



# Freedom of Information Information Statement

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## 1 OUR VISION

Resilient Western Australian communities that work together to build capacity and capability to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

## 2 OUR MISSION

In partnership with the people of Western Australia to:

- Improve community safety practices.
- Provide timely, high quality and effective emergency services.

## 3 STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF DFES

### 3.1 Structure

#### 3.1.1 Enabling Legislation

The *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998* (known as the FES Act) provides DFES with functions relating to the provision and management of emergency services.

#### 3.1.2 Minister Responsible

The Minister for Emergency Services is responsible for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES). The FES Act empowers the Minister to appoint persons to its Advisory Committees and to provide performance and operational directions to DFES.

#### 3.1.3 Corporate Structure

To meet the evolving needs of the community, DFES recognises that its structure must remain flexible and be reviewed regularly to support its role, its strategic intentions and its programs.

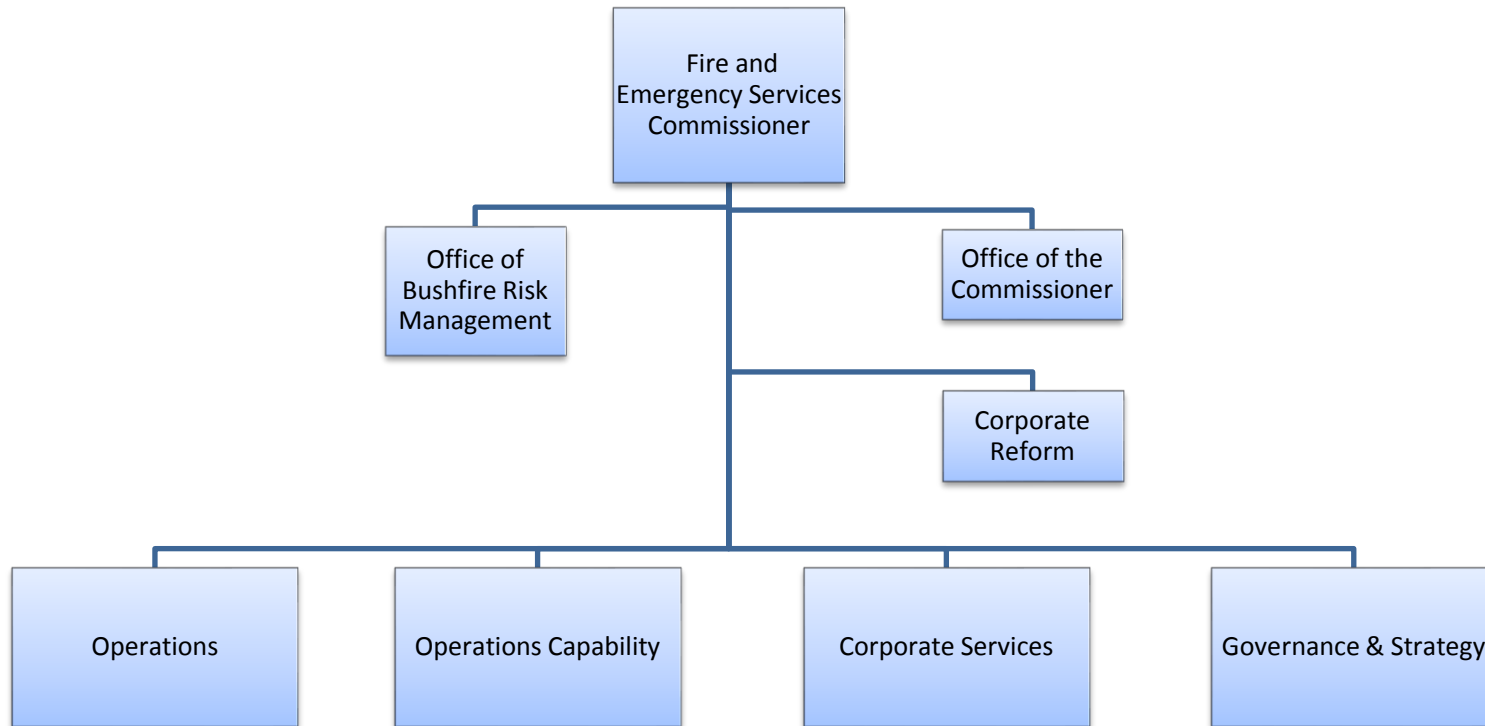
DFES has a Commissioner and provides leadership and direction through the following operational and support Commands:

- Operations Command - including:
  - > Career Fire and Rescue Service (FRS);
  - > Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS);
  - > Volunteer Bush Fire Service (BFS);
  - > Volunteer Emergency Service (VES);
  - > Volunteer Fire Service (VFS);
  - > Volunteer Marine Rescue Services (VMRS); and
  - > Volunteer State Emergency Service (SES).
- Capability Command;
- Corporate Services Command; and
- Governance and Strategy Command.

The Office of the Commissioner has responsibility for delivering corporate reform and delivering whole of Government services in respect of Bushfire Risk Management.



### 3.1.4 Corporate Structure Chart



## 3.2 Functions

Under Western Australia's emergency management arrangements, the FES Commissioner is the hazard management agency for the following hazards:

- Fire - rural and urban fires in gazetted fire districts
- Fire - level 3 bushfire on Department of Parks and Wildlife managed estates
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Flood
- Cyclone
- Storm
- Earthquake
- Tsunami
- Collapse – landforms or structures.

DFES also provides combat and support services, including:

- Marine search and rescue
- Land search
- Air search and rescue (including emergency casualty transport)
- Urban search and rescue
- Cliff, cave and confined space rescue
- Road transport emergencies
- Rail transport emergencies
- Animal disease outbreaks
- Telecommunications
- Resupply

DFES achieves this by working in partnership with the community and other agencies to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Functions and powers relating to the provision and management of fire and emergency services are vested in the FES Commissioner by:

[Bush Fires Act 1954](#)

[Bush Fires Regulations 1954](#)

[Bush Fires \(Infringements\) Regulations 1978](#)

[Emergency Management Act 2005](#)

[Emergency Management Regulations 2006](#)

[Emergency Services Levy Act 2002](#)

[Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998](#)

[Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 1998](#)

[Fire Brigades Act 1942](#)

[Fire Brigades Regulations 1943](#)

## 3.3 DFES's New Beginnings 2024

The 'New Beginnings 2024' is about DFES's journey towards better coordinated and effective delivery of emergency services within Western Australia. This document focuses on Stage One (2012 – 2016) of a 12 year strategic plan that will guide these activities of the newly created DFES.

A copy of 'NEW BEGINNINGS 2024' is available from:

[http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/aboutus/corporateinformation/PlansandStrategiesPublications/DFES-New\\_Beginnings-2024.pdf](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/aboutus/corporateinformation/PlansandStrategiesPublications/DFES-New_Beginnings-2024.pdf)

## 4 EFFECT OF DFES'S FUNCTIONS ON THE PUBLIC

### 4.1 Overview

DFES's vision, "*Resilient Western Australian communities that work together to build capacity and capability to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies*" best summarises the desired effect of DFES's functions on members of the public.

DFES facilitates the State's emergency management capacity through:

- State hazard planning and building operations capability;
- Administration of the Western Australia Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements;
- Assistance in the development of mitigation initiatives.

DFES also provides advice and support on emergency management issues to key stakeholders at the local, State and national levels, including:

- Maintenance of State emergency management legislation
- Participation in State and national strategic working groups.
- Provision of emergency management training.

### 4.2 Specific example

The potential effects of DFES's decisions can best be demonstrated by considering their potential impact on 'Emergency Services Levy' (ESL) charges on properties throughout the State. ESL revenue is collected to fund the fire and emergency services of DFES and local governments.

The ESL is a fair and equitable property-based funding arrangement based on the type of fire and emergency services available to each property. The type and location of services made available across Western Australia are in turn based on ongoing risk analysis undertaken by DFES and local governments.

There are five ESL rate categories that apply, depending on the type and level of fire and emergency services available to a property. Properties with more services available to them will contribute more. The ESL category boundaries in broad terms are:

ESL Category	Emergency Services Available	Properties located in
ESL Category 1	A network of metropolitan career Fire and Rescue Service stations and the SES.	Perth metropolitan area
ESL Category 2	A career station plus volunteer Fire and Rescue Service brigade and the SES.	City centres of Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Mandurah
ESL Category 3	Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service brigade with the availability of a network of career fire stations <u>OR</u> bush fire brigade with the availability of a network of career fire stations <u>AND</u> the statewide SES network.	The periphery of the metropolitan area.
ESL Category 4	Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service brigade <u>OR</u> a Volunteer Emergency Service unit with breathing apparatus <u>OR</u> a bush fire brigade with breathing apparatus <u>AND</u> the statewide SES network.	90 regional townsites.
ESL Category 5	The statewide SES network and generally a bush fire brigade.	All other areas of the State

## 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DFES'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The representative structures of the Advisory Committees, including the public, interested organisations and emergency service volunteers, enable stakeholders to participate in policy formulation. A consultative and participative approach is preferred when policy is being developed.

### 5.1 Constitution of Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees typically involve representatives from emergency service volunteers across Western Australia and their volunteer associations, local government, employee associations and the respective DFES Command Head.

### 5.2 Customer feedback

DFES's Customer Service Charter welcomes direct feedback, comments and queries regarding our customer service.

There is a public email facility provided ([dfes@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:dfes@dfes.wa.gov.au)) or a customer feedback form available on the website at [www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au).

Public input is also available via the usual Ministerial, political and parliamentary processes.

## 6 PARTICIPATION IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DFES' FUNCTIONS

The performance of many of DFES's functions can be hazardous and should only be attempted by persons with appropriate training and competencies, personal protective clothing and equipment and support.

DFES encourages members of the public to be proactive in helping their communities by:

- Becoming an emergency services volunteer – a range of operational and support roles are available for people with different capabilities; and
- Taking all appropriate steps as individuals in relation to emergency prevention and preparedness. This might involve simple tasks such as the installation of smoke alarms or firebreaks, clearing leaves from house gutters, following recommended StormSafe or boating safety practices or participating in local hazard planning networks such as Bushfire Ready Action Groups.



## 7 KINDS OF DOCUMENTS USUALLY HELD BY DFES

Document Title	Description	Access available	Web Access
Administration records / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Collection of books, journals, audiovisual items / database	Specialising in fire services, emergency management and disaster preparedness	Public access to the collection by appointment only. Loans arranged through the interlibrary loan system.	
DFES publications	Annual Report, Strategic Plan, journals, newsletters, CD-ROMs, hazard specific brochures	Most are available on the website. Brochures provided free of charge. Public access by appointment. WA State Library – Battye also hold.	<a href="http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au">www.dfes.wa.gov.au</a>
Financial records / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Fire and Emergency Services Education and Heritage Centre / database	Previous Board minutes, occurrence books, regalia and memorabilia	Public access Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10am until 4pm	
Fire Incident Reports / Operational Management Database	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
Fire Investigation Reports	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
Fleet management / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only	
Operational reports / procedures	Operational Information	FOI Access only	

Document Title	Description	Access available	Web Access
Personnel, Training and Occupational Health records / database	General Department Records	FOI Access only unless you are seeking information about yourself	
Property tracking records / database	Building submissions / plans	FOI Access only	
SES Operational Database	Operational Information	FOI Access only	
Standard reports	Volunteer Numbers Incident Response by general or property type	Written request to reports@dfes.wa.gov.au	<a href="http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au">www.dfes.wa.gov.au</a>
Statistical Reports	Financial; service types whole of state / region	Written request to reports@dfes.wa.gov.au	<a href="http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au">www.dfes.wa.gov.au</a>
Volunteer records / database	Personal information	FOI Access only unless you are seeking information about yourself	

## Detail on the Kinds of Documents –

- Administrative and personnel records – including policies, procedures, committee minutes, internal circulars, Job Description Forms, selection and recruitment material.
- Operational - fire incident reports, Fire Investigation / Wildfire Investigation Reports (may include photographs), Incident Information, Standing Administration Procedures, Standing Operational Procedures, SES Operations Database reports and Property Tracking documentation.
- Statistical reports:
  - Financial quarters or years (up to and including the past five years)
  - Service type (Career Fire and Rescue Service, State Emergency Service)
  - Whole of State or by Region

- Standard reports are available for:
  - Volunteer numbers
  - Incident responses (by general type, eg structure fires, bushfires, storm incidents)
  - Incident responses by property type (residential or non-residential)
- Periodic and reference publications by DFES – including Annual Report, Strategic Plan, Customer Service Charter, magazines and reference material relating to fire and emergency services issues
- Library reference material.

All of DFES's periodic and reference publications are available on the DFES website – [www.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications)

## 8 PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

Copies of hazard specific publications may be obtained by contacting DFES's Community Engagement branch by completing an online order form at [www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au), telephone (08) 9395 9816 or by visiting DFES, Emergency Services Complex, 20 Stockton Bend, Cockburn Central.

Publications can be made available in alternate formats for the sight impaired, on request.

A copy of DFES's latest Annual Report and other information concerning the Department are also available on the website – [www.dfes.wa.gov.au](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au)

## 9 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCEDURES AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

DFES aims to make information available promptly and at the least possible cost to the applicant. Whenever possible, documents will be provided outside the Freedom of Information (FOI) process. If information is not routinely available, the Western Australia *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (FOI Act) provides the general public with the right to apply for documents held by DFES and enables the public to ensure that personal information in documents is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.

### 9.1 Applications

Applications may be lodged (together with applicable fee or charge) in the following ways:

**In person:** FOI Coordinator  
Department of Fire and Emergency Services  
Emergency Services Complex  
20 Stockton Bend  
COCKBURN CENTRAL WA 6164

**By mail:** FOI Coordinator  
Department of Fire and Emergency Services  
PO Box P1174  
PERTH WA 6844

**Email:** [foi@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:foi@dfes.wa.gov.au)

In some instances DFES may request proof of your identity.

Your application will be dealt with as soon as practicable (statutory maximum time limit within 45 days) after it is received. However, where necessary, extensions may be obtained.

If you are seeking access to a document(s) on behalf of another person, then DFES may require written authorisation from the person you represent.

Further information can be obtained from DFES's FOI Coordinator on (08) 9395 9381 or email [foi@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:foi@dfes.wa.gov.au).

The FOI Act is available from the State Law Publisher and may be viewed electronically on their website [www.slp.wa.gov.au](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au) or may be purchased from their offices at Ground Floor, 10 William Street, Perth. Another source of information is the Office of the Information Commissioner. Their website is [www.foi.wa.gov.au](http://www.foi.wa.gov.au) or email: [info@foi.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@foi.wa.gov.au).

Applications to either gain access to a document, amend personal information or have a previous FOI decision regarding access to, or amendment of, a document reviewed must be:

- be in writing;
- give enough information so that the documents requested can be identified;
- give an Australian address to which notices can be sent; and
- be lodged at DFES with any application fee payable.

Applications will be acknowledged in writing and the applicant will be notified of the decision which will be made within 45 days. DFES makes every effort to notify the applicant of the decision before the end of the permitted period.

An "[Application for access to documents](#)" form is available from the FOI page on the DFES website.

## 9.2 Charges

### Fees and Charges

The current application fee is currently \$30.00. DFES may impose a charge for processing a FOI application.

Applications seeking personal information or amendment of personal information are free of any fee or charge.

If charges apply DFES will issue you a statement of payable charges. Currently, where a processing charge applies, the current breakdown of fees is as follows:

#### Personal Information (about you personally)

Free (no application fee)

#### Non-Personal Information Only

\$30.00 application fee

\$30.00 p/hr of staff time processing charge

\$30.00 p/hr of staff time photocopying charge

\$0.20 per photocopy

\$0.60 per photograph

Discounts on fees are available under certain circumstances, e.g. for applicants on low incomes or those issued with a prescribed pensioner concession cards, the charge payable is reduced by 25%.

Where required, charges must be paid in full before access to non-exempt documents will be permitted.

## 9.3 Access Arrangements

Access to documents can be granted by way of inspection, or in the form requested. DFES prefers to provide copies of documents sought.

## 9.4 Viewing Documents

If documents are to be made available for viewing, those documents may be viewed at DFES's library on the ground floor of DFES Emergency Services Complex, on weekdays, between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm. A fee may be charged for the supervised viewing of non-personal documents.

## 9.5 Notice of Decision

As soon as possible, but in any case within 45 days, the applicant will be provided with a notice of decision. The notice of decision will include details such as:

- the date the decision was made;
- the name and the designation of the officer who made the decision;
- if the document is an exempt document, the reasons for classifying the matter exempt or the fact that access is given to an edited document; and
- information on the right to review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

## 9.6 Right to Review

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a decision made by DFES are entitled to ask for an **internal review** by the Department. An application needs to be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of decision. An application for internal review will not be dealt with by the person who made the original decision or by any person who is subordinate to the original decision-maker. The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the review within 15 days.

If you disagree with the internal review result then an application can be made to the [Office of the Information Commissioner](#) for an **external review**. An application for external review should be made within 60 days of receiving notice of the internal review decision. For further details on lodging an external review, contact the Office of the Information Commissioner via their website [www.foi.wa.gov.au](http://www.foi.wa.gov.au) or telephone (08) 6551 7888.

## 10 AMENDING PERSONAL INFORMATION, INCLUDING CONTACT INFORMATION

This relates to applying to DFES for correction or amendment of any documents containing personal information.

The application must be in writing and give as much information to demonstrate how or why DFES's records are inaccurate, incomplete, and out of date or misleading. If DFES decides to amend the information it will usually alter the record, or add a further note in relation to the record. DFES must inform the applicant of its decision, and reasoning, together with the applicants' right of review if they are not satisfied.