



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-28





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**AS VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WE DO WHAT WE CAN,
WHEN WE CAN, WHERE WE CAN,
TO THE VERY BEST OF OUR ABILITY.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association of WA acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples throughout the state of Western Australia as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, work and volunteer.

We recognise Aboriginal peoples connection to land, waters and community and we acknowledge the wisdom of and pay our respects to Elders both past and present.



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OUR ASSOCIATION

We support and encourage the progress of Fire and Rescue Service volunteer Brigade members and their Brigades through representation; promote the fitness and discipline of volunteer firefighters and the improvement of firefighting skills through competitions; and develop a community understanding, knowledge and respect for the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service.

The Association provides representation to over 100 Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service Brigades from Kununurra to Esperance to Laverton. This includes five private Brigades including Leinster, Paraburdoo, Pannawonica, Tom Price and Murrin Murrin.

The Strategic Plan is focused on the five (5) strategic pillars including

1. Structure, Governance, Succession
2. Promotion
3. Communication
4. Association Funding
5. Equivalence Focus

OUR PURPOSE

To represent Volunteer Fire Fighters by promoting the profile, welfare, health, safety and resourcing of member brigades.

OUR MISSION

At the VFRSAWA our Mission is to

- Represent the concerns and needs of our member brigades.
- Promote Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service Health and Wellbeing
- Advocate for equivalency with CFRS.
- Promote the education and training of volunteer fire fighters.
- Ensure open and effective communication with all stakeholders.
- Promote a positive public profile for Volunteer Fire and Rescue brigades.

OUR VALUES

- Act with integrity and honesty
- Put our volunteers and community first.
- Work together as a committed team of volunteers.
- Respect and value each other
- Encourage diversity and inclusion.
- Strive to keep ourselves and others safe.
- Work continuously to improve our services
- Have open and honest two way communications.
- Continuously improve our services to our volunteers



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

This Strategic Plan positions the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service Association of Western Australia (VFRSAWA) to enhance its capacity to support volunteers, strengthen community safety, and advocate for the needs of the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS).

It provides a roadmap for the association to address current challenges, seize opportunities, and adapt to the evolving landscape of emergency services.

The Strategic Plan has been developed in collaboration with our staff and Executive and sets the strategic direction for the association over the next five years. It reflects our collective vision for a strong, sustainable, and resilient association that empowers volunteers and delivers meaningful outcomes for the communities we serve.

The plan is underpinned by the five key pillars. Each pillar identifies specific goals and initiatives to ensure the association operates effectively, secures necessary resources, and continues to advocate for its members.

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STRATEGIC PILLARS

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, SUCCESSION

TO INVESTIGATE AND EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION TO ENSURE SUSTAINED, MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ASSOCIATION THAT SERVES OUR MEMBER BRIGADES.

- Adapt to change,
- Build on current skills.
- Continue to provide support and alternatives to ensure a sustained, more efficient, and effective association.
- Continue to provide support and alternatives for the administration to ensure a sustained, more efficient and effective association.
- Continue with current well-structured zones and regions (minor changes to boundaries as required).
- Continue to operate current subcommittees and review as appropriate.
- Succession, plan, identify.
- Continue with our informal mentoring approach; and
- Equal opportunity representation
- Review our constitution in regard to tenure-time as Executive.
- Develop succession guideline for the executives to consider proxy attendance.
- Continuous improvement approach to the association operations.
- Review current approach to corporate governance.
- Gap analysis to be completed biannually.

PROMOTION

ENHANCING VISIBILITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN VFERS BY PROMOTING VOLUNTEER HEALTH, WELLBEING, AND FITNESS THROUGH COMPETITIONS, FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY, SUPPORTING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS, AND LEVERAGING MEDIA AND STRATEGIC OUTREACH.

- Promote volunteer health and wellbeing and fitness, through competitions.
- Continue to work on media plan.
- Being more diverse when promoting VFERS
- Listening to Female Fire Fighters group and encouraging Female fire fighters to visit stations.
- Assist with recruitment and retention of volunteers.
- Link competition with recruitment strategies.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

COMMUNICATION

STRENGTHENING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS WITH DFES LEADERSHIP WHILE SIMPLIFYING ACCESS TO INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS, ENHANCING VOLUNTEER TOOLS AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS WHILE MAINTAINING POSITIVE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS.

- Promote and improve means of effective communication with our stakeholders.
- Continue to develop and expand relationships with high Level DFES management to discuss and find solutions to issues that are not resolved through normal channels.
- Members: Association to regularly send out monthly relevant DFES circulars and important information.
- Expand volunteer portal and simplify portal.
- Explore opportunities with DFES to improve communications CELFI to go in all regional vehicles.
- Community awareness of volunteer status
- Maintain positive communications with DFES and government.



STRATEGIC PILLARS

ASSOCIATION FUNDING

SECURING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING THROUGH SPONSORSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS, ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED DFES SUPPORT, AND EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE FUNDING AVENUES, INCLUDING RECOGNITION OF COMPETITIONS AS A SPORT TO UNLOCK ADDITIONAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES.

- Discuss funding with Volunteer Advisory Committee
- Add and secure ongoing sponsorship for competitions in addition to current DFES funding.
- Alternative funding: Partnership with organisations
- Vehicle sponsorship/ vehicle provision
- Seek recognition for competition to be recognised as a "sport" through the department of sport and recreation to enable further grant funding.
- Apply to DFES and Minister for increased funding inline with increased CPI.



STRATEGIC PILLARS

EQUIVALENCE FOCUS

ADVOCATING FOR VFRS VOLUNTEERS TO ACHIEVE PARITY WITH CFRS AND NATIONAL STANDARDS IN OPERATIONS, EQUIPMENT, AND ASSETS, WHILE ADDRESSING VOLUNTEER WORKLOAD, ENHANCING TRAINING PATHWAYS, AND INCREASING COLLABORATION WITH DFES TO IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR HEALTH, PROPERTY, AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES.

- Maintain presumptive legislation to same standard as CFRS and national standards.
- Advocate to DFES for equivalence in VFRS
 - Operations, equipment, appliances & PPE.
 - Assets: Station builds, Property, Fleet
 - Training and development
 - Brigade management
- Lobby DFES for accounting software and training
- Lobby DFES for AO to assist with vehicle checks.
- Health screening for volunteers
- Explore and implement alternative training delivery.
- Explore and encourage full time trainer pathways for volunteers.
- Review time commitment placed on volunteers in respect to vehicle, equipment checks, cleaning, training and general administration duties.
- Increased meetings with DFES property and asset management in relation to station builds.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, SUCCESSION

ASSOCIATION RESTRUCTURING EXPLORATION

- Launch a comprehensive review of the current Association structure and administration to identify areas for improvement.
- Explore alternative organisational structures that can enhance efficiency and effectiveness in serving member brigades.
- Engage with members and stakeholders to gather input and feedback on potential structural changes.
- Develop a clear roadmap for implementing any recommended structural adjustments.

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Create a robust succession planning program to identify and develop future leaders within the Association.
- Establish guidelines for identifying and nurturing talent, including mentorship and training programs.
- Review the constitution to ensure that succession planning principles are incorporated, including provisions for proxy attendance and tenure.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the succession planning efforts.

ENHANCED REGIONAL AND ZONE MANAGEMENT

- Maintain the current well-structured zones and regions with minor adjustments to boundaries, as needed.
- Strengthen the roles and responsibilities of regional and zone representatives.
- Evaluate the performance of regional subcommittees and make improvements as necessary.
- Promote equal opportunity representation by encouraging executive members to visit brigades and engage with members directly.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, SUCCESSION

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Conduct a thorough review of the Association's corporate governance practices.
- Identify areas where governance can be enhanced, such as transparency, accountability, and decision-making processes.
- Implement a continuous improvement approach to streamline and optimise the Association's operations.
- Solicit feedback from brigades to gauge their views on governance and operational matters.

COMMUNICATION AND GAP ANALYSIS

- Appoint a designated individual (EO) to survey and promote communication between the executive team and brigades.
- Conduct a gap analysis to assess the effectiveness of existing guidelines, practices, and communication channels.
- Solicit feedback from members to identify gaps in information dissemination and decision-making.
- Use the feedback to refine communication strategies and bridge any identified gaps.

THESE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SHOULD HELP THE ASSOCIATION ADAPT TO CHANGE, BUILD ON EXISTING SKILLS, PROVIDE BETTER SUPPORT TO MEMBER BRIGADES, AND ENSURE A SUSTAINED, MORE EFFICIENT, AND EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION WITH A FOCUS ON GOVERNANCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING.



PROMOTION

COLLABORATIVE OUTREACH WITH DFES

- Establish a partnership with DFES to jointly promote the Association's role in representing brigades and their members.
- Coordinate efforts with DFES to ensure consistent messaging and awareness campaigns.
- Explore opportunities for co-hosted events or initiatives that highlight the Association's contributions.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROMOTION FOR MEMBERS

- Develop and launch health and wellbeing promotion programs tailored to Association members.
- Organise competitions and events that encourage a healthy lifestyle and camaraderie among members.
- Use these initiatives as a platform to reinforce the Association's vital role within the firefighting community.

MEDIA AND MERCHANDISING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- Create a comprehensive media plan that includes strategies for on line and offline promotion.
- Develop branded merchandise to reinforce the Association's identity and raise awareness among members and the public.
- Incorporate merchandising into media campaigns to enhance visibility and engagement.



PROMOTION

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROMOTION

- Launch initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion within the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS).
- Implement outreach programs that specifically target underrepresented groups, including women.
- Organise visits by female volunteer firefighters to stations to inspire and encourage potential recruits.

ENHANCED ONLINE ENGAGEMENT AND RECRUITMENT

- Leverage video conferencing and digital platforms to connect with member brigades more effectively.
- Tailor recruitment strategies to meet the specific requirements and preferences of regional brigades.
- Link volunteer firefighting competitions with recruitment efforts, particularly targeting younger potential volunteer firefighters who are techsavvy.

THESE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ARE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE ASSOCIATION'S VITAL ROLE, ENGAGE MEMBERS AND POTENTIAL RECRUITS, AND CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE AND DYNAMIC OUTREACH APPROACH. THEY WILL HELP INCREASE AWARENESS AMONG DFES AND OTHER AGENCIES ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIREFIGHTING COMMUNITY.



COMMUNICATION

ENHANCED STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Implement a comprehensive strategy to promote and improve effective communication with all stakeholders, including members, DfES, and the community.
- Utilise a variety of communication channels such as newsletters, email updates, and social media to ensure timely and relevant information sharing.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to gather input and insights from stakeholders for continuous improvement.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT WITH DFES LEADERSHIP

- Develop and expand relationships with high-level DfES management to create a platform for discussing and resolving issues that cannot be addressed through standard channels.
- Arrange regular meetings or forums to facilitate open and productive dialogue with DfES leadership.
- Collaborate with DfES on joint initiatives that benefit both parties and the broader firefighting community.

STREAMLINED INFORMATION DISSEMINATION TO MEMBERS

- Establish a system for the Association to regularly send out monthly relevant DfES circulars and important information to its members.
- Ensure that critical updates and resources from DfES are easily accessible to all members through a centralised platform.



COMMUNICATION

VOLUNTEER PORTAL EXPANSION AND SIMPLIFICATION

- Expand the volunteer portal to provide volunteers with a user-friendly and comprehensive platform for accessing resources, training materials, and updates.
- Simplify the user interface to make navigation and information retrieval more intuitive for volunteers.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

- Work on improving community awareness of volunteer firefighters' vital role, even in the absence of financial compensation.
- Advocate for greater recognition and support for volunteers within the community and engage in awareness campaigns to highlight their contributions.

THESE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES WILL HELP THE ASSOCIATION ESTABLISH ROBUST COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH DFES, ENHANCE MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, IMPROVE ACCESS TO RESOURCES, AND RAISE AWARENESS OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTING COMMUNITY'S IMPORTANT ROLE IN SOCIETY.



ASSOCIATION FUNDING

DIVERSIFIED FUNDING SOURCES

- Explore and secure diverse sources of funding beyond traditional avenues, such as government grants and contributions.
- Initiate discussions with the Volunteering Advisory Committee (VAC) to explore potential funding opportunities and partnerships.
- Seek sponsorships for competitions in addition to DFES funding to augment financial resources.

STRATEGIC SPONSORSHIP PARTNERSHIPS

- Actively seek sponsorship opportunities from corporate partners and organisations that align with the Association's mission and values.
- Collaborate with sponsors to develop mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to the sustainability of the Association's operations.

ADVOCACY FOR GRANT FUNDING

- Advocate for the Association's recognition as a legitimate sport through the 'Sport and Recreation' framework, enabling access to grant funding.
- Work on securing grant funding from organisations that support equal opportunity initiatives to align with the promotion of diversity within the Association.



ASSOCIATION FUNDING

VEHICLE SPONSORSHIP AND PROCUREMENT

- Seek DFES support further support for vehicles.
- Seek vehicle sponsorships or partnerships with automotive companies to provide vehicles for the Association's operations.
- Explore opportunities for cost-effective procurement of vehicles that can support the Association's activities.

FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Develop a strategic financial plan with the goal of making the Association self-sufficient in the long term.
- Implement measures to increase revenue streams and reduce unnecessary expenses while maintaining operational efficiency.

THESE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AIM TO SECURE INCREASED AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR THE ASSOCIATION'S OPERATIONS, ENSURING ITS FINANCIAL STABILITY AND CAPACITY TO SUPPORT ITS MISSION EFFECTIVELY.



EQUIVALENCE FOCUS

OPERATIONAL PARITY ADVOCACY

- Advocate to DFES for the achievement of operational equivalence between Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS) and Career Fire and Rescue Services (CFRS).
- Engage in dialogues and negotiations with DFES to ensure that VFRS operations, including equipment, appliances, and training, align with CFRS standards.

ASSET EQUITY ENHANCEMENT

- Focus on achieving equity in assets, including station builds, property, and fleet, between VFRS and CFRS.
- Collaborate with DFES to secure resources and investments in station infrastructure and firefighting equipment to bridge the asset gap.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDISATION

- Work on standardising training and development programs for VFRS personnel to match CFRS standards.
- Explore alternative methods of training delivery to ensure accessibility and equivalence in skill development.



EQUIVALENCE FOCUS

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Maintain and advocate for the same standards as CFRS in presumptive legislation for occupational diseases.
- Promote and enhance mental health support, including national health screening, for VFRS members, particularly in addressing PostTraumatic Stress Injury (PTSI).

EFFICIENCY AND TIME COMMITMENT REVIEW

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the time commitments placed on VFRS volunteers, including vehicle and equipment checks, cleaning, training, and administrative tasks.
- Explore innovative solutions to reduce time burdens, particularly for officers, and increase efficiency in brigade management.

THESE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ARE DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT GREATER EQUITY AND EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN VFRS AND CFRS ACROSS VARIOUS ASPECTS OF FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT, ULTIMATELY ENHANCING THE CAPABILITIES AND WELL-BEING OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS.





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