



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

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Management and Governance	17
Summary Review of Operations	25
Key Focus Areas	33
Financial Tables	53
Appendices	101
Glossary	143
Index	144



MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Legislation and governing bodies

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the lead combat agency for bush fires in NSW. For over 100 years we have been a significant part of the history and landscape of NSW. Working closely with other agencies we respond to a range of emergencies including structure fires, motor vehicle accidents and storms that occur within rural fire districts.

The NSW RFS is widely acknowledged as the largest volunteer fire service in the world. Members of the NSW RFS are trained to very high levels of competence to ensure they know what to do in an emergency.

The Service aims to reduce the likelihood and consequence of fires occurring. This involves comprehensive risk management programs to reduce bush fire hazards, reduce fire ignitions and the development of regulations for bush fire prone areas.

Legislation

The management and operational responsibilities of the NSW RFS are set down clearly in the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and can be summarised as follows:

- > Protection of life and property for all fire-related incidents within all rural fire districts in the State
- > Safety and welfare of all volunteers
- > Provision of effective training and resources to rural fire brigades
- > Provision of emergency assistance to other emergency service organisations.

A number of amendments were made to the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and introduced in December 2010. The amendments formalised arrangements for Neighbourhood Safer Places and the responsibility of the NSW RFS Commissioner to issue warnings to the public about bush fires.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Elise (Sandy Point Brigade) at an Hazard Reduction burn in Woronora, 2013. Photo by Sharon Quandt

NSW RFS Commissioner

The Commissioner is responsible for managing and controlling the activities of the Service and has other functions conferred or imposed on him by or under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. It is the Commissioner who invokes Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* in order to declare a bush fire emergency.

NSW RFS Executive

The day-to-day management of the Service is carried out under the direction of the NSW RFS Executive.

The Executive consists of the Service's Directors and a profile of each of these principal officers can be seen on [pages 22-23](#).

Corporate Executive Group

The Corporate Executive Group (CEG) comprises the Executive and senior managers of the Service and representatives of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA), which is the representative association of the volunteers and staff of the NSW RFS. Its principal role is to consider and provide advice to the Commissioner on strategic issues affecting the Service.

Details of representation and attendance at this Group are set out in [Appendix V](#).

Governance Committees

Three bodies are empowered by legislation to assist in the operation of the NSW Rural Fire Service, they are the:

- > Rural Fire Service Advisory Council
- > Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee
- > Fire Services Joint Standing Committee

Rural Fire Service Advisory Council

The Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (RFSAC) is established under the provisions of Part 6 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The Council advises and reports to the Minister and the NSW RFS Commissioner on any matters relating to the administration of the Service. It also provides advice to the Commissioner on public education, programs relating to rural fire matters, the training of rural firefighters and Service Standards.

Details of representation and attendances at the Council are set out in [Appendix V](#).

Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee

The Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC) is established under the provisions of Section 46 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The Committee is chaired by the NSW RFS Commissioner and supported by the Service.

The BFCC is responsible for planning in relation to fire prevention and coordinated bush firefighting. It also advises the Commissioner on bush fire prevention and mitigation and coordinated bush fire suppression.

The BFCC constitutes Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) for all rural fire districts and areas with significant risk of bush fire. It also approves operations coordination and Bush Fire Risk Management Plans that are prepared by the BFMCs.

Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in [Appendix V](#).

Fire Services Joint Standing Committee

The *Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act 1998* provides for the establishment of the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC).

The major functions of the Committee are to develop and submit to the Minister strategic plans for the coordinated delivery of urban and rural fire services at the interface; to undertake periodic review of fire district and rural fire district boundaries; the minimisation of duplication and the maximisation of compatibility between the NSW RFS and Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW).

The Committee is chaired alternately by the Commissioners of FRNSW and the NSW RFS.

Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in [Appendix V](#).

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides assistance to the NSW RFS Commissioner by overseeing and monitoring the governance and accountability requirements of the NSW RFS. The Committee is chaired by an independent member and advises the Commissioner on a range of matters including: the effectiveness of the Service's internal audit function; legislative

compliance; the financial statements and financial reporting of the Service; risk and control frameworks; business continuity and corruption prevention activities.

Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in [Appendix V](#).

Consultative and Stakeholder Committees

Consultation with our stakeholders and related agencies plays a key role in the governance of the NSW RFS.

Consultative Committees

The Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) is a State-wide non-partisan member association and a valued partner of the NSW RFS. The NSW RFS Commissioner relies on a number of consultative committees, comprising RFSA representatives and senior staff of the Service, for advice on the NSW RFS operations and management.

The Committees that met in the reporting period were: Community Engagement, Membership Services (including the Young Members Group), Regional Services, Infrastructure Services and Operational Services.

Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in [Appendix O](#).

Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW RFS Liaison Committee

The principal roles of the Committee are to discuss and resolve significant issues of a strategic nature that are of mutual interest to local government and the Service.

Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in [Appendix V](#).

Stakeholder liaison and collaboration

The Service is also represented on a number of external organisations:

- › Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and its various committees
- › Association of Environment Education (NSW) Border Liaison Committees
- › Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
- › District Emergency Management Committees
- › District Rescue Committees

- › Emergency Services Communications Working Party
- › Emergency Services Industry Reference Group
- › Emergency Services Personnel Support Advisory Group
- › Environmental Education Officers' Group
- › Fire Protection Association
- › Museum Education Officers' Group
- › National Aerial Firefighting Centre
- › NSW Health Disaster Management Committee
- › Public Sector Occupational Health and Safety Group
- › Standards Australia – various committees
- › State Emergency Management Committee
- › State Rescue Board
- › National Emergency Management Committee
- › Fuel Loads Management Working Group
- › The National Bushfire Arson Prevention Working Group.

Governance and Ethical Standards

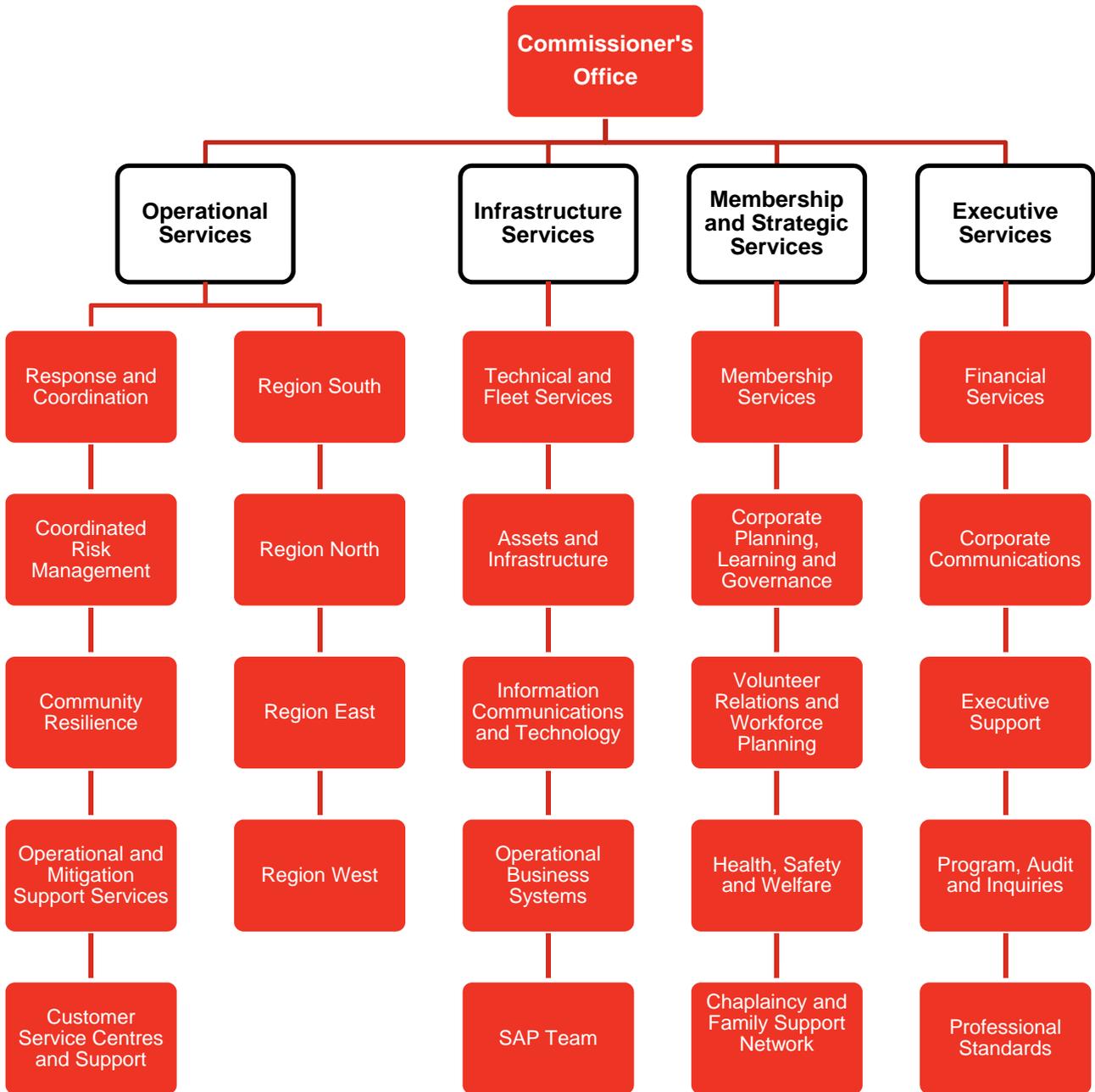
The Service remains committed to the highest level of ethical behaviour and satisfactory conduct being displayed at all times by its members. All day-to-day activities of the Service are supported by the [Service's Code of Conduct and Ethics Service Standard 1.1.7](#) which applies to volunteer and salaried members alike.

There were no changes to the Code during the reporting period.

The Service's Professional Standards Unit also provides advice, education, training and mentoring relating to fraud prevention and corruption prevention issues. It is designed to ensure the community's ongoing trust in the NSW RFS by maintaining the highest standards of ethical behaviour among our members.

NSW RFS Organisational Chart 2012/13

(as of 30 June 2013)



Principal Officers

NSW RFS Commissioner

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons has more than 25 years experience with the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) serving as both a volunteer and salaried officer. In 1998 he was appointed an Assistant Commissioner with the NSW RFS and has held portfolio responsibilities for Operations, Strategic Development and Regional Management.

In 2004 he was appointed the inaugural Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Visiting Fellow to the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) for a period of 12 months. In September 2007 he was appointed Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service. In March 2008 he was appointed a Director of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) and is currently the Chair of the NAFC Board. He is a member of the NSW State Rescue Board and is currently appointed as Chairman. In December 2009 he was appointed as a Director on the Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons was awarded the National Medal in 1999 and the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) in 2001.

Director Operational Services

Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers, AFSM

Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers joined the NSW Rural Fire Service in 1979 as a volunteer member of the Belrose Brigade.

In 1995, Deputy Commissioner Rogers commenced his career as a salaried officer as Deputy Fire Control Officer for the Greater Taree District. Since 2002, he has held various Executive positions responsible for Regional Management, Risk Management, Community Safety and Operational Services.

In 2004, he was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal. In July 2008 Deputy Commissioner Rogers was appointed Director Operational Services which brought together the two service delivery areas of Community Safety and Operations into a single cohesive team. In 2011 he was appointed Deputy Commissioner.

In May 2013, the Service undertook a realignment that included the Regional Services Directorate being amalgamated into the Operational Services Directorate.

Deputy Commissioner Rogers represents the NSW RFS on the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Director Membership and Strategic Services

Bronwyn Jones

Ms Bronwyn Jones was appointed to the Service in November 2008.

Prior to joining the Service, Ms Jones had extensive senior level experience in strategic planning and reporting, human resource management and project delivery gained in various public sector agencies, including the Premier's Department, the Department of Community Services, NSW Police Force and IAB Services.

She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Labour Relations and the Law (University of Sydney); a Master of Arts (Interdisciplinary Studies) degree and a Master of Commerce (Human Resource Studies) degree, both from the University of NSW.

Director Executive Services

Richard Lyons

Mr Richard Lyons has been employed in the NSW Public Sector since 1979. Over his career he has principally worked in policy-related areas in the Health and Attorney-General's Departments, the Ministry of Police and, prior to this appointment to the Service in August 2008, he held the position of Director, Office of Emergency Services for 13 years.

Mr Lyons holds tertiary qualifications in Science and Law and has responsibility for managing the Executive Services Directorate.

Director Regional Services

Assistant Commissioner

Dominic Lane, AFSM

(October 2008- December 2012)

Assistant Commissioner Dominic Lane was a longstanding member of the Service having joined the Milbrulong Bush Fire Brigade in 1984 just after leaving school.

Assistant Commissioner Lane was appointed to the position of Director, Regional Services in October 2008. Following an organisational realignment in October 2012, Assistant

Commissioner Lane was appointed Director Regional and Infrastructure Services.

Throughout his career with the NSW RFS he was responsible for significant service delivery and capability improvement across the entire Service. He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2004. Assistant Commissioner Lane resigned from the NSW RFS in December 2012 to take up the position of ACT Emergency Services Commissioner.

Director Infrastructure Services

Bruce McDonald, AFSM

Assistant Commissioner Bruce McDonald was appointed as the Director Infrastructure Services for the NSW Rural Fire Service in May 2013.

Assistant Commissioner McDonald joined the then Bush Fire Brigade in 1980 and progressed through the organisation, holding various brigade positions culminating in Group Captain in the mid 1990s.

He commenced as a salaried officer in 1998 in the role of Deputy Fire Control Officer - Operations, bringing to a close a 25-year management career in the automotive industry.

Since 2001, Assistant Commissioner McDonald has held various management positions at State Headquarters, including State Operations Officer, Manager, Operational Communications and Group Manager, Assets and Infrastructure.

In 2008 he was seconded to head up the implementation of a SAP Enterprise Resource Planning System replacing the Service's Finance and Procurement systems.

Assistant Commissioner McDonald was awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal in 2011.

