.1 In charting a way through the current challenges, it is worthwhile envisaging what the ideal future may look like. Part of this process is also to ensure the future end state addresses the shortcoming in the current arrangements. Such an approach allows policy options to be assessed against their mitigation of current issues and their contribution to the end state. The ideal future arrangements could address the following aspects:

- delineation of State and local government responsibilities in relation to disaster response;
- better understand the SES capability and agree an SES base level of service (capability) for each LGA (risk dependent);
- reduction of the fiscal burden for local government;
- removal the dual ‘risk owner’ situation;
- clarification of command, control and coordination arrangements for the SES;
- strengthen the local government, QFES, SES relationship;
- reduction in the current disparity in SES capability state-wide;
- provision of better support to SES Local Controllers and Group Leaders and arrangements that are more responsive to SES needs;
- improve consistency in tasking, activations, and the application of procedures and policies state-wide; and,
- embed arrangements that strengthen the ability of the Commissioner QFES to meet his legislative responsibilities.

11.2 The ideal future arrangements could have the following attributes:

- The SES is commanded as a state-wide and deployable capability; they are coordinated regionally, managed and responsive locally, and remain connected to their community.
- There is an agreed resourcing model that provides a sustainable funding stream and appropriate oversight to improve SES capability and reduce the disparity between various SES units state-wide,
- There is a strong three-way relationship between QFES, SES and Local Government with formalised enforceable agreements to ensure consultation, minimum SES service levels, delineation of responsibilities, and clear tasking processes.
- SES equipment, policy, procedures and standards are harmonised state-wide.

12. Structuring an Approach to Change

12.1 Achieving sustainable change that is embraced across both levels of government and by volunteers will be a long term and challenging project. A structured and mainly linear approach will be needed to ensure many of the enablers of success are in place before

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adopting any new model. Failure to have these enablers in place could be costly and jeopardise the success of any change.

12.2 The following stages are seen as critical elements in any implementation plan before making changes in the arrangements. Even before contemplating changes to the arrangements and as a means of managing expectations, a strategic communications plan will be necessary to shape the environment and complement the strategic level implementation plan.

Stages	Rationale/Comments
Develop an SES Charter and Operational Concept	Needed to clarify authority and hierarchy of SES C3, and establish and promote SES core and supporting functions and roles.
Engage each local government authority to determine and agree a base level of SES capability and verify asset base costings.	Takes into consideration current capability, risk profile for the region, and adjoining supporting capability. Ensures a ‘resources to risk’ approach and provides basis for future funding.
Determine the most appropriate funding model; negotiate agreement with LGAQ and develop implementation strategy.	Includes: Funding quantum – full or partial. If partial on what basis – percentage, by function, or by asset/expense class Funding dissemination mechanics. Through council, or direct to SES, or a blended approach Implementation – Iterative and incremental, trial basis, staggered rollout, or wholistic
Develop a Partnership Agreement or Service Level Agreement with Councils. With Brisbane City Council agree a “Statement of Principles”	This will guide the implementation of change, and manage State – Local Government interaction in regard to the support, management and tasking of the SES under the new arrangements. Potential use of incentive financial arrangement to ensure compliance.
Change and resource enhancements to QFES long term structures and staffing.	This will enable governance, doctrine/policies, oversight, administrative support, and enabling data and asset management systems to be in place before assuming full responsibility for the SES
Commence roll-out of new arrangements.	More than just funding and assumption of support responsibility. Includes changes to the oversight and consultative mechanisms so that local government has greater visibility of SES local capability, tasking and deployment. Strengthen legislated links between Local Controllers, the LDMG and the Commissioner QFES

13. Future Funding and Governance Models

13.1 Unfortunately there are no funding models in other States upon which valid comparisons can be drawn. Queensland is unique in the legislated role of local government in disasters, and the extent to which they directly support (financially and in-kind) the SES. Requirements to support the SES in other States are more specific and bounded. For example

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local government in NSW is required to provide a facility for the SES to a standard specified by the NSW SES Commissioner. Any new funding model is likely to be a unique arrangement.

13.2 For a new model to be effective it is clear that appropriate governance, oversight and support mechanisms appropriate to the model need to be instigated. While the support currently provided by councils may vary, as a minimum, this level of support will need to be replicated in the future by the State if they assume funding and support responsibilities.

13.3 Any new model should address both funding and governance changes as the two aspects are interdependent in driving improvements. The validity of the various models can be assessed against a range of criteria. The attributes considered important are:

- resolving the current clash in asset ownership lying with council and people; responsibility being retained by the State;
- clarifying C2 and tasking;
- ensuring councils have visibility of the SES capability and, from their understanding of local disaster risk, they retain a voice in influencing local SES capability considerations;
- reducing the disparity in SES capability across the State;
- being relatively simple to administer in the fully developed state; and,
- enhancing capability through providing more accessible, direct and proactive support to SES executives and volunteers.

13.4 A simplistic but nonetheless strategic approach to funding could consider both the quantum of funding and the manner in which funding is distributed. Figure 5 represents this in a diagrammatic fashion and shows seven funding options. The following points clarify the terms used in this diagram.

- **Full Cost** – In this approach QFES assumes full funding responsibility for the SES - equipment, facilities, operational expenses, training.
- **Partial Cost** – Costs are shared between State and LG. This could be on a percentage basis of the agreed SES capability. Or split into funding different cost elements. E.g. Council fund facilities and facilities maintenance. QFES all other equipment, maintenance and operating expenses
- **By Subsidy & Grant.** This approach is similar to current arrangements but the grant quantum is increased significantly and disbursed on the basis of a stronger assessment of needs.
- **Direct Payment.** Funding stream provided direct to the local government with caveats and agreements in place on how the funds must be used.
- **QFES Managed.** QFES support all SES groups with funds for equipment, maintenance and operating expenses. Will require significant oversight and support mechanisms.
- **Combined.** QFES provide a level of funding to local governments as well some funding direct to SES to fund certain costs.

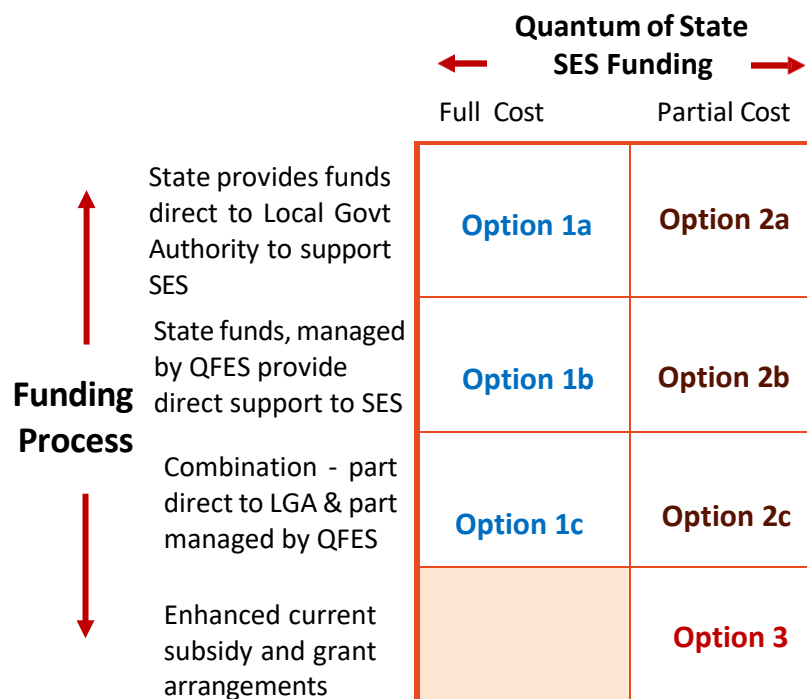
13.5 Each of the options illustrated in Figure 5 have both strengths and weaknesses. An assessment of these strengths and weaknesses are described in Annex E where more detailed examples of each option are explored against a range of criteria seen as critical to the success

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of any new arrangements. However, this is only a broad brush look and detailed cost benefit analyses will be required for several of the options.

13.6 Having examined a number of different approaches to funding and governance it is clear that there is no one option that will suit all local government authorities. The options in paragraph 13.7 are the models most likely suited to meeting the expectations of the most number of councils and clarifying the ongoing concerns around responsibility, accountability and SES C2.

Figure 5. Different Funding Approaches



Funding Models

13.7 There are five funding models described below that provide options for government to consider. Each model will need to be prefaced by a negotiated ‘base’ or ‘minimum’ SES service level that determines what capability is appropriate in each local government area. While the principal characteristics of each model are separate, obviously elements of the models can be blended, combined or refined as required.

13.7.1 Option 1b State Funds and Delivers. In this model the State assumes full funding and management/support responsibility for the SES service delivery. This includes all equipment, operational expenses and SES facilities. Transfer of ownership of equipment and either lease or transfer of ownership of SES facilities will be undertaken through negotiation with councils. Negotiation principles and processes and will need to be consistent state-wide to maintain equity. Funding and support to SES groups’ delivery of the service will be provided direct from QFES. This will require a significant increase in QFES staff

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support both at the local level and from Kedron in order to provide appropriate governance, oversight, and support in the form of logistics, IT, HR, and contracting.

13.7.2 Option 1c State Funds – Service Delivery Shared. This model is very similar to option 1b and has the same caveats. The difference is that funding delivery is split between direct support to the SES and utilising councils’ resources and expertise to provide support to the SES Groups within their boundaries. This split could be based on the relative cost benefits of councils being contracted or reimbursed for the provision of specific support. This could be, for example, vehicle maintenance and fuel, and/or facilities maintenance and costs (electricity, water etc). The SES could be funded directly for operational expenses, small equipment replacement and repair, IT support etc. This option may have a lesser FTE demand than Option 1b.

13.7.3 Option 2b. Funding Shared – State Delivers. In this approach council and State share the costs of the SES in an arrangement that creates a partnership more equitable than at present. This could be a shared arrangement based on a percentage of council SES costs but a cleaner approach would be to share the cost by asset or equipment functional area. An approach which has some attraction would be for councils to commit to providing and continuing to fund SES facilities, and the State funds all other SES expenses. Agreement on a minimum facility standard would need to be negotiated and promulgated by the Commissioner QFES. The State would then lease the facility on a peppercorn rent basis removing the issue of dual risk owner. Funding for the other SES expenses (not facilities related) will be provided through QFES direct to the SES. Where SES are accommodated in non-council owned facilities these arrangements will need to be negotiated independently.

13.7.4 Option 2c. Funding and Service Delivery Shared. This option is a more nuanced approach to Option 2b. Council will fund some aspects and depending upon cost benefit analyses, QFES will utilise the expertise and facilities of councils to provide some local support to the SES on a reimbursement or contracted arrangement. An example could be, Council fund facilities as in Option 2b, and QFES provide reimbursement to councils for vehicle maintenance and fuel and IT access if this is the most cost effective approach. QFES fund SES groups directly for operational expenses and small equipment maintenance and replacement.

13.7.5 Option 3. Minimalist Approach. This option is available should major change in the sector be seen as too complex and challenging to implement. Providing increased and better targeted funding and having a more substantial recurrent funding stream (to assist councils in strategic financial management) would be a way to ease some of the concerns of councils. For example, if \$6M was added to the QFES council subsidy and grants (to take the total to \$8.43M) this could be spread indicatively as:

Top 10 spending councils receive \$225k	-	\$2.25M	
Next 10 councils receive \$175k	-	\$1.75M	
Next 25 councils receive \$100k	-	\$2.5M	
Final 32 councils receive \$60k	-	\$1.92M	Total \$8.42M

13.7.6 If QFES was to take responsibility for the provision of IT and communications connectivity and equipment (computers, software, mobile phones) it would be well received by the volunteers. However the systemic issues of risk ownership, tasking, capability

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variability, and C2 will remain and strong service level agreements would need to be developed to ensure councils spent the additional funding on SES capability.

Funding Model Assessment

13.8 Should there be an intent to change the arrangements by taking on greater funding responsibility detailed policy analysis of the approaches outlined above will be required. In a broad summation, in the order shown in Table 5 the options:

- generally decrease in terms of clarity of accountability and their simplicity to manage when moving from Option 1b through to 3; and,
- generally increase in terms of the flexibility of the arrangements and potential cost effectiveness when moving from Option 1b to Option 3

13.9 Of the options outlined above, Table 4 summarises the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Table 4. Options Comparison

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1b - State fully fund and deliver	Responsibility and authority lies wholly with the State, therefore simpler to administer and accountability is clear.	Greatest cost (assets, infrastructure & operating expenses) to State. Does not keep councils involved in SES support FTE requirement to manage will be large.
1c - State fully fund - service delivery shared	Responsibility and authority lies wholly with the State. Utilisation of council expertise and services may be cost effective. May retain a council/SES connection. Can provide flexibility if council's wish to contribute more funding.	Also high cost (assets, infrastructure & operating expenses) to State. Negotiating a shared service arrangement could take time. Significant FTE burden. Caveats/partnership agreement on use of SES funds can be administratively burdensome
2b - Funding shared - State delivers service	Keeps local government involved with SES. Funding partnership balances council/State costs. If State lease council owned facilities then dual risk owner issue negated. Arrangements can be flexible.	Not all councils will support. Will be a time consuming negotiation process.

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2c - Funding shared - service delivery shared	Provides most flexibility. Re-balances the funding partnership. Council may benefit from payment for services where they have cost advantage/expertise. Council/SES/State relationship can be enhanced. Likely to be most cost-effective.	Not all councils will support. Will be a time consuming negotiation process. May be a number of ‘bespoke’ agreements based on a council’s capacity
3 - The Minimalist	Least cost, quickest to implement	Systemic risk and C2 issues remain. Unlikely to meet councils expectations. Only marginal capability improvements are likely.

14. The Brisbane City Council Challenge

14.1 Brisbane City Council (BCC) staff indicated during several meetings that the Council had no wish to change the current arrangements. They went further to say the Council would actively resist any changes to the current arrangements and their view reflected those of the Council’s elected representatives.

14.2 There are a number of factors influencing the BCC view. The partisan political nature of this local government area is a significant factor with representatives acutely attuned to the mood of their constituents. Elected representatives believe it is council’s responsibility to determine their capability needs to mitigate and respond to disasters. They would be negligent if they ceded this responsibility to the State and it would be unacceptable from the perspective of their citizens. The strong sense of civic responsibility, and need to be active in efforts to ensure community safety, when overlaid with the Council political system, summarise the context of the BCC view.

14.3 Given BCC is the subject of separate State legislation³⁴ a case can be made to treat it as a separate issue in terms of this review. This case is strengthened by the comparative size of BCC being approximately double the size (population, revenue, workforce etc) of the next largest local government authority. BCC could be specified as a special situation and, with the formal agreement Council representatives, be excluded from arrangements implemented with other councils.

14.4 However, this approach gives rise to command and control issues and questions of equity. What authority (legislative and/or moral) does the State have to task BCC SES in a situation where the great majority of BCC SES funding support comes from the Council. Compare this with all other local government areas where the majority of funding is provided by the State. BCC staff stressed they did not want to see SES in BCC area excised wholly from the state-wide SES arrangements, and they recognised the importance of BCC SES

³⁴ City of Brisbane Act 2010

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units being interoperable across the State. Given the significant SES capacity resident in the BCC region it is important that they can contribute as a deployable capability to assist in disasters state-wide. Similarly, there is a quid pro quo with other SES groups outside BCC available to deploy to support BCC in major disasters.

14.5 No doubt these issues can be worked through but extensive relationship building between BCC and QFES at all levels will be required. Brisbane City is a crucial entity as a support base for the provision of capability to disasters state-wide, and it may be worthwhile the Commissioner QFES engaging with the BCC Chief Executive Officer.

14.6 A means of establishing and articulating how a specific BCC/State arrangement will work may be a high level ‘Statement of Principles’ that defines an agreed joint strategic objective. The signatories would be the CEO of BCC and the Commissioner QFES. It will identify how the two organisations would work together, in both disasters and peacetime, to provide the best public safety outcomes for both BCC citizens and other Queenslanders. It would reinforce consultation mechanisms, points of contact and authority, and methods of dispute resolution. Given it will be high level document the latter will be important to ensure minor irritants do not derail the strategic objective. Legislative changes may be required to harmonise the Disaster Management Act and the City of Brisbane Act should a change such as this be adopted.

15. Measuring Capability and Driving Change

15.1 Seeking performance data as a way of measuring capability is a compelling agent in striving to influence change. But it is necessary that the data collected and the outcomes sought reflects the desired direction of the organisation. QFES has for some time used the number of SES trained flood/storm damage teams as a measure to indicate the level of SES capability. This focus I would contend is too narrow and drives poor or unintended outcomes. It does not take account of the range of tasks that SES fulfil, nor the regional and local variations on the most regular task activations. For example, a number of groups cited land search as being by a long margin their most regular tasking and the one requiring the greatest number of volunteers. Data gathering and performance reporting should work in synergy to identify capability shortfalls and drive improve aligned with organisational objectives.

15.2 While data capture systems within SES and the broader QFES have been through some upheaval it is important that appropriate effort is put into:

- systems and interfaces that easily allow data on capability and activities to be entered and analysed;
- assessing the overall capability level and future capability needs based on analysis of activations, taskings and risk; and,
- embedding performance reporting and capability performance measures better aligned to mitigating the risk by region or area and in line with QFES’s strategic plan.

16. Risks and Opportunities

16.1 Through the consultation process it was apparent that establishing and undertaking the SES review has resulted in an expectation from both councils and the SES for changes to the

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arrangements that are both substantial and long term. There is a sense of momentum growing, initiated by the review, but strengthened by disaster events external to the review.

16.2 The consultation process moderated as much as possible expectations and was particularly clear in outlining realistic time frames should changes to the arrangements be contemplated. Notwithstanding the advice provided during consultation, there is both a reputational risk and risk to operational capability if some of these expectations cannot be effectively accommodated. To that end a comprehensive strategic communications plan will be needed to inform the various stakeholder groups of future actions, intentions and timeframes.

16.3 It is clear that the state-wide SES capability will continue to struggle if no changes are instigated. On the assumption that one of the funding options in Section 13 and Table 3 (excluding option 3) is implemented the following opportunities could be realised. Similarly, in moving forward the risks discussed in paragraph 16.5 come into play.

16.4 **Opportunities.** If the State was to assume a greater funding and governance responsibility the following high level opportunities, many of them inter-linked, present:

- A clear line of accountability and authority resulting in the State being the sole risk owner for all SES activities. The State will be able to fully manage the risks under its purview.
- A significant improvement to SES' capability state-wide making them more readily deployable.
- SES specialist functions (vertical rescue, road crash rescue etc) can be developed and located appropriately (based on risk) in areas of highest need.
- Cost effectiveness. Having a single entity with the authority and responsibility for SES capability service delivery has the potential to achieve cost to capability improvements.
- The ability to drive SES volunteer renewal through capability enhancement and harmonisation, consistent processes, and coherent SES recruitment and support programs.
- More productive council partnerships that will enhance community safety and disaster response operations.
- Clarify the uncertainty around command, control and coordination of the SES which has been an issue noted in many previous reviews.
- Improved community support to the SES.
- Enhanced QFES SES capability will permit them to become the lead agency and specialists for storm and flood damage response.

16.5 **Risks.** If changes to the arrangements are going to be implemented a fully committed approach will be needed to avoid or mitigate the risks below. Experience from other jurisdictions indicate the cost, complexity and time needed to undertake such an endeavour can be easily and significantly under-estimated. The key risk is that change will falter, and the SES will be left in limbo and a worse situation than at present; i.e. local government having stepped back from their support and the State is not fully committing to support. If a move is made to 'unpick' the current arrangements it will be next to impossible to reverse any changes and reconstitute in its current form. A number of high level risks in moving forward with a change to the arrangements are shown below.

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- It is a significant undertaking that could take over five years to complete. There is a danger of losing momentum and support for a new arrangement.
- Councils expressed a diversity of views on the extent to which the arrangements should change. Gaining agreement to a single model or a number of broadly similar models will be challenging and time consuming, and could impede the change process.
- There may not be the capacity and capability to undertake the complex tasks of council negotiation, risk assessing, and verifying council SES capability, asset base, and costings.
- External factors (compounding disaster events, future disaster inquiries, strategic policy changes, leadership turmoil, etc) could take away focus and effort from the program.
- Future economic conditions could reduce projected SES funding in the outer years of the program.
- Strong financial model governance and oversight mechanisms will be needed to prevent and identify misapplication of funds intended for the SES.

17. Key Observations

This section draws together the key observations identified in this review.

Observation 1- An Ongoing and Wicked Problem

17.1 Numerous reviews stretching back over more than a decade have indicated shortcomings in the shared arrangements. Previous reviews were consistent in raising concerns regarding C2 and tasking clarity, delineation of responsibilities between the State and local government, and management of the SES capability. These reviews are a potent indicator of the need for change. But change remains a wicked problem given the differing views and interests, the diversity of capability and capacity state-wide, and geographically influenced perspectives. Policy changes agreeable to most stakeholders that avoid perverse outcomes will be difficult to negotiate. Any change to the future arrangements should take account of these previous reviews and accommodate governance, organisational and funding changes that clarify responsibilities and result in a more effective SES that can grow and be sustained well into the future. (Para 1.5, 4.6, 5.7 – 5.14)

Observation 2 - Council Perspectives on Motion 56

17.2 With the exception of a very small number of councils, those consulted agreed changes to the shared partnership were warranted given the shortcomings in the current arrangements. The scope and extent of the change necessary was the main point of divergence, and there was a range of views on the role that council should play in the future SES support framework. A significant number felt that council should continue to manage and support the SES using State funds with appropriate financial governance mechanisms in place. However, a larger number were of the view that the State should both fund and manage the SES support. Overall there is general support for change but it will need to be a more nuanced approach than Motion 56 suggests. (Para 4.3, 7.3)

PUBLIC**Observation 3 – Disaster capability and council responsibilities**

17.3 Legislation provides negligible guidance of value on the extent of councils' responsibilities for disaster response. This extends to the SES and there is seemingly no objective methods for determining the level of SES capability, how to accommodate emerging SES roles, and what is an appropriate level of investment in disaster response more broadly. This leads to highly disparate capabilities across the state, and potentially poor use of funds that build capability not matched to mitigating the risk profile. The 'capability' owner for the SES is diffuse - and the responsibilities and expectations of councils in providing a disaster response capability is unclear. The State, with most of the levers at its disposal, is best positioned to determine and guide SES capability as a better integrated part of the state-wide emergency service response capability. (Para 6.4-6.6)

Observation 4 – Asset Ownership and Risk

17.4 The separation of responsibility for councils' ownership of SES assets (and use) from the State's responsibility for the volunteers is a situation fraught with risk for the State, councils, and volunteers. It is a confusing and illogical situation with conflicting policies and guidelines (between State and local government), minimal common standards for equipment such as vehicles, and little oversight/auditing of equipment maintenance. No single entity has holistically, either the authority or wherewithal, to manage the continuum of risk across the SES sector. It is an area of significant concern for councils and if viewed through the prism of a Coroner's inquest should raise similar concerns for the State. (Para 6.11)

Observation 5 – Financial Management and Costing

17.5 The nature of funding for the SES is highly dispersed across the three levels of government, the private sector and the community. Establishing a true cost of the capability is challenging due (for example) to the extent of council in-kind support, shared services attribution within QFES, and individual group fund raising. Considerable effort is often expended on grant applications and the random timing of these grants makes strategic financial planning in small councils impossible. It pits councils against one another in a competitive process where often the volunteers are the losers. The funding arrangements work against effective long term financial planning, negate the ability to use economies of scale, and are administratively unwieldy. Overall the result is reduced cost effectiveness and missed opportunities for capability enhancement. (Section 10 and Para 6.15, 6.19 and 6.29)

Observation 6 – The SES Local Controllers role and authority.

17.6 The SES local controller's legislated role was the subject of much discussion. Paid local controllers are in an invidious position being paid by one entity but responsible to another. Volunteer local controllers have weighty responsibilities that seem incompatible with a volunteer position. The authority of the local controller is also not well understood or clearly articulated within policy documents. Whether all local controllers should be paid positions (on a payment scale appropriate to the task) was often discussed but the mood suggested that it was not widely supported. In sum the local controller is a potential single point of failure and the lack of support a significant risk.

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17.7 An increase in QFES SES numbers to reduce staff members' span of responsibility and increase direct and more regular support to local controllers could be considered. This could be accompanied by a formal delegation and directive from the Commissioner QFES to individual regional SES staff who would be responsible for oversight and reporting on the SES capability. By this means the Commissioner can ensure his legislated SES responsibilities are fulfilled. Such actions would need to be accompanied by the promulgation of a clearly defined C2 structure and the relevant authorities attached to individual positions. (Para 6.2)

Observation 7 - SES roles and functions.

17.8 SES roles and functions are evolving with specific roles in their own right, as well as support to other frontline responding agencies, as part of an integrated approach to disaster response. Under current arrangements there is no guidance for councils on which evolving roles could or should sit under their purview. It is left up to councils and the SES to determine what extra support or funding is required to equip them for evolving roles. Similarly the management of specialised SES capability and its location (road crash rescue, vertical rescue) does not seem to be subject of any gap-analysis or state-wide coordination to minimise public safety risks. The lack of a current State Rescue Policy (the only documentation is one from 2006) is indicative. It is symptomatic of the current arrangements that shortcomings in response to a public safety incident will generally only come to light after an event rather than through any forward looking assessment of evolving needs, capability gaps, roles and functions. Para 6.39

Observation 8 - The need for an SES Operational Concept

17.9 There is an argument for a **single** document that removes the misperceptions around the SES' roles, and the confusion around command, control and tasking of the SES. Such a document could be an SES Charter and Operational Concept. Through a Charter the value of the SES would be better recognised. The body of the document could also:

- establish mission and goals (to drive outcomes);
- encompass and clarify the C3 structure for QFES and the SES;
- identify SES' core, supporting, and specialised roles; and,
- identify the role and authorising environment of the various tasking agencies.

Such a document provides the starting point to ensure structural and funding changes are coherent with the desired organisational requirements. (Para 6.45, 8.11)

Observation 9 - Communications and IT Connectivity

17.10 The SES overall capability (trained, equipped, responsive) relies heavily on the effectiveness of the available communications and information technology. The majority of this falls to councils to supply and the facilities are at best variable. Two key components of SES undertakings, that is SES tasking and SES training, rely heavily on mobile communications, and internet connectivity and equipment. These two components are accepted State responsibilities but the effectiveness of the SES in these areas depends primarily on council support and equipment – an incongruous situation. This is an area of State responsibility, where improvements and a consistent approach would reap significant benefits in capability and SES volunteer morale. (Para 8.4)

PUBLIC**Observation 10 - Capability Priorities - Valuing local knowledge and context.**

17.11 Concern expressed by both volunteers and councils regarded the State applying a ‘one size fits all’ model where local knowledge, experience, and context was disregarded. There is validity in this view because of the perils of distance and challenges of understanding conditions in remote areas. Many councils wanted to ensure that under any new funding model they still some ability influence decisions on disaster response capability priorities being taken remote from their local area. Structural changes to the arrangements should incorporate a formalised mechanism for consultation and feedback between QFES and local government. This could be through the Local Disaster Management Group (separate to disaster event considerations) where matters to do with QFES disaster response arrangements, and particularly SES capacity, capability, and capability planning could be a standing agenda item. (Para 7.19, 8.3)

Observation 11 - Comprehensive Change – Implementation and Governance Structures

17.12 Unravelling the current SES/local government/State arrangements and moving to a new model will be a time consuming and complex task. If moving to a new model it will be crucial that many enabling elements are in place before attempting to implement any changes. The task will require extensive and sometime complex negotiation between the State and local government. There is a risk in failing to commit fully to the change, and if the appropriate funding and governance structures are not supported from the outset then momentum will be lost and the potential opportunities will not be fully realised.

17.13 Managing the expectation of councils and the SES will be crucial, requiring a disciplined and extensive communications effort. From an outsiders perspective a change such as this can appear relatively simple. It will be important to reinforce the time scale and complexity while showing some progress towards a future vision for the sector.

Observation 12 - Managing Arrangements with Brisbane City Council

17.14 BCC is strongly resistant to changing the arrangements. If arrangements are to change it may be possible to manage the BCC separate to the rest of the state as they are covered by their own legislation. This will require a separate negotiated arrangement and high level relationship building.

Observation 13 - Funding and Governance Models

17.15 If moving to new arrangements then there are a number of viable funding options. The key question is a fully funded or partially funded model and then which entity is responsible for managing and supporting the delivery of the SES capability. A model where local government are responsible for providing the SES facilities and the State funds all other SES costs would appear a neat arrangement. Local governments are best placed to understand future planning and development intentions and are well versed in leasing to different types of entities. This approach will not be supported by some councils because of a desire to recoup some costs. However for councils, money spent on SES facilities are ‘sunk costs’ and

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the asset(s) will remain under council ownership but leased to the State under a peppercorn rent arrangement.

17.16 The question of utilising some council facilities for SES support (e.g. vehicle maintenance) under contract or reimbursement would need to be investigated to determine whether council or private providers were the more beneficial. The possible contracting of council resources for SES support may be an advantage in negotiating with some councils.

Observation 14 – Legislative Change

17.17 Irrespective of any change to the arrangements a comprehensive review of the legislation pertaining to this sector could be considered. It will be needed specifically to establish councils' responsibilities and determine the bespoke Brisbane city arrangements. In general, the separation into two Acts has resulted in an authorising environment that lacks clarity, leaves significant accountabilities unsaid and opens the way for the avoidance of responsibility. (Para 14.6, 18)

Observation 15 – Resources to Risk Balance

17.18 A pressing strategic question is the appropriateness of the breakdown of resources against risks given the disaster risk profile for the State. Interstate comparisons and the social impacts of floods and storm type events on Queenslanders would suggest the division of resources across the emergency services sector is out of balance. (Para 6.51)

18. Amendments to Legislative Arrangements

18.1 The need for legislative change to the authorising environment for the SES, QFES and councils will to a large extent be determined by any future models for SES support. Many people from all stakeholder groups commented upon the shortcomings in the two primary Acts of relevance – the Disaster Management (DM) Act and the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Act. The Acts, particularly the DM Act, lack clarity and are silent on many subjects allowing broad and potentially risky interpretations to become embedded. There are some advantages in having legislation that allows those to whom the legislation applies scope to interpret the Act to meet its intent. However, there are some aspects of both these Acts that could be amended or incorporated in the relevant Regulations pertaining to the Acts. It is not the intent of this review to propose specific amendments but the following aspects could be considered in any future general legislative review and to align the legislation with possible new arrangements.

18.1.1 Council Responsibilities for Disaster Response. (DM Act Section 80 (2)) Guidance on the level of disaster response capability that councils should have is highly generalised and of limited value. The required capability may be better expressed in a generic functional way that relates to councils day to day responsibilities. E.g. local response coordination, road access, water and sewerage, evacuation centres, local transport, animal welfare etc.

18.1.2 SES - Lead Agency or Primary Response Agency. (FES Act). For consideration, the SES role could be changed to being the agency responsible for leading the

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response to storm and flood type hazards. Other States have the SES as the Hazard Management Authority, or Combat Agency as a specified and legislated role for the SES.

18.1.3 **SES Functions.** (FES Act). The SES functions could be re-defined to broaden the scope (to include support roles) and authority (incident control, etc)

18.1.4 **Local Controllers** (FES Act). The role of local controllers could be expanded to define their reporting arrangements and authority. Alternatively this could be ‘as determined/directed by the Commissioner QFES’.

18.1.5 **Reports to LDMG** (DM Act). Embed the requirements for consultative mechanisms between the SES, QFES and the LDMG to regularly audit and report upon local disaster response capability.

18.1.6 **Rescue Officers** (DM Act Section 110). The intent is unclear and seemingly this section has never been utilised. Its value is limited given the minimum level for authorisation is at the District level, and in an urgent or more localised situation it would seem impractical. This section could apply a blanket authorisation to SES Executives as Rescue Officers to remove an administrative burden during disasters.

18.1.7 **SES as Authorised Officers** (FES Act). Whether the SES (of an appropriate level) should be appointed as ‘authorised officers’ has been a point of considerable discussion. The current situation leads to significant tension across agencies and the perception that the SES are not able to undertake certain controlling roles in Operations Centres, Incident Control Centres, or at incidents.

18.1.8 **Council Requirements to support the SES** (DM Act). Future changes to the arrangements could result in a partnered funding model. If so the detail of the requirements of local government should be included in legislation, along with the QFES responsibilities for oversight and auditing.

18.1.9 **Risk and Capability** (DM Act). Emphasis on risk assessment could be strengthened through the local government disaster plans which are a requirement under the DM Act. Disaster risk appreciation is at best patchy and is a key driver in assessing capability gaps. Councils could be required to undertake risk and capability gap analysis in conjunction with QFES as part of disaster planning.

19. Conclusions

19.1 It is clear that the current arrangements are in need of change and there is an expectation amongst both councils and volunteers that this will occur. The current arrangements are inefficient and do not lead to the best community safety outcomes. Previous reviews have highlighted the shortcoming in the arrangements and this review reinforces previous observations.

19.2 State-wide there is great disparity in the level of support provided by local government to the SES and a resultant variability in their capability. QFES support to the SES is also variable especially in rural regions. This results in volunteer disillusionment, impacts

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volunteer morale and deployable capability. The future disaster landscape will require better integrated, more capable and highly deployable volunteer groups and the current structures do not support such a growth in capability.

19.3 The lack of clarity in the arrangements and the diffusion of responsibility represents a major risk for the State, for local government and for volunteers. The C2 arrangements for the SES, both within QFES and with local government are imprecise and exacerbate the situation. This risk manifests as an operational risk for volunteers and for the community through reduced response capability, as well as strategic and reputational risk for governments.

19.4 However there is no strong consensus on what form the future arrangements should take and any change will need careful negotiation. Various funding approaches are possible but it will be a challenging policy route to negotiate agreed outcomes, implement the changes and embed appropriate governance and oversight mechanisms. There will also be the inevitable push back from other emergency service agencies who see this as a zero-sum game and fear losing resources. Stakeholder engagement at all decision points and a strongly nuanced strategic communications plan will be essential in ensuring progress is not waylaid or momentum lost.

19.5 From a strategic perspective the question of whether the resources available to QFES are divided appropriately given the Queensland risk profile is one that should be considered. When the EML was introduced in Parliament, the intent was it would fund all emergency services but this has not transpired, and a volunteer group, whose core function helps to mitigate the most likely disaster risk to Queenslanders has been, in most respects, excluded from this funding.

PUBLIC**Annex A****Annex A. State Emergency Service Review Terms of Reference****Background**

In October 2018 the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) convened their annual State Conference in Brisbane. Motion 56 related to the operation of the State Emergency Service (SES) and was passed as a resolution by attending councils. Motion 56 stated:

‘That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Queensland Government to wholly fund the State Emergency Service from existing funds received from the Emergency Services Levy with appropriate budget allocation and governance arrangements.’

Motion 56 has subsequently been incorporated into the LGAQ Advocacy Action Plan for 2019

‘Item 76: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to develop a transition plan to achieve a State Emergency Service that is wholly funded and managed by the State Government’.

Purpose

The purpose of the review is to identify how SES capability can be improved through transition to a new model where SES management and funding support are substantially a State responsibility; and provide observations on the risks and opportunities in such a transition in order to develop implementation strategies for QFES to consider.

Scope

The reviewer will

- Conduct a comprehensive and broad-based information gathering process and assessment of existing SES arrangements in Queensland and around Australia. This will include in the first instance State-wide regional stakeholder visits with SES units and groups, local councils, and state-level associations and agencies to understand the issues at the both the local and State enterprise level.
- Examine how the authorising environment, operational structures and financial arrangements operate and could be improved, in order to understand and identify the impact of mooted changes.
- Develop for the Commissioner QFES an issues paper with observations, opportunities for capability improvement and significant risks (including key aspects for consideration in a strategic communications plan)
- If required assist QFES with development of implementation strategies and options, and an implementation plan for the transition to an enhanced SES model. This may require further engagement and consultation with respective stakeholders.

Reporting

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The reviewer will report to the Commissioner QFES and provide interim updates as to the progress of the review.

PUBLIC**Annex B****Annex B. Consultation Program**

Date	Consultation - (Council visits highlighted in green)
10 Sep	Meet AC BNE Region and RM SES. Meet AC SES and Director SES. Meet SES BNE Volunteers (at SES Support Group meeting).
11 Sep	Meeting A/DC Adam Stevenson. Meeting A/IGEM, Alistair Dawson.
12 Sep	Meeting Logan City Council. Meeting Ipswich City Council. Meeting Redlands City Council.
13 Sep	Meeting Moreton Bay Council. Meeting Brisbane City Council.
19 Sep	Met with NSW SES Deputy Commissioner
25 Sept	South East (Sth East) - SES RM & QFES A/AC.
26 Sept	Meeting Frazer Coast Council
26 Sept	Meeting Gympie Council
27 Sept	Meeting Noosa Council
27 Sept	Meeting Sunshine Coast Council
27 Sept	North Coast – SES Staff. Inc volunteers.
27 Sept	North Coast (Nth Coast) - SES RM & QFES A/AC.
30 Sept	Meeting Gold Coast
30 Sept	Met SES Volunteers at Canungra function.

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1 Oct	Meeting Toowoomba Council
1 Oct	Meeting Somerset Council
1 Oct	Meeting Lockyer Valley Council
8 Oct	Northern – SES RM & QFES A/AC.
8 Oct	SES Staff (NR).
8 Oct	Meeting Townsville Council
8 Oct	SES Volunteers (NR). *Working dinner with volunteers, planned to finish at 7.30pm.
9 Oct	Meeting Burdekin Council
9 Oct	Mackay SES LC. Mackay SES Executives. Mackay SES volunteers. Met SES Executive (5 members) and observed SES exercise.
10 Oct	Meeting Mackay Council
11 Oct	Meeting Hinchinbrook Council
13 Oct	North Coast Volunteer Forum at Gympie (and SES awards Ceremony).
23 Oct	SES Emerald volunteers and key CHRC staff
24 Oct	Meeting Central Highlands – Emerald
24 Oct	Meeting Banana Shire Council (Biloela)
24 Oct	Meeting Gladstone Council
25 Oct	Meeting Livingstone Council

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25 Oct	Meeting Rockhampton Council
25 Oct	AC Central Region and SES RM.
25 Oct	Rockhampton QSES VA and SES Volunteers. (This includes key SES Exec for Central Region Conference).
26 Oct	SES Executives – Volunteers and staff.
27 Oct	SES Volunteers - Longreach.
28 Oct	Meeting Barcoo Council SES volunteers - Barcoo.
28 Oct	Meeting Barcaldine Council
29 Oct	Meeting Blackall – Tambo Council SES Volunteers.
30 Oct	Meeting Winton Council SES Winton Volunteer.
30 Oct	Meeting Longreach Council
2 Nov	Toowoomba. SES Executive workshop.
6 Nov	TCICA (six Councils), Video presentation and presentation by QFES and LGAQ Staff
6 Nov	QFES Executive Leadership Team.
8 Nov	PSBA - Strategic & Service Alignment Team.
11 Nov	Meet volunteers at Atherton function -.
12 Nov	Meet SES Staff Far North and Regional AC.
13 Nov	Teleconference Cooktown Council. Meeting Cairns Council Meeting. Meeting Council Meeting Innisfail/Cassowary Coast.

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14 Nov	Meeting Atherton (Tablelands Shire meeting). Meeting Mareeba Shire. Meeting Mossman (Douglas Shire).
16 Nov	Meet Far North SES Executives - Cairns.
14-16 Nov	AFAC SES Operations Group - Wollongong. Consult other States on SES arrangements (Brian Cox). Meeting NSW SES 12-13 Nov.
17 Nov	Bundaberg SES.
18 Nov	Council Meetings Bundaberg, Biggenden, Kingaroy. Overnight Warwick.
19 Nov	Meeting Warwick Council Warwick SES (5 SES members). Beaudesert (Scenic Rim) (Telecon).
19 Nov	Toowoomba. Visit Airport - SES Air Base ops (7 SES members) Regional AC and ICC staff
20 Nov	Meeting Goondiwindi Council Goondiwindi SES (10 SES members).
28 Nov	Meeting Julia Creek (McKinlay) - concurrent meeting with SES (3 SES members).
29 Nov	Meeting Cloncurry Council Cloncurry SES Unit (8 SES members) & Mount Isa SES member. Meeting Mount Isa.
4 Dec	Meeting Isaac (Moranbah).
5 Dec	Meeting Charters Towers. Meeting Bowen Whitsunday Council.
5 Dec	SE Region SES (30 SES members) SE AC and staff.

PUBLIC**Annex C****Annex C. SES Consultation – Key Themes**

The following were key themes raised by volunteers in an on-line survey. The veracity of the concerns is not endorsed but they represent the most common perceptions of volunteers.

Training – Overly bureaucratic for low skill requirements. Lacking for management and leadership for executives. Not aligned and responsive to operational needs. Difficult to access and time consuming.

Roles and Functions – Not well articulated and understood. Evolving but policy and doctrine not keeping up. Other agencies subsuming traditional SES roles. Councils differing expectations and use of SES (major event support with parking, crowd control etc a point of contention

Policy and procedures – Many out of date or not consistent with other guidelines. Difficult for SES to access online. Also can be overwhelming the volume and complexity.

General Support – QFES support in remote areas limited. QFES staff not seen for long periods. Some support staff have limited understanding/empathy with volunteers. Perceive they are the lowest priority for support and equipment. Some examples of not being supported during deployments and capabilities not being utilised.

Internet and computers – Poor connectivity, and poor IT support. Old computers with outdated operating systems. Unable to access QFES internet gateway.

Expending own funds – Examples of volunteers expending own funds on food supplies, office items, mobile phones. Slow or non-reimbursement of personal costs.

Respect for capabilities – Examples of other emergency service agencies having little respect for SES capabilities. Often relegated to menial tasks by other agencies. Can be disparaging and SES feel actively cut out of opportunities and training. Perceived lack of support is seen as not respecting the effort and capabilities of volunteers.

Examples of poor facilities – Buildings in a poor state. Unsuitable bathroom facilities. Limited training facilities. Some equipment exposed to elements. Potential asbestos risks. Some councils not responsive to WHS risks and health concerns.

Leadership – Quality of leadership and management variable. Minimal training and support to volunteer management teams.

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Annex D

Annex D. Council SES Funding as a Percentage of Net Rate Revenue. FY 2016-17

Council	2016/17 Total Nett Cost of SES support	Net Council Rate Revenue base	Nett SES Support/Net Council Revenue
Richmond Shire Council	-\$ 5,875.95	\$ 782,000.00	-0.751%
Carpentaria Shire Council	-\$ 12,351.00	\$ 4,321,000.00	-0.286%
Boulia Shire Council	-\$ 1,982.21	\$ 848,000.00	-0.234%
Croydon Shire Council	\$ -	\$ 414,000.00	0.000%
Ipswich City Council	\$ -	\$ 149,895,000.00	0.000%
Council of the City of Gold Coast	\$ 224,556.00	\$ 417,618,000.00	0.054%
Etheridge Shire Council	\$ 1,372.04	\$ 2,328,000.00	0.059%
Mount Isa City Council	\$ 9,938.00	\$ 12,938,000.00	0.077%
Cloncurry Shire Council	\$ 7,205.06	\$ 9,075,000.00	0.079%
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	\$ 24,230.00	\$ 16,292,000.00	0.149%
Quilpie Shire Council	\$ 7,048.00	\$ 3,892,000.00	0.181%
Sunshine Coast Regional Council	\$ 455,213.49	\$ 205,295,000.00	0.222%
Mackay Regional Council	\$ 239,107.65	\$ 102,485,000.00	0.233%
Balonne Shire Council	\$ 15,983.45	\$ 5,776,000.00	0.277%
Tablelands Regional Council	\$ 60,552.60	\$ 21,065,000.00	0.287%
Southern Downs Regional Council	\$ 81,954.00	\$ 28,341,000.00	0.289%
Townsville City Council	\$ 421,707.72	\$ 143,900,000.00	0.293%
South Burnett Regional Council	\$ 70,494.88	\$ 22,523,000.00	0.313%
Banana Shire Council	\$ 67,909.76	\$ 20,451,000.00	0.332%
Barcoo Shire Council	\$ 3,038.88	\$ 872,000.00	0.348%
Logan City Council	\$ 483,955.00	\$ 128,854,000.00	0.376%
Whitsunday Regional Council	\$ 179,426.00	\$ 44,545,000.00	0.403%
Mareeba Shire Council	\$ 63,081.18	\$ 15,426,000.00	0.409%
Douglas Shire Council	\$ 59,863.08	\$ 13,977,000.00	0.428%
Gympie Regional Council	\$ 137,610.00	\$ 29,947,000.00	0.460%
Moreton Bay Regional Council	\$ 1,065,317.00	\$ 224,274,000.00	0.475%
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	\$ 158,100.00	\$ 33,258,000.00	0.475%

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Cairns Regional Council	\$ 516,389.00	\$ 106,290,000.00	0.486%
Gladstone Regional Council	\$ 377,358.92	\$ 75,001,000.00	0.503%
Goondiwindi Regional Council	\$ 60,905.00	\$ 11,533,000.00	0.528%
Toowoomba Regional Council	\$ 633,922.73	\$ 116,249,000.00	0.545%
Lockyer Valley Regional Council	\$ 164,729.00	\$ 29,750,000.00	0.554%
Redland City Council	\$ 469,805.00	\$ 83,930,000.00	0.560%
Brisbane City Council	\$ 4,625,000.00	\$ 788,441,000.00	0.587%
Bulloo Shire Council	\$ 29,070.00	\$ 4,225,000.00	0.688%
Bundaberg Regional Council	\$ 487,001.39	\$ 68,491,000.00	0.711%
Barcaldine Regional Council	\$ 26,960.00	\$ 3,694,000.00	0.730%
Isaac Regional Council	\$ 388,824.00	\$ 51,957,000.00	0.748%
Western Downs Regional Council	\$ 464,915.30	\$ 59,746,000.00	0.778%
Burdekin Shire Council	\$ 211,802.31	\$ 26,239,000.00	0.807%
Noosa Shire Council	\$ 363,743.00	\$ 44,369,000.00	0.820%
Livingstone Shire Council	\$ 252,051.00	\$ 28,128,000.00	0.896%
Paroo Shire Council	\$ 18,842.75	\$ 2,015,000.00	0.935%
Fraser Coast Regional Council	\$ 683,085.00	\$ 70,886,000.00	0.964%
Rockhampton Regional Council	\$ 484,140.00	\$ 48,694,000.00	0.994%
North Burnett Regional Council	\$ 88,168.00	\$ 8,405,000.00	1.049%
Somerset Regional Council	\$ 179,743.00	\$ 16,673,000.00	1.078%
Cook Shire Council	\$ 33,373.00	\$ 3,067,000.00	1.088%
Flinders Shire Council	\$ 20,650.64	\$ 1,882,000.00	1.097%
Blackall-Tambo Regional Council	\$ 33,014.00	\$ 2,985,000.00	1.106%
Central Highlands Regional Council	\$ 1,024,308.00	\$ 53,743,000.00	1.906%
Charters Towers Regional Council	\$ 222,793.13	\$ 10,334,000.00	2.156%
Scenic Rim Regional Council	\$ 80,275.00	\$ 3,658,000.00	2.195%
Murweh Shire Council	\$ 68,706.00	\$ 3,061,000.00	2.245%
Torres Strait Island Regional Council	\$ 34,651.00	\$ 1,087,000.00	3.188%
Longreach Regional Council	\$ 316,133.00	\$ 3,956,000.00	7.991%
Diamantina Shire Council	\$ 97,580.00	\$ 657,000.00	14.852%
Aurukun Shire Council	\$ 62,910.00	\$ -	
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council	\$ 10,554.00		

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Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council	\$	5,000.00		
Mornington Shire Council	-\$	3,704.00		
Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council	\$	13,442.48		
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council	\$	46,310.00		

PUBLIC**Annex E. Indicative Funding Spread**

1. Indicative only
2. Based on 19/20 FY value and not adjusted for inflation in outer years.
3. Adds a 30% error margin on LGA figures provided for 16/17 FY and adjusted for inflation to 19/20 FY Dollars.
4. FTE based on \$115k per FTE.
5. Figures are additional to current QFES SES spend.
6. Funding models assume taking over 60% of a land and building asset base of \$90M and ongoing management/refurbishment of \$100M of building assets.

Funding model	Y E A R	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Activity		Set up SES Renewal Project team. Develop detailed implementation plan. Establish data systems and data needs. Commence council negotiations (risk vs capability assessment, asset/cost verification). Begin IT equip harmonisation and flood boat resumption	Continue IT rollout, and flood boat resumption. Commence land, building and vehicle valuations and negotiations. Action legislative changes and QFES structural arrangements	Commence vehicle resumption/replacement program. Begin taking over responsibility for SES operating expenses and small equipment in a trial manner	Continue vehicle program and start implementing phased change to responsibilities for SES	Continue phased role out of change to arrangements. Mature state at end of period.
1. Full funding						
\$ Total (FTE)		\$2.07M (18 FTE)	\$3.91M (34)	\$5.63M (49)	\$6.32M (55)	\$5.86M (51)
Non FTE		\$18.5M	\$48M	\$56M	\$63M	\$56M
		\$21.02M	\$51.91M	\$61.63M	\$69.32M	\$61.86M

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2. Full Funding Exempt BCC					
FTE	\$1.95M	\$3.68M (32)	\$5.29 (46)	\$5.98M (52)	\$5.52M (48)
Non- FTE	\$17.5M	\$43M	\$54M	\$60M	\$49M
	\$19.45	\$46.68M	\$59.29M	\$65.98M	\$54.52M
3. Funding Shared (LG provide facilities)					
All LGAs					
FTE	\$1.61M (14)	\$3.35M (29)	\$5.17M (45)	\$5.86M (51)	\$5.63M (49)
Non FTE	\$8.5M	\$18M	\$26M	\$33M	\$31M
	\$10.11M	\$21.35M	\$31.17M	\$39.16M	\$36.63M
4. Funding Shared (LG provide facilities) Exempt BCC					
FTE	\$1.49M (13)	\$3.1M (27)	\$4.94M (43)	\$5.63M (49)	\$5.29M (46)
Non-FTE	\$7.5M	\$16M	\$24M	\$30M	\$24M
	\$8.99M	\$19.1M	\$28.94M	\$35.63M	\$29.29M

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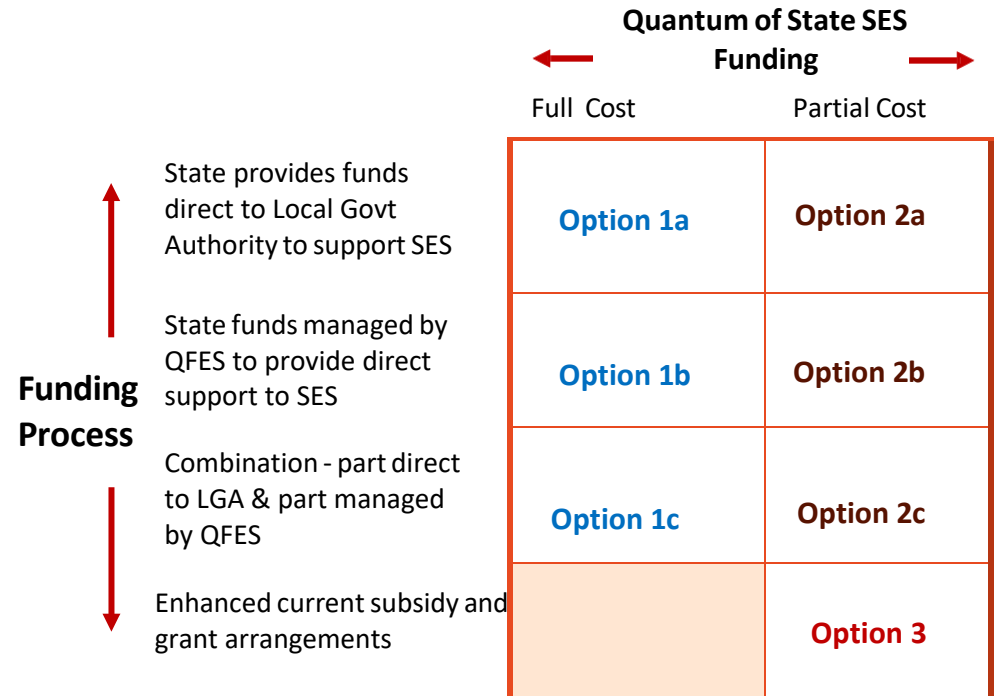
Annex F. Analysis of Funding Models

Analysis of Funding Options.

There are three common requirements.

1. The level of SES capability (a minimum or base service level) for the local government area has been negotiated and agreed with the relevant council. This will be based on current capability, it will take into account the risk profile for the area, and provide allowances for capabilities that contribute significantly to a deployable and state-wide capability.
2. The local government expenditure on the SES will need to be verified (over a number of financial years), perhaps independently, as the basis for future funding provision.
3. All options have an increased FTE requirement as a key enabler to better capability and effectiveness.

Figure 3. Different Funding Approaches



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Option 1a. **The Banker. State Funds – Council Delivers.** The State assumes full funding responsibility for the SES. This includes all equipment, operational expenses and a negotiated outcome for SES facilities owned by the council. Funding to be provided to the LGA through a partnership agreement with agreed outcomes, strong performance measures and rigid reporting requirements.

Option 1b **The Plutocrat. State Funds and Delivers.** The State assumes full funding responsibility for the SES. This includes all equipment, operational expenses and a negotiated outcome for SES facilities owned by the council. Transfer of ownership of equipment and either lease or transfer of ownership of SES facilities will need to be negotiated. Funding and support to SES groups will be provided direct from QFES. This will require significant enhancement of QFES staff support both at the local level and from Kedron in order to provide appropriate governance and oversight. Depending upon the local support capability (IT, vehicle and boat maintenance for example) contracts with councils and/or local providers may need to be established.

Option 1c. **The Benevolent Dictatorship. State Funds – Shared Service Delivery.** The State assumes full funding responsibility for the SES. This includes all equipment, operational expenses and a negotiated outcome for SES facilities owned by the council. Funding could be split based on the relative cost benefits of councils continuing to provide some support. For example Council could be reimbursed for some elements such as vehicle maintenance and fuel, facilities maintenance and costs (electricity, water etc). SES would be funded directly for operational expenses, small equipment replacement and repair, IT support etc.

Option 2a. **The Oligarchy. Funding Shared – Council Delivers.** Council and State share the costs of the SES. This could be on a direct percentage basis. For example Council 40% and State 60%. Or done on the basis of expense or equipment type. For example council continue to fund the SES facilities, and the State funds all other SES expenses. Funding for the other SES expenses (not facilities related) will be provided direct to council. In either example (percentage or equipment/asset type) a partnership agreement with agreed outcomes, performance measures and reporting requirements will be required.

Option 2b. **The Democracy. Funding Shared – State Delivers.** Council and State share the costs of the SES. State provide funding direct to SES with councils funding their portion of SES expenses from council resources. Providing funding in this manner does not work well with the percentage model as it would be difficult to determine what element of the SES capability will the Council percentage be funding. However this approach works well if, for example ,council provides the SES facilities and the State provides all other funding needs direct to the SES group. State would be a lessee for SES facilities under a ‘peppercorn’ rent arrangement to ensure a single SES risk owner.

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Option 2c. **The Diarchy. Funding and Service Delivery Shared.** This option is a more nuanced approach to Option 2b. An example could be, Council fund facilities and IT access, QFES provide reimbursement to councils for vehicle maintenance and fuel, QFES fund SES groups directly for operational expenses and small equipment maintenance and replacement.

Option 3. **The Minimalist. Changes at the margins.** This is an enhancement of the current arrangements. This would see a review of the current subsidy arrangement that determine what a local government receives for their SES and an enhancement of the recurrent funding that presently applies. It could be accompanied by an increased pool of grant funds available on application with an improved assessment criteria based on a combination of local SES needs, council capacity to fund, and regional capability needs.

Assessment Criteria	Cost & Cost Effectiveness	Ease of managing SES capability and service delivery	Meets most councils' expectation	Removes risk of 'dual owner'	Clear lines of accountability and responsibility	Summary
Option 1a State funds – council delivers	High cost in non-FTE aspects (equip, facilities, OpEx). Significant oversight of Local Govt expenditure will be required. With strong oversight processes option can be cost-effective.	Moderately complex. QFES remain detached from day to day activities. Council retains responsibility for SES equipment capability. Major effort to develop a SLA with LGA	Meets many councils expectations as they can determine how State funds are expended. Other councils would prefer to not have to manage SES equip and physical support	No. (Unless LGA purchases equipment and transfers it to State ownership)	Improves accountability but still potential for disputes about where the LGA is spending State-provided funding in support of SES.	Viable option but not preferred. State is paying but does not have control of levers.
Option 1b State funds and delivers	Highest cost. Will have the highest FTE reqmt to manage and oversight SES funding and support. May not be most cost-effective in rural/remote areas.	Complex to implement but in a mature state simplest arrangement to manage as QFES in overall control.	Meets some councils expectations. Non-financial QFES organisational arrangements will need adjustment to accommodate Council disaster response reqmts/views	Yes. QFES is sole risk owner	Yes.	Best for clarity of accountability and authority but probably not the most cost effective.
Option 1c	Cost high but potentially most cost effective by having	Complex to implement and relatively complex to	Meets councils expectations. They retain some visibility	Yes. But only if council service	Mostly. Depending upon the extent to which QFES draws	Accountability could still unclear. Complex to set up

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State funds – service delivery shared	Council manage aspects where there is a cost benefit and where they have the expertise.	manage. Bespoke arrangements may be needed depending upon council and local region capability	of SES capability depending upon the extent of support they provide and for which they are reimbursed.	delivery relates to asset maintenance	on council resources to support. Will need a definitive SLA to manage.	but may be cost effective
Option 2a Funding shared – council delivers	Moderate overall cost, and moderate FTE reqmnt.	If a shared as a percentage model only moderately complex. If costs split by function more complex. A definitive SLA will be reqd.	Meets majority of councils expectations around fiscal relief while retaining an SES/council connection. Special arrangements for some councils where SES are in QFES facilities or if council lacks capacity to deliver support.	No.	Some improvement in accountability but potential for dispute over spending priorities. State/LG could be played off against one another. Definitive SLA required.	Not preferred. Does not overcome current issues
Option 2b Funding shared – State delivers	Moderate overall cost. Large FTE reqmnt. Possible cost efficiencies.	Complex to set up but relatively easy to manage. Council fiscal commitment is clear. Will need ongoing council oversight.	Meets majority of councils expectations around fiscal relief. Special arrangements for some councils where SES are in QFES facilities.	Yes. Assuming facilities owned by council leased back to the State.	Some improvement in accountability. Clarifies fiscal responsibility.	Some complexities to negotiate but an attractive option long term.
Option 2c Funding shared – service delivery shared	Moderate overall cost. Moderate FTE reqmt. Probably most cost effective .	Most complex to negotiate and implement. Ongoing oversight of council and SES in the mature state.	Meets majority of council expectations. Utilises council capacity to continue SES support.	Yes.	Marginal improvement. Clarifies fiscal responsibility. C2 arrangements will need to be specified	Complex to negotiate but an attractive option if strong governance implemented.
Option 3 Minimalist	Smallest equipment cost. Smallest FTE reqmnt	Review of current arrangements and assessment criteria	No - Would only be supported by a small number of councils	No	No – Unless accompanied by new policies/guidance	Not preferred. Minimal improvement

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PUBLIC**Annex G Comparative State Arrangements**

State	NSW	Vic	WA
Local Govt role in Disaster Management	Limited – Reqd to have a current disaster plan. Reqd to provide a facility to house the SES	Very limited. Reqd to have Municipal Emergency Plans. Categorised as support agencies. Resources & facilities can be used by the control agency.	Must have Local Emergency Management arrangements (Plans, contact and resources register, evacuation capability).
EM Structure	Three levels, State, regional, local. State EM Committee oversees. Senior NSW Police officer as State Emergency Ops Controller. Individual agencies nominated as responsible for and across PPRR. Office of Emergency Management (under Dept of Justice) central strategic policy lead.	State Resilience and Crisis Committee advises Minister for ES. ES Minister the Coord in Chief for Emergencies. EMV is the governing body for all emergency response and central policy agency. Emergency Service Commissioner is key lead and policy advice to Minister	State Emergency Management Committee and office of the SEMC for policy and guidance.
SES Structure	Separate statutory entity	Separate statutory entity	Part of Dept of Fire and Emerg Services. No separate structure within the Dept. A Division within the Operational arm
SES role & authority	Combat Agency for storm, flood and tsunamis. SES officers Unit commander and above (equivalent Group leader in QLD) authorised Emergency Service Officers	Control Agency for storm, flood, earthquake, landslide and tsunamis. Fully integrated into all emergency activities. All members are authorised officers with varying powers, rank dependent	No separate structure. Dept has both Hazard Management Agency and Controlling Authority responsibilities. Individual SES Executive authorised Emergency Service Officers. SES roles and function quite broad.
Legislative differences	State Emergency and Rescue Management Act primary. Supported by individual SES, Fire and RFS Acts.	EM Act 1989 and EM Act 2013 are governing Acts. Specific -SES Act 2005. Each agency (MFB, CFA and SES required to have 3 year strategic direction plans approved by Minister.	Fire and Emergency Service ACT 1998 (new Act in development)
Funding sources	Insurance levy primarily (70%+), remainder rates and from State revenue	State for operational expenses. State grants for assets. Supplemented by fundraising	Emergency Service Levy on property's rateable value
Other comments		Main provider of Road Crash Rescue services. Strongly integrated across all Emergency areas.	

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PUBLIC**Annex H Framework SES Charter and Concept of Operations**

The following outlines a possible ‘strawman’ framework for an SES Operational Concept

SES Charter.

- High level statement encompassing the vision, values and intent of the SES, and the primary supporting agencies.

CONOPS

- CONOPS Intent
- Scope and Definition
- Mission, Objectives and Outcomes
- Organisation’s Attributes
- Operating Environment
- Organisational Structure and Framework
 - Authorising environment
 - Command, control and coordination hierarchy
 - QFES organisational line diagram
 - Authorities and Tasking (internal and external to QFES)
- Capability Requirements
 - Core and enabling
- SES Roles and Functions
 - Core, support and specialised
 - Emerging roles
 - Role endorsement
- Operating Doctrine
- Performance and Reporting

PUBLIC**Glossary and Abbreviations**

BCC	Brisbane City Council
CapEx	Capital Expenses
C2	Command and control
C3	Command, control and coordination
C4I	Command, control, coordination, communication and information (or intelligence)
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DM	Disaster Management
DFES	Department of Fire and Emergency Services (WA)
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
FireCom	Fire Communications – Call desk and tasking agency for QFES. Initially and primarily fire event focussed
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
FY	Fiscal Year
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
Kedron	Generic term for the QFES HQ based at Kedron
LC	Local Controller
LGA	Local Government Authority (or Area)
MFB	Melbourne Fire Brigade
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OpEx	Operational Expenses
PACSR	Public and Community Safety Review (Keelty)
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPRR	Preparedness, Prevention, response and Recovery (the continuum of disaster management)
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QFCI	Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
RFS	Rural Fire Service
SDCC	State Disaster Coordination Centre
SOC	State Operation Centre
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TAMS	Tasking and Management System
Watchdesk	SES specific tasking organisation taking public requests for assistance.

PUBLIC

Attachment 1. MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A Partnership for the Management and Support of the State Emergency Service

BETWEEN

THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND

acting through the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

AND

<Insert name> COUNCIL



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Draft

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Queensland State Emergency Service (SES) is a community-based, volunteer emergency service supported by both the State Government, through Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), and local councils, hereinafter referred to as “the Parties”.
- 1.2. The SES plays a vital part in Queensland’s disaster management system helping communities prepare for, respond to and recover from an event or disaster along with providing assistance to other emergency services.
- 1.3. A sustainable and skilled volunteer workforce is essential to meet the increasing demand for support as a result of more frequent and severe disasters, as well as the changing needs and expectation of the community itself.

2. Background

- 2.1. The SES plays an integral role in supporting local government’s disaster response capability prescribed in *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld) section 80 (1) (a).
- 2.2. The establishment, roles and responsibilities of the Queensland SES are set out in Chapter 4 of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* (Qld) (the Act).
- 2.3. Section 140 of the Act provides that the commissioner may enter into an agreement with a local government that sets out the responsibilities of each Party in relation to the SES in the local government’s area.
- 2.4. The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Final Report (March 2012) and the Police and Community Safety Review Final Report (August 2013) highlighted the importance of executing agreements to provide both Parties clarity on the management and support arrangements for the SES.
- 2.5. The Parties recognise changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003*, specifically the relocation of the SES from the *Disaster Management Act 2003* to the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* (the Act), and the establishment of QFES as a department being the primary provider of fire and emergency services in Queensland.
- 2.6. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed in collaboration with the Inspector General Emergency Management (IGEM) Disaster Management Officers Network Project State Working Group.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. This MOU establishes the collaborative approach between QFES and local councils for the management and support of the SES to ensure the delivery of an effective emergency service that contributes to a safer more resilient community. It builds on the Parties existing commitment to the SES, recognises the history of shared responsibility and the importance of a continued strong partnership.
- 3.2. This MOU sets out the framework for both Parties, additional to that which is stated or implied in the Act, and further defined in QFES doctrine and policies.
- 3.3. Both Parties seek from this MOU:
 - i. **Collaboration:** a collaborative approach to the shared administration of Chapter 4 Part 1 of the Act, in respect of the SES.

- ii. **Cooperative partnership:** an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and obligations of the Parties.
 - iii. **Service delivery:** a contemporary volunteer emergency service that strengthens community capability.
 - iv. **Value for money:** the cost-effective use of resources devoted to the management and support of the SES.
 - v. **Accountability:** integrated and informed regulatory and decision making processes.
 - vi. **Efficiency:** avoid duplication and conflict between the provision of services.
 - vii. **Transparency:** information sharing in the context of their agreed roles in relation to the SES.
- 3.4. Any prior obligation, whether financial or otherwise, of either Party, shall continue in the same manner as was the case prior to this MOU.
- 3.5. This MOU does not constitute or create any legally binding or enforceable obligations on the part of either Party.
- 3.6. The Parties are expected to act in good faith at all times during the term of this MOU.

4. Commencement and Duration

- 4.1. The MOU will commence the date both Parties have signed and remain valid for a period of three (3) years or until either clauses 10 or 12 are invoked.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. These roles include the obligations of the parties under the provisions of the current legislation.
- 5.2. The parties jointly agree to:
- i. Recognise supporting the SES is a shared goal that strengthens community capability and provides for an effective emergency service;
 - ii. Acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of the SES are prescribed by the Act, QFES doctrine and policies and local council policies;
 - iii. Ensure the other Party is consulted regarding matters concerning the SES which may impact the other Party;
 - iv. Acknowledge the Parties' shared roles and responsibilities in the provision and effective use of resources for equipment, training, administration, operations and other matters relevant to SES;
 - v. Acknowledge each Party has an obligation to provide funding for activities and functions related to the SES;
 - vi. Acknowledge Local Controllers are responsible to ensure their unit functions efficiently and effectively;
 - vii. Work to sustain optimum levels of membership to maintain the agreed functions of SES groups in local council areas;

- viii. Acknowledge the activation, tasking and deployment of the SES is a shared arrangement between the local council, state agencies and QFES;
 - ix. Ensure the most efficient and effective use of SES resources during activations and deployments for disasters, major emergencies and significant incidents;
 - x. Promote open and inclusive communication and maintain cooperative and supportive working relationships with SES members, QFES staff and local council staff;
 - xi. Work together to complete a local arrangements document (Schedule A) that details how the principles in this MOU are to be implemented; and
 - xii. Acknowledge that QIT+ Guardian Control Centre is an agent of local council to provide incident management software and integration processes.
- 5.3. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services agrees to provide the following support:
- 5.3.1 Appointments
- i. Recruit and appoint people to be an SES member in accordance with s.132 (1) and (2) of the Act;
 - ii. Appoint Local Controllers in accordance with s.134 (1) of the Act; and
 - iii. Undertake a merit based recruitment and selection process to appoint other SES Executives.
- 5.3.2 Human Resource Management and Support
- i. Define the roles and responsibilities of Local Controllers, SES Executives and SES members;
 - ii. Provide human resource management and support for SES members;
 - iii. Support SES Executives to perform their roles;
 - iv. With the exception of local council employed Local Controllers, undertake disciplinary actions in relation to SES members in accordance with QFES doctrine and policy and where required, provide advice to local council; and
 - v. Implement and monitor recruitment and retention initiatives.
- 5.3.3 Functions
- i. Determine and agree, in consultation with local council, the functions for all SES groups within the local government area in accordance with s.138 of the Act; and
 - ii. Inform the unit and local council of the agreed functions of each SES group in accordance with the s.139 of the Act (refer Schedule A).
- 5.3.4 Operational Arrangements
- i. Provide a common point of contact for use by the community to contact the SES - currently 132500;
 - ii. Provide a consistent tasking and management system for use by the SES - currently SES Task and Management System (TAMS);

- iii. Support Local Controllers to manage responses when the volume of tasking exceeds the local capacity for events;
- iv. Appoint an SES Coordinator if a disaster goes beyond the capacity or capability of the SES in the local government area in accordance with s.136 of the Act; and
- v. Coordinate, support and manage SES deployments including transport, accommodation and logistics arrangements.

5.3.5 Fleet

- i. Register and comprehensively insure SES vehicles;
- ii. Provide vehicle livery and emergency lighting for official SES vehicles;
- iii. Provide and register SES flood boats to the requisite standard required;
- iv. Provide and register trailers to the requisite standard required; and
- v. Register caravans and other approved items of equipment requiring registration.

5.3.6 Operational Equipment

- i. Provide uniforms, personal protective clothing and equipment to the requisite standard required for the agreed functions;
- ii. Provide and maintain radio communication equipment and systems;
- iii. Ensure any equipment provided by QFES or acquired through grants and/or sponsorship, meets all technical and safety requirements as per QFES doctrine and policy; and
- iv. Ensure consultation occurs with the receiving local council where items being provided have a value greater than \$5,000 and/or impose ongoing costs and/or specialist servicing.

5.3.7 Information Technology

- i. Provide technology devices and connectivity to ensure requests for SES assistance are responded to and activity data is timely and accurate; and
- ii. Provide software solutions to support SES operations and activities; currently TAMS, Nexus, Office 365 (Enterprise 1) and the SES Volunteer Portal.

5.3.8 Training

- i. Maintain a training framework including standards, packages, equipment and support materials, to ensure SES members are trained and competent to perform their agreed functions;
- ii. Ensure the timely approval, delivery and processing of training to SES groups; and
- iii. Maintain Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status.

5.3.9 Doctrine and Policy

- i. Develop and maintain current QFES doctrine and policy to provide direction and guidance to the SES for safe, effective and efficient service delivery to the community in accordance with s.131 of the Act;

- ii. Consult with SES Executives and local councils during doctrine and policy development and review; and
- iii. Ensure QFES doctrine and policy is accessible to all local councils and SES groups.

5.3.10 Workplace Health and Safety and Duty of Care

- i. Ensure the SES performs its functions safely and effectively in accordance with the s.131(c)(ii) of the Act;
- ii. Minimise the risks to SES members in regard to their health and safety as a result of performing their functions;
- iii. Ensure SES members are trained, competent and equipped to perform their functions;
- iv. Provide workers compensation and rehabilitation for all SES members; and
- v. Provide psychological and workplace health and safety support.

5.3.11 Financial Support

- i. Provide financial support to the SES through the provision of:
 - a. An annual recurrent subsidy to local council to assist with the costs associated with the operation of the SES;
 - b. An annual 'out of pocket' allowance to SES Executives to off-set the expenses they incur carrying out their duties; and
 - c. A non-recurrent subsidy program to assist local councils with the provision of facilities, vehicles and office equipment.

5.4. Local council agrees to provide the following support:

5.4.1 Appointments

- i. Nominate appropriately qualified persons to undertake the role of Local Controller, including acting positions during temporary absences, in accordance with s.134 (2) of the Act; and
- ii. Participate in the selection process for SES Executives in accordance with QFES doctrine and policy.

5.4.2 Human Resource Management and Support

- i. Support SES Executives to perform their roles.

5.4.3 Operational Arrangements

- i. Provide a disaster response capability for the local government area to effectively deal with an emergency situation or disaster in accordance with the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld) s. 80 (1) (a).

5.4.4 Facilities and Services

- i. Provide and maintain facilities and services appropriate to the agreed functions of the SES group;
- ii. Provide a safe and secure environment for the storage of SES fleet and equipment; and

- iii. Insure facilities and contents including fixtures, fittings and relevant equipment.

5.4.5 Fleet

- i. Provide, or grant access to, vehicle(s) appropriate for the agreed functions of the SES group;
- ii. Coordinate and meet the ongoing maintenance, repairs and operational costs of vehicles, flood boats and trailers;
- iii. Insure agreed flood boats and trailers; and
- iv. Dispose of SES fleet in accordance with QFES doctrine and policy and local council policy.

5.4.6 Operational Equipment

- i. Coordinate and meet the ongoing maintenance, repairs and operational costs of equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, QFES doctrine and policy and local council policy;
- ii. Consult with QFES on the acquisition and replacement of equipment not provided by QFES;
- iii. Consult with QFES on the proposed introduction of any non-standard equipment; and
- iv. Dispose of equipment in accordance with QFES doctrine and policy and local council policy.

5.4.7 Information Technology

- i. Provide access to technology devices, data systems and connectivity links.

5.4.8 Workplace Health and Safety and Duty of Care

- i. Ensure facilities, fleet and equipment used by the SES are maintained in line with manufacturer's instructions, QFES doctrine and policy and local council policy.

6. QFES Doctrine and Policy

- 6.1. The Parties agree to comply with the QFES doctrine and policy. If inconsistency arises between QFES doctrine and policy and local council policy the Parties will work together to resolve the issue.
- 6.2. In the event of any inconsistency between these documents and the MOU, the QFES doctrine and/or policy will prevail.

7. Intellectual Property

- 7.1. Unless expressly provided, nothing in this MOU has the effect of transferring any intellectual property owned or created by either Party, to the other Party.

8. Confidential Information

- 8.1. The Parties agree unless expressly authorised in writing by the other Party or required by law, confidential information will not be disclosed to any third party.

8.2. The Parties understand they are bound by privacy laws applicable to them in their respective jurisdictions.

9. Costs

9.1. The Parties agree expenses associated with the implementation of this MOU and compliance with legislative requirements remains the responsibility of each Party.

9.2. Should costs be incurred that are otherwise not considered by this MOU or the legislative provisions the responsibility for these costs will be subject to negotiation between the Parties.

10. Review and Variation

10.1. The MOU may be varied by agreement between the Parties in writing.

10.2. It will be sufficient evidence of any agreement to vary a schedule to the MOU if the Parties execute and date a document purporting to be a substitute schedule.

10.3. The Parties agree to review the content of the MOU 12 months from the commencement date, and thereafter annually on the anniversary of the initial review, or at such other time as may be agreed by the Parties.

11. Dispute Resolution

11.1. A dispute will have arisen when either Party gives notice in writing to that effect to the other.

11.2. In the event of a dispute arising, the Parties through their nominated representatives agree to meet at a mutually convenient time and place to discuss resolution within 7 days from the written notice.

11.3. If the Parties are unable to resolve a dispute, the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive or delegate of each party.

12. Termination

12.1. Either party may, at any time, withdraw from this MOU without legal consequence by providing 30 days written notice to the other party.

13. Relevant Documents

Schedule A to the MOU between the QFES and <insert name> Council

Disaster Management Act 2003

Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990

Local Disaster Management Plan

QFES Doctrine and Policies

State Rescue Policy (under review)

<Insert name> Council Policies and Procedures

14. Definitions

Word or phrase	Definition
Delegate	A person authorised to represent others.
Disaster	A serious disruption in a community, caused by the impact of an event that requires a significant coordinated response by the State and other entities to help the community to recover from the disruption.
Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld)	An Act to provide for matters relating to disaster management in the State, and for other purposes.
Disaster Management	Arrangements about managing the potential adverse effects of an event, including, for example, arrangements for mitigating, preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering a disaster.
Disaster response capability	The ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or disaster in the local government's area.
Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (Qld)	An Act to establish the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, to establish a fund for particular purposes, to provide for the prevention of and response to fires and emergency.
LDCC	Local Disaster Coordination Centre. A centre established at a local government level as a centre of communication and coordination during times of disaster.
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group. The group established under the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003 (Qld)</i> to manage disaster planning and operations on behalf of the local government.
Local Government	An elected body that is responsible for the good rule and local government of a part of Queensland <i>Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)</i> . For the purpose of this document referred to as local council.
LGA	Local Government Area. A part of Queensland that is governed by a local government <i>Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)</i> .
Local Council	See Local Government.
Management	The process of dealing with or controlling things or people. In the case of this MOU a consultative process between QFES and local council to determine a desired outcome or objective.
QIT+ Guardian Control Centre	A computer based program which assists to facilitate disaster response strategies for local councils.
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. A department under the <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> . QFES is the primary provider of fire and rescue, emergency management and disaster mitigation programs and services throughout Queensland, and includes Fire and Rescue, Emergency Management, Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service.
Response	Actions taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an emergency to ensure that its effects are minimised, and that people affected are given immediate relief and support. Measures taken in anticipation of, during and immediately after an emergency to ensure its effects are minimised.
SES	State Emergency Service established under s.129 of the <i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 (Qld)</i> .
SES equipment	Equipment provided by QFES and/or local council to be used by the SES to undertake their agreed functions. Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flood Boat Safety Equipment - General Response Equipment - Incident Management Equipment - Vertical Rescue Equipment - Road Crash Rescue Equipment - Storm Equipment - Traffic Management Equipment - Working Safely at Heights Equipment

Word or phrase	Definition
SES Executive	An SES member who is appointed as a Local Controller, Deputy Local Controller or Group Leader.
SES function	A function of the SES under s.130 of the <i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990</i> .
SES Group	Physical location of a group of SES members that provides SES services within a local council area.
SES member	A person who is appointed as an SES member s.132 (1) of the <i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990</i> .
SES Unit	A geographical location containing one or more SES Groups. These Units regularly align with local council areas.
Support services	A type of assistance or resource providing help to a particular group of people, especially as provided by a government or local authority. In the case of this MOU will include administration, human resource and financial management, logistics and maintenance.

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Signed by the Parties on the dates set out below:

.....
Signed by **<insert name>**
Assistant Commissioner
State Emergency Service
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

.....
Signed by **<insert name>**
Chief Executive Officer
<insert name> Council

Dated: / /
.....

Dated: / /
.....

.....
Acknowledged by **<insert name>**
Local Controller
<insert name> State Emergency Service Unit
State Emergency Service

Dated: / /
.....

SCHEDULE A LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Memorandum of Understanding

BETWEEN

THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND

acting through the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

AND

<Insert name> COUNCIL



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Local Arrangements between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and <insert name> Council hereinafter referred to as “the Parties”, builds on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Parties.
- 1.2. These local arrangements take into account functions accorded to local government areas, local hazards and the capability and capacity of each of the Parties.

2. Functions

- 2.1. As determined by QFES, in consultation with <insert name> Council, the functions of the SES groups in the <insert name> Council area are:

Group Name	Agency Support	Flood Boat Response	Incident Management	Road Crash Rescue	Search	Special Rescue	Storm Damage Operations	Traffic Management	Vertical Rescue

3. Operational Arrangements

- 3.1. The SES will be tasked and commanded by the Local Controller;
- 3.2. QFES will provide coordination and support to the Local Controller as necessary;
- 3.3. When Stood Up, the LDMG will typically set priorities for the event/s;
- 3.4. If a disaster exceeds the capability or capacity of the SES in the local government area and an SES Coordinator appointed, in accordance with s.137 of the Act, they will:
 - i. Coordinate the performance of SES functions in the local government areas for which they have been appointed in circumstances where SES resources are made available within the local government areas from outside the local government areas;
 - ii. Provide advice to Local Controllers about:
 - a. SES functions;
 - b. Managing the safety and fatigue of the members; and
 - c. Logistical and financial matters.
 - iii. Perform other functions agreed between the SES Coordinator and the Local Disaster Coordinator;
 - iv. Have regard to:
 - a. The advice of the Local Disaster Coordinator; and
 - b. Any applicable disaster management plans.
- 3.5. For agency requested activations:
 - i. The requesting agency will be responsible for costs, such as food and accommodation, specific to the event;
 - ii. <insert name> Council retains the right to negotiate cost recovery for costs such as fuel, maintenance and repairs incurred as a result of the request for assistance, if they choose so;
 - iii. This will also apply if the SES responds to another Local Council area; and
 - iv. If this response is at the request of QFES, QFES accepts responsibility for all such costs incurred in relation to such deployments, including but not limited to any necessary repairs and maintenance.
- 3.6. For activated “NDRRA” or “SDRA” events:
 - i. <insert name> Council will include all eligible costs for repair and maintenance of equipment used during an SES response, and the replacement of equipment not provided by QFES in their NDRRA/SDRA claim; and
 - ii. QFES will include all eligible costs incurred relating to the replacement of equipment used during an SES response and provided by QFES in their NDRRA/SDRA claim.

OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENT DIAGRAMS
(Under development)

Draft

4. Facilities and Services

- 4.1. <insert name> Council is responsible for providing accommodation and services appropriate to the agreed functions of the SES groups.
- 4.2. The facilities provided by <insert name> Council to support SES operations and activities are:

Group Name	Headquarters or Depot	Location

Note:

1. Local councils can apply to QFES through the SES Non Recurrent Grant Program for a grant to assist with the provision of suitable accommodation. QFES does not guarantee the success or otherwise of such applications.

Schedule A Local Arrangements between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and <insert name> Council

4.3. Responsibilities for facilities and services are in accordance with the following:

	QFES	Local Council	Additional Information
Maintenance and Repairs		✓	
Grounds Maintenance		✓	
Security		✓	
Insurance – Facility and Contents		✓	
Electricity		✓	
Telephone		✓	
Council Rates and Associated Charges		✓	
Office Equipment		✓	Includes desks, chairs, photocopiers, printers, televisions, projectors etc.
Consumables		✓	Includes paper, cartridges and stationery.

Note:

1. The parties will consult and negotiate acceptable arrangements for shared facilities and reference under Section 8 Special Conditions.

5. Fleet

- 5.1. The fleet items currently in service and provided for SES operations and activities are detailed in Annex A.
 5.2. Responsibilities for fleet items are in accordance with the following:

	QFES	Local Council	Additional Information
Vehicles			
Provision and Replacement ¹		✓	
Ownership		✓	
Registration	✓		
Insurance	✓		
Maintenance and Repairs ²		✓	
Operational Costs ²		✓	
Disposal		✓	
Flood Boats			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership		✓	
Registration	✓		
Insurance		✓	
Maintenance and Repairs ²		✓	
Operational Costs ²		✓	
Disposal		✓	
Trailers			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership		✓	
Registration	✓		
Insurance		✓	
Maintenance and Repairs ²		✓	

Schedule A Local Arrangements between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and <insert name> Council

	QFES	Local Council	Additional Information
Operational Costs ²		✓	
Disposal		✓	

Note:

1. Local councils can apply to QFES through the SES Non Recurrent Grant Program for a grant to assist with the purchase of a suitable vehicle. QFES does not guarantee the success or otherwise of such applications.
2. In the event that resources are deployed outside of the local council area at the request of QFES, QFES accepts responsibility for all such costs incurred in relation to such deployments, including but not limited to any necessary repairs and maintenance. This include authorised training activities.

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6. Operational Equipment

- 6.1. The operational equipment currently in service and provided for SES operations and activities is detailed in Annex B.
 6.2. Responsibilities for operational equipment items are in accordance with the following:

	QFES	Local Council	Additional Information
Operational Response Equipment			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership		✓	
Maintenance and Repairs		✓	
Operational Costs		✓	
Disposal		✓	
Road Crash Rescue Equipment			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership		✓	
Maintenance and Repairs	✓		
Operational Costs		✓	
Disposal		✓	
Communications Equipment			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership	✓		
Maintenance and Repairs	✓		
Disposal	✓		
Uniforms, Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership	✓		

Note:

- Any operational equipment purchased for, or donated to, an SES group must meet the requirements of QFES doctrine and policy and local council policy.
- With the exception of communications equipment all operational equipment becomes the property of the local council. This includes equipment purchased by an SES support or social groups.

7. Information Technology

- 7.1. Information technology devices currently in service and provided for SES operations and activities are detailed in Annex C.
 7.2. Responsibilities for information technology are in accordance with the following:

	QFES	Local Council	Additional Information
Provision and Replacement		✓	
Ownership		✓	
Maintenance and Repairs		✓	
Internet Access		✓	
Mobile Phones and Pagers		✓	
IT Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TAMS - Nexus - Office 365 (Enterprise 1) - SES Volunteer Portal 	✓		
IT Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Software excluding the above - Hardware excluding TAMS iPads 		✓	
TAMS iPads			
Provision and Replacement	✓		
Ownership	✓		
Maintenance and Repairs	✓		
Mobile Data	✓		
IT Support	✓		

8. Special Conditions

- 8.1. Additional conditions outside the normal local arrangements are:
i.

(Examples under development)

9. Relevant Documents

Memorandum of Understanding between QFES and <insert name> Council

10. Definitions

Refer to Section 14 Memorandum of Understanding between QFES and <insert name> Council

Draft

Schedule A Local Arrangements between Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and <insert name> Council

Signed by the parties on the dates set out below:

.....
Signed by <insert name>
Assistant Commissioner
State Emergency Service
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Dated: / /
.....

.....
Signed by <insert name>
Chief Executive Officer
<insert name> Council

Dated: / /
.....

.....
Acknowledged by <insert name>
Local Controller
<insert name> State Emergency Service Unit
State Emergency Service

Dated: / /
.....