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3/3/16

Mr Euan Ferguson
Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry
Level 6 Dumas House
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WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Sir,

As secretary and active volunteer with Uduc brigade I would like to briefly outline some issues which arose through the brigade's involvement that were discussed at our last brigade meeting on 18th February.

1. The brigade station is approximately 20 kms from the Cookernup station/ control point for the fire but we were fighting the fire 5 kms from the Uduc station. We believe there should be a system whereby local volunteers could sign on and off a fireground remotely if necessary. This could have given us at least an extra hour on the fireground per shift during the Waroona fire.
2. Brigade members worked in both the Uduc area and less familiar areas during the fire. Communication needs to be improved around shift changes. The outgoing shift sector commander and/or firefighters need to physically take the incoming shift around the fire perimeter so that the new shift is familiar with the fireground. This is especially important with outside volunteers or before the night shift when it is easy to become disorientated. Sector commanders not familiar with the area could also be allocated a local brigade member or perhaps even the help of a local landholder, see below.
3. Landholders, particularly farmers, who are generally going to stay and defend their property and who usually have good fire fighting equipment, including fire units and ploughs, could be registered within the local brigade/shire structure and protocols evolved for improved communication between landholders and DFES/volunteer firefighters. Through their local knowledge and assets these landholders can and do make a huge difference.
4. Better maps need to be handed out. Those given to sector commanders were on too large a scale and not detailed enough. This has also been the case at other fires that Uduc members have attended.
5. Brigade members witnessed many instances of ineffectual 'blacking out'. There needs to be more emphasis placed on effective 'blacking out' in VBFB training.

While making this submission I would like to emphasise that no criticism is intended and believe that everyone involved worked to the best of their ability and training during the fire. There has been a lot of negative criticism and we hope that the inquiry can generate some positive outcomes.

I do not wish to orally present my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Mapstone
Secretary/Treasurer
Uduc VBFB



UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

ABN: 31 367 577 278

PRESIDENT: Kevin Jolly *AFSM* SECRETARY: Lea Anderson

Submission to the Ferguson Inquiry into the Waroona Yarloop Fires 2016

Introduction:

For the record and on behalf of all of the members of the West Australian Branch of the United Firefighters Union of Australia we express our sympathy and condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of those people killed in the Waroona Yarloop and Esperance fires and to all who have suffered as a result of losing their homes, property, livelihood and stock.

The Waroona Yarloop fires have resulted in the single largest loss of property or structures in the State of Western Australia's history. This requires an immediate review and response from Government to deliver the Fire and Rescue Service resources needed across our State to meet the challenges our citizens and communities face from fires and the significant bushfire risk for WA. Climate change is increasing the risk of fires to our communities and this requires an increase in resources, particularly in regional WA.

The United Firefighters Union of Australia - West Australian Branch has 1,193 members and is run by a Committee of Management with 19 elected representatives. The members of our Branch Committee share 388 years of operational experience and many of them were Volunteers before they became professional operational Firefighters and Officers.

Our members work primarily in the professional Fire and Rescue Service and they have the skills, competencies, training, experience and equipment to protect life and property. Wherever the fires start, when those fires threaten life and property and are handed over to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) to manage, it is commonly Fire and Rescue Service personnel who are despatched and tasked to protect life and property, including critical infrastructure.

What is very clear to our members and the communities that they serve, is that you cannot continue to drain the metropolitan area and the four country stations of existing resources and then respond effectively to these huge or campaign fires – more Fire and Rescue resources are needed, especially in country regional WA.

Our Union represents professional firefighters and the majority of our members come from a Fire and Rescue background, a minority of our members are professional firefighters from a Bush Fire Brigade background. It is a myth that professional Firefighters and Officers have no bush fire experience. Our members are called upon to serve outside of their designated fire districts when catastrophic fires that threaten life and property are beyond the control of the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) and the various Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades primarily vested in Local Government (approximately 112 disparate agencies overseeing over 500 Bush Fire Brigades).

Professional Fire and Rescue Firefighters and Officers do have extensive bushfire, wild fire and grass fire experience - you only have to examine the occurrence books from our Fire Stations and to review the statistics collected annually (from the Fire Incident Reporting System - FIRS) to determine this. Our members attend over 80% of the State's fire incidents wherever those fires start.

It is the Union's view that the management of fires including bushfire mitigation, prevention, planning, community education and engagement and response must clearly come under the control of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

It is obvious from the recent experience of catastrophic fires including Esperance, Yarloop – Waroona, Northcliffe, Boddington, Margaret River, Lake Clifton, Kelmscott Roleystone, and Toodyay that when these fires escalate to a stage where lives and property are threatened or lost and the fire cannot be managed locally, that professional Fire and Rescue resources can be deployed to take control of the fires and incidents within a disciplined, rank structured chain of command led by our Senior Officers and the Fire and Rescue Service. This response must include local knowledge and volunteers and there must be additional resources embedded within Incident Management Teams and State Operational Resources to facilitate the most efficient operational response to these disasters.

For some years our senior Officers have been advising us that the handing over of catastrophic fires from either DPAW or Local Government occurs far too late and when it is clear that neither DPAW nor Local Government can manage the fires and risk. The skills that DPAW and Local Government personnel and volunteers have do not meet the risk assessment and response skills that professional operational personnel have when addressing risks to life and property. It is also obvious that there are ongoing problems with information sharing and the co-ordination of personnel and equipment between the disparate agencies. Our communities deserve better service and fewer power struggles.

Too often after these catastrophic fires derogatory comments are made about professional firefighters and officers, mostly these comments are asserted without foundation or evidence. If all volunteers and personnel came under the same codes of conduct, legislative framework and regulations then genuine issues could be raised appropriately and through the chain of command. The Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and professional Fire and Rescue Service have worked well together and have operated with common disciplinary codes of conduct since 1942.

Another apparent contradiction which appears in the ongoing debate about how to best manage fires in WA is the use of local knowledge, no one doubts the importance of local knowledge and experience and transporting large numbers of volunteers within WA and from interstate does not necessarily deliver a local focus. However, how local knowledge is supported and managed within Incident Management Teams is crucial to the success of any response and a single operational chain of command and control is the best model within which to deliver Fire and Rescue services to our communities.

A clear legislative response is needed to ensure that one, well resourced agency is responsible for fire management and response throughout WA. The single agency has to be sufficiently resourced to effectively distribute operational personnel and equipment across our vast State of Western Australia inclusive of volunteers and operational personnel responsible for mitigation, prevention, fuel-load reduction, community education and engagement and response.

The Union's submission concentrates primarily on the need for further reform – including the consideration of:

Any legislative, policy or functional reforms relating to bushfire risk management, emergency management and processes for review of major incidents to strengthen the State's capability to efficiently manage bushfire related risk.

Other terms of reference are addressed within the body of the following recommendations. The Union reserves the right to make further comment on the Operational Audit Report which DFES will submit as part of their submissions separately to this submission.

Recommendation 1:

The State Government needs to vest authority, power and resources for all matters related to fire management including but not limited to bush fire mitigation, fire hazard reduction, community education and engagement, planning and fire and emergency response with the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner.

Recommendation 2:

The functions and resources currently vested in DPAW and Local Government related to the management of fire, mitigation, risk and response should be transferred to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).

Recommendation 3:

The State Government needs to immediately allocate more professional Fire and Emergency Services resources, equipment and personnel to country regional WA. The DFES country regional office network needs to expand to include more personnel with more equipment and resources to improve service delivery across WA especially in areas that do not have professional Fire Stations. This resourcing must include additional relief staff in the formulae so that no portfolio is left unattended when staff are on leave or are absent due to issues covered by Workers Compensation. It must be noted that operational personnel in DFES country regional offices deliver fire and emergency responses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and support Volunteer Brigades to provide emergency responses across WA. Current Government Wages Policy does not provide for the funding and allocation of relief personnel. DFES should be exempted from these restrictive practices mandated in policies given the nature of the services they provide and co-ordinate for the citizen and communities in WA.

Recommendation 4:

Currently there are only 4 Professional Fire Stations in country regional cities (Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie and Geraldton). This number of Fire and Rescue Stations needs to expand to match the State's population growth and risk. All existing country Fire and Rescue Stations should be staffed on a model that is based on 2 appliance model supported by Light Tankers, aerial appliances and additional 3:4 tankers.

Recommendation 5:

Esperance requires a full time Fire and Rescue Service (F&RS) Fire Station and more personnel and equipment in the Esperance Regional Office. Apart from the increased population growth and risk for the broader Esperance region, the geographic isolation means that currently scarce Fire and Rescue resources are 4 -5 hours away by road and when those resources are despatched from either Kalgoorlie or Albany, that leaves those districts without full professional F&RS coverage.

Recommendation 6:

The State Government needs to review the categorisation of the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) in regional WA and to increase the ESL for the regions that require more comprehensive protection to ensure that more Fire and Rescue resources go directly to the communities that need them the most. Urgent consideration must be given to the broader Fire districts of Busselton, Karratha, Port Hedland, and Broome as well as the Perth outer metropolitan area particularly in the Darling Range escarpment (Parkerville – Stoneville – Darlington). The risk to people and structures has to be recognised and resourced in these areas to supplement the existing Volunteer F&RSs and Bush Fire Brigades.

Recommendation 7:

The escalation of the category of fire incidents should trigger a response which includes the despatching of Professional Incident Command Vehicle crews (including the use of off duty personnel) to assist with improved radio and communications across the fire incident grounds. Such crews should work together with locals and Volunteer Brigade members to ensure that local knowledge about the risks to people and infrastructure is communicated efficiently using long established operational command and communication procedures for all personnel on the fire incident ground including professional and volunteer personnel who may be attending from out of district areas.

Recommendation 8:

With the allocation of all fire management responsibilities to a single Department comes the need to resource such responsibilities. Too often there has been a piece meal approach to allocating additional resources– for example, following the Keelty Review into the Kelmscott Roleystone fires there was a recommendation to place additional resources (3:4 tankers with 2 experienced Firefighters on at least 3 Fire Stations). However that initiative did not include additional allocation of Full Time Equivalent positions (FTEs) with a relief formulae to support the staffing of the new trucks. That means that the additional 3:4s are not guaranteed and available 24 hours a day 7 days a week while the risk and fuel load remains. Without the additional 3:4s existing crews are hampered from implementing an early suppression strategy which knocks down fires more quickly and prevents fires and risk from escalating.

The result of this under-done approach to resourcing has been the frequent decommissioning of these appliances. This places enormous stress on our Senior Officers, who are effectively “gambling” with community protection and safety, given the lack of genuine commitment to improving the Fire and Rescue response from the decision makers and bean counters who allocate staffing levels and personnel.

Recommendation 9:

Climate change is increasing the risk of fires to our communities and this requires an increase in resources, particularly in regional WA. The Climate Council's 2013 Report "Be Prepared: Climate Change and the Australian Bushfire Threat" refers to hotter fires, drier climates, significant increase in fuel loads and more frequent lightning strikes which ignite many fires. The Report also calls for the doubling in professional Fire and Rescue personnel by 2030.

The need for more personnel has to be supported by the adequate resourcing of relief personnel as well as increasing the number of professional operational Instructors and Assessors to ensure that all operational training is of a consistent and high standard.

The provision of world class training in a state of the art training facility with accommodation and transport support for trainees from across the State of WA and with the necessary equipment, resources and protective clothing will require a significant commitment of resources by the State Government. The current training centre or Academy in Forrestfield is best described as being of a "third world" standard.

The current training "pathways" are worthless without sufficient operational resources available to ensure personnel can be released to attend, instruct and assess training. The State Government need to fund and resource a suitable world class facility that can manage the volumes of training required in WA.

Recommendation 10:

The use of deployed personnel from intrastate needs to be reviewed so that all of the State's resources are not being drained from areas that may also be facing high risk weather or fire threats at the same time.

The use of personnel from interstate needs to be considered and agreed by the lead agency responding to the fires and the expense and usefulness of such deployments needs to be carefully examined.

The use of off duty professional F&RS crews needs to increase and to be organised and communicated (including the use of media outlets) so that there are more Firefighters on appliances that can carry more than 2 crew members, and the effectiveness of crews is enhanced, particularly when multiple structural firefighting responses are required. Every available seat should be filled with firefighters who can be used on the fire ground.

There are over 300 firefighters and officers available at any given time and this valuable resource of trained and experienced personnel has been chronically under-utilised in recent years.

Recommendation 11:

The use of private contractors by DPAW during the recent fires needs to be reviewed and prevented from occurring in the future. It appears that the decision by DPAW to use such contractors may be inconsistent with the restrictions in place related to State Government expenditure and further it appears that DPAW did not request to use such contractors or advise DFES of the decision to employ and deploy private firefighting companies during the Waroona Yarloop fires.

There are significant risks associated with the use of private firefighting units. There are no systems in place to guarantee quality control, the registration of competencies held, there are no checklists for the currency of alleged competencies held, the tracking of such appliances and crews and there is no quality control related to standard operational procedures or standard equipment or standard protective clothing.

In addition to this, the Union has received reports of concern that the frequent use of such private firefighting contractors could lead to volunteers refusing to volunteer if there is an opportunity to be paid or remunerated to protect their communities. The Union understands the issues that some Volunteer brigades have with being able to attract and to retain new members, and the increased market for private firefighting contractors and advisors for Fire Management planning, makes the co-ordinated operationally focussed single line of command and control for all fire related matters more difficult for our State.

Key fire management activities including Bushfire Mitigation, the reduction of fire fuel loads, preparation and pre-planning for fire, community engagement, communication and education must be in the hands of operational personnel. The placement of these operational positions should also be dispersed across metropolitan and country regional WA so that the resources are close the communities being served.

Recommendation 12:

Until there is a single Department responsible and resourced to manage all fire related activities interim measures must be put into place which ensure the following:

1. Improved communications equipment that is common across all agencies including radios, Incident Command Vehicles, mapping systems and printers, and Vehicle Location Devices.
2. Common equipment should be supported by common operational procedures and practices and where there are multiple agencies working on incidents there needs to be the open sharing of information and complete visibility of information and situational awareness data related to fire behaviour, weather patterns and other risks that could impact on the incidents.
3. Inter- agency communication appears to be stronger at the local level but it has been disturbing to have received reports from some of our members about IMTs reaching agreement about common incident objectives and then having those objectives undermined by instructions not to hand over the incidents to DFES alleged to have come from DPAW senior managers based in Perth. It has also been reported that on occasion the use of different radio command channels by DPAW and DFES at the same fire, and the two agencies using different firefighting strategies within the same sectors has occurred which is both dangerous and inconsistent with the development of “common incident objectives” as set out in AIIIMS.
4. Where there is any threat to life or property the Officers managing the incidents must include senior F&RS personnel with professional structural firefighting competencies and experience to develop and modify the required incident plans. No amount of good will, local government experience, forestry fire prevention expertise or community connectedness can replace professional F&RS skills, training, competencies and experience when it comes to the protection and defence of lives and property. Further more what cannot be underestimated is that we have witnessed the most catastrophic fires and loss of property and life in WA over the last 10 years. Wherever these fires have started they have resulted in the significant loss of life and property and that requires a greater more targeted structural firefighting response.

5. The procedures for giving effect to the Section 13 control of these incidents to DFES need to be streamlined. The need to confer with up to 112 different local government agencies servicing over 500 Bushfire Brigades is not workable or feasible when decisions need to be made to move equipment and resources to where they are most needed. By contrast the relevant section of the Bushfires Act, S45 A which relates to the handing of control of fires to DPAW is more straight forward as DPAW takes control of “all operations in relation to the fire”. Any unnecessary time delay in communication about fires, or the handing over of such incidents from DPAW or Local Government Brigades to DFES is leading to greater loss for our communities.

6. All firefighting appliances (professional and volunteer) need to be fitted immediately with vehicle tracking devices and all IMTs and operational centres (ROCs and SOCs) need to have visibility of where appliances are on the fire ground.

7. Incident and fire ground protocols need to be better understood by all volunteers to ensure the management of all personnel entering and leaving incident grounds is logged so that their location, fatigue management and the knowledge of what competencies they hold (including the currency of those competencies) and what equipment they may be able to utilise is known by the Officers running the incidents. This will require some Volunteer Brigades to keep and to maintain better records. Surf Life Saving Australia has a simple computer based system which includes competencies, currency and the recording of annual testing and patrol hours and this system is used by clubs Australia wide and could provide a useful model for moving forward with the management of volunteers on the fire and incident ground.

8. All firefighting appliances need to be built to a high standard without any compromise to firefighter safety. This includes the certification and maintenance of such appliances by specialist qualified engineers, technicians and tradespeople who are based in and who work for DFES. All appliances need to have the best standard of cab and vehicle protection. The Union’s initial analysis of damage to firefighting vehicles and related equipment failure, suggests that vehicle protection needs to include water -spray functions for the cabs and undercarriage. In addition a high standard of design and installation for all working parts must be guaranteed that ensures that braking, pumping and engines are more resistant to heat and fire so that the vehicles do not fail or break down on the incident ground.

9. IMTs need to be expanded to include operational personnel that can support and liaise with local community members and volunteers. All IMTs should include experienced and trained local volunteers so that local knowledge is optimised and included and considered by the senior Officers running the incidents.

10. Separate Public Information Officer positions need to be created so that this vital function is not lost in the need to perform other key tasks and Incident Controllers should not have to fulfil this role unless there are other suitable Deputy Incident Controllers available to assist with the incident response duties.

11. Within IMTs there needs to be a new position created that includes an Officer with Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) or F&RS competencies to advise the IMTs on risk and when the fire front has passed on, whether or not critical roads and access routes are safe. This is vital for farmers needing to check stock, road users to pass through fire affected areas and local people needing to access their properties. The information commonly collected by USAR crews about damage and safety, including whether power lines or other key infrastructure is damaged and is safe, is critical for the opening up of access and roads into fire damaged areas.

Conclusions:

Significant changes have been made within DFES since the Keelty Reports into previous catastrophic fires but it is time to bring our legislation and legal frameworks into the modern era.

DFES has a country regional portfolio that provides a framework to build additional Fire and Rescue resources across WA. The significant loss of life and structures in these recent fires should trigger an immediate legislative response from the Government with additional resources.

More broadly DFES has the capacity to take operational control of the management of bushfire mitigation, fuel load reduction, hazard planning, community education and engagement and fire response. This includes the sensitive and appropriate operationally focussed management of local knowledge and volunteers throughout Western Australia. The challenge lies ahead for our politicians from all political parties to support and commit to the funding of this change.

Please contact me if you should require any further information or clarification and Kevin Jolly and I would be happy to represent the Union in any formal hearing related to the Inquiry.

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Submission to Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry

The Institute of Foresters is a national organisation that represents the views of forest management professionals and has more than 120 members in Western Australia who work in native forests, plantations and environmental services. Members of the Western Australian Division of the Institute have extensive experience in forest fire management through their role as land managers, employees of emergency service agencies, and as volunteer fire fighters.

The scale and impact of fires in south-west forests has increased dramatically over the past decade. Factors contributing to this trend include reduced rainfall and a prolonged bushfire season, expansion of fire vulnerable development at the rural urban interface, increased complexity of land management, and most significantly a decline in the extent of prescribed burning. All of the key issues for bushfire management identified by the 2010 Ferguson Review conducted for the Western Australian Government remain pertinent today, and many of these have become more critical with the passage of time.

The Institute is concerned at the growing incidence of large and damaging summer bushfires in south-west Western Australia. These latter bushfires are having severe detrimental impacts on forested water catchments, commercial tree plantations, productive regrowth forests, biodiversity values and a wide range of forest amenity values important to the community. This trend must be reversed, with greater emphasis placed on bushfire prevention and mitigation activities on all land tenures. The focus of this submission is therefore directed primarily at Special Inquiry Term of Reference 1 (a) – *The effectiveness of pre-incident bushfire prevention and mitigation activities*. The Institute of Foresters believes that the Inquiry should pay particular attention to land management issues that may have contributed to the scale, intensity and difficulty in controlling the Waroona bushfire. Issues of specific concern include:

1. Impact of bauxite mining in State forest on access and the ability to undertake effective fuel management

During 6 and 7 January 2016 the fire burnt through State forest heavily disturbed as a result of bauxite mining operations feeding the Wagerup refinery. Fragmentation of the native forest within the Willowdale minesite has made it impossible to undertake effective broadscale fuel reduction burning in this area for several decades. While it may be technically possible to undertake prescribed burning in patches of remnant native forest and in older rehabilitated stands, the fragmented nature of the forest landscape within the mining envelope greatly increases the complexity, cost and risk of conducting burns (Fig. 1). Access for firefighting operations can also be compromised by mining infrastructure such as minepits, conveyors, pipelines and haul roads. Bauxite mining has been underway in the northern jarrah forest since the 1970s, making this a very significant legacy issue.



The potential for bushfires of a similar scale, intensity and impact to the Waroona fire exists for much of the forest estate between Jarrahdale and Harvey.

This situation must be addressed urgently, and will require a multi-faceted approach including:

- Identification of buffer zones where fuel reduction takes priority over other land uses including mining
- Increased resources for prescribed burning on State forest within active mining leases
- Evaluation of silvicultural approaches, including mechanical fuel treatment, for managing stands rehabilitated after mining
- Greater consideration of the consequences of mining and other developments for strategic fire protection during environmental impact assessment

2. Inadequate management of fuels across all land tenures including remnant vegetation on the Swan coastal plain

The declining extent of prescribed burning on public lands managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife including State forest, national park and nature reserve is well documented and has been the subject of considerable scrutiny and discussion. This is entirely justified given the predominance of public forest land in the south-west and the need to manage the inherent biodiversity values of the forest areas.

Fuel management on smaller holdings of public land managed by a variety of Commonwealth, State and local government agencies also deserves scrutiny, particularly where these remnants are close to settlements, main roads and critical infrastructure. This is clearly highlighted by the situation at Yarloop where long unburnt remnant vegetation close to the townsite was directly responsible for the extreme fire impact on the community. All agencies responsible for land must accept responsibility for fire management on these lands.

Fuel build up following changes in land use is also likely to have contributed to the large extent of the fire in agricultural lands on the Swan coastal plain. Reduction in open channel irrigation and a shift to dryland farming operations have made agricultural lands more flammable than during past decades. During the Waroona bushfire the network of roads, channels and drains acted as wicks that allowed fire to spread very rapidly. Many road verges were poorly maintained and carried heavy fuels of dry grass and weeds (Fig. 2). This contributed to the difficulty of containing the fire and to serious damage to the electricity transmission network.

Actions required to address this situation include:

- Tenure-blind planning for fuel management on public and private land, with increased resourcing and support for agencies responsible for fuel management
- Better incentives and support for volunteer bush fire brigades prepared to undertake prescribed burning



- Evaluation of the role of private fire management contractors to undertake fuel management, including issue of accreditation, risk management and community consultation

3. Recognition of the importance of plantations and forests as valuable State assets

Commercial tree plantations are valuable assets with a long investment timeframe, up to 30 years in the case of pines. During the past decade bushfires have resulted in very significant damage to pine plantations in the Blackwood Valley, at Gngangara and Yanchep, and most recently at Waroona (Fig. 3). Regrowth stands of native forest are also significant assets, with certain age classes critical to the sustained supply of high quality sawlogs to industry. Large bushfires at Babbington in 2012 and O'Sullivan in 2015 impacted heavily on regrowth stands of karri, necessitating salvage harvesting and costly rehabilitation activities.

The Waroona bushfire will have caused many deleterious effects on catchment and biodiversity values which impact on water production, recreational activities and tourism. These additional assets underpin many local, regional and national employment opportunities that support our industries and communities.

The Institute questions whether the current WestPlan Fire document and associated doctrine that guides decision-making during bushfires places sufficient emphasis on these values. Lack of recognition of these values may lead to poor operational firefighting decisions that result in needless loss and damage to future timber values. There is a strong case to be made that consolidated areas of plantation and regrowth forest should be given equal status to critical infrastructure when deciding on priorities and actions during bushfire response.

The Institute looks forward to presenting these views to the Special Inquiry in person.

John Clarke
Bushfire Spokesman
Western Australian Division

1 March 2016



Figure 1. Forest fragmented by bauxite mining, Willowdale minesite



Figure 2. Poorly maintained road verge with heavy fuel load, Fawcett Rd Waroona



Figure 3. Defoliated immature stand of *Pinus pinaster*, McLarty plantation



WALGA

Submission to the

**PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO JANUARY 2016
WAROONA FIRE**

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1.0 Introduction

The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is the united voice of Local Government in Western Australia. The Association is an independent, membership-based organization representing and supporting the work and interests of Local Governments in Western Australia.

The Association provides an essential voice for our members who are 139 local councils, 1,300 elected members and approximately 14,500 Local Government employees as well as over 2.2 million constituents of Local Governments in Western Australia. The Association also provides professional advice and offers services that provide financial benefits to the Local Governments and the communities they serve.

The Association welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry. The Association has undertaken consultation to ensure that the key concerns for Local Governments are captured in the Association's submission. Local Governments have been encouraged to send through their own submissions in addition to the WALGA submission to enable local variations to be captured and considered by the Special Inquirer.

2.0 Background

WALGA has developed the submission with a conscious focus on the second and third terms of reference relating to: the extent to which findings and recommendations of relevant reviews undertaken since 2011 have been implemented; the effectiveness of reforms implemented by the State since 2011; the State's ability to prevent, mitigate and respond to major bushfires and the community's understanding of and preparedness for bushfire risk; and any legislative, policy or functional reforms relating to bushfire risk management, emergency management and processes for review of major incidents to strengthen the State's capability to efficiently and effectively manage bushfire-related risk.

WALGA has encouraged those councils that were directly impacted by the Waroona fire to provide a submission to the Special Inquirer, in order to address the first terms of reference, to provide first hand, pertinent information to the inquiry. It should be noted, that WALGA and its members were disappointed that the terms of reference for this inquiry did not include consideration of the November 2015 Esperance fire, which affected the Shire of Esperance and surrounds, resulting in four deaths and significant impacts on the rural farming community.

The Local Government sector is supportive of efforts to increase WA's risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery capacity. The Association encourages the State to commit to working in partnership with Local Government and the communities they represent, to develop practical systems that reduce red tape, and provide enough flexibility to apply the necessary local knowledge to solve unique local problems.

Local Government plays an essential role in the State's emergency response and recovery capacity and an increasing role in mitigation across a number of natural hazards. Local Government is therefore a key stakeholder in the development and implementation of any

future reforms and would welcome the opportunity to engage in sector based solutions to the complex nature of emergency management.

3.0 Comment on terms of reference

3.1 The response to the January 2016 Waroona Fire

As discussed above, WALGA has made a conscious decision to not respond to the first term of reference and to encourage those Councils directly impacted by the Waroona Fires to provide their own submissions directly to the Special Inquirer, to relay relevant information for this term of reference.

3.2 Lessons learned from previous bushfire emergencies

3.2.1 Implementation of findings and recommendations

In reviewing the extent to which the findings and recommendations of the named Western Australian bushfire reviews undertaken since 2011 have been implemented, the Associations observations are that only two reviews, those being:

1. A Shared Responsibility – Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire February 2011 Review (Keelty, 2011;) and
2. Appreciating the Risk – Report of the Special Inquiry into the November 2011 Margaret River Bushfire (Keelty, 2012)

have been through a formal process of consideration and implementation. The Premier established the Bushfires Review Implementation Group (BRIG) in 2011, to oversee the State's response to the recommendations made in the 2011 report by Mr Mick Keelty. WALGA was a member of the BRIG representing local governments' interests.

It has been WALGAs experience that post incident reviews and reviews conducted by the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) Secretariat (since the SEMC was reconstituted) do not have a rigorous or transparent process for analysing and implementing recommendations emanating from these reports. Whilst there is a requirement to undertake these reviews the subsequent process for adopting, implementing and evaluating the changes implemented is lacking. The reports are tabled with the SEMC with recommendations allocated to various committees and agencies. This fragments the implementation process and leads to confusion amongst stakeholders. Separate status reports are tabled at subsequent SEMC meetings; however the holistic picture is lost and accountability and effectiveness are not measured or reported.

Recommendation – That SEMC Secretariat develop an assurance framework to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of recommendations emanating from all public inquiries and reviews.

Adding to the complexity of implementation is the number of policy/decision making groups involved in the States emergency management and bushfire framework. Diagram 1 below, highlights the key agencies and committees all with authority to develop and impact policy within the States emergency management and bushfire frameworks.



Diagram 1: Decision making bodies in Bushfire and Emergency Management

There needs to be consistent oversight to ensure a more rigorous assessment of policy impact and coordination prior to implementation to maintain the integrity of the legislative framework, minimise duplication of effort and effectively allocate the limited resources available within the State.

Recommendation – That the policy and decision making framework for emergency management and bushfire in WA be streamlined and integrated.

3.2.2 The effectiveness of reforms

The number of specific recommendations relating directly to Local governments across the reviews named in this special inquiry was minimal, however this does not diminish the impact the reforms implemented since 2011 have had on local government, by virtue of their roles and responsibilities within the legislative framework. Furthermore whilst a key focus of the reforms have been heavily weighted to the State, there have been many changes that have resulted in increased responsibility and expectation of local government, but little investment in implementation and a growing confusion regarding local government's role and responsibilities within the current arrangements.

The reform agenda since 2011 has focused heavily on the State level due to the cultural differences that have been identified in reviews and inquiries. WALGA as a member of the Interagency Bushfire Management Committee (IBMC) and the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC), continues to observe ongoing cultural issues, not only in the response area, but also in the development of policy and programs. WALGAs members have raised concerns about the use of volunteers at major incidents, the lack of response to local knowledge and expertise and inconsistencies in the application of operational doctrine between the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (PaW). As these are operational matters, WALGA feels they are best discussed with our members and their volunteer bushfire brigades directly.

In the area of policy and program development in emergency management and bushfire, it is also evident that a level of competitiveness exists between agencies which is not in the spirit of a 'shared responsibility'. Despite this WALGA is committed to working with and through the State's emergency management decision making bodies, to represent the local government sector and is willing to work in partnership with all emergency management stakeholders to gain improvements and empower local communities to build community resilience.

Local governments accept their responsibilities under the Emergency Management Act (2005) and Bushfires Act (1954). However the sector has continually raised concerns about the lack of due diligence given by the State Government to determine the resources and processes required for introduction of new policy requirements. This is an ongoing shortcoming which requires attention as the implications of adopting policy positions that are not fully costed and analysed prior to being endorsed can be significant. This makes it difficult for local governments to adequately undertake their responsibilities and deliver the intended outcomes for their communities.

By way of example, we will refer the Special Inquirer to the recommendations emanating from the Keilty report (2011) that led to the development and introduction of Bushfire Risk Management Plans (piloted 2014) in WA. The Association considers that the State designed Bushfire Risk Management Planning process essentially shifted the responsibility and cost for assessing and coordinating bushfire risk on crown lands from the State to local government.

Throughout the process, local government indicated support for the concept however objected to local governments being responsible for the ‘tenure blind’ plans. WALGA requested a full assessment of the legal implications, resources and costs required to develop and manage the plans and the resultant mitigation works. Despite repeated requests it became evident that the State Government was not going to undertake this analysis. WALGA sought legal advice at its own expense, to ascertain the legal implications within the relevant legislation and any potential liability for local governments. WALGA further engaged an independent consultant to undertake a cost impact assessment to demonstrate to the State government the potential costs that will be borne by Local government in undertaking the program. Despite this the policy requirement and a business case were put to State Cabinet for approval, without the information provided by WALGA. As a result the Bushfire Risk Management Plans have had little investment by either the State or local government and will take an inordinate amount of time to be completed. This is not in the public’s interest.

Further, after much advocacy by WALGA to ensure the State supported the intent of Mick Keelty’s recommendation that the State declare bushfire prone areas, in 2015 a Bushfire Prone Map was released by the WA Planning Commission, together with State Planning Policy 3.7 ‘Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas’ and supporting Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas.

Whilst WALGA and its members had input into the development of these policies and guidelines, the process has been extremely lengthy and convoluted, and ongoing training and organisational implementation issues remain unresolved.

The State’s Regulatory and Gatekeeping Unit within the Department of Finance and Treasury produces the *Regulatory Impact Assessment Guidelines* for Western Australia, which outline a requirement for rigorous assessment of regulatory proposals that have a significant impact on business, consumers and/or the economy. Adoption of the principles and processes within the guidelines for emergency management and bushfire initiatives and policies would assist the sector to have confidence that the analysis and cost implications of such have been fully identified prior to adoption or implementation of any new requirements.

Recommendation – That a full analysis, including cost implications for all stakeholders, of all policy recommendations or initiatives should be undertaken in consultation with local governments, and in accordance with the Regulatory Impact Assessment Guidelines prior to adoption and implementation.

3.3 The need for further reform

3.3.1 Bushfire Mitigation

Local governments would be well served by legislative, policy or functional reforms that have the effect of building a culture of confidence in bushfire risk management activities. Local government members require enhanced legal protections that are laid out in a clear and coherent way to those involved in bushfire mitigation work. Those protections need to be articulated so that people involved in mitigation work understand that so long as they carry out mitigation activities that have been authorised (or, where not authorised, carried out in a diligent and careful manner) they will not be sued or have their reputations sullied. There is a lot of confusion about the scope and extent of legal protections and this often leads to some hesitancy and uncertainty.

WALGA and Local Government Insurance Services believe there is a strong argument certain risk mitigation activities may be regarded as being of sufficient importance to warrant protection from liability. For this to operate effectively statutory protection clauses would need to be enhanced to provide for specific activities to be covered – such as hazard mitigation or acting in terms of a risk management plan. A commitment to quality risk mitigation training, an emphasis on developing effective state-wide standards and procedures in terms of risk mitigation, and coherent inter-agency communication and leadership should alleviate any concerns over any potential increase in negligence in the conduct of risk mitigation work (the so called ‘*moral hazard*’).

If local governments are to have more responsibility in risk mitigation areas then, as an example, since most of the legislation regulating bushfire risk management and protections from liability talks about “*performing a function under the Act...*” perhaps a more generous threshold test should be “*acting in accordance with...*”. This would cover a wide range of mitigation activities that might fall outside the scope of performing a function under the Act. Skilled drafting of any new legislation, or new policies or functional reforms, should address any concerns or confusion as to which activities are, or are not, covered by any proposals to enhance statutory liability protections.

There needs to be purposeful cooperation between local governments and state government entities to improve the management of lands that is, strategic alignment of land management programs, plans, projects and activities. Open communication between the entities, information, resources, expertise and knowledge sharing. This would be assisted through clarifying roles and responsibilities of local governments in all phases (particularly mitigation) of bushfire response. There is a multitude of stakeholders including, private landowners, land owned by local governments, land vested, land licenced to the local government, Crown land, reserve land and so on. Each land owner has a responsibility to cooperate and work together (particularly in the mitigation phase) in ameliorating a combined response (in all phases) of bushfire mitigation.

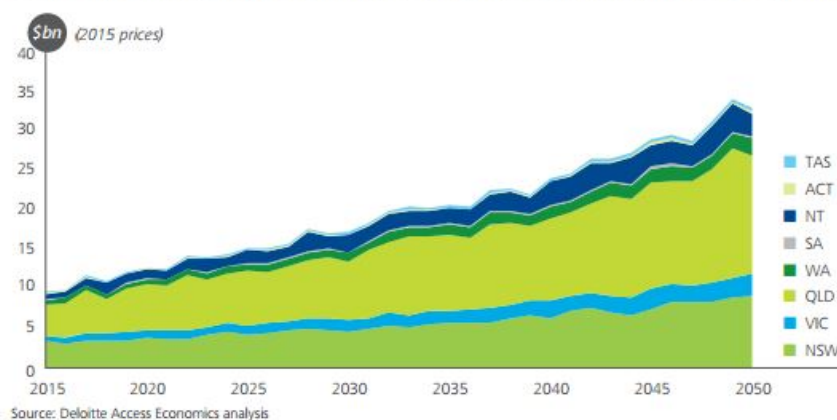
3.3.2 Community Resilience

The State currently, has no documented plan that articulates the way in which WA will build community resilience and deliver on the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience.

In WA, local governments have statutory responsibility for recovery at the local level and through experience, appreciate the need to build resilient communities to cope with impacts post event. The Australian Business Round table report *The Economic Cost Of The Social Impact Of Natural Disasters (March 2016)*, highlights the costs and long-term social impacts of natural disasters in Australia and finds the social (intangible) costs of natural disasters in 2015 were at least equal to the physical (tangible) costs (as outlined in previous reports).

Furthermore, the report finds that the true cost of natural disasters is at least 50% greater than previous estimates when the cost of social impacts is incorporated. When both financial and social costs are included, it is estimated the total cost of natural disasters in Australia in 2015 exceeded \$9 billion, or 0.6% of GDP. This is expected to double by 2030 and to reach an average of \$33 billion a year by 2050. The following graph from the report highlights the economic forecast.

Chart ii: 2015–50 forecast of the total economic cost of natural disasters, identifying costs for each state



Local governments experience in recovery efforts since 2011, highlight the need for investment in this area to minimise the long term social and physical impacts on their communities. Local governments have a range of skills and expertise in the areas of community development and building social capital. The *Parkerville, Mount Helena Bushfire Review (June 2014)* reports on efforts of the Shire of Mundaring in building community resilience suggesting that a number of factors may have contributed to a lessened impact of this fire on these communities.

The directly affected communities of Parkerville, Stoneville and Mt Helena may have a greater appreciation of bushfire risk than other communities in high bushfire risk areas in the State. Evidence of a good level of risk awareness is reflected in residents' submissions to the Review. There is also a large and active volunteer firefighting community in the Shire of Mundaring. It is possible that this has

contributed to building a level of preparedness, both physical and psychological, that has assisted the community both in response and recovery. Prior to the event, the Shire of Mundaring had in place appropriate emergency planning arrangements, which included a disaster recovery plan. The local emergency management arrangements and recovery plan were exercised and....an active fuel mitigation program was in place. The Shire gave emphasis to building community capacity and preparedness through the support given to volunteer bushfire brigades.

The relationship between a council and its community is fundamental and significant. Councils view their links with community groups as a valuable tool to deliver measures to improve community resilience and build social capital. This relationship and inherent expertise in local government should be recognised and supported in the State's emergency management framework.

COAG's National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (2011) advises, 'critical to ensuring long-term impacts are minimised is "strengthening local capacity and capability, with greater emphasis on community engagement and a better understanding of the diversity, needs, strengths and vulnerabilities within communities". A significant body of evidence shows that resilient and prepared communities are more likely to withstand the negative impacts of natural disasters. Likewise, strong social capital correlates to a more effective recovery'.

Recommendation – That the State fund a sector led project to develop a road map (in line with the principles of the national strategy for disaster resilience) to empower local governments to take a leadership role in developing and delivering programs and strategies to build community resilience.

And

Recommendation – The State government should invest resources in local governments to leverage off existing community development skills and expertise inherent in local and develop community resilience strategies that will deliver localised solutions.

3.3.3 Sustainable Funding

Funding mechanisms for Local Governments in Western Australia are not sustainable and do not adequately provide funding for the responsibilities assigned to councils. Funding is currently sourced from

- a) the Local Government Grant Scheme (LGGS), for Bushfire Brigades and State Emergency Services Units (funded through the Emergency Services Levy (ESL);
- b) State administered grants; and
- c) local government budgets.

a) ESL and the Local Government Grants Scheme.

The Minister for Emergency Services declared the ESL rate for 2015/16 with a 10.8% increase on the previous year. This increase saw an additional \$31.3million injected into the DFES budget via ESL funds, along with a reduction of \$15.6 from consolidated revenue. The LGGS does not reflect contemporary emergency management arrangements and primarily funds response.

LGGS Grants budget and payment processes are designed to reflect the historical linkages between the local government, the brigades/units themselves and DFES between, local governments and DFES. It no longer represents contemporary emergency management arrangements.

Local Governments are required to administer SES capital and operating grants even though they have no legislative responsibility for SES. Additional burden for Local Governments who effectively act as a middle man, along with the additional burden of expenses associated with SES facilities.

The intended role and function of the LGGS is to enable DFES to finance the approved capital and operating costs associated with the provision and maintenance of an effective bush firefighting service for Local Governments.

In a contemporary emergency management context, Local Governments require sustainable funding for a range of responsibilities that are bestowed upon them. A comprehensive review would assess the expansion of the ESL to include access to funding for items not currently deemed eligible and that fall into the prevention and preparedness aspects of emergency management.

b) State Administered Grants Funding

Other funding offered by the State government tends to be grants based. Local Government has been disenfranchised by the grants administered by the State, (such as NDRP, AWARE) in recent times as the criteria have changed to focus on projects of state significance. Local governments traditionally focus their efforts on local level, community based projects aimed at building community resilience. Grants provide local governments with little or no on-going funding, leaving councils with legacy projects, particularly in the areas of emergency risk identification, one off mitigation and community engagement projects. Projects funded through grants are typically short term, can lead to unrealistic expectations within the local government organisation and a lack sustainable outcomes for communities.

c) Local Government Budget Allocation

Councils have different approaches to managing the financial burden of their increasing emergency management activity depending on their individual capacity, risk profile, recent experience and political will. Some have progressively increased funding arrangements for emergency management employing specialist staff and integrating emergency management as mainstream council activity. Furthermore some councils have extended this capability by

entering into MOUs with neighbouring councils to provide mutual support and assistance during response and recovery activities.

Some councils with low rate bases struggle to invest in up front emergency management planning and staffing, instead focusing their limited budgets on more tangible services with immediate and visible benefits for the community. Despite having greater capacity some larger councils also struggle to see the sense in investing in emergency management in the face of other demands and competing priorities.

Sharing resources or entering into agreements with state agencies for resources such as the Community Emergency Services Managers, are proving challenging. Whilst it provides an officer based within the Local government, as they are weighted towards the DFES operational responsibilities and in some cases are not available to Local governments when they are needed the most.

The sector has also seen a realignment of human resources in line with the focus on State reform. Community Emergency Management Officers employed by the SEMC Secretariat, have recently been repositioned to reflect a strategic change in focus reflecting an emphasis on District Emergency Management Committees (DEMCs) rather than the initial advisory service aligned to local governments and Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs). Whilst this is a strategic decision to maximise limited resources and progress DEMCs to support LEMCs, it leaves a void in the support available to Local Governments. Bushfire Mitigation Officers are another human resource assisting local governments; however these are short term contract positions dependent on future funding through the additional cabinet submissions to state government.

Community Emergency Services Managers (CESMs) are a jointly funded initiative by DFES and Local Governments housing a human resource within a local government to undertake management of Bushfire Brigades and other bushfire and emergency management activities. CESMs have experienced varying levels of success with a growing concern within local governments that whilst they are contributing 50% of their wages, they receive less than 50% of their time. DFES are increasing utilising these resources within operations removing this resource during a time of need within the community in which they are paid to serve. This can actually leave the local government out of pocket as they are not back filled whilst on operational duties.

None of these resourcing scenarios provide confidence to the local government sector that the investment and commitment by stakeholders is sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION: That the State Government commits to identifying a sustainable funding source for local government, for functions required under the State's current (or proposed) legislative and policy framework for bushfire. This should include a review of the future scope, purpose and use of the Emergency Service Levy and the Local Government Grants Scheme to adequately fund activities in addition to response.

3.3.4 Building Local Government Capability in Emergency Management and Bushfire Risk Management

Any attempt to build Local Government capability in Emergency Management and Bushfire activities needs to be underpinned by a commitment to understand and appreciate the current capability, environment and challenges within the local government sector.

Local Governments are prescribed responsibilities under the *Emergency Management Act (2005)* noting that they are the closest level of government to their communities and have access to specialised knowledge about the local environment and demographic features of their communities. To date, there has been a focus on local government developing capacity to undertake their mandated roles and responsibilities with a focus on compliance.

The 2015 preparedness report, page 26, articulates *the SEMC and its subcommittees perform as the knowledge and coordination hub for EM governance in the State.* Local Governments are required to establish an LEMC, under the EM Act (2005) section 39. The function of an LEMC is to:

- (a) Advise and assist the local government in ensuring that local emergency management arrangements are established for its district;
- (b) To liaise with public authorities and other persons in the development review and testing of local emergency management arrangements; and
- (c) To carry out other emergency management activities as directed by the SEMC or prescribed by the regulations.

It is critical to note that the LEMC has no authority to make decisions on behalf of the local government, nor does it have a budget allocated to it, by the State, to undertake emergency management activities. It is important for the State to be realistic in its assignment of functions and responsibilities to the LEMC and subsequent governance arrangements through the emergency management committees at all levels. It would be beneficial for policy and key decision making bodies to gain a true understanding of local government and its capability to leverage off the existing strengths of local governments to increase the level of success in developing contemporary emergency management policy and programs.

Recommendation – State Government agencies commit to genuine engagement with local government to fully appreciate the current capabilities and limitations of the sector and to leverage off existing strengths to increase the success of contemporary emergency management and bushfire policies and/or programs.

Further evidence to support this recommendation, is provided in relation to recommendations from reviews which have suggested that local government staff with specialist skills (i.e. community engagement, mapping etc.) could be utilised in Incident Management Teams. Local Government experiences in recent events, have demonstrated that fatigue management is a real issue within the sector and local government resources

are often stretched as they navigate their dual role of support to response and managing recovery.

CEOs from the Shire of Harvey, Waroona and Esperance have all made contact with WALGA during recent events seeking additional resources to support 'business as usual' activities within the council along with specialist skills relating to emergency management. WALGA has provided assistance by calling for support from members through internal mechanisms and linking support as appropriate.

The City of Mandurah who has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with their neighbouring councils undertook an internal debrief following the Waroona Fire, whereby support was provided to the Shire of Harvey who is a signatory to the MOU. They captured the extent to which their council was involved during this event and the table below highlights the business units that were engaged in providing information, advice or services as a result of the fires.

Business Area	Role
Customer Service	queries/complaints re road closures, donations of goods and services
Strategy & Marketing	monitoring and updating social media, preparing media releases
Ranger Services	around 80 hours in animal welfare, control and emergency sheltering
Recreation Centre Services	53 hours in welfare centre support, weekend shift relief
Organisational Development	employee support and EAP referral for affected staff
Finance	capturing costs, leave entitlements, Council donation to the Lord Mayors Appeal
Libraries, Arts, Culture	enquires re Steam Museum, concerts and donations
Environmental Services	support for wildlife careers, heavily impacted by loss of life
CEOs Office	providing assistance to Shire of Harvey residents re disaster relief funding
Emergency Management	communications and support (LG, interagency, staff, volunteers)
Health Services	property inspections and delivery of information packs (in coming weeks)

This is a significant use of resources given that they were not directly combatting the fire as it was not within their local government boundary. To this end, they were not acting under any state based policy; however implementing local solutions and policies as were agreed and devised by local governments in their area. This demonstrates that realistic expectations of local governments is critical to leverage off their capacity and capability and not be prescribed further responsibilities which are unrealistic or may result in further burden during significant events.

Training and development opportunities are limited within WA to improve the capability of local governments to undertake their legislative responsibilities.

WALGA has developed a suite of Emergency Management courses following the SEMC Secretariats decision to no longer deliver training to the Emergency Management sector in Western Australia. This was a result of the reconstitution of the SEMC in 2011.

The sector has embraced these courses with several local governments, such as the City of Mandurah purchasing an online licence and embedding the Introduction to Emergency Management Course (provided online) into their induction for all local government employees. This has increased knowledge within the City and also provided a cost saving to the council as it provided a better return on investment than sending individuals to courses over time.

The local government sector require comprehensive training in order to increase their capability to deliver on other legislative responsibilities as shown in the diagram below. Besides the limited courses provided by WALGA, little other training is available for local government staff or elected members in WA.

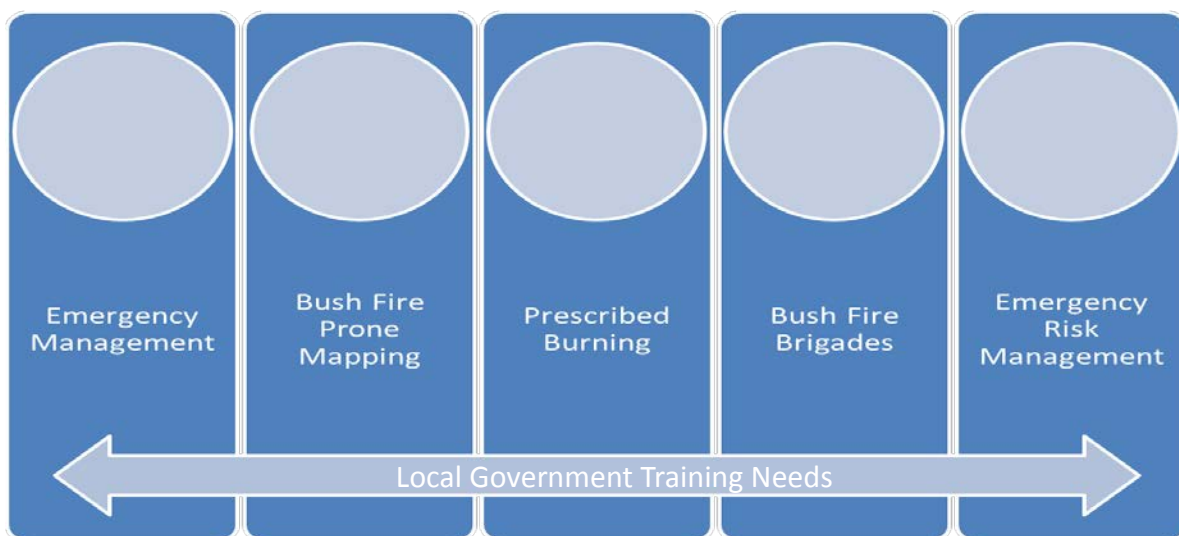


Diagram 2: Local Government Training Needs

Further, Local government volunteers make up for 77 per cent of the total emergency services volunteers in WA, however training requirements and responsibilities are unclear.

It is generally considered that DFES is primarily responsible for the development and provision of training, and for equipping volunteers. To a lesser extent local government councils, to whom nearly 80 percent of the volunteers are logistically tied¹, also seek to support training of volunteers through joint arrangements with DPAW. WALGA has been advocating that clarity about the roles and responsibilities of DFES, DPaW and Local Governments for the development and delivery of training for local government volunteers is needed.

¹ Support and Preparedness of Fire and Emergency Services Volunteers, pg 5. Report 17. August 2015

The Bushfire Volunteer Association will be better placed to talk to the specific training needs, however WALGA raises this as it is a continual question that arises from our members. The Association seeks clarity on the roles and responsibilities of training volunteers, the standard to which volunteers are required to be trained, equitable access to training throughout the state and recognition of training through a transparent and current training database.

The development and clarification of volunteer training has been recommended and stated in previous reviews, however this is yet to be seen. The Auditor General's report '*Support and Preparedness of Fire and Emergency Services Volunteers*' (August 2015) and subsequent DFES strategy to address the report will go some way. However Local Government's again need to be engaged through genuine consultation if we are to realise an increased capability for the State and to reverse the declining numbers of volunteers, which will soon become a critical issue if not addressed. An associated benefit of this approach is the development of community resilience through active, sustainable volunteering which has been discussed at 3.3.2.

Recommendation – That a clear policy statement about the roles and responsibilities of all agencies for the training of volunteers; the standards to which volunteers are required to be trained; the availability and location of training throughout the State; and recognition of prior learning/experience is developed.

Recommendation - A transparent and current training database be developed with online access.

4.0 Conclusion

Local Government is supportive of the promotion of a 'shared responsibility' for prevention and mitigation across State agencies, Local Government and private landowners. Local Governments acknowledge that they are a key stakeholder in assessing and mitigating risks across hazards, as well as playing a significant role in supporting response delivery across the State to combat the ongoing threat of bushfires. Unfortunately at present most do not have the skills, expertise or resources to achieve this.

Councils entrust that future reforms in the State's emergency management and bushfire policy framework will deliver well analysed and costed policy positions prior to implementation, and provide sustainable funding solutions and enhanced capability leveraging off local government strengths, so that together we can increase capability at the local level and the state as a whole.

The Association looks forward to contributing to further stages of the Special Inquiry as required and to working together to enhance community resilience within local communities.



3rd March 2015

Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry
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WEST PERTH WA 6005

Email to WaroonalInquiry@semc.wa.gov.au.

Dear Mr Ferguson

The West Australian Pork Producers Association (Inc) (WAPPA) represents the interests of Western Australian pork producers. There are 118 pork producers spread throughout the South West Land Division using a mix of production systems including straw based housing, intensive systems and free range. The number of pigs held on a property at any given time varies between 500 and 75,000.

During the recent Waroona fire, two producers were caught in the midst of the fire zone. One of those producers successfully battled to save his piggery from the fire, however he lost most of his fencing and a large amount of pasture. The other producer's property was unaffected by the fire itself but he was impacted by barriers to accessing his property.

The comments in this submission are specifically relevant to terms of reference:

g) Effectiveness of assistance to and management of those affected by the fire:

(iv) Management of people seeking to return to their properties,

h) Livestock and companion animal management and welfare issues.

Sheep and cattle producers are able to manage their production systems with minimal staff. Usually family members live on the property and are available to attend to urgent animal welfare. Pork producers however, rely on a larger number of external employees and there may not be anyone permanently residing on the property. During the Waroona fire one producer experienced considerable difficulty gaining access to his property for himself and his staff after the immediate danger had passed. His staff were denied access at the road block because they could not prove residency. The property was no longer at risk from fire but the pigs were at risk from lack of supervision. Approximately 5000 pigs (including piglets) are housed in this intensive piggery that require regular attention for feeding, health management and assistance during farrowing. The temperatures during this period were extreme, sometimes in excess of 40°C. Pigs are highly susceptible to heat stress as they are unable to sweat. In high temperatures it is important to monitor their welfare and ensure sufficient cooling and water is available. Under the standards in the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals (Pigs) Third Edition it is a requirement to check pigs at least once per day and piglets need to be checked within 24 hours of birth. Non-compliance with these standards must be taken into account by any court determining an alleged breach of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*. It is not a one person job.

There was no flexibility at the road block to allow employees through to the farm so the welfare of the pigs could be attended to. The owner of the piggery suggested solutions that would have re-assured the authorities of the employee's legitimate need to enter the property but they were rejected. Ironically it was possible to enter the property from another, albeit longer, direction but the intransigence at the road block caused unnecessary delay in ensuring the welfare of 5000 animals.

The designation of the fire zone was also an issue that created a barrier to returning commercial operations to normal as soon as possible. The piggery referred to above is in the northern part of the fire zone and was fortunate to be out of danger at an early stage of the fire's progress. The area remained part of the exclusion zone for a considerable period which resulted in restrictions on transport and individual access. This undoubtedly used resources at road blocks that could have been put to good use elsewhere. It also created conflict between authorities and producers that could have been avoided if the exclusion zone was more closely aligned to the fire's progress.

In the aftermath of the fire near the piggery in Yarloop, with mains power no longer available, the owner had difficulty in gaining access for fuel supplies so pumps could continue to operate providing water to livestock and enable farm vehicles/fire fighting units to continue their protection of the piggery. The importance of maintaining water and cooling to a facility with approximately 400 sows (4000 pigs) cannot be under-estimated.

In view of the experiences outlined above the following recommendations for improvement are made:

1. A protocol is developed in consultation with the pork industry that would provide easier access to properties following a fire. The protocol would recognise the unique characteristics and animal welfare needs of piggeries.
2. Consideration is given to modifying the approach to designating the fire area by aligning the exclusion zone more closely with the progress of the fire. This would enable roads to be opened quicker and access to properties earlier.

In conclusion we recognise that priority must be given to human safety and that the authorities have a difficult job to do. However, once personal safety is secured the next priority must be animal welfare and the infrastructure necessary to ensure welfare. We believe that developing basic protocols in consultation with those most likely to be affected by a fire will help prepare WA for future events and avoid the frustrations that were experienced during the Waroona fires.

We look forward to the results of your Inquiry.

Yours faithfully



Jan Cooper
Executive Officer

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14 March 2016

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Dear Mr Ferguson,

WAROONA BUSHFIRE SPECIAL INQUIRY – WESTERN POWER RESPONSE

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry.

Recognising the Inquiry's particular consideration of the protection of, and access to, essential services by emergency services organisations and the community, please find below information regarding:

- Western Power's role in the Waroona Bushfire Incident Management, including interactions with emergency services organisations
- Description of electricity supply to the towns of Waroona, Hamel, Yarloop, Cookernup and Preston Beach prior to the Waroona Bushfire
- The sequence of events regarding the Waroona Bushfire, including where supply was affected in the specific areas of Waroona, Hamel, Yarloop, Cookernup and Preston Beach
- Details of assets lost as a result of the Waroona Bushfire
- Policies and procedures regarding the role of Western Power during a bushfire and/or access to electrical networks during a bushfire
- Application of relevant national standards to Western Power's delivery of electricity services

Further to these specific queries and in view of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, Western Power has made an additional submission regarding Western Power's assistance to and management of those affected by the fire in the local community.

In view of the complex nature of this information, Western Power is available to provide a briefing to yourself with subject matter experts if this is of value to the Inquiry process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate and please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information regarding the below information.

Yours sincerely,



PAUL ITALIANO
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
WESTERN POWER

Western Power Response

Overview

Western Power is charged with a significant role during bushfire events, both in its support of wide-ranging emergency response efforts and in supporting affected communities returning to their homes. Due to the size of the network, this can result in an enormous deployment of resources to meet the operational and logistical requirements associated with the response. This is in part affected by the wide range of legislative and emergency management protocols which Western Power must comply with during a bushfire.

During any emergency event, Western Power is a Support Agency with co-ordination undertaken by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) as the Controlling Agency. This is in line with the State Emergency Management Plan for Fire (*Westplan – Fire*). Interactions between DFES and Western Power are additionally governed by the *Bushfire Investigation Protocol for Possible Electricity Network Related Bushfire Incidents (2012)*, which relates to investigation and reporting on the cause of a bushfire incident. A copy of this protocol is attached to this submission. Western Power also has a communication protocol with DFES in these situations, which is also attached.

However Western Power must be mindful of broader legislative requirements that directly and indirectly govern its operations and management of emergency events.

At a high level, Western Power's rights, roles and responsibilities are laid out in the *Electricity Corporations Act (2005)*. This Act establishes Western Power's requirements to be safe, reliable and affordable, with the independent Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) responsible for holding the organisation to this promise. Subsidiary reporting requirements are agreed between the ERA and Western Power under the ERA's Electricity Compliance Reporting Manual, guiding the efficient operation of network operations. The ERA also reviews Western Power's technical licenses and standards which guide, for example, how Western Power replaces equipment post bushfires. This can have an impact on the types of equipment replacing damaged assets, with the need to balance the needs of a community with cost efficient practices.

The Public Utilities Office (PUO) establishes the guiding rules for the ERA and sets overall energy policy for the State. The PUO also undertakes an emergency management role as the Coordinator of Energy in the event of electricity supply disruptions. This role is governed by *Westplan – Electricity Supply Disruption*, and supported by *Westplan – Fire*. As part of its role during the Waroona Bushfire, Western Power supported the Coordinator of Energy by providing regular updates on its recovery and restoration efforts to the PUO.

EnergySafety is also a major regulator of Western Power. It comes under the responsibility of the Department of Commerce and is responsible for the technical and safety regulation of all the electrical and most of the gas industry in Western Australia. EnergySafety provided a crucial role post the bushfires in assisting Western Power's electrical inspectors confirm that reconnected houses and businesses were safe to be switched back on. This issue is explored more fully in the paper as an example of where resourcing issues can potentially delay reconnections in the event of major emergency events.

Other bodies such as the Environmental Protection Authority and WorkSafe set guidelines which determine how Western Power goes about its day-to-day work and ensures the safety of its workforce. This is a critical consideration during emergency events, ensuring that our employees are safe during times of significant time and emotional pressure.

Finally Western Power has a robust series of internal policies, including its Works Practice Manual that guides how and when crews are able to operate on the network. This includes restrictions on work during fire weather days, to ensure network and crew safety is maintained.

In 2015 the Minister for Energy announced an energy market review which has resulted in a number of intended changes for the WA energy industry and Western Power. A key change is the move from state-based to national regulation under the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). Western Power is currently preparing a regulatory submission to the AER and is supporting the Public Utilities Office led Electricity Market Review. This, however, should not materially affect the way Western Power responds to bushfires.

1) Description of electricity supply to the towns of Waroona, Hamel, Yarloop, Cookernup and Preston Beach prior to the Waroona Bushfire

The South West Interconnected System, or SWIS, is an isolated self-contained network that serves more than one million customers across a network area of 254,920 square kilometers. The network consists of over 41,000 transmission assets and over 770,000 distribution assets which enable electricity to flow from a large number of generators to consumers across over 100,300 kilometers of conductors. Western Power is responsible for maintaining and replacing these assets in a way that acceptably delivers a safe and reliable connection to electricity at the lowest cost to customers.

The network is a meshed series of high voltage transmission lines that are interconnected via terminals and sub-stations. Distribution to households occurs at lower voltages via feeders, which radiate out from sub-stations to service local communities. The network in the Waroona region operates on this basis, in addition to multiple transmission lines which traverse the region.

Both the transmission and distribution networks are regularly monitored to ensure electricity is delivered reliably to customers. The performance of these feeders is governed by Western Power's Access Arrangement and administered by the Economic Regulatory Authority (ERA). Service standard benchmarks are set for network performance based on the average number and duration of interruptions experienced by a customer for each electricity feeder type. The benchmarks focus on the average experience of customers on each feeder and mean that some customers will experience a below average performance, while others will receive outstanding performance. Western Power's commitment to improving reliability was reflected in our performance in 2014/15, where all 17 service standard benchmarks were achieved – the first time since 2006.

Electricity is supplied to the towns of Waroona, Hamel, Yarloop, Cookernup and Preston Beach through an overhead wood pole distribution network, with a three-phase backbone, and three-phase and single-phase spurs. Feeders in these towns are categorised as "rural short feeders" which have a route length of less than 200 kilometers.

Prior to the Waroona Bushfire, performance of the network in Yarloop and Preston Beach exceeded the rural short service standard benchmark, with a reduction in the number and frequency of network interruptions in these towns. Network performance in Hamel, Cookernup and Waroona did not meet the service standard benchmark for number and frequency of interruptions. Western Power is not aware of any systematic issues lowering the performance of the network in these areas. Most of the faults in these areas relate to interruption from vegetation and damage from third party machinery.

Please see **Attachment A** for more detailed information, including numbers of customers in each locality area, feeders and affected substations.

2) The sequence of events regarding the Waroona Bushfire, including where supply was affected in the specific areas of Waroona, Hamel, Yarloop, Cookernup and Preston Beach

The Western Power electricity network is designed with equipment to automatically detect and isolate faults, which is a key element of maintaining system security and commitment to safety. The majority of faults are temporary and result in no permanent damage to the network, with automatic restoration soon afterwards. About 30 percent of faults are more significant and supply is interrupted until the cause can be found and addressed.

It is important to note that during bushfire season, Western Power modifies settings that monitor the electricity network to make them more sensitive to faults. When there is a fault or other interference, the more sensitive settings ensure that power is interrupted faster than usual and the power will remain off instead of being automatically restored. This reduces the likelihood of starting a fire but results in more frequent outages that may last longer. On Fire Weather days, Western Power will not restore power until a crew has visually inspected the feeder and determine the cause of the fault. As a result, restoration times can be increased where Total Fire Bans and Vehicle Movement Bans are declared, and crews required to wait for bushfire conditions to ease before inspection can occur.

The Waroona Bushfire commenced on 6 January 2016. At 2am on the morning of 7 January 2016, Western Power's Network Operations Control Centre (NOCC) was contacted requesting that Western Power personnel attend the State Operations Centre with the bushfire categorised as "uncontrolled and uncontained". In the days that followed, multiple outages occurred on transmission and distribution lines traversing the bushfire zone, impacting local communities as well as more broadly affecting the South West of the Western Power network.

Eight transmission lines cross the bushfire zone, with one transmission terminal station located within the zone. These transmission lines traverse the South West, connecting the thermal power stations of the South West Country area to supply electricity to Perth regional areas, including the CBD and North Country.

Due to the height and predominantly steel construction of transmission tower assets, most of the transmission lines were not damaged and the majority of interruptions were for short periods of time. This was due to the operation of auto-reclosers on the transmission lines within a meshed network, allowing for near-immediate restoration of supply. Multiple short period outages of the transmission system occurred, but their impact was generally limited to distribution customers adjacent to the bushfire area. Further detail regarding the timing of these interruptions is available at **Attachment B**.

Towns within the bushfire zone are supplied by distribution substations at Wagerup and Coolup, fed by the wood pole Picton-Coolup and Picton-Busselton-Pinjarra-Kemerton transmission lines. The Picton-Coolup line was tripped off on 7 January 2016 at 8:25am and was returned back into service on 15 January 2016 at 19:41. Damage to a section of the Picton-Busselton-Pinjarra-Kemerton transmission line was isolated on 7 January 2016 and re-energised at 18:30 on the same day.

These outages impacted Preston Beach, Dwellingup, Coolup, Lake Clifton, Waroona, Pinjarra and surrounding areas, with restoration time impacted by the magnitude of repair work to be undertaken in the area. The Coolup substation supplied by this line was not impacted by the fire. The Wagerup distribution substation was directly located in the fire zone, with all distribution feeders from this substation extensively damaged. Further detail regarding distribution feeder interruptions is available at **Attachment C**.

Western Power provided the towns of Waroona, Preston Beach and Hamel with low and high voltage emergency generator sets during the incident in areas deemed essential for community support. A further emergency generator was installed near Harvey Beef to provide support in the event the Harvey townsite became isolated from the network, or the network required additional support.

Western Power notes that faults due to the bushfire impacted critical infrastructure sites, including those held by the Water Corporation, Telstra, Main Roads and NBN Co. Western Power understands that private generation is installed, maintained and operated at these sites by these customers. This generation is not the responsibility of Western Power, and it is not aware of the location of these generators or when they are used, including during emergency events.

The Water Corporation has visibility of outages affecting their assets through their operational control room. Western Power provides additional information regarding outages through an online real-time portal, including time for restoration. The respective control rooms of Water Corporation and Western Power have direct contact with each other, and are able to advise on priorities for restoration for critical infrastructure. Western Power has also provided online real-time portals to Telstra, Main Roads and the Health Department, which provide them with additional information regarding outages that affect their assets.

Western Power also notes that it undertook pre-emptive de-energisation of identified feeders in consultation with DFES to support the emergency response effort and maintain system security. This was managed by the Western Power liaison officer, DFES local incident management site personnel and the Network Controller site support.

3) Western Power's role in the Waroona Bushfire Incident Management, including interactions with emergency services organisations

Western Power has two distinct phases of engagement with emergency services during a bushfire emergency: Emergency Response and Emergency Recovery. The majority of its engagement with the emergency services, such as DFES, takes place during the Emergency Response period. During the Waroona Bushfire, Western Power had in place three liaison officers providing support to DFES at the Incident Command Centre, Regional Operations Centre and State Operations Centre. Through these officers, Western Power undertook ongoing engagement with DFES to discuss issues including incident response, site access, escalation and recovery works. This included directives regarding the switching of response areas as the fire moved through the bushfire zone, and any emergency isolations in aid of the Emergency Response effort. Western Power also seeks DFES' approval to re-enter fire zones as part of recovery to ensure the safety of our employees.

Throughout the event, Western Power maintained communications with DFES via the above liaison officers, as well as through the Network Operations Control Centre, with a direct line provided to DFES officers. Western Power's presence at the State Operation Centre enabled timely engagement with representatives with other emergency services providers, and promoted interagency communication. All agencies involved in the emergency response were also provided direct access into Western Power's Network Control Room.

There was additional ongoing engagement with DFES at various executive and other office levels throughout the event in order to ensure a swift response to a continually evolving situation. As a result no centralised record of individual engagements with DFES is maintained during emergency events.

4) Western Power assets impacted by Waroona Bushfire

Between the commencement of the fire on 6 January 2016 and DFES demobilisation from the Waroona area on 14 January 2016, 993 distribution poles and 121 transmission poles were damaged, along with 107 transformers and 50 kilometers of overhead conductor over almost 70,000 hectares. An approximate assessment of damage to assets was conducted on 15 January 2016 once Western Power was able to gain access to the bushfire zone, with power restored to almost all of the 3,500 affected customers within three weeks of being granted access to the site. There was a further flare up around 18 January 2016 near an already remediated section of the network which resulted in damage and repair to an additional three poles.

Due to the extent of assets impacted, the restoration effort faced by Western Power was unprecedented – more than three times larger than any other fire event the utility has managed before, at an initially estimated cost of \$26 million. Overall, more than 80 Western Power trucks were deployed and around 300 employees involved in the restoration effort. Not all damaged assets were replaced like-for-like, with Western Power replacing the network to meet current design standards and exploring new and smarter network build options to improve safety and security. This led to the undergrounding of 6.5 kilometres of the network between Forrest Highway and the outskirts of Preston Beach townsite, enhancing the reliability for this area. This assessment of network design opportunities was undertaken with a view of the ERA's requirement for efficient investments, and with a view to restoring customers to normal electricity supply in a prudent and timely manner.

5) Policies and procedures regarding the role of Western Power during a bushfire and/or access to electrical networks during a bushfire

Western Power's operations are governed by an extensive series of policies, standard operating procedures and guidelines to ensure optimal management of the distribution and transmission systems, including during a bushfire emergency. These processes leverage off past internal feedback, as well as external inputs. Following each incident, Western Power's Emergency Response Function conducts Post Implementation Reviews to ensure continuous improvement is incorporated and implemented.

Copies of the following documents are included with this submission for your reference.

- Standard Operating Procedure 123 – Fire Weather Days Mitigation Scheme Activation / Deactivation
- Standard Operating Procedure 377 – Restoration of Transmission Lines
- Standard Operating Procedure 122 – Bushfire Management
- Standard Operating Procedure 164 – Restoration of Feeders and Reclosers
- Standard Operating Procedure 166 – Unplanned Switching Program Schedule
- Guideline 170 – Transmission Plant Restoration
- Guideline 370 – Contingency Plan: Type 4 Transmission Network Contingencies
- Guideline 371 – Contingency Plan: Distribution Network Contingencies
- State Emergency Management Plan for Electricity Supply Disruption (*Westplan – Electricity Supply Disruption*)
- State Emergency Management Plan for Fire (*Westplan – Fire*)
- Bushfire Investigation Protocol for possible electricity network-related bushfire incidents (2012)
- Western Power Works Practice Manual

6) Application of relevant national standards to Western Power's delivery of electricity services

The Western Power network is designed in accordance with planning criteria contained in the Technical Rules. These Technical Rules detail the technical requirements to be met by Western Power on the transmission and distribution systems and by Users who connect facilities to the transmission and distribution systems. This includes standards, procedures and planning criteria governing the construction and operation of an electricity network.

The Technical Rules are governed by the Economic Regulatory Authority, with regular review to ensure the Rules meet industry best practice. This includes consideration of National Standards as guidelines for determination of industry best practice, managed by Standards Australia. Western Power also refers to National Standards in its management of the network to ensure industry best practice is employed within its operations. Currently 280 National Standards are referred to by Western Power in the operation of the network, with a list of these Standards available at **Attachment D**. Due to the volume of these documents a copy of each Standard is not provided with this response.

With regards to bushfire mitigation, Western Power refers to AS/NZS 7000 for construction of new overhead lines and AS/NZS ISO 31000 for risk assessment processes.

Please note that Standards are designed to be applicable to new equipment and processes, and are not intended to be retrospectively applied to the routine maintenance and assessment of old equipment. Western Power applies current Standards for the replacement of all new equipment.

7) Western Power's assistance to and management of those affected by the fire in the local community

During the Emergency Recovery, Western Power had extensive engagement with the community through a combined response from its Emergency Response, Customer Service, Community, Communications and Media teams. Western Power's Emergency Management processes have established key roles within these teams to ensure the public are informed and their expectations managed in the event of an emergency, particularly as relates to restoration of electricity supply. Western Power is not involved in communication of evacuation procedures, which are managed by DFES.

Western Power has a formal process to support reconnection of houses impacted by bushfire activities, lead and managed by its Electrical Systems Inspection Manager. Properties within the bushfire zone are inspected to determine whether or not they are electrically safe, and tagged to indicate whether they are safe to be re-energised or require additional repair. This tagging process is tracked and documented by external electrical inspectors, engaged by Western Power. During the Waroona Bushfire, Western Power waived electricity reconnection fees for households at an average cost of \$500 per reconnection.

An event of this scale is expected to result in a long and difficult recovery process for the impacted communities. Western Power established a responsive and flexible community engagement approach aimed at understanding each community's issues from the beginning of the emergency and best enable the business to respond appropriately as the community moved through the different stages of shock, anger and grief. This included a daily on-site presence by Western Power personnel available to community members to seek information regarding electricity supply.

In response to requests from the community, Western Power also undertook a significant effort to distribute approximately \$300,000 worth of fire damaged, but still structurally sound, wood poles and other hardware to farmers. These donations were warmly received, and will be used by farmers for fence replacements and other necessary repair work.

8) Lessons learnt from previous bushfire emergencies

In 2013 Western Power developed the Emergency Response function to look at our end-to-end response to any emergency situation impacting our network. This Function is dedicated to managing Western Power's emergency response during operationally critical situations, as well as ensures continuous improvement in the business' emergency response practices.

The Function works alongside the rest of the business during and following each emergency, with support provided during the Parkerville, Bullsbrook, Northcliffe and Waroona bushfires plus all the minor events and storms. From each of these events and internal "lessons learnt" sessions, Western Power identifies key learnings and areas for improvement. This feedback is coupled with studying best practise and learning from organisations such as Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI), DFES, WAPol and the Western Australian bushfire reviews undertaken since 2001. This approach has led to the development of a highly well regarded and effective approach to emergency response, resulting in what the organisation considers to be the successful management of the Waroona Bushfire.

The Waroona bushfire also presented some additional challenges that Western Power would like to highlight, in particular those relating to subsidiary reporting requirements under the ERA's Electricity Compliance Reporting Manual. One of these requirements relates to the notification period that Western Power must provide registered life-support equipment (LSE) customers three days notification before their power is due to be interrupted. Failure to notify constitutes a Type 1 breach under the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers (2014)* (the Code) and the ERA is notified.

Due to the need for accelerated restoration of the bushfire area, Western Power was unable to notify an LSE customer in the Hamel region within this notice period for works taking place on 19 January 2016. In light of the emergency, and the broader consequences for the whole community, Western Power decided to proceed with restoration work on the designated date to restore power to a larger number of customers as soon as practicable, despite the potential for a Type 1 breach. Western Power liaised closely with the LSE customer impacted regarding energisation options who was satisfied with this approach yet, in compliance with the Code, the ERA was notified.

This situation highlights a gap in the Code where no Type 1 exemption is available for necessary interruptions to restore electricity supply to LSE customers who have lost power as a result of an emergency, and where there is no threat to the life support customer. In Western Power's opinion this should be regarded as an exceptional circumstance, and is discussing this regulatory reform to address this discrepancy with the ERA at present.

ATTACHMENT A

Network Performance of Bushfire Affected Areas

Locality	Customers	Network feeders	Benchmark		Actual		Networks supplying the locality (percentage of locality customers)	
			SAIDI	SAIFI	SAIDI	SAIFI	Feeders	Substations
Cookernup	254	Rural short (93%), Rural long (7%)	261.1	2.74	1136	2.40	WGP 512.0 HARVEY (93%), MRR 534.0 BINNINGUP (7%)	Wagerup (93%), Marriot Rd (7%)
Hamel	126	Rural short	227.8	2.61	291	3.68	WGP 515.0 DRAKESBROOK	Wagerup
Preston Beach	377	Rural short	227.8	2.61	29	1.01	CLP 502.0 CLIFTON	Coolup
Waroona	1502	Rural short	227.8	2.61	449	4.13	WGP 515.0 DRAKESBROOK (83%), WGP 508.0 WAROONA (14%), CLP 502.0 CLIFTON (3%)	Wagerup (97%), Coolup (3%)
Yarloop	395	Rural short (98%), Rural long (2%)	237.9	2.65	224	0.75	WGP 512.0 HARVEY (98%), MRR 534.0 BINNINGUP (2%)	Wagerup (98%)

ATTACHMENT B

Transmission Line Interruptions

The bushfire impact on the transmission network was felt through multiple outages on the following lines:

Date	Line	Interruption times
6 January	Muja-Northern Terminal	20:22
7 January	Muja-Northern Terminal	12:18, 13:16
	Kwinana-Kemerton-Oakley	16:57, 22:25, 23:30, 23:41
	Shots-Southern Terminal-Oakley	03:03, 06:52, 11:09, 11:12, 11:15, 15:39, 15:41, 21:30, 21:58, 23:41
	Landwehr-Shots-Kemerton	22:20, 22:39, 23:41
	Landwehr-Southern Terminal	16:24, 16:38, 22:44
	Picton-Busselton-Pinjarra-Kemerton	3:12, 03:41, 04:13, 04:50, 07:16
	Picton-Coolup	03:04, 04:30, 08:25
	Wagerup-Landwehr	09:39
	Wagerup-Worsley	15:43, 15:51
8 January	Kenwick-Kemerton-Oakley	01:06, 08:33, 11:01, 14:06, 14:16, 15:03, 16:32
	Landwehr-Shots-Kemerton	02:20, 08:33, 08:36, 13:50, 14:07, 14:13, 14:15
	Landwehr-Southern Terminal	15:03
	Shots-Landwehr	13:01, 15:02, 15:18

ATTACHMENT C

Distribution Line Interruptions

Date	Time	Event
7/1	03:07	Wagerup circuit breaker 515.0 (Drakes Brook feeder) trips, impacting 13534 customers including customers in Waroona and Hamel. The cause of this outage is the Waroona fire and the feeder is left off until 23 Jan 2016 with customers supplied through other feeders during this time.
7/1	07:20	Wagerup feeder 512.0 is turned off to allow isolation of the network past W121 in Johnston Road near Anderson Street, Yarloop,] and turned back on at 08:18. This affects supply to 51 customers.]
7/1	08:18	Wagerup circuit breaker 512.0 is reclosed and this section of the network de-energised. This affects customers within the Yarloop area, including Bunnings Yarloop and a Water Corporation site at 500 Boundary Rd Wagerup. Water Corporation is provided a real time notification regarding this fault.
7/1	08:25	Picton-Coolup feeder trips, impacting 1727 customers in Preston Beach, Dwellingup, Coolup, Lake Clifton, Waroona and Pinjarra.
7/1	08:32	Drop out fuse WH13/1 is removed affecting a small number of customers in the Wagerup area due to encroaching fire, including a WA Police licence radio site.
7/1	14:42	Wagerup feeder 508.0 trips due to Waroona fire and remains off. This feeder interrupts supply to Waroona and surrounding areas.
7/1	15:26	Between 15:26 and 20:44, Western Power connects six low voltage generators to the Waroona town site network, supplying the majority of the town. These generators are in place until normal town supply is restored.
7/1	16:04	Wagerup feeder 512.0 trips due to encroaching fire, affecting customers in the Yarloop, Cookernup and Harvey areas. This includes a Water Corporation site at Unit P, 2 Johnston Rd Yarloop. Water Corporation is provided a real time notification regarding this fault.
7/1	17:21	Western Power connects a low voltage generator to the Hamel town site, supplying 117 customers.
7/1	19:22	Recloser WH158 is turned off to isolate the broader network from the bushfire affected area. This recloser is left off for most of 8/1 to prevent overloading the Margaret River feeders, avoiding damage to these feeders and causing temporary loss of supply to customers.
8/1	09:00	Network Operations carries out distribution switching to supply areas north of the fire through the Pinjarra and Mandurah distribution load area.
8/1	15:34	Recloser WH248 is restored to supply 98 customers in the Harvey region
8/1	15:58	Pole top switch disconnecter P480 is restored to feed Harvey from the Margret River substation, restoring 892 customers in the Harvey town. The remaining 557 customers in the bushfire region were not restored, including those in the Cookernup region.
9/1	17:00	Western Power connects a low voltage generator to supply Preston Beach Resort.
10/1	11:00	Western Power connects a low voltage generator to supply the Preston Beach town area, supplying 393 customers.
15/1	19:41	Picton-Coolup transmission line restored, supplying the Coolup substation
18/1	16:06	Restoration of Cookernup town and majority of the surrounding areas
24/1	15:54	Commencement of Yarloop network restoration
1/2	12:00	All generators in Preston Beach area removed, and the town returned to normal network supply. Restoration of network commenced at 07:30 and last generator removed at 10:33, with all customers restored by 12:00)
12/2	11:52	Completion of Yarloop network restoration

ATTACHMENT D

National standards relevant to Western Power's delivery of electricity services

AS 1025	AS 1720	AS 2865
AS 1033	AS 1725	AS 2870
AS 1100	AS 1726	AS 3007
AS 1101	AS 1742	AS 3011
AS 1103	AS 1743	AS 3147
AS 1104	AS 1744	AS 3155
AS 1111	AS 1746	AS 3198
AS 1112	AS 1767	AS 3500
AS 1154	AS 1768	AS 3566.1-2002
AS 1154.3	AS 1796	AS 3600
AS 1155	AS 1798	AS 3607
AS 1170.2	AS 1824	AS 3609-2005
AS 1199.1:2003	AS 1852	AS 3610
AS 1203	AS 1856	AS 3678
AS 1204	AS 1881	AS 3679
AS 1214	AS 1882	AS 3700
AS 1222	AS 1883	AS 3702
AS 1237	AS 1905	AS 3745
AS 1243	AS 1906	AS 3754
AS 1247	AS 1931	AS 3766
AS 1265	AS 1939	AS 3818
AS 1275	AS 1940	AS 3818.11
AS 1289	AS 1940-2004	AS 3822
AS 1304	AS 2024	AS 3823
AS 1306	AS 2067	AS 3850
AS 1307	AS 2082	AS 3865
AS 1319	AS 2159	AS 3891
AS 1359	AS 2184	AS 3894
AS 1379	AS 2204	AS 3947.3
AS 1391	AS 2209	AS 3959
AS 1394	AS 2279	AS 3983
AS 1397	AS 2331	AS 3990
AS 1450	AS 2373	AS 3995
AS 1531	AS 2374	AS 3999
AS 1553	AS 2419	AS 4044
AS 1562	AS 2423	AS 4100
AS 1580	AS 2467	AS 4133
AS 1604	AS 2467:2008	AS 4154
AS 1627	AS 2589	AS 4282
AS 1650	AS 2629	AS 4291
AS 1654	AS 2650	AS 4312
AS 1657	AS 2699	AS 4396
AS 1683.26	AS 2700	AS 4398
AS 1717	AS 2841	AS 4435
	AS 2848	AS 4436

AS 4457	AS/NZS 1559	AS/NZS 4382
AS 4506	AS/NZS 1574	AS/NZS 4383
AS 4600	AS/NZS 1594	AS/NZS 4396
AS 4663-2004	AS/NZS 1604	AS/NZS 4534
AS 4678	AS/NZS 1660	AS/NZS 4586
AS 4680	AS/NZS 1768	AS/NZS 4600
AS 4702	AS/NZS 1865	AS/NZS 4671
AS 4707	AS/NZS 1891	AS/NZS 4676
AS 4708	AS/NZS 2053	AS/NZS 4677
AS 4741	AS/NZS 2067-2008	AS/NZS 4680
AS 4777	AS/NZS 2293	AS/NZS 4791
AS 4799	AS/NZS 2312	AS/NZS 4792
AS 4853	AS/NZS 2344	AS/NZS 4805
AS 4859	AS/NZS 2344:1997	AS/NZS 4853
AS 5100	AS/NZS 2373	AS/NZS 4961
AS 5577-2013	AS/NZS 2648	AS/NZS 5000
AS 60038	AS/NZS 2650	AS/NZS 5033
AS 60044	AS/NZS 2857	AS/NZS 60137
AS 60076	AS/NZS 2878	AS/NZS 60265
AS 60269	AS/NZS 2890	AS/NZS 60479.1
AS 60529	AS/NZS 2947.1:1999	AS/NZS 60598
AS 60947	AS/NZS 2947.4:1999	AS/NZS 60695.11.10:2001
AS 60947.1-2004	AS/NZS 3000	AS/NZS 60695.2.10:2001
AS 60947.7.1:2004	AS/NZS 3000:2007	AS/NZS 60695.2.11:2001
AS 61330	AS/NZS 3008	AS/NZS 60840
AS 62217-2007	AS/NZS 3010:2005	AS/NZS 60950.1:2011
AS 62231-2007	AS/NZS 3013	AS/NZS 61000
AS 62271	AS/NZS 3017	AS/NZS 61000.3.7.2001
AS 62271.200	AS/NZS 3100	AS/NZS 7000
AS 62271.301	AS/NZS 3190	AS/NZS CISPR 15
AS IEC 60720-2007	AS/NZS 3191	AS/NZS ISO 14001
AS ISO 1000	AS/NZS 3439	AS/NZS ISO 19011
AS ISO 1302	AS/NZS 3439.1:2002	AS/NZS ISO 9000
AS ISO 13822	AS/NZS 3439.5:2009	AS/NZS ISO 9001
AS/ACIF S009	AS/NZS 3560	CJC 4-2000
AS/NZS 1026	AS/NZS 3661.2:1994	CJC 5:1997 - SAA HB101
AS/NZS 1101	AS/NZS 3678	CJC 5-1997
AS/NZS 1102	AS/NZS 3679	HB 100
AS/NZS 1125	AS/NZS 3750	HB 101
AS/NZS 1158	AS/NZS 3798	HB 102
AS/NZS 1163	AS/NZS 3808	HB 153
AS/NZS 1170	AS/NZS 3835.1:2006	HB 187
AS/NZS 1252	AS/NZS 3835.2:2006	HB 219
AS/NZS 1328	AS/NZS 3845	HB 223
AS/NZS 1337	AS/NZS 3947	HB 264
AS/NZS 1365	AS/NZS 3947.3:2001	HB 331
AS/NZS 1376	AS/NZS 3996	
AS/NZS 1429	AS/NZS 4026	
AS/NZS 1465	AS/NZS 4063	
AS/NZS 1554	AS/NZS 4325	



WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE
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Dear Mr Ferguson

WA POLICE SUBMISSION TO THE WAROONA BUSHFIRE SPECIAL INQUIRY

Thank you for your invitation to make a submission to this special inquiry on behalf of Western Australia (WA) Police. This submission focuses primarily on the role of WA Police as a combat agency supporting the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) and Department of Parks and Wildlife (P&W) in the Waroona Fire Complex, rather than, in any detail, on Commissioner's additional role as State Emergency Coordinator.

Bushfire Inquiries

WA Police has been involved in progressing outcomes of previous bushfire reviews in Western Australia through its membership on the State Emergency Management Committee and sub-committees, the Interagency Bushfires Committee, the Bushfire Review Implementation Group and other associated processes.

Overview of the WA Police role in bushfire response

WA Police supports the fire agencies, on request by assisting with a number of activities as outlined in Westplan Fire, including evacuation, traffic management and cordons, in accordance with legislative provisions (primarily the *Bush Fires Act 1954* and *Emergency Management Act 2005*), State emergency management policies (particularly SEMP 4.1, 4.8 and 4.9) and relevant State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) guides (Traffic Management during Emergencies Guide 2015 and Community Evacuation in Emergencies Guide 2014). WA Police air assets may also assist with night-time fire mapping on request.

Through a series of internal reviews, legal consultation and workshops, WA Police refined its approach to some of these activities, to address concerns about officer safety and role ambiguity. This was presented to commissioned ranks and officers-in-charge across the agency throughout October and November 2015. This approach was also communicated to the fire agencies at a strategic level prior to the bushfire season. An on-line bushfire safety and arson awareness course is available to all police officers.

Command structures (see figure 1)

- The initial police response in support of a bushfire will be undertaken by the police station responsible for an affected area; however, as an incident escalates, further command structures may be established at the District level.
- Teams comprising a Superintendent (as the Police Commander) and an Emergency Management (EM) Advisor are placed on-call for the primary bushfire/cyclone season (December to March) to deploy to the DFES State Operations Centre (SOC) for 'high' level 2 / level 3 emergencies requiring significant police resources.
- Where warranted, a strategic level police command team may be deployed at the Maylands Incident Control Centre (MICC), led by a commissioned officer at the rank of Commander, whereupon the Superintendent at the SOC will become the Deputy Police Commander.

Operational response

- Fire agencies may request assistance with specific tasks from WA Police which may be accepted, modified or declined based on risk assessment, appropriate legislative provisions, achievability and appropriateness for police action.
- Police officers may undertake tasks to support the controlling agency in areas with physical conditions appropriate to their level of personal protective equipment (PPE) and training (i.e. absence of embers, smoke, radiant heat).
- WA Police may undertake tasks to support a directed evacuation, where the message is clear that people must leave/stay out of an area at risk.
- WA Police will not use force for a failure to comply with a direction to evacuate, other than in exceptional circumstances; those failing to comply may be committing an offence and be subject to prosecution¹.
- Where an evacuation is voluntary, the specific circumstances of the situation will impact on whether tasks are deemed appropriate for WA Police involvement and will be considered on a case by case basis.

¹ A police officer may use force to ensure compliance with a direction to evacuate under section 76(2) of the *Emergency Management Act 2005*, although whether such force should be used is a matter of discretion. There is no equivalent power under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, however it might be open for a police officer to arrest for an offence under section 14C(1) (failure to comply with a direction) under section 128(3) of the *Criminal Investigation Act 2006*. Neither Act allows for an exemption to a direction based on pecuniary interest.

- Assistance with planning (e.g. traffic management, evacuation) may be undertaken by WA Police jointly with the controlling agency where the controlling agency has identified an area at risk. All plans are subject to sign off by the Incident Controller (IC).
- Vehicle control points (VCPs) to support smooth ingress/egress of vehicles and/or protect firefighters inside an affected area may be undertaken by WA Police until alternative methods can be implemented by the controlling agency.
- VCPs to keep people out of an area and prevent their return should they leave, may be undertaken for a directed evacuation, subject to minimum standards for officer safety (e.g. two officers and a vehicle with two means of communication, two escape routes and appropriate physical conditions).
- Police officers will move a VCP location should physical conditions change and should withdraw officers from all activities in an area predicted to be impacted by fire no later than one hour prior to time of predicted impact.

WA Police involvement in the Waroona Bushfire

The provision of support to DFES and P&W for the Waroona bushfire involved a significant and complex operation, known within WA Police as Operation Murray, with a police command structure in place from 06/01/16 until 19/01/16, when the fire was downgraded to a level 1 incident.

Due to the scale of the emergency, Operation Murray saw the activation of a strategic level police command team at the MICC, a Deputy Police Commander and EM Advisor at the SOC, operational level police command teams at Mundaring (initially), Waroona and Bunbury, and tactical police command teams as required. Across the duration of the police operation, a large number of police officers undertook roles within one of these command structures, in addition to officers involved directly in operational activities on scene, e.g. as VCP operators.

As stated previously, WA Police assists the controlling agency with relevant aspects of their response and needs to establish clarity of tasking to assess requests for officer safety, achievability and appropriateness for police response. This was achieved either through completion of a Request for Assistance form or, when this was not achievable (e.g. due to time available), in conversation with the IC.

WA Police assisted with tasks primarily around traffic management and VCPs, support to 'voluntary evacuations', other evacuation preparation (i.e. there were no directed evacuations) and public reassurance patrols of fire affected areas. The WA Police social media platform was also provided to support the controlling agency with public reassurance to counter misinformation about reports of 'looting.'

Traffic management/VCPs

- WA Police developed a number of 'Interim Traffic Management Plans' throughout the operation on behalf of, and for endorsement by, the fire agency IC. These plans focussed on police resources and instructions for refusing/allowing access at police managed VCPs, with inclusion of VCPs operated by Main Roads WA later in the incident.
- These IC endorsed plans include instructions for police regarding the direction to be given to the public, e.g. 'no access permitted', conditions for allowing access, e.g. 'access is prohibited unless authorised by DFES or P&W' actions required for any breaches, e.g. 'obtain details of vehicle of interest and forward to the nearest local policing team for action'.
- The primary purpose (i.e. mission) for these VCPs was to minimise community members' risk of entering the fire zone and fire affected areas through controlled access points from major traffic routes.
- The controlling agency's traffic management cell at Waroona had integrated maps of all VCPs/road closures (i.e. WA Police, Main Roads and local government/contractors).
- In the future, WA Police would support an overarching integrated traffic management plan across the incident (i.e. encompassing the IC's intention, strategies for light/heavy haulage traffic and activities tasked to all partners in traffic management, etc).
- DFES are trialling a restricted access permit system which was utilised to some extent for the Waroona bushfire. Authorised access permit exemptions might be issued to particular classes of person, e.g. Western Power, Water Corporation and Main Roads or their contactors, with all other persons to apply for an access permit to be determined on a case by case basis. Permits issued by DFES or P&W were inspected by VCP staff. Members of the public who were not exempt were directed to the 'public access team' to apply for a permit.

Evacuation related activity

- Police officers were pre-deployed via the police command structures to be available on standby for evacuation duties close to townships prior to formal requests for tasking from the controlling agency.
- In accordance with the IC's task requests, police officers undertook doorstop notifications for residents to leave for a safer place from some areas identified as under threat.
- There were challenges to the achievability of some of these tasks, due to the level of information available to confirm the exact location of this fast moving fire and the time available prior to predicted fire impact once tasking was requested. This had the potential to impact officer safety but was effectively managed.

- Whilst the controlling agency is responsible for maps for the response (with DFES, for example, developing and distributing maps for Wagerup), WA Police were proactive in the preparation of sectorised townsite maps of towns potentially under threat during the progression of the fire to assist police if tasked at short notice to undertake an evacuation. This was highlighted as something which would be of benefit to have available as a standard resource via the local government and their local EM arrangements.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this submission. Please let me know if you require any further information regarding the above, along with any matters that may arise for response through the Special Inquiry process.

The contact point for WA Police in relation to the Special Inquiry is Commander Jon Tuttle. He may be contacted at jon.tuttle@police.wa.gov.au or 9323 5601.

Yours sincerely



G E DREIBERGS APM
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
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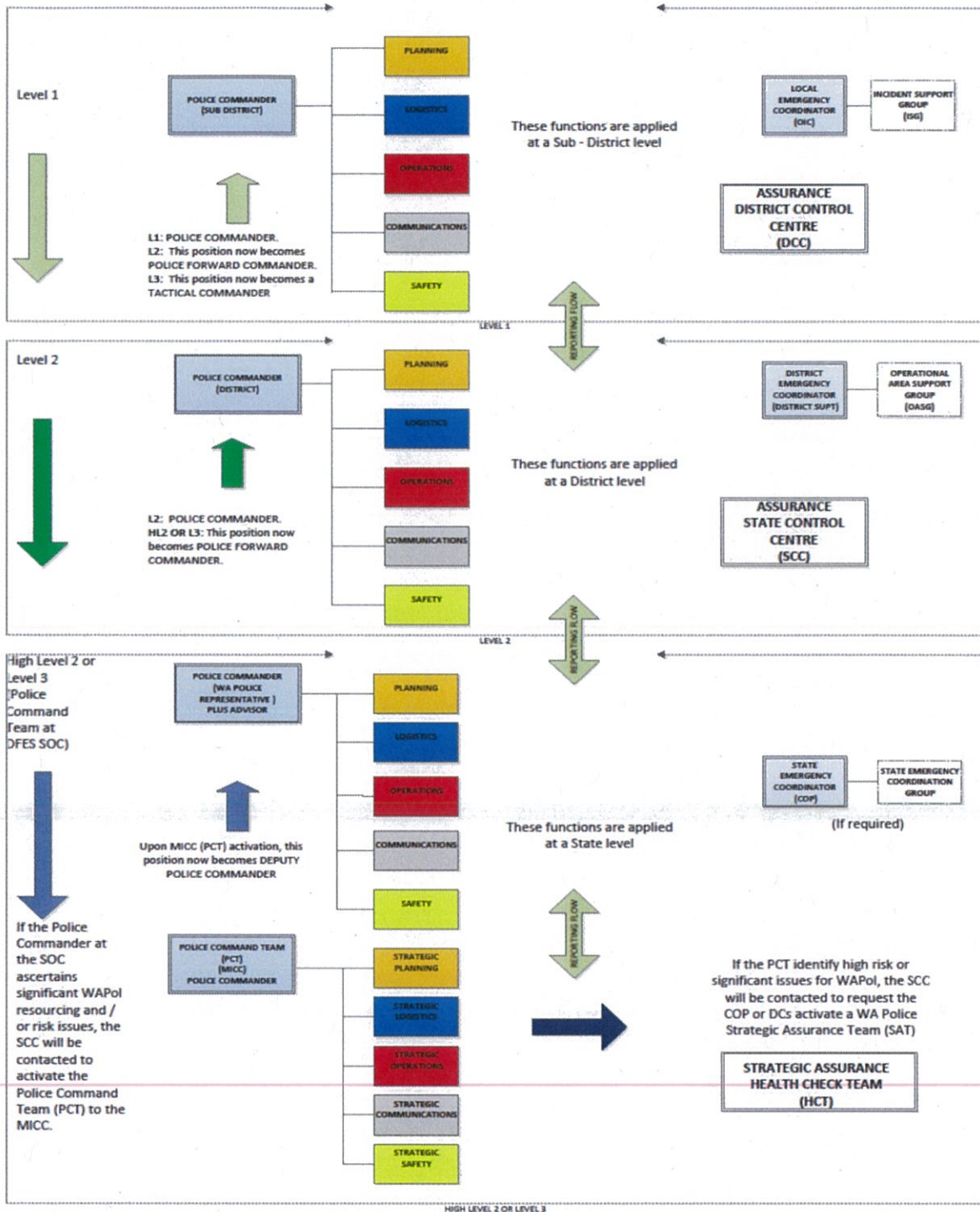


Figure 1: Police Command Structures for Bushfire 2015/16