

Rural Fire Service

Building Community Resilience



Bushfires are a fact of life in Western Australia, and the Liberal-led State Government is committed to ensuring our fire preparedness and response is world's best practice.

As a result of the January 2016 Waroona Fire and subsequent Special Inquiry, a re-elected Liberal Government will establish a dedicated Rural Fire Service to further improve the State's capacity to prepare for and respond to major bushfires.

Fast Facts

- There are about 28,000 operational emergency services personnel in WA
- Volunteers make up more than 95% of the State's emergency services response, with more than 27,000 registered volunteers from 820 brigades

Our Commitment

A Liberal Government will establish an independent Rural Fire Service to improve the State's ability to prepare for and respond to bushfires, build community resilience and engage and support volunteers.

A Liberal Government will continue to work with relevant agencies, including the departments of Parks and Wildlife and Fire and Emergency Services, local government, volunteer firefighters and the United Firefighters Unions of WA, to determine the best model for the service ahead of the 2017-18 bushfire season.

The Rural Fire Service will have its own CEO who will report directly to the Minister for Emergency Services but will work closely and collaboratively with the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner according to protocols that will be developed.

The Rural Fire Service will be regionally based and will comprise administrative headquarters and a training facility.

The Liberals have identified Collie as the preferred location for the Rural Fire Service because of its central location in the south west, its significant size, and proximity to a large pool of bushfire volunteers, Parks and Wildlife staff, and bushfire prone areas.

Collie is readily accessible for the training of large numbers of career and volunteer bushfire fighters and has existing infrastructure and services to support a Rural Fire Service.

This will create significant business and employment opportunities in Collie and surrounds.



Protecting Regional Communities

In January 2016 the Liberal-led Government appointed Euan Ferguson to undertake a Special Inquiry into the bushfire that devastated the Shires of Harvey and Waroona, causing the loss of two lives and the destruction of 166 homes in Yarloop.

The Government committed to support all 17 recommendations of the Ferguson Report, including the establishment of a Rural Fire Service, an Office of Emergency Management, and an independent review of the Emergency Services Levy. A number of urgent recommendations were implemented ahead of the 2016-17 bushfire season.

The Liberals are strong supporters of fuel reduction burning to reduce the occurrence and ferocity of bushfires, with an additional \$20 million allocated in the 2015-16 Budget to boost the Department of Parks and Wildlife's prescribed burning capacity.

This resulted in a record number of prescribed burns in the south-west in 2016-17 to date and the Government is on track to meet its 200,000ha target.

Labor's position on fuel reduction burning is unclear, with its environment spokesman having been at the Conservation Council when it completely opposed any fuel reduction burning.



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