COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S READINESS FOR THE 2011-12 BUSHFIRE SEASON

Report No. 9
in the 38th Parliament

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S READINESS FOR THE 2011-12 BUSHFIRE SEASON

Report No. 9

Presented by:
Mr A.P. O'Gorman, MLA
Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly
on 24 November 2011

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

The functions of the Committee are to review and report to the Assembly on:

(a)   the outcomes and administration of the departments within the Committee's portfolio responsibilities;

(b)   annual reports of government departments laid on the Table of the House;

(c)   the adequacy of legislation and regulations within its jurisdiction; and

(d)   any matters referred to it by the Assembly including a bill, motion, petition, vote or expenditure, other financial matter, report or paper.

At the commencement of each Parliament, and as often thereafter as the Speaker considers necessary, the Speaker will determine and table a schedule showing the portfolio responsibilities for each committee. Annual reports of government departments and authorities tabled in the Assembly will stand referred to the relevant committee for any inquiry the committee may make.

Whenever a committee receives or determines for itself fresh or amended terms of reference, the committee will forward them to each standing and select committee of the Assembly and Joint Committee of the Assembly and Council. The Speaker will announce them to the Assembly at the next opportunity and arrange for them to be placed on the notice boards of the Assembly.

INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee will examine:

- the Police Commissioner;

- FESA's Chief Executive Officer;

- the Department of Environment and Conservation's Director General;

- the WALGA President;

- the President of the United Firefighters Union Of Western Australia; and

- the President of the Bedfordale Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade.

about the State's preparedness for this year's coming fire season, including:

(a)   the interoperability of agencies with responsibilities to combat bushfires;

(b)   the coordination of bushfire volunteers;

(c)   evacuation policies in force;

(d)   public information policies in force; and

(e)   the implementation status of previous recommendations of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee.

The Committee will report to Parliament by 24 November 2011.

CHAIR'S FOREWORD AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Keelty Report noted that there have been "a large number of previous reviews on bushfires" in Western Australia and listed the following reports over the past seven years:

- Auditor General– Performance Examination – *Responding to Major Bushfires* (2004)

- Community Development and Justice Standing Committee – *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation* (2006)

- Department of the Premier and Cabinet – *Review of Western Australia's Bushfire Preparedness* (2009)

- Auditor General– Performance Examination – *Coming Ready or Not: Preparing for Large-Scale Emergencies* (2009)

- Mr Euan Ferguson – A Review of the Ability of the Department of Environment and Conservation Western Australia to Manage Major Fires (2010).

This Committee began this Inquiry on 7 September 2011 after the community discussion which followed the tabling in Parliament on 17 August 2011 of *A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review* (commonly referred to as the 'Keelty Report'). It was concerned to report to Parliament before the beginning of the 2011-12 bushfire season as to whether the main State agencies were better prepared than during last year's season, and on how many of the Keelty Report's 55 recommendations have been implemented. This report is written so that its chapters reflect the Committee's terms of reference.

The limited timeframe set by the Committee to report has placed constraints on it from canvassing the diverse and complex range of issues raised in the course of our deliberations. Nevertheless in the interests of balance, to more accurately reflect the nature of evidence given by witnesses and to build upon the recommendations of the Keelty Report, we have addressed the progress on all of those recommendations where their implementation is not anticipated to occur before the forthcoming bushfire season.

We are mindful of the plethora of inquiries already conducted on this topic. We are anxious that this Inquiry articulates a framework for continuous improvement for bushfire seasons to come. To restrict our recommendations to this year's season may signal a lack of urgency to finish the good work which has been initiated after the Keelty Report was tabled. Of even more concern is the danger of complacency setting in. The best means of avoiding this is for the Committee to outline in its findings and recommendations a way forward to prepare for future bushfire seasons.

Chapter One builds the context of the Inquiry and the critical role being played by the Keelty Report's recommendations in reshaping the State's bushfire services. The Premier told Parliament

"the vast majority of these recommendations can and will be readily accepted by the Government. A number will, however, require detailed analysis." The Executive Director of a Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Keelty Report Implementation Group said that while there is 'in principle' support from the State Government for all recommendations, some may not be implemented, or may be implemented in a different form to that suggested in the Keelty Report, due to agencies suggesting the outcome can be achieved by another means.

According to the latest Stakeholder Briefing available to the Committee on the work of the DPC Working Groups, only nine (or 17%) of the Keelty Report's recommendations will be completed by the start of this year's bushfire season on 1 December. **This means that less than a third of the Keelty Report's recommendations will have been completed, or substantially completed, by the start of this year's bushfire season.**

The Committee heard that, subsequent to the Keelty Report, all senior staff from the main agencies are participating in the DPC Implementation Group. In light of this, the Police Commissioner said "I can say that, yes the State will be better prepared to deal with bushfires this summer."

The Committee was given similar assurances on preparedness by both FESA's new CEO, Mr Wayne Gregson, and DEC's Director General, Mr Keiran McNamara. The Committee heard evidence from the three main government agencies that subsequent to the Keelty Report they were now collaborating more closely in preparing for the forthcoming bushfire season. This evidence from senior staff given to the Committee is consistent in that **Western Australia is better prepared for the forthcoming bushfire season than it was last year**.

Evidence from the United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia

However, the Committee was told a different story by the United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia. The Union was concerned about:

- staff training–*We are concerned with the training levels provided to our middle managers; it is not up to scratch. The station officers … get trained up and then they go on the trucks and receive very little training for the rest of their career. If they seek to get promoted to the next level as a district manager, who are the ones who get directly employed with the interagency fires, they do it without any formal training.*

- lack of staff– …*before this week, appliances are getting decommissioned as we are leading into the* [bushfire] *season because they have not got enough staff. … Because they have not resourced the fire service correctly over the last years, they are having a hard time getting those guys on those trucks all the time because of family commitments. … and they cannot get enough people and they do not want to pay the overtime to get the people who are willing to come.*

- equipment– …*at the basic level we do not have enough radios for firefighters. If you look at the Police communications, they seem to be able to be in contact with individual officers anywhere at any time. We are lucky to have one radio or two radios for a full team.… we cannot track them. We believe that every firefighter should have his own radio to be tracked at all times, but that has not happened.*

The Union's statements about poor training for FESA were recently backed up by the new CEO who was reported as saying that FESA staff needed more training and "he was 'gobsmacked' at some of the inadequacies within the Fire and Emergency Services" and was astounded "at the lack of training".

The Union made proposals about the additional staff and equipment resources needed in Perth and suggested that on extreme and catastrophic fire days all FESA staff should be notified and "have them sitting on appliances [ready] to respond". The Union concluded its evidence with a proposal that the State's fire services were only going to be effective and well-coordinated if their control was bought under one agency.

Lack of progress by local government

Twenty-one (or nearly 40%) of the Keelty Report's recommendations were addressed directly to the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) or generally to 'local government'. The WALGA CEO sits on the State Emergency Management Committee and is currently involved with DPC's Implementation Group and working groups.

The Committee finds that WALGA seems to have made less effort to comply with the Keelty Report's recommendations than have State Government agencies, such as FESA and DEC. The WALGA CEO told the Committee that "the recommendations have to be separated into what are achievable and what are not achievable."

The Executive Director of DPC's Implementation Group said that the implementation process had shown there was a lack of clarity around the role of local government in preparing for the bushfire season and that the State's legislation confers many entitlements to local governments but requires few responsibilities from them. He gave as an example the reluctance of councils in the Perth Hills to consider an increase in the number of their green waste collections, as recommended by the Keelty Report.

Other evidence

This chapter notes evidence from the Keelty Report that it received from the WA Regional Office of the Bureau of Meteorology suggesting that "the Perth Hills and the immediate area are undergoing significant climate change when viewed over a thirty-year period." The Report said the State Government should "recognise the projected changes in climate and potential impact on future fire events."

This chapter also recommends urgent changes to the *Emergency Management Act 2005, Bush Fires Act 1954* and the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* to ensure a more effective response from the State's main agencies.

Chapter Two summarises the background to the relationship between FESA and DEC before the publication of the Keelty Report. The Keelty review spent considerable time trying to understand why the main State agencies did not work well together during the February bushfires given their membership of existing multi-agency organisations, such as the Interagency Bushfire Management Committee. For example, the review tried to "reconcile why FESA management

would ignore the DEC pre-formed teams in favour of interstate resources unfamiliar with the terrain." The Premier, Hon Mr Colin Barnett, in tabling the Keelty Report in Parliament, commented:

> *In this context, I can assure the public that the message to all relevant government agencies and those leading them is clear:* **work together urgently and cooperatively in the best interests of the community**. *Failure is not acceptable to the community or the Government.* [emphasis added]

The new CEO of FESA told the Committee a draft Heads of Agreement between FESA and DEC "that sets the flavour of the way in which the CEO of FESA and the CEO of DEC, and their respective agencies or departments, are going to work together in a much more collaborative and cohesive way as they move forward" had been prepared. The finalisation of the Heads of Agreement was the first recommendation of the Keelty Report and it was signed by the CEO of FESA and Director General of DEC on 4 November 2011.

This chapter investigates some key areas that require close collaboration and interoperability to ensure the success of firefighting programs, such as the holding of joint exercises, common radio equipment and software, and an integrated system for measuring and managing fuel loads.

Chapter Three describes the role of volunteers, who make up the vast majority of the State's firefighters. The Committee heard from both DEC and FESA that the use of volunteer fire fighters in their operations "is essential and critical in readiness for the bushfire season". FESA supports more than 28,000 volunteer firefighters and rescue staff throughout the State by delivering training, equipment, appliances and facilities. However, FESA told the Committee that currently they have "no legal authority over bushfire volunteers, as the power rests with local government".

The Committee heard from volunteers from the Roleystone Bushfire Brigade who were involved in fighting the Roleystone-Kelmscott fire in February 2011. The brigade serves dual purposes as a fire and rescue brigade as well as a bushfire brigade. All of its approximately 50 members are unpaid volunteers and the Brigade is supported and coordinated by the City of Armadale. In its current round of controlled burns around Roleystone and Kalamunda, DEC asked the Roleystone volunteers for assistance and "they are actually now communicating a lot better. They actually did ask for our assistance earlier."

The Committee was told the Brigade's members are covered under a workers' compensation policy through the City of Armadale and the fire and rescue staff are covered under FESA's policy. But this issue is "a bone of contention" because:

> *we have had a few firefighters who have been injured in incidents where the workers' compensation for them has run out, yet they still have to have ongoing medical treatments. We have had a few of them over the years where they have actually ended up on social security because they cannot go back to work.*

The United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia compared the task of bushfire and rescue volunteers to Army Reservists, who get paid leave to attend the same training courses undertaken by regular Army personnel. The Union's Secretary was very concerned about the pressures and stresses that volunteer work was putting on people. He suggested that volunteers be given "proper

equipment, proper stations and then proper training." The Union suggested to the Committee that bushfire volunteers should be compensated for call-outs.

Finally, the Union suggested the abandonment of separate career and volunteer fire services:

> *The next step of it is there should not be bushfire volunteers and a volunteer fire and rescue service. There should be one service, one stream, so we all have the same training and we all have the same equipment so we all can do the same thing.*

The Committee was told that a major issue of contention between the Police and FESA was the legislation governing evacuations. **Chapter Four** reports evidence provided by both agencies about this issue. FESA and the WA Police made a joint approach to the State Solicitor's Office in April 2011 seeking clarification of the provisions of the *Bush Fire Act 1954* and the *Emergency Management Act 2005* in regard to road closures and control of people's movement. The SSO advice was received by FESA in September and subsequently agreement was reached on a range of issues. FESA is developing protocols and templates to be used in the event of an evacuation.

The *Emergency Management Act 2005* sets out the legislative requirements for emergency management in Western Australia and it is operationalised by State Emergency Management Policies (SEMP). SEMP No. 4.7 *Community Evacuation* guides the hazard management agency, and other agencies with emergency service responsibilities and enabling legislation, in their planning and execution of evacuations. The WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE identifies the responsibilities of an Incident Controller undertaking an evacuation.

Local emergency management committees are primarily responsible for a particular area and are made up of representatives from the community and not just emergency personnel. They are supported by local government authorities to identify groups at risk and other information that can be used by emergency services in the planning for a evacuation. In recognition of the responsibilities local government authorities have in emergency management planning for their communities, the WA Local Government Association have developed an *Emergency Management Toolbox* to assist their members meet their emergency management obligations.

Chapter Five reviews the slow progress made by the main State agencies to implementing the Keelty Report's 13 recommendations on improving public information about the preparation for, and response to, a bushfire. The recommendations were aimed at a wide range of government and non-government organisations providing information in various media.

The need for undertaking more intensive public education was shown in the Bushfire Cooperative Research Council's report into the Lake Clifton bushfire in January 2011 where it found that nearly 60% of residents had no prior training or experience of bushfires, and nearly 56% had little or no knowledge of bushfire safety. While 60% of the respondents had read about bushfire safety, and 65% had planned on leaving their homes early and not trying to defend them, in the face of the fire only 20% of these 'early leavers' actually left early, while nearly three-quarters left late.

The Committee finds that the area of improving public information seems to be one where the State's agencies have done the least in preparing the Western Australian community for the 2011-12 bushfire season. A campaign prepared by FESA on these issues, such as changes to the

meaning of a Total Fire Ban and the way in which one is applied and lifted, await gazettal of regulations planned for in December 2011.

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee in the 37th Parliament tabled a report titled *Inquiry into Western Australia's Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements* on 10 May 2007. The report contained 14 recommendations. **Chapter Six** provides evidence from FESA's Chief Executive Officer that 11 of the report's recommendations had been accepted by Cabinet and have now been implemented. The remaining recommendations "have not been progressed however FESA remains conscious of these and where circumstances change they will be revisited." The Committee's earlier report titled *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation* was tabled on 19 October 2006 and contained 88 recommendations. The Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Mr Rob Johnson, told Parliament in August 2011 that "nothing at all happened to it until we came into Government … Within a month or six weeks of becoming a Minister, I took recommendations to Cabinet, and I got Cabinet endorsement to fulfil the most critical recommendations contained within the report."

Conclusion

I thank my fellow Committee members for their dedication and goodwill over this very short Inquiry. On behalf of the Committee, I acknowledge and sincerely thank our Principal Research Officer, Dr David Worth, and Research Officer, Ms Jovita Hogan, for their invaluable work in support of this Inquiry while undertaking two others. I would also like to thank the witnesses who appeared before us on short notice. The Committee appreciated the assistance of FESA in providing data and information in a timely way while undertaking some important internal changes. I hope the recommendations contained in this report help to make this, and future, bushfire seasons safer for all Western Australians.

Mr A.P. O'Gorman, MLA
Chair

FINDINGS

Page 4

> **Finding 1**
>
> Less than a third of the Keelty Report's recommendations will have been completed, or substantially completed, by the start of this year's bushfire season.

Page 12

> **Finding 2**
>
> The United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia made serious allegations to the Committee about poor training, inadequate equipment levels and inadequate firefighting staff numbers within FESA that may lead the State to not being sufficiently prepared for the coming bushfire season.

Page 13

> **Finding 3**
>
> The State Government announced $6.25 million for additional equipment to fight bushfires during the 2011-12 season, the majority of which is for the lease of the Erikson Skycrane water bomber. The bushfire fighting impact of helicopters is limited by weather and the time of day. They were unable to fly during the Perth Hills bushfires due to extreme weather conditions.

Page 14

> **Finding 4**
>
> There is no whole-of-government equipment register of the firefighting equipment held by FESA, DEC and local government authorities. The response to a bushfire would be made more effective if such a register was developed.

Page 15

> **Finding 5**
>
> The Western Australian Local Government Association is concerned about the insurance and cost implications of its members fully implementing the Keelty Report's recommendations.

Page 17

Finding 6

A key recommendation of the Keelty Report to better prepare bushfire prone areas of the State for future bushfire seasons was allocated to the Western Australian Planning Commission but there has been little progress on it.

Page 19

Finding 7

The Keelty Report's findings and recommendations in regard to the Perth Hills bushfires has exposed a need for the State's main agencies to re-examine the effectiveness of their risk analysis and planning processes.

Page 22

Finding 8

Western Australia's drying climate over the longer term in the South West has impacted the efforts of State agencies in preparing for the annual bushfire season and in fighting bushfires.

Page 28

Finding 9

The weight of evidence given to the Committee was that the main State firefighting agencies are better prepared for the 2011-12 bushfire season than they were for the 2010-11 season.

Page 33

Finding 10

The involvement of the key government and non-government organisations in bushfire exercises, particularly field exercises, improves their interoperability and familiarity with WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE procedures.

Page 35

Finding 11

The area of radio communications is one where the major State agencies have a high level of interoperability, although the Police digital trunk radio network will not be completed for another five years.

Page 38

Finding 12

The use of a common incident management platform such as WebEOC by all State agencies dealing with emergencies such as bushfires and is essential to ensuring accuracy, transparency across agencies and the endorsement of decisions by different agencies during an emergency.

Page 42

Finding 13

The knowledge of an area's fuel load is a critical piece of information in determining how a bushfire is responded to by Government agencies. The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee Fuel Load Management sub-committee has been unable to complete the development of a State Fuel Load Management Policy since its inaugural meeting in 2010. Currently, comprehensive fuel load information is only held for land managed by DEC but FESA is developing its own system for capturing similar information.

Page 50

Finding 14

Other Australian jurisdictions manage and value their volunteer firefighters and rescue workers in different ways to Western Australia.

Page 51

Finding 15

The Victorian Volunteer Charter is an important method for recognising the work undertaken by volunteer bushfire and emergency services personnel.

Page 66

Finding 16

The Keelty Report recognised the importance of the public in terms of the 'shared responsibility' in preparing for and dealing with bushfires. Western Australian research has shown that found that a majority of residents had no prior training, experience of bushfires and little or no knowledge of bushfire safety. This area seems to be one where the State's agencies have done the least in preparing the Western Australian community for the 2011-12 bushfire season.

Page 70

Finding 17

A significant proportion of residents likely to be effected by a bushfire do not heed the warnings of FESA and their local governments to properly prepare their properties before the bushfire season commences.

Page 72

Finding 18

Warning systems based on modern communication technologies, such as FESA's 'State Alert' SMS system, are useful to warn affected residents of an impending bushfire if the messages are generated in a timely fashion.

Page 74

Finding 19

The Committee believes that the results of the Bushfire CRC research shows the level of understanding of the meaning and implication of a Total Fire Ban by Western Australians is at a lower level than that judged by FESA staff.

Page 79

Finding 20

FESA has implemented the majority of the recommendations made in the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's report *Inquiry into Western Australia's Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements.*

Page 81

Finding 21

FESA has implemented the majority of the recommendations made in the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's report *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Page 4

Recommendation 1

The Minister for Emergency Services report to Parliament every six months on the progress made in completing all of the outstanding recommendations of the Keelty Report.

Page 7

Recommendation 2

The Minister for Emergency Services introduce by the 2012-13 bushfire season psychological testing of all FESA career staff and bushfire and rescue volunteers.

Page 12

Recommendation 3

At the conclusion to the 2011-12 bushfire season, the Minister for Emergency Services institute a thorough review of the operations of FESA, the Police and DEC in protecting the State from bushfires and other natural disasters, with a primary focus on:

- staffing levels;
- equipment levels and coordination; and
- training needs.

The Minister report to Parliament by June 2012 on any changes that need to be made to the current departmental structures to optimise the State's preparedness for the 2012-13 bushfire season.

Page 14

Recommendation 4

The Minister for Emergency Services ensure that a whole-of-government equipment register of the firefighting equipment held by FESA, DEC and local government authorities is in place for the 2012-13 bushfire season.

Page 16

Recommendation 5

The Minister for Local Government have urgent discussions with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) as to why they are not supporting the full implementation of the recommendations addressed to local government in the Keelty Report. The Minister ensure that by May 2012 WALGA and its member councils have the resources to fully implement the recommendations.

Page 17

Recommendation 6

The Minister for Planning report to Parliament by May 2012 on the urgent actions undertaken by the Department of Planning and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to transfer responsibility for declaring bushfire probe areas to the WAPC.

Page 19

Recommendation 7

The Minister for Emergency Services institute a thorough review by December 2012, including a comparison to other jurisdictions, of the risk analysis processes used by FESA, the Police and DEC to prepare them to protect the State from bushfires and other natural disasters.

Page 22

Recommendation 8

In implementing the Keelty Report's recommendation 42, the Ministers for Emergency Services and Environment jointly report to Parliament by May 2012 on the likely impacts on, and implications for, the future bushfire operations of the State Government of the drying climate in the State's South West region.

Page 24

Recommendation 9

The Minister for Emergency Services amend section 50 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* by June 2012 to allow the State Emergency Coordinator, as well as a hazard management agency, to make an emergency situation declaration.

Page 27

Recommendation 10

The Minister for Environment bring to Parliament by June 2012 amendments to the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* that reflect the use by the Department of Environment and Conservation of prescribed burns for both biodiversity conservation and community protection purposes.

Page 29

Recommendation 11

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for the Environment report to Parliament by December each year as to the state of readiness of the main State Government agencies tasked with fighting bushfires.

Page 34

Recommendation 12

The Minister for Emergency Services ensure that the annual budget of FESA contains the funds it requires to coordinate an annual multi-agency bushfire field exercise, alongside other desktop exercises, to be held in different regions of the State each year. The outcomes of this field exercise should be included in the proposed annual Ministerial statement to Parliament on bushfire readiness before each season.

Page 36

Recommendation 13

The Minister for Emergency Services makes it a priority that the annual budgets of FESA and WA Police are sufficient to bring forward the completion dates of the current radio projects now underway.

Page 38

Recommendation 14

The Minister for Emergency Services ensure that FESA has the funds to implement the installation and use of WebEOC for use during the 2011-12 bushfire season and immediately put in place common protocols with the Police and DEC to record significant events during a bushfire.

Page 42

Recommendation 15

The Minister for Emergency Services, with advice from the Interagency Bushfire Management Committee Fuel Load Management sub-committee, report to Parliament by May 2012 on the estimated cost of developing one fuel load information system across all lands in Western Australia, no matter who manages it. This system's information should be readily accessible and easily understood by all stakeholders, including the public.

Page 50

Recommendation 16

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Local Government review and report to Parliament by May 2012 on ways in which the State's volunteer firefighters and rescue workers can be more effectively managed and valued.

Page 51

Recommendation 17

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Environment develop by December 2012 a Volunteer Charter that recognises the important work undertaken by the State's volunteer bushfire and emergency services personnel.

Page 66

Recommendation 18

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Local Government provide additional resources to FESA, DEC and WALGA in the 2012-13 Budget to improve the Western Australian community's knowledge of bushfire safety and to allow these agencies to involve the public in their exercises.

Page 70

Recommendation 19

The Minister for Emergency Services commission an independent report to Parliament by June 2012 on the best practices in other jurisdictions to increase the rate of residents likely to be effected by a bushfire who properly prepare their properties before the bushfire season.

Page 74

Recommendation 20

The Minister for Emergency Services commission an independent report to Parliament by June 2012 on an assessment of the success of FESA's Total Fire Ban community education campaign in improving the community's knowledge on this issue.

Page 75

Recommendation 21

The Minister for Emergency Services report to Parliament by May 2012 on the resources required to ensure a 'One Source One Message' multi-layered information system, as recommended by the Keelty Report, including any upgrades required for FESA's current State Alert system.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSE

In accordance with Standing Order 277(1) of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee directs that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Local Government report to the Assembly as to the action, if any, proposed to be taken by the Government with respect to the recommendations of the Committee.

CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee began this Inquiry on 7 September 2011 following the community discussion on the tabling in Parliament on 17 August 2011 of *A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review* (commonly referred to as the 'Keelty Report').[1] The Committee was concerned to report to Parliament before the beginning of the 2011-12 bushfire season as to whether the main agencies were better prepared than during the previous season.

The Committee initially planned on hearing evidence from the main State Government agencies involved in handling bushfires: the WA Police, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the Fires and Emergency Services Authority (FESA). Subsequently the witness list was expanded to include WALGA, the United Firefighters Union of Western Australia and volunteer bushfire fighters involved with the Perth Hills bushfire in February 2011.

This report is written so that its chapters reflect the Committee's terms of reference:

a) the interoperability of agencies with responsibilities to combat bushfires;

b) the coordination of bushfire volunteers;

c) evacuation policies in force;

d) public information policies in force; and

e) the implementation status of previous recommendations of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee.

The limited timeframe set by the Committee to report has placed constraints on it from canvassing the diverse and complex range of issues raised in the course of our deliberations. Nevertheless in the interests of balance, to more accurately reflect the nature of evidence given by witnesses and to build upon the recommendations of the Keelty Report, we have addressed the progress on all of those events where their implementation is not anticipated to occur before the forthcoming fire season.

We are mindful of the plethora of inquiries already conducted on this topic. We are anxious that this Inquiry articulates a framework for continuous improvement for bushfire seasons to come. To restrict our recommendations to this year's season may signal a lack of urgency to finish the good

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[1]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

work which has been initiated after the Keelty Report was tabled. Of even more concern is the danger of complacency setting in. The best means of avoiding this is for the Committee to outline in its findings and recommendations a way forward to prepare for future bushfire seasons as well.

While the Keelty Report focused on the response to the Perth Hills bushfires in February 2011, the implementation of its 55 recommendations should flow through to a better, more coordinated, response to other types of natural disasters. The FESA *2010-11 Annual Report* highlighted that nearly three-quarters of the State's local government areas had been affected by natural disasters that year.[2]

1.2   Is the State Better Prepared for this Fire Season?

(a)   Previous State reports on bushfires

As the Keelty Report noted, there have been "a large number of previous reviews on bushfires in WA including a Parliamentary Review." The Keelty Report listed the following reports:

- Report of the Ministerial Working Group Investigating the Darling Escarpment Fire Hazard (1994)

- Auditor General– Performance Examination – *Responding to Major Bushfires* (2004)

- Community Development and Justice Standing Committee – *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation* (2006)

- Department of the Premier and Cabinet – *Review of Western Australia's Bushfire Preparedness* (2009)

- Auditor General– Performance Examination – *Coming Ready or Not: Preparing for Large-Scale Emergencies* (2009)

- Mr Euan Ferguson – *A Review of the Ability of the Department of Environment and Conservation Western Australia to Manage Major Fires* (2010).[3]

This list does not include Coronial Inquests into bushfires, such as the one into the fire on 30 December 2007 that killed three truck drivers when they and their vehicles were consumed by a fire as it crossed the Great Eastern Highway near Boorabbin. Additionally, FESA has also

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2   Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia, 'Annual Report 2010-11', 2011. Available at: www.fesa.wa.gov.au/publications/Annual%20Reports/FESA_Annual_Report_2010_2011.pdf, p42. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

3   Ibid, p25.

published Major Incident Reviews of bushfires which occurred at Karijini (April 2004), Toodyay (December 2009) and Lake Clifton and the Perth Hills (June 2011).[4]

(b)   Keelty Report

The 'Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review' was established by the State Government on 23 February 2011 under the provisions of section 24H(2) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* after 71 houses were destroyed and another 39 received substantial damage during the bushfire in the Roleystone-Kelmscott area on 6 February 2011.[5] It heard from more than 100 witnesses and made 55 recommendations aimed at ensuring that the main agencies were better prepared for the forthcoming 2011-12 bushfire season.[6] The Premier told Parliament "the vast majority of these recommendations can and will be readily accepted by the Government. A number will, however, require detailed analysis."[7] The Executive Director of a Department of Premier and Cabinet Implementation Group said that while there is 'in principle' support from the State Government for all recommendations, some may not be implemented, or may be implemented in a different form to that suggested in the Keelty Report, due to agencies suggesting the outcome can be achieved by another means.[8]

The 'Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review' was titled *A Shared Responsibility* as Mr Keelty saw an important interaction between the following stakeholders:

- the public– who could assist reduce the number of bushfires by their actions in preparing their properties by reducing its fuel load and providing equipment to help fight a bushfire, and limiting their activities on adverse fire days;

- the State agencies– with FESA and DEC undertaking prescribed burns to lower fuel loads and preparing their staff and equipment in readiness to fight fires; and

- the public and the State agencies– to combat a bushfire in a coordinated fashion.

Recommendation 55 of the Keelty Report was for the State Government to review the implementation of its recommendations in June 2013. According to the latest Stakeholder Briefing available to the Committee on the work of the DPC Working Groups, only nine (or 17%) of the

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4   Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia, 'FESA Reports', 2011. Available at: www.fesa.wa.gov.au/publications/Pages/Reports.aspx. Accessed on 9 November 2011.

5   Hon Mr Colin Barnett, Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 23 February 2011, p968.

6   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, pp1-2. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

7   Hon Mr Colin Barnett, Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 17 August 2011, p6011.

8   Mr Stephen Home, Executive Director, Department of Premier and Cabinet, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

Keelty Report's other 54 recommendations will be completed by the start of this year's bushfire season on 1 December 2011 (see Appendix Nine). A further seven are likely to be substantially completed by then.[9] This means that less than a third of the Keelty Report's recommendations will have been completed, or substantially completed, by the start of this bushfire season.

Finding 1

Less than a third of the Keelty Report's recommendations will have been completed, or substantially completed, by the start of this year's bushfire season.

Recommendation 1

The Minister for Emergency Services report to Parliament every six months on the progress made in completing all of the outstanding recommendations of the Keelty Report.

(c)   Committee evidence

The Committee heard that, subsequent to the Keelty Report, all senior staff from the main agencies are participating in an Implementation Group established by the Department of Premier and Cabinet which is working to immediately implement most of the Keelty Report's recommendations before the coming bushfire season.[10] In light of this, the Police Commissioner said "I can say that, yes the State will be better prepared to deal with bushfires this summer."[11]

Department of Environment and Conservation

The Committee was given similar assurances on preparedness by both FESA and DEC, although the Director General of DEC said that his assurance particularly related to the Perth Hills region:

> *We have put a lot of effort into strategically placed burns on the urban interface. As at a week or two ago, we had a count of about 16 prescribed burns that we could count as being right up against the urban interface from Mundaring to Sawyers Valley to Roleystone–Kelmscott and so on. And we had some on the Swan coastal plain as well, including one, for example, at Rockingham Lakes Regional Park, which is hard up against the hospital, to provide protection again. In the sense of more targeted, strategic, right*

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9   Mr Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Letter, 1 November 2011.

10   Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p3.

11   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p4.

next to the community, right next to houses preparation, we have done more this year and we also have an investment in extra capital that will stand us in good stead.[12]

FESA's activities

The FESA CEO also qualified his evidence by saying to the Committee that:

> *Despite recent above–average rainfall for September* [2011], *the trend for the average rainfall pattern across the State has increasing fuel loads, resulting in the majority of the State to be registering **above–average potential for bushfire risk**. The next few weeks will further determine the season's potential, and if the rains continue, then that will improve the season's outlook. **But all indications at this stage are that the fire season is shaping up to be at least as challenging as the last***.[13] [emphasis added]

FESA reported an increase in its non-metropolitan prescribed burns program which "have taken place in the Midwest–Gascoyne region, the metropolitan area, the lower South West and South West regions and in the Midlands–Goldfields over the past two months."[14] FESA told the Committee that its prescribed burns were generally located around town sites and complemented DEC's landscape-scale type of burn. FESA had completed 22 burns in the Perth Hills since June 2011 but this had been difficult as they:

> *are small packages, and while they are quite resource-intensive, DEC will probably describe their burns, ... in, say, 1,000 hectares or hectare lots, it is not so easy in these intimate areas where you are working in between houses and the like in those urban interface locations. So we might use the same amount of resources that DEC would use for 1,000 hectares to do, say, a four hectare or eight hectare small burn.*[15]

Another way in which FESA has increased bushfire readiness in Western Australia is by working in partnership with local government:

> *to support a successful bushfire-ready program, which encourages local residents to work together in preparing and protecting their families and properties against bushfires. There have already been a number of briefing sessions for bushfire-ready facilitators in high-risk areas such as the Perth hills. The concentrated focus by FESA **has led to the doubling of State-wide capacity of the bushfire-ready group since 2009.** [emphasis added] There are currently 66 bushfire-ready facilitators in WA, and each has a varied number of street coordinators.*[16]

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[12] Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p12.

[13] Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p2.

[14] Ibid, p3.

[15] Mr Christopher Arnol, Assistant Chief Operations Officer for Country, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p18.

[16] Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4.

FESA also told the Committee that it has additional equipment ready for this coming bushfire season. The regular FESA truck fleet will be supplemented by an additional 78 appliances that have been returned as a result of scheduled appliance replacement programs. They have been held over from being decommissioned and disposed of, and are "currently located in the northern regions (Pilbara, Kimberley and MidWest/Gascoyne) with a number being retained in the South West from previous seasons." The FESA Aviation Services air intelligence helicopter's contract has been renewed with a twin-engine turbine Bolkow 105. Its onboard equipment has been upgraded in order to improve the real-time infrared and vision observation pictures and electronic mapping of fires information available to Fire Incident Controllers.[17]

WA Police

Dr O'Callaghan told the Committee that Strike Force Falcon was the Police's summer arson risk-management strategy. The Police have started to do more proactive work around arsonists and the main offenders based on its intelligence after becoming concerned about the lighting of bushfires after the Lake Clifton bushfire. The Commissioner said "It is a little bit like, if I can make a comparison, managing sex offenders on the sex offender register. You know who your main suspects are and you have to keep an eye on them. You want to know where they are; what their movements are."[18]

Strike Force Falcon seeks to keep an eye on both first-time offenders and recidivists, particularly over the summer months. The Commissioner said that there had not been a permanent increase in the arson squad, but:

> last year we moved more officers across for the bushfire season into that squad. That is probably what we will do in preference to a permanent elevation of the number of the police in there. Obviously, our peak time for bushfires is going to be around the summer months, so we will increase it then and decrease it in winter.[19]

Dr O'Callaghan told the Committee that in discussions he has had with other Commissioners and emergency service coordinators across Australia that "one of the things that is evident in the profile of offenders who light fires is that many of them have been or are in the fire industry." He said that it "seems to me that it would be a reasonable thing to do to have psychological testing of people who are going into that either as volunteer or career fire fighters", as is currently undertaken with the State's police. People have to undergo psychological testing to identify whether they have a particular pathology before they can join the WA Police.[20]

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[17]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Questions on Notice, 18 October 2011.

[18]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p19.

[19]   Ibid, p20.

[20]   Ibid.

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│                                                                   │
│  Recommendation 2                                                 │
│                                                                   │
│  The Minister for Emergency Services introduce by the 2012-13     │
│  bushfire season psychological testing of all FESA career staff   │
│  and bushfire and rescue volunteers.                              │
│                                                                   │
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(d)   DPC Implementation Group

The terms of reference of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Implementation Group (IG) are to:

- provide oversight of the implementation of the recommendations of the Keelty Report in accordance with Cabinet's decision, including the work required of the various government agencies, local government and community groups;

- ensure appropriate public consultation and communication with key stakeholders, particularly the communities of bushfire prone areas, in relation to the procedures and timeframes for implementation of each recommendation; and

- submit regular implementation progress reports to Cabinet.[21]

Membership of the IG comprises the following State Government chief executives:

- Mr Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, (Chair);

- Mr Mal Wauchope, Public Sector Commissioner;

- Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority;

- Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner, WA Police Service;

- Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation;

- Mr George Storer, Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades; and

- Ms Ricky Burges, Chief Executive Officer, WA Local Government Association.

The IG has formed three Working Groups (State Policy, Interagency Bushfire Management and Community Information), chaired by DPC senior staff, to consider specific recommendations. The

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[21]   Mr Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Letter, 1 November 2011.

Working Groups are comprised of representatives of all agencies directly involved in considering and implementing relevant recommendations and each includes a representative of the bushfire volunteers as well as local government.[22]

The Committee was provided a DPC IG stakeholder briefing document dated 13 October 2011 that summarised the progress on each of the Keelty recommendations (see Appendix Nine). However, Mr Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet was unable to tell the Committee which of the recommendations would be implemented before this season's bushfire season. He gave an example of recommendation two, which required the establishment of "an inter-agency working group to continue the development of the new single emergency services Act." The working group has been established but the drafting of the new Act has not been completed.[23]

(e)   United Fire Fighters Union's disagreement on preparedness

While agreeing with other witnesses that the interagency structures are a lot better prepared than during the past bushfire season, the United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia told the Committee that it was concerned about:

- staff training– *We are concerned with the training levels provided to our middle managers; it is not up to scratch. The station officers out there do a fantastic job. They get trained up and then they go on the trucks and* **receive very little training for the rest of their career.** *If they seek to get promoted to the next level as a district manager, who are the ones who get directly employed with the interagency fires,* **they do it without any formal training.**[24] [emphasis added]

- lack of staff– …*appliances are getting decommissioned as we are leading into the* [bushfire] *season because they have not got enough staff. … Because they have not resourced the fire service correctly over the last years, they are having a hard time getting those guys on those trucks all the time because of family commitments. The last few weeks of school holidays, people have to look after their children and they cannot get enough people and they do not want to pay the overtime to get the people who are willing to come. There are people willing to man* (sic) *those trucks and they are decommissioning them and taking that risk.*[25]

- equipment– …*at the basic level we do not have enough radios for firefighters. If you look at the Police communications, they seem to be able to be in contact with individual officers anywhere at any time. We are lucky to have one radio or two radios for a full team. When we deploy someone inside a structure and have only one radio between two people, we cannot track them. We believe that every firefighter should have his own radio to be*

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22   Ibid.

23   Ibid.

24   Mr Graeme Geer, Secretary, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p2.

25   Ibid, pp2-3.

> *tracked at all times, but that has not happened. The further roll-out of what I think is called the WAERN [Western Australian Emergency Radio Network] system across the State seems to be happening. But again, it seems to be a very slow process. We are always baffled by how long it takes FESA to implement any new IT.*[26]

The Union's statements about poor training were recently backed up by the new CEO who was reported as saying that FESA staff needed more training and "he was 'gobsmacked' at some of the inadequacies within the Fire and Emergency Services" and was astounded "at the lack of training".[27]

The Union said that Perth's fire stations are designed to respond to a fire within six minutes but average times were more likely to be about 12 minutes because of FESA budget pressures. Similarly, the volunteer bushfire structure aimed for volunteers to achieve a response to their fire station within 14 minutes. However, the response time for volunteer firefighters to attend a fire "is around 20 to 30 minutes".[28]

The Union claimed that the current lack of fire engines at FESA led to a higher loss of houses in the Perth Hills bushfire than should have occurred:

> *I believe that if there were more fire engines at the fire face in a timely manner, fewer houses would have been lost. You said it was an unusual fire. No, it was not. Those fires have been happening across Australia for the last 10 years, and we should know by now what resources we need. In the last 10 years we have had fires around Gingin, Lake Clifton and Toodyay. ...*
>
> *In the first two hours of the incident, only five fire engines got there from the Fire and Rescue Service. ... If I was to turn up to a house fire in Morley, you would expect Bassendean and Malaga to be there—two fire engines for one house. We had 70 houses that we lost and there were several hundred houses under threat, and we were able to mobilise only five fire engines to that fire because of the other commitments to the Red Hill fire and other fires going on in Perth at that time. **We ran out of fire engines on that day, and for a city the size of Perth, that is disgusting.** [emphasis added]*[29]

The Committee was also told by the Union of some extraordinary situations that reflected on the ability of FESA in dealing with structural fires, as well as bushfires, especially on the fringes of the metropolitan area:

- ▪ <u>Inadequate IT equipment on fire engines</u>– Unlike the WA Police vehicles, the State's fire engines have no GPS systems on board as the existing inadequate Mobile Data Terminals are being replaced. Their Victorian counterparts have the

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[26]   Ibid, p11.

[27]   Ms Georgia Loney, 'Poor Training Shocks FESA Chief', *The West Australian*, 24 October 2011, p3.

[28]   Mr Graeme Geer, Secretary, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p18.

[29]   Ibid, p3.

ability to "print out from their control centre into their trucks a map as well as having an electronic system and radio guidance to attend [fires]."[30] *[FESA's] fire crews have to use a road map to find the fire. At the beginning of last year, I believe, they stopped producing road maps, so FESA actually had a bit of trouble trying to get road maps for the fire crews. As funny as it sounds, it was quite a serious thing, ... that the organisation has not kept up with technology and allowed that to happen.*[31]

- <u>Lack of fire stations with two fire engines/pump stations</u>– *Joondalup has a fire engine, a light tanker and a medium tanker. We are saying they need the extra fire engine, which gives them an extra four people and also that extra response. ... we had a Joondalup fire engine respond to Kelmscott* [bushfire], *so there was no* [fire engine remaining] *in Joondalup. That is quite dangerous. If you look at the area around Carabooda, it is not a lot different to the areas around Kelmscott. ... In any small fire starting there, the time response to get from Duncraig up to the Joondalup area, the fire becomes major and we have another major problem.*[32]

- <u>Lack of petrol tankers</u>– The Committee was told, that every fire station used to have its own diesel pumps but now FESA relies on public fuel stations to get fuel using a fuel card, *I attended a chemical spill in the basement of a warehouse in Fremantle; we were there for some eight hours trying to evacuate the fumes from the building. The fire engine ran out of petrol twice, and the card we had would not work. I had to go and beg the attendant at the petrol station to allow us to fill the fire engine to go back to the incident. He was not the owner and he said, "I can't do anything unless you have an authorised card."*[33]

- <u>Lack of earthmoving equipment</u>– *FESA does not have its own earthmoving equipment. It is absolutely absurd that we have to try to rely on begging, borrowing and stealing it from either local government or CALM, or trying to get a contractor in. There is skill in putting in firebreaks in a fast manner, and so you need someone who has experience in doing those sorts of things. FESA should have its own earthmoving equipment in reserve.*[34]

While acknowledging that FESA had placed about 60 to 70 new managers throughout the State to assist regional fire preparedness by preparing plans and coordinating volunteer services, the Union said there are no full-time career firefighters north of Geraldton and many major regional towns such as Busselton lacked full-time career firefighters. The Busselton and Dunsborough region is the second fastest growing region in Australia with "seven primary schools, three high schools, a

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[30]   Ms Lea Anderson, Industrial Officer, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p12.

[31]   Mr Kevin Jolly, President, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p12.

[32]   Mr Graeme Geer, Secretary, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p19.

[33]   Ibid, p13.

[34]   Ibid.

large hospital and aged-care facilities." Its closest career fire station is in Bunbury.[35] The Union placed the blame with the FESA Board as it had not ensured that the gazetting of towns under the *Bushfire Act 1954* to receive fulltime services had lagged the actual population changes and growth over the past decade. It gave the example of:

> The northern suburban corridor of Perth holds approximately 30% of the State's population, and yet we do not have 30% of the State's career fire stations in that northern suburban corridor. We believe that the correct mix for the saturation rate of career stations is reflected most accurately in the western suburbs.[36]

Union proposals for additional equipment

The Union made the following proposals about the additional staff and equipment resources needed in Perth:

- another 13 medium tankers need to be allocated to the fringe metropolitan stations of Ellenbrook, Midland, Welshpool, Gnangara, Armadale, Rockingham and Mandurah;

- a medium tanker should be provided in each of the regional stations at Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Albany and Bunbury;

- a manned-up additional eight light tankers in the metropolitan area should be formed into a strike force on all days, not just for extreme and catastrophic days; and

- there should be additional two-pump fire stations (and additional staff) immediately at Kiara/Eden Hill and Rockingham, with the new Bassendean station being made a two-pump station and Joondalup, when it is rebuilt, becoming a two-pump station.[37]

Another proposal from the Union that seemed to be a sensible precaution for the coming bushfire season was that on extreme and catastrophic fire days all FESA staff should be notified and "there is a whole range of equipment out there that could be manned up." There were about three or four catastrophic fire days during the 2010-11 bushfire season and "at any one time, there are some 400 career firefighters off duty … it would make sense to me that you actually call those people and have them sitting on appliances [ready] to respond."[38]

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[35]   Ms Lea Anderson, Industrial Officer, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p7.

[36]   Ibid.

[37]   Mr Graeme Geer, Secretary, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p18.

[38]   Ibid.

The Union concluded its evidence with a proposal that the State's fire services were only going to be effective and well-coordinated if they were brought within one agency, "the fundamental thing is that it is time for this State to have one fire service for all emergency fires"[39]:

> *I think the interagency cooperation at the fire front, on the fire ground, is as good as it can be. While you have got separate agencies on the fire ground, that is always going to be a problem. We are never going to resolve the issue until we all have the same equipment, the same clothing, the same breathing apparatus and the same culture and the same communications and structures within the organisations. While you have different departments or different agencies trying to work together, we are going to be floored at all locations.*[40]

Finding 2

The United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia made serious allegations to the Committee about poor training, inadequate equipment levels and inadequate firefighting staff numbers within FESA that may lead the State to not being sufficiently prepared for the coming bushfire season.

Recommendation 3

At the conclusion to the 2011-12 bushfire season, the Minister for Emergency Services institute a thorough review of the operations of FESA, the Police and DEC in protecting the State from bushfires and other natural disasters, with a primary focus on:

- staffing levels;

- equipment levels and coordination; and

- training needs.

The Minister report to Parliament by June 2012 on any changes that need to be made to the current departmental structures to optimise the State's preparedness for the 2012-13 bushfire season.

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[39]   Ibid, p19.

[40]   Ibid, p4.

(f)   New firefighting equipment

The State Government announced on 8 November 2011 $6.25 million for additional equipment to fight bushfires during the 2011-12 season. About 60% of this figure was for the lease of one Erikson Skycrane water bomber (known as 'Elvis'). The other funds will provide "funding to purchase five new fire appliances and re-equip four appliances as part of a roving standby fleet [and] will support career and volunteer firefighters in the metropolitan area, as well as in the North-West and South-West of the State, depending on the fire season."[41]

Finding 3

The State Government announced $6.25 million for additional equipment to fight bushfires during the 2011-12 season, the majority of which is for the lease of the Erikson Skycrane water bomber. The bushfire fighting impact of helicopters is limited by weather and the time of day. They were unable to fly during the Perth Hills bushfires due to extreme weather conditions.

Appendix Six lists the new equipment provided to DEC in this year's State Budget. A significant problem identified by the Committee was that there is no whole-of-government equipment register of the firefighting equipment held by FESA, DEC and local government. This might limit the knowledge of an Incident Controller in knowing what resources could be quickly accessed to fight a bushfire. The Committee was told:

> *It is fair to say that FESA, as far as earthmoving machinery, to my knowledge, does not own any. Local government has significant resources as far as earthmoving machinery goes. It is mostly managed at a district and regional level.*[42]

Separate equipment registers are held by DEC and FESA and the Committee heard that local governments have:

> *local emergency management plans and bushfire plans. Certainly, when I see those, they have a stocktake in them of access to resources and so on. That includes access to resources of, for example, mining companies in the south west forests, of timber harvesting contractors and the like.*[43]

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[41]   Hon Mr Rob Johnson (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) and Hon Mr Bill Marmion (Minister for Environment), *Elvis Coming to WA for the Summer*, Media Statement, Perth, 8 November 2011.

[42]   Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p5.

[43]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p6.

> **Finding 4**
>
> There is no whole-of-government equipment register of the firefighting equipment held by FESA, DEC and local government authorities. The response to a bushfire would be made more effective if such a register was developed.

> **Recommendation 4**
>
> The Minister for Emergency Services ensure that a whole-of-government equipment register of the firefighting equipment held by FESA, DEC and local government authorities is in place for the 2012-13 bushfire season.

(g)   WALGA's response to Keelty Report

Twenty-one (or nearly 40%) of the Keelty Report's recommendations were addressed directly to the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) or generally to 'local government'. The WALGA CEO sits on the State Emergency Management Committee and is currently involved with the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Implementation Group and working groups.[44]

The Committee finds that WALGA seems to have made less effort to comply with the Keelty Report's recommendations than have State Government agencies, such as FESA and DEC. The WALGA CEO told the Committee that "the recommendations have to be separated into what are achievable and what are not achievable." WALGA has surveyed its members on the recommendations and found "one of the things we realise is that a lot of work is already going on."[45]

WALGA is particularly concerned about the impact on its members of their insurance coverage if they take action on the recommendations:

> *Our insurers have asked us to be very cautious about picking up or taking on any responsibility without first ensuring that there are no liability issues. ... everyone accepts and appreciates the need for having better communication and education, so that is not an issue. However, there is a concern that if there is any transfer of responsibility, there may then be liability issues. The insurer's legal firm ... has undertaken a very detailed assessment of liability issues in this report.*[46]

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[44]   Ms Ricky Burges, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p2.

[45]   Ibid.

[46]   Ibid, p3.

The other concern of WALGA is that, while its members have an interest and a willingness to implement the Keelty recommendations, they do not have the resources or the funding to implement some of them:

> *…local government does not have the resources—that is, both human resources and/or funding resources—to take on additional or extra responsibilities. They are two things that we are currently working on with Premier and Cabinet and asking them to consider ways that we might be able to fund any additional work. … As we go through some of the recommendations, some of those things are just not viable. We are working through what is and what is not viable. In terms of education and communication, there is absolutely complete acceptance by local government that we want to do more and we will do more. Some of those councils in the immediate vicinity of this fire are committed to that.*[47]

The Executive Director of DPC's Implementation Group said that the implementation process had shown there was a lack of clarity around the role of local government in preparing for the bushfire season and that the State's legislation confers many entitlements to local governments but requires few responsibilities from them. He gave as an example the reluctance of councils in the Perth Hills to consider an increase in the number of their green waste collections, as recommended by the Keelty Report.[48]

WALGA told the Committee, in response to questions on notice, that it had met with member councils in the Perth Hills about this recommendation (number 17). However, WALGA was informed that "green waste pickups are subject to contract arrangements and any additional pickups will require significant changes to scheduling and will attract significant costs to each Local Government."[49]

From its evidence and response to questions, it would seem that WALGA and its members will not allocate any additional resources to implement the Keelty Report recommendations addressed to them.

Finding 5

The Western Australian Local Government Association is concerned about the insurance and cost implications of its members fully implementing the Keelty Report's recommendations.

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[47]   Ibid.

[48]   Mr Stephen Home, Executive Director, Department of Premier and Cabinet, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

[49]   Ms Ricky Burges, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Local Government Association, Response to Questions on Notice, 24 October 2011.

Recommendation 5

The Minister for Local Government have urgent discussions with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) as to why they are not supporting the full implementation of the recommendations addressed to local government in the Keelty Report. The Minister ensure that by May 2012 WALGA and its member councils have the resources to fully implement the recommendations.

(h)   Changing the State's planning laws

Recommendation three of the Keelty Report was allocated to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) with the aim of better preparing bushfire prone areas of the State for future bushfire seasons. It recommended that responsibility for declaring bushfire prone areas be transferred from local government to the WAPC. Additionally, the WAPC was to "urgently assess those areas that should be declared bushfire prone."[50]

The DPC Implementation Group's most recent stakeholder briefing reported that there is a lack of existing legislation to authorise the WAPC to declare areas bushfire prone and that the Department of Planning (DoP) does not have the technical expertise or resources to assess those areas that should be declared bushfire prone. As at 13 October 2011, the WAPC, DoP, FESA, DEC and WALGA had yet to agree on a definition of 'bushfire prone' or the requirements subsequent to an area being declared bushfire prone.[51]

Associated with the recommendation to the WAPC, recommendation four of the Keelty Report called on the State Government to give legislative effect to WAPC's *Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines*. The Report found that FESA and DoP are reviewing the guidelines in light of the findings of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. The Report said:

> *…guidelines provide detailed advice to assist people who plan, regulate or provide advice as part of the land development process to ensure fire protection is integrated early in the development process and across all levels of planning decisions and proposals.*
>
> *The Special Inquiry heard evidence that while the guidelines were supported by State Planning Policy, there is no head of power to enforce them. This means local governments*

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50   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p14. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

51   Mr Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Letter, 1 November 2011.

have discretion as to how they interpret the guidelines and whether they adopt them in their planning schemes and local regulations.[52]

Finding 6

A key recommendation of the Keelty Report to better prepare bushfire prone areas of the State for future bushfire seasons was allocated to the Western Australian Planning Commission but there has been little progress on it.

Recommendation 6

The Minister for Planning report to Parliament by May 2012 on the urgent actions undertaken by the Department of Planning and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to transfer responsibility for declaring bushfire probe areas to the WAPC.

(i)   Conclusion

The State's main agencies dealing with bushfires– FESA, DEC and WA Police- received a copy of the Keelty Report on 16 June 2011 from the Public Services Commissioner to allow them to comment on it before it was submitted to Cabinet. This is less than six months before the beginning of the 2011-12 bushfire season on 1 December 2011.

However, the evidence from State Government agency senior staff given to the Committee is consistent in that **Western Australia is better prepared for the forthcoming bushfire season than it was last year**. However, the new CEO at FESA warned the Committee:

> *Despite recent above–average rainfall for September, the trend for the average rainfall pattern across the state has increasing fuel loads, resulting in the majority of the State to be registering above–average potential for bushfire risk. The next few weeks will further determine the season's potential, and if the rains continue, then that will improve the season's outlook. But all indications at this stage are that the fire season is shaping up to be at least as challenging as the last.*[53]

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[52]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p35. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[53]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p2.

The Minister for Emergency Services told Parliament a similar message in late October:

> *…with 80% of the State at an increased risk of bushfire, I urge homeowners who live near bushland to prepare for another tough and challenging* [bushfire] *season. Recent rainfalls have generated abundant grassland fuels in many areas of the State. The Kimberley is already experiencing some of the worst conditions and highest fuel loads on record, and the south of the State is likely to follow suit, particularly in the Mid West and Goldfields. Now is not the time for complacency but, rather, is an opportunity for action.*[54]

Use of risk analysis in planning

One thing that seems to be missing from the preparedness of the main State agencies is a thorough cross-agency 'risk analysis' process. In a recent report, the RAND Corporation highlighted:

> *Policymakers and the public need ways to prospectively assess preparedness so they know what they can expect when disaster strikes. Doing so is also critical for resource management. Because of the nature of emergency situations, there will almost always be "more that could have been done" when responding to a particular incident or disaster. ... Trying to address every shortfall identified retrospectively in response actions therefore risks either creating unsustainable demands for increasing preparedness expenditures or focusing scarce resources on shortfalls that may be easy to see but that may not be the most important preparedness problems.*[55]

Following the recent run of loss of homes and lives in Western Australian bushfires, and particularly since the Keelty Report, the main State agencies seem to be "trying to address every shortfall identified retrospectively in response actions", as identified in the RAND report. FESA told the Committee that it uses a 'resource to risk' process that "culminates in the development of a Capital Works Investment Plan and comprehensive supporting Business Cases." The current process will be used in 2012 to "determine appropriate minimum resourcing levels and appliances types for bushfire brigades and State Emergency Services."[56]

While FESA expresses its confidence in its 'resource to risk' process it seems to have been unable to expose some of the basic shortcomings identified in the Keelty Report, such as incident managers declaring the incident level of a bushfire. The RAND report suggests that instead of the process undertaken by FESA, processes such as 'root-cause analyses' and 'reliability assessment' are better ways to evaluate the preparedness for disasters.[57]

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[54]   Hon Mr Rob Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 20 October 2011, p8478.

[55]   Mr Brian Jackson, 'The Problem of Measuring Emergency Preparedness: The Need for Assessing "Response Reliability" as Part of Homeland Security Planning', RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2008, pvii.

[56]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

[57]   Mr Brian Jackson, 'The Problem of Measuring Emergency Preparedness: The Need for Assessing "Response Reliability" as Part of Homeland Security Planning', RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2008, p17.

Finding 7

The Keelty Report's findings and recommendations in regard to the Perth Hills bushfires has exposed a need for the State's main agencies to re-examine the effectiveness of their risk analysis and planning processes.

Recommendation 7

The Minister for Emergency Services institute a thorough review by December 2012, including a comparison to other jurisdictions, of the risk analysis processes used by FESA, the Police and DEC to prepare them to protect the State from bushfires and other natural disasters.

1.3 Future Challenges from the State's Changing Climate

The Keelty Report noted that evidence it had received from the Western Australian Regional Office of the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) provided data to "suggest that the Perth Hills and the immediate area are undergoing significant climate change when viewed over a thirty-year period." In recommendation 42, the Report said the State Government should "recognise the projected changes in climate and potential impact on future fire events."[58]

While not spelt out in the Keelty Report, the future implications for bushfire preparation in Western Australia seem to be that:

- a drying South West region will see a greater number, and more destructive, bushfires;

- to prepare for and to fight more bushfires, government agencies will need larger annual budgets to deal with them; and

- after the experience of the Toodyay and Perth Hills fires, the State Government may have to budget for increased one-off payments to householders who had not insured their homes for a bushfire.

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[58] Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p11. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

In terms of preparing for each bushfire season, the Director General of DEC explained the impact of drier winters on DEC's annual prescribed burning program:

> *Certainly in comparison with last year* [2010-11], *when we came off a disastrous winter, if you like, in terms of extremely low rainfall, basically at this time last year, mid-September, we had to pull up stumps on prescribed burning in the Perth Hills because it was already too dangerous and **we were getting midsummer bushfire conditions in mid-September**. .... Now, if I can just draw back from that for a second—it is not any one year in isolation that counts; **it is the pattern of prescribed burning that we build up over a period of time**.*[59] [emphasis added]

DEC's website has information confirming the worries expressed in the Keelty Report. Figure 1.1 below shows the significant decline in rainfall in the South West region since 1910.

Figure 1.1- Trend in Western Australia's annual total rainfall 1910–2008 (mm/10 years)[60]

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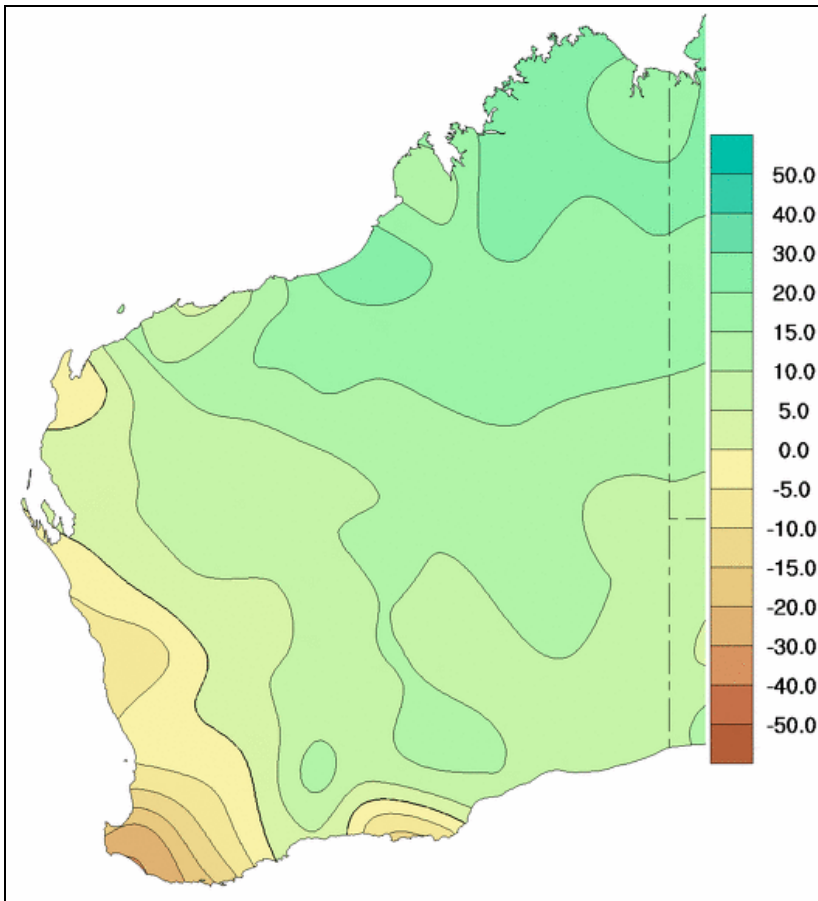
[59] Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p12.

[60] Department of Environment and Conservation, 'Factsheet 6: Evidence of our Changing Climate', 2009. Available at: www.dec.wa.gov.au/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_download/gid,3421/Itemid,1/, p2. Accessed on 12 October 2011.

Figure 1.2 below highlights the impact that the reduced rainfall has caused on water entering the State's dams. Average inflow between 2001 and 2006 was 81.8 gigalitres, which was less than 25% of the average inflow between 1911 and 1974. Inflow during the 2011 winter was just 48.3 gigalitres.[61]

Figure 1.2- Decreasing average inflow into the State's dams[62]
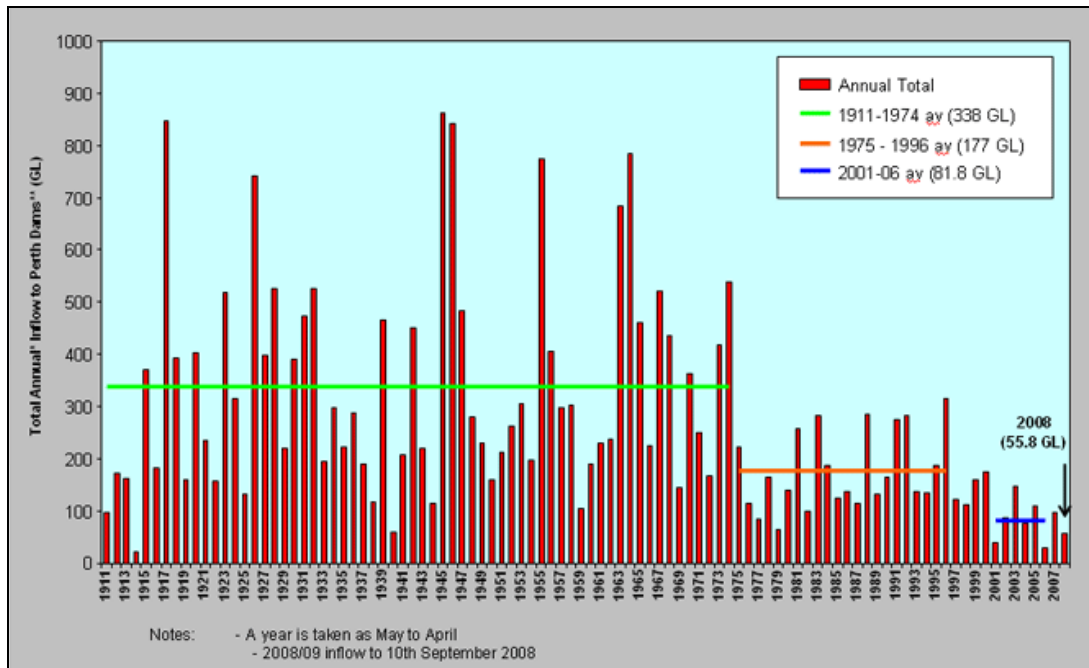
The Keelty review requested BOM to undertake research to supplement its evidence. This showed the declining rainfall in Western Australia has been accompanied by an increase in the frequency of extremely dry easterly winds since the late 1970s. The Keelty Report found "these extremely dry easterly winds increase both the intensity and the rate of spread of bushfires (planned and unplanned), making them even more difficult for fire authorities to control."[63]

The BOM told the Keelty review that their future projections for Western Australia's South West region, dependent on global greenhouse gas emission scenarios, indicated:

- an expected further decline of 2-20% of rainfall by 2030 and 5- 60% by 2070;

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[61] Department of Environment and Conservation, 'Yearly Streamflow for Major Surface Water Sources', nd. Available at: www.watercorporation.com.au/D/dams_streamflow.cfm. Accessed on 12 October 2011.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p56. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

- the mean 10 metre wind speed in southern parts of the South West during summer is likely to increase by 2-5% by 2010, with the area of increased wind speeds expanding to the remainder of the region by 2070;

- the surface relative humidity (relative to the 1980 to 1990 period) in northern parts of the South West during summer is likely to decrease by up to 1% by 2030; and

- the whole of the South West is likely to experience a relative humidity decrease of 1-3% by 2070.[64]

The Department of Health's report *Health Impacts of Climate Change* includes similar data to BoM's on the future impact of climate change on Western Australia. In particular, it notes there will be more heatwaves and bushfires and in the South West the number of days over 35 degrees each year will increase from an average of 27 by a range of one to 20 additional days.[65]

Finding 8

Western Australia's drying climate over the longer term in the South West has impacted the efforts of State agencies in preparing for the annual bushfire season and in fighting bushfires.

Recommendation 8

In implementing the Keelty Report's recommendation 42, the Ministers for Emergency Services and Environment jointly report to Parliament by May 2012 on the likely impacts on, and implications for, the future bushfire operations of the State Government of the drying climate in the State's South West region.

Prospects for the 2011-12 bushfire season

The Bureau of Meteorology said at the FESA Season Outlook Briefing in early November that it was too early to tell how bad the 2011-12 bushfire season will be. Information from the Bushfire CRC suggests that for much of Western Australia, there will be above normal fire activity (see Figure 1.3 below) because of the likely re-emergence of a La Nina weather pattern (see Figure 1.4 below).

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[64]   Ibid, p157.

[65]   Department of Health, 'Health Impacts of Climate Change: Adaptation Strategies for Western Australia', 2008. Available at: www.public.health.wa.gov.au/cproot/1510/2/Health_Impacts_of_Climate_Change.pdf, p7. Accessed on 9 November 2011.

Figure 1.3- Seasonal bushfire outlook 2011-12[66]
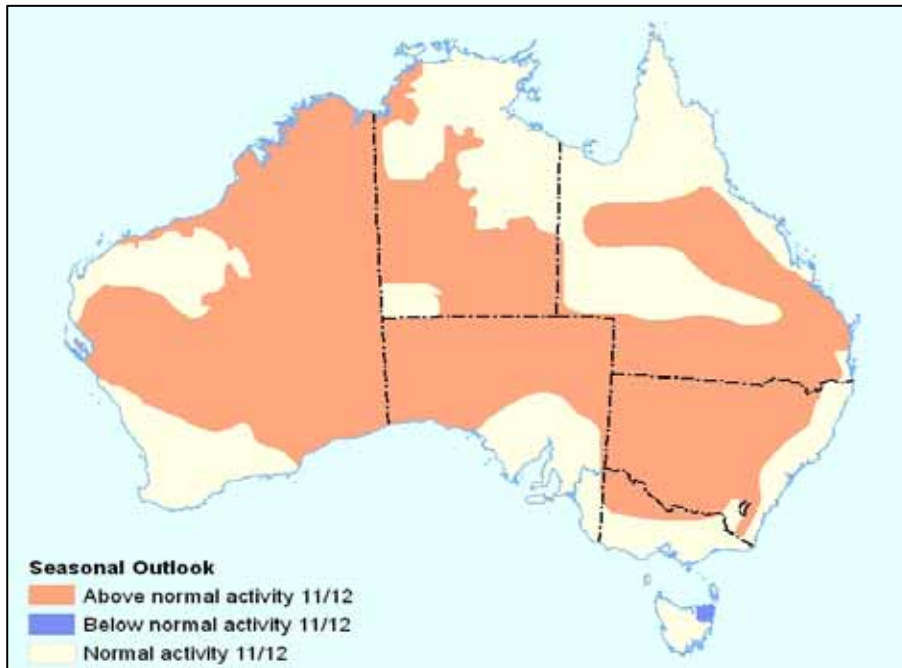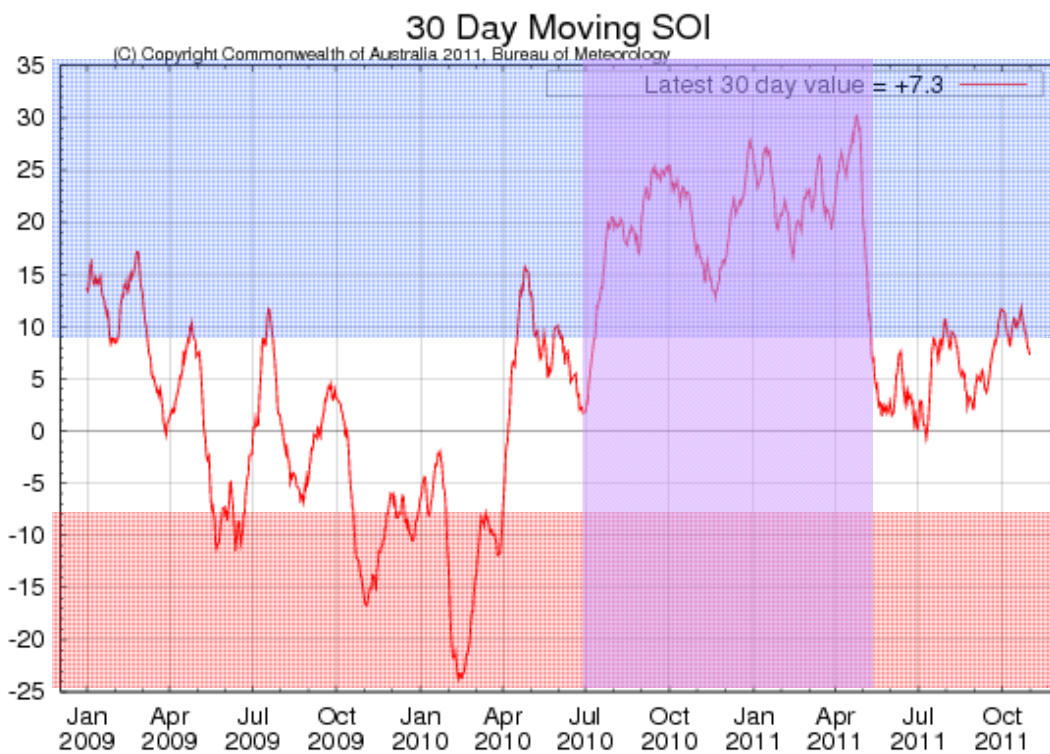

Figure 1.4- Trending towards a La Nina pattern?

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[66]   Mr Andrew Burton, Regional Manager for Severe Weather Services (WA), Bureau of Meteorology, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

1.4 Urgent Legislative Amendments Required

The Committee heard from the State agencies dealing with bushfires and other emergencies of amendments needed to current legislation that will not be able to be put in place before this season's bushfire season, but were needed for following ones.

(a) *Emergency Management Act 2005*[67]

The Police told the Committee that part four, section 50 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, outlining the triggers for an emergency declaration, needs to be amended. Currently this section provides that either the Minister for Emergency Services or the hazard management agency may make an emergency situation declaration. The Police Commissioner, as the State Emergency Coordinator, does not have a role in that process. The Police have raised this proposal with FESA as to "whether it should be more appropriate for the Commissioner to actually intervene as the State Emergency Coordinator, but at this stage he cannot."[68]

Additionally, the Police are seeking from FESA for them to appoint Police as hazard management officers under part four, section 55 of the Act for emergencies such as bushfires or cyclones. This would then allow Police to carry out functions in Part Six (emergency powers) of the Act, such as:

> *either prohibiting people from moving into an area or evacuating them from an area without having to go back from the patrol officer on the control point through the Police commander, up to the incident controller from FESA, get a new direction, come back to the Police commander and then give that direction back to the constable standing there at the control point. The Police could be given a task, such as preventing people from coming into an unsafe area. They could change that as the fire moved around and, indeed, they could carry out all the evacuations. Where people are staying behind and putting themselves at risk, we would then enjoy powers that would enable us to assist them to a place of safety, which we do not currently have in other legislation.*[69]

Recommendation 9

The Minister for Emergency Services amend section 50 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* by June 2012 to allow the State Emergency Coordinator, as well as a hazard management agency, to make an emergency situation declaration.

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[67]   AustLii, 'Emergency Management Act 2005', nd. Available at:
       www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/ema2005190/. Accessed on 17 October 2011.

[68]   Mr Duane Bell, Assistant Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p6.

[69]   Ibid, p7.

(b) *Bush Fires Act 1954*[70]

The Police Commissioner alerted the Committee to a disagreement between the Police and FESA over the use of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* versus the use of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* during a bushfire. He said that the *Emergency Management Act 2005* provides broader powers for the Police to operate, especially when conducting evacuations of an area. The Police have had two separate legal opinions from the State Solicitor about this issue which provided the same advice:

> *…if FESA makes a declaration under the* Bush Fires Act *we can only act on the direction of an authorised officer from FESA. So the only thing that the Police can do is say to someone, "Look, an authorised officer from FESA has said you can't go there or do this," but if they do that, the only intervention we can really make is that they are not obeying the directions of, not a Police officer, but an authorised FESA officer.*[71]

The difficulty that this poses for the Police is that as the actual fire front shifts quickly, the FESA declaration needs to change according to the different areas affected by the fire. The Commissioner believes that the Police do not have the powers they need:

> *I think when we use the powers under the* Bush Fires Act, **we are often acting in a way that is not quite within the law**. [emphasis added] *We are operating by bluff a lot of the time when trying to manage people's movements.*[72]

The Commissioner said that the Police could use the common powers under the *Road Traffic Act 1974* to stop people and get them to obey the directions of an officer when they are on a road. But he said "what that does not do, of course, is prevent people from moving through the bush or driving through the bush or walking through the bush or just going around anybody who is on the road."[73]

The Commissioner proposed that the more clear and unequivocal way of acting is for FESA, or another hazard management authority, to use the *Emergency Management Act 2005* instead as that gives the Police "much more broad powers about moving people, stopping people and detaining people". He said that FESA:

> *has been continually reluctant to use and declare that. … it is very difficult for us to operate, I think, legally. We have raised this three time with FESA to say, "We believe we don't have sufficient powers to operate in these situations unless you use the powers under the Emergency Management Act".*[74]

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[70]   AustLii, 'Bush Fires Act 1954', nd. Available at: www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/bfa1954119/. Accessed on 17 October 2011.

[71]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p6.

[72]   Ibid.

[73]   Ibid.

[74]   Ibid.

Given the debate over the use of the two Acts, the Police have "issued quite succinct and clear guidelines for Police officers working in these situations" in a publication called *Traffic Management During Emergencies Guide*.[75]

The Commissioner said that using the powers of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* rather than the *Bush Fires Act 1954* would provide Police with "more protection against civil liability as well. Currently, we do not believe that Police officers have that protection under the *Bush Fires Act* because often they are acting beyond their remit to try to get the job done." He was confident that "we will resolve that issue before the next bushfire season with the new structure of FESA."[76]

The new FESA CEO said that the Authority "have been working closely with the Western Australia Police service to develop operational arrangements for managing evacuations, road closures and scene control for the upcoming bushfire season." He said that "the impasse between FESA and WA Police … regarding the powers to be used when evacuating residents has been resolved" and that for future bushfires the *Emergency Management Act 2005* will be relied upon, rather than the *Bush Fires Act 1954*.[77]

(c) *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*[78]

The Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, told the Committee that the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* is essentially silent on fire management and bushfire impact mitigation being a function of his Department. The Act lists the current functions and objects in respect of the land the Department manages "go to conservation, recreation, the protection of water values, timber harvesting on state forest and those types of things and, … Aboriginal joint management." The Director General said that DEC carries out "a very active prescribed burning program. It is an active function that we perform to protect the values of that land."[79]

The Director General told the Committee that the Minister for Environment and the Cabinet have endorsed that the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* should reflect DEC's prescribed burning program "as an object and a purpose, if you like, for which we manage land to provide that sort of active use of fire for both biodiversity conservation and for community protection." He said that DEC's functions and powers as a land manager in relation to bushfire suppression reside under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and the Department is not looking for these powers or functions to be enabled under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. DEC was looking at a number of potential amendments to the *Act* to give effect to the recognition of its prescribed

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[75]   Ibid, p7.

[76]   Ibid, p6 & p8.

[77]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4 & p6.

[78]   AustLii, 'Conservation and Land Management Act 1984', nd. Available at: www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/calma1984290/. Accessed on 17 October 2011.

[79]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September, p4.

burning program, but these are "not critical in the sense that it might otherwise be preventing us from getting on with our job."[80]

Recommendation 10

The Minister for Environment bring to Parliament by June 2012 amendments to the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* that reflect the use by the Department of Environment and Conservation of prescribed burns for both biodiversity conservation and community protection purposes.

1.5   Collaboration of Main Agencies in Fighting Fires

While the Premier initially told Parliament that FESA's performance was not going to be part of the Keelty review[81], the Keelty Report commented "the Special Inquiry took the view that to properly address Terms of Reference number 1, 4 and 5, an examination of FESA was not only appropriate, but very necessary."[82] The media focused on the Keelty Report recommendations that focused on FESA, in particular its perceived unwillingness to work closely with other agencies such as DEC (eg recommendation 1). Subsequently both FESA's CEO and Chief Operations Officer resigned and the State Government announced it had accepted a recommendation of the Keelty Report to make FESA a government department headed by a Fire Commissioner.

The Committee heard evidence from the three main government agencies that subsequent to the Keelty Report they were now collaborating more closely in preparing for the forthcoming bushfire season. The Director General of DEC acknowledged that he had contacted the new FESA CEO in his first week in office and discussed issues of collaboration, and that in future bushfires "that the full capacities of the State and the different capacities and capabilities of different organisations should be properly harnessed".[83]

The new FESA CEO agreed that:

> *the community has a right to expect that the government agencies, at least, collaborate as they address community problems. I have said publicly that* [FESA] *people will play ball,*

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[80]   Ibid.

[81]   Hon Mr Colin Barnett, Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 23 February 2011, p968.

[82]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p9. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[83]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p15.

and if I cannot change my people, I will change my people. It is a not insignificant challenge to change entrenched culture, but I am starting to see some glimmer of cooperation, and I think that will happen.[84]

In answer to questions on notice from the Committee, FESA provided the following as examples of where it is working more closely with other agencies to improve the State's readiness for the coming bushfire season. FESA has:

▪ developed a process and template for the declaration of a fire incident level taking into consideration the processes of DEC and the Police, and these templates will be tested during the Statewide multi-agency bushfire exercise on 8 November 2011;

▪ conducted two workshops in September 2011 with managers from DEC and local government to better operationalise the use of the national Australian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS);

▪ jointly conducted a number of prescribed burns across the State and in the metropolitan area in conjunction with DEC and local governments;

▪ met with WALGA and the Department of Child Protection in September 2011 to discuss ways in which Local Emergency Management Committees can involve the community in their exercises; and

▪ completed a three-day 'air attack' competency training course in the South West with DEC for all staff involved with aerial firefighting and has commenced discussions with DEC to form a single State air desk.[85]

These matters are examined in more detail in the next chapter.

Finding 9

The weight of evidence given to the Committee was that the main State firefighting agencies are better prepared for the 2011-12 bushfire season than they were for the 2010-11 season.

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[84] Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p12.

[85] Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

Recommendation 11

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for the Environment report to Parliament by December each year as to the state of readiness of the main State Government agencies tasked with fighting bushfires.

CHAPTER 2   THE INTEROPERABILITY OF AGENCIES

2.1   Introduction

The Keelty Report noted that in 2009 the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) *Review of Western Australia's Bushfire Preparedness* had determined that Western Australia was well placed to respond to bushfires with "well established plans and arrangements and strong relationship between the agencies and organisations involved."[86] A key recommendation of the DPC review was "there be an interagency committee that looked at developing or enhancing shared sort of standards in respect of technology, communications and those types of things, also operations." The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee (IBMC) (reporting to the Minister for Emergency Services) first met in February 2010 and its membership includes DEC, FESA and the Police.[87] Its establishment followed recommendations of the 2009 *Review of Western Australia's Bushfire Preparedness* and initial discussions between DEC and FESA on 27 November 2009 and 15 January 2010.[88]

The Keelty review spent considerable time trying to understand why the main State agencies did not work well together during the February bushfires given their membership of existing multi-agency organisations, such as the IBMC. For example, the review tried to "reconcile why FESA management would ignore the DEC pre-formed teams in favour of interstate resources unfamiliar with the terrain."[89]

The Premier, Hon Mr Colin Barnett, in tabling the Keelty Report in Parliament, commented:

> *In this context, I can assure the public that the message to all relevant government agencies and those leading them is clear:* **work together urgently and cooperatively in the best interests of the community**. *[emphasis added] Failure is not acceptable to the community or the Government.*

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[86]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p27.
Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[87]   Mr Peter Dans, Director, Regional Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p6.

[88]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, Response to Questions on Notice, 29 September 2011.

[89]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p131.
Accessed on 6 October 2011.

The report urges cultural and organisational change in the Fire and Emergency Services Authority. The Government accepts this advice and accepts that new leadership is required to achieve this.[90]

As shown in the previous chapter, there is now a new CEO in place at FESA and all three key State agencies told the Committee that they are working more closely together in preparing for the 2011-12 bushfire season. The CEO of FESA told the Committee "that there has been some friction between FESA and other government agencies, DEC in particular". A draft Heads of Agreement between FESA and DEC "that sets the flavour of the way in which the CEO of FESA and the CEO of DEC, and their respective agencies or departments, are going to work together in a much more collaborative and cohesive way as they move forward" had been prepared.[91] The previous draft had been prepared in 2007-08 and the current version was a 'high level' document "drafted around the intent of the interagency arrangement and the broader principles that will be adhered to by the agencies in delivering upon the intent."[92]

The finalisation of the Heads of Agreement was the first recommendation of the Keelty Report and it was finally signed by the CEO of FESA and Director General of DEC on 4 November 2011 (see Appendix Five for the full text of the Heads of Agreement).[93]

2.2   Joint Exercises

The Keelty Report recommended that "emergency service agencies undertake more consultation and joint exercising involving FESA, the Department of Environment, the Western Australian Police, the Department for Child Protection, local governments and volunteers – including Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades."[94]

All of the key agencies told the Committee of the importance of undertaking joint exercises to ensure that their programs and staff were well-prepared for actual bushfires. DEC admitted that the State's agencies had not undertaken joint bushfire exercises very often, and those that had been held were mostly 'desktop' exercises'. This was because "exercising has been a particularly

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[90]   Hon Mr Colin Barnett, Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 17 August 2011, p6011.

[91]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p12.

[92]   Mr Peter Dans, Director, Regional Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p17.

[93]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

[94]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p22.
Accessed on 6 October 2011.

difficult area for us, because it is resource intensive to design the exercise."[95] The procedures for State agencies to respond to a bushfire are outlined in WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE. DEC told the Committee that it attends about 600 fires a year and uses these incidents to effectively exercise the procedures in WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE through its actual operations at these fires.[96]

The Police Commissioner agreed that FESA was responsible for organising the annual bushfire exercise and the last one had been held in August 2010.[97] FESA told the Committee that "we do hold a joint annual exercise pre-summer. Last year it was up in the Hills, and I think the year before it was in Kalamunda. They are quite extensive and they do involve all other agencies, with DEC involvement."[98]

FESA conducted a State-wide major multi-agency exercise on 8 November 2011 to help with preparations for this bushfire season. DEC said that this exercise "will involve all the regions from what we call our mid-west region, Geraldton southwards, and will involve staff at all levels, including incident management teams, those operating in the field and regional and state operations centres."[99] DEC also involves local government authorities and volunteer bushfire brigades at some of its prescribed burns. These 'less dangerous, smaller fires' gives DEC an opportunity to exercise, particularly with volunteer bush fire brigades, to increasing their familiarity and interoperability.[100]

Finding 10

The involvement of the key government and non-government organisations in bushfire exercises, particularly field exercises, improves their interoperability and familiarity with WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE procedures.

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[95]   Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p7.

[96]   Ibid.

[97]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p15.

[98]   Mr Lloyd Bailey, Assistant Chief Operations Officer for Metropolitan, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p21.

[99]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September, p8.

[100]   Ibid, p7.

> **Recommendation 12**
>
> The Minister for Emergency Services ensure that the annual budget of FESA contains the funds it requires to coordinate an annual multi-agency bushfire field exercise, alongside other desktop exercises, to be held in different regions of the State each year. The outcomes of this field exercise should be included in the proposed annual Ministerial statement to Parliament on bushfire readiness before each season.

2.3 Radio Communication Equipment

The Committee was told that radio communication between various State agencies involved in an emergency such as a bushfire, is "absolutely critical" and "it is absolutely essential that there is compatibility across FESA, DEC, local government." It is one area that there seems to be good interagency cooperation, especially in developing the Western Australian Emergency Radio Network (WAERN) project. This is a FESA-led project that has been underway for several years.[101] This program will provide 300 VHF and UHF repeaters across Western Australia and nearly 8,000 mobile radios and over 1,300 hand-held radios. The interoperable radio network will be used by FESA Emergency Response Groups as well as other State Government agencies such as DEC.[102]

DEC is a significant stakeholder in WAERN given the amount of communication resources it has across the State. For example, its radio network is significant with 76 repeater stations centrally monitored and managed from Kensington. DEC told the Committee it has "no problem—our compatibility with rural fire agencies, both part of FESA and local government through the brigades, is good." The problem for DEC is "the issue that is in that urban interface where you have the urban equipment coming out of the city into the interface where the issues are."[103]

The Committee was told that WAERN is adequate and working well; "it is the rollout and the familiarity of operators that becomes the issue because of the level of change. ... There is a significant challenge and there is a lot of work going into that this preseason across all of the agencies to make sure, because radio communication is absolutely critical."[104]

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[101]   Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p19.

[102]   Integranet Technology Group Pty Ltd, 'Fire Emergency Services Authority (FESA) WAERN Project', 2011. Available at: www.integranetgroup.com.au/services/project-management/current-project/. Accessed on 13 October 2011.

[103]   Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, pp19-20.

[104]   Ibid, p20.

FESA told the Committee that approximately 100 local Police stations around the State have access to WAERN–based terminals. In 2012 a radio network project will see further standardisation of communication technology when fire and rescue service resources migrate to the State's Police digital trunk radio network in the greater metropolitan area and the key regional centres of Albany, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Northam and Karratha.[105] FESA and the Police have recently entered into a MOU to allow FESA access to the Police's trunk radio network.[106]

The Police Commissioner confirmed to the Committee that this digital trunk radio network is not due to be finished until 2016. The holdup is due to the building of required infrastructure. The Commissioner said "I think the Government has committed to the funding; it is simply the process of building infrastructure outside of the metropolitan area. So, it is a long, involved and slow process, unfortunately." He confirmed:

> *We are covered in the metropolitan area as far south as Dunsborough and as far north as Lancelin and out towards Wundowie and Northam. Where about 85% of the State's population resides, there is already very solid digital coverage, but it is in the outer areas where we will be focusing in the next few years.*[107]

The Police Commissioner told the Committee that at the Perth Hill's bushfire, the agencies were not using the same system. The Police said:

> *No, we are not on the same platform. The main way we get around this is—we should not just rely on the radio—we put liaison officers into incident control rooms when we are invited. We have a person there who can provide that communication back between the agencies. Under the policies, the incident management team should have other agencies represented. ... We roll out our standard structure for that, which includes liaison officers at their control points, say, in this case, where the bushfire might be, and certainly in the incident control room as well. That provides direct conduits back to us.*[108]

Finding 11

The area of radio communications is one where the major State agencies have a high level of interoperability, although the Police digital trunk radio network will not be completed for another five years.

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[105]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4.

[106]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

[107]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p9.

[108]   Mr Duane Bell, Assistant Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p9.

Recommendation 13

The Minister for Emergency Services makes it a priority that the annual budgets of FESA and WA Police are sufficient to bring forward the completion dates of the current radio projects now underway.

2.4 Incident Management Software

The Police Commissioner told the Committee that the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) had endorsed the use of the 'WebEOC' software product as an incident management platform in September 2008. Launched in the United States in 1998, WebEOC is used across Australia in emergency management incidents.[109] The software loads fire and other incidents in real time and every responding agency can see the progress of the incident, wherever they happen to be located. The Police Commissioner said currently in Western Australia, "the Police are using it, the PTA is using it, MRD is using it, and I believe DEC will be using it very shortly".[110]

One of the major issues during the Perth Hills bushfire in terms of inter-agency cooperation was that all the major agencies were not using a common incident management platform. The Commissioner said "FESA did not have it operational and the stipulation that SEMC put on [FESA] last year was that if you did not have WebEOC, you needed to have something that was compatible with it or worked with it." When asked to why FESA had not joined the other State agencies in using WebEOC, the Commissioner replied:

> *I think you would have to talk to the CEOs or the people who are running those agencies rather than the SEMC. ...*
>
> *My understanding of the delay, generally, is that other agencies, like many government agencies do, were exploring alternative IT options rather than all joining hands and saying, "Let's use the same platform." My personal view is that I do not see any reason why another agency could not have gone to it. It is a web-based product and it is not very expensive or complicated. I think these things are often cultural.*[111]

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[109]   In the United States, WebEOC is used by federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Interior, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs. WebEOC is also used by more than 50 state-level agencies in 36 states and U.S. territories. ESi Acquisition, Inc, 'WebEOC Professional', 2011. Available at: www.esi911.com/esi/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=377&Itemid=377. Accessed on 13 October 2011.

[110]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p4.

[111]   Ibid.

The new CEO of FESA told the Committee that "WebEOC is a fantastic tool in terms of ensuring accuracy, transparency across agencies and the endorsement of decisions by different agencies across agencies. It is, in effect, a shared running sheet, if you will." He was unable to say why FESA had previously declined to purchase this software:

> *I cannot quite nail it absolutely as to why WebEOC was not implemented by FESA. It seems to me that it was supported operationally but that there were some managerial concerns about the way in which it relates to other systems and other aspects, which I have not been able to get, I guess, sufficient granularity on to really say what the reason was...*[112]

Mr Gregson confirmed that FESA was now planning on purchasing WebEOC at an indicative cost of around $300,000 to $350,000. He said:

> *A business case has already been drafted and there is an application on stand-by to fast-track the procurement. We currently have a business analyst involved to make sure that if there are any problems integrating it with the internal systems within FESA, they can be overcome. ... all I can say is that FESA is moving very rapidly and in a very focused manner to implement WebEOC.*[113]

The estimated cost to FESA of purchasing WebEOC covers the implementation, licensing and staff for "a considerable period." There will be ongoing costs, but they are not significant. Other minor costs are likely to be the work undertaken by a business analyst and with issues of integrating WebEOC with existing FESA software.[114]

The lack of a common incident management platform during the Perth Hills bushfire in February 2011 also led to competing claims between FESA and the Police Commissioner over when telephone calls were made in regard to the calling of a meeting of the State Emergency Coordination Group (SECG). The Police Commissioner told the Committee "I think you will find the FESA running sheets are not comprehensive. Part of the problem is that if WebEOC had been active, you would have had all that information here. But there is no detail on the running sheets of advice to the State Emergency Coordinator."[115]

Mr Gregson responded to the Commissioner's claim about the Perth Hills running sheets:

> *it is not to say that detailed running sheets do not exist on operations, but there is no standardised way of doing that. ... I have already had some preliminary discussions around making sure that we have good record keeping, but WebEOC will certainly help. ...*

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[112]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p7.

[113]   Ibid.

[114]   Mr Frank Pasquale, Executive Director Corporate Services, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p8.

[115]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner of Police, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p10.

it gives you absolute clarity then of decision making because you have got time-stamped running sheets—who made what decision, what the basis for their decision was.

But there are existing [FESA] *methodologies and critical decision-making logs and running sheets that are stock standard fare for any operation; they are just not done. It appears to me—and, again, I predicate this—my early observations are that that is not standardised nor optimised across every operation.*[116]

Finding 12

The use of a common incident management platform such as WebEOC by all State agencies dealing with emergencies such as bushfires and is essential to ensuring accuracy, transparency across agencies and the endorsement of decisions by different agencies during an emergency.

Recommendation 14

The Minister for Emergency Services ensure that FESA has the funds to implement the installation and use of WebEOC for use during the 2011-12 bushfire season and immediately put in place common protocols with the Police and DEC to record significant events during a bushfire.

2.5   Integrated System for Fuel Load Assessment and Management

Mr Euan Ferguson's report in 2010 titled *A Review of the Ability of the Department of Environment and Conservation Western Australia to Manage Major Fires* clearly stated "**if you own the fuel, you own the fire and so you also share the responsibility for fire management**."[117]

The Director General of DEC told the Committee that "experience and scientific evidence over a long period of time prove beyond doubt prescribed burning to reduce fuel loads must be the

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[116]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p9.

[117]   Mr Euan Ferguson, 'A Review of the Ability of the Department of Environment and Conservation Western Australia to Manage Major Fires', 6 September 2010. Available at: www.dec.wa.gov.au/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_download/gid,4725/Itemid,/, p6. Accessed on 12 October 2011.

primary bushfire mitigation strategy in our South West forest areas."[118] The Keelty Report recommended that:

> *FESA, DEC and local governments jointly develop a single, integrated system for fuel load assessment and management. The system should enable public access to allow members of the community to access information about the fuel load in a given locality.*[119]

This recommendation followed the Keelty review's examination of the progress of the Fuel Load Management sub-committee, one of the five sub-committees established under the Interagency Bushfire Management Committee (IBMC) and chaired by FESA. This subcommittee was tasked by the IBMC with the development of a State Fuel Load Management Policy and had its inaugural meeting on 18 March 2010. The subcommittee's specific goal was to develop "a more holistic prescribed burning framework to support the management of bushfire fuels across all tenures to reduce potential for wildfire impact on communities."

The Keelty Report found that the sub-committee's progress had been slow and the adoption of the draft policy "as it currently stands would have very little, if any, impact on mitigating the risk of bushfires." The Keelty Report found "the fundamental issue inhibiting the development of a meaningful State Fuel Load Management Policy is the absence of the information that would form the foundation of such a policy, i.e. the fuel load."[120]

DEC system

DEC explained to the Committee how critical its fuel load information and hazard reduction burning program was to reducing the threat of bushfires:

> *…the first thing when you get a fire and you plot it on a plan, the first move is you have a look at what the fuels are in the area. If we have lower fuel areas as a result of prescribed burns—certainly in the last five to seven years—your chances of effectively or safely running a direct attack on a fire are significantly enhanced by lower fuel areas. That is really part and parcel of why we need a mosaic of fuel-reduced areas across the landscape, particularly in the south west, to allow you that option of getting straight in on a fire.*[121]

DEC have a six-season, three-year rolling prescribed burn programs for the South West which it has been undertaking for about seven years. It has equivalent programs state-wide on its own land.

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[118] Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September, p2.

[119] Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p75.
Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p5.

DEC told the Committee:

> *We have to get to whole-of-landscape, tenure-blind understandings of those things* [fuel loads], *and that is an area of interest in the interagency bushfire management committee, and also specifically in some of the Keelty recommendations. Clearly, the landowners in question could be other government agencies; they can be private landowners or they can be local governments.*[122]

The fuel loads in an area are calculations based on:

> *fuel age since the last fire, be it a burn or a bushfire, and then based on years of research on vegetation types—not necessarily forests, but other types as well—and depending on where they are geographically, we can run an estimate that would be pretty close of so many tonnes per hectare, which then dictates, again, fire intensity.*[123]

FESA's approach

FESA provided information to the Committee in response to questions on notice and said that in 2010 it had embarked on an initiative called 'Bushfire Safe – WA'. This is an "integrated program to provide support and information on strategic bushfire management across Western Australia. To coordinate and manage this program FESA established the Bushfire and Local Government Branch (BLGB)." The subsequent outcomes of the BLGB include:

- the management of the rapidly expanding Community Emergency Services Managers (CESM) program, where local governments provide a dedicated officer to enhance their fire and emergency management programs, including fuel load mapping. By November 2011 there will be 31 CESM partnerships covering 44 local governments;

- in readiness for this bushfire season, BLGB has also established a team of Bushfire Mitigation Officers (BMOs), which includes a coordinator and six BMOs on National Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) contracts for 12 months, to support the CESMs and focus on fire prevention programs and mitigations works on townsite Crown lands, local government reserves and facilitate the coordinated mitigation of bushfire risk across all tenures. Two BMOs are based in the newly created Lower South West Region, but can be used anywhere in the State; and

- the development of an online database in 2010-11, called the Integrated Bushfire Risk Management System (IBRMS), which is a portal that identifies hazards and enables a coordinated approach to manage bushfire risk by all agencies. The IBRMS has the ability to ensure that all information/data on Crown and other lands

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[122] Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September, p16.

[123] Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p17.

is captured and maintained in a structured manner. The system is currently being rolled out to many local governments and is being assessed by a number of other government agencies. It has the ability to map all fuel loadings, fire scarring and prescribed burns across a local government area.[124]

The Keelty Report found that the IBMC Fuel Load Management sub-committee's progress in developing a State-wide policy had been slow.[125] FESA told the Committee that a draft State Fuel Load Management Policy had been endorsed in July 2011 by the IBMC and approved for publication and public consultation. FESA has committed resources for developing a three-year rolling bushfire mitigation works program. The IBMC Fuel Load Management sub-committee met on 30 September 2011 to progress a proposed fuel load management Code of Practice and other recommendations of the Keelty Report.[126]

Local government information

The development of a State-wide, tenure-blind, fuel load database system would be a challenge, particularly for local government authorities, because under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* many areas in and around town sites are their responsibility. The main issue would be the significant resources needed to gather and map fuel load information across the State and across lands managed by FESA, DEC and local government. DEC suggested that they would be the appropriate agency to lead any such program as their information system was based on 40 years of operation and was "the most mature system in Australia, without doubt."[127]

The Keelty Report recognised the enormity of the challenge posed by developing a fuel load system, but said that:

> *the size of the challenge is not an acceptable reason for shrinking from it. Until the scale of the risk posed by the build-up of fuel loads is quantified by local governments and the State Government agencies responsible for fire, it is not possible to ensure that the most effective programs are in place to mitigate against it.*[128]

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[124]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Questions on Notice, 18 October 2011.

[125]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p75.
Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[126]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

[127]   Mr Murray Carter, Manager, Fire Management Services, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p16.

[128]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at:
http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p77.
Accessed on 6 October 2011.

The Premier told Parliament in late October that the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is considering as a high priority a number of recommendations in the Keelty Report that relate to the mapping of fuel loads, but no specific time frame for implementation has been established.[129] The Treasurer confirmed to Parliament that no estimates of the cost of developing a State-wide fuel load system had yet been made by his Department.[130]

Finding 13

The knowledge of an area's fuel load is a critical piece of information in determining how a bushfire is responded to by Government agencies. The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee Fuel Load Management sub-committee has been unable to complete the development of a State Fuel Load Management Policy since its inaugural meeting in 2010. Currently, comprehensive fuel load information is only held for land managed by DEC but FESA is developing its own system for capturing similar information.

Recommendation 15

The Minister for Emergency Services, with advice from the Interagency Bushfire Management Committee Fuel Load Management sub-committee, report to Parliament by May 2012 on the estimated cost of developing one fuel load information system across all lands in Western Australia, no matter who manages it. This system's information should be readily accessible and easily understood by all stakeholders, including the public.

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[129]   Hon Mr Colin Barnett, Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Questions on Notice, 19 October 2011, p8406.

[130]   Hon Mr Christian Porter, Treasurer, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Questions on Notice, 18 October 2011, p8266.

CHAPTER 3   THE COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEERS

3.1   Introduction

The Committee heard from both DEC and FESA that the use of volunteer fire fighters in their operations "is essential and critical in readiness for the bushfire season".[131] DEC use the less dangerous, smaller fires in its prescribed burns as an opportunity to provide exercising and joint participation with FESA, and particularly with volunteer bush fire brigades.[132] DEC also make use of staff from the Forest Products Commission (FPC) who "are essentially in the incident control levels rather than the front-line fire fighters, although there might be a bit of both." The Committee was told that the FPC had been reduced in capacity and therefore it was now of less assistance to DEC as it had been in the past. DEC said staffing in the emergency and fire sectors was a challenge in the public sector and "it is a challenge in our Department to deal with workforce attraction and retention in an environment in which [resource] industry growth is so strong."[133]

The Committee was told by DEC that the main liaison by government agencies with volunteers was undertaken by FESA.[134] FESA supports more than 28,000 volunteer rescue and firefighting staff throughout the State by delivering training, equipment, appliances and facilities to them. However, FESA told the Committee that currently they have "no legal authority over bushfire volunteers, as the power rests with local government".[135] Appendix Three outlines the different types of volunteers that support FESA's operation, as at 30 June 2011.

The City of Armadale submitted to the Keelty review that they control their two volunteer bushfire brigades (VBFBs) through its Bushfire Central Local Laws,[136] which was incorporated in April 2002 under the State's *BushFire Act 1954*. In its more populated area it "defers to FESA for fire management, coordination, education and public awareness". Under its local law, the City

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[131]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p3.

[132]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p8.

[133]   Ibid, p9.

[134]   Ibid, p22.

[135]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p3.

[136]   City of Armadale, 'Bushfire Central Local Laws', 2 April 2002. Available at: www.armadale.wa.gov.au/files/ed74e8d7-cc57-4367-ad6f-9cb000b2d59f/BushFireControlLocalLaw.pdf. Accessed on 25 October 2011.

provides its VBFBs with training and equipment. This expense has been offset in recent years by the Emergency Services Levy it collects from its residents.[137]

FESA staff attend meetings of local bushfire advisory committees and district operations advisory committees on a regular basis to ensure bushfire volunteer issues are addressed. It also has written policies on operational bushfire mutual aid and support arrangements which are contained in memoranda of understanding between FESA and local governments. These outline the procedures for the use of metropolitan bushfire resources, particularly when compiling task forces or strike teams to attend larger bushfire incidents. FESA also coordinates local government community emergency services managers (whose role is to provide coordination and support for bushfire volunteers). This is done by 26 memoranda of understanding between FESA and local governments throughout the State.[138]

3.2   Evidence from Bushfire Volunteers

The Committee heard from volunteers from the Roleystone Bushfire Brigade who were involved in fighting the Roleystone-Kelmscott fire in February 2011. The brigade serves dual purposes as a fire and rescue brigade as well as a bushfire brigade. All of its approximately 50 members are unpaid volunteers and the Brigade is supported and coordinated by the City of Armadale. The Committee was told that the previous Mayor backed the Brigade and "if we wanted something, he would bend over backwards to make sure we got it. Our current chief bushfire patrol officer is the same."[139]

The Brigade's members report to the chief bush fire control officer who is a staff member at the City of Armadale. Within FESA there is a district manager who liaises with all the chief bush fire control officers within his area. The FESA district manager for Roleystone also manages the Brigades in Gosnells and Serpentine–Jarrahdale. The Roleystone Bushfire Brigade captain is also the local government training coordinator for the City of Armadale and reports to FESA's south metropolitan training committee, which then reports to the State committee.[140]

(a)   Cooperation with DEC

The Committee was told that the Brigade "get on really well with DEC" as their township is surrounded by land controlled and managed by DEC and "basically, they take over any fire within five kilometres of their land, … we have got members in DEC as well who belong to the Brigade,

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[137]   City of Armadale, 'Submission to the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', nd. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Bushfire_Submissions_90-94.pdf, Submission 91, pp4-5. Accessed on 25 October 2011.

[138]   Ibid.

[139]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p7.

[140]   Ibid, p9.

so it is good because then they can actually bring their training and their experiences back to us".[141]

In its current round of controlled burns around Roleystone and Kalamunda, DEC asked the Roleystone volunteers for assistance and "they are actually now communicating a lot better. They actually did ask for our assistance earlier." The Brigade liaises with DEC through their bushfire advisory meetings:

> *They let us know what they are doing and we try to coordinate our* [controlled burns] *with theirs as much as we can, especially with some of the reserves and smaller bits of land. We try to knock those off at the same time as they do; so we try to combine to give the maximum protection we can.*[142]

The Brigade told the Committee that they and DEC "talk to each other at least yearly, but more in the lead-up, so you are getting from July to August. They are starting to get their planning into gear, and we are starting to do the same as well. During the summer period we meet each other quite regularly out on the fire ground."[143]

(b) Equipment

The witnesses said that since the 2011 bushfire the Brigade had "not received any new equipment or any additional training, but some of our members have done other courses." This training was part of the Brigade's normal training and upgrading to ensure its staff were current before the coming fire season. This involves making sure "they are current with what the equipment does and how it works and where it is located on all the appliances."[144]

The Committee was told that the Roleystone Brigade had the following equipment as its normal allocation:

- a '2–4 urban appliance' which is a 2,000-litre four-wheel-drive truck which is designed for the urban–bush interface;

- a '2–4 rural appliance' which is a 2,000-litre four-wheel-drive bush firefighting vehicle with longer hose reels; and

- a light tanker which is a LandCruiser, with 500 or 600 litres of water on the back.[145]

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[141]   Mr Glenn Bush, Volunteer Firefighter, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p9.

[142]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p9.

[143]   Ibid, p11.

[144]   Ibid, p2.

[145]   Ibid.

When asked if this equipment was sufficient for the job the Brigade faced every year, the Committee was told:

> *No, but then we are never going to find it sufficient. We could really use, especially this time of year when we are trying to get into the hazard production burns. For example, everybody's gung-ho, the whole crews and that, but when you get 18 or 20 people turn up, we have got people, we have to say, "Look, sorry, we can't get you on the vehicles because we're light on vehicles". Another light tanker would have been great, so we can actually get these done and knocked off. … it would be nice to have, like everyone else, the little red one behind it just to follow up, but that is not up to us.*[146]

(c)   Radio communication

Recommendation 35 in the Keelty Report was that the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) and its member local governments should jointly review radio communications capability prior to the 2011–12 bushfire season with a view to improving the current delivery of service to firefighters. The Committee was told "that has not happened. Where we are, we have the Brookton Valley, and once we are in that valley the radio reception—the communication—is terrible."[147]

The Committee heard that in February 2011 "that was our biggest thing …communications. … In a hills and valley situation, the line-of-sight radio just does not work." Members of the Brigade had suggested for many years that communication reception needed to be upgraded but had been told that the current repeater station at Canning Mills is:

> *the ideal spot for it even though we have now had a TV translator tower built from the other side at Roleystone between us and Bedfordale, and it gives us now TV reception all down the Brookton Valley, which we never used to have. So it was offered to the Bushfires Board back then and nothing has ever been done.*[148]

WALGA told the Committee that, while the Keelty Report had included this issue in recommendation 35, it was more an issue for FESA as they supplied the volunteer brigades with radio equipment, including the roll-out of the new WAERN. The main issue seemed to be providing towers to extend radio coverage and is mainly confined to:

> *where the urban fringe meets the bush. That is the problem because their* [FESA] *trucks do not have the same communication as the white* [volunteer brigade] *trucks, and bringing that communication has been an issue for FESA. It has been an ongoing one. I am not sure how they are going to resolve that one, but it is up to them. It is not an issue for local*

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[146]   Mr Glenn Bush, Volunteer Firefighter, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p2.

[147]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p5.

[148]   Ibid.

government because it is largely driven by the equipment that FESA provides for the bush fire brigades and not local government.[149]

(d) Volunteer training

The Brigade trains its new volunteers while undertaking prescribed burns in September through to November as:

> *that is where they get to actually see how the fire behaves in different terrain and types of fuel, because depending on where it is located within Roleystone, the fire can behave in completely different ways. So it is the only place you can actually start to teach the new members how a fire will react in certain locations.*[150]

Because the Brigade has a dual-purpose to provide fire and rescue and bushfire services, the training its volunteer members receive, "the whole training program and everything else—is exactly the same as the permanents. The only difference is we do not get paid. We only get one pair of socks a year. They get more."[151]

(e) Public liaison

The Committee was told that the public living in the Roleystone area generally "have not got a clue" about how dangerous the fires are and:

> *in the country they are living, how bad and how disastrous it can be. They have got no idea. Most of them have never even seen the fire—a little bit on the edge of a road, that is it. No-one has seen a fire, fully developed, crowning out through the tops of the trees. Until they see that, they will not believe it, and most people will not.*[152]

FESA provides public information brochures and the Roleystone and Bedfordale Brigades work with the local FESA-established Bushfire Ready Action Group (BRAG) street coordinators to distribute the information and ensure residents prepare for the bushfire season. They:

> *get the groups in the more hazardous areas to get all those people organised in their own BRAG group, so they are actually looking after each other and helping each other. In those we try and teach them the basics in fire behaviour, what to look for. But our biggest problem, though, is the turnover of people; people just come and go, move into Roleystone,*

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[149]   Mr John Lane, Coordinator Emergency Management Services, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p5.

[150]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p3.

[151]   Mr Glenn Bush, Volunteer Firefighter, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p4.

[152]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p3.

stay a couple of years and shift because of work or family or other reasons. The turnover in our area is quite prolific really.[153]

The public have until 30 November each year to undertake any burns required to reduce the fuel load on their properties. The City of Armadale rangers start checking properties earlier than this "and make sure everyone is aware, and there are more notices going out from council in the local papers and newspapers and all the local magazines and that."[154]

Many residents turn to the Brigade to burn their blocks as they cannot physically do it themselves. The Brigade's "books for controlled or prescribed burning are just ridiculous. We try to earn a living during the week, and you spend all weekend burning and evenings, afternoons—whatever you can do."[155]

(f)   Workers compensation insurance

The Committee was told the Brigade's members are covered under a workers' compensation policy through the City of Armadale and the fire and rescue staff are covered under FESA's policy. But this issue is "a bone of contention" because:

> *we have had a few firefighters who have been injured in incidents where the workers' compensation for them has run out, yet they still have to have ongoing medical treatments. We have had a few of them over the years where they have actually ended up on social security because they cannot go back to work. They are still injured—they will not probably work—but the workers compensation has run out because the payments.*[156]

3.3   Future Development of Volunteer Roles

While acknowledging the role of bushfire volunteers as "…essential. We cannot survive without them. They are fundamental to the [firefighting] process", the United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia told the Committee that it had been advocating to FESA and the State Government for the last 15 years that "the volunteers should get exactly the same equipment and exactly the same training as career firefighters. This does not happen. They get two-day weekend courses for whatever reason it is."[157]

The Union compared the task of bushfire and rescue volunteers to Army Reservists, who get paid leave to attend the same training courses undertaken by regular Army personnel. The Union's

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[153]   Ibid.

[154]   Ibid, p6.

[155]   Mr Glenn Bush, Volunteer Firefighter, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, pp6-7.

[156]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p8.

[157]   Mr Graeme Geer, Secretary, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p16.

Secretary was very concerned about the pressures and stresses that volunteer work was putting on people, and said that:

> *They do not get paid. They get scraps from the career service—they used to get the boots and clothing we used to wear, but now they are actually getting some better equipment. The volunteer fire and rescue service is getting some better equipment. They are still not up to scratch. If you look at the fire engines down here in Perth fire station and then go out to the fire engines at the volunteer fire stations, they are toys. They should not be toys— they should be real, proper fire engines.*[158]

He suggested that volunteers be given:

> *proper equipment, proper stations and then proper training. They should receive the exact same training to the exact same standards of career firefighters to make sure they are not going to endanger themselves and then to make sure they can deliver to the community. They need to be given the incentives to do that. Most government agencies support the Defence Force service paid leave and yet there is no defence emergency service paid leave* [in Western Australia]. *We believe there are areas there where you can assist the volunteers.*[159]

The other major suggestion with cost implications made to the Committee by the Union was that bushfire volunteers should be compensated for call-outs. The Union's President said:

> *There has been a lot of resistance from the volunteer associations* [to call-out compensation]. *Fundamentally, that is probably one of the biggest detriments to the volunteer movement. Everyone likes to work in the community and volunteer, but the job now of a volunteer firefighter is becoming more of an impost on their home life …* [volunteers] *really do suffer from the mental stresses that go with attending these types of jobs, as well as there is a lot of financial burden because they give all their time and effort, and that is not rewarded. I know their associations have been reluctant to accept the retainer-type scenario where they get paid for turnouts, but I think, for justice, they are going to have to move on and accept it like the rest of Australia has. I think that will go a long way to improving the retention and the ability to do their service.*[160]

Finally, the Union suggested the abandonment of separate career and volunteer fire services:

> *The next step of it is there should not be bushfire volunteers and a volunteer fire and rescue service. There should be one service, one stream, so we all have the same training and we all have the same equipment so we all can do the same thing.*[161]

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Mr Kevin Jolly, President, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p17.

[161] Mr Graeme Geer, Secretary, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p16.

The Union offered the experience in Victoria as a model for how volunteer firefighters could be made more professional, even without becoming part of one service:

> *In Victoria, after the Royal Commission, significant additional personnel were recommended for both the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and the Country Fire Authority. That included the placement of experienced and more senior career personnel in some volunteer fire stations in regional Victoria. The Union is very open to working with the new* [FESA] *CEO to have further discussions about how you grow services and transition them from perhaps volunteer brigades into career services to match the growth of the population and the infrastructure. We think that previously FESA administrators have missed the boat with regard to their response to the Victorian Royal Commission in that area.*[162]

Appendix Seven shows that the Emergency Services Levy was spent differently by some metropolitan local government authorities on their bushfire brigades, SES units and for a Community Emergency Services Manager. There should be resources available from the levy to allow more to be spent on making the volunteer bushfire services more capable and allowing them to work more closely with the FESA career firefighters.

Finding 14

Other Australian jurisdictions manage and value their volunteer firefighters and rescue workers in different ways to Western Australia.

Recommendation 16

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Local Government review and report to Parliament by May 2012 on ways in which the State's volunteer firefighters and rescue workers can be more effectively managed and valued.

Another recent development in Victoria was the signing in February 2011 of a Volunteer Charter. This was signed by the Victorian Premier, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the President of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and the Chairman of the Country Fire Authority. The Charter ensures the State of Victoria and CFA "will commit to consultation with Volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect Volunteers".[163]

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[162]   Ms Lea Anderson, Industrial Officer, United Fire Fighters Union of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 October 2011, p16.

[163]   State of Victoria, 'Country Fire Authority Volunteer Charter', 27 February 2011. Available at: www.oesc.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/justlib/OESC/resources/b/6/b6aa328041306de39056960db22e92f0/ Volunteer+Charter+27+Feb+2011.pdf. Accessed on 8 November 2011.

Finding 15

The Victorian Volunteer Charter is an important method for recognising the work undertaken by volunteer bushfire and emergency services personnel.

Recommendation 17

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Environment develop by December 2012 a Volunteer Charter that recognises the important work undertaken by the State's volunteer bushfire and emergency services personnel.

CHAPTER 4   EVACUATION POLICIES IN FORCE

4.1   Background

Emergency management in Western Australia is based on the principle of a graduated response, with the scale of the event determining the relevant actions taken by the emergency agencies. In the case of evacuations of the public, the decision rests with the incident controller of the controlling agency, or hazard management agency.[164] The Committee was told of tensions between State agencies over how evacuations were managed during the Perth Hills bushfires, particularly around the legal powers of Police, "we are working with FESA and Emergency Management WA in relation to the mechanics of evacuation, and they are not exactly signed-on to the processes that we are advocating at the moment, but we feel that will be solved fairly shortly."[165]

4.2   *Emergency Management Act 2005* Guidelines

The *Emergency Management Act 2005* sets out the legislative requirements for emergency management in Western Australia. The Act is operationalised by State Emergency Management Policies. The Act confers powers that can be invoked when a declaration of an emergency situation or state of emergency has been made, and includes those specifically in relation to vehicle movement and evacuation:

> **Powers concerning movement and evacuation**
>
> For the purpose of emergency management during an emergency situation or state of emergency, a hazard management officer or authorised officer may do all or any of the following —
>
> (a) direct or, by direction, prohibit, the movement of persons, animals and vehicles within, into, out of or around an emergency area or any part of the emergency area;
>
> (b) direct the evacuation and removal of persons or animals from the emergency area or any part of the emergency area;
>
> (c) close any road, access route or area of water in or leading to the emergency area.[166]

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[164]   State Emergency Management Committee, 'State Emergency Management Policy No 4.1: Operational Management', January 2011. Available at: https://extranet.fesa.wa.gov.au/sites/emwa/Lists/StateEmergencyManagementDocumentLibrary/State%20E M%20Policies/Operations/SEMP%204.1%20Operational%20Management%202011.pdf. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

[165]   Mr Mark Ryan, Strategic Policy Advisor, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p14.

[166]   AustLii, '*Emergency Management Act 2005*', nd. Available at: www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/ema2005190/, Part 6 Division 1. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

The State Emergency Management Policy (SEMP) is prepared under the authority of the Act and section No. 4.7 *Community Evacuation* of that policy dictates that decisions relating to evacuation should be aware of the following factors:

> a. the threat of the hazard;
>
> b. community preparedness (self evacuation, asset preparedness);
>
> c. community vulnerability (evacuation vs. protect in place);
>
> d. time available to conduct evacuation safely;
>
> e. safety of persons conducting evacuation;
>
> f. local emergency management arrangements and other plans in place (including the identification of welfare centres, refuge sites and safer places) to support the evacuation;
>
> g. safer alternatives (protect/shelter in place);
>
> h. identification of safest corridors for egress;
>
> i. availability of effective public communication resources;
>
> j. the number of people, capability and demographics of groups to be evacuated;
>
> k. method of evacuation including transport requirements;
>
> l. any legislative provisions;
>
> m. requirement to manage welfare of domestic pets of evacuees.

SEMP No. 4.7 also guides other agencies, which have emergency service responsibilities and enabling legislation, in their planning and execution of evacuations.[167] The State Emergency Management Plan for Bushfire (WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE) identifies the responsibilities of an Incident Controller undertaking an evacuation, as including the:

> ▪ coordination of the transportation of evacuees;
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> ▪ identification of safe egress routes;
>
> ▪ identification of designated Welfare Centres;
>
> ▪ security of locations evacuated;
>
> ▪ provision of community information; and

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[167]   State Emergency Management Committee, 'State Emergency Management Policy No 4.7 Community Evacuation', December 2010. Available at: https://extranet.fesa.wa.gov.au/sites/emwa/Lists/StateEmergencyManagementDocumentLibrary/State%20EM%20Policies/Operations/SEMP%204.7%20Community%20Evacuation%202010.pdf. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

- return of the community to a safe and risk-free environment.[168]

WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE further explains that when an evacuation is required, section 14B of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* provides the authorised person with additional powers to:

- prohibit the movement of people, animals and vehicles within, into out of or around the affected area or any part of the affected area;

- direct the evacuation and removal of persons or animals from the affected area or any part of the affected area; and

- close any road, access route or area of water in or leading to the affected area.

The arrangements for traffic management during an emergency are contained in SEMP 4.8[169] and referenced in WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE.[170] The Keelty Report identified there were major issues with the evacuation procedures and road blocks established during the Perth hills bushfires, and noted that members of the WA Police that were called before the Special Inquiry were not clear on the powers they were applying for the evacuations as they were unsure of the level of the Incident that had been declared.[171]

4.3 Responsibility for Action

(a) How does evacuation work in practice?

Local emergency management committees (LEMCs) are primarily responsible for a particular area and are made up of representatives from various elements of the community and not just

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[168] Fire and Emergency Services Authority, 'State Emergency Management Plan for Bushfire', 13 December 2010, Available at: https://extranet.fesa.wa.gov.au/sites/emwa/Lists/StateEmergencyManagementDocumentLibrary/State%20E M%20Policies/Operations/SEMP%204.8%20-%20Traffic%20Management%20during%20Emergencies.pdf, p23. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

[169] State Emergency Management Committee, 'State Emergency Management Policy No 4.8: Traffic Management during Emergencies', 13 December 2010. Available at: https://extranet.fesa.wa.gov.au/sites/emwa/Lists/StateEmergencyManagementDocumentLibrary/State%20E M%20Plans/Westplan%20Bushfire%20December%202010%20SEMC%20approved%20- %20public%20version.pdf. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

[170] Fire and Emergency Services Authority, 'State Emergency Management Plan for Bushfire', 13 December 2010, Available at: https://extranet.fesa.wa.gov.au/sites/emwa/Lists/StateEmergencyManagementDocumentLibrary/State%20E M%20Policies/Operations/SEMP%204.8%20-%20Traffic%20Management%20during%20Emergencies.pdf, p24. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

[171] Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf. Accessed on 6 October 2011, p118.

emergency services personnel.[172] LEMCs are supported by local government authorities to identify groups at risk and other information that can be used by emergency services in the planning for the evacuation of their community. These responsibilities are outlined in the State Emergency Management *Local Emergency Management Arrangements Guide*.[173]

During an incident, the Hazard Management Agency's (HMA) Incident Controller is responsible for making decisions regarding evacuation. The Incident Controller should be aware of:

- local emergency management arrangements relevant to the area;

- the hazard; and

- any legislative provisions.

The WA Police, through its Local Emergency Co-ordinator (LEC), are requested by the Incident Controller to effect and control the evacuation of people to a particular location that has been determined by the Incident Controller. However, when loss of life or injury is imminent, and a decision from the IC is not readily available, the LEC may make their own decision to evacuate. Once the evacuees are moved to an evacuation centre, the Department for Child Protection (DCP) coordinates the welfare functions and services for them.[174]

(b) Local government responsibilities

Local government has specific responsibilities under the *Emergency Management Act 2005* and typically emergency management districts are established with reference to local government boundaries. The Act outlines these roles as:

(a)   to ensure that effective local emergency management arrangements are prepared and maintained for its district;

(b)   to manage recovery following an emergency affecting the community in its district; and

(c)   to perform other functions given to the local government under this Act."[175]

In recognition of the responsibilities local government authorities have in emergency management planning for their communities, the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) have

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[172]   Mr Mark Ryan, Strategic Policy Advisor, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p16.

[173]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4.

[174]   Emergency Management WA, 'Information Sheet 2/2009: Local Emergency Management Arrangements & Community Evacuation', nd. Available at: http://emtoolbox.walga.asn.au/Preparing_em_arrangements/infosheet3/file/at_download. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

[175]   AustLii, '*Emergency Management Act 2005*', nd. Available at: www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/ema2005190/, Part 3 Division 1. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

developed an *Emergency Management Toolbox* (see http://emtoolbox.walga.asn.au) to assist their members meet their emergency management obligations.

In the *Toolbox*, WALGA says that it is not the role of local governments to be responsible for developing an evacuation plan for each hazard. However, it is their responsibility in partnership with agencies such as FESA and DCP to ensure adequate arrangements are in place to support evacuations, including providing evacuation centres. Specific evacuation plans, such as those for aged care facilities and child care centres, are the responsibility of business owners but councils keep a copy of the plans as an annexure to their local emergency plan.[176]

When an emergency situation is declared, a representative from the local government authority facing the emergency is made a member of the State Coordination Group. WALGA advised the Committee that the procedures for evacuation were well documented and easy to follow:

> *Currently under the arrangements under the State emergency management policy 4.7, the call is with the incident controller of the hazard management agency. So if it is a bushfire, shall we say, and the hazard management agency for the operation is FESA, then the incident controller would then, in consultation with the local government and with DCP, make an informed decision about evacuation. To my way of thinking, that has worked particularly well in most areas.*[177]

The Committee was told that DCP document which centres are to be used within that local government area for evacuation purposes and includes them in its district plan. In addition the local government authority documents its own centres and has a responsibility for opening and staffing those centres for DCP. If an evacuation is decided on, the two parties confer as to the most appropriate centre to be used. Appendix Ten provides a list of the approved evacuation centres in the Kimberley emergency management district that shows the different types of facilities that are used for this purpose.

WALGA said that as a result of lessons learnt from the evacuations in the Perth Hills, their members were now liaising with nursing homes in their areas:

> *There have been some instances, particularly with aged-care facilities that are not set up particularly well with their evacuation planning. That is one area that has been concentrated on by local government, local emergency management committees, particularly in the metropolitan area over the past 12 months, contacting all the nursing homes in the area and ... advising them that it is a good idea to have evacuation plans in place that say, not only that we get the people to the gate, but we actually have a plan which relocates these people, along with their drugs. ... at the Roleystone fire; people were evacuated out of nursing homes but without their medication, and they had to get special*

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[176]   Emergency Management WA, 'Information Sheet 2/2009: Local Emergency Management Arrangements & Community Evacuation', nd. Available at: http://emtoolbox.walga.asn.au/Preparing_em_arrangements/infosheet3/file/at_download. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

[177]   Mr John Lane, Coordinator Emergency Management Services, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p10.

permission from incident control to get back in to get the medication back to these people.[178]

(c)   FESA's role

The Committee was told that the impasse between FESA and WA Police outlined in the Keelty Report, regarding the powers to be used when evacuating residents, has now been resolved. FESA said that they have been working closely with the Police to develop operational arrangements for managing evacuations, road closures and scene control for the coming bushfire season. FESA and the WA Police made a joint approach to the State Solicitor's Office (SSO) on 15 April 2011 seeking clarification of the provisions of the *Bush Fire Act 1954* and the *Emergency Management Act 2005* in regard to road closures and control of people's movement. The advice from the SSO was received by FESA on 14 September.[179] A meeting was held between the two agencies where agreement was reached on a range of issues with FESA developing protocols and templates to be used in the event of an incident this bushfire season.[180]

In addition, FESA's Operational Doctrine was promulgated at the inaugural Fire and Emergency Services Authority Conference 2011. Section 3.5 of the Doctrine outlines factors that affect evacuation:

> *Restricted access and egress from areas of Rural Urban Interface (RUI) represent risk to both the general public and firefighters. RUI communities are commonly serviced by a single avenue of egress and decisions to evacuate/relocate must be made early to ensure firefighting operations are not restricted to volumes of the general public seeking refuge at late notice. All public information releases must be assessed for their accuracy and relevance to the community against anticipated fire behaviour timelines.*[181]

FESA's Operational Doctrine is in addition to the existing WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE that identifies both the responsibilities of the Incident Controller when conducting evacuations and the powers conferred under the *Bushfires Act 1954* when conducting evacuations. FESA told the Committee it is undertaking a comprehensive review of evacuation issues but it will not be completed until mid-2012. The review will consider shelters, refuge facilities, public messaging and also the roles and responsibilities of all agencies in the conduct of evacuations.[182]

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[178]   Ibid.

[179]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

[180]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4-5.

[181]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

[182]   Ibid.

(d)   The role of West Australian Police

Underlying issues with the *Bush Fires Act 1954*

The Commissioner of Police Dr Karl O'Callaghan is confident the ambiguity that Police were faced with in responding to the Perth Hills bushfire will not re-occur. He told the Committee that Police have sufficient powers within the *Emergency Management Act 2005* as long as the HMA declares the incident at the appropriate level, as recommended by the Keelty Report. Dr O'Callaghan said, "What we need is for the hazard management agency to say it will use it [the Act]. I am confident that we will resolve that issue before the next bushfire season with the new structure of FESA."[183]

Police described to the Committee the range of actions they take in traffic management when called in to assist at a bushfire, and the confusion caused if the *Bushfires Act 1954* is used instead of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*:

> *Initially, a Police car is standing there. We use powers under the* Road Traffic Act*, which is our ability to direct traffic. We are simply a patrolman standing there directing traffic moving around. But if they drive off the road in through the bush and go around, we do not have any powers. That is fine to start that up. Once it gets into place and a bushfire officer from FESA has been authorised under section 13 of the* Bush Fires Act *to take control of that area, they then rely on section 14B(2)(c), which is the power to close roads. Our argument is that that is not enforceable because it is not a direction under that, so we still cannot do anything other than disobey the lawful commands of a patrolman.*
>
> *If they then invoke 14B(2)(a) and (b), which is about moving people away from an area or evacuating, then we are simply conduits of the bushfire officer out there. That is, I think, confusing for not only our officers, about the powers and the limits on that, but also the public as to what we are doing. That is why our recommendation—assertion is that the* Emergency Management Act, *particularly for level 3 incidents, provides greater clarity. It is those incidents that have a more protracted lifespan than, say, a level 1, where it may just need some traffic diverted, rather than areas blocked off.*[184]

The use of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* allows Police to prevent access to a broad area and not just a roadway:

> *Basically under* [the Emergency Management Act], *it is an area rather than just a road, and that is what we are finding in practice from those in charge of the bushfire; they will use the subsection to close a road, but not the subsection to limit movement in an area. If it is movement in an area, we have a little more power although we are still conduits of that information. So it is a Police officer standing there saying that the FESA bushfire officer says that you cannot come through, and if you do you are then failing with his direction.*[185]

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[183]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p6.

[184]   Mr Duane Bell, Deputy Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p13.

[185]   Ibid.

Currently Police officers have a degree of ambiguity in their ability to enforce orders in bushfires:

> *It is when it becomes protracted that there is that uncertainty around. They will rely on a range of powers. We have also seen officers try to use move-on orders, which were not necessarily intended for something like that, as they search for appropriate powers to deal with the situation. It is our assertion that the appropriate use of the Emergency Management Act, particularly for protracted matters, would clarify that, remove uncertainty, and the officers will be sure who they are taking direction from, and the community would know because the officers could tell them it is the police instruction.[186]*

The Commissioner claimed that the existing ambiguity the officers face when working in a bushfire creates a situation that may expose them to civil liability issues, "Currently, we do not believe that police officers have that protection under the *Bush Fires Act* because often they are acting beyond their remit to try to get the job done."[187]

Evacuation policies in force

The Committee was told that the Police provide their officers with a written bushfire's power checklist that guides their actions on control points. Police are also given the publication *Traffic Management During Emergencies Guide*.[188] The Police are guided by SEMP 4.7 when undertaking evacuations:

> *It is a controlling agency's decision; we simply do the task. Each WESTPLAN has evacuation mentioned in it … We have got the bushfires power's checklist so that our officers out there, who are either in the Police command role forward or those on vehicle control points, can know the intricacies of that and what questions to ask to get some clarity. We have done some online training for those vehicle control points.[189]*

Recognising the key role they play in evacuations, the Police have recently conducted a series of exercises in the Shires of Mundaring and Denmark involving a mock evacuation of 100 residential properties. Information concerning the exercises were publicised so that community members were not alarmed at the increased Police numbers in their area:

> *The exercise will help test methods used to evacuate residents and provide information to assist determine the amount of time it will take to evacuate residents in urban and semi-rural settings in the event of a real emergency.[190]*

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[186]   Ibid.

[187]   Dr Karl O'Callaghan, Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p8.

[188]   Mr Duane Bell, Deputy Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p13.

[189]   Ibid, p15.

[190]   WA Police, 'Mundaring Evacuation Exercise', nd. Available at:
www.police.wa.gov.au/Aboutus/News/MundaringEvacuationExercise/tabid/1848/Default.aspx. Accessed on 21 October 2011. and WA Police, 'Denmark Evacuation Exercise', nd. Available at:
www.police.wa.gov.au/Aboutus/News/DenmarkEvacuationExcercise/tabid/1738/Default.aspx. Accessed on 21 October 2011.

The Committee was told that these exercises were designed to inform further evacuation policy development, "we are combining that data and we are developing our own policies to allow us to have more surety about the mechanics of evacuation, and we are pushing that up into the multiagency environment." The background to the Denmark exercise was explained to the Committee:

> *It was a physical, on-the-ground exercise to gather data in relation to how long it would take to evacuate X number of houses and the number of resources you would require to go around all those houses. The exercise was designed by the District Superintendent there, because he had some concerns about physical evacuation of a community like Denmark in a bushfire environment, so he commissioned that exercise. He did get support locally from the district emergency management committee, including the FESA representative locally, and the local government.*[191]

In response to questions on notice, FESA told the Committee that a meting had been held with WA Police on 28 September 2011 to develop operational arrangements for managing evacuations, road closures and scene control for the upcoming bushfire season. FESA has been tasked with developing protocols and templates for use during a bushfire.[192]

4.4 Coordinated Bushfire Exercise

The Committee was told that a State-wide multi-agency exercise had been planned by FESA and held on 8 November 2011 involving all their regions. The exercise involved local governments, the Police, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department for Child Protection. FESA anticipated some community involvement in the trial by way of moving people to evacuation centres and testing the process with agencies such as DCP. The testing of evacuation centres and the involvement of the community in exercises of this nature was a recommendation of the Keelty Report. The exercise will include the deployment of staff at all levels, including the Incident Management Team, Regional Operational Centres and the State Operations Centre, with Incident Management Teams operating from the field.[193]

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[191]   Mr Mark Ryan, Strategic Policy Advisor, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, p14.

[192]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

[193]   Ibid.

CHAPTER 5   THE PUBLIC AND BUSHFIRE INFORMATION

5.1   Introduction

(a)   Keelty Report

Thirteen (or nearly a quarter) of the recommendations in the Keelty Report addressed the issue of bushfire information provided to the public or information that was needed to be gathered from the public after a bushfire. The recommendations were aimed at a wide range of government and non-government organisations providing information in various media. Some of the recommendations made to specific organisations (underlined) were:

- [Recommendation 7]– FESA review its distribution of information material, including *Prepare. Act. Survive*. FESA should also consider including the community in pre-season exercising, in consultation with the Department for Child Protection and local governments;

- [Recommendation 8]– Local governments continue to include information on bushfire risk and preparedness with rates notices;

- [Recommendation 9]– FESA work in partnership with the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia to develop a package of information for new residents moving into bushfire prone areas, and a process to ensure this information is provided through real estate agents;

- [Recommendation 10]– The Department of Education oversee the provision of bushfire education in schools that are located in bushfire prone areas, ensuring that **all** schools in these areas incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum;

- [Recommendation 12]– FESA work in partnership with Main Roads Western Australia and local governments to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for the use of mobile variable message boards to alert the community to the declaration of a total fire ban and what it means;

- [Recommendation 33]– FESA and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation commence a thorough review of emergency warning messages. This review should give consideration to 'the content, structure and presentation of emergency warning messages Media access to the Incident Management Team and State Operations Centre.' This review should be expanded to include other media organisations should they demonstrate a willingness and capacity to contribute.[194]

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[194]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, pp15-19. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

The Director General of DEC told the Committee that some of the Keelty Report's recommendations in regard to public information issues had been given a high priority by the Department of Premier and Cabinet for adoption and implementation in advance of the 2011-12 bushfire season.[195]

(b)   Importance of public information on bushfires

If the public who live in an area that is likely to suffer a bushfire prepare their properties properly then there will a smaller likelihood of a bushfire, or the damage and loss of life and property from a bushfire will be reduced. The importance of making the public more aware of the need to prepare for bushfires was highlighted by the Keelty Report in its transmittal letter to the Public Service Commissioner:

> *The 'Shared Responsibility' theme of the Report highlights the areas where communities were informed and prepared for the bushfires; areas where the community formed its own collective response with the help of local and State Government agencies...*[196]

The need for undertaking more intensive public education was shown in the Bushfire CRC's report into the Lake Clifton bushfire in January 2011 where it found that nearly 60% of residents (a similar proportion to a survey undertaken of Marysville residents after the 2010 Victorian bushfires) had no prior training or experience of bushfires, and nearly 56% had little or no knowledge of bushfire safety.[197] While 60% of the respondents had read about bushfire safety, and 65% had planned on leaving their homes early and not trying to defend them, in the face of the fire only 20% of these 'early leavers' actually left early, while nearly three-quarters left late.[198]

Importantly, this report found that 92% of the Lake Clifton residents had little or no awareness of the potential fire danger weather on 10 January 2011 and 91% were unready to respond to the bushfire threat on that day as it had not been declared a total fire ban day.[199] In terms of sources of information on the day about the emerging bushfire threat:

- 83% relied on visual cues such as smoke and embers;

- 65% received calls from a family member of friend about the fire;

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[195]   Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 19 September 2011, p2.

[196]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p1. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[197]   Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, 'Lake Clifton Fire 10 January 2011: Field Interview Task Force Report-Community Bushfire Safety', September 2011. Available at: www.bushfirecrc.com/lake_clifton_fire_report, p8 & p11. Accessed on 25 October 2011.

[198]   Ibid, p14.

[199]   Ibid, pp11-12.

- ▪ only 13% heard about it from a ABC radio station;

- ▪ another 13% were contacted by Police or FESA personnel; and

- ▪ none received the FESA 'State Alert' message to their telephone or mobile before the bushfire had impacted.[200]

A larger research project by the Bushfire CRC used interviews and mailed surveys to residents in the Perth Hills affected by the bushfires in February 2011.[201] This report found similar results to that contained in the Lake Clifton report:

- ▪ the most cited source of information used by residents for their bushfire preparation was FESA's *Prepare. Act. Survive.* pamphlet;

- ▪ residents reported a 'common sense' approach due to prevailing weather conditions or from not knowing the difference between a fire ban and a total fire ban;

- ▪ over 60% of residents reported expecting to receive an official warning if required to evacuate, with some not feeling the need to consult official sources for further information;

- ▪ the majority of residents became aware of the fire through either seeing or smelling smoke, with the next most important source of information being contact from family, friends or neighbours;

- ▪ when seeking further information from official sources, the most accessed sources were State Alert, ABC Radio, the FESA website and emergency services personnel; and

- ▪ when residents were asked about the most important official source of information, only 10% responded that the State Alert was the most important.[202]

The Keelty Report noted "not one agency appearing before the Special Inquiry could point to engagement of the community during exercises designed to test the response to a bushfire emergency."[203] FESA told the Committee in response to questions on notice that it had met with WALGA and the Department of Child Protection in September 2011 to discuss ways in which

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[200]   Ibid, p16.

[201]   Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, 'The February 2011 Fires in Roleystone, Kelmscott and Red Hill', July 2011. Available at: www.bushfirecrc.com/managed/resource/bushfire_final_report_0.pdf. Accessed on 25 October 2011.

[202]   Ibid, pp13-14.

[203]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: Perth Hills Bushfires February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p13. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) can involve the community in their exercises. A letter was sent to the LEMCs by Emergency Management WA on 20 September 2011 "requesting consideration be given to including the community when exercising."[204]

The Keelty Report recognised the importance of informing the public to ensure their involvement in the 'shared responsibility' in preparing for and dealing with bushfires. This area seems to be one where the State's agencies have done the least in preparing the Western Australian community for the 2011-12 bushfire season.

Finding 16

The Keelty Report recognised the importance of the public in terms of the 'shared responsibility' in preparing for and dealing with bushfires. Western Australian research has shown that found that a majority of residents had no prior training, experience of bushfires and little or no knowledge of bushfire safety. This area seems to be one where the State's agencies have done the least in preparing the Western Australian community for the 2011-12 bushfire season.

Recommendation 18

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Local Government provide additional resources to FESA, DEC and WALGA in the 2012-13 Budget to improve the Western Australian community's knowledge of bushfire safety and to allow these agencies to involve the public in their exercises.

5.2 Overview of Current System

(a) FESA

FESA told the Committee that it has a range of policies which describe how it will communicate with the public regarding bushfires. These policies particularly relate to two State-wide plans: WESTPLAN–PUBLIC INFORMATION and WESTPLAN–BUSHFIRE. These plans specify FESA's role in providing information to the public about bushfire. FESA also has an internal media policy, several operational policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which provide direction about how FESA communicates with the public about large bushfires. FESA said that these policies "are in line with the national guidelines and the language to be used in

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204   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Response to Questions on Notice, 17 October 2011.

alerts and warnings."[205] The Committee was told that FESA's media policy and SOPs are currently under review following the release of its Perth Hills Major Incident Review and the Keelty Report.[206]

WESTPLAN–PUBLIC INFORMATION states that FESA is responsible for managing public information for bushfires when it is the Hazard Management Agency. The FESA CEO told the Committee:

> *This plan outlines that agencies are required to ensure that their protocols are in place to provide information to the public during incidents and have appropriately trained media and public affairs staff. It also sets out the interagency framework, including the role of the support agencies, the State Emergency Public Information Coordinator and the State Public Information Group.*[207]

WESTPLAN–BUSHFIRE requires FESA to provide talking points and media alert templates to all relevant agencies for use during bushfires to ensure a consistent safety messages. This plan requires that FESA will also "publish warnings issued by other bushfire agencies, DEC, and local government on its website and information line. This plan also outlines the standardised bushfire warning system in three levels of advice: watch and act and emergency warning."[208]

To prepare its policies and plans, FESA has "developed an extensive bushfire community consultation engagement program to provide a strategic approach to the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of its community engagement activities." Practical projects arising from community meetings include mail-outs of essential information packs such as *Prepare. Act. Survive* and shopping centre displays.[209] Other aspects of its active community engagement program include the development of a new urban bushfire publication *Am I at risk from bushfire?*; engaging 38 local governments to promote and supply bushfire safety material (see Appendix Eleven for a list of these LGAs and locations at high risk of bushfire); the distribution of about 95,00 copies of *Prepare. Act. Survive;* inviting nearly 10,200 Perth-based property owners to attend an absentee landowner forum; and developing a fact sheet for residents in rental properties in high risk bushfire locations and having hard copies handed out by real estate agents.[210]

As part of its preparation for this bushfire season, FESA is working in partnership with local government to encourage local residents to prepare and protect their families and properties against bushfires, especially by joining a Bushfire Ready Action Group (BRAG). This has led to the doubling of the State-wide capacity of the bushfire-ready group since 2009. There are

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[205] Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4.

[206] Ibid, p22.

[207] Ibid, p21.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid, p4.

[210] Ms Suellen Shea, Director Community Engagement, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

currently 66 bushfire-ready facilitators based in local governments, and each has a number of street coordinators within their region.[211]

(b)   WA Police

The Police told the Committee that the Director of Police Media is the State Emergency Coordinator for Public Information and this role ensures that all of the State agencies "are working on a consistent message … to give that information out to members of the public." However, the "broader parts of the public messaging during bushfires rests with FESA, and we do not have a role in that" as FESA is the hazard management agency for bushfires. The Police's role in public information relates to "vehicle directions around the road points and the other responsibilities we may have during that" and it uses social media such as Twitter and Facebook to supplement its internal resources such as its radio system and the WebEOC software.[212]

5.3   Response to the Keelty Report's Recommendations

(a)   Written information

The WA Local Government Association (WALGA) told the Committee that it has worked 'very hard' with FESA to identify all of the councils in the Perth Hills area that are bushfire prone, "particularly the ones in the southern corridor along the hills escarpments, to make sure that the message of bushfire preparedness gets out for this season." It believes that local governments in those areas are "well and truly aware of their responsibility to their community as far as bushfire readiness and preparedness goes." These local governments send out comprehensive mitigation messages with their rates notices, particularly about firebreaks and the fuel load requirements of section 33 of the *Bush Fires Act 1954* for residents who have houses in bushfire-prone areas.[213]

WALGA was worried about "how we get that message to people who do not want to listen" and that their government members can not do more than what they are not doing at the moment to get the bushfire message through to more residents. It believes that residents in traditional country areas are more aware and educated about the bushfire threat to homes than those in "the urban fringe, if you like, it tends to be more a lifestyle thing than actually a place where you have been brought up and you actually work. It is more a lifestyle thing, so I think the community message is very hard to get out there."[214]

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[211]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p4.

[212]   Mr Duane Bell, Assistant Commissioner, WA Police, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 September 2011, pp8-9.

[213]   Mr John Lane, Coordinator Emergency Management Services, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p3.

[214]   Ibid, pp3-4.

A problem with providing the public with bushfire information in written form with their rates notices is the amount of material that is sent out at that time:

> *If there is a great big bundle of paperwork in my hand that has my rate notices in it, the main thing I am interested in is how much that local government is charging me for my rates this year. The rest of the stuff, apart from the tip passes, probably goes in the bin. Now, I mean, that is unfortunately the society we live in because we get so much through our mailboxes. How much of that do you actually sit down and read. "Gee, I must read this". There are 15 pieces of paper there; which ones do I actually read?*[215]

WALGA said that councils, such as the City of Armadale, and FESA provide comprehensive information on their web sites. The FESA website has:

> *a plethora of stuff on it. If you went on to that website and spent probably half an hour just digging around, you would find an inordinate amount of information. How people actually choose to access that information, I think, is largely up to the individual. I do not really think we can do a lot more to make people want to know then we are already doing at the moment.*[216]

FESA told the Committee that its website "has just been significantly upgraded."[217] The website's front page contains a link to a special section with the current alerts. It now refreshes its pages every five minutes to assist residents in bushfire areas seeking to obtain the most current information.[218]

The WALGA CEO said "The view that some people hold is that "I understand it is bushfire-prone or high-risk area. I'll build and, if it burns, I'll build it again.""[219] As an example of this apathy, one of WALGA's members replied to its survey that publications and the occasional bushfire were not enough to register sufficient interest to mobilise residents to take action:

> *In my experience even after such tragedies as Roleystone if residents have not had their outlook changed within that first year or so it is too late. As an example a fire occurred whereby 43 five-acre properties lost every piece of vegetation on their properties, within three to four years a third had been fined for not even bothering to install firebreaks. The message needs to be re-enforced with schools education to apply pressure on parents to*

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[215]   Ibid, p12.

[216]   Ibid, pp13-14.

[217]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p15.

[218]   Ms Laura Keating, Coordinator Media and Communications, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

[219]   Ms Ricky Burges, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, pp12-13.

act, regular TV adverts to prompt people to act at appropriate times of year such as the time to spray for firebreaks and low fuel zones...[220]

In recognition of a high level of apathy towards the risk of bushfire from residents, WALGA was considering alternative forms of providing this information, such as television advertising. It has been running a general advertisement on the role of councils and had "a fair degree of success with the advertising campaign that we have been running over the past few years". WALGA said it could do some collaborative work on television advertisements with the State Government to extend the impact of its current ones.[221]

The Premier told Parliament that:

We must therefore take all reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood that fires will place lives, property and public infrastructure at serious risk. All members of the community should assess the risk that their properties present to their family and their neighbours, and take the necessary steps to reduce that risk.[222]

Finding 17

A significant proportion of residents likely to be effected by a bushfire do not heed the warnings of FESA and their local governments to properly prepare their properties before the bushfire season commences.

Recommendation 19

The Minister for Emergency Services commission an independent report to Parliament by June 2012 on the best practices in other jurisdictions to increase the rate of residents likely to be effected by a bushfire who properly prepare their properties before the bushfire season.

(b)   Information by SMS

The Keelty Report highlighted the informational role played by FESA's 'State Alert' SMS system. The Keelty Inquiry received data from the Bushfire Cooperative Research Council Survey that 55% of respondents were made aware of the February bushfires through the State Alert system.

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[220]   WALGA, *Survey Report: Local Government Emergency Management Preparedness*, report prepared by Mr John Lane, WALGA Coordinator Emergency Management Services, Perth, 28 September 2011, p17.

[221]   Ms Ricky Burges, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, pp12-13.

[222]   Hon Mr Colin Barnett, Premier, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 10 November 2011, p9335.

The next largest response was 34% who became aware of the fires through the ABC's radio programs.[223]

The Keelty Report found the biggest complaint about State Alert was the time it took for messages to be sent, followed by the confusing content of messages. The Shire of Mundaring provided to the Keelty Inquiry an example of how it might take nearly an hour to generate an alert using this system:

> *If a fire starts close to a property, first the fire needs to be spotted and phoned in, a bushfire brigade called out, a response time may be between 10-25 minutes before fire fighters are on site. A FESA officer must attend and assess the situation, determine possible spread of fire* [and then] *request State Alert to be activated. Generally, the quickest response would be a minimum of 45 minutes.*[224]

The Keelty Report recommended more work needed to be done if the State Alert system was to deliver timely and accurate advice to people likely to be affected by bushfires. It also investigated the greater use of a physical Community Siren sounding to warn residents of impending danger in areas such as the Perth Hills, but found that "demand for additional information as to what exactly was happening and who was affected would mean utilizing existing systems [such as State Alert] anyway."[225]

The Committee was told that in some areas local councils have established their own SMS telephone-tree type of system. One area that has done this is the small community of Bedfordale in the Perth Hills. Its Bushfire Readiness Action Group (BRAG) has established its own SMS system:

> *…they actually go back to their street coordinators of the BRAG groups and they just say, "Just be aware that we have received a fire call about a fire in your immediate vicinity. Please start your bushfire ready action plan." That is all they do. It is just advising that there is a fire in the area.*[226]

The importance of bushfire warning systems based on modern social media communication technologies, such as SMS, Facebook and Twitter, will grow, especially for younger people who no longer listen to the traditional ABC radio stations. The Keelty Report warned against a rapid

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[223]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p126. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[224]   Ibid, p127.

[225]   Ibid.

[226]   Mr Noel Plowman, Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, *Transcript of Evidence*, 17 October 2011, p10-11.

"wholesale adoption of social media options" but said that they could prove to be the preferred communication media in the future.[227]

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Finding 18

Warning systems based on modern communication technologies, such as FESA's 'State Alert' SMS system, are useful to warn affected residents of an impending bushfire if the messages are generated in a timely fashion.

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(c)   Services provided by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) has worked with FESA to refresh its emergency broadcasting services provided by local radio stations throughout Western Australia. Additional resources have been provided to ensure staff are available to work over all weekends during the bushfire season. Its information campaign has commenced using the theme 'tell a neighbour'. This draws on the results of the Bushfire CRC that many affected residents hear important information about a bushfire through a neighbour, friend or family member, as they may not be listening to the ABC.[228]

(d)   The meaning of a Total Fire Ban

Recommendation 11 of the Keelty Report was that FESA consider alternative wording to 'total fire ban' to ensure that Western Australians have a more complete understanding of what actions are prohibited. The FESA CEO admitted to the Committee that the average Western Australian did not know the meaning of a total fire ban (TFB) and:

> *There is a need to get some real clarity around that and convey it to accommodate the mixed demographic of the people out there. I take that on board. FESA has implemented an ongoing annual education and awareness campaign that communicates what a total fire ban means and highlights specifically what people cannot do when a ban is declared.*[229]

In readiness for the 2011-12 bushfire season, FESA's TFB awareness campaign will include advertising, marketing, print media, broadcast in online forums, direct mail-out; and stakeholder

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[227]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p125. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[228]   Ms Sarah Knight, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

[229]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p16.

engagements across the State. In addition, a special public information phone number will be created to provide the community with greater clarity around what total fire bans are. This information is also provided on the FESA website and in its publication *Prepare. Act. Survive.*[230]

The process of implementing and lifting a TFB has been amended. The bans will now be able to be lifted at 0600, 1200 and 1800 hours each day rather than being in place for a whole day. The changes will ensure that the harvesting and movement of vehicles in paddocks in agricultural regions are based on actual conditions and not forecast weather in an area. The public education campaign about these changes has not yet begun as they require changes to the regulations of the *Bush Fire Act 1954* in early December.[231] Figure 5.1 below shows the ignition sources of bushfires caused by agricultural equipment and vehicle movement over the past five years where a brigade attended, but excludes those fires extinguished by farmers. It highlights the importance to the State's agricultural sector of receiving timely information about TFBs.

Figure 5.1- Equipment involved in ignition of bushfires (1 July 2006 to 30 June 2011)[232]
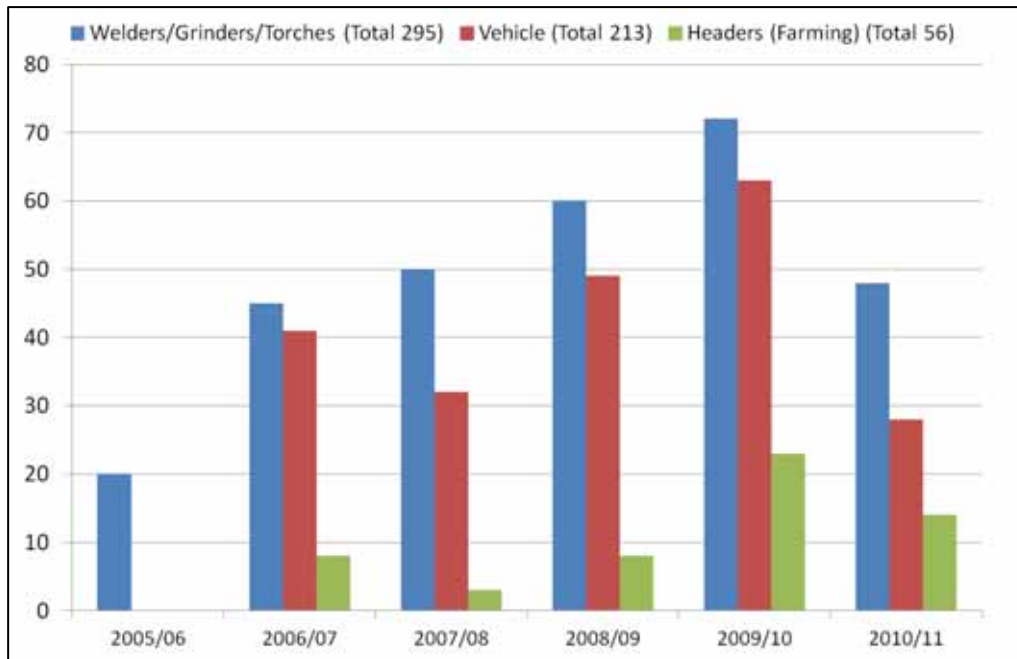
When a TFB is declared, it is publicised through the issuing of media alerts that remind people what they can and cannot do. Recent research conducted by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre found that more than 60% of Western Australian households were aware that there was a total fire ban in place on the day of the Perth Hills bushfires, and more than 85% of surveyed households in the Perth Hills were aware that cooking outside over an open flame is illegal, while

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230   Ibid.

231   Mr Russell Hayes, Regional Director Midwest Gascoyne, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

232   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Letter, 10 November 2011.

almost 70% of residents were aware that undertaking 'hot work', such as using angle grinders, is illegal. The FESA CEO admitted that it could do better to educate the Western Australian community about this issue.[233]

Finding 19

The Committee believes that the results of the Bushfire CRC research shows the level of understanding of the meaning and implication of a Total Fire Ban by Western Australians is at a lower level than that judged by FESA staff.

Recommendation 20

The Minister for Emergency Services commission an independent report to Parliament by June 2012 on an assessment of the success of FESA's Total Fire Ban community education campaign in improving the community's knowledge on this issue.

5.4   Need for a 'One Source One Message' Public Information System

The recommendations made in the Keelty Report on a range of public information processes, including liaison with media bodies such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to provide training, were based on developing a 'One Source One Message' (OSOM) multi-layered system similar to that recommended by the Victoria Bushfire Royal Commission and since implemented by the Victorian Government.[234]

The OSOM system enables all Victorian hazard management Incident Controllers to "send bushfire warnings simultaneously to a range of outlets, including the CFA and DSE websites, Victorian Bushfire Information Line operators and media broadcasters."[235] Approved information officers upload specific information about a bushfire and OSOM generates a message using a standard template. Operating manuals require that the OSOM tool should be the primary method

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[233]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 September 2011, p16.

[234]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, p126. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

[235]   Parliament of Victoria, '2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report: Summary', July 2010. Available at: www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/finaldocuments/summary/PF/VBRC_Summary_PF.pdf, p20. Accessed on 24 October 2011.

of distributing warning messages. An OSOM reference guide has been developed and Victorian Agencies have revised their guidelines for the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System.[236] This material should be available for Western Australian agencies to access and modify for use within this State.

Recommendation 21

The Minister for Emergency Services report to Parliament by May 2012 on the resources required to ensure a 'One Source One Message' multi-layered information system, as recommended by the Keelty Report, including any upgrades required for FESA's current State Alert system.

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[236]   Parliament of Victoria, '2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report: Volume 2', July 2010. Available at: www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/Commission-Reports/Final-Report/Volume-2/Print-Friendly-Version, Appendix A, p25. Accessed on 24 October 2011.

CHAPTER 6   IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Introduction

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee in the 37th Parliament tabled its fourth report, *Inquiry into Western Australia's Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements* (WANDRA), on 10 May 2007.[237] Under the Parliament's standing order 277(1), the State Government was required to respond to the report's 14 recommendations "within not more than three months" (or by 10 August 2007). The report's recommendations are listed in Appendix Four.

On 16 August 2007, the then-Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Hon Mr John Kobelke, made the following statement to Parliament on the Committee's report:

> *In 2006, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee began its inquiry into Western Australian natural disaster relief arrangements. It specifically looked into the adequacy of State Government assistance under the program for persons affected by a natural disaster. The Committee tabled its report, which was the result of intensive, comprehensive and exhaustive consultation and research across the state, in this house on 10 May 2007. I commend the chair of the Committee, the member for Joondalup, Tony O'Gorman, and Committee members for the priority placed on this inquiry and the thoroughness of their investigations.*
>
> *The Committee put forward a report to government making 14 recommendations that are intended to address and resolve any concerns of affected communities. These recommendations are supported in principle and can be grouped around five key themes, being: equitable financial contributions by local governments; improving the dissemination of information to those affected and increasing support to local authorities in time of natural disaster; increasing the amounts available for personal hardship and distress payments; making improvements to enable damaged infrastructure to be upgraded to a more resilient standard; and extra measures, including covering the cost of fencing materials and the secondment of staff to aid local recovery efforts.*
>
> *The Fire and Emergency Services Authority has already started to work through a number of initiatives, including State Alert and redevelopment of its Internet site, to ensure that comprehensive information is available to the community and particularly those affected by a natural disaster. This includes details of WANDRA objectives, assistance measures, administering agencies, eligibility criteria and application forms.*
>
> *A response to the committee's report was due in this house earlier this week and I apologise that it was not finalised by the due date. A number of the recommendations raise*

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237   Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia, 'Report 4: Inquiry into Western Australia's Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements', 10 May 2007. Available at: www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/DF75618F6536EE5F482 57831003E96ED/$file/WANDRA+Report+4.pdf, ppxxiii-xxv. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

significant issues for groups with an interest in our natural disaster relief arrangements, notably emergency service workers, local governments, primary producers and our main state government-body partners. As a result, FESA is still conducting consultations with appropriate agencies and a final analysis of the recommendations.

An integral part of this is to consider the implications of changes made this year by the Commonwealth Government to the natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements, which have direct flow-on effects to Western Australia's natural disaster relief arrangements. A final response to the recommendations and a report to this house will be forthcoming as soon as possible. Again, I thank the Committee for its work and in particular its determination to ensure that Western Australians affected by a natural disaster receive the amounts due to them under natural disaster relief arrangements.[238]

The then-Government made no further response to the report's recommendations before the 2008 State election.

6.2   Response by Current Government

The FESA Chief Executive Officer submitted to the Committee that 11 of the WANDRA report's recommendations had been accepted by Cabinet and have now been implemented. The remaining recommendations (number 5, 8 and 14) "have not been progressed however FESA remains conscious of these and where circumstances change they will be revisited." These three recommendations, and FESA's advice on them, are contained in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1- FESA advice on non-implemented CDJSC recommendations[239]

CDJSC Recommendation	FESA Advice
5– That FESA investigate the use of new technologies such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for supplementing the dissemination of WANDRA information in cases where landlines have been disrupted.	This recommendation is not supported. If landlines are disrupted, VoiP would not assist those attempting to gather information as this technology requires the use of landlines. Regular reviews of new technologies are undertaken to ensure that all possible help is given to those affected, but it must be borne in mind that many of these will not be available in rural areas for some time.

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[238]   Hon Mr John Kobelke, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 16 August 2007, p4204.

[239]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Opening Address, 30 September 2011.

8– That the newly proposed index linked limits for Personal Hardship and Distress Relief Payments as outlined in the paper "National Disaster Relief Arrangements - An Analysis and Recommendations for Personal Hardship Distress Measures" be accepted by government.	This recommendation is not supported. The measures contained in the National NDRRA 2007 Determination supersede the cabinet submission. No measures have been reduced or deleted. The four major measures of emergency assistance food and clothing, temporary living expenses, essential household contents and repairs to housing to make them habitable and secure remain unchanged. Additions under the National NDRRA 2007 Determination are the costs of removing debris, operations to protect a threatened house to make habitable and personal and financial counselling arising as a direct result of the disaster.
14– That consideration be given to the establishment of a 'Heritage Reserve Fund' that might underwrite urgent initial repairs to private heritage listed properties.	This recommendation is not supported. Assistance to private heritage listed properties is not covered under the national guidelines. Grants for repairs are through the Heritage Council.

Finding 20

FESA has implemented the majority of the recommendations made in the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's report *Inquiry into Western Australia's Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements.*

6.3   2006 CDJSC Report

The State Government has also attacked the Opposition for its inaction to another CDJSC report while in Government. The Committee's report three titled *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation* was tabled on 19 October 2006 and contained 88 recommendations.[240]

The State Government was due to respond to the report's recommendations by 19 January 2007. On the 1 March 2007, the then-Minister for Police and Emergency Services made the following statement to Parliament:

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[240]   Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia, 'Report 3: Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation', 19 October 2006. Available at: www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/AE05C50D71250DAD4 8257831003E96B4/$file/Inquiry+into+Fire+and+Emergency+Services+Legislation.pdf, ppxxxix-lx. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

> *In 2004 the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee began an inquiry into the fire and emergency services legislation in Western Australia. Its report, tabled on 19 October, made 88 recommendations relating to efficiency in responding to, and recovery from, fire and emergencies, risk management strategies, incident command and regulatory control.*
>
> *The Fire and Emergency Services Authority has been seeking feedback from the many interest groups and organisations across the State that are involved in implementing the Standing Committee's recommendations. Some of these groups have asked for extra time to forward their views on the practical adoption and implementation of the recommendations. This process understandably takes time and entails for many a considerable resourcing commitment. FESA is continuing to work with these groups and as soon as that feedback and compliance has been collated, I will report back to the Parliament giving the Government's response to the Committee's report and recommendations. I take this opportunity to thank the Standing Committee for its work and, in particular, its determination to deliver a more cohesive, contemporary and coordinated legislative framework for emergency services in Western Australia.*[241]

The Minister for Emergency Services, Hon Mr Rob Johnson, told Parliament on 16 August 2011:

> *Let me just say what the opposition members did not do. Do members opposite remember this report, "Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation"? This was the report of a Committee chaired by an Opposition member, the member for Joondalup. The then-Government had the numbers on that Committee. In all fairness to the member for Joondalup, I think he did a very comprehensive job. It is a huge report; there are 88 recommendations. That was tabled in the house in October 2006.*
>
> *What happened to it? It went on the shelf and gathered dust. Nothing at all happened to it until we came into Government. I hit the ground running, because I took this report and said, "We've got to implement some of these recommendations. Some of them are very serious."*
>
> *I compliment the member for Joondalup for chairing the Committee. I think it did a very worthwhile report. What did I do? Within a month or six weeks of becoming a Minister, I took recommendations to Cabinet, and I got Cabinet endorsement to fulfil the most critical recommendations contained within the report. That is what I did within six weeks of becoming the Minister. I made amendments to the* Bush Fires Act.[242]

In responding to an Opposition motion on a Matter of Public Importance on 30 August 2011, the Minister repeated his criticisms of the lack of action by the previous Government.[243] The then-

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[241]   Hon Mr John Kobelke, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 1 March 2007, p192.

[242]   Hon Mr Rob Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 16 August 2011, p5860.

[243]   Hon Mr Rob Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 30 August 2011, pp6349-6350.

Minister for Emergency Services in the Carpenter Government responded with a personal explanation to Parliament:

> *I became Minister for Emergency Services in early 2006. In late 2006, the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee delivered its report titled "Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation". This report made 88 recommendations. Contrary to what the Minister said, I reported to the House as required under the standing orders, but I was late in doing so. I did that in March 2007. Again contrary to what the Minister said, I was actively involved with senior people in the Fire and Emergency Services Authority in seeking to implement the recommendations of that report. I met with those people on many occasions and had piles of paperwork delivered to me, which I went through and annotated, and gave direction on how we might implement those recommendations. I was somewhat frustrated that the process was taking so long. That was because FESA went out again to consult with a broad section of the community on the 88 recommendations. Anyone who knows something about FESA, and members on both sides of the house have been involved ...*
>
> *The point I was making was that I was attacked for not proceeding with the recommendations when I was Minister, and I am giving a personal explanation on why it took so long—FESA went out to consult. The reason it went out to consult was a very good one; there are many players in this area and we really wanted to get them on board. After some months, I told FESA to cut short that consultation and proceed with the legislation. Of course, we went to the election before that legislation could be brought in, but I note that in 2009 the current Minister brought in legislation that basically picked up the things that I had been working on. To explain that, members need to recognise that not all of the 88 recommendations required legislation; however, a deal of that legislation was going to be quite complex. I had taken out of those recommendations a small number of reforms that could be done fairly quickly. The now Minister did that when he came into Government; he simply picked up all the work I had done and brought it in ...*[244]

Finding 21

FESA has implemented the majority of the recommendations made in the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's report *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation.*

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[244]   Hon Mr John Kobelke, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 30 August 2011, p6360.

APPENDIX ONE

HEARINGS HELD

Date	Name	Position	Organisation
19 September 2011	Mr Keiran McNamara	Director General	Department of Environment and Conservation
	Mr Peter Dans	Director, Regional Services	Department of Environment and Conservation
	Mr Murray Carter	Manager, Fire Management Services	Department of Environment and Conservation
28 September 2011	Dr Karl O'Callaghan	Commissioner of Police	WA Police
	Mr Duane Bell	Assistant Commissioner	WA Police
	Mr Mark Ryan	Strategic Policy Advisor	WA Police
30 September 2011	Mr Wayne Gregson	Chief Executive Officer	Fire and Emergency Services Authority
	Mr Frank Pasquale	Executive Director, Corporate Services	Fire and Emergency Services Authority
	Mr Christopher Arnol	Assistant Chief Operations Officer for Country	Fire and Emergency Services Authority
	Mr Lloyd Bailey	Assistant Chief Operations Officer for Metropolitan Fire	Fire and Emergency Services Authority
17 October 2011	Mr Noel Plowman	Captain	Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Mr Glen Bush		Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
	Ms Ricky Burges	Chief Executive Officer	Western Australian Local Government Association

	Mr John Lane	Emergency Management Coordinator	Western Australian Local Government Association
21 October 2011	Mr Kevin Jolly	President	United Firefighters Union of Australia (West Australian Branch)
	Mr Graeme Geer	Secretary	United Firefighters Union of Australia (West Australian Branch)
	Ms Lea Anderson	Industrial Officer	United Firefighters Union of Australia (West Australian Branch)

APPENDIX TWO

KEELTY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS[245]

Recommendation 1

The FESA and the Department of Environment and Conservation develop and finalise their Memorandum of Understanding and commit to working in partnership.

Recommendation 2

Emergency Management Western Australia establish an inter-agency working group to continue the development of the new single emergency services Act.

Recommendation 3

The State Government transfer responsibility for declaring bushfire prone areas from local government to the Western Australian Planning Commission. The Western Australian Planning Commission should urgently assess those areas that should be declared bushfire prone.

Recommendation 4

The State Government give legislative effect to the Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines.

Recommendation 5

Local Government recognise the work of the Gas Technical Regulatory Council and ensure any amendments to the Australian Standard are enforced. Local Government provide information to residents on any changes to the Australian Standard relating to tethering gas tanks and encourage property owners to take action to comply with the Standard.

Recommendation 6

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, in partnership with local governments, conduct more focused pre-season bushfire education, which emphasises:

• Water supply is not guaranteed during a bushfire

• Power supply is not guaranteed during a bushfire

• Saving life will be a priority over saving property so expect to be evacuated

• Once evacuated, access to affected areas may not be possible for several days

• Water 'bombing' by aircraft cannot be guaranteed in bushfire

• SMS warnings are advice only and may not be timely.

Recommendation 7

The FESA review its distribution of information material, including *Prepare. Act. Survive*. FESA should also consider including the community in pre-season exercising, in consultation with the Department for Child Protection and local governments.

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[245]   Government of Western Australia, 'A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review', 16 June 2011. Available at: http://sharedservices.servicenet.wa.gov.au/bushfire/Perth_Hills_Bushfire_Report_Feb_2011.pdf, pp14-23. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

Recommendation 8

Local governments continue to include information on bushfire risk and preparedness with rates notices.

Recommendation 9

The FESA work in partnership with the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia to develop a package of information for new residents moving into bushfire prone areas, and a process to ensure this information is provided through real estate agents.

Recommendation 10

The Department of Education oversee the provision of bushfire education in schools that are located in bushfire prone areas, ensuring that all schools in these areas incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum.

Recommendation 11

FESA consider alternative wording to Total Fire Ban that ensures people gain a more complete understanding of what actions are prohibited.

Recommendation 12

FESA work in partnership with Main Roads Western Australia and local governments to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for the use of mobile variable message boards to alert the community to the declaration of a total fire ban and what it means.

Recommendation 13

The State Government consider resourcing the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments to develop and administer a comprehensive prescribed burning program in Perth's urban/rural interface to compliment DEC's existing landscape-scale program.

Recommendation 14

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments take proactive steps to conduct their prescribed burning programs as joint exercises. This will give effect to:

• Reducing fuel load

• Improving inter-operability

• A mutual understanding of the fire fighting techniques of each agency.

Recommendation 15

The FESA and local governments ensure that the ability to:

• measure and map fuel loads

• maintain fuel load databases

• draw up prescriptions for, and oversee controlled burns

are included as key competencies in any future recruitment of Chief Bushfire Control Officers and Community and Emergency Services Managers.

Recommendation 16

The State Government give its full support to the Western Australian Local Government Association's Send to Solve initiative.

Recommendation 17

Local governments consider increasing the number of green waste collections carried out each year to encourage a more proactive approach to property (and vegetation) maintenance by residents.

Recommendation 18

The Western Australian Local Government Association explore the feasibility of local governments utilising aerial and satellite imagery to monitor firebreaks and fuel loads on private property.

Recommendation 19

The State Government reaffirm its 2009 decision to approve DEC exercising greater flexibility in managing smoke within national guidelines, in order to achieve its prescribed burn program.

Recommendation 20

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments closely monitor the research and development of alternative fuel reduction techniques to ensure that the most efficient and effective programs are adopted.

Recommendation 21

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments jointly develop a single, integrated system for fuel load assessment and management. The system should enable public access to allow members of the community to access information about the fuel load in a given locality.

Recommendation 22

The State Government ensure that the continued development of the Fire and Emergency Service Authority's Integrated Bushfire Risk Management System is dependent on an independent comparative assessment of its functionality and cost-effectiveness against the Spatial Support System used by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Recommendation 23

The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee develop and oversee a work program to: conduct site specific assessments to assess current fuel loads assess, analyse and prioritise bushfire risk on land within and adjacent to communities develop a three-year rolling mitigation works program with annual implementation and review. This work should commence independently of any decision on the most effective online integrated system. All data collected should be uploaded to the SLIP.

Recommendation 24

The FESA convene a facilitated debriefing session between the families who remained behind to protect their properties, and the incident controllers. This session should include open discussion and explain the decisions of all parties – including how the incident controllers determined priorities, and why residents chose not follow their advice to evacuate. The learning outcomes should be promulgated across all agencies and incorporated in future level 3 incident controller training programs.

Recommendation 25

The FESA immediately comply with the provisions of WESTPLAN BUSHFIRE and formally declare incidents at their appropriate level and document and communicate those decisions in a similar way to the systems used by the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Western Australian Police.

Recommendation 26

The FESA develop formal procedures for mandating the completion of Incident Action Plans, ensuring the documents are detailed and that they record critical decision making.

Recommendation 27

The FESA review its use of the Australian Interagency Incident Management System to ensure that the most appropriate resources (including aerial resources) are used to respond to an incident. If resources are rejected during an incident either through the decision making process or other grounds, the reason for the decision should be documented.

Recommendation 28

The FESA review its program to decommission vehicles and ensure that when such vehicles are offered during an incident that FESA staff adhere to FESA's own policy of "Use of Private Vehicles in Fires".

Recommendation 29

The FESA and the Department of Environment and Conservation ensure that their Incident Controllers identify critical infrastructure as part of their initial assessment and preparation of Incident Action Plans when attending major incidents.

Recommendation 30

Main Roads Western Australia undertake more frequent examinations of its bridges located in areas prone to bushfire and ensure that the risk posed to loss of infrastructure in a fire is understood by local authorities.

Recommendation 31

The FESA and the Western Australian Police ensure they receive all necessary legal clarification in relation to Bushfire Responsibilities of Police Officers – Powers Used in Assisting Fire Authorities in Responding to Bushfires, to be promulgated across FESA and WAPOL.

Recommendation 32

The Western Australian Police and the FESA jointly examine the Traffic Management System developed in response to the 2009 Victorian bushfires and seek its adaptation to use in WA with additional attention to the access and egress by bona fide residents to areas that are evacuated.

Recommendation 33

The FESA and the ABC commence a thorough review of emergency warning messages. This review should give consideration to:

•   the content, structure and presentation of emergency warning messages

•   media access to the Incident Management Team and State Operations Centre.

This review should be expanded to include other media organisations should they demonstrate a willingness and capacity to contribute.

Recommendation 34

FESA develop in partnership with other emergency service agencies a 'one source: one message' multi-layered system similar to that recommended by the Victoria Bushfire Royal Commission.

Recommendation 35

FESA and local governments jointly review radio communications capability prior to the 2011/12 bushfire season with a view to improving the current delivery of service to fire fighters.

Recommendation 36

The Department for Child Protection, the Western Australian Police and FESA develop improved arrangements for communicating the loss of home and possessions to persons gathered at evacuation centres with a view to increasing privacy.

Recommendation 37

Hazard Management Agencies overseeing the response to incidents on the urban fringe select evacuation centres that are well within the urban environment and unlikely to be impacted by the incident.

Recommendation 38

Local governments institute a comprehensive program to assess fuel loads and bushfire preparedness on private properties. The program should give reference to the creation and maintenance of a Building Protection Zone, in line with FESA guidelines. This program should be implemented and managed under the Bush Fires Act 1954 in a manner similar to the fire break inspection program.

Recommendation 39

State and local governments:

a) recognise that regardless of future declarations of bushfire prone areas, the existing planning and building problems in the Perth Hills related to bushfire risk will persist;

b) urge residents in these areas to retrofit their homes and evaporative air conditioners in compliance with AS 3959 - 2009;

c) examine options to retrospectively bring these areas into compliance with Planning for Bushfire Protection Guidelines.

Recommendation 40

The State Government mandate that the title deeds for relevant properties be amended to indicate if the property is in a declared bushfire prone area.

Recommendation 41

Western Power and the Water Corporation continue to work collaboratively to assess options to better protect the power supply to water pumping stations in bushfire prone areas.

Recommendation 42

The State Government recognise the projected changes in climate and potential impact on future fire events.

Recommendation 43

The State Emergency Management Committee amend State Emergency Management Policy 4.1 (Operational Management) to:

- give clear and explicit direction about when and how an incident should be declared

- clearly articulate the actions to be taken

- clearly define accountabilities

- provide detailed criteria for elevating issues and engaging other agencies.

Recommendation 44

The State Government amend section 50 of the Emergency Management Act 2005 to allow the Chair of the State Emergency Coordination Group to declare an emergency situation.

Recommendation 45

Emergency Management Western Australia and the State Emergency Management Committee amend WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE to require State Emergency Coordination Group meetings to be held at the State Coordination Centre in West Leederville.

Recommendation 46

The State Government restructure the FESA as a Department. As part of this restructure, Emergency Management Western Australia should either be:

1. clearly separated from the fire and emergency services response function; or

2. moved to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet; or

3. moved to the Attorney-General's department.

Recommendation 47

Emergency Management Western Australia develop mechanisms to calculate the estimated total cost of a fire to the community.

Recommendation 48

The State Government move the responsibility for the management and distribution of the Emergency Services Levy to the Department of Finance.

Recommendation 49

Emergency service agencies undertake more consultation and joint exercising involving FESA, the Department of Environment, the Western Australian Police, the Department for Child Protection, local governments and volunteers – including Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. This should include field exercises which test:

• Evacuation centres

• Critical infrastructure (including at the local level)

• Traffic management, including road blocks.

Consideration should also be given to involving the community in exercising (see Recommendation 7) and using prescribed burns as exercises (see Recommendation 14). More detailed planning for exercises should be included in a revised WESTPLAN BUSHFIRE to be endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee.

Recommendation 50

The State Government transfer responsibility for the installation, removal, maintenance of fire hydrants to the Water Corporation, in accordance with the recommendations of the 2006 CDJSC *Inquiry into Fire and Emergency Services Legislation*.

Recommendation 51

The Water Corporation immediately review the outstanding orders for hydrant repairs and develop strategies to reduce the backlog.

Recommendation 52

The FESA and local governments ensure that Community Emergency Service Managers are physically based in local government.

Recommendation 53

The FESA and local governments examine the current competencies of Chief Bushfire Control Officers and Community Emergency Services Managers (or Community Fire Managers) and consider what further development is needed to ensure these staff are capable of:

• measuring and mapping fuel loads

• maintaining fuel load databases

• drawing up prescriptions for, and overseeing controlled burns

• building effective working relationships with all relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 54

The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee develop a consistent program of education, training (including media), testing and review of Level 3 Incident Controllers. This should include provision for a formal review of the performance of individual Level 3 Incident Controllers after every incident.

Recommendation 55

The State Government review implementation of the Special Inquiry's recommendations in two years.

APPENDIX THREE

FESA VOLUNTEER NUMBERS (30 JUNE 2011)[246]

Cadets and Juniors as at 30 June 2011	
Emergency Service Cadets	1548
Juniors registered with brigades, groups and units	606
Total cadets and juniors	**2,154**
Emergency Services Cadet (ESC) Units	40
Junior Cadet Programs	92

Volunteers	Number of Brigades, Groups or Units	Volunteer Numbers as at 30 June 2011		
		Operational	Support	Total
Volunteer Bush Fire Service	585	25,165	613	**25,778**
Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service	88	1,971	171	**2,142**
State Emergency Service	65	1,950	44	**1,994**
Volunteer Marine Rescue Services	34	1,298	20	**1,318**
Volunteer Emergency Service	16	621	4	**625**
Volunteer Fire Service	9	370	7	**377**
FESA Education and Heritage Centre	1	0	18	**18**
Total	**798**	**31,375**	**877**	**32,252**

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[246]   Fire and Emergency Services Authority, 'FESA Annual Report 2010-11', 2011. Available at: www.fesa.wa.gov.au/publications/Annual%20Reports/FESA_Annual_Report_2010_2011.pdf, p13. Accessed on 14 October 2011.

APPENDIX FOUR

PREVIOUS CDJSC REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS[247]

Recommendation 1

That Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia and Main Roads Western Australia, in consultation with the Western Australian Local Government Association, investigate a more equitable means of calculating the local government contribution to road and infrastructure restoration costs. In particular consideration should be given to regulations applying in the eastern states i.e. Queensland.

Recommendation 2

That following the declaration of a natural disaster, complete and accurate information on Western Australian Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements (WANDRA) assistance measures and application processes is disseminated through public communications channels, including the media.

Recommendation 3

That FESA, in consultation with local governments, develop and make broadly available WANDRA guidelines with a view to improving pre-disaster awareness of assistance measures and application processes.

Recommendation 4

That FESA develop comprehensive internet-based information including but not limited to detail of WANDRA objectives, assistance measures, administering agencies, eligibility criteria (where applicable) and application forms.

Recommendation 5

That FESA investigate the use of new technologies such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for supplementing the dissemination of WANDRA information in cases where landlines have been disrupted.

Recommendation 6

That, in tandem with their consideration of local government cost sharing arrangements under WANDRA (refer Recommendation 1), the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and Main Roads Western Australia also establish 'exceptional circumstances' criteria to provide for additional assistance to local government where it may be warranted in order to avoid undue financial pressure caused by delays to secure reimbursement.

Recommendation 7

That the Department of Treasury and Finance, in consultation with FESA, consider alternative funding arrangements to alleviate the need for FESA to 'underwrite' NDRA costs during the year.

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[247]   Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia, 'Report 4: Inquiry into Western Australia's Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements', 10 May 2007. Available at: www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/commit.nsf/(Report+Lookup+by+Com+ID)/DF75618F6536EE5F482 57831003E96ED/$file/WANDRA+Report+4.pdf, ppxxiii-xxv. Accessed on 6 October 2011.

Recommendation 8

That the newly proposed index linked limits for Personal Hardship and Distress Relief Payments as outlined in the paper "National Disaster Relief Arrangements - An Analysis and Recommendations for Personal Hardship Distress Measures" be accepted by government.

Recommendation 9

That the guidelines of WANDRA be revised to provide for the inclusion of the cost of materials expended in the repair of boundary fences.

Recommendation 10

That the Professional Assistance Grant is formally extended by WANDRA to include non rural businesses and that it be made available to assist with the clean up of disaster related damage to farms and businesses. (The Committee recognises that the amendments to WANDRA as of March 2007 address this recommendation).

Recommendation 11

That the 'opportunity cost' for Local Authorities in meeting the 25% contribution to the restoration of eligible public assets damaged by a natural disaster event be considered when FESA and MRWA, in consultation with WALGA, investigate a more equitable means of calculating the local government contribution to road and infrastructure restoration costs as recommended in Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 12

The secondment of a resource person(s) to an affected local authority to support the work of that authority in its response to a natural disaster be effected.

Recommendation 13

That, in line with recommendations contained in the 2004 Report to the Council of Australian Governments, greater flexibility should be introduced to WANDRA to enable damaged infrastructure to be upgraded to a more resilient standard where that is both feasible and cost-effective.

Recommendation 14

That consideration be given to the establishment of a 'Heritage Reserve Fund' that might underwrite urgent initial repairs to private heritage listed properties.

APPENDIX FIVE

HEADS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN DEC AND FESA[248]

HEADS OF AGREEMENT for Partnership and Joint Bushfire Management Service Delivery between the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA)

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The intent of the DEC and FESA partnership is to provide joint, seamless and effective bushfire management services to the Western Australian community.

The partnership will pursue continuous improvement in the efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of bushfire management services to ensure the needs and expectations of communities are met and confidence and trust maintained.

DEC and FESA are committed to evolving an inclusive, open and integrated operating environment with all parties involved in bushfire management.

The partnership will be characterised by open communication, consultation, collaboration, transparency, accountability, honesty, respect and goodwill.

The partnership will involve the sharing of information and knowledge, resources and systems for bushfire management activities to provide the best outcomes for the Western Australian community and for government.

DEC and FESA are committed to the joint delivery of bushfire management services that span the prevention, preparation, response and recovery continuum.

Joint service delivery will be conducted having regard to each organisation 's systems of work, workforce composition and arrangements, decision-making processes and values, including those related to volunteer personnel.

The primary objectives of the partnership will be the protection of life, property and the environment, and as a priority, service delivery during bushfire emergency incidents will always maximise the safety, health and welfare of firefighters and other emergency personnel.

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[248]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia, Letter, 9 November 2011.

PRINCIPLES

DEC and FESA have agreed to be parties to this Heads of Agreement to confirm and establish their commitment to conducting integrated bushfire management activities, including the sharing of knowledge, resources and systems between the agencies.

DEC and FESA will estab lish and maintain a series of protocols and planning documents at a state and regional level that detail the operating procedures required to ensure an effective, efficient and flexible service delivery to the Western Australian community.

DEC and FESA agree that they will present a united, professional and responsible front to the community at all times, reflecting the principles of seamless service delivery for bushfire management activities.

DEC and FESA agree that bushfire management activities will be conducted in accordance with the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS), and will operate in accordance with Western Australia's state emergency management policies, procedures, plans and arrangements and as documented in WESTPLAN Bushfire and associated documents.

DEC and FESA will take every practicable opportunity to participate in joint programs, projects or training where a united approach will benefit the Western Australian community.

DEC and FESA are committed to integrated planning and will ensure they consult and collaborate with each other in cases where they can reasonably foresee that plans or strategies they are developing will impact or require work in the area of responsibility of the other, or where a shared interest applies.

DEC and FESA will implement joint coordination and management of aviation resources and activities in accordance with management guidelines and business rules agreed between the agencies.

DEC and FESA will retain their respective legal responsibilities for their employees, volunteer members and local government volunteers and the actions of their employees, volunteer members and local government volunteers irrespective of the tenure on which they are operating.

DEC and FESA will retain and fulfil their individual responsibilities for occupational safety and health, workers compensation and all other employee and volunteer welfare requirements during any joint training or operational activities irrespective of tenure.

DURATION AND REVIEW

This Heads of Agreement will come into effect on the date of the last signature and will remain in effect until 30 June 2014, unless modified by the mutual written consent of DEC and FESA.

This Heads of Agreement will be subject to annual review through the Interagency Bushfire Management Committee (IBMC).

Keiran McNamara

Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation

Wayne Gregson APM

Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority

4/11/2011

APPENDIX SIX

ADDITIONAL DEC FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT PROVIDED IN 2011-12 BUDGET[249]

Region	Item	Comment
Kimberley	90 hp tractor Silent Grove NP.	To assist with asset protection and public safety within high public-use areas.
	Mitchell Plateau– Utility vehicle	To provide an all terrain light vehicle to enhance response capability in remote areas of the Mitchell Plateau.
	FSS Crew Cab x 2	To increase the prescribed burning and fire suppression capability.
Pilbara	Remote signage trailers and signs	To increase public safety and meet legal obligations in managing traffic for bushfire suppression operations.
	Remote camping and utility trailers	To provide basic facilities for enhanced remote prescribed burning and fire suppression activities in a rapidly developing region.
	Equipment trailer (carting tractor)	To provide capacity to transport a tractor to enhance remote prescribed burning and fire suppression activities in a region where prescribed burning activities are being expanded.
South Coast	Albany– generator	To ensure 24/7 power to DEC's Albany regional complex for bushfire control and coordination.
South West	Bunbury– generator	To ensure 24/7 power to DEC's Bunbury regional complex for bushfire coordination and provide redundancy at the State level.

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[249] Mr Keiran McNamara, Director General, Department of Environment and Conservation, Response to Questions on Notice, 29 September 2011.

	Collie– generator	To ensure 24/7 power to DEC's Collie District office for bushfire control and coordination.
	Prime mover and low-loader	To provide additional capacity to transport an existing loader in-house and enhance rapid fire response.
Swan	Swan Coastal District– Prime mover and low-loader	Provide an additional prime mover and low loader to enhance rapid fire suppression response and District capability.
	Swan Coastal District– bulldozer	Provide an additional bulldozer at the Swan Coastal District for enhanced fire suppression and fire protection capability.
	Mundaring– generator	To ensure 24/7 power to DEC's Mundaring District office for bushfire control and coordination.
Warren	Possi-track loader	This is required to clean scrub and leaf litter from around the base of trees close to boundaries prior to commencing prescribed burning, resulting in decreased chances of burn escapes.
Aircraft hangars and airstrips	Manjimup– New hangar	The hangar at Manjimup airport is beyond refurbishment. It houses three existing spotter aircraft. The proposal is to replace the existing facilities.
	Jandakot– Fit out hangar	DEC has leased a hangar at Jandakot to house both pilots and spotter aircraft. The funds are sought to fit out this hangar to required OH&S standards.
	Maintain airstrips– Walpole, Shannon, Nannup, Dwellingup	Funding is sought to resurface four gravel airstrips. Fixed-wing aircraft tend to blow the fine material from the gravel matrix of the airstrip surface, resulting in the surface becoming loose and presenting a risk for aircraft use.

Fire Management Services Branch	Additional funding for fire facilities equipment	To complete the development of the State's mobile fire suppression logistics equipment facility to support fire suppression in remote locations.
	Bunbury– Facilities shed	A purpose-built facility for the storage of a range of high value equipment that is utilised to enhance DEC and community fire management capability. Currently the equipment is not stored under cover.
	Variable message boards x 10	To enhance public safety and meet our legal obligations in managing traffic for fire suppression and prescribed burning operations.
Fire Tower Network	Maintain– Pinjar, Munglinup, Bickley, Mt Williams, Styles	A number of DEC's primary lookout towers require significant maintenance.
	Maintain secondary towers	DEC has a number of secondary towers that require periodic maintenance for employee and public safety.
	Replace– Mowen, Salas	Two primary fire lookout towers are at the end of their life. DEC has the replacement towers on hand.
Heavy Fleet	FSS Crew Cab x 6 (for additional 20 Conservation Employees)	These are required to increase DEC's prescribed burning and fire suppression capability.

APPENDIX SEVEN

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN SELECTED LGAs (2010-11)[250]

Local Government	ESL Collection	Grant for Bushfire Brigade and SES unit	Community Emergency Services Manager	ESL Administration Fee	Total Expenditure
Armadale	**$4,059,419**	$147,484	N/A	$48,440	**$195,924**
Bayswater	**$5,836,344**	$195,909	N/A	$57,930	**$253,839**
Belmont	**$4,721,236**	$401,858	N/A	$39,490	**$441,348**
Canning	**$10,658,575**	$41,745	N/A	$85,290	**$127,035**
Cockburn	**$ 8,768,755**	$638,916	$52,044	$80,910	**$771,870**
Fremantle	**$4,788,033**	N/A	N/A	$36,620	**$36,620**
Gosnells	**$7,762,686**	$1,322,260	N/A	$81,800	**$1,404,060**
Joondalup	**$13,949,602**	$262,000	N/A	$128,640	**$390,640**
Mandurah	**$5,653,257**	$167,643	N/A	$72,260	**$239,903**
Melville	**$9,867,731**	$44,580	N/A	$89,780	**$134,360**
Perth	**$15,680,385**	N/A	N/A	$77,790	**$77,790**
Rockingham	**$6,499,025**	$ 958,792	N/A	$ 80,170	**$1,038,962**
Stirling	**$20,544,766**	$113,410	N/A	$190,520	**$303,930**
Wanneroo	**$12,283,231**	$1,200,083	$85,657	$120,650	**$1,406,390**

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[250]   Hon Mr Rob Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services, Western Australia, Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Question on Notice, 2 November 2011, p8856.
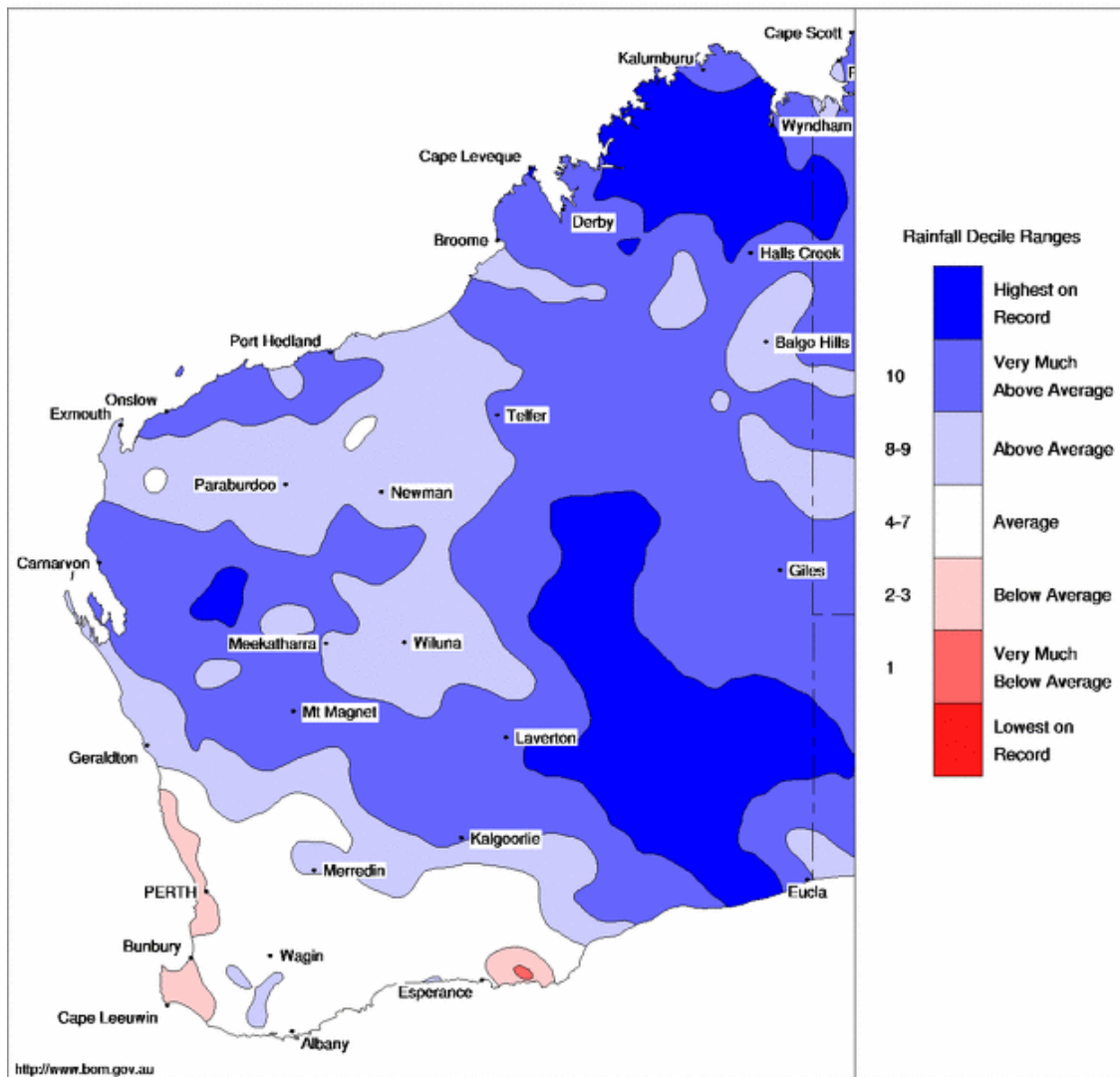
APPENDIX EIGHT

MAP OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S RAINFALL[251]

Year to Date

Rainfall Deciles (AWA grids 1900-pres.) 1 January to 31 October 2011
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
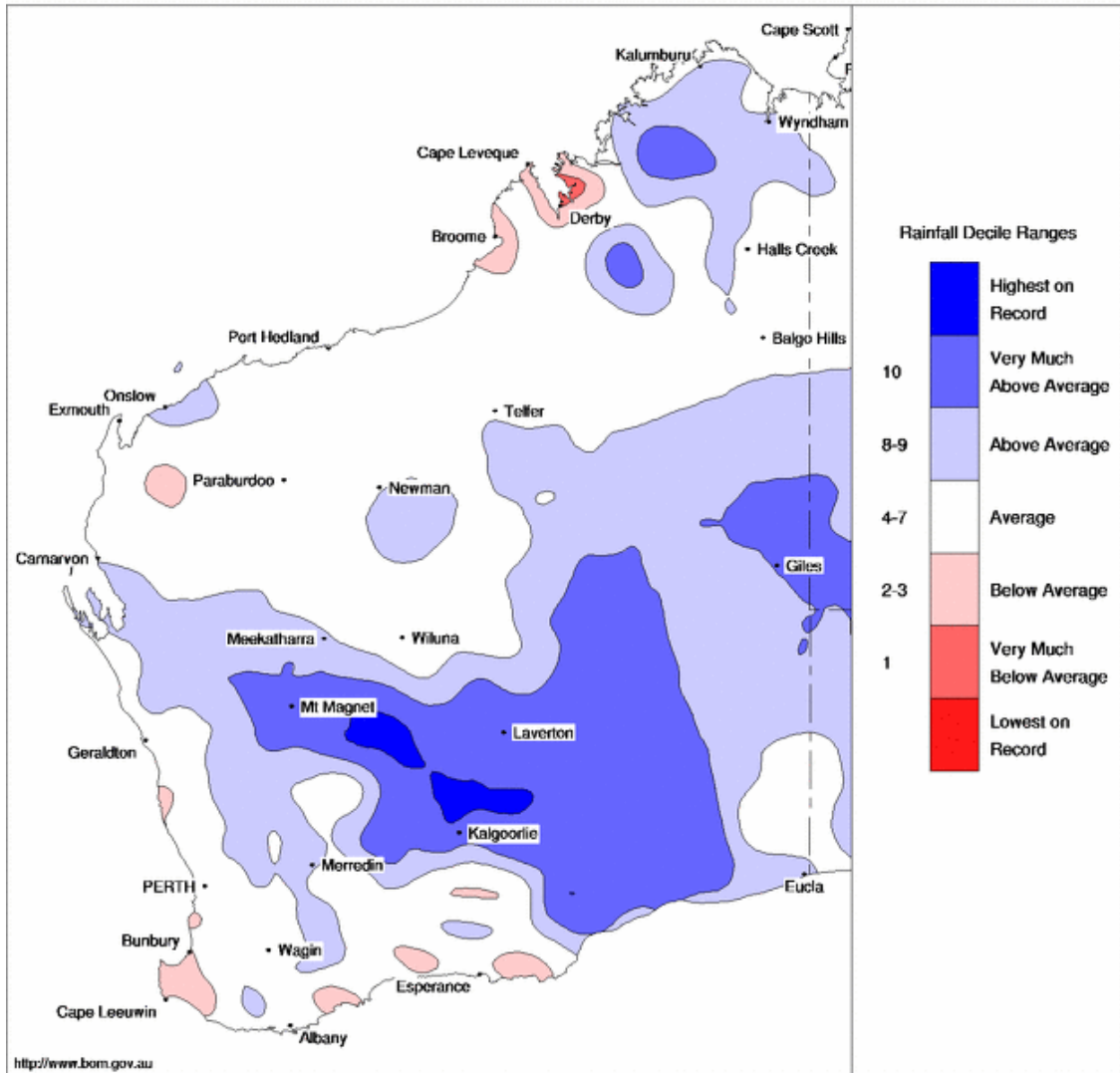Product of the National Climate Centre

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[251]   Mr Andrew Burton, Regional Manager for Severe Weather Services (WA), Bureau of Meteorology, *FESA WA Seasonal Outlook 2011-12 Briefing*, 4 November 2011.

Winter-Spring 2011

Rainfall Deciles (AWA grids 1900-pres.) 1 June to 31 October 2011
Distribution Based on Gridded Data
Product of the National Climate Centre

APPENDIX NINE

DPC IMPLEMENTATION GROUP- STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING
(13 OCTOBER 2011)[252]

RECOMMENDATIONS COMPLETED BY 1 DECEMBER 2011

Number	Recommendation
1	The FESA and the Department of Environment and Conservation develop and finalise their Memorandum of Understanding and commit to working in partnership.
2	Emergency Management Western Australia establish an inter-agency working group to continue the development of the new single emergency services Act.
8	Local governments continue to include information on bushfire risk and preparedness with rates notices.
25	The FESA immediately comply with the provisions of WESTPLAN BUSHFIRE and formally declare incidents at their appropriate level and document and communicate those decisions in a similar way to the systems used by the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Western Australian Police.
26	The FESA develop formal procedures for mandating the completion of Incident Action Plans, ensuring the documents are detailed and that they record critical decision making.
27	The FESA review its use of the Australian Interagency Incident Management System to ensure that the most appropriate resources (including aerial resources) are used to respond to an incident.
28	The FESA review its program to decommission vehicles and ensure that when such vehicles are offered during an incident that FESA staff adhere to FESA's own policy of "Use of Private Vehicles in Fires".
29	The FESA and the Department of Environment and Conservation ensure that their Incident Controllers identify critical infrastructure as part of their initial assessment and preparation of Incident Action Plans when attending major incidents.
36	The Department for Child Protection, the Western Australian Police and FESA develop improved arrangements for communicating the loss of home and possessions to persons gathered at evacuation centres with a view to increasing privacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETED BY 1 DECEMBER 2011

Number	Recommendation
6	The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, in partnership with local governments, conduct more focused pre-season bushfire education.
11	FESA consider alternative wording to Total Fire Ban that ensures people gain a more complete understanding of what actions are prohibited.
12	FESA work in partnership with Main Roads Western Australia and local governments to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for the use of mobile variable message boards to alert the community to the declaration of a total fire ban and what it means.

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[252]   Mr Peter Conran, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Letter, 1 November 2011.

14	The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments take proactive steps to conduct their prescribed burning programs as joint exercises.
24	The FESA convene a facilitated debriefing session between the families who remained behind to protect their properties, and the incident controllers.
33	The FESA and the ABC commence a thorough review of emergency warning messages.
46	The State Government restructure the FESA as a Department.

A Shared Responsibility: The Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire – February 2011 Review

Stakeholder Briefing

As at 13 October 2011

Updates are Presented in Bold Text.

Membership: Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), Fire and Emergency Services Association (FESA), Western Australia Police (WAPOL), Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Landgate, Department of Planning (DoP), Department of Education, Department of Finance

Volunteer Rep: Robert Bootsma

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
State Policy Group		
Recommendation 1 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Department of Environment and Conservation develop and finalise their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and commit to working in partnership.	FESA	*Key Issues* Demonstrated strong strategic partnership Opportunity for volunteer comment will be concluded by 13 October *Actions to Date* Collaboration and cooperation between DEC and FESA has produced an agreed draft Heads of Agreement with Statements of Intent and commitment at a strategic level. *Next Steps* Consultation with volunteer groups and local government on the draft document will occur before signing by the CEOs. Await final response from selected volunteer representatives and local government associations as to document content Assess volunteer and local government comment and incorporate where appropriate Arrange formal signing event.
Recommendation 2 (TOR 5) Emergency Management Western Australia establish an inter-agency working group to continue the development of the new single emergency services Act.	FESA	*Key Issues* Emergency Services Act has FESA specific as well as emergency services issues. Membership of Working Group finalised with identified membership of FESA, DEC, WAPOL, WALGA and Riskcover *Actions to Date* Revised Project Statement has been developed and is currently being reviewed internally. *Next Steps* Determine those matters that may be within the Terms of Reference of an Interagency Working Group. Consult with identified stakeholders. Finalise membership of Working Group, provide FESA endorsed Project Statement for comment and convene inaugural meeting. Invitations to identified members to be forwarded by 10 October. Convene and conduct inaugural meeting no later than 17 October.
Recommendation 3 (TOR 2 and 3) The State Government transfer responsibility for declaring bushfire prone areas from local government to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC). The Western Australian Planning Commission should urgently assess those areas	Planning	*Key Issues* Lack of existing legislation to authorise the WAPC to declare bushfire prone areas. The DoP (which serves and advises the WAPC) does not have the technical expertise or the resources to urgently assess those areas that should be declared bushfire prone.

September 27 2011

1

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
that should be declared bushfire prone.		**Actions to Date** Active investigation is underway to determine the available options and their implications for the WAPC to declare bushfire prone areas. Briefed the WAPC Chair regarding recommendation 3 and the key issues of the Keelty Report. Met with SSO to discuss the legislative changes required to provide the WAPC with the power for declaring bushfire prone areas. **Next Steps** Organise a meeting with WALGA and DEC to determine existing datasets and their applicability to bushfire prone mapping. Brief the WAPC on the options for declaring and assessing bushfire prone areas. Brief the Minister for Planning on the options for legislative change and declaring and assessing bushfire prone areas. Investigate the suitability of the WAPC to be authorised to assess and declare bushfire prone areas. The outcome of this will directly impact upon the technical expertise, resources and legislation required for the WAPC to give effect to this recommendation. Planning to work with WALGA, FESA, DEC and DAFWA to clarify the definition of 'bushfire prone' and the requirements pursuant to a declaration.'
Recommendation 4 (TOR 2 and 3) The State Government give legislative effect to the *Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines*.	Planning	**Key Issues** Legislative change is not considered necessary to give legislative effect to the Guidelines. **Actions to Date** Briefed the WAPC Chair regarding recommendation 4 and the key issues of the Keelty Report. Guidelines are under active review and discussions have taken place regarding strengthening the legislative effect of the Guidelines through a review of SPP 3.4. **Next Steps** Further brief the WAPC regarding strengthening the legislative effect of the Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines. Brief the Minister for Planning regarding strengthening the legislative effect of the Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines.
Recommendation 10 (TOR 4) The Department of Education oversee the provision of bushfire education in schools that are located in bushfire prone areas, ensuring that all schools in these areas incorporate key bushfire messages in their curriculum.	Education	**Key Issues** No mandate on non government schools **Actions to Date** Updated Principals Guide to Bushfires (To be placed on Department's policies website on Friday, 9 September 2011) Director General letter to FESA seeking assistance and advice on Fuel Loads assessments of school sites. The Department has sought advice from Building Management and Works on protecting evaporative air-coolers against ember attack. Schools in bushfire prone areas to incorporate bushfire education into the school's curriculum plan. (Link to FESA resources also)

2

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Meetings with key stakeholders. Compliance to Business Continuity Management Plan (school risk reference list) completed by Principals each year and submitted annually to Department. Liaise with all Regions to update Bushfire Zone Register. (Currently waiting on endorsement from FESA) Ed-e-mail prepared and ready to be sent to all Regional Executive Directors, Coordinators Regional Operations and Principals advising them of changes to document and summary of key messages. Professional Learning provided to Coordinators Regional Operations on 26 August 2011 Maintain strong communication with hazard management agencies Reinforcement of the Department's internal and external communication plans. To further strengthen the Department's response to recommendation 10 a curriculum officer from the Department is now on the Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Interagency Reference Group. In addition a Department representative is communicating with FESA in developing additional educational materials to support Overarching Learning Outcome 7: students understand and appreciate the physical, biological and technological world in which they live and work. (This will include material relating to bushfire developed in conjunction with FESA that will be put into schools as an adjunct to the teaching of the programs). **Next Steps** The Department of Education is in discussion with the Catholic Education Office and Department of Education Services regarding the mandatory nature of incorporating key bushfire messages in the curriculum of Catholic and Independent schools. No additional funding requested for the public school system. All costs will be met from within the organisation.
Recommendation 17 (TOR 1 and 3) Local governments consider increasing the number of green waste collections carried out each year to encourage a more proactive approach to property (and vegetation) maintenance by residents.	WALGA	Initial assessment of adequacy of collections / tip pass entitlements completed. Findings and City of Swan survey of residents seem to support tip passes and increased promotion of service availability to communities rather than increased roadside collection services. Meeting held with Local Governments in the hills area and benefits / costings for additional roadside collections being determined.
Recommendation 19 (Part a) (TOR 1) The State Government reaffirm its 2009 decision to approve DEC exercising greater flexibility in managing smoke within national guidelines, in order to achieve its prescribed burn program.	DEC	**Key Issues** Government to send a clear signal that it intends to allow DEC to relax its approach to smoke management, within national guidelines, in an effort to maximize prescribed burning achievement and as such protection from damaging summer bushfires. **Actions to date** Decision taken that this recommendation will best be achieved through the Premier making a relevant statement to Parliament [or the Minister for Environment issuing a media statement].

3

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Next Steps Options of the Premier making a statement if / when appropriate by the Premier or the Minister, to be discussed with Premier's Office.
Recommendation 31 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Western Australian Police ensure they receive all necessary legal clarification in relation to *Bushfire Responsibilities of Police Officers – Powers Used in Assisting Fire Authorities in Responding to Bushfires*, to be promulgated across FESA and WAPOL	WAPOL	**Key Issues** WAPOL is under legal advice that it cannot 'operate' effectively under the Bushfire Act, however it can do so under the Emergency Management (EM) Act. There is currently confusion over the suitability of the Bush Fire Act in relation to operational support activities during bushfires. **Actions to Date** Legal Advice received supports WAPOL view. WAPOL and FESA met 28 Sept and 6 Oct and agreed to a series of actions to resolve the issue. These include putting in place operational procedures for WAPOL to act at the direction of FESA Incident Controllers, possible modifications to the Bush Fire Act and appointment of Police Officers as HMO under the EM ACT. It was also agreed that, to avoid complexities in the short to medium term that FESA would consider making more use of the EM Act in the upcoming fire season. **Next Steps** Amendments to Bush Fire Act still under consideration by FESA. Agreed Operational Procedure to be tested at FESA State level Bushfire Exercise on 8 Nov. FESA to ensure DEC and BFB are aware of this procedure before 8 Nov. WAPOL previous requests for HMO status under the EM Act to be processed by A/CEO FESA. Review of EM Act project to be revised to ensure that all aspects of multi agency legal requirements are considered. EMWA to ensure that the EM Act review project is conducted in a full consultative manner. FESA and EMWA to review thresholds for Emergency Situation declaration.
Recommendation 32 (TOR 4 and 5) The Western Australian Police and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority jointly examine the Traffic Management System developed in response to the 2009 Victorian bushfires and seek its adaptation to use in WA with additional attention to the access and egress by bona fide residents to areas that are evacuated.	FESA (EMWA)	**Key Issues** Keelty Report advocates adoption of Victorian Traffic Management System. WA has a currently widely supported 'All Hazards' Traffic Management Policy that was the subject of much multi agency work post the Boorabin Bushfires. The adoption of the Victorian System will require a significant change in policy which may not be suitable within the WA Emergency Management context **Actions to Date** The recent review of the Traffic Management Policy considered the policy used in

4

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Victoria, however, it is acknowledged there has been change to this. It also noted the need for continuous improvement and the issues with the Perth hills Fire. Also noted that other recommendations such as evacuation will impact on this policy. **Next Steps** FESA will review the existing Traffic Management Policy using an all hazards approach prior to the 2012/13 bushfire/cyclone season.
Recommendation 35 (TOR 4 and 5) FESA and local governments jointly review radio communications capability prior to the 2011/12 bushfire season with a view to improving the current delivery of service to firefighters.	FESA	**Key Issues** Needs an all hazards approach. **Actions to Date** Implementation of WAERN (Western Australian Emergency Radio Network). **Next Steps** The WAERN project is on track for the implementation of the interim phase for the coming fire season. Continued consultation with stakeholders to achieve the interim phase and development of the "end state" of full transition to the high band for the 2012 / 13 fire season. FESA to complete prior to the bushfire season: • a Communications Plan for metropolitan agencies; and • training program for bush fire prone areas.
Recommendation 40 (TOR 2) The State Government mandate that the title deeds for relevant properties be amended to indicate if the property is in a declared bushfire prone area.	Landgate	**Key Issues** Addressing the recommendations in priority order to ensure interdependencies and impacts are understood and considered before decisions are made. Ensuring that the underlying issue and the intent of this recommendation are clearly understood before a solution is decided upon. Ensuring access to the 'right' information relating to bushfire prone areas, its currency, accessibility and accuracy. This recommendation is reliant upon recommendation 3 being completed (i.e. determining who is responsible for mapping and declaring bushfire prone areas, and creating and maintaining the dataset). Following investigation, mandating the amendment of title deeds for relevant properties to indicate if it is in a declared bushfire prone area is not the preferred option. This needs changes to, or new, legislation to provide the power to place this notification on titles and would be costly for consumers. The preferred option is for WAPC (as the proposed agency responsible) to declare "bushfire prone areas" as an interest under a planning policy or similar means. It then needs to be agreed by key stakeholders for property interest disclosure to become a requirement of real estate agents for all new property listings. Approximately 3% of transactions are not handled by an agent. Parties to these transactions need to be made aware of the interests that affect the property by other means. While this is Landgate's preferred option, its effectiveness requires careful consideration by Government and commitment from key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		There is some uncertainty about the industry response to the new requirement to disclose interests, in light of the changes to identify verification for property sales to manage the risk of fraud. Consultation needs to be undertaken with the real estate and conveyancing industries and an agreement reached on the changes to the codes of conduct. **Actions to Date** Discussions have taken place with the Dept of Planning/WAPC (as the proposed lead agency for declaring bushfire prone areas) to consider options for addressing this recommendation. Several options are being considered. Initial discussion with Dept of Commerce conducted. Landgate has determined that the declared bushfire prone areas become a registered interest and the use of Interest Enquiry is the preferred approach. **Meeting between Landgate and Dept of Commerce 03/10/2011.** **Next Steps** Further investigation into the options and assessment of the work and resources required to deliver preferred solutions. Continued dialogue with the Dept of Planning/WAPC and other stakeholders. Continue to investigate the effectiveness of this approach with stakeholders. Landgate to liaise with Real Estate Institute of WA (REIWA) and Dept of Commerce to discuss making property interests disclosure a requirement for all listings. An initial assessment of the work and resources required to implement this option will be undertaken once the approach is agreed to. Continue dialogue with Dept of Commerce. **Attend the Property Industry Advisory Committee meeting on 24 October.** An initial assessment of the work and resources required will be undertaken once stakeholders agree to the approach.
Recommendation 42 (TOR 1) The State Government recognise the projected changes in climate and potential impact on future fire events.	DEC	**Key Issues** Government to acknowledge that projected changes in climate may have an impact on future fire events. **Actions to date** A draft Western Australian Government Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy [CCAMS] has been prepared, with reference to the potential climate change impacts on future fire events. This will be considered by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in the near future. **Next Steps** Government to consider and endorse.
Recommendation 43 (TOR 5) The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) amend State Emergency Management Policy 4.1 (*Operational Management*) to: • give clear and explicit direction about when and how an incident should be declared	FESA	**Key Issues** Any amendments need to be implemented across all hazards. May need interim fire solution to ensure enhancements are in place. **Actions to Date** Discussions between State Emergency coordinator and Executive Officer SEMC (SECG). Concept developed for the automatic activation of the SECG and a possible

6

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
• clearly articulate the actions to be taken • clearly define accountabilities • provide detailed criteria for elevating issues and engaging other agencies.		Emergency Situation. Note: Only high level consultation has occurred. Appropriate consultation with key stakeholders (operational level) has not yet been undertaken.
Recommendation 44 (TOR 5) The State Government amend section 50 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* to allow the Chair of the State Emergency Coordination Group to declare an emergency situation.	FESA	Stakeholder consultation in relation to the above recommendations were scheduled for 26th September 2011. **Agreement from stakeholders reached on all recommendations. Awaiting legal advice in relation to Recommendation 44 however it was agreed that in the interim there were provisions for powers under the Bush Fire Act that provided the protections required.**
Recommendation 45 (TOR 5) Emergency Management Western Australia and the State Emergency Management Committee amend WESTPLAN-BUSHFIRE to require State Emergency Coordination Group meetings to be held at the State Coordination Centre in West Leederville.	FESA	**Next Steps** • Concept to be discussed by the Implementation Group. • Discussion to be completed with FESA, DEC & WAPOL. • By Friday 16 September. • Clarification with SSO to clarify legislation issues and consultation with FESA, DEC, & WAPOL. • FESA to complete documentation Once agreement has been reached policy change will be developed for endorsement.
Recommendation 47 (TOR 5) Emergency Management Western Australia develop mechanisms to calculate the estimated total cost of a fire to the community.	FESA	**Key Issues** Requires significant research work to identify issues such as scope, methodology, timeliness **Actions to Date** The process in which to progress this recommendation has been established. **Next Steps** The next step is to establish a working group and develop scope.
Recommendation 48 (TOR 5) The State Government move the responsibility for the management and distribution of the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) to the Department of Finance.	Finance	**Key Issues** The completion of this recommendation is not considered an urgent matter, at this time. Recommendation is that a review of the grants application and approval process for the Emergency Services Levy be undertaken after the revised FESA administrative arrangements are put in place Recommended that the review be undertaken within 6 months of the revised FESA administrative arrangements being put in place. **Actions to Date** Reviewed papers from the report on recommendation 48. Reviewed the 2006 report by the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of the Parliament. Meeting held between Department of Finance and FESA representatives to understand the current application and approval process for grant applications lodged by local governments, with FESA, for funding allocations. Reviewed 2006 CD&JSC Report Meeting held between DOF and FESA. Agreed no benefit in transferring the assessment and collection of the ESL to DOF

7

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Next Steps What will be done? Conduct a review of the Emergency Services Levy grants application and allocation process. When? Within 6 months of putting in place of the revised FESA administrative arrangements. By whom? To be further discussed between the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Treasury and the Department of Finance on the conduct and chairing of the review.
Recommendation 52 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and local governments ensure that Community Emergency Service Managers are physically based in local government.	FESA	**Key Issues** Capacity within local governments to accommodate Community Emergency Service Managers is limited and varied. However, the intent of the recommendation is agreed. **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held 6th September 2011. Review of all MOUs. Position on recommendation has been developed in draft. **Next Steps** Liaise with local governments to ensure compliance of intent where possible. Make minor changes in future MOUs. Finalise recommendation through IBM Working Group. Consult with WALGA and local governments regarding CESM positions to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and compliance of intent where possible. **Consult with Local Governments to determine any issues from minor changes proposed.** **Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.**

Interagency Bushfire Management

Membership: Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), Fire and Emergency Services Association (FESA), Western Australia Police (WAPOL), Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Landgate, Main Roads, Western Power, Water Corporation

Volunteer Rep: Rod Eyre

Recommendation 7 (part b) (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) review its distribution of information material, including Prepare. Act. Survive. FESA should also consider including the community in pre-season exercising, in consultation with the Department for Child Protection and local governments.	FESA	**Key Issues** Determining the most effective method of engaging the community in exercises. Determining the most at risk communities. Determining the most effective method of engaging the community in exercises. Short time available prior to the bushfire season **Actions to Date** DEC and FESA Manager's workshop held on 1st September. Planning meeting held on 6th September 2011 Meeting held with DCP, WALGA and EMWA on 19th September Letter forwarded to LEMCs through EMWA on 20th September **Next Steps**

8

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Consultation with DCP and LGs Engage Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMC) Statewide exercise planned for 8th November. Key stakeholders including WAPOL, LG, DEC and DCP to be invited to take part at a district, regional or state level. The inclusion of the community in any exercising of evacuation centres to be considered in consultation with LGs and DCP. Review any feedback from LEMCs and ensure the request is carried forward to 2012. Support for this to be provided through FESA Regional staff. **Develop exercise component to test State Alert in the community.** **Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.**
Recommendation 13 (TOR 1) The State Government consider resourcing the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments to develop and administer a comprehensive prescribed burning program in Perth's urban/rural interface to complement DEC's existing landscape-scale program.	DEC	**Key Issues** Additional resources to build upon existing prescribed burning program Availability of sufficient/suitable resources and expertise for local government to develop and implement a program Joint development of a coordinated program of prescribed burning across all tenures. **Actions to Date** DEC is well advanced in developing a specific program for fire mitigation on DEC-managed lands around the Perth urban interface DEC has included several burns in the interface area in its Spring 2011 master burn plan. Several have been fully or partly implemented. DEC is currently better placed with respect to its Spring 2011 burning program in the Perth hills than at the same time in 2010 as a result of a more favourable winter rainfall pattern. CFM and Community and Emergency Services Managers (CESM) positions in some LGs and FESA Bushfire Mitigation officers provide some capability Development of draft policy for 'tenure-blind' fuel load management has commenced. **Next Steps** Complete policy for 'tenure-blind' fuel load management. **A proposed consultation draft has been completed for corporate endorsement by DEC and FESA.** DEC to complete its specific program for fire mitigation on DEC-managed lands around the Perth urban interface and integrate into its overall master burn plan DEC to submit bid for resources required to expand programs. FESA and LGs to develop strategy for planning and implementation of prescribed burning programs on non-DEC-managed lands and resources required to implement.
Recommendation 14 (TOR 1) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments take proactive steps to conduct their prescribed burning programs as joint exercises. This will give effect to: • Reducing fuel load • Improving inter-operability • A mutual understanding of the fire fighting techniques of each agency.	DEC	**Key Issues** Processes for advice to other authorities of proposed burns and opportunities for joint implementation Availability of volunteers, particularly on the Perth urban fringe Suitability of FESA equipment in Perth urban fringe for burning operations. **Actions to Date** DEC has reinforced need to communicate with FESA and LGs regarding opportunities for joint operations on DEC burns

9

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		DEC has commenced a review of its burn approval process to embed such communications routinely. **Next Steps** DEC to complete review of burn approval process as above FESA and LGs to develop reciprocal process
Recommendation 15 (TOR 1) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and local governments ensure that the ability to: • measure and map fuel loads • maintain fuel load databases • draw up prescriptions for, and oversee controlled burns are included as key competencies in any future recruitment of Chief Bushfire Control Officers (CBFCO) and Community and Emergency Services Managers (CESM).	FESA	**Key Issues** Profiling of CBFCO competencies. Determining high risk areas where competencies are required. Profiling of CBFCO competencies against requirements in high risk areas Training impact on volunteers. **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held 6th September 2011. FESA has already adjusted the key competencies required for any future CESM positions that are negotiated with local government. All current CESM's have been trained by the bushland mitigation section on how to measure fuel loads and maintain this data in the IBRMS database. This process includes the preparation of burn prescriptions then assisting local bush fire brigade volunteers in the burning of the site, all mitigation works are also captured on the IBRMS database for future planning use. A Volunteer Training Advisory Group is also a contributor to the development of competencies and training for CBFCOs and they will be a key stakeholder in this initiative. Mapping current competencies of volunteers and career staff and for future recruitments. Currently seeking feedback from LG CBFCO's, CESM's and CFM's via group email. Prescribed Burning course has been identified as a new requirement along with the need to review and update the CBFCO course. **Next Steps** FESA position to be developed in consultation with local government. A review of the current training resource kits available to staff, CESM's and volunteers to ensure the importance of fuel load assessments and maintaining them at safe levels is understood, information to be inserted in these TRK's where required. FESA assessing the development and implementation of a prescribed burning course and making it available to staff, local governments and volunteers to enable them to successfully carry out assessments and mitigation works within their local areas. Finalise required competencies for CBFCOs and CESMs. Determine what new course requirements are identified and develop timeframes for them to be developed. WALGA obtaining information from Local Governments about existing burning programs and coordination with DEC. Finalise required competencies for CBFCOs and CESMs against identified high risk areas in line with actions and next steps in Rec 53. Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.
Recommendation 18 (TOR 1 and 3) The Western Australian Local Government Association explore the feasibility of	WALGA	**Key Issues** The options around using satellite imagery have been investigated by WALGA and

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
local governments utilising aerial and satellite imagery to monitor firebreaks and fuel loads on private property.		Landgate. There is ample evidence that suggests that Satellite imagery in its present form will not deliver the required results but can be used in conjunction with on ground inspections. Most local governments have access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for their area and supported by the FESA program Integrated Bushfire Risk Management System for those who do not will enable better management of reserves. **Actions to Date** Surveyed local governments Obtained relevant information from FESA and Landgate **Next Steps** Landgate is investigating the use of airborne and satellite imagery through a pilot project that will provide a firebreak monitoring capability. The outcomes of this investigation will be known in February 2012. WALGA to ascertain existing Local Government capacity.
Recommendation 20 (TOR 1) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments closely monitor the research and development of alternative fuel reduction techniques to ensure that the most efficient and effective programs are adopted.	DEC	**Key Issues** Cost and potential environmental impact of alternative techniques **Actions to Date** DEC, FESA and LGs already use alternative mitigation techniques as part of fuel management programs The program being developed for fire mitigation on DEC-managed lands around the Perth urban interface includes the use of alternative techniques where appropriate. **Next Steps** A Bushfire Research Forum will be held in WA in October 2011. While the program does not include any sessions dealing with hazard reduction techniques other than the use of planned fire, the final session at the forum is focussed on future research needs. Alternative risk mitigation techniques will be raised at this time. Jointly develop an options and consequences paper
Recommendation 21 (TOR 1 and 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment and Conservation and local governments jointly develop a single, integrated system for fuel load assessment and management. The system should enable public access to allow members of the community to access information about the fuel load in a given locality.	FESA	**Key Issues** Different requirements of FESA and DEC **Actions to Date** FESA and DEC have agreed to have an independent assessment conducted on the respective fuel load and management systems currently used by FESA and DEC. Some reservations have been made by FESA's Fire Investigations and Analysis Unit and the WAPOL Arson Squad as to the merits of making fuel load information available to the public. This will require further deliberation to determine if the risks of public release can be mitigated. Cannot be actioned until the independent review referred to in recommendation 22 is completed. Attended Fuel Load Management (FLM)Sub- Committee to assess relevance of work to date Consultation between FESA and DEC.

11

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Next Steps Upon completion of recommendation 22 it will be determined if a single data base or a suitably compatible system can be developed for both agencies due to their differing needs e.g. Land conservation versus natural hazards. Outcomes from recommendation 22 will need to be considered in the context of available funding and current agency capabilities to implement and train staff. Wait for the outcome of recommendation 22 Continue to attend Fuel Load Management meetings. Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.
Recommendation 22 (TOR 1 and 5) The State Government ensure that the continued development of the Fire and Emergency Service Authority's Integrated Bushfire Risk Management System (IBRMS) is dependent on an independent comparative assessment of its functionality and cost effectiveness against the Spatial Support System (SSS) used by the Department of Environment and Conservation.	DEC	**Key Issues:** Different requirements of FESA and DEC. **Action to Date:** Discussion with FESA ICT to determine scope of IBRMS review. Previously developed scope for provision of coordinated mapping capability for bushfire operations provided to DEC as a possible starting point for this recommendation. **Next Steps:** Scope of works for independent review to be developed. Consultation between FESA and DEC.
Recommendation 23 (TOR 1 and 5) The Interagency Bushfire Management committee develop and oversee a work program to: • conduct site specific assessments to assess current fuel loads • assess, analyse and prioritise bushfire risk on land within and adjacent to communities • develop a three year rolling mitigation works program with annual implementation and review. This work should commence independently of any decision on the most effective online integrated system. All data collected should be uploaded to the SLIP.	FESA	**Key Issues** Assessment of current fuel loads and community risk mapping. Fuel load assessments of grasslands and coastal heath areas **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held on 6th September 2011. Fuel load mapping being is conducted throughout the Perth Hills rural urban interface area. Whilst a 3 year rolling mitigation works program has not been developed as yet there is a 5 year program in place in some high risk areas. Work program by FESA Bushland Mitigation Officers and CESMs is ongoing. This includes conducting mitigation works, inspections and mapping on a weekly basis throughout the Perth Hills area. Project Officer attended the Fuel Load Management Sub Committee meeting on 30th September. CESMs and BMOs conducting mitigation works in high risk areas. Fuel load mapping is being conducted in tandem with the mitigation works. **Next Steps** The Fuel Load Management Committee to meet within the next month to develop: • A preliminary map of the Perth Hills; • A rolling three year program of planned bushfire risk treatment. FESA will continue to conduct fuel load mapping in Perth Hills rural/ urban interface areas in consultation with Local Government and DEC. The fuel load mapping is to be progressed through to other identified high risk areas in the south west land division. Fuel Load Management Committee scheduled to meet on 30/9/11.

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		FESA Bushland Mitigation Officers and CESMs to continue mitigation and mapping works in identified high risk areas. FESA Bushland Mitigation Officers and CESMs to continue mitigation and mapping works in identified high risk areas. **Development of three year rolling mitigation works program to be investigated.** **Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.**
Recommendation 25 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority immediately comply with the provisions of WESTPLAN BUSHFIRE and formally declare incidents at their appropriate level and document and communicate those decisions in a similar way to the systems used by the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Western Australian Police.	FESA	**Key Issues** Investigation of WAPOL and DEC declaration procedures and documentation. Information flow as a result of incident declaration. Impacts on day to day incident processes state-wide. **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held 6th September 2011. Research has been carried out on the DEC and WAPOL systems. A DRAFT form has been constructed and feedback sought from Operational Managers. To be tested during state exercise on November 8. Liaised with EMWA on possible new Operational Procedure to cover incident declarations across all hazards. **Workshop attended on 3/10/2011 with HMA stakeholders facilitated by EMWA to develop operating principles for declaring incident levels. The results of this workshop will be included in SEMP 4.1 after approval by SEMC.** **Next Steps** Develop declaration procedure including documentation and communication methods. Once pathway determined through procedure or EMWA policy adopt declaration procedure including documentation and communication methods and disseminate to operational personnel. **Once feedback on the draft Incident Declaration form developed by FESA has been submitted the form will be reviewed and tested at the state bushfire exercise.** **Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on October 17th.**
Recommendation 26 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority develop formal procedures for mandating the completion of Incident Action Plans, ensuring the documents are detailed and that they record critical decision making.	FESA	**Key Issues** The completion of the Incident Action Plans (IAP) is achievable across the state eg. detail v timely completion. **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held 6th September 2011. Formulated a timeline that describes when an IAP will be completed and what format it will be in including forms. Working on AIIMS toolbox with FESA ICT to update and reconfigure to make it easier to work for operational staff and volunteers. **This is 90% complete** Updated some forms to reflect current work practice and changes in how AIIMS is set out with positions coming to the fore like the Public Information Officer.

13

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Consulted with the regional staff on current IAP's that they have and used the good points in proposed IAP. Assisted with exercise with District Managers to seek their views on problem issues and how we can progress them. Drafted an Operational Circular for all operational staff and volunteers on ensuring IAP's are completed in a timely and detailed fashion. Tabled timeline and IAP format at Fire Operations Committee meeting with DEC and WALGA. **Next Steps** Mandating the completion of IAPs, with requisite detail and records of critical decisions. Test revised AIIMS toolbox during the state exercise with all agencies involved then review and publish for the 2011/12 fire season. **Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on October 17th.**
Recommendation 27 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority review its use of the Australian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS) to ensure that the most appropriate resources (including aerial resources) are used to respond to an incident. If resources are rejected during an incident either through the decision making process or other grounds, the reason for the decision should be documented.	FESA	**Key Issues** Review the AIIMs Toolbox Ability of FESA to view resources on a statewide basis Determine capability of WEBEOC to record critical decisions with regards to resources. **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held 6th September 2011 Information session on WEBEOC to determine its capability to provide statewide resourcing viewing was conducted on Monday 19th September. FESA's AIIMS Toolbox has been reviewed and is being updated, this includes associated forms that record critical decisions on resourcing. This update is 90% complete. **Next Steps** Develop procedure for recording the assessment, deployment and rejection of resources. Investigate how to enable FESA Comment to view state-wide resources. Meet with WEBEOC Project manager to scope out statewide resource board within WEBEOC. Review FESA's use of AIIMS. AFAC is finalizing changes to the AIIMS structure, these should be available prior to the end of October. Review updated resourcing plans currently used by FESA and Local Governments. These include Operational Bushfire Mutual Aid and Support Arrangements and Zone 2/ Zone 2a Protocols Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.
Recommendation 28 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) review its program to decommission vehicles and ensure that when such vehicles are offered during an incident that FESA staff adhere to FESA's own policy of "Use of Private Vehicles in	FESA	**Key Issues** Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires (2nd ed. 2008) were developed for private citizens; adapted from CFA document (2004). Also used by other Australian fire jurisdictions.

14

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
Fires'		Operational doctrine does not address Incident Controller's responsibilities and procedures for managing private resources / personnel (when resources meet acceptable operational standards). No formal process exists for assessing private resources / personnel or documenting decisions. Processes exist for disposal of replaced (decommissioned) appliances direct to local governments and private interests. Review required to be completed before the 2011/12 fire season. **The need to consult with the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades was identified as necessary to properly complete the review of the Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires. An email was sent to the Association on 3 October 2011 inviting their comment, with feedback not expected until approximately 14 October 2011. This additional consultation has caused the expected timeline for completion of the guidelines to be extended by three weeks.** *Actions to Date* Process for decommissioning of vehicles being revised with a view to the procedure being strengthened to ensure compliance. Disposal of Fleet Assets (Owned and Returned) procedure drafted by Fleet & Equipment Services. **Direct Purchase Guidelines review completed by Regional Directors; revised draft prepared.** **Stakeholders consultation commenced in relation to Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires.** *Next Steps* Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires (2nd ed, 2008) ("the Guidelines") to be contemporised by Operations portfolio. A system will be developed and implemented for the communication of the Guidelines to ensure Operational Personnel are more effectively informed about the use of private equipment at fires. The Guidelines to be embedded in Operational Doctrine. Target date for completion: End of September 2011. No additional funding required. Approval of Disposal of Fleet Assets (Owned and Returned) procedure and linkage to FESA Policy Statement No. 28 Fleet Policy. Circulation of existing draft Direct Purchase Guidelines to Regional Directors and District Managers for comment, with feedback to be incorporated into a series of recommendations for the approval of the A/Director Business Services. **Approval of Direct Purchase Guidelines and distribution to relevant stakeholders.** **Preparation of draft Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires incorporating amendments for approval**
Recommendation 29 (TOR 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Department of Environment	FESA	*Key Issues* What is defined as "critical infrastructure".

15

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
and Conservation ensure that their Incident Controllers identify critical infrastructure as part of their initial assessment and preparation of Incident Action Plans when attending major incidents.		Determine current training standards for identifying critical infrastructure as an incident controller.
		Inclusion of critical infrastructure sections into current AIIMS forms.
		Actions to Date
		Planning meeting held 6th September 2011.
		As part of recommendation 26 sections were added to AIIMS forms to ensure operational managers are considering critical infrastructure as part of the planning process at incidents, it has also been recommended (supported) that PAFTACS be used as a first arrival reporting tool which takes initial incident controllers through a process when sizing up the fire and the threats around it
		The definition of critical infrastructure was identified and a list was drafted by the project group on what could be defined as critical infrastructure, this list has been sent to all FESA Regional Directors across the state requesting that they consult with their managers on what they consider to be critical infrastructure.
		Next Steps
		Consultation with DEC.
		Review the inclusion of critical infrastructure into Emergency Services Directories.
		Review current AIIMS forms.
		Test revised forms within the toolbox during the state exercise with all agencies involved then review and publish for the 2011/12 fire season.
		Review current training material and update where required to reflect the need to assess critical infrastructure.
		Review feedback from FESA regions to determine definitive list of critical infrastructure.
		Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on October 17th.
Recommendation 30 (TOR 1 and 2) Main Roads Western Australia undertake more frequent examinations of its bridges located in areas prone to bushfire and ensure that the risk posed to loss of infrastructure in a fire is understood by local authorities.	MRWA	**Key Issues** Resourcing of Main Roads WA, Local Government and Department of Environment and Conservation to inspect 2 700 bridges owned by the Authorities.
		Defining bushfire prone areas to target bridge inspections to the priority bridges prior to the 2011/12 fire season.
		Determining the risk posed by the loss of bridge infrastructure (including issues such as strategic importance, single access communities) and communication process.
		Actions to Date
		Accelerated bridge inspections and vegetation clearing commenced in South West Region.
		Fire threat assessment being prepared to define priority bridge inspections.
		Assessment of bridge inspection currency and status of bridge clearance envelopes.
		Streamlined Fire Risk Inspection process looking at only vegetation clearances.
		Next Steps
		Identify bridges within bushfire prone areas and develop an overall accelerated bridge inspection program.

16

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues; actions and next steps
Recommendation 37 (TOR 4 and 5) Hazard Management Agencies overseeing the response to incidents on the urban fringe select evacuation centres that are well within the urban environment and unlikely to be impacted by the incident.	WAPOL	Continue with accelerated bridge inspection program. Develop risk assessment process and report. **Key Issues** Availability of accurate information that is centrally located and available to Incident Controllers in an emergency. **Actions to Date** The Department Of Child Protection is capturing information on all Welfare Centres. **Next Steps** Collation of information, including spatial location. Awareness by, and availability to, Hazard Management Agencies
Recommendation 38 (TOR 1 and 3) Local governments institute a comprehensive program to assess fuel loads and bushfire preparedness on private properties. The program should give reference to the creation and maintenance of a Building Protection Zone, in line with FESA guidelines. This program should be implemented and managed under the *Bush Fires Act 1954* in a manner similar to the fire break inspection program.	WALGA	**Key Issues** The legislation currently in place (Section 33 of the Bush Fires Act 1954) allows for the enforcement of fuel load reduction measures and the installation of fire breaks. Most local governments in bushfire prone areas are already enforcing this section of the Act but are hampered by lack of on-ground staff. Most local governments are currently using a mix of paid staff, some contractors and volunteers. The cost of providing seasonal staff to undertake inspections is an impediment to the success of this recommendation particularly in rural areas. **Actions to Date** Survey of local governments **Next Steps** In consultation with FESA ensure the 100% take-up of the Interactive Bushfire Risk Management System across local government. Support FESAs ongoing funding requirements in relation to staffing the project. Assess funding opportunities for local government in support of seasonal inspection programs. Consult with FESA on ways to enable full take-up of the Interactive Bushfire Risk Management System across local government. Determine additional resources that would be required for local government to support increased full load assessment, bushfire preparedness and inspection programs.
Recommendation 41 (TOR 2) Western Power and the Water Corporation continue to work collaboratively to assess options to better protect the power supply to water pumping stations in bushfire prone areas.	Water Corp	**Key/Contentious Issues** Overhead power lines prone to attack in bushfire - difficult to make lines fire proof. Power supplies often interrupted during bushfire emergencies Environmental concerns sometimes inhibit clearing of native vegetation to provide physical asset protection zones, at some Water Corporation sites. **Actions to date** FESA, together with Western Power and Water Corporation have reinforced the existing interagency incident early notification processes, to assist with the proactive identification of potential risks to essential services, and initiate the early deployment of incident resources, and preventative strategies. Water Corporation continues to maintain and review the interagency Darling Escarpment Water Supply plan (DEWS), to coordinate interagency awareness and protection of water

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		supplies in the high fire risk area.
		Water Corporation continues to maintain trailer mounted bulk water containers configured for FESA/DEC fast hose connect standard fittings, to support fire ground water resupply, and post incident potable water resupply, for incident callout by FESA/DEC.
		Western Power and Water Corporation have reviewed and reaffirmed their existing interagency incident communication and coordination processes.
		Western Power and Water Corporation actively participate in interagency emergency planning at the Regional, District and State level, which includes the interagency awareness of interdependent essential services infrastructure.
		The Water Corporation are actively working with DEC to gain environmental approvals for fire fuel load management around essential services.
		Next Steps
		Annual interagency DEWS fire season briefing – November 2011
		Western Power and Water Corporation – South West Region, fire season interagency planning and briefing – October 2011
		Identification of essential Water Corporation assets on the Western Power distribution management system – 30 September 2011
		Water Corporation are actively seeking DEC environmental clearances to assist with the development of Asset Protection Zones – approvals expected November 2011
Recommendation 49 (TOR 5) Emergency service agencies undertake more consultation and joint exercising involving the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, the Department of Environment, the Western Australian Police, the Department for Child Protection, local governments and volunteers – including Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. This should include field exercises which test: • Evacuation centres • Critical infrastructure (including at the local level) • Traffic management, including road blocks. Consideration should also be given to involving the community in exercising (see Recommendation 7) and using prescribed burns as exercises (see Recommendation 14). More detailed planning for exercises should be included in a revised WESTPLANBUSHFIRE to be endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee.	FESA	**Key Issues** Development of joint exercises. Identify current multi agency exercising schedule. Revising Westplan Bushfire – risk of extensive changes prior to the bushfire season. Short time available prior to the bushfire season. **Actions to Date** Planning commenced for statewide exercise in November. This exercise to include DEC, LG and WAPOL. Planning meeting held 6th September 2011. Exercise writing has commenced. 1st draft expected by 3rd October. DEC, WALGA, WAPOL and DCP to be included in the exercises. Opportunities to include the community to be considered by the exercise writers. Meeting held with DCP on 19th September to discuss inclusion in the exercise. Meeting held with WAPOL on 3/10/2011 to provide opportunities for their inclusion in the exercise at a state level. Critical dates for DEC that clash with the date of the exercise have been identified. 1st draft of regional exercises completed. **Next Steps** Ensure FESA conducts consultation across agencies for pre-season exercises. Develop scenario for statewide exercise. Review 1st drafts of exercises. Final exercises to be ready by 4th November.

18

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
Recommendation 53 (TOR 1 and 5) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and local governments examine the current competencies of Chief Bushfire Control Officers (CBFCO) and Community Emergency Services Managers (CESM) or Community Fire Managers (CFM) and consider what further development is needed to ensure these staff are capable of: • measuring and mapping fuel loads • maintaining fuel load databases • drawing up prescriptions for, and overseeing controlled burns • building effective working relationships with all relevant stakeholders.	FESA	Review exercising requirements in Westplan Bushfire. Planning meeting held 20th September Review draft of Westplan Bushfire. Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October. **Key Issues** Determine the competency profile required for CBFCO and CESM Training needs analysis to be conducted Content of current training courses. Profiling of CBFCO competencies against requirements in high risk areas. Training impact on volunteers. **Actions to Date** Planning meeting held 6th September 2011 FESA has carried out training with all current CESM's and Regional staff on the integrated bushfire risk management system (IBRMS) which is a database to record fuel loads and what actions are taken when mitigating them. This training and database has also been made available to local government staff and volunteers in high risk areas with training being carried out upon request. A review of current CBFCO competencies from the FESA training database has been conducted and reveals that most have completed Fire Control Officer training and about a third have completed advanced bushfire suppression and behaviour courses. No CBFCO's are recorded within the training database as completing the prescribed burning or prescription course with DEC. It needs to be recognised that CBFCO's are not necessarily the appropriate person to manage fuel loads as most are volunteers that have their own work and family commitments which do not allow for the timely process of conducting this type of program. Mapping current competencies of volunteers and career staff. Currently seeking feedback from LG CBFCO's, CESM's and CFM's. Assessing feedback received from WALGA and ESVA. Finalised current competencies for staff and volunteers. **Next Steps** Consultation with local governments and volunteer associations Position to be formed in regards to the recommendation. A review of the current training resource kits available to staff, CESM's and volunteers to ensure the importance of fuel load assessments and maintaining them at safe levels is understood, information to be inserted in these TRK's where required. FESA will need to progress the implementation of a prescribed burning course and make it available to staff, local governments and volunteers to enable them to successfully carry out assessments and mitigation works within their local areas. Negotiation is required with local government and WALGA to work out how this type of program can be carried out within LGA's that do not have the services of a CESM or

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		other officer. Finalise current competencies for current staff and volunteers by 28th September. Determine what new course requirements are identified and develop timeframes for them to be developed. Determine training program for current staff in line with review of CBFCO course and final development of Prescribed Burning course. Determine high risk areas identification methodology including identification of required skills and competencies against each identified area. Present project update at Bushfire Consultative Committee meeting on 17th October.
Recommendation 54 (TOR 5) The Interagency Bushfire Management Committee (IBMC) develop a consistent program of education, training (including media), testing and review of Level 3 Incident Controllers. This should include provision for a formal review of the performance of individual Level 3 Incident Controllers after every incident.	DEC	**Key Issues** No agreed formal process for the training and testing of Level 3 Incident Controllers exists in Western Australia Maintenance of any such program is resource-hungry. **Actions to Date** This issue has been acknowledged by all parties within IBMC DEC has undertaken preliminary work on systems in other jurisdictions that may inform progress in WA. **DEC/FESA will "cross-endorse" Level 3 Incident Controllers prior to the 2011/12 fire season.** **Next Steps** IBMC to reconvene and progress the development of an agreed interagency model.
Community Information		
Membership: Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA), Fire and Emergency Services Association (FESA), Western Australia Police (WAPOL), Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Main Roads, Department for Child Protection **Volunteer Rep:** Colin James		
Recommendation 5 (TOR 2 and 3) Local Government recognise the work of the Gas Technical Regulatory Council and ensure any amendments to the Australian Standard are enforced. Local Government provide information to residents on any changes to the Australian Standard relating to tethering gas tanks and encourage property owners to take action to comply with the Standard.	DPC	**Key Issues** Gas standards and operation and monitoring of gas systems are the responsibility of Energy Safety WA not Local Government. **No amendments to the Standard proposed at this stage.** Any amendments would take 1 to 2 years. A voluntary guideline of tethering gas cylinders is currently under development by Energy Safety WA and will take around 3 months to complete. However with no existing guideline, Energy Safety WA currently does not undertake a monitoring or enforcement program. **Actions to Date** Identification of the appropriate agency to be engaged to enact the intent of the recommendation.

20

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Identification that there is currently no guideline for the tethering and consequently no enforcement program. *Prepare, Act, Survive* and other relevant FESA publications have been amended to include references to tethering. **Next Steps** DPC to monitor progress of voluntary guideline.
Recommendation 6 (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority, in partnership with local governments, conduct more focused pre-season bushfire education, which emphasises: • Water supply is not guaranteed during a bushfire • Power supply is not guaranteed during a bushfire • Saving life will be a priority over saving property so expect to be evacuated • Once evacuated, access to affected areas may not be possible for several days • Water "bombing" by aircraft cannot be guaranteed in bushfire • SMS warnings are advice only and may not be timely.	FESA	**Key Issues** FESA currently target the top 30+ priority areas from more than 100 bushfire prone areas for focused education – awareness activities based on resources. The difficulty in establishing Bushfire Ready groups in gazetted fire districts. Up-skilling contracted staff to undertake engagement activities. **Actions to Date** Two factors identified to be addressed – 1. More focussed pre-season bushfire education. 2. Include and increase emphasis on issues covered in dot points. FESA has revised the content of its bushfire safety material to ensure that they are reflective of the advice by Mr Keelty and other relevant reviews and research outcomes. Publications and associated tools have been updated in readiness for pre season engagement in bushfire prone areas. FESA has conducted Bushfire Ready Facilitator training as follows: 21 August 2011 - Metro South Baldivis Bushfire Brigade (13 attendees) 17 September 2011 - Southwest Bunbury FESA Regional Office (8 attendees) 18 September 2011 - Metro North Kalamunda Bushfire Brigade (18 attendees) Bushfire Ready Facilitator Forum Professional Development Day 9 October 2011 Mundaring Administration Offices (30 Bushfire Ready Facilitators attended along with FESA Operational staff). Additional contract staff (community safety officers) employed to work alongside community safety coordinators in the priority bushfire risk locations. Training of these staff is ongoing both in the office and in the field. Engaged local governments in high bushfire risk areas to promote bushfire safety material at public contact points. Materials provided week commencing 17 October 2011 including promotional banners, publications and other bushfire safety tools. High Risk Bushfire Locations identified with priority locations and secondary locations for engagement and approved. High risk bushfire locations will be targeted for engagement. 3 absentee landowner forums have been conducted with an additional session booked for late October. 47,348 FESA *Prepare Act Survive* publications have already been distributed to high risk bushfire locations. A further 15,000 are planned for distribution in November. **Next Steps** 15,000 PAS are planned for distribution in November.

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
Recommendation 7 (part) (TOR 4) (a) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) review its distribution of information material, including *Prepare. Act. Survive* (PAS).	FESA	Face to Face engagement activities are on-going in high risk bushfire locations. (Please also see Rec 7(a)) **Key Issues** Limited human resources to follow up the distribution of material with quality "face to face" community engagement activities tailored to local communities. Up-skilling contracted staff to undertake engagement activities. **Actions to Date** 47,348 FESA *Prepare Act Survive* publications have already been distributed to high risk bushfire locations. A further 15,000 are planned for distribution in November. A new Urban Bushfire Publication entitle "Am I at risk from bushfire?" has been developed to target high risk residential properties within urban areas adjacent to bush and parklands. This publication is currently at the printers and is planned for distribution early November. Existing bushfire safety publications and associated tools have been updated and finalised in readiness for pre season engagement in bushfire prone areas. Engaged local governments in high bushfire risk areas to promote bushfire safety material at public contact points. Materials provided week commencing 17 October 2011 including promotional banners, publications and other bushfire safety tools. High Risk Bushfire Locations identified with priority locations and secondary locations for engagement. **Next Steps** 15,000 PAS are planned for distribution in November. Face to Face engagement activities are on-going in high risk bushfire locations. (Please also see Rec 6)
Recommendation 8 (TOR 4) Local governments continue to include information on bushfire risk and preparedness with rates notices.	WALGA	**Key Issues** Local Government currently includes fire break and fuel load reduction notices to residents as part of their rates notices. Issuing of rates notices allows for preparations to reduce fuel loads but is well before the actual start of the bush fire season and consequently less timely in regard to bush fires response information. **Actions to Date** WALGA committed to continue to encourage Local Governments to include information in rates notices as per the recommendation. **Next Steps** WALGA to encourage Local Governments to continue to include information on bushfire risk and preparedness with rates notices, through existing publications such as Western Councilor and Local Government News, and through other existing mechanisms.
Recommendation 9 (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority work in partnership with the Real Estate Institute of Western Australia (REIWA) to develop a package of information for new residents moving into bushfire prone areas, and a process to ensure this information	FESA	**Key Issues** Distribution may be limited as not all properties are managed by REIWA. REIWA solution expanded to capture a greater amount of new home occupiers. 3 deliverables have been identified to support the execution of this strategy – (1) Fact

22

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
is provided through real estate agents. 16		sheet for rental tenants (2) Fact Sheet for owners of rental properties (3) Material for new property owners in high bushfire risk locations. Dept of Commerce exploring the privacy issues in relation to the information on their rental database for distribution of renters fact sheet. **Actions to Date** All the above-mentioned publication deliverables have been completed and disseminated to REIWA. FESA is working with the Department of Commerce, Building and Tenancy Branch to discuss the provision of information to property owners and tenants upon receipt of Bond applications to address the issue of rented premises. FESA has provided the Department of Commerce with high risk bushfire location postcodes to enable them to interrogate their database (which will provide for a more targeted mail out). Department of Commerce engaging legal advice to determine implications of access to tenancy database re privacy concerns (Residential Tenancy Act). In a complementary strategy, 3 Absentee Landowner forums have been conducted with a further 1 planned for late October. A number of tools including fact sheets have also been developed and distributed to Absentee Landowners. FESA negotiated with REIWA for agents to distribute bushfire safety material to new owners in high bushfire risk locations. **Next Steps** Dept of Commerce to advise of legality of sharing database (this has not progressed to outcome so is being escalated to Senior Management by ED Community Development). FESA is awaiting further database information from REIWA to identify all agents located and working within high bushfire risk locations (to assist with targeted distribution)
Recommendation 11 (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority consider alternative wording to Total Fire Ban that ensures people gain a more complete understanding of what actions are prohibited.	FESA	**Key Issues** Any changes to wording of Total Fire Bans could be in conflict with any Nationally adopted position on such wording. Resourcing and cost implications for the implementation of a media and communications campaign to raise awareness of TFBs and what they mean. **Actions to Date** Liaised with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) on rationale behind the use of the words "Total Fire Ban". State Policy Group has made decision to retain the terminology Total Fire Ban based on National uniformity. FESA publications have been revised an enhanced to reflect intent of more information for community members. TFB information has been inculcated into Bushfire Ready facilitator training and engagement activities which will be ongoing. **Next Steps** Develop an education/awareness strategy document for a media and communications campaign to raise community awareness about TFBs and what

23

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		they mean including the actions that are prohibited FESA media are undertaking a review of other potential leverage for timely dissemination of pertinent information when Total Fire Bans are invoked and through a potential expansion of the use of variable message boards.
Recommendation 12 (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority work in partnership with Main Roads Western Australia and local governments to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for the use of mobile variable message boards to alert the community to the declaration of a total fire ban and what it means.	FESA	**_Key Issues_** Resourcing, access, availability and timeliness. Limitations on what messages can be safely displayed and delivered on a variable message board usually for the purpose of passing traffic. Current, limited capacity of Main Roads WA and Local Government in relation to mobile variable messages boards to viably be used to raise awareness of Total Fire Bans. Following initial consultation, it appears that using message boards that are already owned by agencies is unlikely to be practical. FESA, Main Roads and Local Government will now consider alternative sources of mobile variable messages boards. **_Actions to Date_** FESA and Main Roads WA (MRD) have extended an agreement re the use of MRD variable message boards to alert the community to the declaration of Total Fire Bans. FESA and Main Roads WA currently have an agreement for Main Roads WA to post emergency information (including Total Fire Ban information) on Main Roads WA's permanent variable message boards. FESA has established a steering committee to progress this recommendation in relation to mobile variable message boards. FESA has liaised with Main Roads WA and Local Government over how and where variable message boards could be sourced. Currently agencies have a limited number of message boards, spread across locations, which are currently used for other purposes. It appears that using message boards that are already owned by agencies is unlikely to be practical, due to issues with coordinating boards held by different agencies over a variety of locations and the practicalities of using boards for Total Fire Bans, when they may be required for other unforeseen purposes. Main Roads has suggested that FESA explore the use of a hire arrangement for message boards if/when required for Total Fire Bans. **_Next Steps_** Current variable message board capacity has been examined. FESA will liaise with Main Roads WA and Local Government over alternative sources of variable mobile message boards to alert the community to the declaration of a total fire ban and what it means, and how and who would maintain such a variable message board capacity. A strategy will be developed regarding the best, targeted use of a mobile message board capacity in relation to Total Fire Bans. That strategy will be implemented.
Recommendation 16 (TOR 1 and 3) The State Government give its full support to the Western Australian Local	WALGA	**_Key Issues_** The project with the working title *Send to Solve* is being developed to provide the public

24

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
Government Associations *Send to Solve* initiative.		with an online and smart phone tool to make requests of Local Governments and to report works requirements. Specifically in regard to this recommendation, the tool will have application in assisting the community to report instances where load reduction has not been undertaken on commercial, residential and public property. The tool will also have a two way communication facility that can be used by individual Local Governments to engage their communities on issues which could include bushfire preparation. It will be available state wide and have the capacity to filter Local Government and State Government responsibilities. Participation of State Government agencies (Water Corporation, Main Roads WA etc) in the system would assist in the delivery of outcomes to the community. **Actions to Date** WALGA is in the final stages of developing the application. It is scheduled to be launched with a public campaign within the next few months. **Next Steps** In supporting the tool, funding the capacity for State agencies to receive and action relevant requests made on the system by the community needs to be considered. Regulation to require timely action by Local Governments to requests made by the community using the system should also be considered.
Recommendation 19 (Part b) (TOR 1) The State Government reaffirm its 2009 decision to approve DEC exercising greater flexibility in managing smoke within national guidelines, in order to achieve its prescribed burn program.	DEC	**Key Issues** Government to send a clear signal that it intends to allow DEC to relax its approach to smoke management, within national guidelines, in an effort to maximize prescribed burning achievement and as such protection from damaging summer bushfires. **Actions to date** Agreed that the Government needs to re-affirm its previous decision. **Next Steps** Further education of the public about the need for prescribed burns, including that they **may be undertaken by DEC, FESA or Local Government.** **Re-affirm the Government's previous decision through a statement by the Premier or the Minister.**
Recommendation 24 (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority convene a facilitated debriefing session between the families who remained behind to protect their properties, and the incident controllers. This session should include open discussion and explain the decisions of all parties – including how the incident controllers determined priorities, and why residents chose not follow their advice to evacuate.	FESA	**Key Issues** Identifying property owners that elected to stay and actively defend. Psychological sensitivities of homeowners having to recount their story on the day. The session is required to be a closed event due to the needs of both the residents and the incident controllers. Professional advice has identified that it is essential that this feedback session is undertaken privately with small groups. **Actions to Date**

25

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
The learning outcomes should be promulgated across all agencies and incorporated in future level 3 incident controller training programs.		FESA has liaised with UWA who has undertaken the Perth Hills Bushfire Research in partnership with Bushfire CRC and FESA. They agreed to seek out people that may fall into this category (60% of research participants elected to be involved in further research with UWA) that may have stayed to defend their properties during these fires to be involved in a facilitated session. FESA has liaised with the City of Armadale as another source of information regarding people falling into this category. UWA have recommended that FESA engage advice from recommended professionals in regards to the process to ensure that FESA address the risk of trauma amongst residents and other stakeholders. FESA has liaised with DCP who have agreed to be involved in the session. Independent facilitator contracted to develop plan and facilitate meeting. The City of Armadale briefed on project and identified suitable venue (secured). Session conducted on 11 October 2011 with 17 persons who stayed and defended their properties during the Roleystone/Kelmscott fire. Along with FESA, DEC and DCP also present. Conducted as per recommendation with clear 2-way communication between FESA Incident Controllers and the resident facilitated independently. Significant positive feedback from participants for the opportunity. **Next Steps** Information arising from this session is currently being consolidated. Participants have been promised a written response to the issues raised. Once consolidation of information is completed some follow up actions will need to occur before the written response. A second session for further residents is planned for mid December 2011.
Recommendation 33 (TOR 4) The Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the ABC commence a thorough review of emergency warning messages. This review should give consideration to: • The content, structure and presentation of emergency warning messages • Media access to the Incident Management Team and State Operations Centre. This review should be expanded to include other media organisations should they demonstrate a willingness and capacity to contribute.	WAPOL	**Key Issues** ABC and FESA to work cooperatively to further improve delivery of timely, clear and effective public messaging. Guidelines to be reviewed by both organisations to support this goal. **Actions to Date** FESA and WA Police met with the ABC on Monday September 5th to discuss the Keelty report, this recommendation and ways in which the ABC as an endorsed emergency broadcaster and Government agencies can work better. Discussions focused on: 1. Speed of public information clearance by incident controllers; 2. How best the ABC can access that information most quickly; 3. The wording and duration of emergency messages; 4. The type of language used; 5. How social media systems (e.g.: Twitter and Facebook) can be best integrated into the emergency broadcasting service the ABC already provides. FESA and the ABC have subsequently undertaken considerable direct liaison on the above issues, which will inform improvements to both organisations'

26

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		guidelines. Media access to IMTs considered by Police, FESA and PING sub-committee, with no endorsement of this as an appropriate solution to effective and timely public information dissemination. Other options, including possible access to ISGs or OASGs, considered more beneficial to community overall.
		Next Steps
		FESA and ABC to continue working cooperatively on improving their respective guidelines. (It is now not considered necessary to draft new guidelines as referenced in previous report).
		Public Information Group (PING) of SEMC committee to revise existing MOU between ABC and SEMC to remain consistent with changes in guidelines and capture new technology developments.
		Wider media consultation during October, by PING.
Recommendation 34 (TOR 4 and 5) FESA develop in partnership with other emergency service agencies a 'one source: one message' multi layered system similar to that recommended by the Victoria Bushfire royal Commission.	WAPOL	**Key Issues** This is acknowledged as a key capability for the future, particularly in the context of new communication technologies such as social media. Identifying suitable technology for One Source: One Message and cost of implementing that technology. **Actions to Date** SEMC on 6/9/11 agreed to support a review of this recommendation through the Public Information Group (PING) of SEMC. Discussions within FESA regarding the potential to extend current use of Whispir technology. A review of how the One Source: One Message technology (Whispir) is currently being used by the Victorian Country Fire Authority. **Next Steps** The PING will initiate a review of One Source: One Message technologies, including a review of technology already introduced by the Victorian Country Fires Authority during September/October 2011. FESA to continue examination of potential technological solution to One Source: One Message, including cost. PING sub-committee to oversight project. Meeting on this topic involving FESA, DEC and WAPOL in early October.
Recommendation 36 (TOR 4 and 5) The Department for Child Protection, the Western Australian Police and the Fire and Emergency Services Authority develop improved arrangements for communicating the loss of home and possessions to persons gathered at evacuation centres with a view to increasing privacy.	WAPOL	**Key Issues** Delivering information at welfare centres to people who have lost property, ensuring this information is passed on in a suitably private manner, away from the news media. **Actions to Date** Consultation by WAPOL with FESA, DPC and the chair of the SEMC Public Information Sub-Committee has taken place and resulted in general agreement that common procedures can, and should, be adopted by all HMAs, as part of their standing procedures for the above issue. Protocol drafted, submitted to PING sub-committee and approved for adoption by all HMAs for inclusion in their media and public information standing arrangements.

27

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS – Key issues, actions and next steps
		Next Steps
		Nil required.
Recommendation 39 (TOR 2 and 3)	WALGA	**Actions to Date**
State and locals governments:		WALGA is working with Department of Planning and FESA to identify the information that
a) recognise that regardless of future declarations of bushfire prone areas, the existing planning and building problems in the Perth Hills related to bushfire risk will persist;		can be made available to Local Government bushfire prone areas and is promoting the Guidelines to Local Governments to ensure awareness within the sector.
b) urge residents in these areas to retrofit their homes and evaporative air conditioners in compliance with AS 3959 - 2009;		**Next Steps**
		WALGA, Local Governments and FESA will work towards encouraging home owners in bushfire prone areas to retrofit their dwellings in compliance with AS3959: 2009.
c) examine options to retrospectively bring these areas into compliance with Planning for Bushfire Protection Guidelines.		WALGA is developing an Information Sheet on AS3959 for use by Local Governments. WALGA working with West Australian Planning Commission to examine options for retrospective application.

28

APPENDIX TEN

NOMINATED EVACUATION CENTRES FOR THE KIMBERLEY[253]

For the emergency management district of the Kimberley, the identified evacuation centres are:

Broome:

Broome Recreation & Aquatic Centre

Broome District High School

Broome Police & Community Youth Centre

Broome Camp School

Broome Civic Centre

Kimberley TAFE

Derby:

Derby Civic Centre

Derby Recreation Centre

Derby District High School

Scallywags Child Care Centre

Derby Youth Centre

Fitzroy Crossing:

Fitzroy Crossing Recreation Centre

Fitzroy Crossing District High School

Halls Creek:

Halls Creek Civic Centre

Halls Creek Recreation Centre

Kununurra:

Kununurra Leisure Centre

Kununurra Youth Centre

Kununurra District High School

Wyndham:

Peter Reid Memorial Hall

Wyndham Recreation Centre

Wyndham District Hospital

Wyndham District High School

Ngowar Aerwah Sobering Up Shelter

St. Joseph's Catholic School

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[253]   Hon Mr Rob Johnson, Minister for Emergency Services, Western Australia, the Legislative Assembly, *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), Question on Notice, 17 May 2011, p3500.

APPENDIX ELEVEN

LIST OF 38 LGAs AND 77 LOCATIONS AT HIGH RISK OF BUSHFIRE IN 2011-12 SEASON[254]

METRO NORTH	SOUTH WEST & LOWER SOUTH WEST
Shire of Chittering	Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes
Shire of Gingin	Shire of Collie
Shire of Kalamunda	Shire of Busselton
Shire of Mundaring	Shire of Capel
City of Wanneroo	Shire of Bunbury
City of Swan	Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup
METRO SOUTH	Shire of Boyup Brook
City of Armadale	Shire of Harvey
City of Cockburn	Shire of Dardanup
City of Gosnells	Shire of Nannup
Town of Kwinana	Shire of Murray
City of Rockingham	Shire of Augusta- Margaret River
Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale	Shire of Waroona
	Shire of Manjimup

GREAT SOUTHERN	MIDWEST GASCOYNE
City of Albany	Shire of Dandaragan
Shire of Denmark	City of Geraldton-Greenough
Shire of Esperance	Shire of Northampton

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[254]   Mr Wayne Gregson, Chief Executive Officer, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Letter, 10 November 2011.

Shire of Jerramungup	**MIDLANDS GOLDFIELDS**
Shire of Ravensthorpe	Shire of Beverley
	Shire of Northam
	Shire of Toodyay
	Shire of York

Community Engagement Bushfire Program 2011-12 Priority Location Matrix

Region/Suburb	Location
METRO NORTH	
Mundaring	Glen Forrest*, Parkerville & Hovea*, Wooroloo, Mahogany Creek*, Stoneville
Kalamunda	Gooseberry Hill*, Kalamunda*, Lesmurdie*
Swan	Gidgegannup, Bullsbrook (Shady Hills)*, Bullsbrook
Wanneroo	Quinns Rock, Carabooda - Emerald Valley, Sea Trees, Caramar Rural, Nowergup - Gibbs Road
Gingin	Woodbridge, Ocean Farms
Chittering	Muchea, Upper Chittering, Lower Chittering*
METRO SOUTH	
Cockburn	Thompson Lake West, Manning Park
Gosnells	Martin
Mandurah	Parklands
Serpentine/Jarrahdale	Byford, Serpentine, Jarrahdale
Kwinana	Anketell, Postans, Casuarina
Rockingham	Baldivis*, Coolongup
Armadale	Bedfordale, Roleystone, Forrestdale Lake, Araluen*
MIDLANDS/GOLDFIELDS	
Northam	Beverley, Bakers Hill*
Toodyay	Toodyay (to the west)*, York

SOUTHWEST	
Bunbury	College Grove Estate
Collie	West & Northern (Allanson area), South (Cardiff area), North & East of town (Ewingtron area)
Dardanup	West Dardanup, Wellington Mills
Capel	Stratham*, Gelorup*
Harvey	Leschenault
Murray	Yunderup Island*, Birchmont, Yamba, Murray Hills
LOWER SOUTHWEST	
Augusta Margaret River	Prevelly/Gnarabup/Wilderness*, Leeuwin - Naturaliste Ridge*, Gracetown*, Molloy Island
Busselton	Eagle Bay, Commonage Road, Indjinup*
Manjimup	Bridgetown, Nannup, Quinninup, Northcliffe (and rural subdivisions), Pemberton (and rural subdivisions), Walpole
MIDWEST GASCOYNE	
Geraldton Greenough	Waggrakine/Moresby*
Northampton	Kalbarri*
Dandaragan	Jurien Bay*
GREAT SOUTHERN	
Esperance*	Esperance (rural interface)
Albany*	Mt Clarence, Little Bay, Mt Adelaide, Mt Melville, Torbay, Bayonet Head

* Previous location 2010-11