

# VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

## OUR VISION

To provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service.

## OUR MISSION

To protect the community and our environment we will minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies by providing the highest standards of training, community education, prevention and operational capability.

## VALUES

The values that underpin all our actions are:

### Our People

Volunteerism and commitment

### Professionalism

In all we do

### Community

Mutual assistance

### Quality Customer Service

Internal and external

### Continuous Improvement

Co-operation

### Honesty, Integrity and Trust

Ethical standards and behaviour

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The Hon Tony Kelly MLC  
Minister for Emergency Services  
Level 34, Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Minister

I have pleasure in submitting to you for presentation to Parliament the Annual Report of NSW Rural Fire Service for the year ended 30 June 2006.

Highlights of the year included

- Allocation of \$27.4M for the purchase of 230 new and refurbished tankers
- 88% of districts have established Bush FireWise programmes
- All districts have Bush Fire Risk Management Plans
- All districts have Operational Plans
- 50% of brigade stations audited
- 86% of paper purchased had recycled content
- 5,275 membership applications processed
- 298 applications for junior membership processed
- Implementation of Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code
- 85% of volunteers now qualified Basic Bush Firefighting.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act, 1985*, the *Public Finance and Audit Act, 1983* and the *Waste Avoidance and Waste Recovery Act, 2001*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Koperberg'.

Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM  
Commissioner

## KEY STATISTICS

	05/06	04/05	03/04
<b>Funding</b>	\$M140	\$M134	\$M125
Brigades	2,100	2,069	2,094
Districts	126	128	132
Zones/Teams	38	39	37
<b>Our people</b>			
Volunteers	70,745	70,964	69,375
Salaried support and administration	680	649	601
<b>Incidents</b>			
Total number of incidents	19,590	17,342	18,812
Bush fires	2,865	2,659	1,764
Grassfires	3,888	3,533	3,844
Building fires	951	949	206
Vehicle fires	1,525	1,166	1,491
Motor vehicle accidents	3,225	2,289	3,152
False alarms	2,028	1,896	1,271
Other	5,108	4,850	7,084
<b>Buildings</b>			
Headquarters	1	1	1
Regional Offices	4	4	4
<b>Tankers</b>			
Number of new and refurbished tankers delivered to brigades	230	210	205
<b>Vehicles</b>			
<b>Current fleet including marine craft</b>			
Tankers			3,927
Pumpers			58
Bulk Water units			52
Trailer pumps			2,109
Cargo, tip trucks, various trailers			83
Communications vehicles and trailers			36
Catering vehicles and trailers			64
Marine			19
Slip on trailers and miscellaneous			1,502
<b>Communications</b>			
Radios			19,800

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



**ESTABLISHED IN 1997**  
**70,000 VOLUNTEERS**  
**2,100 RURAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES PROTECTED**

Over 100 years ago the residents of the south-western New South Wales township of Berrigan formed Australia's first official bush fire brigade. The residents joined together as firefighters for mutual protection against the ever-present threat of bush fires.

On 1 September 1997 the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) was established by an Act of Parliament as the successor to that first bush fire brigade, redefining the world's largest fire service and building on a century of experience in protecting some of the most fire-prone areas on earth.

Today the Service comprises over 2,100 volunteer rural fire brigades with a total membership of just over 70,000. In addition, salaried staff are employed to manage the day to day operations of the Service at Headquarters, regional offices and district fire control centres. Staff carry out a variety of roles including operational management, administration, finance, planning, training, hazard reduction management, and engineering.

The role of volunteer fire brigades encompasses far more than fighting and preventing bush fires – for which they are best known. Volunteer firefighters are regularly called upon to attend building and structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, assist in search and rescue operations and help with storm and flood recovery. The Service is responsible for structural firefighting in more than 1,200 towns and villages across the state.

Brigade members are all volunteers and come from all walks of life. They are community minded, having the volunteer spirit of service, combined with a professional approach to the protection of life and property within the community.

As a matter of daily routine we also work closely and collaboratively with the media, government departments, rural land managers, local government and schools.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND CUSTOMERS

### OUR CUSTOMERS:

- The people of New South Wales
- Our volunteers and staff

### OUR STAKEHOLDERS:

- The people of New South Wales
- The Insurance Industry
- Local Government
- Other emergency services
- Other Government agencies
- The Government of New South Wales





**I CAN NEVER STRESS ENOUGH THE GRATITUDE I HAVE FOR THE TIRELESSNESS AND PROFESSIONALISM OF THE RURAL FIRE SERVICE'S VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS.**

The fifth year of drought across the landscape produced a series of intense fires in the Central Coast, Central West and Central South areas of the state that resulted in property and stock losses. Though losses were confined to these areas, in what was otherwise a typical fire season, volunteer firefighters were tested owing to the weather conditions which resulted in record temperatures for January along the eastern seaboard.

I can never stress enough the gratitude I have for the tirelessness and professionalism of the Rural Fire Service's volunteer firefighters.

Firefighting, however, needs to be coordinated through rigorous planning. Operations Plans are in place in all rural fire districts, (100%), as are Bush Fire Risk Management Plans, (100%). These important documents provide direction and strategies for districts and brigades.

They also highlight the bush fire threat and where hazards are located, enabling hazard reduction planning to occur. The weather that produced record temperatures also produced rainfall over much of the state that was nowhere near enough to end the drought but sufficient to delay and frustrate hazard reduction work.

The prospect of climate change may well bring more days of extreme fire weather to parts of the state but current predictions also indicate that the hazard reduction season will shrink and shift to the winter months only, thus further restricting our ability to conduct this work in a narrower window of opportunity than we currently have.

Should this come to pass it will mean a greater reliance on other aspects of fire mitigation, such as manual hazard reduction works, community education, and suppression through the deployment of the modernised tanker fleet and the use of aircraft.

Development control in bush fire prone areas will also help to maximise the level of protection for new or significantly renovated properties. In these increasingly important areas the Environmental Assessment Code was reviewed and implemented in order to streamline approvals for hazard reduction works.

To help educate children about living with bush fires 88% of all rural fire districts have established Bush FireWise community education programmes. Additionally, 291 schools undertook the Kids FireWise programme.

One of the most innovative programmes this year was the development and trial of a school based cadet programme designed for 15 to 16 year old students who learn about fire behaviour and firefighting but also team work, leadership and a sense of community. Trialled in five high schools this year it is expected that the programme will expand. It has the potential to create a new generation of fire aware citizens and may also produce the volunteer firefighters of tomorrow.

People wishing to join the Service or transfer between brigades now have to have a criminal history check undertaken. In 2005/6 the Service undertook 5,275 such checks while a further 1,923 checks were made in respect to members involved with child related activities.

**88% OF ALL RURAL  
FIRE DISTRICTS HAVE  
ESTABLISHED BUSH  
FIREWISE COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION PROGRAMMES.  
ADDITIONALLY, 291 SCHOOLS  
UNDERTOOK THE KIDS  
FIREWISE PROGRAMME.**



Investigations were conducted into 97% of fires where the Fire Investigation Unit was requested to do so.

The Service complied with the State Government's 85% target of recyclable materials to meet the waste reduction programme initiative and improved the cost effectiveness of the RFS passenger fleet through a new fleet management programme and evaluation of performance of all vehicles.

To further support our volunteers \$34.256M was directed to the tanker build programme resulting in 260 additional units being delivered. To ensure that our brigades and their equipment are adequately housed, an audit of all fire stations was commenced, (with 50% audited during the year). The full audit will be completed next year.

The Service has evolved to be the principal coordinating agency for all bush fire fighting and management and has also become a regulatory authority in terms of development control. The NSW Government has been extremely supportive of the expanding role of the Service, demonstrated through the increased level of funding again this year.

The arduous nature of our work would not be possible without the dedication and professionalism of the staff and volunteers of the Service, and I place on record my thanks to them.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank, for the support both personally and professionally, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Tony Kelly. Similarly I would like to thank, Richard Lyons, Director, Office of Emergency Services and his staff for the support and guidance they have provided throughout the year.

**PHIL KOPERBERG AO AFSM BEM**  
Commissioner



*As a volunteer I've had the opportunity to help others and really give something back to my local community. I've also made friends for life, it's a great feeling.*

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Our management and operational responsibilities are set down clearly in the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* and can be summarised as follows:

- Protection of life, property and the environment 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.

The three major bodies that primarily govern the operations of the Service are the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (RFSAC), the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) and the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC).

The Service provides the Secretariat for the BFCC, the peak planning body for bush fire management in New South Wales. The Commissioner has an overarching co-ordinating role and chairs the Committee.

RFSAC has the following functions

- Advising and reporting to the Minister and the Commissioner on any matter relating to the administration of rural fire services under the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*
- Advising the Commissioner on public education programmes relating to rural fire matters and on the training of rural firefighters
- Advising the Commissioner on the issue of Service Standards, and
- Such other functions as may be conferred or imposed upon it by or under the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*.

The BFCC is responsible for planning in relation to fire prevention and coordinated bush firefighting as well as for advising the Commissioner on bush fire prevention, mitigation and coordinated bush fire suppression. The Committee has such other functions as are conferred or imposed upon it by or under the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* or any other Act. In carrying out any function that affects the environment the Committee must have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development described in section 6(2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act, 1991*.

Additionally the Committee must report to the Minister on any matter referred by the Minister and may report on any matter relating to the prevention and suppression of bush fires, whether referred to it or not. Further, the Committee may enter into arrangements with the Minister for Lands and Water Conservation or any public authority with respect to the reduction of bush fire hazards.

The *Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act, 1998* provides legislative support for the work of the FSJSC.

The Committee's work of co-ordinating the activities of the fire services was supported by the Service's representatives, Commissioner PC Koperberg AO AFSM BEM and Chief Superintendent S Midgley AFSM.

Day to day management of the Service is carried on under the direction of the Corporate Executive Group (CEG) that consists of senior managers of the Service and representatives of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association.

Details of representation and member attendances at all of these bodies are set out in Appendix 'N'.



The Service is also represented on a number of external organisations by various staff members including:

- Australasian Fire Authorities Council and its various committees
- Association of Environment Education (NSW)
- Border Liaison Committees
- Bush Fire 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

- GRN Joint Management Board – Department of Commerce
- 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.

All day to day activities of the Service are supported by the Service's Code of Conduct which applies to volunteers and salaried staff alike. There were no changes to the Code during the reporting period.

**DAY TO DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE SERVICE IS CARRIED ON UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CORPORATE EXECUTIVE GROUP (CEG) THAT CONSISTS OF SENIOR MANAGERS OF THE SERVICE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION.**



## GOVERNANCE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS



### COMMISSIONER

**Phil Koperberg** AO AFSM BEM

Mr Koperberg joined the Service in 1967 as a volunteer in the Blue Mountains and progressed through the ranks to become Fire Control Officer in 1970, a position he held until 1982. He was appointed an emergency services policy analyst to the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services before being appointed Chairman of the Bush Fire Council of NSW and Executive Officer of the Bush Fires Branch of the Minister's office in 1985.

In 1989 he was appointed Director-General of the Department of Bush Fire Services and in 1993 he was appointed Commissioner of Bush Fire Services. In January 1994 he was appointed overall emergency controller for major bush fires burning in eastern NSW and, in September 1997, he was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Among his many roles, the Commissioner is Chair of the NSW Rural Fire Service Advisory Council, Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and the State Rescue Board.

He was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1978, made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1994, awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 1995 and made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2003.



### ACTING CHIEF OF STAFF

**Mark Sullivan**

Mr Sullivan manages the operation of the Office of the Commissioner, providing expert advice and support to the Commissioner and Executive in the management and resolution of critical policy and operations issues impacting on the Service.

Mr Sullivan joined the RFS in 1998, after many years in the NSW Police and local government. He was integrally involved in the changes which saw, among other critical things, State Government employment of local government fire control staff.

Mr Sullivan has held senior roles in policy, with his substantive position being that of Director-Regional Management.

Mr Sullivan was awarded the National Medal for Service and he holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Business Administration.



### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

**Mark Croweller** AFSM

Mr Croweller has held various positions in the Service ranging from firefighter to Assistant Commissioner. He was a member of the Review Sub-Committee of the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee; a State Council and Executive Member of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association; a member of the State Executive of that Association, and a member of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.

Prior to joining the Service Mr Croweller was employed in the consulting engineering industry. He holds a graduate certificate, graduate diploma and Master of Management degree.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2003.



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM**

Mr Fitzsimmons has been a member of the Service since 1984 when he joined the Duffy's Forest Brigade and where he remained as a member for ten years, at various times holding the positions of Captain and Deputy Group Captain.

In 1994 he was appointed Regional Planning Officer in Central East Region, eventually progressing to the position of Regional Coordinator before being appointed State Operations Officer. In 1998 Mr Fitzsimmons was appointed Assistant Commissioner Operations.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2001.



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**Rob Rogers AFSM**

Mr Rogers joined the Service in 1979 as a member of the Belrose Brigade in the Warringah-Pittwater District where he remained until 1995. During that time he held various Brigade positions including those of training officer, Deputy Captain and Captain.

In 1995 Mr Rogers was appointed Deputy Fire Control officer for the Greater Taree District, a position he held until 1998 when he was appointed Fire Control Officer for the Cessnock District. In 2002 he was appointed Executive Director for Regional Management but later that year transferred to the newly created Risk Management Directorate that had been formed as a consequence of new legislative responsibilities that had been devolved to the Service.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2004.



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS SUPPORT (PRE-DECEMBER 2005)**

**Tony Howe AFSM (Retired)**

Mr Howe joined the Service in 1999 as Assistant Commissioner Operations Support.

Prior to joining the Service Mr Howe was employed as a forester by the NSW Forestry Commission. He has extensive experience in forest and land management across NSW in native eucalypt forest, rainforest, exotic pine and eucalypt plantations in Tumut, Grafton and Eden. Mr Howe was involved in practical fire management for more than 30 years and was responsible for the Commission's state wide fire policies and strategies.

Mr Howe holds a Bachelor's degree in Forestry and was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2004.

Mr Howe retired in December 2005.



# GOVERNANCE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

### Trevor Anderson PSM

Mr Anderson entered the NSW Public Service in 1966 and in 1979 was appointed Secretary to the Bush Fire Council which, at that time, was a branch of the Department of Services.

He later transferred to the Office of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Following the establishment of the Department of Bush Fire Services as a separate department Mr Anderson was appointed Assistant Commissioner Corporate Services and later Executive Director Corporate Services. A further realignment of duties saw Mr Anderson appointed Executive Director Administration and Finance.

In 1995 Mr Anderson was awarded the Public Service Medal under the Australian Honours for outstanding public service in NSW.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS SUPPORT (POST DECEMBER 2005)

### Keith Harrap AFSM

Mr Harrap joined the Service as a member of Ku-ring-gai Brigade in 1968 and has held various positions ranging from volunteer to Assistant Commissioner.

Mr Harrap was appointed as Deputy Fire Control Officer for Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai in 1988 and then as Fire Control Officer in 1993.

From 2001 to 2004 he held consecutively the positions of Staff Officer and Acting Executive Director Operations Support. In 2004 he was appointed to the position of Executive Director, Corporate Communications.

Mr Harrap was elected to the position of Vice President (Salaried Officers) of the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) in 1994 and held that position for three years.

He is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and a Director of the International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF). He is also an international representative on the IAFC Wildland Fire Policy Committee.

Mr Harrap was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 1999.



## DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

### Peter Hennessy

Mr Hennessy has been employed in the NSW Public Service since 1969 where most of his previous positions were associated with financial budgeting and monitoring.

Prior to joining the Service in 1988 he worked for 19 years in the Department of Health and one year in the Department of Lands.

Mr Hennessy's positions in the public sector have all been associated with financial budgeting and monitoring.

Mr Hennessy has responsibility for the financial and accounting functions of the Service.

## RURAL FIRE REGIONS AND OFFICE ACCESS DETAILS

### REGION EAST

15 Carter Street  
Homebush Bay  
NSW 2127

Tel 02 8741 5555  
Fax 02 8741 5550

### REGION NORTH

Level 4, State Office Block  
Victoria Street  
Grafton  
NSW 2460

Tel 02 6643 2512  
Fax 02 6643 2515

### REGION SOUTH

7-9 Kylie Crescent  
Batemans Bay  
NSW 2536

Tel 02 4472 4615  
Fax 02 4472 4126

### REGION WEST

Shop 3, Lovell Place  
Lovell Street  
Young  
NSW 2594

Tel 02 6382 5677 or  
02 6382 5678  
Fax 02 6382 1731

### HEADQUARTERS

15 Carter Street  
Homebush Bay  
NSW 2127

Tel 02 8741 5555  
Fax 02 8741 5550

Office hours at all locations are  
0845-1700 hours, Mondays to Fridays.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The functional organisational chart is shown at Appendix 'A'.

- Minister for Emergency Services
- Commissioner
- Salaried Staff
- Fire Control Officers
- Rural Fire Brigades (2,100)
- Group Captains\*
- Captains\*
- Senior Deputy Captains\*
- Deputy Captains\*
- Members\*

\* Volunteers (70,745)





*I live just up the road from the station and my Dad has always been a volunteer. I have always had an interest and enjoy getting involved and being part of a team. It's great to be able to help my local community.*

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20	EAST
24	NORTH
26	SOUTH
28	WEST
31	OPERATIONS SUPPORT
35	COMMUNITY SAFETY
40	STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT







### **IN ADDITION, A NEW, MORE EFFICIENT VEHICLE FLEET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – FLEETWAVE – WAS ROLLED OUT ACROSS THE SERVICE.**

During the year under review, considerable focus was given to staff development and training and the professional development committee was extremely active in identifying the needs of individual employees. Additional funding was provided to enable an increase in both internal and external courses.

Public Sector recruitment procedures were followed in all cases to ensure that merit based selection criteria were met. Variations to salary awards and conditions were processed expeditiously in addition to allowance variations.

A new policy was adopted for fleet management to ensure that the Government's criteria for greenhouse gas emissions was met.

As in previous years, the Service's commitment to Chaplaincy and family support was a high priority.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Over the last year the Service continued with its efforts to reduce total energy consumption and purchased 6% green power. In addition other initiatives introduced during the year included:

- Use of energy efficient flat screen technology
- A substantial increase in double-sided printing
- An increase in the number of smaller more fuel efficient cars in the Service's vehicle fleet to replace larger, higher greenhouse gas emission, less fuel efficient vehicles.

In line with the National Greenhouse strategy, which requires governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their own operations, the Service's new headquarters at Homebush Bay is energy efficient having a Sustainable Energy Development Authority 4.5 star tenancy rating.

In addition, a new, more efficient vehicle fleet management system – Fleetwave – was rolled out across the Service. Fleetwave allows the Service to better manage its fleet, fuel consumption, maintenance and vehicle replacement schedules. It also provides an on-line booking capability for pool vehicles.

Office documentation systems were maintained as required by the *State Records Act, 1998*. Electronic document management of all coronial inquiry, legal and litigation material is being introduced next year.

In accordance with the NSW Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP) the Service recycled all cardboard products, identified and marked recycle collection points, established commingled (including paper recycling) collection points throughout the headquarters building, and recycled computer processing units and monitors as required by the Government's Reconnect Programme. During the WRAPP review period the Service recycled:

- 3.47 tonnes of paper
- 1.15 tonnes of cardboard
- 132 toner cartridges
- 34 computer processing units, and
- 34 computer monitors.

At the same time 2,810 reams of A4 paper were purchased of which 2,440 (86.8%) had recycled content, compared to 26% in the previous year.

#### **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

For the 2005/06 financial year funding for the Service was set at \$140.2m and individual councils were notified of their allocations in October 2005.



The Audit Office provided an unqualified audit report for the 05/06 financial year and no adverse comments were received from internal audits conducted throughout the year.

More than 5000 electronic purchase requisitions for various types of equipment, specifically firefighting equipment, were processed, a significant increase on previous years. The purchasing system continued to provide improved delivery times of equipment to Districts with lead-times for all major suppliers reduced. The average processing time for requisitions was 48 hours – within our customer service commitments.

The Service arranged contracts for the following items:

- Category 1, 2 and 11 appliances – these are the major appliances for rural firefighting. New contracts were awarded to mainly small and medium enterprises with the majority of contractors located outside the Sydney metropolitan area
- Major firefighting equipment – incorporating hoses, nozzles, ladders, foam and major firefighting accessories. This contract integrated the needs of both the RFS and NSWFB to achieve a cohesive approach and cost-saving benefits to both services.
- Firefighting Pumps – the new contract for major firefighting pumps will provide the Service with updated technology in this field.

The Service worked closely with AFAC, NSWFB and the SES to achieve aggregated purchasing outcomes. This process will continue into 06/07 and will be included in the Service's Procurement Plan.

#### STAFF SERVICES

The Service's draft Human Resource Strategic Plan was released for stakeholder consultation in June and will be formalised by the Service's CEG in September.

The Service began the implementation of an electronic self service system (HR21) enabling all staff to apply for leave and amend personal and banking details on line as required. Development of the system followed a series of consultative forums, auditing of reporting arrangements and the development of appropriate documentation. Full implementation of the system is scheduled to occur before the end of 2006.

Work began on the establishment of a Service-wide qualifications database on the Human Resources Information System and there will be a training and skills needs analysis to identify any additional training required by Service staff to carry out their duties effectively.

**FIREFIGHTING PUMPS – THE NEW CONTRACT FOR MAJOR FIREFIGHTING PUMPS WILL PROVIDE THE SERVICE WITH UPDATED TECHNOLOGY IN THIS FIELD.**



### THE CHAPLAINCY AND FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK CONTINUED TO PROVIDE A PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE RESPONSE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Under the general banner of the Service's Action Plan for Women the Service's Spokeswomen's Programme funded a distance education Certificate III and IV business administration course, facilitated by the Riverina Institute of TAFE, for twenty staff of whom eighteen are female. Twenty-six students from an earlier 2005 course graduated at the Service's headquarters on 20 March 2006.

The Service also sponsored a number of initiatives to support women in the workplace:

- International Women's Day Breakfast – nine female staff and Executive Director Administration and Finance attended;
- National Women in Firefighting Conference – five female staff and ten female volunteers;
- Administrative Assistants' Conference – ten female staff attended; and
- 'Personal Best' course facilitated through the University of Sydney and attended by forty female staff.

In the area of Ethnic Affairs, the Service participated with Blacktown TAFE in the development of an Ongoing Conversational English programme providing content material for booklets in the study of conversational learning for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The Service maintained and enhanced its bush fire community language publications in twelve different languages on the Service's website [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

Under its Code of Conduct the Service is committed to the highest level of ethical behaviour and satisfactory conduct being displayed at all times. To this end, numerous strategies have been developed to ensure that staff are fully aware of the expectations of the Service during their employment.

The Service's Disability Action Plan complies fully with legislative requirements especially those relating to the access and use of premises or buildings by disabled persons.

### CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy and Family Support Network continued to provide a proactive and reactive response throughout the year. The chaplaincy has become an integral part of many rural brigades, their members and their families.

Seven new chaplains were inducted into the Service and, as a consequence of clergy transfers, five relinquished their roles. As at 30 June 2006 the Chaplaincy Service consisted of a Senior Chaplain, Senior Family Support Chaplain, 49 volunteer district chaplains and eight family support volunteers.

Vacancies exist at Bathurst, Hawkesbury, Harden, Orange, Gosford, Nambucca, Tamworth and Ballina with four being in the process of being filled.

The continuing drought conditions have resulted in the Family Support Network working alongside Service members' families to respond to the need for continuing visitation with information and handouts.

Our chaplains travelled 70,128 kilometres during the year compared with 91,829 kilometres in 2004/05 and 81,390 kilometres in 2003/04.

# OPERATIONS AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

## STATE OPERATIONS

The State Operations Centre (SOC) is responsible for the coordination, dissemination and display of operational intelligence for fire and emergency incidents across NSW and provides operational, logistics and resource support to Rural Fire Districts.

During the year the Centre was responsible for the overall coordination of 38 emergency declarations under section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* involving 74 local government areas. Approximately 92,613 hectares of land of all types were burnt during these emergencies. Last year 16,300 hectares of land were burnt during 20 emergencies.

Total fire bans were declared on 24 days, with five being statewide.

The SOC is a focal point for senior personnel from other fire authorities as well as liaison staff from Police, Ambulance, State Emergency Service, Bureau of Meteorology, Department of Defence, infrastructure (Department of Public Works and Services, roads, railways, telecommunications, water and electricity authorities) and welfare providers (such as Department of Community Services and the Salvation Army).

Staff of the SOC conducted more than 25 tours of the Centre with an informative explanation of the Service's operational management as well as the state-of-the-art technology being used. Many of these were for NSW, other state, federal or international agencies which were researching better methods of conducting their own business. Other visitors included Probud, school and brigade groups.

The Sydney Safety Site Marshal programme was established with 110 Service personnel to assist Police in the management of safety sites as detailed in the Sydney CBD Emergency Sub-Plan.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Service and NSWFB was completed and formally signed by the Minister and the two Commissioners in August 2005.

The draft Safe Working on Roads Standard Operating Procedures were finalised and promulgated to all brigades and the draft Safe Driving SOPs were also released for comment.

## FIRE INVESTIGATION

Funding provided under the Joint State and Commonwealth Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme has enabled the Service to enhance fire investigation data collated by investigators. This has resulted in the development of a mapping database to enable investigators to utilise maps located on the Service's ICON database to generate fire investigation scene documentation.

Two permanent Fire Investigation Coordinator positions were moved to Regions East and West respectively ensuring the delivery of investigation expertise is more closely aligned to Regional and District needs.

At the invitation of the International Association of Arson Investigators the Service's Manager Fire Investigation attended and presented a paper at the Denver International Conference in the United States. Discussions were held with key lead agencies in relation to the training of wildfire investigators in investigation management as well as the future directions concerning wildfire investigation within the National Wildfire Coordinating Group on which the Service holds a key position.

Fire investigators provided evidence to the Alectown Bush Fire Coronial relating to the extensive bush fire that affected the Parkes area in 2004.

## AVIATION

Fixed and rotary wing aircraft continued to play a significant role supporting firefighting operations with NSW based aircraft and Service aviation specialists also being deployed both to Victoria and South Australia to assisting in firefighting in those states.

The Service continued to develop relationships with other agencies in NSW and other states and through membership of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre continued to contribute to the development of national standards of safety and best practice in aviation management.

## SERVICE MEMBERSHIP UNIT

Following the July 2005 release of a new Service Standard - 'Child Related Activities' - 1,923 national criminal history record checks (NCHRC) were processed through the Unit.

Altogether the Unit processed 5,275 membership applications (including 1,923 NCHRC) for new, dual, transferring and rejoining members, against a target level 4,000.

Of great satisfaction was that 298 applications were processed from young people wishing to become junior members of the Service.

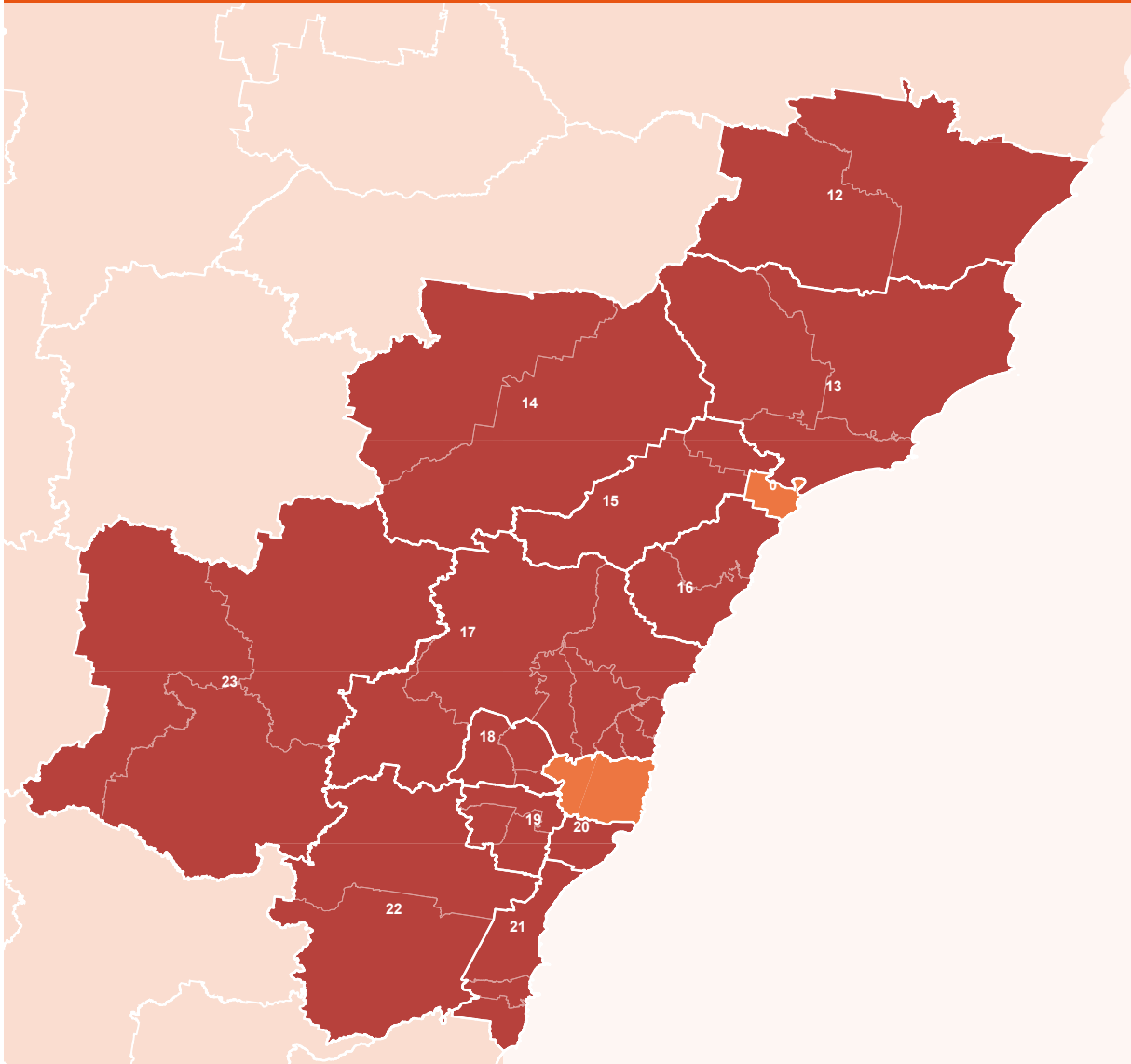


**OF GREAT SATISFACTION WAS THAT 298 APPLICATIONS WERE PROCESSED FROM YOUNG PEOPLE WISHING TO BECOME JUNIOR MEMBERS OF THE SERVICE.**

# THE YEAR IN THE REGIONS

## REGION: EAST

### NSW OVERVIEW – RFS REGION/DISTRICTS/ZONES FOR REGION EAST



#### KEY

12. Manning Team  
Gloucester  
Greater Taree

13. Lower Hunter Zone  
Dungog  
Great Lakes  
Port Stephens

14. Hunter Valley Team  
Muswellbrook  
Singleton

15. Hunter Team  
Cessnock  
Maitland

16. The Lakes Team  
Lake Macquarie  
Wyong

17. (Stand Alone Districts)  
Gosford  
Baulkham Hills  
Hornsby  
Ku-ring-gai

Hawkesbury  
Blue Mountains  
Warringah  
Pittwater

18. Cumberland Zone  
Blacktown  
Fairfield  
Penrith

19. Macarthur Zone  
Campbelltown  
Camden  
Liverpool

20. Sutherland

21. Illawarra Team  
Kiama  
Shellharbour  
Wollongong

22. Highland Teams  
Wingecarribee  
Wollondilly

23. Chifley Zone  
Bathurst  
Oberon  
Lithgow

□ Non-RFS



Dry and mild conditions through spring allowed the successful completion of significant areas of fuel hazard reduction which extended into October. These activities were enhanced by a co-operative effort within the Region with tankers and crews being deployed across Districts.

Region East experienced serious fire activity in December, with S44 declarations being proclaimed at Port Stephens and Muswellbrook, and on New Year's Day Gosford, Wollondilly and Warringah experienced a bush fire emergency. A number of pre-emptive declarations were also made during December and January due to the forecast of poor fire weather conditions.

The Region provided assistance to Region West (Weddin) early in January, then assisted the Victorian and South Australian efforts with large strike team deployments and the movement of a very large number of volunteers by air to crew CFA tankers. Incident Management Team personnel were also deployed to each of these states.

A feature of the 05/06 season was the testing of the Region's Major Incident Co-ordination capability and the successes of the various Zones/Teams and Districts that were under siege with significant fires in the functioning of their respective Incident Management Teams.

In all, the Region deployed 22 strike teams within the Region, 10 strike teams inter region, one strike team to South Australia, and four strike teams and 216 additional volunteers to Victoria.

Regional staff are formed into four units each directly linked to the Service's four Key Result Areas:

- Management
- Operations
- Learning and Development, and
- Community Safety.

#### MANAGEMENT

The key management strategy for the Region is to support the provision of an efficient and effective fire and emergency service through the implementation and continuous improvement of Service planning, resourcing, management, work practices and reporting systems.

Some of the initiatives implemented to drive this strategy included:

- Effective financial management of the Region's budget
- Achieving 100% compliance with target management audits allocated through the Service's Audit Plan
- Identifying and facilitating opportunities for improved management performance through a programme of mentoring and coaching staff
- Enrolling 10 managers in the Public Sector management programme
- Conducting personal development training for 32 staff
- Annual regional conference.



**IN ALL, THE REGION DEPLOYED 22 STRIKE TEAMS WITHIN THE REGION, 10 STRIKE TEAMS INTER REGION, ONE STRIKE TEAM TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AND FOUR STRIKE TEAMS AND 216 ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS TO VICTORIA.**

# THE YEAR IN THE REGIONS

## REGION: EAST

### OPERATIONS

The key operational strategy for the Region is directed to the improvement of operational management by establishing, maintaining and improving a standardised incident response and management infrastructure.

Initiatives to drive this strategy included:

- Coaching and mentoring operational personnel to ensure competency for assigned roles within incident management teams
- Achieving 90% compliance of operational audits allocated through the Service's Audit Plan
- The provision of support/resources for six emergency incidents declared under section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act* including deployment to Victoria and South Australia
- The completion of data capture for the first round of the Standards of Fire Cover programme.

### LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (L AND D)

The key L and D strategy for the Region is to meet industry expectations and government recognised requirements by implementing the Public Safety Training package across the Service.

During the year the Region initiated a series of programmes to support this strategy, including:

- Development of a regional training plan to identify and facilitate improved L and D performance
- Training seven staff in Certificate IV Training and Assessment
- Implementation and review of all District, Team and Zone training plans and calendars
- Conducting and managing 100% Recognition of Prior Learning assessments
- Participation of 179 Service members in various training courses
- The issue of 258 training qualifications covering a wide range of training programmes
- The conduct of three L and D programmes and the review and approval of 13 self-assessment audits.



**VOLUNTEER TRAINING WILL REMAIN AT THE FOREFRONT OF REGIONAL ACTIVITIES WITH AN ANTICIPATED 10 VOLUNTEER TRAINING COURSES AS WELL AS A REGIONAL EXERCISE INTENDED.**



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

The major community safety strategy for the Region is based around the management of bush fire risk and the performance of fire operations and the linkages to District Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and Plans of Operations.

The Region underpinned this strategy through a series of initiatives including:

- Achieving 100% compliance with Community Safety Audits allocated through the Service's Audit Plan
- Monitored, analysed and reported on 100% of District/Zone Bush Fire Risk Management Plans
- Participated in 80% of regional Bush Fire Management Committees
- Conducted quarterly regional community safety forums
- Trained 100% relevant staff to facilitate and support the implementation of *Planning for Bush fire Protection* and associated publications.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The regional focus in 2006-07 will be to maintain and enhance internal and external stakeholder relationships. It is fully recognised that the maintenance of these relationships is critical to effective issues and information management.

Staff development will remain a high priority and the programmes of mentoring and training staff will be enhanced.

Volunteer training will remain at the forefront of regional activities with an anticipated 10 volunteer training courses as well as a regional exercise intended.



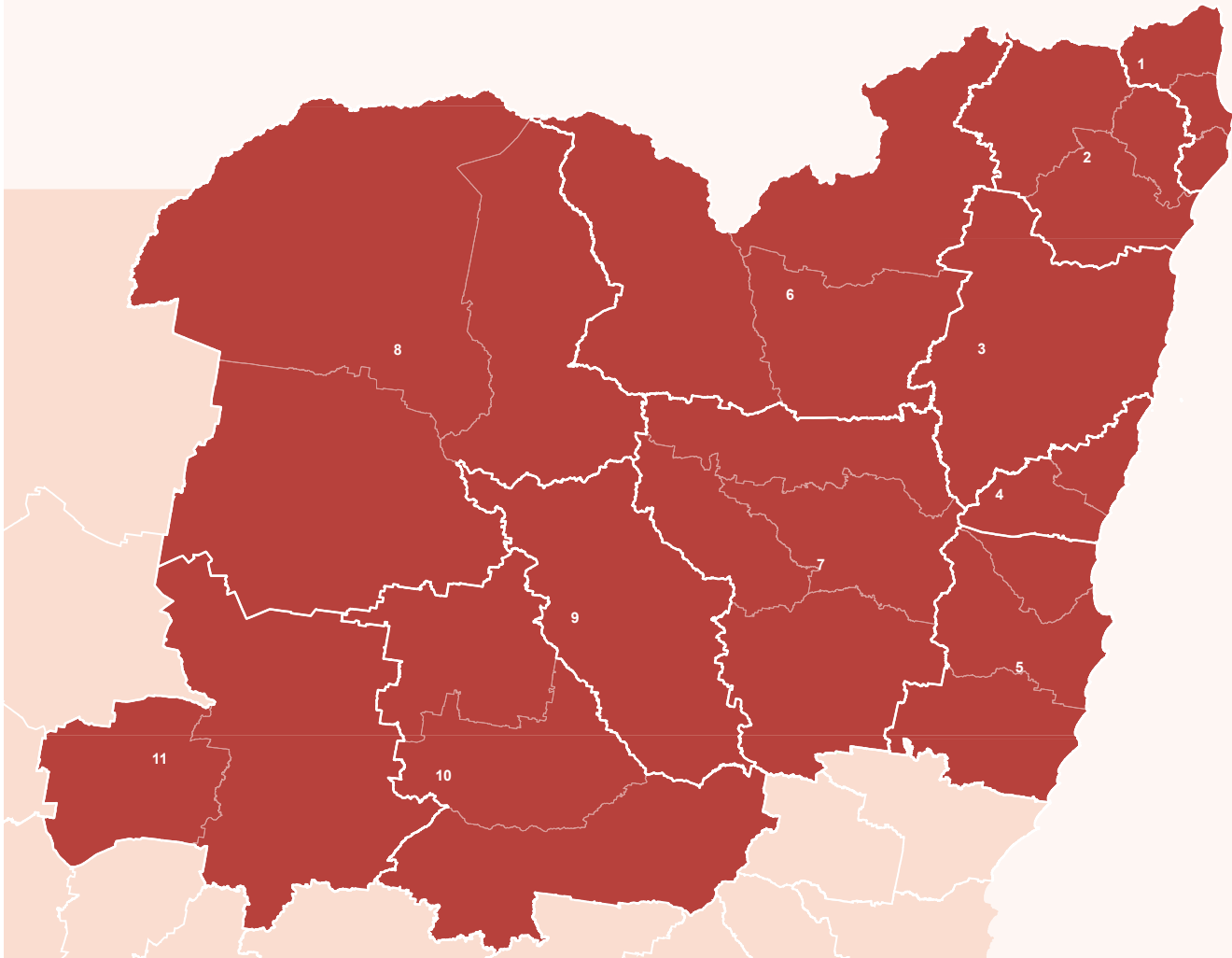
**STAFF DEVELOPMENT WILL REMAIN A HIGH PRIORITY AND THE PROGRAMMES OF MENTORING AND TRAINING STAFF WILL BE ENHANCED.**



# THE YEAR IN THE REGIONS

## REGION: NORTH

### NSW OVERVIEW – RFS REGION/DISTRICTS/ZONES FOR REGION NORTH



#### KEY

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| 1. Far North Coast Zone<br>Ballina<br>Byron<br>Tweed       | 4. Mid North Coast Team<br>Bellingen<br>Coffs Harbour                       | 7. New England Zone<br>Armidale Dumaresq<br>Guyra<br>Uralla<br>Walcha | 9. Tamworth Regional   |
| 2. Northern Rivers<br>Kyogle<br>Lismore<br>Richmond Valley | 5. Lower North Coast Team<br>Nambucca<br>Kempsey<br>Hastings                | 8. Namoi / Gwydir Team<br>Moree Plains<br>Narrabri<br>Gwydir          | 10. Liverpool Range Zone<br>Gunnedah<br>Liverpool Plains<br>Upper Hunter |
| 3. Clarence Valley   | 6. Northern Tablelands Team<br>Inverell<br>Glen Innes Severn<br>Tenterfield |   | 11. Castlereagh Zone<br>Warrumbungle<br>Gilgandra                        |

Dry conditions across the Region coupled with low rainfall and lightning strikes in October 2005 and January 2006 caused major fire problems.

Emergency declarations under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act* were made for Coffs Harbour/Bellingen, Narrabri and Nambucca/Kempsey/Hastings local government areas with strike teams, incident management personnel and aircraft support deployed from within the Region for resource support.

In January 2006, nineteen staff and volunteers travelled to western Victoria as part of an interstate task force.

Under the Service Annual Audit schedule eleven Zones and Teams were audited for compliance in the functional areas of Community Safety and Operations. Separate audits of Learning and Development were conducted as part of compliance with National Training Standards.

Business planning, and five year tanker procurement and station build programmes were established for all Zones/Teams, with Rural Fire District Service Level Agreements in place for all LGAs. Resource sharing across Districts has proved beneficial and the New England Zone was formed with Armidale Dumaresq, Walcha, Guyra and Uralla Districts.

Two border liaison meetings were held during the year, and to test the Border Fire Plan an exercise was held for effective wildfire management and liaison for fire services and agencies operating within 10 kilometres of the NSW Queensland Border from Mungindi to Tweed Heads.

New Fire Control Centres (FCC) at Clarence Valley and Narrabri were completed with extensions scheduled for Willow Tree FCC and planning for Coffs Harbour FCC under way.

All Zones/Teams have established community education strategies linked both to Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and RFS Business Plans and with appropriate resource allocation.

To support Education Coordinators a further two Community Education trailers – located at Tweed and Hastings – were commissioned.

To improve fire response in the community, NSWFB Mutual Aid Agreements are under review for all Districts. For operational support, 85% of Mutual Aid Agreements with SES were completed with the remainder awaiting SES approval.

Thirty-five specialised volunteer training activities were conducted in conjunction with the Region's three Training Assistance Groups (TAGs) with emphasis being on increasing numbers of Trainers and Assessors. Funding provided to TAGs enabled them to meet identified deficiencies in higher level training. One third of the Region's Learning and Development Officers have now completed the upgraded Certificate IV Training and Assessment requirement with all officers targeted for course completion in 2006.

To continue the improvement of coordination and management of resources and exercise operational skills of firefighters and Incident Management Teams a two day practical regional field exercise, involving over 450 personnel, and 90 operational vehicles, was held.

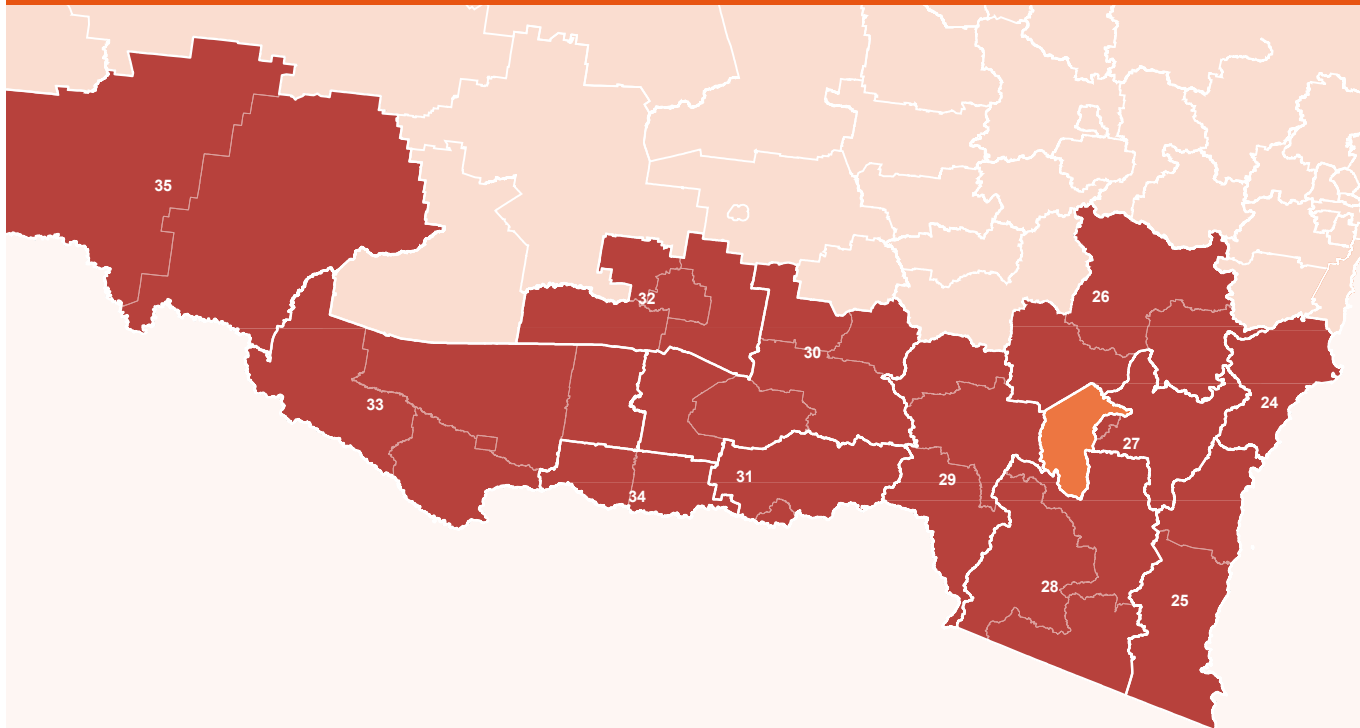
## **IN JANUARY 2006, NINETEEN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TRAVELLED TO WESTERN VICTORIA AS PART OF AN INTERSTATE TASK FORCE.**



# THE YEAR IN THE REGIONS

## REGION: SOUTH

### NSW OVERVIEW – RFS REGION/DISTRICTS/ZONES FOR REGION SOUTH



#### KEY

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 24. Shoalhaven  | 28. Monaro Team<br>Bombala<br>Cooma-Monaro<br>Snowy River                  | 31. Hume Zone<br>Albury<br>Greater Hume  | 34. Corowa Berrigan Zone<br>Corowa<br>Berrigan   |
| 25. Far South Coast Team<br>Bega Valley<br>Eurobodalla                            | 29. Riverina Highlands Zone<br>Gundagai<br>Tumbarumba<br>Tumut             | 32. MIA Zone<br>Murrumbidgee<br>Griffith<br>Leeton<br>Narrandera               | 35. Lower Western Zone<br>Wentworth<br>Balranald |
| 26. Southern Tablelands Zone<br>Yass Valley<br>Goulburn Mulwaree<br>Upper Lachlan | 30. Riverina Zone<br>Urana<br>Lockhart<br>Wagga Wagga<br>Coolamon<br>Junee | 33. Mid Murray Zone<br>Conargo<br>Deniliquin<br>Jerilderie<br>Murray<br>Wakool | □ Non-RFS  |

The Region experienced a relatively busy fire season due to a high grassland fire danger, with the focus of the season being in the central and western parts of the Region.

Emergency declarations under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act* were made for the Junee, Wagga Wagga/Greater Hume and Upper Lachlan local government areas, with one pre-emptive declaration made for Shoalhaven. Resources were provided predominantly from the Region with assistance from Regions West and East.

Sixteen strike teams were also tasked to Victoria and South Australia to assist the Country Fire Authority and Country Fire Service with property protection as a result of fires in the Grampians and East Gippsland areas. Crews were also placed on standby on the Victorian border for rapid deployment.

The Region has targeted training programmes to meet the Service's minimum requirements for qualifications in all positions as well as providing professional development opportunities for staff.

Administration Officers were given the opportunity to undertake learning and development in Certificate IV in Business Administration. Various courses at Certificate IV and Diploma level were undertaken by staff in other functional areas.

During the year:

- three staff completed Certificate IV (Business Administration)
- two staff completed an Advanced Diploma of Business Management
- one staff member completed Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- three staff completed a Diploma of Business (Quality Auditing)
- one staff member completed a Diploma Fire Management
- four staff completed Certificate IV in Firefighting Supervision.

## SIXTEEN STRIKE TEAMS WERE ALSO TASKED TO VICTORIA AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA TO ASSIST THE COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY AND COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

In addition, 11 will be undertaking a Diploma in Business, Frontline Management.

Six Regional staff attended two ICAC Workshops during the year covering corruption prevention and fact finding.

The Region undertook 11 internal audits for the Learning and Development, Community Safety, Operations and Management functions during the year. The outcomes will allow a more consistent approach to issues by Zones/Team, in line with corporate policies and standards.

The Lake George Zone (incorporating Palerang and Queanbeyan City local government areas) was formed during the year.

Key goals for Region South for next year include:

- Further development of Zones across Region
- State Championships – Barooga
- Group Officer Forum – Narrandera
- Community Education
- Regional Incident Management Workshop – Yass
- Regional Incident Management Exercise – Bega
- Formalisation of OH&S structures within Region and Zone Offices
- Region South all staff Conference
- Divisional Commander/Sector Leader Workshops
- Local Government Forum
- Cross-border forum incorporating CFA, ACT RFS and CFS.

The Region continued to place an increased focus on intra-Region communication as well as with a range of stakeholders. This included a number of forums held throughout the Region, comprising:

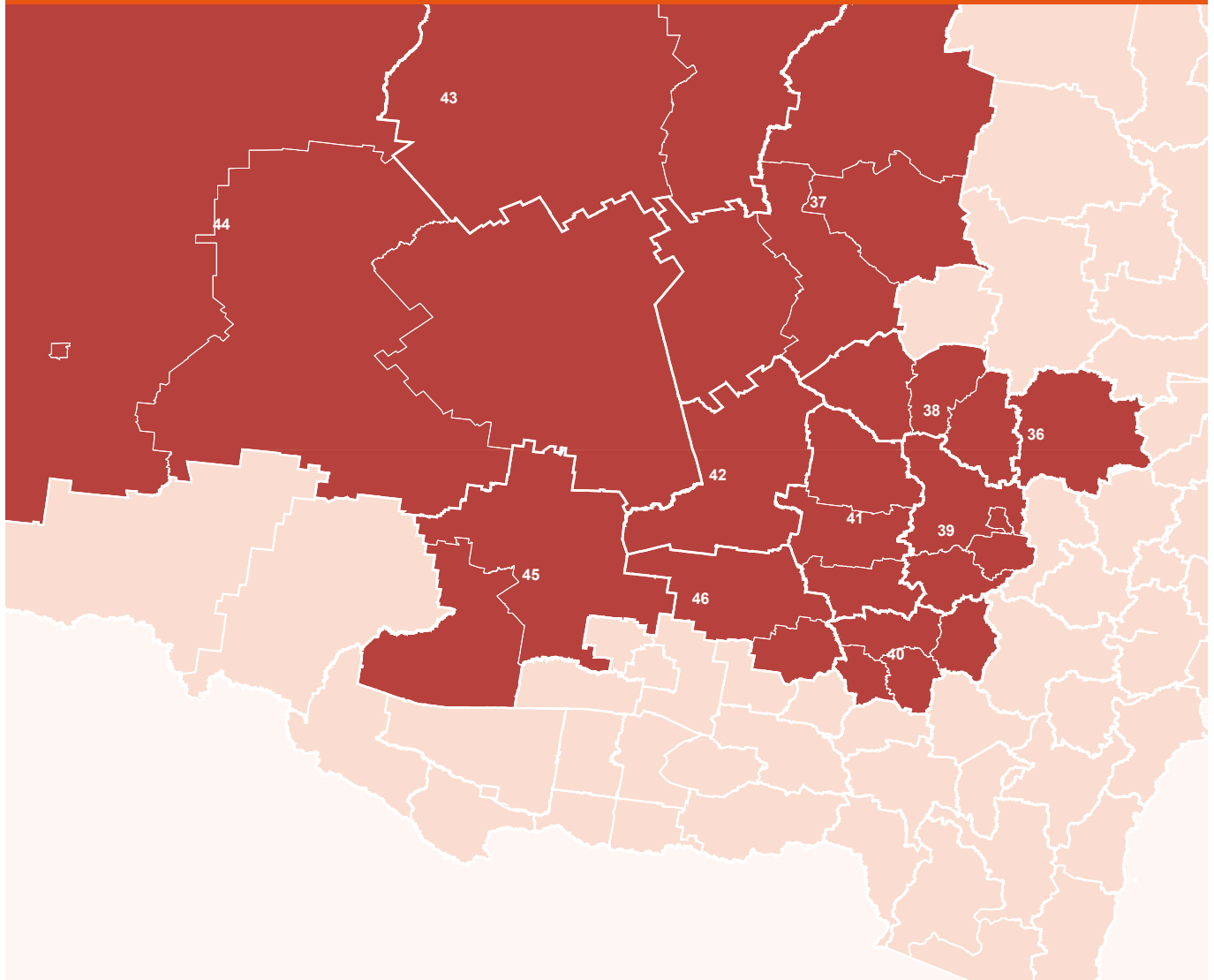
- Group Officers' Annual Conference held at Narrandera 27/28 July 2005 attended by 42 Group Captains and Deputy Group Captains representing each of the 12 Districts/Zones
- Incident Management Workshop held at Yass 9/10 August 2005. Attended by 10 officers from Forests NSW and eight volunteers from five Zones/Teams together with 10 salaried staff
- Combined Region South and Region West Volunteer Community Education Forum held at Griffith 1/4 September 2005
- IMT Exercise and IC/DIC Brief held at Nowra 6/8 September 2005 attended by 21 RFS salaried staff, 18 volunteers eight officers from Forests NSW, one from SCRIO and two from the Department of Environment and Conservation-Parks
- Volunteer Forum held at Culcairn (Hume Zone) on 10 October 2005
- Regional staff conference held at Griffith from 6/8 June 2006 attended by 70 people
- Quarterly Zone Manager and functional (Operations, Learning and Development, Community Safety, Administration) meetings to update and discuss relevant issues.

The major goal of this strategy is to open the lines of communication within the Region as well as with a range of stakeholders. Forums similar to those described above will be held in future to build on the work done to date.

# THE YEAR IN THE REGIONS

## REGION: WEST

### NSW OVERVIEW – RFS REGION/DISTRICTS/ZONES FOR REGION WEST



#### KEY

- |                     |                            |                             |                       |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 36. Cudgegong       | 39. Canobolas Zone         | 41. Mid Lachlan Team        | 44. Far West Team     |
| 37. North West Team | Blayney                    | Parkes                      | Unincorporated NSW    |
| Walgett             | Orange                     | Forbes                      | Central Darling       |
| Coonamble           | Cabonne                    | Weddin                      | Cobar                 |
| Warren              | Cowra                      | 42. Mid Lachlan Valley Team | Broken Hill (Non RFS) |
| Bogan               | 40. South West Slopes Zone | Lachlan                     | 45. Mid West Team     |
| 38. Orana Team      | Boorowa                    | 43. Barwon Darling Zone     | Hay                   |
| Narromine           | Harden                     | Brewarrina                  | Carrathool            |
| Wellington          | Cootamundra                | Bourke                      | 46. Bland Temora Zone |
| Dubbo               | Young                      |                             | Bland                 |
|                     |                            |                             | Temora                |





**OVERALL, AN AVERAGE COMPLIANCE OF 81% AGAINST TARGET PERFORMANCE OF THE 27 PROGRAMMES INCLUDED IN THIS KRA WAS ACHIEVED.**

Above average late spring rains, followed by a long dry summer produced high volumes of cured grass, particularly in the northern Riverina, South and Central West Slopes and Tablelands. This led to a busier than average fire season for Region West with six emergency declarations under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act*, the largest of which was the Weddin Mountains National Park. More than 800 personnel from Region West were deployed in 35 different strike teams across the state as well as a small commitment to South Australia.

In terms of overall performance all Region Teams/Zones can be consistently measured against the four key result areas (KRAs) of the Region's business plan:

- Management
- Operations
- Learning and Development
- Community Safety.

The Region established a process whereby all teams/zones (including the Regional Office) have the same target performances contained within their business plan, meaning that although the action undertaken may vary slightly between the team/Zone

and the Regional Office performance is measured consistently allowing accurate reporting upon the success or failure of programmes as a Region.

Overall performance against Business Plan Targets is shown below:

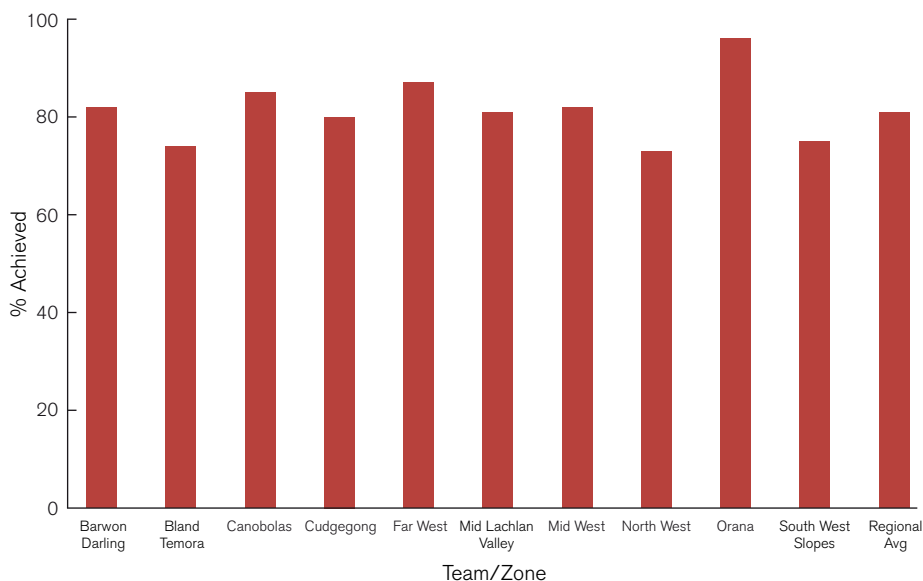
**MANAGEMENT**

Overall, an average compliance of 81% against target performance of the 27 programmes included in this KRA was achieved.

Major achievements included

- development and implementation of a 'core' business plan for Teams/Zones and the Regional office
- completion of an annual exception report within seven days of the end of the reporting period
- completion of all scheduled audits
- introduction of an inventory management system for all Teams/Zones
- introduction of three twelve-month clerical traineeships within the Mid Lachlan Valley, Cudgegong and Canobolas districts.

**REGION WEST – OVERALL 2005/06**





# THE YEAR IN THE REGIONS

## REGION: WEST



**AN AVERAGE COMPLIANCE OF 90% AGAINST TARGET PERFORMANCE OF THE 19 PROGRAMMES IN THIS KRA WAS ACHIEVED.**

### OPERATIONS

An average compliance of 73% against target performance of the 19 programmes in this KRA was achieved.

Major achievements included

- transfer of a Fire Investigation Coordinator to the Region
- progress with the Standards of Fire Cover programme
- the outstanding success of a regional exercise held at Lake Burrendong
- commencement of programmes for communications business continuity, catering provisions and logistics support, completion of which will occur next year.

### LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

An average compliance of 90% against target performance of the 19 programmes in this KRA was achieved.

Major achievements included:

- 70 personnel availing themselves of the opportunity to attend the Region's Group Leader training programme. Twenty-seven successfully undertook the assessment phase
- Twenty-five personnel were awarded the Diploma in Business (Frontline Management) with a further 13 currently studying. Forty-one salaried officers (out of an establishment of 64) within the Region hold the required qualification or better
- Thirty personnel attended a Safe Food Handling course and received a nationally recognised qualification with a further 30 set to attend a similar course next year
- Thirteen of the Region's trainers and assessors attended a Certificate IV Training and Assessment course
- Forty-three staff and volunteers were assessed as being competent to fulfil various roles in Incident Management Teams.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

An average compliance of 85% against target performance of the 19 programmes of this KRA was achieved.

Major achievements included:

- Selection of Orana and Cudgegong as pilot areas for the introduction of the new Risk Management Plan
- Introduction and piloting of the state-wide cadet programme at Forbes and Parkes High Schools
- An average of 12 community safety events in each Team/Zone
- Spatial Mapping system introduced
- Introduction of Community Safety Assistant Course at Gilgandra
- Introduction of Fire Trail Supervisors Course run by Orange TAFE.

Regional priorities for 2006/07 include:

- Level 3 (Fireline Tree Felling) courses in August and September 2006 in partnership with TAFE NSW
- Facilitation of specialist training courses in Aviation, Leadership, Conducting Briefings/Debriefings and Crash Free Driving
- Assisting volunteers to have their experience, knowledge and expertise recognised with formal RFS qualifications
- Incident Management exercises
- Group Officer forums.

## COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

The Counselling and Support Unit (CSU) covers three main areas of responsibility

- Critical Incident Support Services (CISS)
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and
- Member Assistance Programme (MAP).

During the review period information and awareness sessions for staff were provided in the areas of conflict resolution techniques and interview techniques with distressed people, as well as motivational keynote addresses at regional conferences.

The CISS programme is available to all members of the Service on a 24hrs/7 days a week basis with every aspect of the work being strictly confidential with assistance provided through Peer Support and trauma specialist interventions.

The third stage of the review of CISS standing protocols and procedures was completed and involved a review of psychosocial-educational components against best practice theory and delivery models; guidelines for teams, districts and regional offices as well as inter-agency training and multi-agency responses. The review is 90% complete with the final document being produced and implemented in December 2006.

A needs analysis focusing on trends in CISS activations and the use of on-scene support strategies was completed. Advanced training for Peer Support members was undertaken in October 2005 and April 2006.

Future CISS goals

- Representation and undertaking training at the forthcoming Australian Conference of Critical Incident Stress Management and the World Congress in 2007
- Identification of additional Peer Support positions on a geographical basis

- Specific inter-agency teams meetings and training
- Two advanced team training activities.

## MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

The Service continues to recognise the need to support our volunteer members who may be affected by a situation not directly relating to their operational involvement. In these cases, a referral and assistance programme is available, which helps members and their families locate an appropriate practitioner within their geographical location if possible.

The programme continues to be integrated with the Chaplaincy and Family Support initiatives allowing for appropriate clinical advice and services to be offered. Comparative analysis indicates a stable utilisation of the referral service. Spot reviews indicated that the provision of such a programme was perceived as highly valuable.



# OPERATIONS SUPPORT

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

This counselling service, available to employees and their families, is provided through a dual mechanism of internal provision and an external contracted agency of qualified Psychologists and Practitioners, specialising in this aspect of support.

Statistically, the utilisation rate of this programme remains similar to last year.

A review of the geographic locations of clinical associates was conducted resulting in an increase of 12% better coverage.

A critique of the referral mechanisms to the external provider was again reviewed in consultation with the external provider ensuring a smoother and more effective engagement of services takes place.

A promotional drive was undertaken including updated information as part of the new employee orientation package.

An educative process for both employees and managers continued on a region-by-region basis with special emphasis is being given to the 'Manager Assist' element of the EAP.

Customer satisfaction surveys undertaken by the provider indicate a healthy satisfaction with services offered.

## ENGINEERING SERVICES

Delivery of new tankers was in accordance with the agreed production schedule enabling those vehicles to be effectively integrated into the service's tanker fleet. Funding provision was made for 230 new and refurbished tankers to be delivered to brigades.

New developments in the design of tankers/appliances and personal protective equipment were the highlights of an extremely busy year.

In respect of design performance the Service improved the design of the Category 1 tanker and finalised the design of a new Category 11 tanker.

A new format contract for Category 1, 2 and 11 tankers was released.

Research continued into improvements to two-piece wildland protective clothing.



**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS UNDERTAKEN BY THE PROVIDER INDICATE A HEALTHY SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES OFFERED.**

	CISS			MAP	EAP	
	Number of Requests	Number of Personnel assisted	Hours	Number of new Requests	Internal	External
2005-2006	309	2,287	5,886	311	91	24
2004-2005	322	2,533	5,951	304	109	24
2003-2004	295	2,181	4,842	284	118	21
2002-2003	314	2,507	6,819	316	189	8
2001-2002	286	2,330	4,577	338	133	14

## STATISTICS

*NB. These figures do not account for pre-incident information/education sessions provided throughout the year.*

*The number of hours relating to CISS does not account for training and supervision of CISS personnel.*

A modified design to address the issue of chassis cracks in some FTS Category 1 and 2 tankers was completed. Computer modelling of the performance of the altered chassis was carried out successfully. Field testing of the new design will be carried out at the ADF equipment test centre once a test vehicle is available.

### LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Compliance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is mandatory for the Service and is complete except for some training materials that – while meeting the new standards – need to be updated specifically to refer to those standards.

Training materials packs were produced within budget. In 2005/06 a policy of asserting the importance of learning and development objectives and maintaining a stronger focus on meeting deadlines has improved performance for meeting completion target dates. Previously, the number of staff available to produce training materials did not meet market demand but this has now been corrected and 'on time' performance has improved.

The Service's Learning and Development Committee was particularly active and continues to enjoy a positive reputation for providing informed and constructive feedback. Formal feedback sheets will be attached to all drafts sent out for circulation and programmes will be validated and improved in the following twelve months.

Extension of the scope of registration to cover additional units of competency related to a range of large incident management, fire investigation and senior community safety functions was successfully completed.

Workshops developed during the year have helped accelerate the training of firefighters, crew leaders, group leaders and selected specialists.

The new learning and assessment strategies define about 60 training programmes compared with 25 in the previous system defined in 1996. Out of that 60, training support materials currently exist for 50 programmes.

A key entry qualification for many RFS staff positions is the certificate IV in Firefighting Supervision (recently replaced by the certificate IV in Public Safety – Firefighting Supervision). This qualification becomes mandatory for persons seeking relevant new positions from 1 January 2008. The annual and cumulative numbers achieving this qualification through RFS in recent years is indicated in the table below:

*Note: The new national Certificate IV in Public Safety (Firefighting Supervision) is difficult to achieve except for people who are specialists in the aviation or community safety fields – see the drop in numbers qualifying in 2005-06.*

*The RFS also accepts the certificates IV in Business Management, Business (Frontline Management) and Government (with suitable Public Safety units attached) as being equivalent. Arrangements have been put in place for both staff and volunteers of the Service to have easy access to the Certificate IV in Business (Frontline Management). Programmes are now in place to train existing staff in the Diploma of Business (Frontline Management) and Advanced Diploma of Business Management. Future statistics will feature these qualification levels. During the reporting period 45 staff completed these programmes.*

	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03
Number/year	11	87	56	32
Cumulative	226	215	128	72



**IN THE FIRST FULL DEVELOPMENT YEAR MyRFS INCREASED ITS MEMBERSHIP TO 5,800 REGISTERED VOLUNTEER USERS AND HAS A TARGET OF ACHIEVING 10,000 REGISTERED USERS BY 30 JUNE 2007.**

## MINISTERIAL LIAISON UNIT

The Unit is responsible for providing draft replies to Ministerial correspondence, Parliamentary advice and briefing material, answers to Parliamentary questions, coordination of Cabinet papers, and responses to requests for documents on behalf of the Service.

The Unit handled 517 formal Ministerial and Freedom of Information requests compared to 720 last year. The majority were replies to letters (169), closely followed by house folder and estimates committee notes to support the Minister in Parliament (165).

Freedom of Information statistics are set out in Appendix 'H'.

Average response time for answering Ministerial requests was 20.6 days excluding house folder and estimates committee notes.

The Unit achieved 100% compliance with the statutory timeframes for determination under the *Freedom of Information Act*. No decisions were overturned on review.

## MyRFS

MyRFS is the secure volunteer website that allows volunteers to access information and services they need to better fulfil their roles.

In the first full development year MyRFS increased its membership to 5,800 registered volunteer users and has a target of achieving 10,000 registered users by 30 June 2007.

As part of the diverse Project Communications Plan MyRFS was represented and demonstrated at a number of volunteer events during the year including regional exercises, community education forums and the RFS annual conference in Mudgee.

The MyRFS website allows volunteers to self-register using specific information provided to each volunteer by their captain or brigade secretary. This information is also passed to each new member of the Service. MyRFS helpline volunteers can obtain login support 24 hours a day, seven

days a week. A suite of administrative tools were developed to allow front-line staff at the Service's Operations Customer Support centre to diagnose and resolve common problems.

In the next year of development MyRFS will build on its strong foundation with additional maps and more resources to assist volunteers better manage their brigade activities.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

The first year of existence for the section was a busy and rewarding time for the newly appointed staff and a significant number of milestones were achieved.

A staff first aid management system that ensures the provision of expert first aid assistance to staff and visitors to Service offices throughout the state was developed and implemented.

A staff health and safety consultation committee was formed to assist and work with management in the identification and control of hazards within designated RFS workplaces.

A key achievement was the creation of an injury data collection and analysis capability which will enable the Service to efficiently facilitate the collection, storage and retrieval of accident and injury reports for analysis and reporting.

A proposal to establish a formal accident/incident investigation system incorporating trained investigation officers was accepted by the Executive and the project is progressing on schedule with full implementation prior to the start of the 2006 fire season.



The evolution of the traditional fire service role from being that of purely a responsive organisation into one which interacts with the community before, during, and after fire events is evident in the Directorate's focus.

The Service strives to be the leader in complex areas such as development control, hazard complaints, responsible environmental considerations and community engagement.

It is only by having a regulatory role in the approval of developments and management of bush fire hazards that the RFS can influence the level of safety afforded to the community of NSW living in or near bushland, along with ensuring that the environment that our fire fighters work in during times of bush fires is as safe as possible.

During the past year, the Directorate has been significantly involved in a number of projects including:

- Revision of *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2001*
- Assessment of 2,875 development applications as part of Development Control Services function
- Finalisation of the review, and subsequent implementation, of the *Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code*
- Provided districts, zones and teams with media support for more than 7,700 bush, grass and structure fires, as well as hundreds of other emergency incidents across NSW
- Trained more than 600 journalists, camera operators, photographers and producers around NSW in bush fire safety
- Significantly increased the number of schools participating in the 10 week Secondary Schools Cadet Programme.

The Directorate's focus over the ensuing twelve months is to implement the new *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006*, and provide appropriate training for staff and volunteers in all aspects of community safety. Additionally, we will review our service delivery components to ensure that we conduct our business in a manner that is responsive to community expectations and ensure that all policy and guideline documents are realistic and achievable.

## DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SERVICES

Development Control Services aims to increase the safety of our community through appropriate planning, design and construction of development in bush fire prone areas. This ultimately reduces community exposure to the damage caused by bush fires and provides a better environment for firefighters in the event of bush fires.

Rural Fire Districts continue to be supported by Development Control Services in line with the 2002 amendment of the *Rural Fires Act* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* to give the Service a role in approving new developments in bush fire prone areas. Since then 33,084 development applications have been assessed by the Service.

During the year under review, the Service assessed 9,336 developments across the State, of which 2,875 development applications were assessed as part of the development control services function. The number of integrated development applications refused by the Service has fallen significantly over the past three years from 145 (5.3%) in 2003/04 to 41 (1.8%) in 2005/06. The level of service offered to clients and outcomes achieved have increased with a marked reduction in overdue applications.

Of the applications processed 391 were special protection developments (schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other vulnerable communities) and 1872 were subdivision developments.



**THE SERVICE STRIVES TO BE THE LEADER IN COMPLEX AREAS SUCH AS DEVELOPMENT CONTROL, HAZARD COMPLAINTS, RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.**

The Service processed 989 development applications under Sections 79C and 96 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* compared to 752 applications last year – an increase of 31.5%.

Advice was provided to local councils and other agencies in respect of local environment plans and bush fire protection under Section 117 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

In conjunction with the Department of Planning and other stakeholders the Service began a review of *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2001*. The reviewed and revised version of the document will be completed next year.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

The Natural Environment Services section is responsible for developing and implementing environmental policy within the Service. In doing so, the section assists the BFCC, Bush Fire Management Committees, other agencies and the Service to undertake their activities in a more cohesive, planned and effective manner in order to improve overall performance for the community. It aims to provide analysis, advice, recommendations and policy on ecologically sustainable development, ensure compliance with environmental legislation and support continuous improvement initiatives for environmental outcomes.

Finalisation of the review, and subsequent implementation, of the *Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code* was a major project this year. The Code provides a streamlined approach to environmental assessment for the majority of bush fire hazard reduction works across NSW.

The review involved extensive consultation with government regulatory, firefighting and land management authorities and community interest organisations. There was also a state-wide public exhibition of the draft document which resulted in 26 submissions. Following the period of extensive public exhibition, the amended Code was approved by the Minister for Emergency Services (with the concurrence of other relevant Ministers) and subsequently gazetted to commence on 1 February, 2006.

Retraining and assessment of 120 Service staff as Certificate Issuing Officers ensured a smooth transition between implementation of the original Code and the amended version. Comprehensive Code guidelines have also been prepared to assist staff. Natural Environment Services assisted other authorities understand the changes to the Code.

Natural Environment Services has also been involved with a major review of community education documents associated with the Code, as follows:

- Application Instructions for Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificates
- Before You Light that Fire
- Standards for Pile Burning
- Standards for Windrow Burning
- Standards for Low Intensity Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Burning
- Standards for Asset Protection Zones.

During the year, 2,435 Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificates were issued by the Service compared to 2,572 last year.



**ON SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER, MORE THAN 400 BRIGADE STATIONS ACROSS THE STATE WERE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC TO PROMOTE FIRE AWARENESS, PROPERTY PROTECTION AND GENERAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES.**



## MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Media and Public Affairs section manages much of the Service's external relations. It is responsible for media comment on Service issues and activities, as well as key promotions such as the annual Open Day. Media and Public Affairs produces the Bushfire Bulletin four times a year and is also responsible for the production of the Annual Report.

2005-06 saw a number of major achievements for Media and Public Affairs:

### Open Day

On Saturday 8 October, more than 400 Brigade stations across the state were opened to the public to promote fire awareness; property protection and general Service activities. This was the Service's second annual Open Day and the third is expected to be held in September 2006.

### Operational Media

RFS Media Liaison Officers based at local Incident Management Teams (IMTs) provided public safety information to residents in fire affected areas during 38 Section 44 fires in the 2005-2006 fire season, including major fires at Junee and Gosford.

At a state-wide level, the Service's Media Officers supported districts, zones and teams with media assistance for more than 7,700 bush, grass and structure fires, as well as hundreds of other emergency incidents across NSW.

The ongoing media accreditation programme has now seen more than 3,000 journalists, camera operators and photographers around NSW trained in bush fire safety. 600 media personnel were trained during 2005-2006.

This year a new monthly publication 'Operational Brief' was produced by Media and Public Affairs to disseminate vital operational information from Aviation; Operational Policy and Standards; Operational Planning and Development; and Operational Communications. 'Operational Brief' is distributed to volunteers and staff.

## Bushfire Bulletin and Website

Major improvements have been made to both the Bushfire Bulletin and the Rural Fire Service public website.

The Bushfire Bulletin is the Service's quarterly magazine, circulating to more than 33,000 subscribers. After a period of consultation and development, the new look Bushfire Bulletin was launched in January 2006. The new-look Bulletin features a cleaner layout, more photos and updates on activities at brigade, district and state level. A reader survey is currently underway to help future improvements.

The Service's public website plays a key role in communicating information about current fires, preparing for fires, building in bush fire prone areas and the general activities of the Service. The layout and navigation of the site have now been greatly improved and it is now far easier for the public to access the areas they need without a series of searches. The RFS website receives more than 3,700,000 hits each year.

### Establishment of 1800 NSW RFS

In order to improve access to the Service and a faster response to enquiries, a new 1800 number, 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737) has been introduced. 1800 NSW RFS provides direct information on:

- Current fire activity
- Total Fire Bans
- Fire safety tips for urban and country people
- Advice on building development controls.

Introduced in October 2005, the Information Line recorded more than 50,000 calls to 30 June 2006. A new interactive system is being developed that will expand the number of options available to callers and the scope of information they will be able to access.

## Events Coordination

To ensure that standardisation occurs throughout the Service with the way in which medal presentations, station openings and the like are conducted, an 'Events Management Kit' was developed and distributed to all districts. In addition to presentation resources the kit also contains guidelines on how to manage events.

## RISK MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

The Risk Management Performance Unit provides audit, investigation, reporting and support services for the BFCC and the Service. The Unit's activities inform continuous improvement of community safety outcomes and facilitate improvements in the coordinated fire management arrangements.

Fire Permit reporting forms part of the Annual Bush Fire Risk Management Plan implementation report to the BFCC. The *Rural Fires Act 1997* provides for this report to close by 31 August 2006 for the 2005/06 year. It is anticipated that the full report will be presented to the BFCC in November 2006.

The BFCC Communications Reference Group met several times during 2005/06 to further develop implementation of seven key strategies adopted last year.

The co-ordination of hazard reduction figures involves the integration of different data sets from land management agencies. The hazard reduction figures are set out in Appendix 'C'.

The performance audits of BFRMPs continued with 41 plans having been audited to date, including nine during 2005/06.

BFRMPs are developed by local BFMCS, and approved by the BFCC, and provide a comprehensive set of strategies for the reduction of bush fire hazards across all land tenures and agencies involved in bush fire management within that local area over a five year period.

Performance audits are conducted under section 62A(1) of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, which gives the Commissioner the authority to carry out audits. The required number of audits being set out in the Strategic Audit Plan which resulted from the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Bush Fires 2002.

Details of the plans that were audited are set out in Appendix 'D'.

The strategies contained within BFRMPs have five levels of risk, from extreme to insignificant, and define community assets such as houses, schools and hospitals and environmental assets such as threatened species and cultural heritage. The strategies cover prevention activities, community education, hazard reduction works, arson reduction activities and response planning.

The review of the model bush fire risk management plan continues and is due for completion in early 2007.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Community Education section is tasked with developing and/or improving the knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours of the wider community regarding fires. The focus is to educate the general public in the prevention, control, suppression and mitigation of bush and other fires thereby ensuring a better prepared and safer community. The ideal outcome is a community that is well aware of the hazards of fire and is well prepared for its threat.

With the BRIMS providing its first full year report on the level of activity across the State the year under review was a watershed for the Service's Community Education section. Data showed that the Service committed 37,700 hours to community awareness and education programmes and delivered:

- 325 Adult Programmes
- 1,072 Fire Awareness Programmes
- 546 Youth Programmes.

The Community Safety Assistant (CSA) training programme, the first of three levels of community education training based on the national *Certificate III* and *IV* and *Diploma in Community Safety*, was rolled out across the State with 243 volunteers and staff successfully completing the programme. The second level of training, Community Safety Facilitator (CSF), was released in June and 24 Service members completed assessment. Both programmes, plus the third level programme – Community Safety Coordinator (CSC) – will continue to be available next year.

The number of schools taking part in the 10 week school based Cadet Training Package increased from five in 2004/5 to 17 in 2005/6 – an increase of 340%.

Funding from NRMA Insurance/Insurance Australia Group enabled the Service to purchase three additional community education trailers, bringing the total number of trailers in use to 32. These highly effective units provide the Service with a professional and flexible capacity to deliver community safety messages to the public at differing types of venues ranging from farms, villages, street meetings, schools or remote parts of the state.

The tenth Community Education Conference was conducted in Newcastle and attended by 427 delegates from across Australia – an increase of 27% on the previous year. The recognition of the quality of the information and resources at this annual conference was further demonstrated by the registration and attendance of 37 delegates from 15 related services located throughout Australasia. Mentoring in the delivery and use of contemporary techniques and new resources was delivered through a series of regional forums specifically targeted at volunteer educators to address the outcomes of the Conference.

Major enhancements were achieved in the reference and research capabilities of the Service through the Library website and resource catalogues were made available to all volunteers via the MyRFS portal.

## COMMUNITY HAZARDS MANAGEMENT

District Bush Fire Risk Management Plans form the basis for bush fire hazard reduction works planning within local government areas in NSW. The Community Hazard Management section develops the guidelines and frame work for these plans and assists local Bush Fire Management Committees to develop Bush Fire Risk Management Plans. A significant outcome of these plans is ensuring that essential hazard reduction works are undertaken.

**MAJOR ENHANCEMENTS WERE ACHIEVED IN THE REFERENCE AND RESEARCH CAPABILITIES OF THE SERVICE THROUGH THE LIBRARY WEBSITE AND RESOURCE CATALOGUES WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL VOLUNTEERS VIA THE MyRFS PORTAL.**



The section is also responsible for managing the complaints about hazard reduction, and providing members of the public with a facility to register concerns about bush fire hazards. The section is also responsible for ensuring that hazards are treated by issuing notices and engaging contractors to undertake works where the landholder fails to comply.

The Community Hazards Management section is committed to the continuous improvement of the policy and planning instruments relating to coordinated bush fire planning under section 52 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The section also provides assistance and advice to BFMCS in the development of these plans, as well as managing the issue of fire safety permits and penalty notices.

During the year key achievements included the:

- development of a penalty notice system
- completion of *Guidelines for Permit Issuing Officers*
- implementation of a spatial reporting system for fire safety permits and
- continuation of the review of the Risk Management Planning Process and the use of that process by four BFMCS.

In the next twelve months the section will:

- finalise the development of the Bush Fire Risk Management planning process
- complete a roll-out of the new model for Operations Plans under Section 52
- develop a state-wide fuel assessment process
- implement a new permit issuing system to support volunteers issuing permits
- establish a collaborative research centre for the environmental risk management of bush fires.

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Business Development Unit's role is to identify and act upon international and domestic commercial business opportunities within the functions of the Service as identified in the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The objectives of these activities are to increase revenue for the Service; to provide professional development opportunities for volunteers and staff; to benchmark the Service against others, both within Australia and internationally; and to make a contribution to emergency management at a global level, particularly in developing countries.

The activities of the Business Development unit make a financial contribution to the resources available to support the development of facilities and opportunities for volunteers.

#### Domestic Business

Our corporate training programme within NSW continues to grow in areas such as fire extinguisher training and bush fire awareness courses. Each corporate training course is conducted by qualified instructors drawn from volunteer ranks from Rural Fire Districts across the state.

During the year, a total of 91 corporate training courses were conducted generating total revenue of \$97,000.

#### International Business

For the review period the focus centred on new market opportunities to include Korea and Vietnam.

Discussions and/or officer exchange programmes were also pursued with the governments of China, Bhutan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan.

Details of international travel relating to business development are included in Appendix 'O'.

## CORPORATE PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE

Strategic Development is responsible for the development, implementation and the provision of support for the Service's planning, reporting, management and continuous improvement systems.

Its role is designed to assist other parts of the Service with the delivery of key services through the adoption of a more systematic and planned approach to their work. Largely, much of this work is project-based during the initial phases of development, followed by the implementation of ongoing management and maintenance systems.

Significant outcomes were achieved in a range of fields during 2005/06, including:

- Support for the expansion and development of the Service's internal auditing function
- Establishment of the Service's interim Business Continuity Management Plan
- Revitalisation of the Service's Standards of Fire Cover in order to better inform the allocation of firefighting equipment and facilities
- Establishment of the Service's Corporate Plan, and
- Implementation of elements of the Organisational Performance Management Framework.

In pursuing its strategy to satisfy the current and future needs of the Service and other agencies by maintaining and expanding the competencies both of operational and non-operational personnel the Service introduced a centralised audit programme. The policy development framework includes a comprehensive review document to ensure that key performance indicators are developed to provide measures against which they can be audited.

## Information Services

Improvements to the structure and process within the Help Desk area have delivered a more customer focused service. Staff both in headquarters and districts – where distance makes such a service even more important – have expressed their increased satisfaction with the service. During the year 7,561 help desk calls were opened compared to 7,063 in the previous year and 7,444 in 2003/04. This increase largely reflects the expected peak in calls during the roll-out of the new Standard Operating Environment.

Based on surveys that were completed at the closure of each call, customer satisfaction remained relatively unchanged at 6.62 on a scale of 1 to 7, compared to 6.61 last year.

Other key achievements during the year were

- Mapping and data analysis for the hazard reduction four year plan
- A portal for volunteers (MyRFS) was developed and an improved version, with additional features, was released
- In support of MyRFS, two thousand brigade maps were provided
- A reduction in the time taken to map firescan data (from aircraft) from the forecast six hours to two hours. This has significantly improved the Service's ability to plan firefighting operations
- The implementation of a standard operating environment for all RFS workstations comprising the latest versions of Microsoft systems and applications. These changes have enabled the delivery of a significant improvement in the overall reliability of our computer systems
- Implementation of a standards-based (PRINCE2) project management methodology
- Improvements to ICON for the management of live incidents.



**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
REMAINED RELATIVELY  
UNCHANGED AT 6.62  
ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 7,  
COMPARED TO 6.61  
LAST YEAR.**



### Policy and Standards

Achievements during the year have been directed into four areas

- Complete review of the model brigade constitution
- The implementation of a new policy development framework
- A review of all existing policy documentation, and
- Development and maintenance of a legal advice register.

Review of the model brigade constitution included extensive consultation with key stakeholders, in particular a broad cross-section of volunteer representatives. Three separate guidelines were also developed to complement the new constitution to assist brigades in

- managing their accounts
- managing brigade meetings, and
- completing the new constitution.

In reviewing the existing policy environment it was recognised that there was an opportunity for improvement in the development, dissemination and communication of policy documentation. Following development of a policy development framework, and a supporting Service Standard, an effective communication strategy is being developed. This will be directed to all staff and volunteers to better communicate and educate policy documentation to ensure widespread dissemination and promotion of a two way exchange of information with all Service members.

An extensive review of all service standards and associated guidelines and standard operating procedures was undertaken with a view to reducing not only the number of documents but also ensuring that they comply with legislative requirements. The Service's Policy Review Committee has agreed to a proposal to reduce the number of service standards from 107 to 64. The proposal will be implemented next year.

### Strategic Services and Infrastructure Planning

The Standard Station Project was a key project undertaken by the section. It has enabled the Service for the first time to set a flexible standard that meets the needs of the Service's Volunteers. The standard takes into account the various needs across the State, whether it be a Rural Remote Brigade needing a simple 1 Bay Station or a Village 2 Brigade requiring a 4 Bay Station with a Meeting Room, Office, Kitchen, Toilets and Breathing Apparatus Cleaning and storage room, the new standard allow this to occur. The standard eliminates the need to keep redesigning stations every time a Brigade needs a new station built. It also allows Local Government to better manage its budget as the new standard gives certainty to the budgeting process. The standard also allows for a more coordinated approach to procurement with the possibility of State-wide contract being let for construction and therefore giving the possibility of discounts through bulk purchase.





*I've been volunteering for 5 years and I enjoy getting involved in the community and obtaining new skills. Socialising is also a big part of what we do and it's a great way to meet new people.*



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## OUR PERFORMANCE

Our Strategic Plan guides our performance and is based on the doctrine of continuous improvement.

The four key result areas that are the drivers for our performance are

- **Management** – managing our human, financial and physical resources in a competent and accountable manner
- **Community Safety** – providing a range of prevention and mitigation services to increase community awareness of risks, and involvement in their reduction
- **Learning and Development** – competent and productive leadership and management by people who are committed to our mission, and
- **Operations** – ensuring rapid and effective response to emergency incidents and to prevent injury and loss.

This section of our annual report details our performance against these critical areas.



## MANAGING OUR HUMAN, FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES IN A COMPETENT AND ACCOUNTABLE MANNER

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Establish and maintain office documentation systems	Complied with statutory requirements	Audit confirms compliance	Follow up audits
Record Assets on Asset Management system	Introduced new policy and systems to improve asset reporting	Percentage of assets recorded	Follow up audits
Comply with Government energy reduction targets	Increased green power purchased to 6%	Percentage of green power purchased	Review of Energy Management Plan
	Prepared Energy Management Plan		
Improve cost effectiveness of RFS passenger vehicle fleet	Energy efficient equipment purchased	Percentage of new equipment purchased	Increased percentage of energy efficient equipment
	Identified appropriate vehicles for fleet	Reduction in fleet running costs for fleet	Evaluate performance of vehicles
Reduce waste	Implemented new fleet management system	Percentage of regions/districts using new system	All regions/districts using new system
	Met target of 85% recyclable materials recycled/purchased	Percentage of compliance with government policy	Fully comply with policy
Improve security	Introduced new recycling initiatives		Increase staff awareness
	Standard platform for regional/district offices delayed	Percentage of regional/district offices moved to common platform	Roll-out platform to appropriate offices
Improve warehouse management	Introduces best practice warehousing processes	Number of breaches of processes	Continue process and comply with OH&S requirements
Increase revenue through business development	20% revenue increase	Percentage of revenue increased	Increase return on investment through increased business
Review Strategic Plan	New Corporate Plan developed	Compliance with target date.	Refinement of performance indicators
	New Strategic Plan drafted	Milestones met	Plan available November 2006
Design and implementation Version 3 of Electronic Service Delivery model (eSDM)	Delivered April 2006	Implementation timetable. Number regional offices using eSDM	Version 4 – with links to Total Asset Management System (TAM) – available Service-wide
Continue implementation of systems audit programme	68 audits in 2005/6 21 lead auditors trained	119 target audits percentage increase in number of lead auditors trained	Comply fully with programme targets

# MANAGEMENT

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Revitalise Standards of Fire Cover (SOFC) programme	Districts completion of SOFC begun Regions to complete pilot brigade classification projects	Number completed Number completed by target date	Data to be included in TAM plan August 2006
Review Performance Management Planning and Review System	Project delayed until March 2007	Compliance with target date	Completion by March 2007
Develop links between Corporate and Human Resources Plans	Initial development completed	Compliance with target date	Development of extent and quality of links
Efficient supply of tankers	Tankers supplied within specified timeframes	Percentage of delivered late Percentage of reduction in number of faults reported	On-time delivery of tankers
Participate in development of PPE to Australian and ISO technical standards	Active involvement in working forums	Percentage of forums/working groups attended	Ongoing participation
Develop RandD programme to provide basis for engineering related decisions	Programme developed and implemented	Findings published	Continuation of programme
Design new tanker spray protection system	System designed and tested	Adoption by December 2006	Monitor and evaluate
Develop and release new Corporate Reports	Two new sections added – Inventory and Training	Clients find reports fit for purpose	Enhancement of existing reports, construction and deployment of new reports
Implement policy and document review process	Framework developed Review and update of Service Standards and SOPs delayed	Regular meeting of Policy Review Committee Compliance with timetable	Three yearly review schedule to be developed Full completion of review process by June 2007
Development of policy document control management system.	Delayed through failure of supply by software provider	Percentage of information loaded onto Document Management System	Implementation following supply of software
Review of brigade model constitution	Project completed	Process developed and compliance achieved	New suite of documents to be issued by 1 September 2006

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Project manage key corporate projects	21 projects managed compared with 21 in 2004/05 and 8 in 2003/04	Number of projects managed using corporate project methodology	Full compliance with methodology
Complete revised TAM plan	Plan completed	Compliance with Treasury Guidelines	Approved by Treasury, August 2006
Audit of brigade facilities	50% brigade stations audited	Percentage brigade stations audited	100% audit completed
Preparation of draft Strategic Human Resources plan	Plan drafted	Plan to be available June 2006	Report on action strategies
Support volunteers in performing Service roles	Identified issues Systems, policies developed to remove constraints Participated in V21 Project conducted by Australian Catholic University – 3 year project Participated in CRC research project on volunteerism – Phase 1 completed Participated in volunteer forums	Percentage reported and analysed Percentage of issues identified Delivery of Project report – 90% completed Compliance with completion dates Number of forums	Continue Ongoing analysis Analysis of report; implementation of identified recruitment options Commencement of Phase 2 Increase number of forums
Effective service membership procedures	Provided evidence of record keeping, electronic database and destruction of Consent forms	Percentage of compliance with provisions of MOU with CrimTrac Agency	Audit by CrimTrac Agency

# COMMUNITY SAFETY

## PROVIDING A RANGE OF PREVENTION AND MITIGATION SERVICES TO INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF RISKS AND INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR REDUCTION

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Update and review Planning for Bush Fire Protection (PBFP) and train staff	Delayed due to extensive consultation with review panel	Target date compliance	Public exhibition in September 2006
Design and implementation of Fire Investigation System to Phase II	Implementation completed	Design and implementation completed	Planning for next version
Maintain and improve fire investigation data analysis system	Final development of system	Percentage of system completed within timeframe	Integrate with incident reporting system (ICON)
Investigate and report upon cause and origin of reported fires	375 wildfire and 362 structural fires investigated (97%)	Percentage of fires investigated within Service parameters	Increase reporting capabilities
Promote Service's fire investigation capabilities	Participation on Australian Fire Investigators Committee and Wildland Investigation Working Team (USA)	Participation level in relevant workshops/professional meetings	Enhance international fire investigation links
BFCC coordinated firefighting communications strategies	Communications plan 80% completed	Communications plan implementation programme developed	Implementation of Plan
Monitoring Section 52 plans	10% plans audited. 100% plans compliant	10% risk plans audited. Compliance levels of plans	Continue audits Develop S52 operations plans audits.
Performance audits of BFRMPs	10% plans audited	Percentage of plans audited	Analysis of audits



What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Encourage bush fire awareness	20 community FireWise groups established	Percentage of increase in number of groups	5% increase
	Bush FireWise programme established in 88% districts/zones	Percentage of districts/zones with Programme	Gap analysis to be performed
	190 Community Fireguard for Kids Programmes conducted	Percentage of increase in programmes conducted	5% increase
	291 schools visited	Percentage of increase in schools visited	5% increase
	Education material aligned to Code	Reduced number of deaths, injuries, property losses/damage attributed to fire	Further development of education material
		Number of reported fire incidents per 100,000 people	Reduction in number of fire related incidents
Implementation of community education strategies	Implementation report completed	Compliance with August reporting deadline	05/06 report to be used as benchmark for 06/07 reports
Development of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans by BFMCs	Model plan developed and under review	Percentage of BFMCs with completed plans within 12 months of release of new model 20% target	Completion of review

# LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

## COMPETENT AND PRODUCTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT BY PEOPLE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO OUR MISSION

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Determine GIS training needs to ensure competence in using spatial data	Needs identified and informal training conducted for GIS users	Percentage identified programmes undertaken within first year	Formal training programmes for GIS/GPS systems users
Support and training of Intranet	Software upgrade completed. Training given to content managers	Intranet content maintained	Ongoing support as required
Ensure relevant learning and development compliance	Complied with Australian Quality Training Framework	Percentage of compliance	Audit as Registered Training Organisation
Staff training	<p>Training needs identified</p> <p>Link established between professional development and PMPRS</p> <p>Protect and Preserve the Incident Scene package developed and submitted for VETAB accreditation</p> <p>34 personnel trained in wildfire investigation and 14 personnel trained in structural fire investigation</p>	<p>Training delivered</p> <p>Individual training applications to be supported by Personal Development Plans</p> <p>On-time for VETAB submission</p>	<p>Professional Development Committee (PDC) to report on progress</p> <p>Package to be delivered to Service's first attack crews</p> <p>Additional training as required</p>
Fire investigation component to be included in all regional exercises	100% inclusion	Percentage of exercises including fire investigation component	Ensure full compliance at all future exercises

## ENSURING RAPID AND EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY INCIDENTS TO PREVENT INJURY AND LOSS

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Design and implementation of logistics management function	Project did not commence	System specified, designed, developed and implemented	May resume under guidance of the Emergency Information Management Committee
Develop Standard Operating Procedures for safe driving	90% completion; awaiting legal advice	Percentage completion	Finalise SOPs, implement and post to intranet
Expand Remote Area Firefighting Team capability	Operational doctrine finalised and awaiting comment. Medicals and fitness testing began	Satisfactory completion	Finalise SOPs, operational doctrine and post to Intranet
Finalise local Mutual Aid Agreements and formal Memoranda of Understanding with other agencies/utilities	80% MAAs completed; 90% MOUs complete	Percentage of completion	Finalise, implement and post to Intranet
Completion of Operational Communications Service Level Agreement with NSWFB and endorsement by Fire Services Joint Standing Committee	Draft finalised and disseminated for comment	Submission to FSJSC	Finalise and send to FSJSC
Develop procedures for counter disaster assistance	Draft Service Standards completed Participation in State Emergency Management Committee exercises	Processes developed and distributed	Service Standards developed and supporting training programmes implemented
Self sufficiency in delivering aviation training	Completed training needs analysis Completed training curriculum Completed programmed training courses	Percentage of needs analysis completed Percentage of curriculum completed Percentage of training completed	Develop three year plan Pilot programmes for Air Attack Supervisor and Aircraft Officer Air Base Manager curriculum Completion of annual and periodic training
Implementation of aviation safety programme	Completed audits of contractors Discussion papers issued	Legislative and industry compliance Percentage of audits undertaken Aviation risk management programme developed Helicopter performance standards developed Issue of discussion paper	Sustain compliance Audit continuation Completion of performance, charter and dangerous goods projects Instigate Aviation Safety Advisory Committee
Processing of membership data, including National Criminal History Record Check	5,275 applications processed 1,923 checks made in respect of members involved in child related activities	Target of 4,000 and compliance with Service Standard Full compliance with statutory requirements	New Service Standard to be released Review and amend Consent form

## STATEMENT ON STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES

Service provision is in accordance with the commitments and criteria as detailed in the Service's Strategic Plan, copies of which can be obtained free of charge from the Service's website ([www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)), headquarters and regional offices or by telephoning 02 8741 5555.

## CONTRACT AND MARKET TESTING

Policies and action plans have been developed to address issues of contract and market testing in areas of equipment supply, learning and development, and community education.

The Commissioner and senior staff of the Service undertake a regular programme of regional visits during which valuable feedback on service provision is obtained.

## ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

The Service's Applications Development unit continued to support business activities.

The volunteer intranet (MyRFS) was rolled out and there have been and will continue to be regular enhancements delivered as part of a programme of continuous improvement.

There were a number of releases to the Bush Fire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) and as at 30 June the system was being used by approximately 1295 users from 11 government agencies – an increase of 11.7% – and 420 local government users.

Work continued on providing spatial data in the BRIMS application as well as the recently released incident control system (ICON). The geospatial database enabled the Service to deliver a range of external data such as contours and roads, and internal data such as brigade locations and bush fire prone land. Further releases related to ICON are progressively in train and ICON is being used by 1,218 users from eight agencies.

## PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

In response to the requirements of the *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998* the Service has developed a Service Standard that specifies requirements for the handling of personal data collected during the course of non-operational activities. This includes the personal particulars of Service members and recordings of non-operational radio and telephone calls.

The Standard also provides for a confidentiality undertaking by officers with access to persona information including the Service's database 'Firezone'. The necessary access protocols and procedures are in place.

## ANNUAL REPORT – EXTERNAL COSTS AND AVAILABILITY

The total external costs incurred in the production of this report were \$38,798. The report is accessible on the Service's website [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) and copies may be obtained from the Service's headquarters at Homebush Bay.

## ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS

Four consultants were retained during the year at a total cost of \$585,329.

Consultancies equal to or more than \$30,000 were as follows:

	\$
<b>Personnel and Industrial</b>	
Diplomacy Management Consultants	38,840
(Industrial relations advocacy service)	
<b>Information Technology</b>	
Incheck Systems	178,907
(General support and development of Bush Fire Risk Information Management System)	
CCS Technology	309,275
(BRIMS Development and Volunteer Intranet)	
<b>Legal</b>	
Clayton Utz	58,307
(General Support)	
<b>Total all Consultancies</b>	<b>\$585,329</b>

## Three Year Comparative Costs

Four consultancies were retained during 2005/2006 at cost of \$585,329

Fourteen consultancies were retained during 2004/2005 at cost of \$646,903.

Fourteen consultancies were retained during 2003/2004 at cost of \$1,530,143.

### SALE OF PROPERTY

The Service does not own any property or land.

### PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

A summary of the Service's payment performance for the year under review, and the two previous years, is set out in Appendix J.

The Service continues to meet its set targets and has done so through greater use of direct bank deposits.

There was no interest paid for late payments.

### MAJOR ASSETS

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
	\$	\$	\$
Computer Equipment	240,000	758,000	2,203,000
General Equipment	9,725,000	11,338,000	10,619,000
Fitout	2,000,000	4,368,000	3,934,000
Intangibles	–	–	102,000

### GRANTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
	\$	\$	\$
Nature Conservation Council	83,700	80,667	82,685
Volunteer Units (through Office for Emergency Services)	950,000	1,300,000	1,290,000
Rural Fire Service Association	70,000	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,103,700</b>	<b>1,380,667</b>	<b>1,372,685</b>

### CONSUMER RESPONSE

The Service continued to be well regarded by its customers and stakeholders. Any complaints received are given attention and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

### OVERSEAS VISITS

Details of overseas visits by staff are set out in Appendix 'O'.

### EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION

In light of the recognition by the State Government that the public has the clear right to know how much senior public servants are paid and the need for more transparency in the reporting of senior executive salaries at level 5 or above, the following information is provided:

Position	SES Level	Total Annual Remuneration
Commissioner Mr P C Koperberg	6	\$267,300