



DFES
Department of Fire &
Emergency Services

FOR A SAFER STATE

STRATEGY 2026-2031

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From the Commissioner

Over the past five years, Western Australia has faced challenges of unprecedented scale, testing the resilience of our communities and the strength of our emergency services.

These experiences have reinforced a simple truth – effective emergency management is not just about responding to emergencies, it is about anticipating them, adapting quickly and working together to reduce their impact.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) 2026-2031 Strategy is our blueprint for this future. It builds on the achievements of our previous Strategy and captures our evolution into a trusted, capable and forward-looking emergency management agency.

Our vision is clear and enduring: all Western Australians working together for a safer State.

Achieving this vision means building prepared and resilient communities, a robust and adaptable statewide capability and strong partnerships across government, industry and the community.

We are equipping communities with the knowledge, tools and confidence to manage risks. In doing so, we strengthen

shared preparedness and resilience, while maintaining DFES' strong and effective emergency response.

Our priorities are clear – enhance our capabilities, strengthen our culture and embrace innovation.

We will be intelligence led and data driven, leveraging technology, skills and insights to guide decisions and improve operational effectiveness.

We will continue to nurture future-ready leaders and a workforce built on professionalism and service. A high-performing and supported workforce is the foundation of our success.

Through ongoing investment in leadership and professional development, DFES will remain at the forefront of emergency management excellence.

As technology evolves, particularly through artificial intelligence and data analytics, our ability to anticipate and adapt will be transformed. Developing data literacy across our workforce will turn information into insight, helping make faster, smarter decisions and better serve the people of WA.

Proactivity will define our approach.

By predicting, planning for and mitigating risks, we can reduce the impact of natural disasters and emergencies and strengthen resilience across communities.

Collaboration will be equally vital. When DFES works alongside government agencies, industry and communities, we build trust, strengthen partnerships and ensure sector alignment in protecting our State.

I am deeply proud of the dedication and professionalism shown by staff, volunteers and our emergency management partners. This unwavering commitment ensures we deliver excellence every day.

As I look forward, I do so with pride and confidence. DFES stands ready, strong and future-focused. Our shared vision will guide us as we build a safer, more resilient WA.

Together we can create a State where communities are empowered, risks are managed and DFES continues to help to protect and support every Western Australian before, during and after emergencies.

**Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner
Darren Klemm AFSM**

Working together for a safer State

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is Western Australia's leading fire and emergency services agency.

Our dedicated emergency services volunteers and staff work together to deliver emergency management before, during and after emergencies.

We take measures to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from cyclones, earthquakes, fires, floods, storms, tsunamis, structural collapse, radiation from nuclear-powered warships and hazardous material incidents.

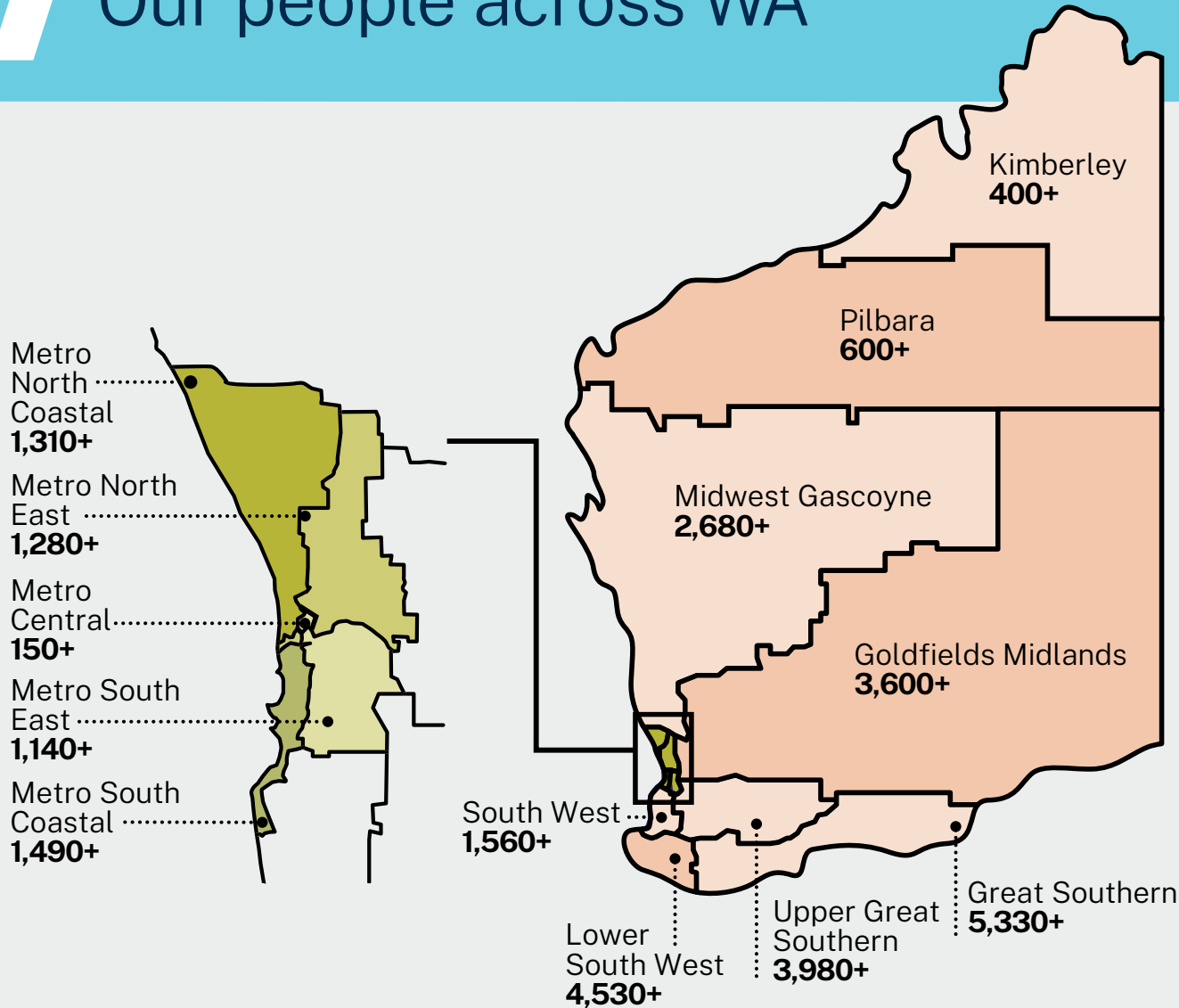
We operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, on land, in the air and by sea across the vast 2.5 million square kilometers of our great State.

Our vision is for all Western Australians to work together for a safer State.

Our purpose is to achieve a safer Western Australia by enabling and protecting the community before, during and after emergencies.



Our people across WA



We are the Hazard Management Agency for:



Fire



Cyclone



Storm



Flood



Tsunami



Earthquake



HAZMAT



Collapse

Our workforce

29,151

Total volunteers and staff*

1,912

State Emergency Service

1,144

Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service

19,970

Bush Fire Service

1,583

Marine Rescue Western Australia

779

Public Service Officers, Technicians and other fire service staff

2,146

Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services

1,225

Career Fire and Rescue Service

392

Other volunteers^



^ Other volunteers include our Youth in Emergency Services programs and Emergency Services Cadet Corps and their instructors. * As at 30 June 2025



Our values provide guidance on navigating the future environment

DFES is committed to our vision of all Western Australians working together for a safer State.

Our strategy is grounded in our values that ensure our services remain contemporary and productive.



Leadership

We lead by example, empowering our people, partners and communities to inspire initiative, innovation and drive positive change in emergency management.

Our leadership is grounded in community service, accountability and delivering community safety in line with State Government priorities.



Commitment

We are dedicated to getting the best outcomes for the WA community. We continuously improve and develop our people to enhance capabilities and readiness.

By embracing change and innovation, we ensure we are effective, impactful and responsive to community needs.



Teamwork

We work together with communities and our partners across WA's Emergency Management system. We value everyone's skills and contributions, fostering teamwork that drives innovation and resilience.

Our collaborative approach ensures we meet challenges and deliver on our vision for all Western Australians working together for a safer State.



Trust

Trust is the foundation of our relationships with emergency management partners and the community. We treat people with respect and act with integrity, enabling strong collaboration and shared success.

We build strong relationships and reinforce trust through robust decision-making processes, genuine collaboration, ethical conduct and accountability.

Emergency Management in Western Australia

The Emergency Management landscape in WA is constantly evolving, driven by the following dynamic forces that demand strategic action to strengthen community safety and resilience. As the emergency landscape evolves, volunteers, career firefighters and corporate staff will work together to deliver innovative and cohesive strategies for community resilience.



Climate and Environment

Shifting climate patterns are contributing to more frequent and severe natural hazards, including bushfires, cyclones, floods and storms.

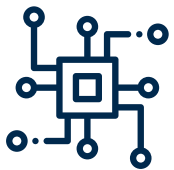
Impact: Growing demand for our volunteer and career workforces, capable of managing multiple and concurrent hazards across regions and seasons.



Economic Pressures

Natural disasters are increasing costs for governments, insurers and communities and placing greater strain on emergency services.

Impact: Greater need for effective resource management and efficient service delivery.



Technology

Advancements in artificial intelligence and automation, coupled with the impact of cybersecurity measures are driving the modernisation and adoption of technology and digital tools, enabling smarter decision-making and expanding our capacity with better use of data and insights.

Impact: Strengthening cybersecurity and adopting smart technologies will enhance operational efforts and support faster, data-driven responses to natural disasters and emergencies.



Social and Demographic Changes

Population shifts are increasing the demand for emergency services, along with an ageing population and fluctuating volunteer numbers, which affect workforce capacity and availability.

Impact: Need for a more diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects our changing communities, ensures everyone feels valued and enables us to meet changing demands.

Alignment to State Government priorities 2025-2029

We will continue to mitigate the changing emergency management context to ensure that we focus on initiatives that deliver on the Premier's priorities for State Government.

PRIORITY 1

Diversifying the WA economy so that it remains the strongest in the nation

Strategy (How)

1. Developing a skilled and productive workforce
2. Making more things here

DFES Initiatives (What)

- Trainee Firefighter Schools
- Expand the Community Emergency Services Manager Program
- Public Sector Commission Solid Futures Program
- Fleet Apprenticeships
- Fleet Manufactured in WA



PRIORITY 4

Building safe and inclusive communities

Strategy (How)

1. Supporting our Police and Emergency Services to protect our community

DFES Initiatives (What)

- State Bushfire Mitigation Branch
- Special Technical Rescue capability (Swift Water Rescue, Disaster Assistance Rescue Team)
- HAZMAT capability
- Prepare DFES to manage radiation incidents involving nuclear-powered warships
- Aerial firefighting capability
- Next Generation Warnings Phase Five



PRIORITY 6

Delivering quality infrastructure and services across our State

Strategy (How)

1. Improving infrastructure and services in our regional centres and remote communities

DFES Initiatives (What)

- New State Emergency Management Training Centre
- New Aviation Services Facility
- New and improved fire stations and facilities
- Administration of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements for Western Australia on behalf of the State Government





As we move towards 2031, we will address complex issues

Changing risk and hazard management landscape



What would it take to build the knowledge, frameworks and processes necessary to effectively manage new and increasingly complex risks in an evolving hazard landscape?

By this we mean:

- Strengthening our expertise in hazard and risk management.
- Enhancing specialist skills and cross-sector support.
- Building our adaptive capacity and hazards-informed resourcing.

Key opportunities:

- Embedding accountability within governance frameworks can strengthen capability to address emerging hazards.
- Leveraging intelligence and predictive tools can boost operational readiness.
- Addressing complex hazard consequences can lead to innovative solutions.

Developing the workforce needed for the future



How are future-ready operational and strategic leaders developed in line with evolving demands, while also enhancing our ability to attract and retain volunteers and staff in all regions?

By this we mean:

- Strengthening leadership capabilities to deliver strong Emergency Management.
- Building capable and credible leaders and the future workforce.
- Ensuring a sustainable volunteer and staff workforce across the State.

Key opportunities:

- Cultivating a skilled and capable workforce can meet evolving capacity demands.
- Attracting and retaining talent can ensure a future-ready workforce.
- Implementing decentralised decision-making can enhance regional effectiveness.

Leveraging data and information in our approach



What options exist to transform our approach to data and information analysis and sharing practices to enable timely, insight-driven and evidence-based decision-making?

By this we mean:

- Ensuring seamless and secure data sharing integrations and connections.
- Providing robust and shared infrastructure, governance and systems.
- Using data and analytics for proactive management.

Key opportunities:

- Leveraging shared infrastructure and systems developments can improve efficiency.
- Ensuring robust infrastructure, governance and systems can improve data-driven decision-making.
- Building data analytics capability can increase our ability to predict and proactively prepare for emergencies.

Elevating WA's Emergency Management capability



How will we establish capabilities needed to fully embrace an expanded Emergency Management mandate, including building trust and stronger community resilience through proactive services and partnerships?

By this we mean:

- Formalising our role in the State Emergency Management Framework.
- Building Emergency Management capability across the public sector.
- Leading a more resilient and engaged community.

Key opportunities:

- Enhancing prevention and preparedness can lead to more effective responses.
- Increasing capacity for resilience-building services can strengthen community support.
- Improving role clarity can enhance coordination and overall effectiveness.

DFES STRATEGY 2026-2031

Working together for a safer State

Our community sits at the heart of everything we do and guides how we prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

This strategy sets out how we will strengthen resilience, build capability and lead a unified emergency management system for Western Australia into the future.



DFES Strategy 2026-2031 Overview

Our purpose

To achieve a safer Western Australia by enabling and protecting the community before, during and after emergencies.

Leading excellence in Emergency Management

Enabling a unified and resilient Emergency Management sector in WA, defined by our unwavering focus on building safer, more resilient communities.

Leveraging data and information to power our digital future

Harnessing data and information to drive smarter decisions, enhance service delivery and multiply the effectiveness of our workforce by establishing data as a critical asset.

Our vision

All Western
Australians working
together for a
safer State

Managing complex and evolving risks in our community

Ensuring the community is resilient to natural disasters and emergencies by proactively identifying, managing and mitigating new, complex and evolving risks before, during and after incidents.

Developing our future capabilities, leaders and skills

Cultivating an engaged and respected workforce of volunteers and staff, with skilled and diverse leaders capable of anticipating challenges, taking initiative and working together collaboratively.

Strategic priorities

Managing complex and evolving risks in our community



Strengthen partnerships with communities to improve resilience by proactively identifying, managing and mitigating new, complex and evolving risks.

We will increase confidence through a strong influence on policy and planning, supported by a sector-wide capability that effectively manages risk before, during and after emergencies.

Developing our future capabilities, leaders and skills



Cultivate a skilled and diverse workforce of volunteers and staff, that operate effectively across strategic planning, community resilience and service delivery empowering communities and driving sector-wide capability.

We will develop capable and respected leaders for the Emergency Management and public sectors.

Leveraging data and information to power our digital future



Establish data as a critical asset that is seamlessly and securely integrated into decision-making and service delivery.

We will encourage strategic exploration and refining of data to power analytics and insights that support an evidence-based culture.

Leading excellence in Emergency Management



Champion a unified and resilient Emergency Management sector that delivers coordinated, community-focused outcomes across WA.

We will activate our statewide mandate to strengthen partnerships, drive innovation and embed excellence in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities to build, safer, more resilient communities.

Outcomes

1.1 Coordinated statewide hazard preparedness

1.2 A proactive, intelligence-led and prevention focused approach

1.3 Capable, competent, and collaborative sector

2.1 A thriving and empowered workforce

2.2 Strong and capable volunteer and staff workforce across all regions

2.3 A recognised leader in the public sector

3.1 Mission critical data is recognised as a strategic asset

3.2 Faster, more informed decisions for the community

3.3 Seamless collaboration for a coordinated response

4.1 Clear and unified Emergency Management system

4.2 Capable and integrated Emergency Management sector

4.3 Engaged and confident communities

Statement of Intent

Managing complex and evolving risks in our community



Developing our future capabilities, leaders and skills



Leveraging data and information to power our digital future



Leading excellence in Emergency Management



1.1 Coordinated statewide hazard preparedness

Ensuring that a clear, robust and collaborative system is in place at the State level to govern, prioritise and plan for new and complex risks, providing clarity to all stakeholders.

1.2 A proactive, intelligence-led and prevention focused approach

Transforming internal structures and capabilities, driven by proactive intelligence, technology and skills, prioritising prevention.

1.3 Capable, competent and collaborative sector

Leading the Emergency Management sector, fostering a unified and effective multi-agency approach.

2.1 A thriving and empowered workforce

Creating a positive, inclusive and psychologically safe culture where people feel valued, trusted to make decisions and are proud to volunteer and work for DFES.

2.2 Strong and capable volunteer and staff workforce across all regions

Ensuring all regions are resourced with diverse, competent and empowered leaders who are trusted within their communities.

2.3 A recognised leader in the public sector

Stepping up to be the trusted leader and partner, influencing beyond our traditional remit and contributing to the capability of the WA public sector.

3.1 Mission critical data is recognised as a strategic asset

Managing and leveraging data to better predict, plan for and mitigate risks leading to fewer emergencies and increased community resilience.

3.2 Faster, more informed decisions for the community

Ensuring decision-makers have immediate access to accurate and relevant information needed to make effective decisions.

3.3 Seamless collaboration for a coordinated effort

Driving collaboration in data sharing, ensuring all stakeholders are working from a common operating picture to deliver effective and unified services for our communities.

4.1 Clear and unified emergency management system

Establishing the formal authority, governance and shared role understanding that are essential for a truly integrated system to function.

4.2 Capable and integrated Emergency Management sector

Ensuring all agencies have the skills, training and professional recognition needed to effectively perform their roles.

4.3 Engaged and confident communities

Delivering tangible benefit for WA communities, ensuring they are engaged, informed, prepared and confident in their ability to withstand emergencies.

Focus areas for success

Managing complex and evolving risks in our community



- Establishing a hazard and risk intelligence decision framework.
- Developing adaptive and competency-based operating and financially sustainable resourcing models.
- Prioritising proactive risk reduction.

Developing our future capabilities, leaders and skills



- Dynamic and inclusive culture and capability.
- Enhancing whole-of-business regional capability.
- Driving sector-wide leadership development.

Leveraging data and information to power our digital future



- Establishing a shared intelligence network.
- Transforming data into insights to enhance maturity in decision making and processes.
- Proactively working towards digitalisation.

Leading excellence in Emergency Management



- Formalising our role in the State Emergency Management Framework.
- Modernising Emergency Management and inter-agency collaboration.
- Building sector capability and community engagement.



Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

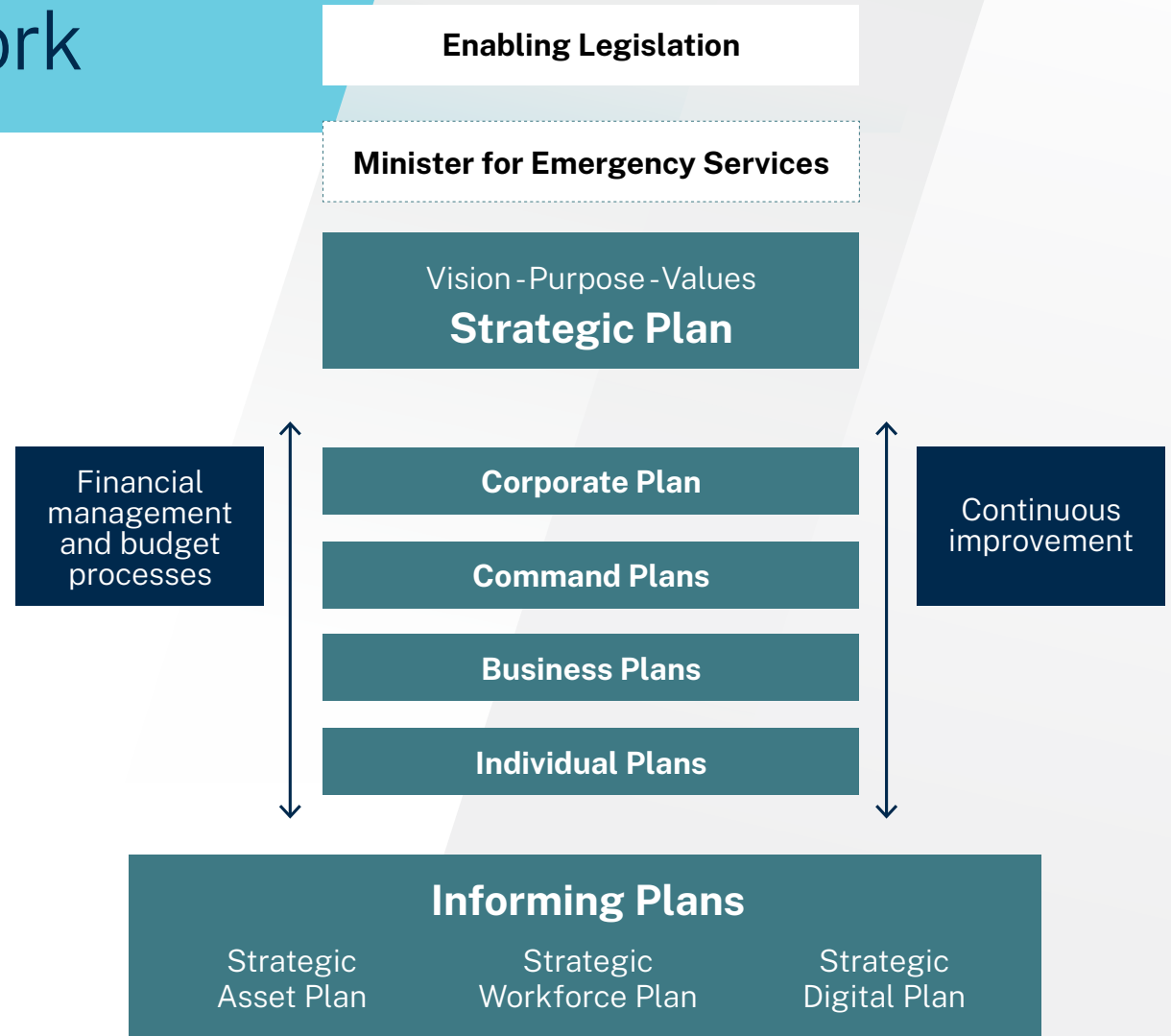
The strategy is the keystone that connects to all other DFES plans.

The strategy is underpinned by our Corporate Plan, which sets the annual initiative level direction for DFES and ensures alignment across all enabling plans.

It is further supported by a hierarchy of informing plans like the Strategic Asset Plan, Strategic Workforce Plan and Strategic Digital Plan, which align resources and capabilities to strategic goals.

All these plans link to ensure that every level of DFES, from high-level governance to individual actions, is working together to deliver on the strategy.

This structured approach enables consistent decision-making, performance monitoring and continuous improvement across all functions.



The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) acknowledges First Nations Australians as the Traditional Custodians throughout Australia and their continuing connection to lands, waters, sky and community.

We acknowledge the wisdom, cultures, languages and communities of First Nations Australians and pay respect to Elders past and present.



FOR A SAFER STATE