



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

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NSW RFS ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

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**MANAGEMENT
AND GOVERNANCE**

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the lead combat agency for bush fires in NSW.

For over 100 years we have been a significant part of the history and landscape of NSW. Working closely with other agencies we also respond to a range of emergencies including structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, floods and storms that occur within rural fire districts.

The NSW RFS is widely acknowledged as the largest volunteer fire service in the world. Members of the NSW RFS are trained to very high levels of competence to ensure they can respond to any emergency.

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

Legislation

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

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

In the 2015/16 reporting period amendments were made to the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to include:

- people are not guilty of offences under environmental legislation merely for carrying out bush fire hazard reduction work or vegetation clearing if the work is done in accordance with the *Rural Fires Act 1997*;
- vegetation clearing work carried out to reduce bush fire risk near farm sheds is permitted in certain areas;
- clarification of how provisions authorising vegetation clearing apply to removal of trees;
- written consent is to be obtained from adjoining neighbours before certain vegetation clearing work is carried out.

NSW Government and Ministry

As a department of the NSW Government, the NSW RFS comes under the Emergency Services portfolio within the Justice Cluster. The Hon. David Elliott, MP, Member for Baulkham Hills, is the Minister for Emergency Services including responsibility for the NSW RFS.

NSW RFS Commissioner

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

NSW RFS Executive

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

The Executive consists of the Commissioner and the Service's Executive Directors, Chief Financial Officer and Directors. A profile of each of the Principal Officers can be seen on pages 24-5.

Corporate Executive Group

The Corporate Executive Group (CEG) comprises the Executive Directors, Chief Financial Officer and Directors of the Service and representatives of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA), which is the representative association of the volunteers and staff of the NSW RFS. Its principal role is to consider and provide advice to the Commissioner on strategic issues affecting the Service. Details of representation and attendance at this Group are set out in Appendix 4.3.

PREVIOUS PAGE: Captain Keith White and Senior Deputy Captain Todd Gibson from Heathcote Brigade at a pre-season training exercise at Waterfall.
Photo by Sharon Quandt

Governance Committees

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

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

Rural Fire Service Advisory Council

The Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (RFSAC) is established under the provisions of Part 6 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The Council advises and reports to the Minister and the NSW RFS Commissioner on any matters relating to the administration of the Service. It also provides advice to the Commissioner on public education, programs relating to rural fire matters, the training of rural firefighters and Service Standards. Details of representation and attendances at the Council are set out in Appendix 4.3.

Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee

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

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

The BFCC constitutes Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) for all rural fire districts and areas with significant risk of bush fire. It also approves Operations Coordination and Bush Fire Risk Management Plans that are prepared by the BFMCs. Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in Appendix 4.3.

Fire Services Joint Standing Committee

The *Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act 1998* provides for the establishment of the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC). The major functions of the Committee are to develop and submit to the Minister strategic plans for the coordinated delivery of urban and rural fire services at the interface; to undertake periodic review of fire district and rural fire district boundaries; the minimisation of duplication and the maximisation of compatibility between the NSW RFS and Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW). The Committee is chaired alternately by the Commissioners of FRNSW and the NSW RFS. Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in Appendix 4.3.

Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides assistance to the NSW RFS Commissioner by overseeing and monitoring the governance and accountability requirements of the NSW RFS. The Committee consists of independent members and advises the Commissioner on a range of matters including: the effectiveness of the Service's internal audit function; legislative compliance; the financial statements and financial reporting of the Service; risk and control frameworks; business continuity and corruption prevention activities. Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in Appendix 4.3.

Consultative & Stakeholder Committees

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

NSW RFS / RFSA Consultative Committees

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

The Young Members Group is a sub-group of the Membership Services Consultative Committee and provides advice to that Committee on policy and programs, participate in decision-making at a State level and make suggestions and raise ideas relevant to young members.

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

Details of representation and attendance at these Committees are set out in Appendix 3.11.

Local Government Liaison Committee

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

Details of representation and attendance at this Committee are set out in Appendix 4.3.

Stakeholder liaison and collaboration

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

- Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and its various groups
- Australia/New Zealand Emergency Management Committee
- Association of Environment Education (NSW) Border Liaison Committees
- Bushfire and Natural Hazards 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
- Emergency Service Organisation Work Health and Safety Consultative Committee
- Environmental Education Officer's Group/ Fire Protection Association
- Fuel Loads Management Working Group
- Museum Education Officer's Group
- National Aerial Firefighting Centre
- National Public Information and Warnings Group
- NSW Health Disaster Management Committee
- Standards Australia - various committees
- State Emergency Management Committee/ State Rescue Board
- The National Bush Fire Arson Prevention Working Group.

Governance & Ethical Standards

Corporate Governance

The NSW RFS Corporate Governance Statement was reviewed with an updated Statement being published in November 2015. The update was undertaken using the Audit Office of NSW 2015 checklist.

Resulting from the review, 15 out of the 17 governance components were deemed to be Fully in Place with the remaining two being Substantially in Place. Comparing the Service's 2014 governance status and the 2015 status resulting from the review, it highlights the following in regard to those components not Fully in Place.

- Compliance Management - remains Substantially in Place
- Continuous Disclosure - has moved from Not in Place at all to Fully in Place
- Internal Controls - has moved from Substantially in Place to Fully in Place
- Stakeholder Communication - has moved from Fully in Place to Substantially in Place

The change of status for stakeholder communication was due to the NSW RFS not having a complaints management policy in place at the time of the review. On 9 May 2016 P7.1.2 Complaints Management was approved.

The NSW RFS Corporate Governance Statement is available on the public website and for staff, on the NSW RFS intranet.

Ethical Standards

Code of Conduct and Ethics Training

The Code of Conduct and Ethics training program was revised to incorporate changes to the Code as a result of the Directive from the Public Service Commissioner to all State Government agencies. This revised program was delivered to 141 salaried members and 43 volunteer members across the state with nine training sessions held in 2015/16.

Additionally presentations were delivered to 51 salaried members and 15 volunteers members at the Region East District Managers Forum, Young Members Forum and District Managers forums. Topics included Public Interest Disclosures, Grievances, Misconduct, Discipline, Record Keeping, Complaints Management, Professional Boundaries, Safety and Welfare of Children and Young Persons and Effective Teams.

Ethical Standards and Training

In September 2015 the NSW Ombudsman's Office conducted an audit into Public Interest Disclosure (PID) matters and internal reports received by the NSW RFS. This audit was conducted as part of an ongoing audit program of compliance by public authorities within the requirements of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*.

In February 2016 the NSW RFS received the NSW Ombudsman's Office Audit Report and implemented a number of changes to the NSW RFS Public Interest Disclosure (PID) management process, in response to recommendations. These changes included:

- increasing the number of NSW RFS officers nominated to receive PIDs from three to 10;
- specialised training by the NSW Ombudsman's office to support staff members appointed to the role of nominated PID officer; and
- a review of Service Standard 1.1.30 Public Interest Disclosures in the NSW RFS and related forms

Public Interest Disclosure Training

During the reporting period representatives from the NSW Ombudsman's office delivered four workshops about Public Interest Disclosure Management / Awareness training. There were 72 salaried members who attended the training.

In addition, a range of training relating to ethical standards was rolled out to members.

Fraud and Corruption Prevention Training

Fraud and Corruption prevention training was delivered to 151 salaried members across the state by representatives from the NSW ICAC with seven workshops held in 2015/16.

Resolve Case Management System

A functioning and efficient complaints handling system is an important element in the NSW RFS governance framework and a necessary part of service delivery, serving the public interest and accountability.

The development of a computerised case management system, to record, monitor and report on staff and volunteer conduct matters was approved in 2015. The Resolve Case Management System (which has been successfully implemented in a wide range of other State Government agencies) was selected and is currently being adapted to meet the specific needs of NSW RFS. This system will be managed by the Professional Standards Unit and Regional Services.

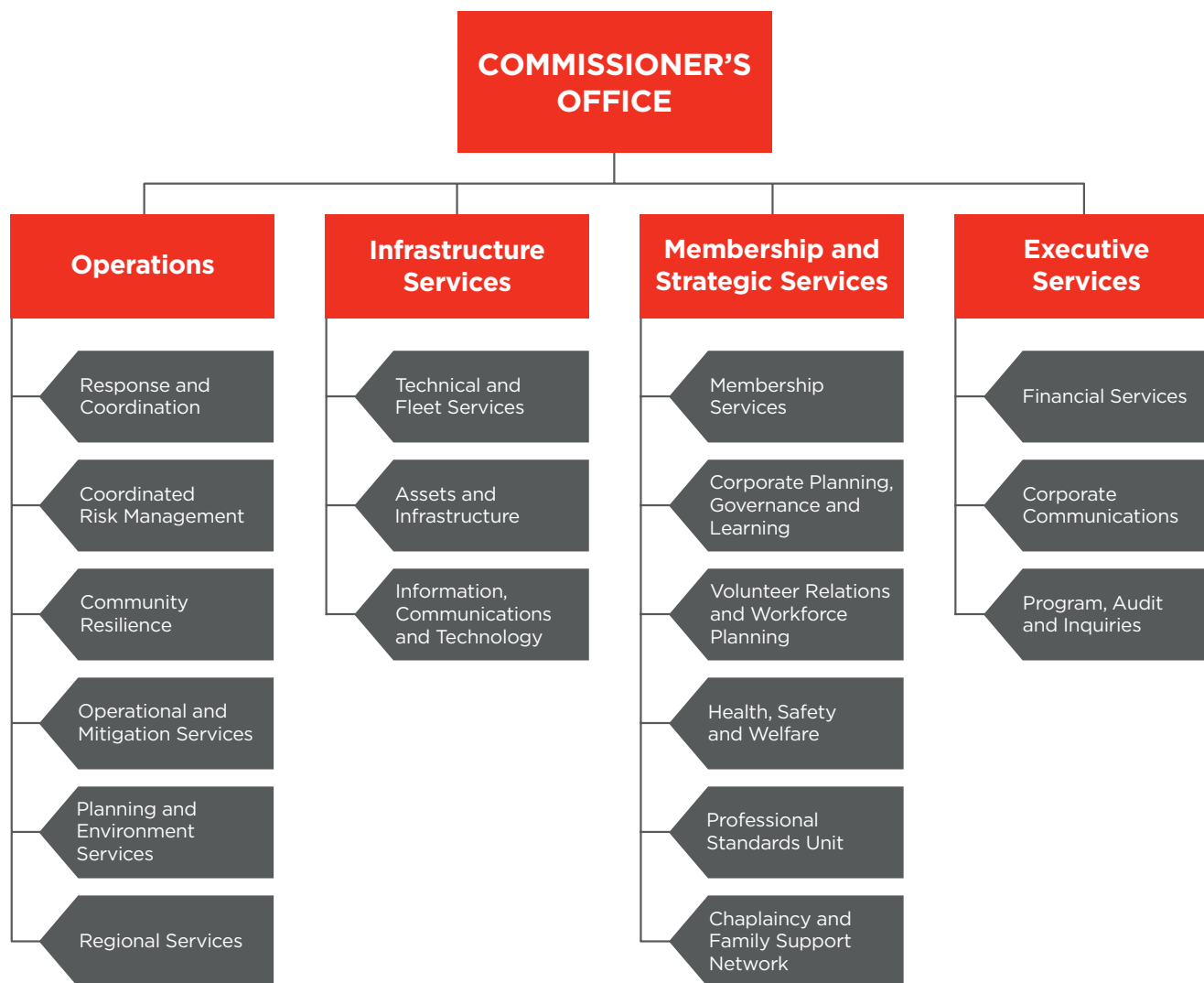
It is expected the system will reduce duplication,

increase data accuracy, streamline the process for escalation of matters where required and increase the capability of reporting of trends to the Senior Executive.

Independent Commission Against Corruption Report

In December 2015, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) delivered its report into Operation Vika, an investigation into the corrupt conduct of officers of the NSW Rural Fire Service and others. The NSW Rural Fire Service submitted its response to ICAC on 17 March 2016 and agreed to implement the four recommendations contained in the report.

NSW RFS Organisational Structure 2015/16



Principal Officers

NSW RFS Commissioner

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM

Shane Fitzsimmons has over 30 years experience with the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) serving as both a volunteer and salaried officer.

In 1998 he was appointed an Assistant Commissioner with the NSW RFS and has held portfolio responsibilities for Operations, Strategic Development and Regional Management. In 2004 he was appointed the inaugural Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Visiting Fellow to the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) for a period of 12 months.

In September 2007 he was appointed Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) and is also the Chair of the NSW RFS Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee and the NSW Rural Fire Service Advisory Council.

He was appointed a Director of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) in March 2008 and was the Chair of the NAFC Board from 2009 to 2013. He is also a member of the NSW State Emergency Management Committee and the NSW State Rescue Board and was Chairman from 2008 to November 2015. He was a Director on the Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre from 2009 to 2014. In July 2012, he was appointed a Board Member of the NSW Government Telecommunications Authority. In January 2016 he was appointed as a Councillor of the Royal Humane Society of NSW Inc.

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

Executive Director Operations

Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers, AFSM

Deputy Commissioner Rogers joined the NSW RFS in 1979 as a volunteer member of the Belrose Brigade, before being appointed as Deputy Fire Control Officer for the Greater Taree District in 1995.

Deputy Commissioner Rogers has held various executive positions responsible for Regional Management, Community Safety and Operations, and in 2004 was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Deputy Commissioner Rogers represents the NSW RFS on several national and international bodies including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Asian Fire Chiefs, the Wildland Fire Policy Committee, National Bush Fire Arson Taskforce and a number of AFAC Groups.



Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM



Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers, AFSM

Principal Officers - Executive Directors

Executive Director Membership and Strategic Services

Ms Bronwyn Jones, PSM

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

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

Ms Jones holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Labour Relations and the Law (University of Sydney); a Master of Arts (Interdisciplinary Studies) degree and a Master of Commerce (Human Resource).

Ms Jones was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2016.

Executive Director Infrastructure Services

Senior Assistant Commissioner Bruce McDonald, AFSM

Senior Assistant Commissioner Bruce McDonald, AFSM was appointed as the Director Infrastructure Services for the NSW RFS in May 2013 and Executive Director Infrastructure Services in April 2016. Senior Assistant Commissioner McDonald joined the then Bush Fire Brigade in 1980 and progressed through the organisation, holding various brigade positions culminating in Group Captain in the mid-1990s.

He commenced as a salaried officer in 1998 in the role of Deputy Fire Control Officer - Operations, bringing to a close a 25-year management career in the automotive industry. Since 2001, Senior Assistant Commissioner McDonald has held various management positions at NSW RFS Headquarters, including State Operations Officer, Manager, Operational Communications and Group Manager, Assets and Infrastructure.

In 2008 he was seconded to head up the implementation of a SAP Enterprise Resource Planning System replacing the Service's Finance and Procurement systems. Senior Assistant Commissioner McDonald was awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal in 2011.

Executive Director Executive Services

Mr Brad Scutella

Mr Brad Scutella has been employed in the NSW and Commonwealth Public Sector since 1980. Over his career he has principally worked in legal related areas in the NSW Police Force, Transport and Australian Securities and Investment Commission. Prior to his appointment to the NSW RFS in April 2015, he held the positions of Special Adviser and Chief of Staff to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

In 2001 Mr Scutella was awarded a scholarship from the Independent Commission Against Corruption. He attended the ICAC scholarship course in Corruption and Anti-Corruption at the Australian National University as both a participant and lecturer.

Mr Scutella is a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW and has responsibility for managing the Executive Services Directorate.

Directors and Chief Financial Officer

OPERATIONS	
Director Response and Coordination	Assistant Commissioner Steve Yorke, AFSM
Director Regional Services	Assistant Commissioner Jason Heffernan
Director Operational and Mitigation Services	Assistant Commissioner Rebel Talbert
Director Coordinated Risk Management	Assistant Commissioner Stuart Midgley, AFSM
Director Community Resilience	Mr Corey Shackleton
Director Planning and Environment Services	Mr Jeff Lucas
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES	
Director Assets and Infrastructure	Chief Superintendent John Parnaby
Director Information & Communications Technology (ICT)	Mr Matthew Smith
MEMBERSHIP & STRATEGIC SERVICES	
Director Membership Services	Mr Daniel Moroney
Director Corporate Planning, Governance & Learning	Mr Stephen Glassock
Director Professional Standards	Ms Helen Colbey
EXECUTIVE SERVICES	
Chief Financial Officer	Mr Stephen O'Malley
Director Corporate Communications	Mr Anthony Clark
Director Program Audit and Inquiries	Ms Natalie Marsic