

## Acknowledgement

The Queensland Fire Department acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of country throughout Queensland and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to the Elders – past and present – for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state. As an emergency services organisation, we look to our First Nations communities for their knowledge and wisdom – developed over tens of thousands of years – in caring for country, and to learn how we can support in healing country, now and into the future.



# Commissioner's foreword

As one of the state's largest frontline public safety agencies, the Queensland Fire Department (QFD) plays a pivotal role in supporting Queensland communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from, fire and a range of disaster and emergency incidents.

There is a long and proud history of fire services in Queensland, with many people choosing to serve to protect the community and be stewards of the environment. I am proud of where we have come from and I am honoured to lead the QFD community, which prides itself on its values of respect, integrity, courage, loyalty and trust. These values are self-evident in the daily work our staff and volunteers do to keep each other, our friends, neighbours and communities safe.

QFD is changing and evolving to ensure we are able to respond to new challenges. In 2021, to ensure that our fire services deliver the best possible outcomes for Queensland communities, the Queensland Government commissioned an independent review of the then Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Driven by recommendations of the review, QFD was established with a clear focus on fire prevention, response and control.

QFD will continue to face new challenges as our climate, technology, and populations change. I am confident we are equipped with the right people and capabilities to identify these changes, understand the meaning, and confidently develop safe and effective service delivery solutions.

Part of responding effectively in times of change and uncertainty is a strong understanding of organisational and operating environments and developing a clear path forward. QFD's legislative responsibilities direct and guide decisions and actions in support of the organisation's defined responsibilities, objectives, capabilities and effects.

*"Beyond the Smoke: Queensland Fire Department's foundation and direction for a safer tomorrow"* provides overall guidance and direction in regard to QFD's operations, organisation and service delivery. It outlines the 'why' of the department so that we can better understand and work together towards our common vision – creating safer communities through contemporary fire and emergency services.

I feel privileged to lead the diverse and skilled staff and volunteers that make up QFD. Your passion and service to the community enables the important work of QFD each day.

**Stephen Smith AFSM**  
Commissioner  
Queensland Fire Department

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# 1. Introduction

*Beyond the Smoke: Queensland Fire Department's Foundation and Direction for a Safer Tomorrow* serves to lay the foundation for understanding QFD's complex service delivery environment. It is aimed at fostering transparency and cooperation by delineating the department's roles, responsibilities, history, purpose, vision, objectives, services, and operating context. Moreover, it underscores the connection between our broader strategy, policy, and planning goals, while setting enduring priorities and values.

## 2. Our history

The history of fire management in Queensland spans centuries. For thousands of years, Traditional Owners have cared for the Queensland landscape through fire management practices, and as early as the 1860s, even before Queensland became a state, volunteer and later paid, fire brigades acted to protect people, places and the environment.

Over the years, Queenslanders have consistently confronted threats from fires, emergencies and disasters. As these challenges persist and change, our fire services have adapted to better serve the evolving needs of Queensland communities.

The 1990s recognised the need for sophistication and coordination in emergency service delivery, and fire and emergency services were incorporated into, and delivered through, various iterations of Queensland Government departments tasked with ensuring public safety.

In July 2021, the Queensland Government commissioned an independent review of the then Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to ensure the long-term sustainability of fire and emergency service delivery and outcomes for the Queensland community.

Key themes within the report emphasised the department's delivery of services; enhancement of culture and capability through strategic investment in people, assets and equipment; and increased interoperability of the Fire and Rescue Service, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and other public safety agencies.

To bring a clear focus to fire prevention, response and control and allow for significant opportunities for growth and enhancement of the fire services, the review recommended the fire services be housed within a dedicated fire department and the State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue services and a number of other disaster management functions be transitioned to other agencies.

On 1 July 2024 QFD was established comprising Queensland Fire and Rescue (QFR), Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), State Operations, Strategy and Corporate Services and the Office of the Chief Fire Officer to deliver fire prevention, response and emergency services to Queensland communities.

The establishment of QFD signifies the continued growth in the maturity of the fire services, enhancing its ability to provide essential services to all Queenslanders.



# 3. Our purpose, vision and objectives

The QFD purpose and vision reflect QFD’s identity, focus and the desire for effective impact now and into the future. Our purpose, vision and objectives are based on a clear understanding of our responsibilities, strengths, opportunities and challenges both now and what might be on the horizon.

## Our purpose:

“To pre-empt, prevent, mitigate and manage the consequences of fires and other emergencies on Queensland communities”

QFD’s purpose statement is intended to provide a clear description of the department’s aim and reason for existence. The purpose serves as the unifier that brings staff, volunteers and stakeholders together with shared motivation and understanding of the common aim.

## Our vision:

“Working together to create safer communities through contemporary fire and emergency services”

Our vision statement describes what QFD aspires to be by reflecting on how we wish to be perceived by, and the impact we want to deliver to, customers, stakeholders and the community.

## Objectives

Objectives are the effects or impacts we seek to have. Considering the current operating environment and the opportunities and challenges likely in the future, QFD has the following objectives:

- Safe and effective response that minimises the consequences of fires and emergencies.
- A safe, capable and inclusive workforce — both our staff and volunteers — that is representative of the communities we serve.
- Planning, decision making and QFD led preparedness activities are informed by current and future risk.
- Communities are well informed and take necessary actions relevant to their local risk.
- We are a valued and trusted partner.
- We make the best use of current and emerging assets and technology.
- Organisational enabling capabilities work effectively with our frontline staff, volunteers, partners and community.
- We connect and support our staff, volunteers, partners and communities in recovery after fires and emergencies.



Safe and effective response that minimises the consequences of fires and emergencies.



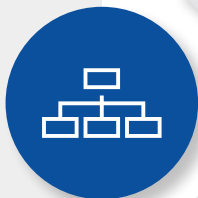
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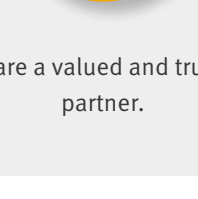
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We are a valued and trusted partner.



## Purpose & Vision

# 4. Our role and responsibilities

## Role of QFD

QFD provides world-class fire and rescue services to communities across Queensland, including fire prevention, response, and control. QFD's foremost priority is to respond to fires and emergencies that threaten life, property or the environment by providing support to communities before, during and after their times of need.

The *Fire Services Act 1990* (the Act) establishes two fire services — QFR, and RFSQ — as specific fire services, undertaking dedicated functions to deliver on the legislative purposes of the Act. To achieve this, the Act requires processes to be established that provide ongoing operational and strategic collaboration and coordination between the fire services, and that continue to recognise the valuable role of staff and volunteers.

Under the Act, the fire services' core functions and powers include:

- protecting people, property and the environment from fire, bushfire (which includes grass fires and fires that have broken out in a forest or scrub) and hazardous materials emergencies
- protecting people trapped in vehicles, buildings or otherwise endangered
- providing and promoting fire and bushfire prevention and control advice and education
- supporting other entities providing emergency services to help communities respond to and recover from disasters.

## Responsibilities of QFD

QFD is the administering government department that will ensure the entire organisation delivers on statutory and government service delivery responsibilities. These responsibilities can be summarised as:

- Supporting Queensland Government objectives for the delivery of quality frontline services.
- Working across the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery continuum to:
  - support the building of community capability to prevent incidents occurring and best equip communities to be prepared for and able to mitigate the impact and consequences of fires, emergencies and disasters
  - contribute to the provision of a timely, coordinated and appropriate response to minimise the effects of fires, emergencies and disasters
  - provide appropriate relief and support during and after responses to fire, emergencies and disasters until a managed transition occurs.

## 5. Our Values and Charter

Values are the deeply held ideals and beliefs that QFD holds and is guided by when making decisions. Our shared values play a vital role in guiding our decisions and behaviours individually and collectively as an organisation. Promoting a shared understanding of QFD's values fosters a sense of belonging and purpose and sits at the core of how QFD works to support each other and the community.

QFD's shared values are:



The way we live our values every day at QFD is outlined in the QFD Charter.

The QFD Charter document was developed with input from our people, to set out the behaviours we expect to see in our workplace, and the behaviours we don't accept. The charter recognises the importance of not only calling out inappropriate behaviours, but also celebrating actions and comments that demonstrate QFD values and positively impact on another person.

Acknowledging that behavioural standards are evolving, and actions that used to be accepted may not be tolerated in today's world, is a key principle in the department's approach to calling out unacceptable workplace behaviours. QFD aims to reinforce values-aligned behaviour and provides support to staff and volunteers when responding to below-the-line behaviours with bystander interventions and a range of additional supports and services.

# 6. Our operating environment

## Legislative environment

The legislative environment in which the QFD operates has a long history. The review of and amendments to the primary legislation implemented in 2024 represent the most recent in a robust list of refinements and improvements to enhance the safety of Queenslanders. The Act, while having gone through several name changes, is only one of the articles that the QFD is guided by, and accountable to.

### *Fire Services Act 1990*

The *Fire Services Act 1990* (the Act), formally the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990*, establishes and details the functions of QFR and RFSQ and the responsibilities of the Commissioner as head of the fire services. The Act also provides for the establishment and functions of rural fire brigades. QFD also administers the subordinate *Fire Services Regulation 2011* which provides the framework for the administration of Queensland's Emergency Management Levy and requirements for permits to light a fire.

The Act also establishes the role of the Chief Fire Officer dedicated to providing specialist expertise in the delivery of fire services, best practice, innovation and research.

### *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008*

QFD shares administration of the *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008*, with the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works. The Regulation provides minimum safety standards to ensure buildings are appropriately constructed, maintained and equipped to minimise the risk of fire and ensure safe evacuations in the case of fire or hazardous material emergencies.

### *Disaster Management Act 2003*

The *Disaster Management Act 2003* guides Queensland's disaster management arrangements, which includes disaster mitigation through a prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) approach.

### *General legislative and regulatory environment*

QFD staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the broader regulatory environment applicable to the general government sector in Queensland, including: the *Human Rights Act 2019*, *Information Privacy Act 2009*, *Right to Information Act 2009*, *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, *Public Sector Act 2022*, *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, *Public Records Act 2002* and the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service.



## Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA)

Queensland has adopted a comprehensive and integrated approach to disaster management which recognises that no department or agency can single-handedly prevent, prepare for, respond to and support recovery from all disaster events. The QDMA explains how stakeholders work together during disasters, outlining a primarily local-led approach to disaster response, with the ability to scale response to an incident as needed. The QDMA details how disasters are managed through all phases of PPRR through disaster management groups, coordination centres, state agencies and non-government organisations. QFD plays a significant role in those arrangements.

Under the QDMA, disaster management groups stand up coordination centres at the relevant level to enact the group's decisions, predominantly in the response and recovery phases. Activation is based on flexibility and adaptability to an incident's circumstances. QFD is represented on Local and District Disaster Management Groups. Local Disaster Management Groups are a means of coordinating multiple agencies and other stakeholders at the local level and are coordinated by the relevant local government. District Disaster Management Groups are coordinated by Queensland Police Service (QPS) to oversee each disaster district. The Commissioner is a member of the State Disaster Management Group. The State Disaster Management Group provides strategic oversight of, and support for, disaster management and disaster operations for the state. Disaster events will see the Queensland Disaster Management Committee (QDMC) stand up. The QDMC, comprising of Ministers of portfolios pertinent to disaster management, plays a crucial role in planning, communication, and resource allocation to mitigate the impact of disasters. The Commissioner is an assisting official on the QDMC.

The Queensland State Disaster Management Plan serves as a framework, guiding arrangements and practices for current and future disaster management in Queensland. It outlines how Queensland will prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from disasters.

QFD is the primary response department for structural fire, bush and grass fire and chemical/hazmat incidents and has emergency support functions including urban search and rescue and technical rescue.

Command of all QFD services resides with the Commissioner, with command of resources being delegated to the appropriate level. This command is exercised within the coordination structures of the QDMA using the principles of the Australasian Interagency Incident Management System.

QFD supports government, stakeholders and the community by fulfilling its responsibilities and support functions under the QDMA.

## Physical environment

Queensland is the second largest state in Australia and covers more than 22 per cent — 1,730,648 square kilometres — of continental Australia. Queensland shares its borders with New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory, as well as Papua New Guinea. The state also borders the sea to the east, north and north-west, with approximately 6973 kilometres of coastline.

Queensland's physical geography can be broadly characterised by climate (i.e. temperature, rainfall, and wind), topography (i.e. elevation) and relief (i.e. the difference between the highest and lowest points in a given area). These physical characteristics influence the potential for, and nature of, natural disasters. Queensland is recognised as Australia's most disaster-prone state.

Queensland is the nation's third most populous state behind New South Wales and Victoria. It has a population exceeding 5.5 million or just over 20 per cent of the total Australian population, of which more than 3.5 million reside in South East Queensland. The remaining population is dispersed predominantly along the eastern coastline and the remainder throughout the interior, resulting in Queensland being one of the most decentralised states.

### Key hazards

The Queensland State Disaster Risk Report provides a foundational level of information for risk assessments undertaken by the disaster management groups and other entities within Queensland's disaster management arrangements. These assessments can inform the development of risk-based disaster management plans across all levels of Queensland's disaster management arrangements. The table below shows the hazard ranking at the state level. The State Disaster Risk Report also provides guidance on climate change and its relation to disaster risk in Queensland.

Hazard	Overall Rank (State)
Flooding	1
Tropical cyclone	2
Bushfire	3
Severe thunderstorm	4
Heatwave	5
Pandemic	6
Biosecurity	7
Chemical, biological, radiological	8
Earthquake	9
Tsunami	10

Identifying and understanding the physical environment is a key consideration for QFD as the physical environment is where we operate, and our understanding of this allows us to anticipate risks, leverage opportunities and ensure responsible service delivery in the short term and over longer planning horizons.

Climate change exacerbates the conditions that lead to changed risk for both the urban and rural environment. Long-term changes in Queensland's climate will change the number and severity of hazard events. The impacts of the changing climate on fire and severe weather behaviour within Queensland are significant. Climate projections are important for risk management both in coming years, but also for risk reduction today. Queensland has of recent years experienced more frequent and extreme fire and severe weather days. There are emerging risks too in building and vehicle fire safety as design and construction materials transition to lower emission materials, and alternative energy generation, distribution and storage becomes more ubiquitous.

Population migration trends can complicate service delivery design. By analysing causes, trends, and implications, QFD can adapt to changing population profiles and demographics.

The dynamic environment in which QFD operates provides challenges for effective operations, so QFD draws upon training, support, and planning at the strategic, operational and tactical level to ensure our capabilities meet the evolving needs of Queensland communities.

## Contemporary operating environment

QFD service delivery continues to evolve in response to changing community needs. Traditionally, primary response for the fire services has been centred around structural fire, bush and grass fire, road crash rescue, hazardous material response and technical rescue, including vertical, urban search and rescue and swiftwater rescue. Enhancements in technology and innovative practices continue to influence, inform and advance QFD operations. The need for the qualified skills and services of firefighters and fire and rescue specialists is seeing increasing demand in non-traditional ways, in particular around multi-agency, large scale, rapid onset and prolonged events.

Further, prevention and mitigation demand has increased. For example, the introduction of Operation Sesbania, a three-year rolling bush and grass fire mitigation program, has seen a shift in the way mitigation activities are undertaken, with a greater focus on variable fuel and weather conditions and an enhanced focus on safety and reducing consequences for communities.



## Funding sources

QFD is funded from a range of sources, including:

- Emergency management levy – administered through local government rates notices. The levy is paid by prescribed Queensland property owners and creates a funding base for fire, rescue and emergency services across the state.
- Government appropriations – providing defined amounts for specific purposes.
- Australian Government grants and contributions.
- Fees and charges – issued for services including infrastructure fire safety and alarm monitoring services and attendance at incidents.

Rural Fire Brigades are also supported through donations from the community and community groups, grants and, in some local government areas, the raising of a levy by local government for the rural fire brigade operating in its area.

Through responsible administration of its funding, QFD is able to deliver on its strategic objectives by equipping the right people with the right training and resources to effectively deliver Queensland's fire and emergency preparation and response capabilities, now and into the future.

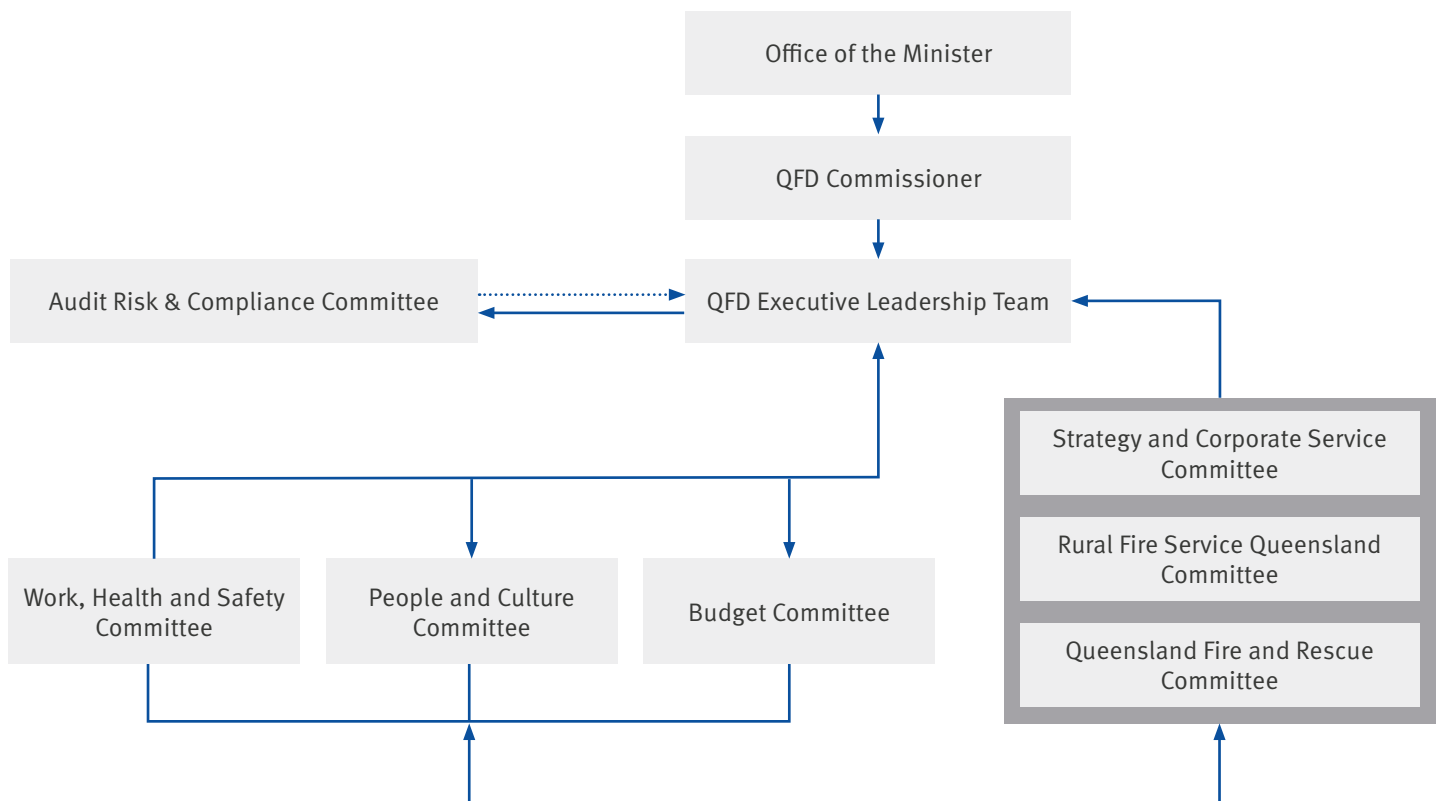
## QFD governance

Governance is described as the set of responsibilities and practices exercised by a department to provide strategic direction, ensure objectives are achieved, risks are managed and resources and investments are used responsibly. High quality governance assumes having the correct structure in place to deliver outcomes effectively, achieve high levels of performance, while aligning with applicable legislative and policy obligations.

QFD's Governance Framework is designed around key governance principles, supporting frameworks, instruments of delegation and a committee structure that brings together the respective services with improved oversight and consideration for key opportunities and improvements across the department.



QFD's Committee Governance structure comprises enterprise and service-based committees. Each committee has a clear purpose and is responsible for planning and performance monitoring in accordance with clear terms of reference and guidelines set out within the committee charters. Enterprise governance committees provide oversight and rigour in decision making where there are impacts or linkages beyond a single service.



## Our performance

QFD recognises the importance of its role supporting Queensland communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from, fires, emergencies and disasters. QFD is accountable to government and the community and undertakes planning and monitors its performance at the strategic, organisational, operational and individual levels to ensure it is best delivering its services.

Strategic performance within the department is monitored and assessed through key performance indicators that are published in QFD's strategic plan. The department also assesses its performance at the strategic level against:

- government objectives for the community relevant to QFD
- the Productivity Commission's National Report on Government Services
- Ministerial Charter Letter priorities
- Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authority Council measures.

Operational performance is achieved through delivery of the priorities contained in QFD's Organisational Plan. The department undertakes quarterly reporting against the Organisational Plan, including assessing and monitoring performance against identified activities. Opportunities for performance management are also reflected within the department's program and project management methodology. Project and program plans include performance measures, which can be used to assess and inform decision-making and to monitor and review the individual project or program.

Financial performance is monitored and reported through a range of methods, including service delivery statements which provide the Legislative Assembly and the public visibility of the budgeted financial and non-financial performance for the budget year.

Individual performance excellence is fostered through the principles of positive performance, with formal development processes undertaken to ensure a tailored approach to individual success.

By planning for and assessing performance regularly and through a range of lenses, QFD is able to ensure it is achieving its objectives and delivering effective, value-for-money services to the Queensland community.



# 7. Who we are

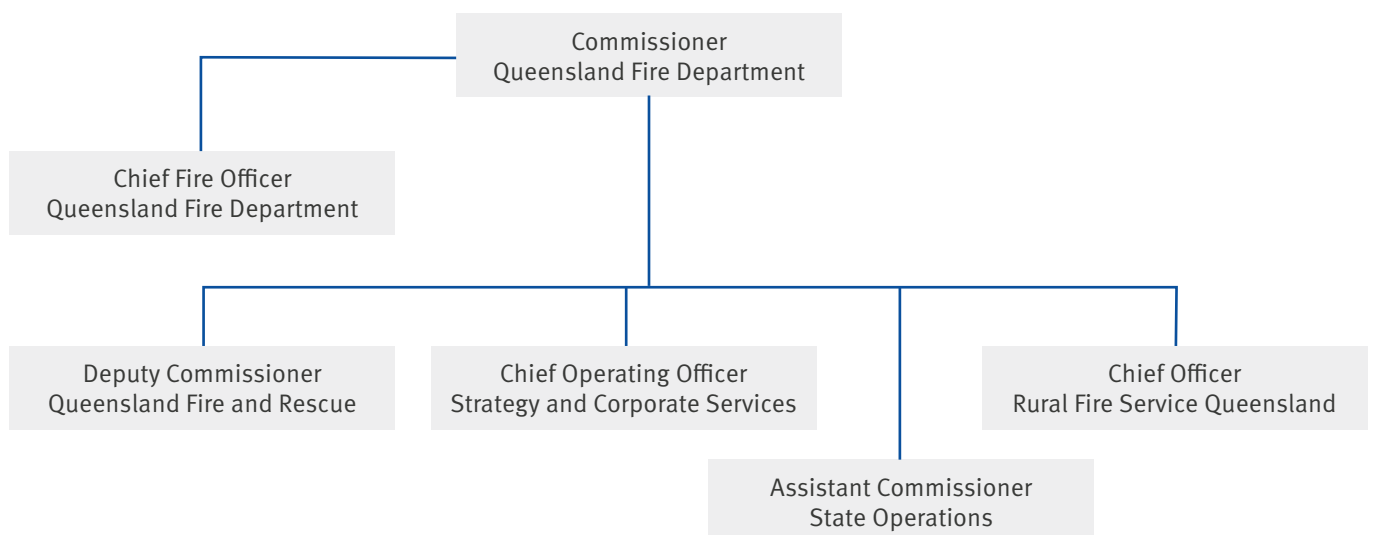
## Organisational structure

### Office of the Commissioner - leadership, organisation and control

The Commissioner is responsible for managing the department in a way that ensures QFD performs its functions effectively and efficiently. The Commissioner discharges these responsibilities through the provision of an organisational structure and governance systems, which facilitate effective operations, enterprise oversight, risk management and considered decision making.

### QFD organisational structure

QFD comprises the Office of the Chief Fire Officer, QFR, RFSQ, State Operations and Strategy and Corporate Services (SCS). SCS and State Operations enable collaboration and coordination between the fire services, including shared service capability and delivery.



A four-region model for QFR and RFSQ supports service delivery throughout the state. Regional Headquarters for both Services are located in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Maryborough and Townsville. QFR and RFSQ operate within the respective regions across eight districts (RFSQ) or divisions (QFR).

SCS functions through six Directorates: Strategy; Assurance; Assets; People and Culture; Information and Technology; and Finance, Procurement and Levy. Services are delivered via state headquarters and eight corporate hubs distributed across the state. State Operations delivers shared capability across RFSQ and QFR based out of the state headquarters.

## Office of the Chief Fire Officer

Independent of the services, the Chief Fire Officer is embedded within the department and tasked with providing specialist expertise in operational assurance, interoperability, operational culture, research, best practice and innovation. The Chief Fire Officer works with the services to identify opportunities to strengthen the delivery of core functions to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the department.

The Chief Fire Officer is not in the line of command and reports directly to the Commissioner. The Chief Fire Officer is supported by staff and executive support officers, as well as three special leads who provide technical, authoritative and professional advice, analysis and direction aligned to QFD's strategic intent.

## Our people

QFD's purpose, vision and objectives could not be achieved without the skill and support of its large contingency of staff and volunteers.

Our staff work together with dedicated volunteers. In addition to our RFSQ volunteers we also have QFR's Research and Scientific Branch Volunteer Scientific Officer network and AUS-1 Disaster Assistance Response Team volunteers, as well as Auxiliary Support Officers and Peer Support Officers.

QFD's staff and volunteers devote their time and efforts to ensuring Queenslanders stay safe.

Our workforce development arrangements empower staff and volunteers to manage, embrace and enhance individual and collective performance. With an inclusive approach to learning, we provide our people with opportunities to keep improving. By providing clear career pathways and encouraging a culture of continuous improvement, we support professional development through all stages of our staff and volunteer careers, ensuring our people are prepared to lead and succeed in technical, operational, administrative, and managerial roles.



## Diversity, equity and inclusion

QFD is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce that aligns with the Queensland Government's strategy for inclusion and diversity.

The department's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is strengthened by its values, practices and procedures. It fosters a culture which promotes equal representation, respect and support for all staff and volunteers, regardless of attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or age.

QFD is proudly recognised as being a positive role model within the community. QFD values this privileged position, recognising the value of diversity and the responsibility it carries to ensure the continued alignment of these values across all internal and external interactions.

QFD contributes to Queensland's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, which has at its core leadership, accountability and human capital management strategies that foster inclusion and diversity, helping to create a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and included.

QFD's *Reframing the Relationship Plan* outlines our commitment and way forward as we reframe and build stronger relationships with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It builds on the commitments identified in the *QFES Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2022-2025* and supports the Queensland Government *Statement of Commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the Queensland Government*.

## Workplace health and safety

Our staff and volunteers are our most valuable asset and their safety is our priority. QFD prioritises its responsibility to ensure the physical and psychological wellbeing of its staff and volunteers. QFD's *Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan* recognises the importance of healthy, safe and well workplaces and addresses the department's health and safety obligations.

The department's Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS) outlines our approach to addressing this priority. The WHSMS seeks to integrate health, safety and wellbeing processes into our planning and core business activities to help create a robust and sustainable culture of health, safety and wellbeing. Injury and illness management is a workplace managed process that incorporates QFD management, rehabilitation and return to work advisors and medical advisors to support workers to stay at work or return to work following an injury or illness. The Fire and Emergency Services Support Network provides access to a team of highly qualified psychologists and counsellors in addition to Peer Support Officers, available to staff and volunteers, and counselling services available to immediate family members, promoting and supporting positive mental health and well-being.

## 8. Our services



### Queensland Fire and Rescue

QFR provides fire prevention, preparedness and response services to fire in the built environment and landscape environments, as well as scientific and specialist capabilities to Queensland communities. QFR provides a multi-hazard response which includes structural fires, road crash rescue, bushfires, hazardous material, technical rescue including vertical, urban search and rescue and swiftwater rescue.

QFR works across four broad themes, which facilitate the continued delivery of world leading emergency services to the community of Queensland. The themes are:

- **Service Delivery** – QFR continuously strives for operational excellence in the delivery of its capability. QFR will continue to deliver our services with professionalism and integrity, so our response is effective, meeting community expectations.
- **Community Safety** – QFR has strong connections to and actively engages with communities to reduce the risk of harm and to minimise incidents occurring. QFR builds strong relationships with key fire, emergency service and disaster management partners and stakeholders to help Queenslanders deal with any risks they face.
- **Professional Development** – QFR continuously evaluates training to ensure it meets operational needs and is responsive to evolving threats that may arise. QFR's training and exercising framework seeks to promote safe and effective outcomes for staff and the community.
- **Business Management** – QFR actively seeks to adopt industry best practices, through understanding its key service delivery needs, the way in which evolving technology impacts on service delivery and the drivers impacting our operating environment. QFR creates investment standards and adopts methodologies that value-add, are flexible and sustainable into the future.

More information about QFR is provided in the QFR *Concept of Organisation* document.





## Rural Fire Service Queensland

RFSQ is a community-based, volunteer emergency service and the lead service for the control and prevention of bush and grass fire in Queensland. RFSQ operates in rural, semi-rural and urban fringe areas providing bush and grass fire prevention, mitigation and response capabilities and community engagement services, assistance during other emergencies and disasters and in some instances road crash rescue.

RFSQ works closely with emergency management agencies (such as QPS and the State Emergency Service), land managers (such as Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service [QPWS]) and other stakeholders (such as Local Government) to protect communities from the threat of bush and grass fire and other natural and man-made emergencies.

RFSQ is supported by approximately 27,000 dedicated volunteer members across approximately 1,400 rural fire brigades and is proudly one of the largest volunteer-based organisations in Queensland with well-developed and strong connections to Queensland communities.

Volunteer brigades undertake a range of planning, preparation and response and recovery activities to ensure communities are well prepared for the bushfire season. This includes community education, and hazard reduction and mitigation activities to reduce the risk from fire to people and property.

Volunteer Community Educators also play a key role in their local community promoting and delivering safety and bushfire preparedness education packages. While managed by RFSQ, the Permit to Light Fire system, which ensures the controlled use of fire across the state, is also largely implemented by volunteer fire wardens.

More information about RFSQ is provided in the RFSQ *Ways of Working* document.



## State Operations

State Operations is a shared capability across RFSQ and QFR. State Operations enhances cooperation and collaboration across QFD operations, with a particular focus on how RFSQ and QFR come together before, during, and after an emergency.

Priorities for State Operations include:

- providing contemporary and efficient incident management and disaster management capabilities for use by QFD and its services to deliver effect across PPRR.
- ensuring coordination of short, medium and long term sustainability and readiness in an increasingly challenging and changing incident and disaster management context.
- leading specialist capabilities that embrace and empower technical experts, and innovation in support of our staff, volunteers and communities.
- delivering, maintaining and enhancing all requirements for the successful use of QFD's Incident Management Concept of Operations (IM CONOPS) and control centres at a state, regional and incident level.
- fostering competency, collaboration and flexibility across QFD and with its partners to minimise risk and develop and evolve common capabilities.
- positioning QFD and its services as an effective partner within the broader QDMA.
- monitoring ongoing state-wide situational awareness relative to the departmental objectives and responding accordingly with measured deliverables.

QFD's IM CONOPS is developed by State Operations, with QFR and RFSQ direction and support. The IM CONOPS is used by all services within the department where more than one of the department's operational services are providing or supporting a response.

More information about State Operations is provided in the State Operations *Concept of Organisation* document.





## Strategy and Corporate Services

SCS provides a diverse range of organisational and professional support to RFSQ, QFR and State Operations. Community mindedness is a core tenet of SCS, its people and its service model, with a strong value placed on the importance of effective and efficient corporate service delivery.

SCS is state coordinated with a distributed corporate services model to ensure an integrated planning, policy, and delivery approach that augments the delivery of SCS capability for QFD and its people. The delivery model enables fiscal sustainability, to ensure that services are contemporary, agile and able to meet the needs of Queensland communities.

In addition, many SCS functions directly reach and service the community, including:

- community messaging, engagement, information, and public safety campaigns delivered through the Media, Communications and Online, and Strategic Content, Community Engagement and Partnership branches.
- promoting accountability and transparency in government through right to information, information privacy and publication schemes.
- advocating for fire, rescue and bushfire safety improvements through strategic policy and legislative reform.

More information about Strategy and Corporate Services is provided in the *SCS Concept of Organisation* document.

# 9. Our capabilities and partners

## Our capabilities

Capability in its most simplistic form is the power or ability to do something. Capability is ‘what’ we do, and the activities identified in the capability map outline ‘how’, as an organisation, we do it. In QFD’s context, this includes operational, operational support and organisational enabling capabilities that work to enable delivery of services to the community.

QFD’s definition of capability is:

*“The ability to achieve a desired effect through having the capacity to mobilise the right people, with the right training, the right information, and the right equipment in the right place at the right time.”*

For QFD, this means making sure we are delivering the right services to the community for a particular hazard they are confronting.

Capability is the lens through which QFD defines and conceptualises the services it delivers. By defining its capabilities, the department is able to consistently review its services and its performance. This enables QFD to respond to the changing environment and community expectations to categorise and prioritise investments that support delivery of strategic objectives, management of risk, and ensures effective use of finite resources.

The capability review and investment process provides a structured approach for the department in reviewing capability, by identifying gaps and providing evidence-based options to inform investment decision making.

QFD categorises capabilities across operational, operational support and organisational enabling domains, reflecting the primary, secondary and enabling effects they deliver.





## OPERATIONAL

*Provides a frontline response that delivers a primary effect, that could be felt or experienced by the community.*

## OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

*Provides a secondary effect with support and/or direction to the delivery of an Operational Capability across the different operating environments creating efficiency and coordination to support delivery of the desired effect.*

## ORGANISATIONAL ENABLING

*Provides an enabling effect with outputs to either Operational or Operational Support Capabilities to enable delivery of the desired effect, whilst managing the running of a government department.*

## Key partners and relationships

QFD develops and draws on robust relationships with government and disaster management stakeholders and the community. Strong relationships allow for effective consultation, policy development, pre-incident planning and response during an incident. Key partners and relationships include, but are not limited to:

- Queensland disaster management agency partners:
  - QPS, including the State Emergency Service
  - Inspector-General Emergency Management
  - Queensland Reconstruction Authority
  - Queensland Health
  - Queensland Ambulance Service
  - Department of Environment, Science and Innovation
  - Department of Energy and Climate
  - QPWS
  - Bureau of Meteorology
  - Local governments and the Local Government Association of Queensland
- National agency partners:
  - National Emergency Management Agency
  - Department of Home Affairs
  - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
  - National Council for Fire and Emergency Services (AFAC)
  - Natural Hazards Research Australia
  - Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
  - Australian Defence Force
  - Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (ANZEMC)
- International partners:
  - International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)
  - Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA)
- Not-for-profit organisations:
  - Volunteering Queensland
  - Red Cross
  - St John's Ambulance
  - The Salvation Army Emergency Services
- Other partners:
  - HQ Plantations
  - Queensland Farmers Federation



# 10. The megatrends influencing our future

In addition to factors impacting QFD's operating environment, we pay attention to "megatrends" to ensure we are also focussed on creating safer communities into the future. Megatrends are long-term, transformative shifts that significantly impact societies, economies, and organisations. These trends shape the world over decades and have wide-ranging effects.

In its 2022 report titled "*Our Future World*", Australia's national science agency, the CSIRO, identifies global megatrends. These megatrends are likely to impact the fire and emergency services sector over the next decades and offer both challenges and opportunities. A summary of each identified megatrend and its relevance to the fire and emergency services sector is as follows:

## 1. Adapting to a changing climate:

- Extreme and unprecedented weather events are becoming more frequent and impactful due to climate change.
- **Relevance:** The fire and emergency services sector must be prepared for an increase in weather-related incidents and develop strategies to mitigate risks associated with a changing climate, such as bush and grass fires and floods and practical impacts on services, including a reduced ability for jurisdictions to share resources due to overlapping severe weather and fire seasons. Adaptation strategies, improved preparedness, and community resilience will be essential.

## 2. Leaner, cleaner and greener:

- There is a global push toward reaching net zero emissions, protecting biodiversity, and using resources more sustainably.
- **Relevance:** Fire and emergency services must adapt to and support environmental policies, potentially by employing greener technologies and approaches in their operations, as well as preparing for and responding to changed risk profiles in the community brought about by the transition to alternative energies.

## 3. Unlocking the human dimension and the changing workforce landscape:

- The workforce dynamics across all sectors, including the fire and emergency services, will evolve over the next decade. There is a growing importance of diversity, equity, and transparency in decision-making processes within the sector and more broadly.
- Demographic shifts, retirements, and changing skill requirements will impact recruitment, training, and retention. Agencies must adapt to attract and retain skilled personnel while addressing diversity and inclusion challenges.
- **Relevance:** Fire and emergency services need to foster an inclusive culture and transparent practices to better serve communities and enhance trust and cooperation during crises. Further, emergency response organisations may face difficulties in maintaining viable volunteer workforces. Sociodemographic changes, such as work-family lifestyle shifts, rural population decline, and a preference for flexible volunteer participation, contribute to these challenges.



#### 4. The escalating health imperative:

- Public health challenges are increasingly prominent, with a heightened focus on disease prevention and health system resilience. There is a growing imperative to protect and respect frontline services.
- **Relevance:** The sector needs to prioritise the health and well-being of its staff, volunteers and the community, in preparing for and responding to health-related emergencies and indeed all emergencies and disasters.

#### 5. Geopolitical shifts:

- Emerging geopolitical dynamics may influence resource availability, global trade and international cooperation.
- **Relevance:** Changes in geopolitics could affect how fire and emergency services plan for and access resources, as well as how they collaborate internationally in disaster response.

#### 6. Diving into digital and enhancements in technology:

- Advancements in digital technologies are transforming how we interact with the world and each other. Advancements in technology, including the use of drones, robotics and artificial intelligence, will continue to shape emergency response operations.
- **Relevance:** The adoption of digital tools can enhance communication, coordination and data analysis for fire and emergency services, leading to more efficient and effective responses. Fire services will benefit from improved situational awareness, faster response times, enhanced and safer firefighting capabilities and enhanced decision making capabilities.

#### 7. Increasingly autonomous

- Increased automation and artificial intelligence are reshaping industries and individual behaviours and provide ethical uncertainties.
- **Relevance:** Implementing autonomous systems may improve operational efficiency and safety for emergency services, particularly in fighting fires, search and rescue operations or in hazardous environments, but will challenge trusted, tested and traditional ways of operating.

# 11. Our guiding principles



Our guiding principles have been developed from an understanding of community expectations, our authorising environment and the challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

By applying these guiding principles to our everyday decision-making, before, during and after emergencies, we will navigate towards our vision. QFD has five guiding principles:



## 1. Capable communities: “We’ll collaborate with communities to enhance fire and emergency preparedness”

- We believe that solutions to problems in a community are best when they come from that community. That’s why we want to work with communities to help them prepare for fires and other emergencies. We’ll focus on helping communities gain the knowledge and skills they need to participate fully before, during, and after an emergency. We’ll also help communities to understand their strengths and abilities to manage fires and emergencies, so that we can better serve their needs. Each community is different, so we’ll work with them to understand their unique needs and risks. By prioritising our efforts according to local risk, we can make Queensland a better place for everyone to live.



## 2. Interoperable: “We’ll bring together people, knowledge, capabilities and equipment to make us and our communities safer”

- To be effective, everyone involved in fire and emergency management needs to work together in a coordinated way. We’ll help different parts of the fire and emergency management system to work together seamlessly with minimal gaps or duplication. Our world is complex, so we need to be able to bring together people, knowledge, capabilities and equipment to make our organisation and community safer. We don’t let borders or limits reduce our ability to help people in need. We understand our role through talking, listening and working with others, we’ve built our capabilities to reflect our responsibilities and risk, and we’ll do everything we can to make communities safer.



### **3. Intelligence:** *We'll identify, collect, analyse and communicate relevant data, information, knowledge and wisdom"*

- We want to help people feel more confident when making decisions about fire and emergencies. We'll identify, collect and analyse a broad array of information that helps us make better decisions. We'll practice high-quality sense-making of the information we identify and generate, to extract as much meaning as we can, relevant to the problems and uncertainties in front of us. This intelligence will underpin our decision making. Once we know what we need to do, we'll share our insights, advice and plans with people in a way that makes sense to them. We'll make sure our messages are clear, easy to understand, and delivered at the right time.



### **4. Sustainable:** *"We'll balance what we spend, consume and emit with the benefit we provide our community and environment"*

- We want to make sure we are sustainable. This means we balance what we spend and consume with the benefit we return for our community, environment, and economy. To be sustainable, we need to understand what our communities value. We must make choices that have the least impact on the environment and reflect what our community needs. We must be fiscally responsible, but that's not all we must consider. We also need to think about the effects our decisions will have. This includes things that are hard to measure, like how our choices will affect the future.



### **5. Adaptive:** *"We'll quickly, safely and effectively adjust to emerging opportunities and challenges"*

- Working together with the community, our organisation, and the fire and emergency services sector will increase our adaptive capacity – which is our ability to quickly and effectively adjust to changing situations and challenges as we respond to emergencies. It's about being flexible, resourceful, and ready to handle whatever comes our way and being able to better prepare for, respond to and recover from, the uncertain and the unexpected. By building trust and learning from each other, we can adjust and anticipate challenges together. Our world is always changing and moving, so it's important for different parts of our systems to work together and be able to adjust to new situations without causing unwanted consequences. Being adaptable helps us handle the unexpected and makes our communities, organisations, and emergency services stronger and more resilient.

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