



**United Firefighters Union of South Australia Inc (UFUSA) Submission to the Independent Review into South Australia’s 2019/2020 Bushfire Season**

**Executive summary**

1. The 2019-20 bushfire season was one of the longest and most intense series of fire events in the history of South Australia and Australia alike. With climate change making weather hotter and drier for longer, more frequent and intense bushfires appear set to increase in the future.
2. UFUSA members responded to bushfires in South Australia as well as Queensland and New South Wales, working professionally and flexibly alongside the Country Fire Service and Department for Environment & Water crews.
3. The large volume of requests for MFS assistance reflects the reality that bushfires have become a “core business” of the MFS.
4. Unfortunately, the changed reality of bushfire fighting in South Australia is not reflected in the fleet of MFS appliances or the training and support members receive.
5. MFS appliances lack essential bushfire protections, such as Burn Over Protection Systems or BOPS, and bushfire training for members is piecemeal and subject to competing funding pressures.
6. The UFUSA urges the Review to consider the need for further MFS funding in the areas identified in this submission to ensure bushfire resourcing and training is a priority ahead of the next bushfire season.

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## UFUSA

7. The United Firefighters Union of South Australia Inc (UFUSA) represents the industrial interests of professional career firefighters in South Australia.
8. The majority of UFUSA members are full-time or retained firefighters or officers in the South Australia Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and are stationed in both metropolitan Adelaide, and regional locations across South Australia.
9. The UFUSA also represents the industrial interests of MFS support personnel, including trades persons responsible for repairs and maintenance to firefighting appliances.
10. With over 99% of MFS firefighters and officers being members of the UFUSA, the UFUSA is best positioned to represent the first-hand experiences and views of professional career firefighters in South Australia.
11. In the preparation of this submission, the UFUSA has consulted with a cross-section of members, including firefighters, officers and mechanics, who were deployed to each of the bushfires in South Australia and interstate to which MFS deployed personnel in the 2019-20 bushfire season.

## 2019-20 Bushfire Season

12. The length and intensity of the bushfire season in Australia is increasing, especially in southern Australia.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1950s alone the frequency of the extreme heat events has increased approximately fivefold.<sup>2</sup> The cause of these increases is long term climate change.<sup>3</sup>
13. The 2019-20 bushfire season was no exception. 2019 was Australia's warmest and driest year on record, with South Australia having its lowest average rainfall and second highest mean temperature on record.<sup>4</sup>
14. In Spring 2019 Australia recorded the highest accumulated Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) on record,<sup>5</sup> and the December accumulated FFDI's for much of Australia, including most of South Australia, was likewise some of the highest on record.<sup>6</sup>
15. Some of the highest FFDIs were set in the South Australia's agricultural districts which recorded not only the highest FFDI on record for the region in spring, but the highest FFDI for any day of the year in at least 50 years.<sup>7</sup>
16. In the 2019-20 bushfire season more than 10 million hectares of land burned in southern Australia, which is more than the combined area burned in the Black Saturday 2009 and Ash Wednesday 1983 bushfires.<sup>8</sup>
17. The increase in length and intensity of the bushfire season directly impacts the demand for our members' resources.<sup>9</sup> As a result of climate change, our members are deployed to more bushfires, more often and for more protracted periods.
18. Increased demand on our members in South Australia because of climate change means a forecasted 448 to 705 (50% to 78%) increase in the number of MFS firefighters in South Australia by 2030 depending on the climate change scenario that plays out:<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) & Bureau of Meteorology, *2018 State of the Climate Report* (2018) pp 2 and 5; CSIRO, *The 2019-20 bushfires: a CSIRO explainer* (Feb 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Annual Climate Statement 2019* (9 Jan 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) & Bureau of Meteorology, *2018 State of the Climate Report* (2018) p 2.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Annual Climate Statement 2019* (9 Jan 2020).

<sup>5</sup> FFDI is widely used as a basis for issuing weather warnings by fire agencies.

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Special Climate Statement 73 – extreme heat and fire weather in December 2019 and January 2020* (17 Mar 2020) p 9.

<sup>7</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, *Special Climate Statement 72 – dangerous bushfire weather in spring 2019* (18 Dec 2019) p 9.

<sup>8</sup> CSIRO, *The 2019-20 bushfires: a CSIRO explainer* (Feb 2020).

<sup>9</sup> National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), *Firefighters and climate change: the human resources dimension of adapting to climate change: final and consolidated report* (February 2013) p 8.

<sup>10</sup> NIEIR, *Firefighters and climate change: the human resources dimension of adapting to climate change: final and consolidated report* (February 2013) pp i & 27.

	Base	H2 Scenario		H3 Scenario	
	2012	2020	2030	2020	2030
NSW	3826	4741	5728	5175	6759
VIC	2648	3405	4296	3564	4697
QLD	2525	3529	4951	3529	4892
SA	906	1098	1354	1196	1611
WA	1225	1693	2334	1751	2494
TAS	321	337	367	337	395
NT	255	369	522	383	560
ACT	334	435	586	455	656
<b>AUST</b>	<b>12041</b>	<b>15607</b>	<b>20136</b>	<b>16391</b>	<b>22065</b>

Source: ABS Census data/NIEIR forecast.

19. Our members are being deployed with increasing frequency to fight fires in the urban rural interface, such as the Adelaide Hills, as well as rural areas, such as Kangaroo Island.<sup>11</sup>
20. Our members are being deployed not just to assist in asset protection, but to assist their fellow volunteer firefighters at the Country Fire Service (CFS) on the fire ground.<sup>12</sup>

### **MFS 2019-20 Deployments**

21. In the 2019-20 bushfire season hundreds of members were deployed on strike teams to fight fires both within South Australia and interstate, working alongside CFS, Department for Environment & Water (DEW) and other fire agencies in strike teams and Incident Management Teams (IMTs).
22. Our members were first deployed for the 2019-20 bushfire season in September 2019, when 26 members were deployed to strike teams and local IMTs in regional Queensland alongside crew from local and other South Australian fire agencies.
23. From October to December 2019 142 members were deployed to regional New South Wales in strike teams crewing local, and later South Australian CFS appliances, as well as local IMTs.
24. In both Queensland and New South Wales deployments our members on strike teams successfully co-crewed local and South Australian CFS appliances with CFS crew and reported to a mix of CFS/MFS/DEW strike team leaders, an MFS Field Coordinator, and CFS Deployment Coordinator.
25. In November 2019 our Port Lincoln members were deployed on MFS appliances to assist the CFS in asset protection against the Eyre Peninsula bushfires.

<sup>11</sup> MFS, *Strategic Plan 2019-26: Rural Fire and Urban Interface*.

<sup>12</sup> MFS, *Strategic Plan 2019-26: Rural Fire and Urban Interface*. See also NIEIR, *Firefighters and climate change: the human resources dimension of adapting to climate change: final and consolidated report* (February 2013) p 12.

26. In December 2019 hundreds of members from regional and metropolitan stations were deployed to strike teams to fight the Cudlee Creek bushfires in the Adelaide Hills. Members were deployed to assist the CFS in asset protection.
27. Over January and early February 2020 320 members were deployed to strike teams and IMTs on Kangaroo Island. Members were deployed to the fire ground and successfully co-crewed CFS appliances with CFS crew, whilst MFS appliances were stationed in towns for asset protection. Members were also deployed to perform urban search and rescue.
28. In the course of the bushfire season, MFS support personnel and UFUSA members were also deployed to New South Wales, Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island for repair and maintain of appliances.

### **Issues arising out of 2019-20 deployments**

29. Overwhelmingly, members remarked on the professionalism of their fellow firefighters and officers during the 2019-20 bushfire season, and of the good working relationship they enjoyed with their fellow CFS firefighters and officers.
30. A number of serious concerns were nevertheless raised about the safety and capability of MFS fleet of appliances and equipment for responding to bushfire emergencies, and the lack of bushfire training provided to members.
31. The concerns raised by members fall into two categories: resourcing and training. Each will be addressed in turn.

### **Resourcing**

32. Resourcing was viewed by members deployed to bushfires in the 2019-20 season as the most pressing issue to be addressed.
33. It is essential that the MFS has sufficient numbers of appliances at the ready on days of fire danger to meet the demand for any requests for assistance.
34. The existing MFS fleet of urban appliances is ageing and is being replaced with urban interface appliances that have increased water carrying capabilities and, crucially, turnover protection systems or BOPS.
35. The rate of replacement of the MFS fleet however is too slow to respond to the increase in demand for appliances ready and capable for deployment to bushfires.
36. There are also insufficient appliances, especially in stations in regional and urban rural interface areas that have off-road (or 4WD) capability, and insufficient bulk water carriers to transport water to the fireground.

37. All appliances on the fireground must be fully stowed with safety and communications equipment, as well as food and water, and all members deployed to the fireground, whether operational or not, provided with personal protective equipment and access to fully functioning airconditioning.

#### *Retrofitting BOPS*

38. The cabin of an appliance is a member's last refuge in the case of a sudden advancing fire that burns over the appliance.
39. Evidence given at Victorian Coroner's Inquest into the death of 5 firefighters in the 1998 Linton fires was that being<sup>13</sup>

*overtaken by fire remains a significant cause of death for Australian bushfire fighters. Often the burnover occurs so suddenly there is little time to prepare, and it must be ridden out in whatever location and orientation the appliance is in.*

40. Burnover protection systems (BOPS) are a last but necessary solution to save member's lives and appliances, and are essential for any appliances deployed in bushfires, whether used on- or off-road.
41. Most existing appliances in the MFS fleet must be retrofitted with BOPS, whether through the purchase of BOPS with new appliances or the retrofitting of existing appliances, including:<sup>14</sup>
  - fireproof curtains,
  - water sprinklers on exterior of appliance,
  - lagging on fuel and brakes,
  - enhanced water reserves
42. Previous funding allocated to retrofitting of BOPS fell well short of what was required and focused on only one component of BOPS (fireproof curtains).
43. Funding must be provided for the retrofitting of **all** MFS appliances with BOPs, and the rollout performed as a matter of urgency in preparation for the next bushfire season.

#### *Increase number of appliances operationally ready*

44. The MFS needs funding to enable it to have sufficient numbers of appliances operationally ready to meet its Operational Levels of Preparedness (OLOP) on days of bush fire danger.

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<sup>13</sup> State Coroner's Office (Victoria), *Report of the Investigations and Inquests into a Wildfire and the Deaths of Five Firefighters at Linton on 2 December 1998* (11 Jan 2002) p 552.

<sup>14</sup> See further State Coroner's Office (Victoria), *Report of the Investigations and Inquests into a Wildfire and the Deaths of Five Firefighters at Linton on 2 December 1998* (11 Jan 2002) p 639.

45. On at least one day of catastrophic fire danger in November 2019, members reported that the MFS was not in a position to meet the OLOP requirement at the time of having four (4) spare pumpers operationally ready.
46. At all times there must be sufficient appliances, including pumpers and bulk water carriers, available for deployment to bushfire strike teams.<sup>15</sup>
47. During the bushfire season at all times there must be sufficient appliances available to deploy three (3) strike teams, with an additional surge capability of one (1) to two (2) strike teams.
48. As part of the MFS response to Cudlee Creek, members also reported that reserve appliances were used, with some reserve appliances being removed from the MFS's Learning and Development, and Engineering Departments, reducing MFS's urban capacity.
49. A number of the reserve appliances deployed also did not have BOPS and were not fully stowed and were missing essential safety equipment including chainsaws and thermal imaging cameras.
50. Whilst on days of bushfire danger it is appropriate to deploy all available appliances "to fight the fire you've got", it is imperative that there is a sufficient number of appliances that are at all times operationally ready, including complying with all safety requirements.
51. Without sufficient funding, MFS will not be able to meet the increase in requests for bushfire assistance in regional and urban rural interface areas whilst maintaining OLOP in metropolitan Adelaide area and, vitally, the safety of our members.

#### *New appliances*

52. Members must have at their disposal a fleet of appliances that are bushfire safe and ready to meet the demand for bushfire firefighting assistance.

#### Urban interface pumpers

53. Since 2010, 17 urban interface pumpers have been introduced into the MFS fleet of appliances. These pumpers have BOPS and an additional 1,000 litre water carrying capacity to assist with fighting fires for longer and to operate the water sprinklers in the case of a burnover.

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<sup>15</sup> The MFS OLOP at Dec 2019 defines strike team as: four (4) pumpers, one (1) command vehicle, and one (1) bulk water carrier.

54. The MFS still has 23 urban pumpers that have no BOPS and reduced water capacity. These must be replaced, and as a matter of urgency. Failing to do so is a risk to our members' lives.
55. To ensure bushfire readiness the SA Government must approve bilateral funding for the purchase of at least 12 new urban interface pumpers for the MFS now, with additional funding for 6 per year thereafter.

#### 4WD appliances

56. Off-road capability is essential for members in regional areas to assist with the increase in demand on MFS resources to assist CFS with bushfire fighting, particularly in regional and urban rural interface stations where the bushfire risk is greatest.
57. Off-road capability ensures flexibility in firefighting methods and enhanced capacity to assist the CFS in fighting increasingly intense and sustained bushfires. For example, it allows members to conduct direct attacks on fires located off-road, keeping small fires small.
58. At stations in regional and rural urban interface area, ageing urban pumpers must be replaced with 4WD pumpers with increased water carrying capacities and BOPS.

#### Bulk water carriers

59. Whether undertaking asset protection activities or fighting grass fires, the greater the water capacity the more effective and efficient our members are.
60. Enhanced water capabilities are vital particularly in regional and urban rural interface areas, where there are limited refilling capabilities.
61. To meet the needs of deployed MFS appliances, the MFS bulk water carrying capacity needs to be enhanced.
62. Existing bulk water pods located in metropolitan Adelaide have insufficient water carrying capacity, and two (2) bulk water carriers must be purchased as a matter of priority.
63. Three (3) existing bulk water carriers at Port Lincoln, Whyalla & Renmark need immediate replacement due to age and wear and tear.

#### *Equipment*

64. A number of appliances deployed this bushfire season were missing equipment that is essential to protecting the lives of our members in bushfires.
65. Members deployed this bushfire season reported a number of MFS and other appliances were missing essential equipment needed for fighting fires, including

maps, GRN radios, breathing apparatus, defibrillators, burnover blankets, thermal imaging cameras and chainsaw.

66. All MFS appliances in station must be bushfire ready. Sufficient funding must be provided to ensure that all appliances in stations contain at all times the equipment necessary to fight bushfires.
67. The MFS and CFS must also ensure by all means possible that the appliances used by our members interstate are safe and adequately equipped with the tools necessary to fight bushfires.

#### *Bushfire PPE*

68. All members are provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) suited to urban fires, not bushfires.
69. P2 facemasks are issued to members in bushfire deployments, but cover only the nose and mouth and do not prevent seepage of bushfire smoke.
70. All members are issued with helmets suited for structural fires, which is unnecessary and inappropriate for bushfires.
71. Members must be provided with PPE that is safe and suited to the conditions that they are operating in, including the provision of respirator, and lighter weight helmet.

#### *Communications equipment*

72. Communications systems generally operated well over the course of deployments during the 2019-20 bushfire season.
73. Members nevertheless observed instances where they were in black spots in communication, including at deployments in New South Wales and Cudlee Creek, either because of the terrain or congestion on the GRN network.
74. Some MFS appliances in regional stations did not have Very High Frequency (VHF) radio capacity, the radio system used by the CFS.
75. Individual members on the fireground were also unable to communicate with CFS personnel because members are issued with portable radios that use the GRN, whilst individual CFS personnel use Very High Frequency (VHF) network.
76. Failure to be able to communicate on the fireground can have devastating consequences for the safety of members.
77. Black spots in bushfire prone areas must be identified and communications solutions identified to ensure communications remain possible during a bushfire.

78. All members on the fireground should be supplied with portable radios that support not just the GRN but VHF frequency, and all appliances supplied with satellite phones to act as a backup in case of loss of communications.
79. Although Port Lincoln appliances have now been fitted with VHF radio, it must be ensured that all appliances in regional and metropolitan Adelaide have this VHF capability to ensure members are able to communicate with CFS on the fireground.

*More MFS personnel embedded in State IMT*

80. On most occasions over the course of the 2019-20 bushfire season the MFS had a liaison officer present in the level 3 State IMT.
81. Members observed that the embedding of a liaison officer in the State IMT enhanced the quality and timeliness of information flow between State IMT and the MFS.
82. With the MFS called upon to respond more and more to bushfires, the number of members embedded in the level 3 State IMT needs to increase to meet the increased information flows resulting from the increase in requests on MFS assistance in fighting bushfires.

*Rapid Damage Assessment team*

83. As outlined in the State Emergency Management Plan, damage assessment begins during the response to an emergency.
84. Members deployed to Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA) are responsible for Stage 3 damage arising out of bushfires and are deployed to the fireground to assess and gather information about the damage and community losses that occur whilst operations remain ongoing.
85. In the most recent as well as past bushfire seasons our members have been deployed to fireground deemed safe but which subsequently become active in the course of assessment.
86. Members deployed to RDA, who are trained firefighters and officers, are deployed in work utilities without defensive firefighting capability and without PPE or breathing apparatus. This is unacceptable.
87. Members deployed to RDAs must have their safety ensured and be provided with vehicles that have basic firefighting equipment, BOPS, safety and recovery equipment, such as chainsaws, breathing apparatus and VHF radios, and they must be issued with appropriate PPE.

*Support personnel*

88. Whilst most repairs and maintenance to MFS appliances are undertaken when crews return to station, this is not always possible especially during lengthy bushfire deployments.
89. Our support personnel members are regularly deployed to the warm zone of a fire to ensure the safety and ongoing operationality of appliances, as regularly occurred in Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island.
90. Despite the obvious risks to the health and safety of support personnel, their maintenance vehicles are not provided with bushfire protection and they are provided with no personal protective equipment (PPE) or training.
91. Support personnel members must have their safety ensured and be provided with vehicles that have basic firefighting equipment, BOPS, safety and recovery equipment, such as chainsaws, breathing apparatus and VHF radios, and they must be issued with appropriate PPE.

*Fire ground welfare*

92. When on the fireground fighting fires an integral part of the health and safety of our members is that they must be fed and watered, and have the opportunity for respite from the heat.
93. During the course of the 2019-20 bushfire season many members were on shift for 12 hours and longer without food or water provided to them, in temperatures greater than 45° C.
94. Whilst the MFS issued some members with ration packs for consumption on deployment to ensure self-sufficiency for the duration of shift, they were not located on all appliances.
95. The air-conditioning units on a number of appliances, particularly in regional stations, either did not work or were not working efficiently, denying members one of the few means of respite from extreme heat.
96. Whilst in the emergency situations people's minds are often fixed on the bushfire at hand, a lack of food and water supplies can cause dehydration, as occurred with an entire crew at Cudlee Creek, and potentially more devastating consequences.
97. Members must be provided with food and water when on the fireground, eg, by way of ration packs. Sufficient funding must also be made available to allow for the installation and/or repairs to appliance air-conditioning units.

## Training

98. Of the members deployed in the 2019-20, a large proportion had no training in fighting bushfires.
99. Failing to provide appropriate bushfire training to our members poses a risk to our members health and safety and reduces the productivity and effectiveness of our members in helping to save lives and property.
100. Members must be provided with training in firefighting bushfires that meets Australian standards and is administered by a dedicated department within the MFS that holds expertise in bushfires and has the available resources to roll out the training.

### *Firefighter training*

101. Whilst all members are required to perform burnover drills as part of their on-station training, this is not enough.
102. The basic nationally recognised competency for firefighters to fight bushfires is Respond to Wildfire (RTW) (PUAFIR204B) training and is commonly a prerequisite for our firefighters to be deployed to fight bushfires interstate.
103. Whilst all members deployed interstate in the 2019-20 bushfire season had RTW, only a portion of those deployed to Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island had undertaken the training.
104. The MFS must comply with national standards and provide all members with RTW as a matter of priority, and before the next bushfire season.
105. A roll out of RTW training in the MFS began in May 2019 but was stopped due to lack of resourcing. The roll out has since resumed with approximately 200 members still to do the training, many of whom are at stations in regional and rural urban interface areas.
106. Funding must be prioritised for RTW training and rolled out to all operational firefighters and officers and provided to **all** new recruits as part of recruitment training.

### *AllIMS training*

107. The importance of standardised inter-agency protocols for incident management have been repeatedly stressed in previous inquiries, commissions, reports, and inquests arising out of bushfires in Australia.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Council of Australian Governments (COAG), *National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management* (31 March 2004) xxxviii. See also State Coroner's Office (Victoria), *Report of the Investigations and Inquests into a*

108. Whilst inter-agency protocols must also allow for input from local knowledge and expertise,<sup>17</sup> training in Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System or AIIMS is essential to ensure the goal of “*integrated and coordinated decision making and management*” is achieved.<sup>18</sup>
109. In the 2019-20 bushfire season a number of our members deployed interstate and in South Australia in strike teams and IMTs did not have AIIMS training.
110. That our members were able to adapt to CFS and other fire agencies’ processes is a testament to their professionalism and flexibility, but it is no excuse for failing to provide the recognised nationally accredited appropriate training.
111. It is vital that all members leading strike teams and working in IMTs have training in AIIMS to ensure they are ready to respond to request for bushfire assistance.
112. At least all Senior Fire Fighters, Station Officers, Commanders and Senior Management must have AIIMS training, with training also provided to all future Senior Fire Fighters as part of the Staff Development Framework.
113. Following the 2019-20 bushfire season AIIMS training is being rolled out by two dedicated MFS personnel. It must be ensured that sufficient funding remains in place to roll this training out before the next fire season.

#### *Officer training*

114. Our Senior Fire Fighters, Station Officers and Commanders competently and professionally perform roles as strike team leaders, and sector and divisional commanders both interstate and in South Australia.
115. Whilst the training our members undertake for urban fires is transferrable to other types of fires, it is not specific to bushfires.
116. Good incident management in the early stages of a bushfire is crucial to containment, as well as to protecting our members’ lives and the lives and properties of those in our communities.

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*Wildfire and the Deaths of Five Firefighters at Linton on 2 December 1998* (11 Jan 2002) pp. 613-25; 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Chapter 2: Emergency & Incident Management (Vol 2) p 70; Deputy State Coroner, South Australia, Inquest into the Deaths of Borlase & Ors (2007) p334; Australian Senate, Recent Trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events (Aug 2013) para 5.60 & recommendation 9.

<sup>17</sup> Australian House of Representatives, *A Nation Charred: Report on the Inquiry into Bushfires* (23 Oct 2003) Ch 5.

<sup>18</sup> COAG, *National Bushfire Management: Policy Statement for Forests and Rangelands* (2014) p 13. See also Deputy State Coroner, South Australia, Inquest into the Deaths of Borlase & Ors (2007) pp 442 and 583-4 (recommendations 22-25 & 28).

117. Whilst some members have undertaken the nationally-recognised Suppress Wildfire training designed for strike team leaders fighting bushfires, it is not offered by the MFS and members are required to wait for positions in CFS training courses to become available.
118. To ensure our current members deployed as strike team leaders and sector and divisional commanders are ready and equipped to safely and professionally fight bushfires they must be provided with Suppress Wildfire training as well as other nationally-recognised training specific to their roles under the AIIMS, eg, first arrival officer, strike team leader and sector and divisional commander.
119. Suppress Wildfire training and other role-specific training under the AIIMS must also be provided to all future Senior Fire Fighters, Station Officers and Commanders through integration into the Staff Development Framework to ensure an ongoing availability of members ready for deployment.

#### *Safe Off-Road Driver Training*

120. With increasing number of bushfires, our members are increasingly called upon to drive 4WD appliances off road.
121. Many members were required to drive CFS and interstate agency vehicles whilst on interstate and Kangaroo Island deployments.
122. There are also some 4WD appliances in regional MFS stations, and one 4WD drive appliance current being trialled at Salisbury station.
123. Our members are trained and competent in driving in urban operational settings, but receive no training in off-road driving of 4WD, with the exception of a limited amount of training being offered at Salisbury station during the trial.
124. Safe off-road driving techniques are vital to ensure the safety of our members and to ensure appliances do not roll.
125. Failure to observe such techniques can lead to tragic consequences as it did when a CFS truck rolled in operation causing severe disablement of a CFS firefighter in 2006.
126. Safe Off Road Driving Training must be made available to all members as a matter of priority, and before the next bushfire season.

#### *Support personnel training*

127. Members deployed to repair and maintain appliances on the fireground are qualified tradespeople; they are not firefighters and do not receive firefighting training nor training in fire ground procedures and communications.

128. Despite the risks our trades members face in being deployed to the fireground, they are not provided with training in how to respond should, for example, there be a change in wind that turns the warm zone hot again.
129. Our members employed in the trades in the MFS must be provided with training in fire ground safety, as well as radio training to ensure they are able to remain safe during a bushfire.
130. Maintenance and repairs of appliances during bushfires is vital to ensuring appliances are safe and operational, and so it is imperative that we maintain the health and safety of our members that carry these out.

*CFS appliance & equipment training*

131. In the course of deployments interstate and to Kangaroo Island in the 2019-20 bushfire season our members crewed CFS appliances alongside CFS personnel.
132. Our members exhibited great professionalism and adaptability in adjusting to the differing capabilities of CFS appliances, assisted by the expertise and guidance of CFS crews, in spite of receiving no prior training in CFS appliances and equipment.
133. It is unacceptable that members ride on appliances that they are unfamiliar with and which they have ridden for the first time on deployment.
134. Our members must be provided with training on CFS trucks to familiarise them with differences and/or similarities of the appliances.
135. Our members must also be provided with training in the use of CFS equipment, particularly VHF radios, as well as in map reading and topographical awareness.

*Formation of bushfire department*

136. MFS has departments dedicated to three of the four “core businesses”: Structural Fire, Technical Rescue and Hazardous materials. The fourth is bushfires.
137. Each of these departments have full time staff, trainers and support staff to develop resources and deliver training relevant to the core risk/incident type.
138. Presently, bushfire training is provided at the station level, is piecemeal and subject to funding priorities. This is not good enough.
139. MFS must be funded to develop a bushfire department with at least four (4) FTE personnel dedicated to developing programmes for the roll out of the training identified above as well as deliver resources and expertise in the time of bushfire emergencies.

140. The MFS has recently created two (2) Emergency Management Officer positions who will be allocated responsibility for rolling our AIIMS training for 9 months of the year. This is a start, but further funding and personnel is urgently required, and before the commencement of the next bushfire season.

**21 April 2020**