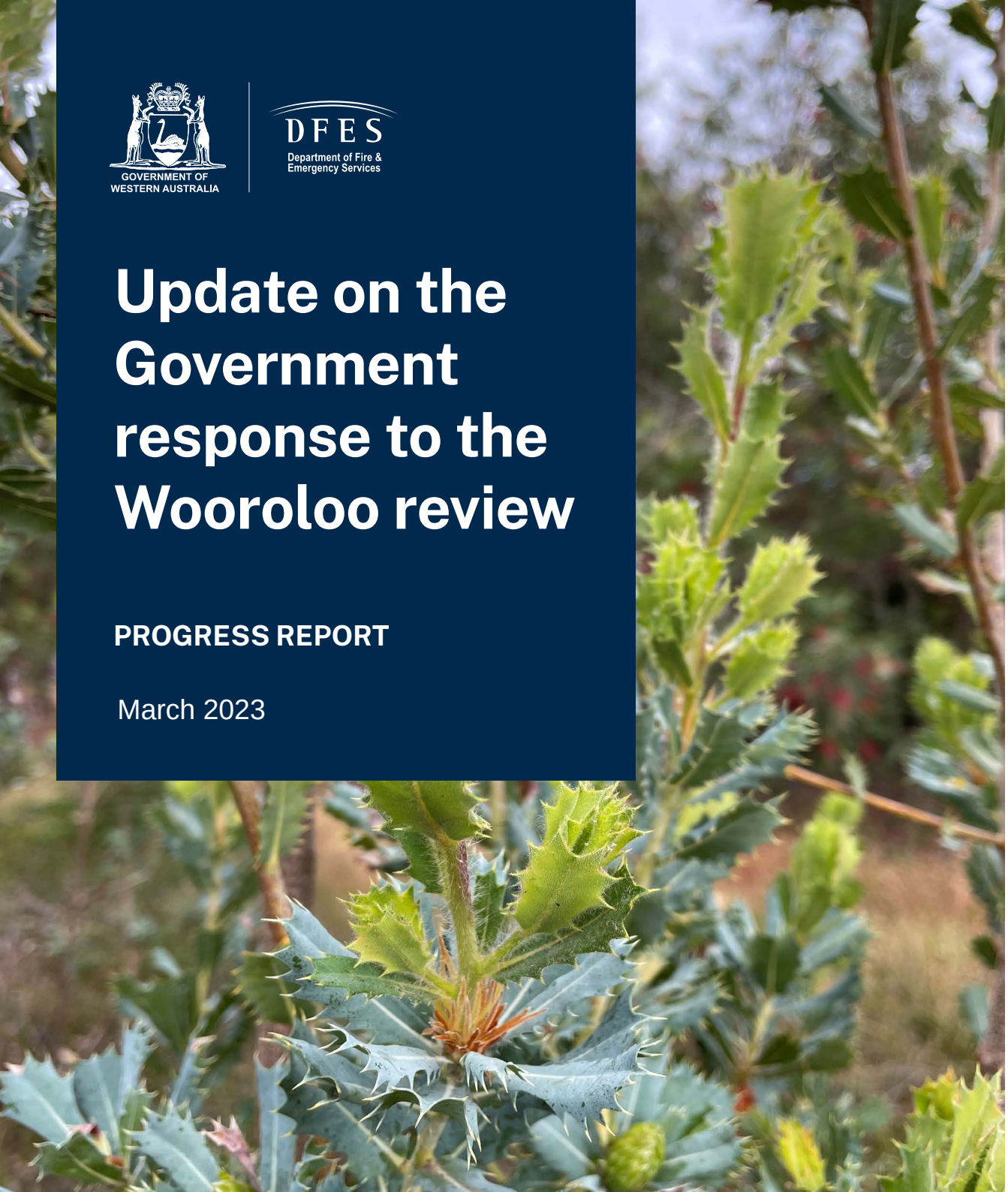


GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DFES
Department of Fire & Emergency Services

Update on the Government response to the Wooroloo review

PROGRESS REPORT

March 2023

Contents

Recommendation 1
Recommendation 2
Recommendation 3
Recommendation 4
Recommendation 5
Recommendation 6
Recommendation 7
Recommendation 8
Recommendation 9
Recommendation 10
Recommendation 11
Recommendation 12
Recommendation 13

RECOMMENDATION 1

Consideration of a dedicated Perth Hills Incident Management Facility

Project description

This recommendation was noted by the State Government – acknowledging the benefits of enhancing incident management capacity in the Perth Hills region yet recognising the significant analysis and consultation that would be required to enable such an investment.

DFES is leading the first stage of this analysis, comprising an evaluation of three shortlisted sites that could potentially meet requirements for the Perth Hills region. A final recommendation on the most suitable site, building and equipment configurations will then be made to Government.

This Options Analysis will be presented for consideration in budgetary processes, after which the State Government will determine the next level of detail required and any associated timeframes.

Contact: Executive Manager, Asset Planning and Services c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Milestones 1, 2 and 3 were completed between July and late 2022. Internal agency feedback was provided on Stage 1 of the Options Analysis in December.

Work is now well underway on Stage 2 of the Options Analysis which will look at the feasibility of shortlisted locations in the Perth Hills Region. This is on track for completion in early 2023.

Concurrent with Stage 2, DFES is also exploring options to improve existing mobile Incident Control Centre (ICC) functionality and resourcing. This work has been directly informed by Stage 1 of the Options Analysis.

Project progress

Establish project working group	Scope ICC requirements and analysis criteria	Stage 1 of Options Analysis to consider ICC configurations	Stage 2 of Options Analysis to consider possible ICC locations	Present final Options Analysis to Government
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	IN PROGRESS	
Jul 2022	Sep 2022	Nov 2022	Mar 2023	Apr 2023

RECOMMENDATION 2

Enhanced and integrated community engagement programs for bushfire

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government. The Review recommended increasing the focus on landowners in high bushfire-prone areas implementing risk mitigation strategies and ensuring they are prepared for an extended stay without support following a bushfire.

DFES aims to integrate its community engagement program with the bushfire risk-management planning program (Recommendation 3), as these programs are highly complementary and together improve local communities' understanding and involvement in local bushfire prevention.

The enhanced Areas of Community Engagement Focus (ACEF) program will be tested with a pilot community, concurrent with enhanced bushfire risk-management planning processes. Evaluation of the pilot will inform future directions for the ACEF program.

Contact: Director, Community Preparedness Directorate, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

A review of the existing ACEF program is now complete and will guide further scoping work on opportunities to enhance the program.

The ACEF review has been considered against the evaluation of the Guidelines for Preparing a Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP guidelines) to ensure alignment of the complementary nature of these two projects.

Stakeholder consultation has commenced on recommendations for ACEF program improvements.

Next steps will include identification of possible pilot communities for trialling program improvements.

Project progress

RECOMMENDATION 3

Finalisation of enhanced DFES bushfire risk planning framework

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government and recognises the need to expedite the release of the enhanced Guidelines for Preparing a Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP guidelines). These guidelines were originally developed in 2015, with minor updates undertaken in recent years.

DFES is undertaking an extensive evaluation of the guidelines to ensure a contemporary, best-practice approach. The updated guidelines will improve bushfire risk assessment and treatment processes to better integrate government and community stakeholders. Increased community participation in planning processes will be a priority.

The updated guidelines will be implemented through local government planning processes, through 2023 and beyond.

Contact: Director, Office of Bushfire Risk Management, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Evaluation of the existing guidelines was completed mid-2022 and identified four main areas for potential improvements: planning process and integration, government and non-government stakeholder engagement, risk evaluation processes and metrics, and facilitating community involvement in the planning process.

These themes will guide the development of the updated guidelines. A dedicated project officer has been appointed to manage the development of updated guidelines.

Development of the updated guidelines is well underway with the commencement of initial cross agency engagement, along with briefings to a range of bushfire committees and stakeholders.

Project progress

Evaluate current BRMP Guidelines	Recruit dedicated DFES position to develop new BRMP guidelines	Develop updated BRMP guidelines	Commence implementation of BRMP guidelines with local governments	Monitor performance; review and update accordingly
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	IN PROGRESS		
Jul 2022	Sep 2022	Mar 2023	Jul 2023	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 4

Establishment of bushfire mitigation crews

Project description

The Wooroloo Review recommended the establishment of dedicated bushfire mitigation crews to work with local bushfire brigades in implementing mitigation activities in highly bushfire prone areas of WA. This recommendation was accepted by the State Government in-principle, noting the significant complexity in its implementation.

DFES is working with local government to undertake comprehensive analysis and options-development and to consider a trial of arrangements. There is significant alignment between this recommendation and Recommendation 3, as priority mitigation treatments are identified through the BRM planning process. Options analysis will be developed and presented to government for consideration in budgetary processes.

Contact: Superintendent Bushfire Risk Management Branch, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Good progress has been made with work to scope and analyse mitigation team delivery models, including the most effective configurations of staff, roles, resources and equipment.

Engagement has been undertaken across DFES and through the Interagency Bushfire Operations Committee (IBOC).

Possible funding models and opportunities have been identified, should the options put forward to the State Government be supported.

Given the potential high costs of establishing dedicated bushfire mitigation teams, the scale and pace of any possible rollout of this program will be largely dependent on budget allocations and how these are staged over concurrent financial years.

Project progress

Establish project working group	Scope and analyse mitigation team delivery models	Undertake cross agency consultation on delivery models	Develop Options Analysis with clear recommendations	Submit to government for consideration	(If approved / funded) Establish bushfire mitigation team based on funding allocated	Manage bushfire mitigation team and works program delivery
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	IN PROGRESS			
Jul 2022	Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Mar 2023	Jul 2023	Jul 2023 onwards	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 5

DFES role in WA land-use planning

Project description

This recommendation was noted by the State Government, recognising the importance of the advice provided by DFES in land- use planning processes.

DFES will work to ensure that its advice provided in land-use planning processes is given appropriate consideration in determination of planning applications.

This will be achieved by a range of initiatives that aim to clarify DFES' role as a referral agency, better understand how the advice DFES provides is used, improve internal policies, tools and templates to ensure consistency in the advice that DFES provides and building stronger working relationships with planning decision makers.

Contact: Director Land Use Planning, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

A range of works have commenced to enable improved understanding and utilisation of the advice DFES provides in land-use planning processes.

Cross-agency engagement has commenced and is continuing with local governments, DFES, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and the WA Local Government Association (WALGA). This will help facilitate input and feedback on the draft suite of documents developed and the scope of any DFES internal policy adjustments to inform the revised governance arrangements.

Project progress

RECOMMENDATION 6

Bushfire practitioner accreditation register

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government. The Fire Protection Association of Australia (FPAA) currently maintains a register of bushfire practitioners. Bushfire practitioners deliver bushfire assessment, planning, design and advice services and are accredited to different levels under the WA Bushfire Accreditation Framework.

DFES will work collaboratively with DPLH, FPAA, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) and the industry to improve the reliability, consistency and quality of work undertaken by bushfire practitioners in WA.

This will include elements such as improved oversight, auditing and compliance arrangements and identifying skills, training and capacity building opportunities for practitioners.

Contact: Director Land Use Planning, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

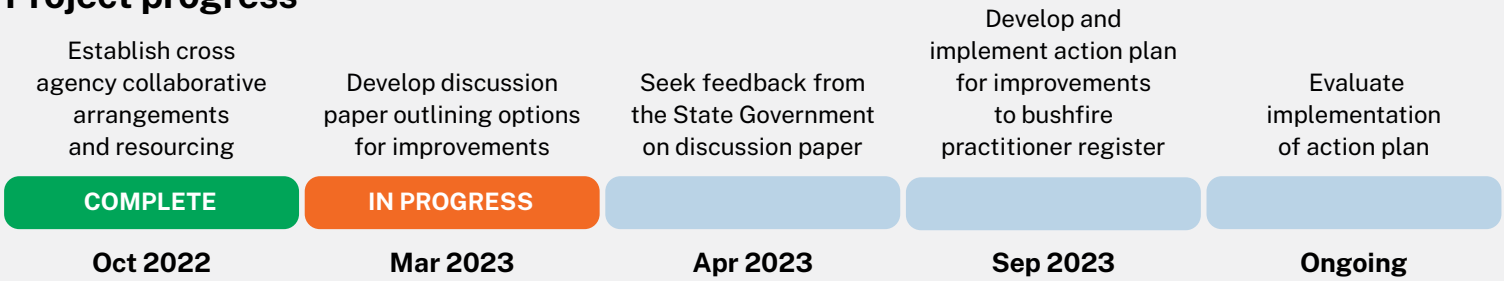
Summary and next steps

This project relies heavily on cross-agency engagement with DPLH, DMIRS and FPAA. A cross-agency steering committee has been established to facilitate a collaborative approach and is meeting regularly.

Key resourcing arrangements have also been discussed with DPLH and FPAA to support improved investment in this work.

Work has commenced on a discussion paper to identify options for improvements on a cross-agency setting and will be a focus for this project over coming months.

Project progress



RECOMMENDATION 7

Traffic management review

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government. DFES will lead a multi-agency review of traffic management (TM) arrangements at bushfires to determine steps for improvement.

The review will consider Vehicle Control Points (VCP), Restricted Access Permits (RAP), community messaging, the role of the Traffic Access and Management Officer (TAMO) in Incident Management Teams and arrangements for working with TM contractors.

The broad scope of this review across multiple facets of traffic management will result in a range of opportunities for improvement at major incidents. These improvements will be prioritised and delivered over stages in 2022 and 2023.

Contact: Chief Superintendent Metropolitan Operations, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

The workshop undertaken in June 2022 was pivotal in shaping the highest priority improvements for traffic management arrangements.

Since then, improvements were grouped in two phases; those that could be delivered before the 2022-23 southern WA bushfire season (milestones 3, 4 and 5) and those that could be delivered before or during the 2023-24 southern WA fire season (milestones 6, 7 and 8).

Delivery of Phase 1 of the TAMO training has broadened capability in the role. Newly trained TAMOs are already being deployed this bushfire season and strengthening cross-agency road management at incidents with WA Police, Main Roads WA and local governments.

Improved document management has streamlined important planning steps, including the development of incident traffic management plans and road status summaries, as well as briefing procedures for traffic management contractors.

Project progress

Undertake multi-agency workshop to scope improvements	Seek endorsement for priority improvements	Deliver phase 1 of TAMO training	Develop guidance to improve TM contractor management	Deliver improvements to RAP arrangements	Deliver Phase 2 of TAMO training	Develop communications package for Traffic Management	Update doctrine and procedures as required
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE			
Jun 2022	**Aug 2022**	**Sep 2022**	**Dec 2022**	**Jan 2023**	**Oct 2023**	**Nov 2023**	**Dec 2023**

RECOMMENDATION 8

Road clearing capability

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government.

DFES will lead a cross-agency process to develop consistent road-clearing standards across fire and emergency agencies and build capacity to undertake road-clearing works for major incidents.

Similar to Recommendation 7, this work will involve identifying a broad range of potential improvements across areas such as common doctrine, procedures and standards, incident management arrangements, community messaging, working with contractors and cross-agency capability and data sharing. These improvements will be prioritised and delivered over stages in 2022 and 2023.

Contact: Chief Superintendent Country North, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Similar to Recommendation 7, the cross-agency workshop undertaken in June 2022 identified 5 focus areas for improvements in road-clearing capability. Initial work has commenced on standardising multi-agency processes and standards for managing hazardous trees and road-clearing works.

Extensive engagement has been undertaken with Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), Main Roads WA, infrastructure providers, local governments, and private industry.

Communication has also occurred with bushfire Incident Controllers and Incident Management Teams to reinforce resourcing and communication arrangements for road clearing during the 2022-23 bushfire season.

A process to formalise data-sharing arrangements across agencies and with infrastructure managers is nearly complete. Finalising common doctrine across fire agencies and continuing engagement with private industry are focus areas in 2023.

Project progress

Establish cross-agency steering groups to scope approach	Identify and prioritise improvement opportunities	Establish common doctrine for tree risks and road inspections	Establish cross-agency data sharing arrangements	Develop communications strategy to guide Incident Management Teams	Develop communications strategy for community members	Identify heavy plant support options from industry and the private sector
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	IN PROGRESS	COMPLETE	COMPLETE		
Jul 2022	Sep 2022	Oct 2022	Dec 2022	Dec 2022	Oct 2023	Nov 2023

RECOMMENDATION 9

Evaluation of ARENA HP module to contract, manage and deploy heavy plant.

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government. This project will evaluate the suitability of the ARENA HP module in a multi-agency WA context.

A multi-agency working group will examine the capabilities of the ARENA HP system and provide recommendations to the State Government on the suitability of the ARENA HP module.

The project team will liaise with the Interagency Bushfire Operations Committee (IBOC) on project progress, findings of the evaluation and next steps.

Should the module be deemed fit for purpose in a WA context, the project team will scope implementation requirements and present a case to the State Government for consideration in budget processes.

Contact: Assistant Commissioner Operations Capability, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Good progress has been made in evaluating the suitability of ARENA HP for application in WA. This has included the establishment of the cross-agency working group, engaging with the ARENA HP team and other Australian jurisdictions to better understand the module and assessing the performance of ARENA HP in addressing key issues and areas for improvement in plant management contracting in WA.

Importantly, IBOC, comprising membership from DFES and DBCA, has been engaged extensively throughout this work and is well placed to inform decision making and priorities for the working group.

Next steps include identifying potential customisation options for ARENA HP to be better tailored to a WA context and the consideration of multi-agency funding arrangements to enable this.

Project progress

Establish cross-agency working group	Undertake environmental scanning including demonstrations on ARENA HP	Analyse suitability of product for multi-agency needs in WA	Discuss findings and seek input from IBOC	Scope implementation options if ARENA HP module is deemed suitable
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	
Jul 2022	Sep 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jul 2023

RECOMMENDATION 10

Review Impact Assessment Process

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government. The Impact Assessment Process is an all-hazards process governed by the WA State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC).

DFES will review the existing Impact Assessment Process, drawing on input and knowledge from a range of agencies involved in the Wooroloo fire.

The review will consider the performance and efficiency of the current impact assessment process including associated tools and templates and multi-agency accessibility. Stakeholder input will be collated and developed into a report which is presented to the SEMC for consideration.

Contact: Chief Superintendent Country South, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Detailed feedback was sought during June and July 2022 on the existing Impact Assessment Process from local government, DFES, DBCA, WALGA and infrastructure managers.

An initial analysis of the assessment has been undertaken following feedback from the consultation process. This has determined that significant changes are required to existing processes to improve performance and efficiency.

Next steps include consultation with SEMC as the owner of the Impact Assessment Process to determine progression.

Project progress

RECOMMENDATION 11

Backup power for telecommunications sites

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government.

The independent review recommended that DFES and local government continue discussions with telecommunications providers to explore the adequacy of current arrangements for backup power at telecommunication towers in emergency incidents.

Contact: Executive Director, Corporate Services, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

DFES is continuing discussions with national telecommunication providers and WA infrastructure managers to advance WA requirements. DFES has initiated consultation with a range of government and commercial stakeholders to discuss and understand current arrangements for backup power at telecommunications sites.

Telecommunication providers are exploring potential technological solutions and possible synergies with future communications infrastructure upgrades. These opportunities are being aligned by DFES staff to existing programs.

Government has limited influence or control over commercial business objectives and priorities, including private sector competition and commercial strategy considerations. This poses challenges and complexities in delivering project objectives.

DFES will continue to work with telecommunication providers to progress WA requirements.

Project progress

RECOMMENDATION 12

Upgraded Emergency WA platform

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government. DFES is leading a multi-year project to redesign the State's official emergency information source, Emergency WA, and enable full alignment with Australian Warning System standards.

The project will use new and emerging technologies along with improved data inputs from multiple agencies to deliver faster, more personalised warning information to people impacted by emergencies.

Extensive consultation with emergency management agencies and end users will help ensure the upgraded platform meets community needs. Improvements to the Emergency WA platform will be released in stages.

Contact: Manager Public Information, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

Significant progress has been made in the Next Gen Warning Project to deliver a redesigned Emergency WA platform.

Stakeholder engagement has been a focus for the second half of 2022: approximately 30 cross-government workshops have been held to identify agency requirements, and external workshops with community stakeholders including First Nations Australians and disability groups has helped define end user needs.

This consultation has helped determine system requirements and the design and architecture for an improved Emergency WA platform.

Next steps include building on initial work undertaken in procurement planning to ensure the market can provide the most suitable and effective solution through formal government procurement processes.

Project progress

Develop project plan and secure funding	Establish the project team	Undertake needs analysis; sector and community	Design new platform architecture	Complete procurement for new Emergency WA platform	Replace the core Emergency WA platform	Refine and improve upgraded platform
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	IN PROGRESS		
Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Sep 2023	Dec 2023	Ongoing to 2026

RECOMMENDATION 13

Improved Telephone Warning System (TWS)

Project description

This recommendation was accepted by the State Government.

DFES will undertake a review of current arrangements for issuing Emergency Alerts through the Telephone Warning System (TWS) to identify improvements to efficiency or effectiveness.

Procedural documentation will be updated and in place for the 2022-23 southern bushfire high-threat period.

Further improvements will continue to be explored through possible alignments with the redesigned Emergency WA platform (see Recommendation 12) to achieve enhanced consistency and timeliness.

Contact: Manager Public Information, c/o: ruralfire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Summary and next steps

There has been steady progress in this project since commencing in July 2022 and significant changes have been made for the management of TWS procedures for the 2022-23 bushfire season.

During the 2022-23 bushfire season, the TWS is being used whenever the first Emergency Warning is issued for an incident through Emergency WA and when major changes occur. This differs from previous seasons where the TWS was not always used with the first Emergency Warning.

Relevant agency procedures have been updated and this change is now in effect.

Any potential further improvements to the use of TWS will be managed through the upgraded Emergency WA platform (see Recommendation 12).

Project progress

Review existing TWS procedures and arrangements	Consult with key emergency operations roles	Update procedural documentation	Apply new TWS arrangements	Refine and improve in alignment with Emergency WA
COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	
Jul 2022	**Aug 2022**	**Nov 2022**	**Dec onwards**	**Ongoing to 2026**