

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question On Notice

Thursday, 18 May 2023

1449. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Minister for Emergency Services

I refer to the conduct of reviews following significant emergency responses and the important role they play in improving and guiding future responses and also engaging career and volunteer first responders, and I ask:

- (a) please outline any incidents since January 2022 which have been subject to an after action review;
- (b) for each incident identified please outline the status and expected completion date for the review;
- (c) please outline any incidents since January 2022 which have been subject to a major incident review or an independent review; and
- (d) please table the Department of Fire and Emergency Service incident analysis policy?

Answer

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) advises:

- (a)
 - Metropolitan Storm Event (MSE)
 - Adverse Fire Weather Event (AFWE)
 - Kimberley Region Flood Event (KRFE)
- (b)
 - MSE – completed October 2022
 - AFWE – published February 2023
 - KRFE – Terms of Reference in development
- (c) KRFE
- (d) See tabled paper no. #####



Hon Stephen Dawson MLC
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES
INNOVATION AND ICT; MEDICAL RESEARCH; VOLUNTEERING



FOR A SAFER STATE



OPERATIONAL LESSONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE: The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) will undertake debriefs, reviews and analysis following operational activity and incidents in accordance with [State Emergency Management Policy](#) and [State Emergency Management Plans](#). It requires all actions arising from these forums are implemented driving continuous improvement across the organisation.

File reference	D16100	Document Number	20/174488
Document Type	Policy, Directive, SOP		
Applies to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DFES employees• Contractors• Bush Fire Service (BFS) under the control of DFES• Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS)• State Emergency Service (SES)• Volunteer Marine Rescue Service (VMRS)• Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service (VFES)• FES Units (non-VFES)		
Topic / Sub Topic	Operational performance		
Command	Strategy and Emergency Management		
Directorate	Strategy and Governance		
Responsible Officer	Manager, Lessons Management		
Effective Date	28 October 2020		
Superseded documents	Policy 54: Incident Analysis dated 30 April 2016.		
Review Date	1 July 2021		
	DARREN KLEMM AFSM COMMISSIONER Date: 27 October 2020		

OVERVIEW

DFES' Operational Lessons Management Policy provides the authorising environment for Operational Lessons Management's conduct and management. This Policy and accompanying Directive together with its supporting procedures detail the process for conducting these activities. The supporting end to end Doctrine provides the philosophy, framework, principles and templates underpinning the process.

DFES recognises the importance of Operational Lessons Management for driving continuous improvement, knowledge and assurance across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Various mechanisms exist to harness lessons, good practice and innovation across DFES' business areas and environments. To realise the opportunity for department wide learning and improvement that currently exists, DFES is adopting the principles of a Lessons Management Framework in the operational environment aimed at drawing together lessons from across DFES managed hazards.

Operational Lessons Management is an overarching term that refers to collecting, analysing, disseminating and applying learning experiences from incidents, exercises and strategic operational themes. It includes experiences that should be sustained or improved and drives continuous improvement in both process and people.

DFES uses principles from the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Handbook, '[Lessons Management](#)' to guide DFES' approach to Operational Lessons Management. DFES will continue to develop its processes in accordance with best practice.

OPERATIONAL LESSONS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Operational Lessons Management is a system-based approach to continuous learning focusing on 'mission success' and not individual performance. The overarching term used for this process is an After Action Review (AAR or Review).

It introduces Lessons Management principles widely used successfully in Australian Emergency Management. The following guiding principles will formulate the DFES Operational Lessons Management process:

- Collection of Facts
- Analysis
- Lesson Identified
- Validation
- Implement and Monitor
- Test and Review

- Lesson Learned

Each process step will be documented and stored on the DFES records management system to ensure transparency and accountability.

POLICY SCOPE

The Policy scope is confined to AARs in the format of:

- Hot Debriefs (informal)
- Formal Operational Debriefs
- Incident After Action Reviews (internally and externally facilitated)
- End of Season Reviews
- Themed Strategic Reviews
- Post Exercise Reports

No matter the type of AAR, each will be scaled according to the size of the review and will:

- define who the participants are and their roles and responsibilities
- the scale of the review
- be recorded to ensure transparency and accountability
- be targeted and focused through appropriate terms of reference
- assess and where appropriate implement actions to improve or sustain an activity
- tracking, monitor and record those actions
- test that an action has made a demonstrated positive change
- verification that the action is complete.

Personnel tasked with undertaking an AAR will be provided access to any relevant DFES created or received government record.

OUT OF POLICY SCOPE

This policy does not apply to:

- Royal Commissions
- Coronial Inquiries
- Special Inquiries
- Non-DFES Mandated Reviews
- Non-DFES External Report Reviews

If the Commissioner directs that DFES be involved in the above out of scope AAR's, the concepts of this policy may be used. To ensure DFES benefits from potential learnings arising from the above, the relevant Command Head (for example the Rural Fire Division for Bushfire related materials) will analyse recommendations and where applicable, make

a submission to the Operational Service Delivery Committee (OSDC) setting out any recommendations DFES should consider adopting. Where the OSDC endorses a submission, it will be forwarded to the relevant Command Head for final approval.

The Manager, Lessons Management will be responsible for initiating and supporting the review with the relevant Command and monitoring and reviewing any actions arising.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The *Emergency Management Act 2005*, (Act) provides for the establishment of a State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC), which is the peak emergency management body in Western Australia.

The Act, s 17 empowers the SEMC to prepare relevant policies including the roles and responsibilities for emergency management agencies. DFES is an emergency management agency in accordance with the *Emergency Management Regulations 2006*, reg 17 and is required to comply with directions set out in SEMC Policies and Plans.

The State Emergency Management Policy, clause 5.11.3 provides that:

Following any operational activity, it is important to identify any lessons so that actions can be taken to improve the State EM framework. Debriefs, reviews and analysis should be conducted by all State agencies and be regarded as a routine practice following an event. Debriefs are to be undertaken in accordance with the State EM Plan section 5.7.1.

The State Emergency Management Plan, clause 5.7.1 provides that:

Following any operational activity, it is important to identify and adopt any lessons, so actions can be undertaken to continuously improve the State EM framework. Debriefs, reviews and analysis should be conducted by all State agencies and regarded as a routine practice following an event.

Accordingly, Operational Lessons Management activities will be undertaken in order to regularly analyse aspects of operational performance to ensure:

- a. compliance with relevant SEMC policy and plans
- b. identified lessons and opportunities for improvement are actioned
- c. that DFES' service delivery meets community expectations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commissioner is responsible for:

- delegating functions to specified personnel for after action reviews.
- establishing the [Operational Service Delivery Committee](#).

Command Heads are responsible for:

- ensuring all persons within their Commands comply with this policy and related procedures
- assuming responsibilities as delegated by the Commissioner.

Operational Service Delivery Committee (OSDC) is responsible for:

- reviewing and endorsing any findings or suggested actions in an AAR report for approval by the Deputy Commissioner Operations or relevant Command Head
- ensuring a copy of the AAR report will be forwarded by the OSDC to the Corporate Executive for information
- the appropriateness and prioritisation of any suggested actions and associated timeframes for completion arising from AARs
- review the progress of any suggested actions.

Deputy Commissioner Operations (or relevant Command Head) is responsible for:

- approving an AAR report (including any suggested actions and timeframes for completion) following endorsement by the OSDC
- approving the conduct of an external review/inquiry
- consider recommended findings for adoption from external (out of scope) reviews/inquiries.

Assistant Commissioners (by role designation) are responsible for:

- ensuring AARs are conducted for level 2 incidents determined by risk assessment using the [DFES Risk Reference Tables](#). Incidents rated as Moderate or above will be reviewed.
- ensuring AARs are conducted for all level 3 incidents and others as required
- approving the conduct of a themed strategic review
- approving AAR's scope and terms of reference
- ensuring AAR's are commenced within 14 days of the completion an incident
- ensuring regional end of season reviews are undertaken.

Manager, Lessons Management is responsible for:

- conducting AARs including the development of AAR reports (except where responsibility has been assigned to another officer) and coordinating the AAR process

- based on a risk assessment, recommending the conduct of, and liaising and supporting an external review/inquiry and themed strategic reviews
- supporting other officers assigned responsibility for the conduct of AARs
- maintain a register of approved actions and report progress to the OSDC
- initiating and supporting the review of a review/inquiry (out of scope) with the relevant Command and monitoring and reviewing any actions arising.

Regional Superintendents are responsible for:

- supporting the conduct of AARs within their area of responsibility and as directed by their relevant Assistant Commissioner
- conduct regional seasonal reviews
- conduct AARs in another region for Level 1 incidents determined by risk assessment using the [DFES Risk Reference Tables](#). Incidents rated as Moderate or above will be reviewed.

Incident Controllers (or Senior Officers) are responsible for:

- conducting hot debriefs and formal operational debriefs.

Relevant Portfolio Heads are responsible for ensuring:

- any approved identified lessons are implemented.

Commissioner's discretion

The Commissioner may use discretion when applying this policy and has the authority to exempt DFES employees from any part of this policy as is deemed necessary.

COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance with this policy may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the [Conduct and Discipline policy](#).

DEFINITIONS

After Action Review (AAR)

The overarching term used to describe a process (either formal or informal) for undertaking a system review of operational performance after an incident. This includes both internally and externally facilitated reviews.

Assurance

Confidence through the provision of evidence that incident management, response capability, policies and operations are efficient, effective and meet community expectations.

DFES Personnel

Includes DFES employees, contractors and/or emergency services volunteers to whom this policy applies or relates.

Government Record	A record as defined in the <i>State Records Act 2000</i> s. 3.
Level 1, 2 and 3 incidents	Incidents as defined in the State Emergency Management Plan clause 5.1.5
Operational Incident / Activity	Any level 1, 2 or 3 incident or event where DFES is either the Hazard Management Agency or a combat agency on behalf of a Hazard Management Agency.

PROCEDURES

[Directive 3.19 – Operational Lesson Management](#)

[SAP 3.19.A – Debriefs](#)

[SAP 3.19.B – After Action Reviews \(AAR\)](#)

LEGISLATION & REFERENCES

Legislation

- [Bush Fires Act 1954](#)
- [Emergency Management Act 2005](#)
- [Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998](#)
- [Fire Brigades Act 1942](#)
- [State Records Act 2000](#)

References

- [Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Lessons Management Handbook](#)
- [DFES Lessons Management Framework](#)
- [DFES Enterprise Risk Management Framework](#)
- [DFES Risk Reference Tables](#)
- [DFES After Action Reviews – a guide to debriefing](#)
- [State Capability Framework](#)
- [State Emergency Management Plan 2019](#)
- [State Emergency Management Policy 2019](#)
- [State Emergency Management Procedure 2019](#)
- [State Capability Framework](#)

PREVIOUS POLICY

This policy supersedes Incident Analysis Policy – DFES Policy Statement No 54.