NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT
2012/13

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FRONT PAGE: Todd Gibson (Heathcote Brigade) and Steve Franks (Heathcote) in the background) at a Hazard Reduction burn in Engadine, May 2013. Photo by Sharon Quandt

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Key strategies

> Increase diversity through the expansion and recognition of roles
> Strengthen and develop leadership
> Invest in vulnerable communities and people at risk
> Increase public information and awareness
> Increase hazard reduction in areas most at risk
> Develop a flexible and adaptive response model to meet community expectations
> Integrate core information systems and utilise research evidence
> Improve asset and infrastructure management
> Develop new and innovative partnerships

2012/13 milestones

M1	Number of properties protected and area treated by hazard reduction increased in line with State targets
M2	Number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places increased
M3	Number of students completing the Secondary School Cadet Program meets State target
M4	Volunteer recruitment and retention program developed
M5	Three-year bush fire safety public awareness campaign implemented
M6	Programs to improve fire safety in indigenous communities established
M7	Review of Planning for Bush Fire Protection completed
M8	Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code review completed
M9	Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) staged implementation commenced
M10	Ten-year strategy for aviation resourcing and management in place
M11	Organisational communications and engagement plan implemented
M12	Dual data centres to support ICT disaster recovery upgraded
M13	SAP fleet and asset management module implemented
M14	Government corporate services reform programs implemented
M15	Fatigue management guidelines implemented
M16	Number of qualified fire behaviour analysts increased
M17	Initiatives to reduce bush fire arson consistent with national priorities for action established

PREVIOUS PAGE: Region West Familiarisation Tour in August 2012. Group Captain Rick Howard from Region West explains the grass growth patterns to volunteers from Region East.

2015 targets

The NSW RFS Corporate Plan 2011-2015 is aligned with Goal 28 of NSW 2021: A Plan to Make NSW Number One, through the first four 2015 targets listed below. The list of targets is updated annually.

1. Number of properties protected by hazard reduction works increased by 20,000 per year
2. Annual average level of area treated by hazard reduction activities increased by 45 percent
3. 200 more Neighbourhood Safer Places created in bush fire prone areas
4. Additional 4,000 secondary school students trained through the School Cadets Program
5. Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system implemented
6. Fire behaviour analysis capability developed State-wide
7. Risk assessment of all schools in bush fire prone areas in NSW
8. Business requirements developed for the replacement of the Bush Fire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS)
9. Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan implemented
10. Organisational Risk Management framework integrated across the NSW RFS
11. Communities in bush fire prone areas are more prepared and aware as a result of targeted and coordinated public awareness campaigns
12. State, national and international partnerships developed to enhance shared fire management expertise and resources
13. Consolidated SAP solution to manage fleet and equipment implemented
14. Radio and pager network upgrades completed
15. Station/Fire Control Centre works plan implemented in line with local needs and funding provided by Government
16. Learning and Development frameworks aligned with Flexible Membership Model
17. Research framework and utilisation strategy implemented

KFA One

PROTECT PEOPLE, PROPERTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The NSW RFS protects lives, property and the environment in a proactive and ecologically sustainable manner.

Included in this Key Focus Area for 2012/13 were hazard reduction targets and mitigation programs, Neighbourhood Safer Places, Community Protection Plans and continuous improvement of operational procedures.

Milestones for 2012/13 and 2015 Targets

M1   Number of properties and area treated by hazard reduction increased in line with State targets

M2   Number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places increased

M7   Review of Planning for Bush Fire Protection completed

M8   Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code review completed

M17   Initiatives to reduce bush fire arson consistent with national priorities for action established

T1   Number of properties protected by hazard reduction works increased by 20,000 per year

T2   Annual average level of area treated by hazard reduction activities increased by 45 percent

T3   200 more Neighbourhood Safer Places created in bush fire prone areas

T7   Risk assessment of all schools in bush fire prone areas in NSW

T11   Communities in bush fire prone areas are more prepared and aware as a result of targeted and coordinated public awareness campaigns

Properties and Area Treated by Hazard Reduction Works

The NSW RFS and other land management agencies are working to meet the Government's NSW 2021 targets to increase hazard reduction across NSW:

›   To increase the number of properties protected by hazard reduction works across all bush fire prone land tenures by 20,000 per year by 2016; and

›   To increase the annual average level of area treated by hazard reduction activities by 45 percent by 2016.

Substantial work has been completed around the State to manage and reduce bush fire hazards. Of the 9,680 proposed Hazard Reduction works, 82.9 percent have been completed.

During 2012/13, a total of 281,492 hectares were treated by hazard reduction activities. This provided bush fire protection to 146,292 properties. Annual bush fire hazard reduction targets for land management agencies responsible for bush fire prone lands were established and the number and area of hazard reduction activities were increased on national parks and reserves. A total of 209,128 hectares of national parks and reserves were treated.

Given the significant targets, the NSW RFS State Mitigation Support Service (SMSS) crews assist volunteer brigades conduct bush fire mitigation and hazard reduction work. Crews support brigades by carrying out preparation works prior to a hazard reduction burn including constructing control lines, creating and maintaining asset protection zones and assessing fuel loads. An analysis of the impact of the SMSS crews on the Hazard Reduction Works program was conducted in the reporting period. The analysis found that average annual burning works has

increased by 83 percent since the Fire Mitigation Works Crew program commenced 2009/10. It also found that 84.7 percent of local government areas in which SMSS crews have undertaken preparation works have increased the level of completed hazard reduction burns.

Total number of HR burning works completed by NSW RFS from 2010/11 to 2012/13 was 2,075. The e total number of completed HR burning works by NSW RFS prepared by SMSS from 2010/11 to 2012/13 was 785.

Number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places

Reducing the impact of bush fires is a shared responsibility between government, emergency service organisations and the community. The community has an integral role to play in taking the necessary steps to prepare their property and to implement their Bush Fire Survival Plan. Part of this plan may include the relocation to a Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP).

A NSP is a place of last resort for people to gather during the passing of a bush fire front. The primary purpose of a NSP is the protection of human life. NSPs are typically a building or open space within the community which provides a higher level of protection from the immediate threat of fire.

Accessibility and determining the potential exposure of a site to radiant heat are two of the key considerations when determining the potential NSP options.

An extensive audit of all NSPs was undertaken prior to the 2012/13 bush fire season to ensure they met the required standards. The audit identified the need for works to signage, maintenance of Asset Protections Zones and the development of performance based solutions.

The NSW RFS is working to meet the State Government's NSW 2021 targets to increase the number of identified Neighbourhood Safer Places.

As at 30 June 2013, there are 900 designated NSPs – many of which have been identified incidentally and through the completion of Community Protection Plans. The NSW RFS will

continue to establish strategically placed NSPs to improve community safety during bush fires.

Review of Planning for Bush Fire Protection

Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006 (PBP) provides the necessary planning considerations for residential developments on bush fire prone land.

This milestone reflects the NSW RFS undertaking to review PBP within five years of its publication. The review includes amendments reflecting changes in legislation, learnings and policy since 2006.

The aim of PBP is to use the NSW development and assessment system to provide for the protection of human life and to minimise the impacts on property from the threat of bush fire. In line with the government's NSW Planning System Review, and an undertaking to review PBP every five years, the NSW RFS has re-drafted PBP. The draft reflects findings from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, amendments to Australian Standard AS3959: Construction of Buildings in Bush Fire Prone Areas released in 2011, and 20 submissions that were received during the public consultation period. The review is expected to validate and maintain the basic principles of the current document.

The review will ensure the guideline continues to deliver a balanced, risk-based approach to planning and development in bush fire prone areas. It recognises that bush fire is a natural part of the Australian environment and acknowledges that despite best efforts bush fires will occur, and under extreme conditions, losses from bush fire are still possible. It will maintain, however, an overall position that ensuring community safety is critical to planning and development.

A final review of the draft will take place following the enactment of new planning legislation.

Review of the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code

The Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code (the Code) was developed in 2003 in accordance with the *Rural Fires Act 1997.* The Code streamlines the environmental assessment and

approval process for essential bush fire hazard reduction works that comply with set minimum requirements.

Currently, the Code provides for an environmental approval for bush fire hazard reduction works without the need for additional environmental approval under State laws. However, it does not negate the need for approval under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Code has been used successfully in facilitating bush fire hazard reduction works on both private and public lands.

The Code is subject to review every five years and as such a review of the Code was identified as a key milestone on the NSW RFS Corporate Plan for 2012/13. Having been last reviewed in 2006 a Working Group to review the Code was established in 2011. With the recent establishment of the Government's Independent Hazard Reduction Audit Panel, however, the review of the Code was deferred pending the Panel's report.

Community Protection Plans

Community Protection Plans (CPPs) are detailed, practical, community level documents that provide the public, land management agencies and fire authorities easy to understand information on the bush fire threat for a community. CPPs also outline the current and proposed risk treatment works; access and egress issues; the location of vulnerable members of the community (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, childcare centres) and available protection options.

In 2012/13, a total of 38 CPPs were completed, with another 44 CPPs in progress. While the target of 80 CPPs completed was not met, a total of 82 CPPs were started during the period. CPPs are being developed in accordance with a 12 month implementation schedule which identified the priority communities for CPPs, that is, those at extreme risk of bush fire.

Risk assessment of all schools in bush fire prone areas in NSW

The School Bush Fire Risk Treatment Program provides a framework for schools to understand and assess their level of risk from bush fires and to take the appropriate steps to mitigate this threat.

The NSW RFS has worked with the Department of Education and Training to undertake an audit of their risk assessments and a pilot was conducted in 2012/13. This initiative will continue in 2013/14.

Initiatives to reduce bush fire arson consistent with national priorities for action established

The NSW RFS is working with the Bush Fire Arson Taskforce to develop an electronic arson information database to assist in the identification and tracking of arson related incidents. The program enables the extrapolation and analysis of all fire incident data thus identifying areas with arson related issues and enabling the implementation of ignition prevention strategies as well as possible identification of serial arsonists. This program satisfies the national priority for data sharing between agencies. A State-wide multi-agency Ignition Prevention Plan was completed in 2012/13. The Ignition Prevention Plan sets strategies for all agencies to mitigate the prevention of bush fire across the State on days of very high to catastrophic fire danger. This plan meets national strategies for the prevention of arson related bush fires.

Develop and Manage the State Rapid Aerial Response Teams (RART) and Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT) Program

RAFT

Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT), typically hike into difficult or remote areas to help contain or extinguish fires. NSW RFS RAFT volunteers are highly trained in mapping, navigating in day and night environments, using specialised equipment and dry firefighting techniques. RAFT members may also be required to cut helicopter landing pads, mop-up and patrol fires edges, establish containment lines, set up remote area

communications and undertake reconnaissance activities. In 2012/13, the NSW RFS enhanced the RAFT capability across the State bringing on two new teams – Macarthur and Hornsby – both of whom were utilised significantly throughout the fire season. The NSW RFS coordinated 88 RAFT deployments of its volunteer members.

RART

In 2010, the NSW Government committed to establishing Rapid Aerial Response Teams (RART) across the State in both the NSW RFS and NSW NPWS), in response to the outcomes of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. Due to the difficult terrain of many fires, and the necessity

of providing an immediate response to new ignitions such as those caused by lightning strikes, RART teams were developed. RART teams consist of RAFT members with winch certification. This allows these specialised firefighters to be transported to new ignitions in remote areas by helicopter. In 2013/14, the RART program was reviewed and new RART Protocols were developed. The NSW RFS met with the NPWS to determine the triggers for when RART crews will be stood up and responded. These triggers were successfully implemented throughout the year. In total, there were 65 RART deployments in 2012/13 by the NSW RFS.

KFA Two

LEAD COORDINATED BUSH FIREFIGHTING AND PREVENTION IN NSW

The NSW RFS drives effective multi-agency risk planning prevention strategies and response arrangements.

This Key Focus Area covers the lead role of the NSW RFS in the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee's (BFCC) responsibility to coordinate all State firefighting operations and agencies involved in bush fire prevention, and the role of local Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) in developing risk management and operational coordination plans.

Milestones for 2012/13

M10   Ten-year strategy for aviation resourcing and management

Ten-year strategy for aviation resourcing and management

The NSW RFS is currently undertaking a strategic review of its ten-year aviation needs. The review is being carried out in conjunction with partner agencies, and will include a review of contracting, leasing and purchasing arrangements of suitable aircraft. The scope of this project was expanded by Treasury to incorporate multi-agency requirements.

Drafting of Stage 1 (Scoping Strategy) of the 10-year Aviation Plan Scoping Strategy was delivered by an external consultant in early 2013. The draft is currently under review and is expected to be finalised in the new financial year.

Work to begin the 10-year strategy itself will commence upon finalisation and approval of the Scoping Strategy.

The State Air Desk

In 2012/13, the State Air Desk was operational for the tasking of 2,355 aircraft and fuel trucks to fire and emergency incidents and in support of aviation operations across NSW.

KFA Three

ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The NSW RFS ensures the people of NSW are resilient and well-equipped to withstand the impact of bush fire and its consequences.

Initiatives in this Key Focus Area addressed the delivery of bush fire alerts and warnings, public awareness campaigns, community engagement to increase bush fire preparedness, and planning for bush fire protection in the built environment.

Milestones for 2012/13

M5   Three-year bush fire safety public awareness campaign implemented

M6   Programs to improve fire safety in indigenous communities established

Three year bush fire safety public awareness campaign implemented

A three-year coordinated public awareness campaign was developed and approved in August 2012. The first year of the new campaign was conducted during the 2012/13 bush fire season. The campaign had strong success, particularly in improving the awareness, use and completion of the Bush Fire Survival Plan. Nearly 70,000 Bush Fire Survival Plans were downloaded in the year – 55,000 of which were downloaded in January 2013 alone. The success of the campaign was recognised with a number of local and international advertising industry awards.

Programs to improve fire safety in indigenous communities established

In some remote Aboriginal communities, the risk of bush fires is ever present and some communities may be particularly vulnerable.

In 2011/12 Stage 1 of the Bush Fire Resilience for Aboriginal Communities (BRAC) project saw funding from the Ministry of Police and Emergency Services used to complete bush fire and structure fire risk assessments in 34 Aboriginal communities throughout NSW.

Funding for Stage 2 of the BRAC Project was received in 2012/13 with a Project Manager now appointed. The Project Manager will continue to improve community liaison with the NSW and Local Aboriginal Land Councils. Districts are reviewing plans for implementation of Stage 1 recommendations during 2013/14, with progress being monitored through achievable performance measures as the project continues.

Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents (AIDER) Program

The NSW RFS Assist Infirm Disabled and Elderly Residents (AIDER) program is a once-off free service, supporting vulnerable residents to live

more safely and confidently in their home on bush fire prone land.

NSW RFS AIDER crews help these residents with preparation of their properties to reduce bush fire hazards by clearing gutters, thinning vegetation, removing leaf and tree debris, trimming branches from around and overhanging the home, mowing or slashing long grass. AIDER services are provided to vulnerable people who have limited domestic support available from family, relatives, friends or other services. This could include older people, people with disabling conditions and people who are already receiving community assistance and services.

In 2012/13 the NSW RFS completed 833 AIDER jobs. The NSW RFS is committed to continuing the AIDER program throughout 2013/14.

KFA Four

VALUE AND SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS

The NSW RFS fosters a safe working culture, actively promotes a diverse, flexible and adaptive membership; and values and appropriately recognises the contribution of our members, both staff and volunteer.

Initiatives in this Key Focus Area strengthen the NSW RFS workforce; they include the development of workforce metrics and the Flexible Membership Model.

Milestones for 2012/13 and 2015 Targets

M3   Number of students completing the Secondary School Cadet Program meets State target

M4   Volunteer recruitment and retention program developed

T4   Additional 4,000 secondary school students trained through the School Cadets Program

T9   Next Generation Strategic Plan implemented

T16   Learning and Development frameworks aligned with flexible membership

Secondary School Cadet Program

The Secondary School Cadet Program is a priority action in the NSW Government's NSW 2021.

Secondary School Cadet Program provides Year 9 and 10 students with an insight into fire safety and prevention while developing practical life skills and a general appreciation of community service and volunteerism. The aim of the program is to:

> Develop an interest in the NSW RFS and its traditions
> Provide cadets with a knowledge of fire safety and preparedness
> Develop the qualities of leadership, self-discipline, self reliance, initiative and team work
> Encourage cadets to continue service in the NSW RFS or other community service organisations
> Provide training that can contribute to the NSW RFS firefighter and other specialist training.

The Secondary School Cadet Program continued its success throughout the 2012/13 period.

In the 2012/13 financial year, an additional 827 students participated in the Secondary School Cadet program, in around 60 programs across NSW.

Volunteer recruitment and retention program developed

The NSW RFS has received a National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) grant for the purpose of producing a volunteer recruitment and retention kit for Rural Fire Brigades.

The intention of the kit is to provide support and guidance to brigades in relation to their recruitment and retention efforts. The kit will include a self assessment component, as well as other information and resources that support recruitment

and retention generally. Brigades will have the ability to select the components that are most applicable to them; uptake of the resource will be optional. Overall, the content of the resource will be based on the principles of flexible membership and have a strong reliance on Brigade case studies.

The 2012/13 period has seen a significant amount of consultation occur with the membership. A draft version of the kit has been developed and the kit is on target for release at the end of October 2013.

Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan (NGWSP) implemented

The NGWSP outlines nine milestones and targets in relation to the NSW RFS's human resource strategy and workforce planning. A summary of these milestones and their progress to date is outlined below:

- > **Flexible Membership Model agreed (completed) -** The draft model was developed and based on research into future NSW RFS needs and extensive feedback from members (notably during the workshops for development of the NGWSP). The Flexible Membership Model is a set of initiatives designed to attract a wider variety and greater number of members; retain the right people more effectively; provide many and varied pathways of involvement and advancement; better reflect the profile of the community and equally value all roles. These qualities should provide a better, more engaged and balanced system of protection against fires for the community. The final version of the Flexible Membership Model was released in March 2013.

- > **Flexible Service Structure agreed (completed) -** This milestone relates to migration to the NSW Government Capability Framework and development of more flexible structures to provide better opportunities for career progression and diversity. All District and Regional positions have migrated to the capability framework, and headquarters staff will migrate progressively in conjunction with the roll-out of e-recruitment within the NSW RFS.

- > **Appropriate workforce metrics defined (completed and review as required) -** This initiative relates to developing community profile documents for each Rural Fire District in NSW. The purpose of this document is to provide Districts so that localised workforce planning can be conducted. The information contained within these documents is extracted from both NSW RFS and the Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

- • **NSW RFS ready for implementation of human resource aspect of SAP system (Officially complete with enhancements continued into 2013/14) -** The SAP HR project concluded on 30 June 2012. The projects two major component were 1. The 'on boarding' of NSW RFS and NSW SES onto Fire & Rescue NSW SAP Payroll Platform and 2. integrated management improvements (i.e. volunteer data base - ESS/MSS - learning and development, volunteer recruitment and volunteer non-incident time capture, MyRFS portal). By agreement of the steering committee a key element for this reporting period was the implementation of electronic time sheets. The build for this component was completed and the first round of user testing was conducted in May 2013. Issues that arose were referred for rectification with the second round of testing occurring in June and the following months. The go live date is expected in the first quarter of 2014, with pilot programs to be run in two sections in December 2013.

> **Communication strategy for the NGWSP developed and Phase 1 completed (completed)** –The communication strategy was developed and endorsed in May 2009. Phase 1 of the plan is complete, however communication of the plan will continue as required.
> In respect to the Next Generation Workforce Strategic Plan this action is now complete; however the program will continue to be an important initiative for the NSW RFS, particularly as a mechanism to recognise the contribution that employers and self-employed volunteers make to the organisation.

> **Flexible Training Programs designed (continuing into 2013/14)** – The implementation of flexible training programs is intended to support the Flexible Membership Model.
> The NSW RFS is currently working through reviewing all its programs as part of developing them from face-to-face programs to programs that can be delivered through a blended learning approach.
> A key initiative for this milestone is the redevelopment of large training programs into modules to better target specific skill sets. The modularisation of the Advanced Firefighter program is the first step in this process. This includes modules such as work autonomously, crew safety and welfare, pumps and pumping, navigation and wildfire behaviour and allows for the program to be delivered as a combined program or as standalone modules. Following on from this work is the scoping of the Bush Firefighter program and the Village Firefighter program for modularisation.

> **A revised Risk Plan on Health and Safety published (continued, actioned and monitored)** – A specific Health, Safety and Welfare (HSW) risk register was developed for the purpose of identifying and managing risks. Actions associated with the 2012 OHS Audit (IAB) are monitored and status updates are provided to the Membership Services Consultative Committee and Audit and Risk Committee.

> **A system of workforce planning (including succession planning) is designed for all levels of the NSW RFS (completed, support as required)** – This initiative is linked to workforce planning metrics. The intention of the workforce planning system is to develop a more formal approach to localised workforce planning, put simply a system that considers a local area's profile and individual needs so that relevant workforce planning strategies can be developed.

Learning and Development frameworks aligned with flexible membership

During the 2012/13 period work continued towards making the training more flexible in line with the Flexible Membership Model.

In particular, the roll out of the modularisation of the Advanced Firefighter program progressed with the Advanced Programs Introduction, Crew Safety and Welfare and the Navigation modules being released. The remaining two modules are in the final stage of production.

The driving program was also redeveloped into a modular format. The program was split into two, with one being the Rural Fire Driver course and the other being the Off Road Driver course. The key focus of both of these courses is on driver safety.

The community safety training pathway was revised to be in line with the Flexible Membership Model. This involved the Community Safety Assistant (CSA) and the Community Safety Facilitator (CSF) being updated and released. The Community Liaison Officer is currently being updated to build on the CSA and CSF programs.

The leadership training pathway was reviewed and refined in order to make it more robust. Volunteer training related to leadership (level three) was run at Crew Leader level to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in this area.

Finally, the trainer and assessor training programs were updated to ensure the NSW RFS trainers and assessor have the most up to date skill set required under Registered Training Organisation obligations.

KFA Five

BUILD ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The NSW RFS builds capable and ethical leadership at all levels of the Service; promotes an organisational culture of reflection, learning and evidence-based decision making; builds and promotes good corporate governance practices and principles and effectively manages assets and facilities to ensure local needs are met.

This Key Focus Area covers a wide range of programs, from the development and implementation of frameworks to support legislative compliance and organisational risk management, to the upgrade of our core ICT operating systems and the radio and pager network upgrade.

Milestones for 2012/13 and 2015 Targets

M9 Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) staged implementation (renamed as NSW RFS Dispatch System).

M12 Dual data centres to support ICT disaster recovery upgraded

M13 SAP fleet and asset management module implemented

M14 Government corporate services reform programs implemented

M15 Fatigue management guidelines implemented

M16 Number of qualified fire behaviour analysts increased

T5 Computer Aided Dispatch system (CAD) implemented

T6 Fire behaviour analysis capability developed State-wide

T8 Business requirements developed for the replacement of the Bush Fire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS).

T10 Organisational Risk Management framework integrated across the NSW RFS

T13 Consolidated SAP solution to manage fleet and equipment implemented

T14 Radio and pager network upgrades completed

T15 Station/Fire Control Centre works plans implemented in line with local needs and funding provided by Government

T17 Research framework and utilisation strategy implemented

NSW RFS Dispatch staged implementation

A trial of this initiative commenced in 2011, the aim of the trial was to test communication and dispatch protocols for a 24/7 centralised dispatch process using the Operational Customer Service Centre at Headquarters in Lidcombe. The trial was deemed successful but demonstrated that State-wide implementation would prove challenging due to the unique environment of the NSW RFS.

Achievement of this milestone involves the completion of scoping work to examine the alternate dispatch models available and the use of FRNSW Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch system to support the NSW RFS.

In 2012/13, the NSW RFS CAD Business Requirements were developed and a gap analysis was undertaken. Two Districts also implemented the District Pilot project in 2012/13.

Dual data centres to support ICT disaster recovery upgraded

The Dual Data Centre project, completed during the reporting year, enables the NSW RFS to operate from either of two geographically separate computing facilities. This enhances NSW RFS's Disaster Recovery capability as well as delivering improved redundancy and higher availability of NSW RFS information systems.

The draft Disaster Recovery Plan has been developed and approved. Disaster Recovery testing and the Dual Data Centre upgrade was completed in June 2013.

The Dual Data centre project has delivered an equivalent computing capacity at the second data centre. This means that the same number of users and core applications that run on our primary data centre are now supported from the secondary data centre. There are also multiple redundant pathways established between the two data centres and FRNSW for SAP services.

As part of this project, ICT also conducted a full disaster and recovery simulation, confirming that our systems have the capacity to run from an alternative location in the event of a system failure. This included failing over the systems to our secondary data centre and then failing back to

normal, i.e. running from the primary data centre. This test ensured that should a machine or some network equipment fail, the core NSW RFS applications and ICT services become available from the secondary data centre, almost immediately and, in most cases, without the user noticing.

Comprehensive testing proved that switching to the secondary data centre for our core applications, in an event of a disaster, can now be measured in minutes and without any data loss.

Other key benefits include a minimal downtime for our core applications during a planned maintenance period. We now have the capability to switch services to the secondary data centre, partially or fully, to maintain continuity of services, while upgrades and maintenance occur at the primary data centre. The systems can also be load-balanced, that is work from both centres, sharing the network load appropriately should the demand for these systems increase during fire season.

ICT has also completed a project that provided the ability to share common data across the various applications within the NSW RFS. This enabled faster and more cost effective application development and enables obsolete applications to be removed from the system without the risk of losing data or impacting live applications.

SAP Enterprise Asset Management Project implementation (Corporate Plan reference – SAP fleet and asset management module implemented)

This program builds upon the existing SAP platform and will consolidate fleet and equipment into a single system. The SAP program of work for the Emergency Services Sector has been underway since 2008, and the development of this Enterprise Asset Management component is the next logical strategic step in that program.

The NSW RFS currently has over 7,000 operational firefighting and ancillary fleet items and approximately 200,000 items of serialised emergency equipment across the State of NSW. Implementation includes capture and recording for this extensive array of assets. It incorporates the

development of key modules for a single asset management system which also enables various legacy applications to be migrated and retired.

The joint agencies SAP Enterprise Assets Management Project Business Requirements were completed in the reporting period. System design, known as Blueprinting is next to commence with program implementation expected to be complete by December 2014. When complete the solution will be fully integrated with existing SAP applications which include financials and human resources. The result being that all assets are able to be tracked, managed and maintained for total asset life value and are linked directly to the asset register for accounting purposes.

An inventory management system is also being progressed as a component of the SAP Enterprise Asset Management Project which supports the Operational and Mitigation Support Systems (OMSS) warehouse management at Glendenning. Aligned with the EAM project, this is expected to be complete by 31 December 2014.

Government corporate services reform programs implemented

The Justice Shared Corporate Services (JSCS) has been established to support improvements to shared corporate services business practices in all agencies within the Justice Cluster. Improvement initiatives are guided by established government and industry standards and best practice benchmarks. To this end the Cluster has adopted a Centres of Excellence (CoE) approach to this initiative and its implementation.

The CoE approach is designed to support the identification and ongoing implementation of best practice strategy, policy, process and systems across the Justice Cluster in Human Resources, Financial Management, Asset Management, Procurement and Information Technology. The CoE approach will ensure the Justice Cluster agencies engage in cross-cluster sharing and collaboration needed to move business units to exceeding peer levels in the provision of shared services.

The design for identified shared services activities within the human resources component have

commenced with the establishment of the Justice Shared Corporate Services Program (JSCSP) Human Resource Functional Leadership Group (HRFLG). The JSCSP (comprising of all Agencies in the Justice Cluster) was launched on 1 March 2013. HRFLG is one of four functional leadership groups under the Program.

The HRFLG has met on four occasions in the 2012/13 Financial Year. Projects and initiatives under consideration by the HRFLG include; joint Cluster response to Public Service Commission on bullying; building respectful workplaces; Taleo (jobs.nsw) and SAPHR; fatigue management; mental health; health and safety issues; training venues; performance management; leadership and management; IR issues and criminal records checks. These are ongoing projects and it is expected there will be further policy developments in the next reporting period.

Finalisation of the establishment of new arrangements for the Service and Brigades with respect to tax deductible donations

Work continued from the previous year in finalising the establishment of a centralised public fund with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, enabling brigades to receive tax deductible donations. This fund was established in early 2013. In addition to the establishment of the central fund, a process has been developed for brigades who choose to establish their own DGR fund. The operational Central Fund bank account has been established with Westpac and the trust deed signed and five of the seven trustees are volunteer members of the Service.

Fatigue management guidelines implemented

Fatigue Management Guidelines were drafted and implemented in 2012/13. To ensure these guidelines remain fit for purpose they are subject to ongoing review through the Consultative Committee process.

The Health Safety and Welfare unit maintains a monitoring role in fatigue related injuries.

In 2013/14 it is anticipated that the Fatigue Management Guidelines and Service Standard will be reviewed following the fire season.

Fire behaviour analysis capability developed State-wide

Fire Behaviour Analysts (FBAs) are used to prepare bush fire behaviour predictions during the bush fire season and smoke plume modelling for hazard reduction activities. The NSW RFS seeks to increase the number of trained FBAs within the organisation by conducting a fire behaviour analysis course, mentoring and assessing fire behaviour as well as providing skills maintenance.

The program to achieve this goal is dependent on NSW experiencing periods of fire conditions. Fire activity throughout the year provided an opportunity to commence this program. In September 2012 the NSW RFS ran a FBA course for internal and external agency representatives. The bush fire activity then enabled the training program to commence in full and FBAs continue to be assessed during fire reduction activities.

FBAs will continue to be mentored, assessed and have their skills maintained during hazard reduction activities. The number of qualified FBAs has increased by five personnel.

Business requirements developed for the replacement of the Bush Fire Risk Information Management Systems (BRIMS)

The Bush Fire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) is used by the NSW RFS and other agencies to document hazards, risks and mitigation activity in a bush fire context.

While it is recognised that to meet future business needs a new BRIMS platform is required funding for this project has not been finalised. As a result, there has been no action on a replacement for BRIMS during the reporting year.

Radio and pager network upgrades completed

Over the past two years the Service has focussed on two key communication projects - the P25 radio network upgrade and the paging systems upgrade. These upgrades are being undertaken due to network equipment reaching end of life cycle, deterioration in performance, 400 MHz spectrum harmonisation and the increasing cost of maintenance.

The Private Mobile Radio (PMR) upgrade project is 40 percent complete, with Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, Southern Tablelands, Hawkesbury and Clarence Valley digital networks currently operating on digital PMR. Another 10 networks are well underway and due for completion in 2013. Planning works for 90 percent of PMR digital links has been completed with 85 percent of these new IP links now licensed with Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). During this process, some significant re-work was required to take into account spectrum limitations and utilisation of existing infrastructure and sites.

To date:

› 45 out of 80 new radio transmission towers are either built, underway or in planning
› 25 out of 80 solar sites have had power upgrades completed or are near completion
› 25 out of 80 new huts have been constructed, installed or have had orders placed.

The State-wide radio re-profiling process is 60 percent complete with new radio profiles including NSW RFS digital and analogue channels, while removing analogue GRN (Government Radio Network) channelling.

The NSW RFS continues to work with NSW Telecommunications Authority to achieve expected GRN coverage and capacity to meet operational objectives and to improve the ability to transition permanently to GRN for some districts in the high spectrum density areas around Sydney, Blue Mountains, Newcastle and Wollongong.

The paging upgrade continues with all Fire Control Centres (FCC) server upgrades completed. Around 45 percent of the overall paging transmission network is now upgraded to a simulcast technology.

Station/Fire Control Centre works plans implemented in line with local needs and funding provided by Government

In the reporting period funding was allocated for newly built and refurbished buildings throughout the State. These included the following:

Region South

During 2012/13 a new Fire Control Centre (FCC) was completed at Bombala and the official opening of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area FCC at Griffith was held. Approximately $2.5m was allocated to Districts for stations and FCCs in Region South in 2012/13 along with carryover funding; and $2.7m was expended. This included the completion of the Bombala and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area FCC and the final payment for the Southern Border FCC and works to 25 new and existing brigade stations.

Region West

During 2012/13 no new FCC facilities were built in Region West, although the finalisation of the budget for the Orana FCC project budget was made ($80,000). Approximately $1.1m was allocated in the 2012/13 financial year to districts for brigade stations in Region West, this along with carryover funding; saw approximately $1.7m claimed. Works were completed for 18 new and existing stations in the 2012/13 financial year.

Region North

During 2012/13 a total of eight Fire Control Centre upgrade projects were undertaken and one Fire Control Centre new construction project reached completion. Seventeen new stations were completed from the rolling Build Program and another 33 stations had some form of upgrade or extension works completed. The total budget for 2012/13 including carryovers from previous years was $2.99m of which $2.157m was expended.

Region East

During 2012/13 there was ongoing critical enhancement to Stations and FCC across Region East with budgeted allocation of $4,627,201 combined with carry over funding total expenditure on FCC and Station works for 2012/13 was $6,304,382. Significant Projects of note were the commencement and near completion of the Lower Hunter FCC complex; completion of Stage 1 of the Gosford FCC enhancement project (Extension to administration offices and the addition of two training rooms); completion of Valley Heights Brigade Station (Blue Mountains LGA); completion of Kur-ring-gai Brigade Station (Kur-ring-gai LGA) and the completion of Kentlyn Brigade Station (Campbelltown LGA).

Research framework and utilisation strategy implemented

Work progressed on the development of research framework in the reporting period. While a body of work was undertaken in relation to the framework, the development timeframe for the framework was extended to ensure that the research framework is a correct fit for the Service. The framework document is in a final draft stage.

As part of the work undertaken the Service now has a comprehensive research register of the research-related activities. This Register is a dynamic document and is being updated regularly. The Register highlights the strong engagement the NSW RFS has with the Bushfire CRC and other research institutions. A research utilisation strategy is being developed.

One key research initiative undertaken by the NSW during 2012/13 was following the January bush fires. The Service engaged the Bushfire CRC to conduct online and face-to-face surveys of fire affected communities. The research focused on community levels of understanding and response to information and warnings.

Major litigation case outcomes

ACT Civil Litigation

During the year, judgement was delivered in the matter relating to the 2003 ACT bush fires before the ACT Supreme Court. While many of the claims had been settled prior to judgement, the long and complex litigation concluded with judgement in favour of the NSW State agencies involved, including the NSW RFS. The decision is now under appeal.

KFA Six

FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS

The NSW RFS works with its partners to influence the national agenda in relation to emergency services and develops mutually beneficial local, national and international strategic alliances to raise and strengthen the NSW RFS profile.

Programs under this Key Focus Area include the Botswana Fire Management Program and the development of an Organisational Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Milestones for 2012/13 and 2015 Targets

M11   Organisational Communication and Engagement Plan implemented

T12   State, national and international partnerships developed to enhance shared fire management expertise and resources

Organisational Communication and Engagement Plan implemented

An Organisational Communication and Engagement Strategy was developed during the reporting period, including consultation with stakeholders across the State, member surveys and workshops. Following extensive review the strategy was refined and provided for Director approval in June. It is to be considered by the Executive at the beginning of 2013/14.

State, national and international partnerships developed to enhance shared fire management expertise and resources

The NSW RFS, in partnership with AusAid has been supporting the Botswana Fire Management Program.

In February 2013, a further two-year contract was signed with AusAid which will provide funding to support the Botswana Fire Management Program. This program has seen six RFS members involved in the Program up to June 2013, with a further 10 RFS members travelling to Botswana in 2013/14. A highlight of the year saw the NSW RFS awarded the winner of the 2012 Laurie Lavelle award (AFAC Award) for the Botswana Fire Management Program. This is the first time the NSW RFS has won this award.

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