

afac



Australasian Fire and Emergency
Service Authorities Council

**Strategic Plan
2010 - 2012**

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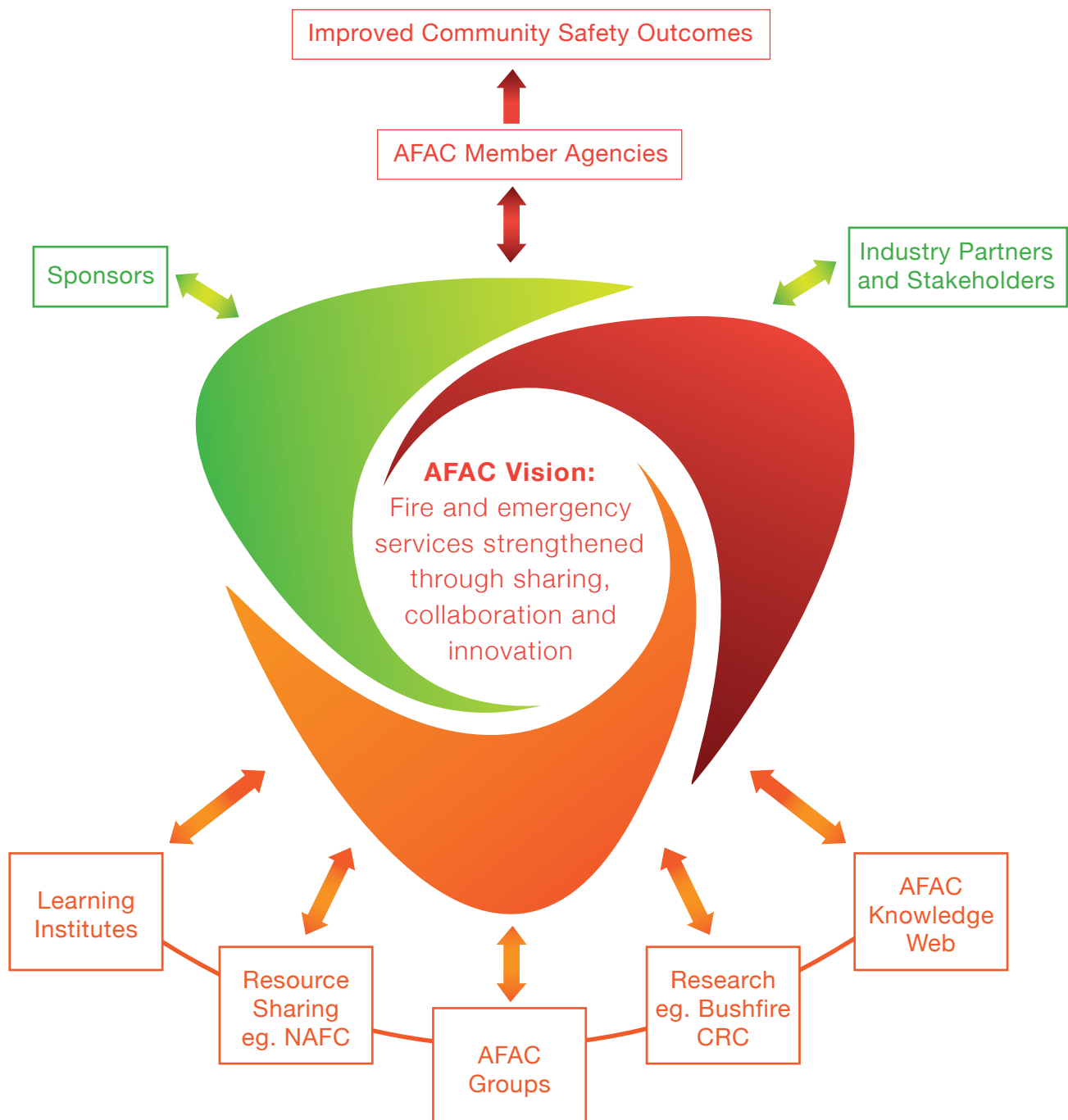


About AFAC

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) is the fire and emergency services industry body established by its members to collaborate on matters of international, national and regional importance.

AFAC is governed by a Committee of Management and a Council of members, supported by a Secretariat.

AFAC exists to help strengthen fire and emergency services so that they are able to continuously improve community safety results in an effective and efficient way.



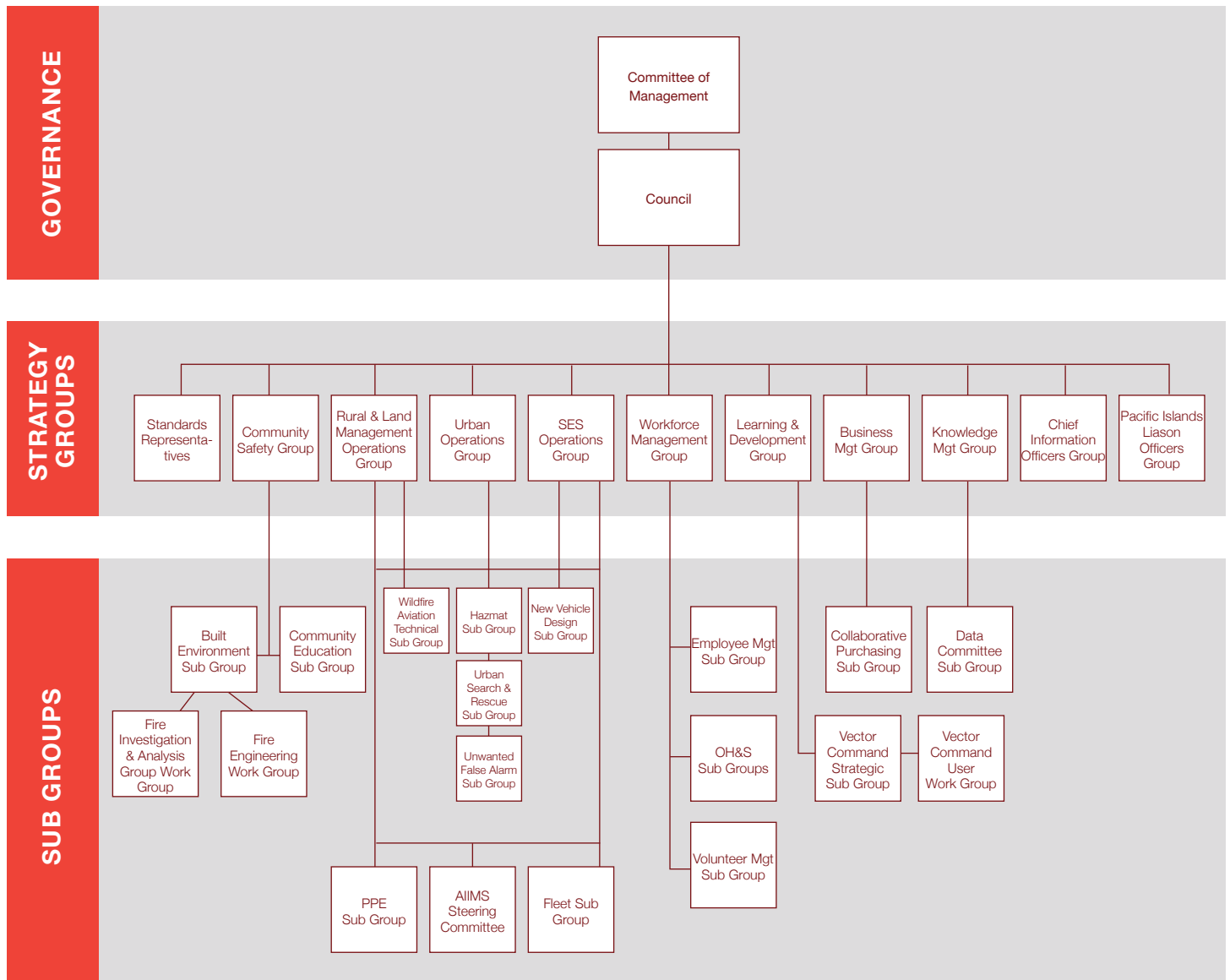
The AFAC Strategic Plan 2010-12 is about creating opportunities to lead, build standards, innovative methods and service delivery approaches in support of the industry.

AFAC Groups

The work of AFAC is undertaken by people drawn from all member agencies, supported by the staff of the AFAC office. AFAC people combine their skills, experience, talent and commitment and through their collective efforts develop strategies, design practice change initiatives, explore opportunities for continuous improvement and look for innovation in the industry.

The work of AFAC is usually conducted through the use of a Group structure and from time to time cross-functional project teams. Senior representatives of member agencies are represented on these Groups and their work includes shaping research and policy, developing national or regional positions and assisting each other with solutions to issues that are best solved collectively.

Through the work of its Groups AFAC produces guidelines and positions for adoption by Council which may be adopted as policy at the agency or jurisdictional levels. This collaborative approach assists agencies work towards achieving better levels of interoperability and ultimately greater community safety outcomes.



AFAC Services

AFAC offers a broad range of services to support the business of its members. Some services are also extended to other organisations who share AFAC's vision of: fire and emergency services strengthened through sharing, collaboration and innovation.

Industry Advocate

AFAC uses its agreed positions and practices and champions these views on behalf of its members. As the industry body AFAC promotes best practice, lobbies for change and works to strengthen emergency services across Australasia.

Professional Networks

AFAC builds and maintains a network of professional groups and associations that connect individuals and agencies throughout Australasia. This approach is often supported by Memoranda of Understanding. Involvement in AFAC broadens the range of professional and personal experiences available to emergency services staff, presenting them with a chance to learn and grow professionally.

Industry Positions

The AFAC Council is the decision making body for the development of agreed industry positions (an agreed stance) that are used throughout the industry for operations, advocacy and community safety. Positions may become agency or jurisdictional policy.

Professional Development

AFAC provides a range of professional development opportunities. The AFAC Conference, seminar series, workshops and leadership programs keep the industry informed of the latest research and developments and enhances the capability development of emergency service personnel.

Collaboration

AFAC brings together key industry specialists to collaborate on significant industry projects that contribute to the development of new programs and efficient methods of operation. This includes the Collaborative Purchasing Initiative, which generates substantial savings for the industry.

The AFAC structure creates a supportive environment where ideas can be trialed and tested, research conducted, new industry personnel mentored and consensus reached.

Training Products and Services

AFAC provides training products and services for the industry including: Public Safety Training Package (PSTP) Firefighter Qualifications, AIIMS, Leadership, Workplace Emergency Response, and simulation training.

Information Services

AFAC information services are provided to keep members up to date with the latest issues, opportunities and developments within AFAC and the wider industry. These services include the AFAC Newsletter, Fire Australia Magazine, updates from the work of AFAC Groups, research reports, articles and other publications.

Research

AFAC identifies and facilitates research opportunities that assist its members obtain new knowledge and keep up to date with contemporary thinking.





Statistical Data Management

AFAC in partnership with the NSW Fire Brigades facilitates the processes to gather and collate discrete or ongoing industry data. This data provides members with aggregated data sets that can be analyzed to inform practice change and research projects.

Australasian Business Processes and Standards

AFAC acts as custodian for a range of business processes, systems (including AIIMS), data sets, technical standards and specifications and other information used by Australasian emergency services.

AFAC represents the fire services position at Standards Australia and the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Member Management

AFAC provides a range of support services and secretariat functions to assist AFAC members and other industry stakeholders to utilise AFAC services.

Industry Awards Program

AFAC recognizes the innovation and excellence of those who make significant contributions through its industry awards program.

Manage the AFAC Shop

AFAC trading activities are mostly managed through the AFAC shop. Products produced or sponsored by AFAC are made available for purchase through this enterprise.

Consultancy

AFAC, from time to time, provides consultancy services to organisations that require independent, specialist and/or technical expertise and advice.

The Knowledge Web

AFAC manages the online collaboration environment of the industry's consolidated research and knowledge. This virtual environment provides emergency service workers with access to and participation in the consolidated industry knowledge and information network.

Strategic Context

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.” Abraham Lincoln

The drivers of change outlined below present a case for all levels of government and society generally to think differently about the challenges of the future. For fire and emergency services, these challenges are ‘piled high with difficulty’ as it is becoming increasingly clear that the established paradigm upon which their service delivery is based is under threat and perhaps no longer valid.

With growing expectations that fire and emergency services are all things to all people, the systems of operation are stretched beyond their traditional design. Intrinsicly linked, the drivers of change represent multi-dimensional pressures on a system that has by and large been inward looking and only experienced incremental change, usually as a result of an undesirable and tragic systemic failure.

In this environment, traditional reactive approaches may no longer support the interests of the fire and emergency services and the communities they serve. Understanding, and anticipating change and forging a new identity in a rapidly changing world are important consideration in a future where trust is the major currency.

Rising in importance is the need to look beyond traditional organisational boundaries, act with speed and flexibility, embrace partnerships and collaboration with others and understand what the public now wants.

“Understanding, and anticipating change and forging a new identity in a rapidly changing world are important consideration in a future where trust is the major currency.”



Changes in the Natural Environment

The changing climate of the earth is widely acknowledged as one of the biggest risks affecting every nation across the globe. In Australasia the previously predicted impacts of climate change have become a reality with instances of increased frequency and intensity of many natural disasters, particularly bushfires, floods and storms. These disasters, combined with rising sea levels, earthquake activity and coastal inundation are of great concern and will directly impact on demand for emergency services.

Such impacts expose emergency service organisation to considerable cost, not only in increased response, but also in re-inventing core service delivery models to meet changing risk profiles, and building capacity to participate and influence mitigation and adaptation strategies.

It is clear that governments need to plan now for the likely effects of climate change. Closely linked to economic risk, dealing with climate change will require a substantial shift in thinking and planning for infrastructure and population growth. Maintaining or growing populations in at-risk locations without some form of mitigation or adaptation strategy is unsustainable given future climate change projections.

For emergency services much remains to be determined about exactly how the frequency of extreme events will change the nature of demand for services and the degree to which dangerous consequences may result. The sector should be equipped with strategies to deal with events that impact severely on the delivery of services. Future planning will need to consider adaptive management opportunities and techniques and build on the resilience of the services as well as community protection that these services provide ¹.

¹ AFAC Position Paper: *Climate Change and the Fire and Emergency Services Sector*, September 2009

Public Policy and Society

The purpose of politics is inextricably related to the purpose of society. If politics exists to facilitate a civilised society in which people can enjoy the highest possible level of safety, freedom and opportunity and democratic societies determine the institutions to which they entrust these aspirations, then knowing what society expects is fundamental.

Caught in the middle of an emerging philosophical struggle between the role of government which determines public policy and the changing expectation of a growing society, emergency service organisations are confronted with a challenge to the basic assumption upon which their service delivery models are based; that is, community safety is a shared responsibility. The business models of emergency service organisation and corresponding levels of capability and capacity have evolved around this assumption.

“... community safety is a shared responsibility.”

Rapidly changing populations and community attitudes to what is expected of their governments and emergency service organisations, combined with a growing requirement for those same organisations to deal with major emergencies more regularly, have placed the current paradigm under a stress that is unsettling.

Compounding this stress is the shock revealed through recent disasters that a major disconnect exists between what the emergency services understand their role to be and what is expected by the community; the paradigm is not shared.

As all levels of government grapple with public policy and layers of legislation and regulation, a trend is emerging whereby matters of national significance are being increasingly dealt with at the federal level (in Australia).

Borders and boundaries are proving to be an inhibitor to the design and implementation of public policy that serves a very mobile and informed population. A further trend is emerging whereby decision-making and consultation is increasingly devolved as close as possible to communities through their local governments.

Emergency service organisations believe they can't be all things to all people and that managing risk is a responsibility best shared with all of society. They hold the view that current and growing expectations cannot be met without a major rethink of Policy and clarity around their role and that of others in managing the safety of the community.

They are concerned that without the opportunity to understand community expectations and the resources to re-engineer their business models, they will continue to experience significant systemic failures which ultimately result in a disastrous erosion of public trust.

The Threat of Terrorism

Terrorism has become a persistent and permanent feature of the international security environment. It is a growing international problem which threatens national interests both domestically and overseas. The threat is being taken very seriously with attention being paid to identifying vulnerabilities and implementing mitigation strategies.

The resultant introduction of new services, capability and capacity has meant that for emergency services their role and responsibility is changing, as is the environment in which they operate. New relationships have to be formed, new skills developed and capability established.

For emergency services it means new frontiers, contributing to the national readiness to respond to threats and attacks when needed and to play a role in strengthening resilience in communities and society.

Changes in the Built Environment

Future buildings and infrastructure assets will be built to use more environmentally-friendly materials and require less maintenance. Information and communications technologies will be increasingly used to underpin advances in design, construction and regulation.

Performance based building codes, construction methods and modern building materials are impacting on fire behaviour and intensity. Emergency services need to rethink their operational tactics and health and safety considerations in the face of more complex and demanding fire environments and increasing risk.

“Information and communications technologies will be increasingly used to underpin advances in design, construction and regulation.”



Economic Outlook

The 2008/2009 Global Financial Crisis represented a huge wake up call for all nations, the impacts of which will be felt for many years to come. With acute awareness of the sensitivities to economic stability, world governments have embarked on policies that are designed to provide stimulus, growth and economic stability.

It is estimated that natural disasters cost Australia around \$1b annually and worldwide the costs of natural disasters are increasing (Swiss Reinsurance Company, 2006)². There is a strong view that demographic and societal changes are responsible for these increasing costs and there is an urgent need for increased efforts to reduce vulnerabilities.

Emergency services organisations are particularly exposed given they draw much of their workforce from volunteers in the community, have a strong connection with the community and have a responsibility to manage risks. Further, an aging population with increasing health issues will result in pressure on the tax base as they leave the workforce and an escalation in the redirection of resources to the health sector.

emergency services may be required to assume responsibility for the protection of new and emerging industries and carbon sequestration assets. This represents new business for emergency services and a need to build capacity and capability.

Increasing national debt to stimulate the economy is a strategy employed by many nations. This debt needs to be repaid therefore funds that were once available to invest will be needed to reduce debt. Added to the need to cater for an aging population and a reducing tax base, the economic outlook will place pressure on limited resources available to emergency services and their ability to meet the challenges of the future.

Understanding the cost/benefit of services deployed by emergency services may provide vital insights into where attention should be targeted to achieve greater return on investment.

² Ryan Crompton and John McAneney: *The Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Vol. 23 No. 4, November 2008: The cost of natural disasters in Australia: the case for disaster risk reduction*

“It is estimated that natural disasters cost Australia around \$1b annually...”

Economic shockwaves as they are felt throughout the community manifest in many ways including in issues of emergency service workforce availability. Many volunteers rely on their employer’s support to release them for emergency services work and in difficult times such support is not as freely available. Self employed volunteers find they can no longer afford to volunteer, or not as often.

As the debate on strategies to minimise the impacts of climate change and reduce global greenhouse gas emissions continues,



Information and Technology Explosion

The availability of unimaginably vast amounts of digital information, device mobility and extensive technology sophistication, along with plummeting costs, is resulting in a seismic shift in information supply and an explosion in the use of technology.

Given that the amount of digital information increases tenfold every five years³ and huge amounts of that information is shared, the business of information management is growing in leaps and bounds and touching all areas of life right across the globe.

Information management is crucial to emergency service organisations particularly when the “community expects and depends on detailed and high quality information prior to, during and after [emergency events]”⁴.

Additionally, the expectation that public policy will be underpinned by credible, quality data obligates governments and emergency service organisations to be transparent and open in their communications.

The technologies that enable data gathering, analysis and information sharing are expanding in new directions. The advent of social networking tools have added a new dimension to the immediacy and speed at which information (or misinformation) can be disseminated. People are looking for and want to go to a trusted source.

Smart technologies and new computing tools are opening up a raft of possibilities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services outputs. Embedded systems⁵, or hiding smart ICT into every day objects and processes, will generate the ‘smart products’ of the future and form the foundations of all-encompassing computing.

Such extensive information and technological change has long outstripped the capacity of emergency service organisations to keep pace and they are lagging further and further behind. A new approach and innovative solutions are needed to forge a stronger future for delivery of emergency services.

³ *The Economist: Data, data everywhere, February 25, 2010*

⁴ *2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission: Interim Report, 2009*

⁵ *NICTA: Australia’s ICT Research Centre of Excellence*



Workforce Changes

There is a major issue building with the demographic profile of emergency service organisations. The age profile of emergency service workers is on the rise with an increasing percentage of the workforce reaching retirement age and a growing health and safety challenge. This expected mass exodus of personnel from the sector represents a loss of knowledge, skills and experience and a challenge for managing corporate memory.

On the other hand, however, these changes represent opportunity. Opportunity for cultural change, embracing diversity in the community and leveraging the contemporary skills of younger generations and the embedding of sophisticated technologies. With the freeing up of a large percentage of the workforce, volunteering their services may become an attractive option and an opportunity to transfer knowledge to other generations.

As the information and technology explosion continues, it will bring with it a rapid onset of change to the way the workforce performs their role and how they interact in the work place.

As the information and technology explosion continues, it will bring with it a rapid onset of change to the way the workforce performs their role and how they interact in the work place. Increased use of machines to perform the roles of humans represents a continuing shift to alternative ways of doing things and a huge knowledge management challenge.

The existing global competition for talent will continue, recognising a persons most valuable skills are the way they think and their problem-solving abilities. The challenge will be to manage that talent and provide reward and recognition that produces a return on investment.



Deficits in the availability of personnel, particularly volunteers represent a resourcing and capacity issue. As the region continues to welcome people from other countries, diversity within the community brings with it a different understanding of volunteering and a variation in community structures and attitudes.

The challenge for emergency services is to derive the business model of the future that has community acceptance and support.

Strategic Goals 2010-2012

The AFAC Strategic Plan recognises that the future will hold some tough issues and these issues are relevant to all AFAC member agencies. This Plan has been devised to help provide the sector and more particularly its current and future leaders with the tools, knowledge and support to deal with these issues. As reflected in the strategic context, the need to collaborate, share information, experiences and knowledge is becoming more than an aspiration, it is essential.

The Goals as outlined in this Plan and the major projects that will be undertaken represent a focus on strengthening safety (both community safety and firefighter safety), re-imagining the operational doctrine that underpins service delivery and enriching the professional development of the emergency service workforce.

This work combined with the continued delivery of AFAC services is aimed at supporting fire and emergency services tackle the challenges of the future together so they can maximise the benefit to their communities.



Goal 1: Leadership and Advocacy

AFAC has high levels of visibility, credibility and influence which impacts positively on public policy development. AFAC is seen as a catalyst to effect change and is actively sought for its opinion and as a collaboration partner. It is a trusted source of information and advice and is recognised as a contributor to innovation across the industry.

Success factors:

- Australasian and international policies, standards, regulations, codes and guidelines reflect the collective views of AFAC member agencies
- The role, needs and capabilities of AFAC members are widely recognised
- AFAC contributes to the sustainable development of fire safety and emergency response training and institutional capacity building in the Pacific
- Fire and emergency management practices are environmentally sustainable

Major Projects:

1.1 Facilitate the Creation of a Fire and Emergency Service Research Institute

The Bushfire CRC which commenced in 2003 through the successful lobbying efforts and support of the AFAC membership will cease on 30 June 2013. AFAC Council strongly supports the need for an ongoing collaborative research effort by and for this industry.

AFAC will facilitate the creation of a sustainable Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Institute.

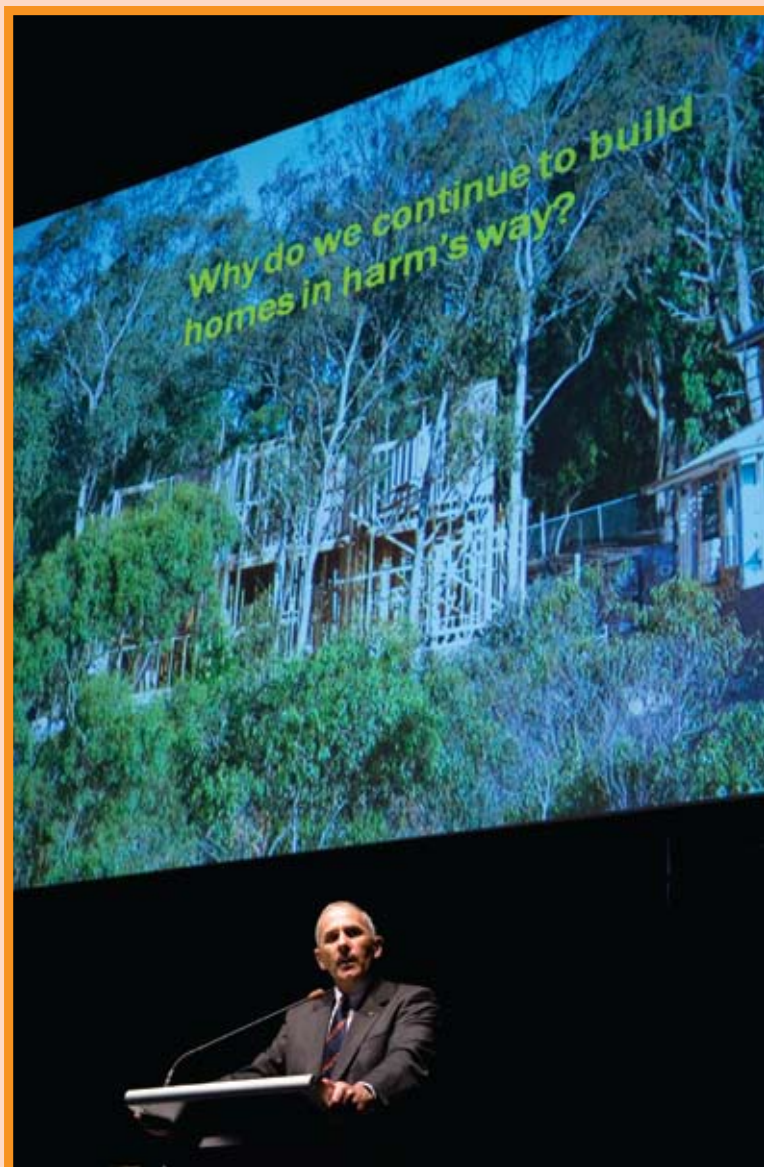
1.2 Analysis of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission Final and Interim Reports

The Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission will hand down its final report in mid 2010. As the defining bushfire event of the last 25 years, the findings will be taken seriously by all state and territory government and readiness for change will be expected of relevant AFAC

members. Matters arising from the 2009 Victorian bushfire event and subsequent Inquiry are not confined to agencies concerned with bushfire but have implications across the board.

AFAC will facilitate the crafting of a response to the findings and draft recommendations, prepare a report analysing major topic areas and undertake a series of events to disseminate the analysis and assist with the identification of any practice change requirements.

“AFAC is seen as a catalyst to effect change and is actively sought for its opinion and as a collaboration partner.”



1.3 Promote the Use of Home Fire Sprinklers

The Community Safety Group (CSG) has, for some time, had an aim to promote the take up of domestic internal sprinklers. In November 2009 the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition was established to lobby the use of home fire sprinklers as a method of reducing the risk to life and property, and, for the inclusion of home sprinklers in future home designs. The purpose of this Coalition is to save lives however there are other benefits from the installation of sprinklers in homes which need to be promoted to the public.

AFAC will support the work of the Australian Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition, a joint venture between FPA Australia, IFE Australia, Insurance Council of Australia and AFAC, and commence promoting the take up of home sprinkler systems in Australia.

1.4 Incorporate Firefighter Life Safety in Buildings into the Building Codes of Australia (BCA)

AFAC members have concerns that the current approach to building regulation is flawed in that it has unwittingly supported the emergence of a culture in which the safe evacuation of building occupants is regarded as the sole objective, leaving responding firefighters, the environment, critical infrastructure, building stock more

generally, and in some cases, the safety of the community, unnecessarily exposed.

Fire services and the Australian Building Code Board have formed a working group to progress this project. AFAC will provide secretariat and facilitation support.

1.5 Finalise the Development of the Fire Brigade Intervention Model Computer Program (FBIM 2008) Full Version

The FBIM Model was developed for use in fire engineering design and in a performance-based regulatory environment, so that the functional role of the fire brigade can be incorporated into the building design process. It provides the framework to measure fire brigade tasks on a time-line basis, and to utilise the output of other sub-systems in the decision process.

FBIM includes detailed analysis of time data for fire brigade tasks and activities. It is adaptable to suit most brigade types, crew sizes, resource limitations etc, since decisions are incorporated within the expertise of local fire brigade input.

Key Supporting Services:

- Industry Advocate
- Industry Positions
- Professional Networks



Goal 2: Consistent and effective approach to the provision of services

Fire and emergency services employ an approach where service delivery (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery) is risk based and adaptable in all operating environments and where systems and practices are interoperable.

Success factors:

- An industry standard incident management system and capability is established and applied
- Sustainable resources are used/available to support response interventions, tactics and activities
- Awareness, education and engagement approaches used with communities are best practice.
- Agencies are able to seamlessly work together in times of need

Major Projects:

2.1 Investigate the Need for Industry Operational Doctrine

With growing intensity, duration and frequency of emergency events, the fire and emergency services are being continually tested and decision makers overwhelmed by the growing complexities of rules, orders and procedures within which they need to make decisions. There is an emerging need to critically review and potentially revise the fundamental principles upon which fire and emergency services operations are based and the culture that supports those principles.

AFAC will investigate exactly what is required and why, and prepare a preliminary gap analysis. This work will also explore the understanding of where doctrine fits into the hierarchy of operations. It will provide the foundation from which more detailed work would be launched.

2.2 Design an Interagency Resource Sharing Model

Current resource sharing arrangements are ad-hoc and unstructured. A national approach to interagency resource sharing will reduce duplication of effort and minimise risk. It will provide surge capability for all member agencies.

AFAC will facilitate the design and development of a model that supports a coordinated approach to resource sharing by AFAC member agencies. This model will incorporate the identification and resolution of interoperability issues.

2.3 Develop a Nationally Consistent Approach to Command and Control Professional Development and Accreditation

The 2009 Victorian fires and the major floods in northern Queensland clearly demonstrate the complexities of emergency management today. These events saw the deployment of personnel from emergency and non-emergency services from other states and in some cases they required international and military assistance. Investigations into these events and others continue to support the argument that there is a need for a common incident management system that is supported and strengthened by nationally-agreed professional development arrangements (e.g. training, assessment, mentoring and coaching, pre-formed Incident Management Teams), and a system for the recognition and accreditation of command and control personnel.



AFAC will scope what is required to develop a nationally consistent approach to the professional development and accreditation of personnel to perform command and control roles. The outcome of this scoping exercise will be to develop an industry-owned and agreed strategy.

2.4 Create an ANZ Testing Regime and Products List for Wildland Firefighting Chemicals

AFAC has an existing position to support the use of wildland chemicals that appear on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) QPL. USDA has suggested that ANZ create its own QPL and have given their permission for their testing procedures to be adapted. An ANZ testing regime will result in faster approvals, more innovation, lower purchase prices for agencies and better application of environmental standards to Australia and New Zealand circumstances.

AFAC will develop an Australasian specific QPL and associated testing procedures.

2.5 Develop a Guideline for Coordination of Incidents Across Multi-agencies

The AIIMS Manual, Edition 3 provides an incident management system suitable for all hazards. It does not provide detailed guidelines for coordination of multiple, multi-agency incidents. There is a need to finalise existing drafts and investigate the options for emergency incident coordination.

AFAC will finalise the production of a Guideline for coordination of incidents across multiple agencies.

2.6 Report on Landscape Fire Performance

The AFAC Rural and Land Management Group has approved 22 performance measures for the consideration of member agencies. Four of these will be reported nationally in the Report on Government Services (RoGS) published by the Productivity Commission. Commenced in July 2008, the project will allow agencies to use the selected performance measures in a nationally consistent manner.

AFAC will finalise the business rules and data dictionary and support agencies in the collection and reporting of the data for RoGS.

2.7 National Aerial Firefighting Strategy

The strategy will be used by member agencies that deploy aircraft. It will also inform national policy makers on the future directions of aerial firefighting. It will determine future direction for the NAFC Board.

A national strategy will provide direction to member agencies on the future use of aircraft.

Key Supporting Services

- Australasian Business Processes and Standards
- Collaboration
- Information Services
- Research
- Professional Networks

Goal 3: The collective experience and knowledge across the sector is captured and shared

AFAC members actively support easy access to quality information with high levels of interaction. Networks are strong and support the development of shared understanding. Collaboration used as the conduit for gathering and disseminating industry knowledge.

Success factors:

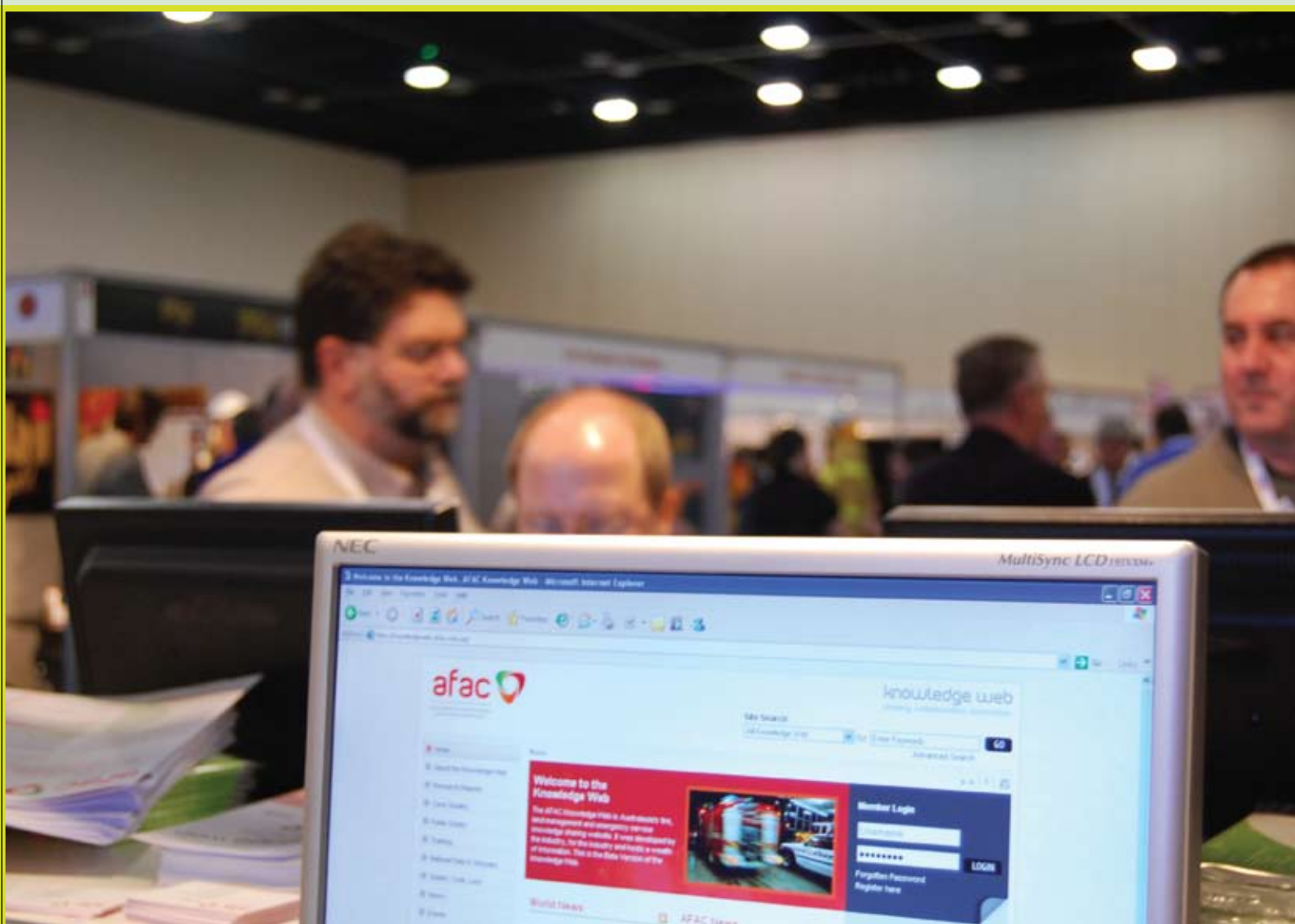
- The fire and emergency services sector has a sustained research and analysis capability
- Fire and emergency management data is relevant, accurate and reliable
- The industry body of knowledge is used by all member agencies

Major Projects:

3.1 Implementation of the Knowledge Management Strategy

The AFAC Knowledge Creation Approach and Strategy was endorsed in April 2009. AFAC now plans to commence implementation and establish knowledge management as a sustainable and important AFAC business activity.

AFAC will over the next 12 to 18 months focus on the development and delivery of knowledge management events, a major component of the knowledge management strategy.



3.2 Determine the Feasibility of a Fire and Emergency Services Data Centre

There is no place for the long-term custodianship of fire and emergency service activity reporting and research data. Identifying an appropriate custodian and ensuring processes are in place to manage the quality, access and use of the industry's collective data as evidence to support policy and practice change are important strategic considerations.

AFAC will explore the feasibility and options for the creation and management of a fire and emergency services data centre. A report will be produced outlining what a data centre might be, the recommended way forward and possible custodians of the industry data sets.

3.3 AFAC Knowledge Web Readability Project

The AFAC Knowledge Web is being developed as the go-to place for the accumulated knowledge of the industry. Demand for access is growing considerably from both within and external to member agencies. The availability of a web based information service tool is crucial to AFAC future strategy and the value that it provides to its membership and the services offered.

This project will improve the content on the website and provide more analysis and interpretation of information to increase the value of the site to its readers.

3.4 Joint AFAC and Bushfire CRC Research Transfer

The Bushfire CRC research program has been extended for three years. In addition to continuing work with the current research, there is now an opportunity to proactively implement a framework and process for research adoption throughout AFAC and its member agencies. AFAC will work in partnership with the Bushfire CRC to consolidate and streamline research adoption processes that have previously been developed, to ensure Bushfire CRC research outcomes are mainstreamed into agency practice in a planned and consistent manner. Particular focus will be given to researcher/end user interactions; the role of the Knowledge Web; professional development events; education and training; impact analysis and research product development.

Key Supporting Services:

- Information Services
- Knowledge Web
- Statistical Data Management
- Research
- Professional Development



Goal 4: A fire and emergency services sector with capability and capacity

Volunteers, staff and contractors are safe, skilled, capable and resourced. Their competencies are fully transportable and nationally recognised.

Success factors:

- A sector with strong and effective leaders
- A sustainable workforce of career and volunteer emergency workers who are competent, capable and equipped to safely fulfil their roles
- A nationally recognised and consistent approach to the training and assessment of all fire and emergency service workers

Major Projects:

4.1 Develop an AFAC Guideline to Promote Portability of Qualifications and Competencies

Whilst the emergency service agencies are aligned to the Public Safety Training Package units, for a number of reasons recognition of qualifications between fire services is not always accepted. Often an experienced firefighter transferring interstate must return to recruit firefighter level to join an interstate agency. There has been an identified need to improve the portability of qualifications, particularly as the industry faces an ageing population with increasing difficulty in filling senior positions.

AFAC will develop guidelines to allow the recognition of qualifications across all services, aligning qualifications to specific levels in each agency.

4.2 Develop an Industry Learning and Development Strategy for 2011 – 2016

Learning and development over recent years has completed a number of national projects to support and consolidate vocational education and training (VET) within the industry. Many of these projects are nearing completion and it is now timely to consolidate

and build on this work by exploring emerging industry needs and opportunities in the field and to consolidate these into an Australian/ New Zealand strategy for learning and development.

This project will explore, among other things, articulation arrangements between VET and higher education, strategic relationships and partnerships with public and private providers, blended learning models and will embed the research outputs of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre into training arrangements.

4.3 Conduct a Retrospective Study into the Incidence of Cancer and Mortality in Firefighters

There has been concern over past years that there is a possible link between firefighting and cancer incidence. Previous overseas studies identify firefighting as a 'possibly carcinogenic' occupation. Research is needed on Australasian firefighters which includes information on exposures, in order to identify if there is a link between firefighting and cancer, and identify which exposures may be influencing any linkages.

AFAC will coordinate and facilitate member participation in a three year retrospective cohort health study. It will manage the contractual relationship with the provider, Monash University and provide guidance and support to agencies as required.

“As reflected in the strategic context, the need to collaborate, share information, experiences and knowledge is becoming more than an aspiration, it is essential.”

4.4 Develop Guidelines which Support 'Fitness for Duty' Principles for Fire and Emergency Services Personnel.

A) Update AFAC Medical Guidelines for Firefighters.

The role of the firefighter has changed since the guidelines were developed in the early 1990s. Firefighters in many agencies are now the first responders in medical emergencies, and attend more motor vehicle accidents. The terms of reference for the guidelines, being the functions a firefighter performs, have been updated and medical referencing is required.

These guidelines will be produced for use by all agencies.

B) Develop an AFAC position of volunteer selection and screening practices.

This position will address the industry position on screening of potential firefighter and SES volunteers. The position initially will cover issues such as criminal record checks and psychological screening.

C) Firefighter Fit for Duty Guidelines.

The industry acknowledges that with increasing issues relating to litigation, inquests and legislation (eg: National Safe Work Act) there is increasing pressure to review the ongoing health and fitness standards for firefighters. Primarily relating to fit for duty requirements for volunteers, Bushfire CRC research program D2.1 will provide the evidence required to review the physiological requirements of firefighting tasks.

D) SES Volunteer Fit for Duty Guidelines.

The SES has never had a consistent scheme to assess new recruits and existing volunteers against task allocations. This project will develop an evidence based tool that will identify to both volunteers and their managers the type of tasks for which they are capable and a regular process of re-evaluation.

Key Supporting Services:

- Professional Development
- Training Products and Services
- Research
- Consultancy



Goal 5: The value of AFAC is realised throughout the membership

Members value AFAC and what it offers and have confidence in its governance and administration.

Success factors:

- The risks to AFAC Ltd are minimised
- The AFAC structure and systems are aligned with its business
- AFAC is in a sound financial position
- Skilled, effective and satisfied staff
- AFAC is well known and understood within member agencies
- AFAC meetings are effective and members time is well used

Major Projects:

5.1 Align AFAC Services with the Needs of Members

The degree of importance members place on products and services delivered by the AFAC Secretariat, along with their level of satisfaction, will be measured and used to guide the distribution of AFAC financial and staff resources.

5.2 Create an AFAC Broader Affiliate Membership Program

Currently the AFAC membership is determined by the Constitution as “any emergency service or fire management agency of a state or territory government in Australia or any other government agency approved by the Council”. Government fire and emergency service agencies work with other providers in emergency services particularly at the local government level and with other government agencies.

AFAC will develop a business case that would scope, cost and analyse the benefits of offering a broader affiliate membership of AFAC to government and private agencies, corporations and individuals involved in emergency services and emergency management.

5.3 Embed Project Management within AFAC Business

There is no standard approach to governance and management of AFAC work, however in some areas of the business very good project management practices exist. Recognised internally and now directed by the Committee of Management, the introduction and embedding of a robust project management methodology is required.

AFAC will design, implement and conduct a standard project management approach to its business.

Key Supporting Services:

- Member Management
- Industry Awards Program
- Professional Networks



AFAC Members

- AirServices Australia
- Australian Capital Territory Emergency Services Agency
- ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands
- Attorney General's Department National Security Capability Division
- Australian Council of State Emergency Services
- Bushfires NT
- Country Fire Authority, Victoria
- Country Fire Service, South Australia
- Department of Community Safety Queensland Government - Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
- Department of Environment Climate Change and Water, NSW
- Department of Environment & Conservation, Western Australia
- Department for Environment & Heritage, SA
- Department of Sustainability & Environment, Victoria
- Emergency Management Queensland - State Emergency Service
- FESA State Emergency Service - Western Australia
- Fire & Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia
- Forests New South Wales
- Forestry Plantations - Queensland
- Forestry SA
- Forestry Tasmania
- Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, Melbourne
- New South Wales State Emergency Service
- New South Wales Fire Brigades
- New South Wales Rural Fire Service
- New Zealand Fire Service
- New Zealand National Rural Fire Authority
- Northern Territory Emergency Service
- Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
- Parks Victoria
- Parks & Wildlife, Tasmania
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services
- South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service
- South Australian State Emergency Service
- Tasmania Fire Service
- Tasmania State Emergency Service
- Victoria State Emergency Service

Affiliate members whose interests are consistent with AFAC's Goals and Objectives are:

- Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO)
- Bureau of Meteorology
- CSIRO Forestry & Forest Products
- Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation (FRSITO)
- Melbourne Water
- Pacific Islands Fire Service Association (PIFSA)
- New Zealand Department of Conservation
- Papua New Guinea Fire Service
- South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM)

Membership list as at 31 May 2010

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AFAC Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012



Australasian Fire and Emergency
Service Authorities Council

AFAC Vision

Fire and emergency services strengthened through sharing, collaboration and innovation

About AFAC

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) is the fire and emergency services industry body established by its members to collaborate on matters of the international, national and regional importance.

AFAC is governed by a Committee of Management and a Council of members, supported by a Secretariat.

AFAC exists to help strengthen fire and emergency services so that they are able to continuously improve community safety results in an effective and efficient way.

Goal 1: Leadership and Advocacy



Major Projects:

- 1.1 Facilitate the Creation of a Fire and Emergency Service Research Institute
- 1.2 Analysis of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission Final and Interim Reports
- 1.3 Promote the Use of Home Fire Sprinklers
- 1.4 Incorporate Firefighter Life Safety in Buildings into the Building Codes of Australia (BCA)
- 1.5 Finalise the Development of the Fire Brigade Intervention Model Computer Program (FBIM 2008) Full Version

Success factors:

- Australasian and international policies, standards, regulations, codes and guidelines reflect the collective views of AFAC member agencies
- The role, needs and capabilities of AFAC members are widely recognised
- AFAC contributes to the sustainable development of fire safety and emergency response training and institutional capacity building in the Pacific
- Fire and emergency management practices are environmentally sustainable

Goal 2: Consistent and effective approach to the provision of services



Major Projects:

- 2.1 Investigate the Need for Industry Operational Doctrine
- 2.2 Design an Interagency Resource Sharing Model
- 2.3 Develop a Nationally Consistent Approach to Command and Control Professional Development and Accreditation
- 2.4 Create an ANZ Testing Regime and Products List for Wildland Firefighting Chemicals
- 2.5 Develop a Guideline for Coordination of Incidents Across Multi-agencies
- 2.6 Report on Landscape Fire Performance
- 2.7 National Aerial Firefighting Strategy

Success factors:

- An industry standard incident management system and capability is established and applied
- Sustainable resources are used/available to support response interventions, tactics and activities
- Awareness, education and engagement approaches used with communities are best practice.
- Agencies are able to seamlessly work together in times of need

AFAC Services

AFAC offers a broad range of services to support the business of its members. Some services are also extended to other organisations who share AFAC's vision of: fire and emergency services strengthened through sharing, collaboration and innovation.

- ➔ Industry Advocate
- ➔ Professional Networks
- ➔ Industry Positions
- ➔ Professional Development
- ➔ Collaboration

Goal 3:

The collective experience and knowledge across the sector is captured and shared



Major Projects:

- 3.1 Implementation of the Knowledge Management Strategy
- 3.2 Determine the Feasibility of a Fire and Emergency Services Data Centre
- 3.3 AFAC Knowledge Web Readability Project
- 3.4 Joint AFAC and Bushfire CRC Research Transfer

Success factors:

- The fire and emergency services sector has a sustained research and analysis capability
- Fire and emergency management data is relevant, accurate and reliable
- The industry body of knowledge is used by all member agencies

Goal 4:

A fire and emergency services sector with capability and capacity



Major Projects:

- 4.1 Develop an AFAC Guideline to Promote Portability of Qualifications and Competencies
- 4.2 Develop an Industry Learning and Development Strategy for 2011 – 2016
- 4.3 Conduct a Retrospective Study into the Incidence of Cancer and Mortality in Firefighters
- 4.4 Develop Guidelines which Support 'Fitness for Duty' Principles for Fire and Emergency Services Personnel.

Success factors:

- A sector with strong and effective leaders
- A sustainable workforce of career and volunteer emergency workers who are competent, capable and equipped to safely fulfil their roles
- A nationally recognised and consistent approach to the training and assessment of all fire and emergency service workers

Goal 5:

The value of AFAC is realised throughout the membership



Major Projects:

- 5.1 Align AFAC Services with the Needs of Members
- 5.2 Create an AFAC Broader Affiliate Membership Program
- 5.3 Embed Project Management within AFAC Business

Success factors:

- The risks to AFAC Ltd are minimised
- The AFAC structure and systems are aligned with its business
- AFAC is in a sound financial position
- Skilled, effective and satisfied staff
- AFAC is well known and understood within member agencies
- AFAC meetings are effective and members time is well used

- ➔ Training Products and Services
- ➔ Information Services
- ➔ Research
- ➔ Consultancy
- ➔ The Knowledge Web
- ➔ Statistical Data Management

- ➔ Australasian Business Processes and Standards
- ➔ Member Management
- ➔ Industry Awards Program
- ➔ Manage the AFAC Shop

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