



UPDATE ON THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE WOOROLOO REVIEW

PROGRESS REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third update on the WA Government response to the AFAC Independent Operational Review of the Wooroloo Bushfire.

In May 2022, DFES established the Wooroloo Implementation Coordination Group (WICG) to oversee the WA Government response to the review. The WICG has developed these public-facing reporting documents in direct response to stakeholder feedback to keep agency staff, bushfire sector stakeholders and the WA community informed and updated on progress.

Since the August 2023 update, significant milestones have been achieved for numerous Wooroloo projects. The DFES Office of Bushfire Risk Management has developed new and improved Bushfire Risk Management Guidelines (Rec 3), a DFES business case has been approved for the development of statewide bushfire mitigation capability (Rec 4) and funding has been sourced to develop a training package for Traffic Access and Management Officers (Rec 7). In a significant recent development, DFES has awarded the contract for the development of the upgraded Emergency WA platform to local public safety technology provider Genvis (Rec 12).

In addition to the above achievements, a further 3 Wooroloo recommendations have been closed; WA emergency management agencies have met their commitments to effectively address Recommendations 6, 10 and 11, in addition to Recommendations 9 and 13 which were closed previously. Projects against Recommendations 3, 4, 5 and 7 are also making good progress and are likely to be completed during the first half of 2024.

At the request of Minister for Emergency Services Hon. Stephen Dawson, the State Bushfire Advisory Committee (SBAC) continues to play a key role in providing oversight of Governments response to the Wooroloo review. Progress updates are provided to SBAC at quarterly meetings so that members can provide feedback on work undertaken, while also endorsing all project closures once works have been completed.

In addition to the working being undertaken by the DFES Bushfire Mitigation Branch to develop a business case for statewide bushfire mitigation capability (Rec 4), DFES Regional teams across all of WA also deliver a range of bushfire mitigation programs to achieve various outcomes. We've provided a Case Study showing recent examples of this work in Appendix 1.

It was an early and busy start to the southern bushfire season in WA with major bushfires including the Serpentine and Mundaring complexes and the Wanneroo fire all igniting prior to December 2023. Over the next few months, DFES, DBCA and local governments will have significant response commitments for bushfires and the Northern Australian cyclone season.

Murray Carter

Executive Director

DFES Rural Fire Division



Volunteers igniting a planned burn in the DFES Lower South West Region. For further information, see Appendix 1-Case Study: Delivering bushfire mitigation programs in regional WA.

Photo: Tim Hutton, DFES Bushfire Risk Management Officer.

Acronyms and abbreviations

DFES: Department of Fire & Emergency Services

DPLH: Department of Planning, Land & Heritage

SBAC: State Bushfire Advisory Council

DBCA: Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

FPA: Fire Protection Association of Australia

IBOC: Interagency Bushfire Operations Committee

ICC: Incident Control Centre

DEMIRS: Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

WaPol: WA Police

ACEF: Area of Community Engagement Focus

TM: Traffic Management

SEMC: State Emergency Management Committee

BRMP: Bushfire Risk Management Planning

TAMO: Traffic Access & Management Officer

WALGA: WA Local Government Association

TWS: Telephone Warning System

NHRP: Natural Hazards Resilience Program

SPP: State Planning Policy

SES: State Emergency Service

RAP: Restricted Access Permit

AFAC: Australasian Fire Authorities Council

IAP: Impact Assessment Process

NEMA: National Emergency Management Agency

RECOMMENDATION 1



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 2



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 3



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 4



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 5



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 6



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 7



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress

Undertake multi-agency workshop to scope improvements	Seek endorsement for priority improvements	Deliver phase 1 of TAMO training	Develop guidance to improve TM contractor management	Deliver improvements to RAP arrangements	Develop Phase 2 of TAMO training	Develop communications package for Traffic Management	Update doctrine and procedures as required
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	IN PROGRESS	IN PROGRESS	
Jun 2022	Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Apr 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024



RECOMMENDATION 8



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress

Establish cross-agency steering groups to scope approach

Identify and prioritise improvement opportunities

Establish cross-agency data sharing arrangements

Develop communications strategy to guide Incident Management Teams

Establish common doctrine for tree risks and road inspections

Identify heavy plant support options from industry and the private sector

Develop Operating Principles document outlining road clearing standards

Update bushfire response and road clearing doctrine

COMPLETE

COMPLETE

COMPLETE

COMPLETE

COMPLETE

COMPLETE

IN PROGRESS

Jul 2022

Sep 2022

Dec 2022

Dec 2022

Nov 2023

Dec 2023

Dec 2023

Apr 2024

RECOMMENDATION 9



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



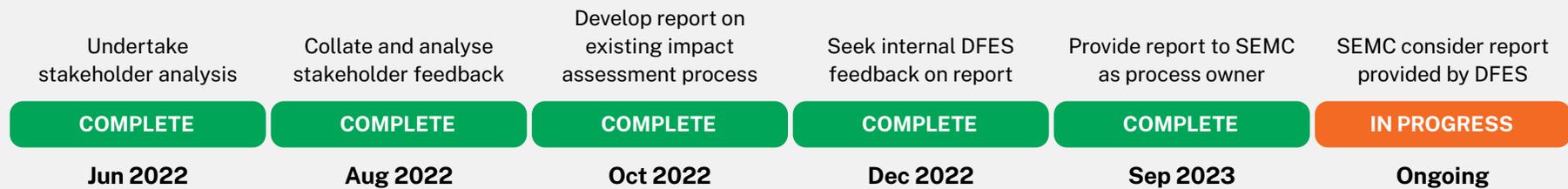
RECOMMENDATION 10



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 11



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress

Scan national telecommunications arrangements and fund sources

COMPLETE

Sep 2022

Identify strategic linkages with communications investment projects

COMPLETE

Dec 2022

Align opportunities to existing DFES resources and business programs

COMPLETE

Mar 2023

Continue cross-agency and national discussions on telecommunications resilience

IN PROGRESS

Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 12



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 13



Project description

Summary and next steps

Project progress



APPENDIX 1

Case Study: Delivering bushfire mitigation programs in regional WA

In addition to the work being undertaken by the DFES Bushfire Mitigation Branch (see Recommendation 4 update), DFES Regional teams across all of WA deliver a range of bushfire mitigation programs to achieve various outcomes. Mitigation programs are a core part of each region's preventative efforts to both reduce bushfire risk and actively involve the community in managing their risks. All DFES regions work around the year to deliver mitigation programs and a few recent examples are included on the following pages.



Volunteers from the DFES Midwest Gascoyne Region participate in mitigation deployments with DFES staff, local government and DBCA on a series of cross tenure burns in Kalbarri.

Part 1: Supporting volunteer involvement in regional mitigation programs

Facilitating volunteer involvement in delivering mitigation works is an important priority that reduces bushfire risk and builds volunteer capability. The DFES Lower South West and Midwest Gascoyne Regions have assembled volunteer teams capable of delivering bushfire mitigation activities through an Expression of Interest processes. These teams deliver planned burns and support other bushfire mitigation treatments both within their own regions, while also undertaking intrastate deployment to support other regions. The DFES Statewide Operational Support Fleet provide access to operational vehicles to enable the volunteers to undertake the work.

APPENDIX 1

LSW Superintendent Phil Brandrett said *“the volunteer mitigation deployments not only help deliver critical activities to reduce bushfire risk, but also build practical skills and understanding of fire behaviour which volunteers can apply when responding to bushfires.”*



Midwest Gascoyne Superintendent Mark Bowen said that *“in addition to bushfire risk reduction, volunteer involvement in planned burning provides an excellent training environment and an opportunity for DFES, local government, DBCA and community members to work together.”*



Volunteers from the DFES Lower South West Region participating in mitigation deployments to reduce bushfire risk in Yanmah (top) and Derby (bottom left).

Volunteers work alongside DFES staff in the Midwest Gascoyne Region to reduce risk around the Badgingarra primary school (bottom right).

APPENDIX 1

Part 2: The role of a planned burn at the Eaton (Bunbury) fire in December 2023.

In the DFES South West Region, a planned burn undertaken in Autumn 2023 by the Shire of Dardanup and local volunteer bushfire brigades played a critical role in minimising the impacts of the Eaton (Bunbury) bushfire in December 2023.

The Eaton fire posed a significant threat to the Forrest Highway (Australind Bypass) and adjacent houses and businesses. The lower fuels within the planned burn area significantly reduced the rate of spread, fire intensity and ember attack as the head fire reached the recently burnt area, while also creating a safe area for firefighters to work from.

This allowed both firefighters on the ground and water bombing aircraft to focus primarily on asset protection of the adjacent houses along Forrest Highway. This ensured no houses or built assets were lost and the fire was kept small, meaning community, infrastructure and environmental impacts were minimised.



The spread of the Eaton fire (left of the track) was stopped as it approached the recent planned burn (right of track).



The planned burn (black) was critical in minimising the impacts of the Eaton fire (red) on the local community.

APPENDIX 2

Supplementary information for Recommendation 11

The Wooroloo Review recommended that DFES and local government continue discussions with telecommunications providers to explore the adequacy of current arrangements for backup power at telecommunication towers in emergency incidents. DFES has been actively engaged in this work and has now built several initiatives and linkages into business as usual that enabled this recommendation to be closed, a summary of which is included below.

Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts

- DFES has been involved with a number of Commonwealth telecommunications initiatives including attending the Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Communications and the Arts Committee, which covers a range of areas including Emergency Services.
- A broad range of stakeholder attended the Committee and DFES continues to liaise with these, and other stakeholders as needed.

Public Safety Mobile Broadband network (PSMB)

- The Commonwealth Public Safety Mobile Broadband network (PSMB) is specific to Emergency Management & Emergency Services (EMES).
- The Commonwealth announced at last budget they are now developing a formal agency called the National PSMB Entity (NPE) – States will opt in within 3 years maximum via an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA). Much of these details are yet to be developed and DFES is actively involved in this work.
- There is still much work to be done at the telco level and DFES continues to work with both Telco and power providers, in terms of technology, costs, and commercial considerations. There are associated Commonwealth programs being considered such as a separate global roaming program, that may enable better Public Safety general use conditions. A separate global roaming program is also being considered for non-Public Safety general use conditions.
- The PSMB is intended to be a nationally consistent scheme.



DFES/DPIRD

- DFES and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) are collaborating with Telstra via a University of Melbourne study (DPIRD, DFES, Telstra, Western Power, UniMelb). This study intends to classify 500 Mobile Infrastructure sites in WA by typology, including telecommunications profile and energy profile. This study is not EMES specific, but regional and remote resilience during EMES incidents is a key focus area.
- DFES is also leading a separate NDRR funded project including DPIRD that will be looking at the EMES aspects of the entire WA picture, intended to work closely with the UniMelb team to develop synergies across these bodies of concurrent work.
- DFES continues to engage all levels of government in this area, including currently exploring the Commonwealth Telecommunications Disaster Resilience Innovation (TDRI) Program Grants collaboratively with DPIRD.
- DFES is also continuing to lead changes across Western Australia in the telecommunications and power resilience areas by convening and chairing the Telecommunications Resilience Improvement Working Group (TRIWG) that brings together
- WA representatives from DFES, DPIRD, WALGA, NBN, Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Western Power, and Horizon Power.

Next Steps – Technology and Investment

- The WA project called the Emergency Services Radio Network (ESRN) has now split into two components, one continuing urgent radio upgrades, and another morphed into the Public Safety Network Strategy (PSNS), that is reviewing longer term technology options, specifically in the EMES contexts.
- The PSNS includes concepts being trialled by WA Police known as the Vehicle as a Node (VaaN) concept, whereby emergency services vehicles become multi-functional telecommunications units. DFES is similarly trialling this concept via Incident Control Vehicles (ICVs) using Starlink and other technologies. Amazon will soon be releasing similar capabilities.
- Current tech development via Apple iPhone14 already provides triple zero direct to satellite capability, and rapid microchip development means Direct Multi-Modal Satellite Devices are likely to be operational within a few years (i.e. the smart phone connects via 5g mobile tower or direct to Satellite as required).
- SpaceX and Optus have recently announced mobile device direct to satellite will be launched across the Australian mainland by 2024 for SMS, and 2025 for full data and voice capability. Once this technology is realised, the power resilience of land-based towers becomes a moot issue in many, if not most contexts.
- It will be important to invest wisely over the years ahead to optimise public safety, and simultaneously avoid wastage and sunk costs based on these rapidly evolving technologies.