

# Bushfire Mitigation Forum 2018 | Statement of Outcomes

## Forum Overview

The Bushfire Mitigation Forum was held on Thursday 4 October 2018 in Kalamunda, Western Australia. The Forum brought together representatives from across the State's bushfire management sector to advance collaboration in bushfire mitigation and to inform the design of a Bushfire Centre of Excellence for Western Australia. Over 100 people attended the event, including representatives from volunteer brigades, groups and units, state agencies, local governments, volunteer associations, and other special interest groups. Reflecting their critical role in the bushfire sector, the event was heavily focused on bushfire volunteers, with this important group comprising over half of event participants.

## Forum Approach

The 2018 Forum aimed to build on outcomes from previous bushfire stakeholder events, including the [2017 Bushfire Mitigation Summit](#) and [Western Australian Prescribed Burning Forum 2017 - The Burning Question: Now & Beyond](#). These first-of-their-kind events reflected a renewed priority on bushfire mitigation in Western Australia, and established a strategic foundation for the detailed, volunteer-focused discussions at the 2018 Forum. Cross-over of participants, topics and program structure ensured a meaningful link between events. The 2018 Forum provided an important opportunity to reflect on progress over the past 18 months, and to inform the continued transformation of the bushfire sector following the introduction of the rural fire reform package in April 2018. The strong emphasis on volunteers will also support a future transition to the new Ministerial Volunteer Advisory Forums, which were announced as part of the recent reform package.

The 2018 Forum program combined plenary Q&A sessions with two workshops – *Working Together in Bushfire Mitigation* and *Designing the Bushfire Centre of Excellence* – to maximise the opportunity for participants to contribute their perspectives. The mitigation workshop was designed to explore the question 'how can we work better together in bushfire mitigation?', with participants working in small, facilitated groups to consider what successful collaboration looks like, and the required steps to get there. The Centre of Excellence workshop explored 'where is the excellence today?' and 'how do we identify, access and share it across stakeholders in the bushfire sector?'. In this workshop, participants again worked in small teams to contribute and capture their ideas across the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery spectrum. The plenary Q&A sessions were staggered over the course of the day to allow participants to raise and discuss issues with the broader participant group, including the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Francis Logan MLA, and Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Darren Klemm AFSM.

## General Discussion Themes

Forum proceedings were facilitated by Dr Ron Edwards, Chair of the State Emergency Management Committee. Participants were welcomed to country by Mr Oral McGuire, who spoke about the cultural context of and application of traditional knowledge to bushfire mitigation practices in Australia. His Worship The Mayor of Kalamunda, Cr John Giardina, also welcomed event guests to the facility, using his address to highlight the importance of volunteering to bushfire mitigation efforts within the City of Kalamunda. The significance of the volunteering contribution to the emergency services sector arose a key theme of the opening remarks, with Dr Edwards noting this contribution had recently been valued at over \$43 billion to the Australian economy, and Cr Giardina providing figures on the considerable proportion of the bushfire services provided by volunteer brigades in the City of Kalamunda. The Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Darren Klemm AFSM, reiterated the importance of incorporating local knowledge in planning and implementing bushfire risk treatments, illustrating this through examples of recent collaboration to achieve significant bushfire protection outcomes for communities in Beverley and Kununurra.

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The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Francis Logan MLA, provided the key note address, reflecting on his conversations with bushfire volunteers during his recent visits to over 200 regional brigades, groups and units, noting their considerable knowledge, experience and skill. Minister Logan also used his address to establish the context for discussions during workshop sessions, providing an overview of recent changes to the bushfire sector, including the establishment of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, and \$35 million in additional funding for bushfire mitigation activities. The Minister outlined his expectations for the Bushfire Centre of Excellence – a world-class institution, providing advice, expertise and leadership, and a home for all involved in bushfire management. Both Minister Logan and Commissioner Klemm encouraged participants to consider their expectations of the Centre and to be courageous in their contributions to design discussions.

Participants were encouraged to ask questions directly of the Minister, Commissioner, and Executive Director of the Rural Fire Division, Mr Murray Carter, during plenary sessions. Attendees raised challenges related to multi-jurisdictional management of bushfire risk, including mitigation responsibilities on Commonwealth lands, the promotion of bushfire mitigation as employment opportunities for Aboriginal persons, and procedural questions relating to the establishment of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence. Many of the questions addressed the importance of adequate, transparent and long-term funding to support bushfire mitigation activities in Western Australia. The need for processes to be consistent, yet flexible and simple, arose as a key theme of discussions. Participants also questioned progress on the review of the emergency services legislation, noting the importance of this supporting the renewed state focus on bushfire mitigation, and sought clarification of the state's position on insurance for mitigation activities.

### *Outcomes of Working Together in Bushfire Mitigation Workshop*

This workshop was structured as a facilitated 'keep doing, start doing and stop doing' activity to support participants to consider how we could work better together in bushfire mitigation. Participants collectively recorded close to 400 views and ideas during the workshop session, with over 200 of those describing what we should 'start doing'. These workshop outputs have been analysed and categorised, and will inform the work of the Rural Fire Division and design of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

Key themes of 'stop doing' discussions were unnecessary complexity, silo behaviours, inadequate or inequitable funding arrangements, top-down or ineffective communication practices, and the lack of commitment from all stakeholders to coordinated bushfire mitigation. Table facilitators anecdotally noted general agreement among attendees that, as a sector, we need to stop viewing mitigation as 'too hard', with participants commenting that the public doesn't care who does what, they just want it done. Key 'keep doing' themes included the improved availability of additional funding for bushfire mitigation activities, opportunities for shared training, coordinated mitigation planning, and local community engagement. Table facilitators reflected on broad support for the recent renewed focus and assistance for bushfire mitigation activities across the state.

Participants collectively captured over 200 ideas to improve how we work together in bushfire mitigation. A central tenet of these recommendations was the need to better tailor planning, systems and practices to the state context. Participants also strongly identified the need to improve communication and consultation with local communities, and empower them to share responsibility for their bushfire risk through tailored education practices. Discussions revealed a strong participant view that the sector needs to better communicate the mitigation imperative, and promote where practices successfully reduced bushfire risk or had directly assisted the management of bushfires. The importance of improving understanding, and appropriate incorporation, of traditional knowledge in bushfire activities also came through strongly, with interest expressed in a 'cultural concierge' concept to assist in promoting meaningful cultural linkages. Participants also generated many specific recommendations relating to training and skills development, which will be incorporated in the planning and design of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence.

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### *Outcomes of Designing the Bushfire Centre of Excellence Workshop*

In the 'Designing the Bushfire Centre of Excellence Workshop', participants explored where excellence currently exists in the sector, and how this can best be identified, accessed and shared. Participants were also asked to express their expectations of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence, an opportunity to contribute to 'blue sky thinking' to stretch and test functional and physical design concepts for the Centre. Participants collectively captured over 730 views and ideas to inform the design of the Centre, demonstrating the strong enthusiasm for this topic among Forum attendees. As with the first workshop, session outputs have been analysed and categorised, and will directly contribute to the planning of the Centre.

Many examples of 'excellence' were captured by participants – these focused on local emergency management arrangements, cross-sector collaborative behaviours, and application of advanced technology. Views on how to share this 'excellence' were more varied, with many noting the challenges of e-learning and online information sharing environments. However, there was strong agreement that information accessibility and ensuring the local relevance of information needed to be critical design considerations. Many groups emphasised the importance of the Centre providing practical outcomes, not bureaucratic outputs. While training arose as the key focus of discussions, support was expressed for the Centre to cover all aspects of bushfire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Many considered that the Centre should both collate and disseminate science and research, and also undertake or facilitate these activities itself.

'Inclusiveness' arose as an essential design requirement, with a participant expectation that the Centre would be accessible and representative of all segments of the bushfire sector. Recorded outputs signal the importance of the composition of the staffing of the Centre, with the success of the Centre dependent on it being staffed by true subject matter experts representative of all segments of the bushfire sector. Interesting discussions on the 'physical inclusiveness' of the building design were also noted by table facilitators, with suggestions that the premises should include communal spaces and have the ability to host social events. The importance of the Centre incorporating leading 'hands on' and 'in-field' training facilities also came through strongly in the results. Others extended this concept, with suggestions that the Centre should also include dedicated research and development facilities.

### **Future Actions**

The ideas and perspectives shared and generated at the Forum will be used to inform the operational planning and design of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence over the coming months. The Rural Fire Division will also draw on these important contributions to shape current and future bushfire mitigation programs and strategies. The Bushfire Centre of Excellence design process is continuing, with a series of consultative workshops planned during the remainder of 2018. Information on the establishment of the Centre is available from [www.dfes.wa.gov.au/RFD](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/RFD).

The value of these collaborative events has been widely recognised by both participants and agencies. The next event in this series will be the inaugural 'Ministerial Volunteer Advisory Forum' planned for 2019. This flagship event will expand the opportunity for volunteers to raise key issues with the Minister for Emergency Services and Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner across all hazards. It is intended that these events will be rotated annually between regions in Western Australia.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services would like to thank all participants for their contributions to the outcomes of the 2018 Forum, and express our sincere appreciation to the members of volunteer brigades, groups and units for their time and travel to attend the event.

## 2018 Bushfire Mitigation Forum – Thursday 4 October 2018

0830 – 0900	<p><b>Forum Registration and Participant Arrival</b>  <i>Venue - Kalamunda Performing Arts Centre, 48 Canning Road, Kalamunda</i></p>
0900 – 1000	<p><b>Forum Opening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction from Executive Director, Rural Fire Division, Mr Murray Carter</li> <li>• Welcome to Country, Mr Oral McGuire</li> <li>• Address by His Worship The Mayor of Kalamunda, Cr John Giardina</li> <li>• Address by Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Francis Logan MLA</li> <li>• Address by Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner, Darren Klemm AFSM</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Facilitator: Dr Ron Edwards, Chair, State Emergency Management Committee</i></p>
1000 – 1030	<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p>
1030 – 1100	<p><b>Q&amp;A Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has changed, what is changing, what does it mean for you?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Facilitator: Dr Ron Edwards, Chair, State Emergency Management Committee</i></p>
1100 – 1200	<p><b>Workshop One - Working Together in Bushfire Mitigation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start Doing, Keep Doing, Stop Doing</li> <li>• Navigating through potential barriers</li> <li>• What would success look like? Developing a benchmark</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Facilitator: Dr Ron Edwards, Chair, State Emergency Management Committee</i></p>
1200 – 1300	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
1300 – 1430	<p><b>Workshop Two – Designing the Bushfire Centre of Excellence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where is the ‘excellence’, how do we identify, access and share it?</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Facilitator: Dr Ron Edwards, Chair, State Emergency Management Committee</i></p>
1430 – 1500	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p>
1500 – 1600	<p><b>Panel Q&amp;A Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise your key sector issues with the Minister for Emergency Services, Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner and Executive Director of the Rural Fire Division.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Facilitator: Dr Ron Edwards, Chair, State Emergency Management Committee</i></p>

## 2018 Bushfire Mitigation Forum - Participant Agencies and Organisations

1.	Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades	Dave Gossage AFSM	President
2.	Bureau of Meteorology	Catherine Schelfhout	A/Operations Manager
3.	Bushfire Front Inc.	Rick Sneeuwjagt	Member
4.	City of Albany	Rob Lynn	Chair, Bushfire Advisory Group
5.	City of Armadale	Matt Plowman	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
6.	City of Armadale	Mick McIntosh	Fire Prevention Officer
7.	City of Armadale	Aaron Kain	Captain, Roleystone Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
8.	City of Busselton	Allan Guthrie	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
9.	City of Busselton	Todd Johnson	Fire Control Officer
10.	City of Busselton	Tanya Gillett	Manager Environmental Services
11.	City of Busselton	Blake Moore	Community Emergency Services Manager
12.	City of Cockburn	Jarrad Fowler	Captain, Jandakot Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
13.	City of Cockburn	Karli Hicks	Training Officer, South Coogee Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
14.	City of Gosnells	Grant Bradbrook	Director Business Services
15.	City of Greater Geraldton	Neil Johnstone	Captain, Moonyoonooka Bush Fire Brigade

16.	City of Greater Geraldton	Murray Smith	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
17.	City of Kalamunda	John Giardina	Mayor
18.	City of Kalamunda	Steve Lake	A/Captain, Kalamunda Bush Fire Brigade
19.	City of Kalamunda	Nathan Miller	Hazard Mitigation Officer, Kalamunda Bush Fire Brigade
20.	City of Kalamunda	Rhonda Hardy	Chief Executive Officer
21.	City of Karratha	Wayne Schut	Captain, Point Samson Bush Fire Brigade
22.	City of Swan	John Mangini	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
23.	City of Wanneroo	Derek Young	Wanneroo Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
24.	City of Wanneroo	Troy Cole	Fire Protection Officer
25.	Community and Public Sector Union	Melanie Bray	A/Branch Assistant Secretary
26.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Jason Foster	A/Executive Director, Regional and Fire Management Services Branch
27.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Keith Low	A/Manager, Fire Management Services Branch
28.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Andrew Milne	Regional Fire Services Coordinator, Fire Management Services Branch
29.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Benson Todd	Swan Regional Manager, Swan Region
30.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Bradley Reynolds	A/Regional Leader Fire Management, Swan Region
31.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Glen Daniel	Fire Planning Services Coordinator, Fire Management Services Branch

32.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Darren Klemm AFSM	FES Commissioner
33.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Murray Carter	Executive Director, Rural Fire Division
34.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Craig Garrett	A/Superintendent, Bushfire Risk Management Branch
35.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	David Ashton	Project Manager, Bushfire Centre of Excellence
36.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Vik Cheema	A/Executive Manager, SEMC Business Unit
37.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Ana Negreiros	Environmental Officer, Bushfire Technical Services
38.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Jen Pidgeon	Manager, Strategic Volunteer & Youth Programs
39.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Hannah Tagore	Director, Media and Corporate Communications
40.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Ryan Casley	Business Analyst, Bushfire Centre of Excellence
41.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Richard Pieper	Program Leader, State Preparedness
42.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Clifton Bieundurry	Aboriginal Development Officer, Aboriginal Advancement Unit
43.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Mal Cronstedt AFSM	Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Emergency Management
44.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Georgina Camarda	Director, Business Services
45.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Richard Burnell	A/Executive Director, Corporate Services
46.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Graham Swift	Assistant Commissioner Country
47.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Loredana Manfredi	Communications Coordinator, Bushfire Centre of Excellence

48.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Sam Kennedy	Manager, Office of the Executive Director, Rural Fire Division
49.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Kendall Winter	Executive Assistant, Rural Fire Division
50.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Petina Blackwell	Policy Officer, Office of Bushfire Risk Management
51.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Lisa Wilde	Event Officer, Media and Corporate Communications
52.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Sarah White	A/Manager, Community Preparedness
53.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services	Giles De Brito	Project Manager, Bushfire Risk Management Branch
54.	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	Jodie Holbrook	Director of Local Government Policy and Engagement
55.	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage	Tony Richman	Manager Strategic Policy
56.	Emergency Services Volunteer Association	Merv Austic	Executive Officer
57.	Forest Industries Federation (WA) Inc.	Matt Granger	A/Chief Executive Officer
58.	Gundi Consulting	Oral McGuire	Managing Director
59.	Kimberley Land Council	Rhys Swain	Senior Fire Officer
60.	Member for East Metropolitan Region	Hon. Tim Clifford MLC	Member for East Metropolitan Region
61.	Member for Kalamunda	Matthew Hughes	Member for Kalamunda
62.	Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services	Hon. Fran Logan MLA	Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services
63.	Office of the Member for Kalamunda	Janelle Sewell	Office of the Member for Kalamunda



64.	Office of the Member for Swan Hills	Naomi Rakela	Electorate Officer
65.	Office of the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services	Ryan Emery	Senior Media Advisor
66.	Office of the Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services	Mia Onorato-Sartari	Senior Policy Advisor
67.	Pastoralists and Graziers Association	Digby Stretch	Vice President
68.	SES Volunteers Association of WA	Gordon Hall	President
69.	Shire of Augusta-Margaret River	David Holland	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
70.	Shire of Augusta-Margaret River	Brett Trunful	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
71.	Shire of Boddington	William Batt	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
72.	Shire of Broome	Narelle Graue	Ranger Coordinator
73.	Shire of Broome	Ben Coles	Ranger and Fire Control Officer
74.	Shire of Chittering	Dave Carroll	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer / Community Emergency Services Manager
75.	Shire of Chittering	David Wilson	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
76.	Shire of Chittering	Jeff Reeves	Captain, Lower Chittering Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
77.	Shire of Collie	Julian Martin	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
78.	Shire of Collie	Kohdy Flynn	Fire Control Officer, Allanson Bush Fire Brigade
79.	Shire of Dandaragan	Richard Brown	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

80.	Shire of Denmark	Craig Hughes	Fire Control Officer / Captain, Carmarthen Brigade
81.	Shire of Esperance	Ashley Stewart	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
82.	Shire of Gingin	Brendon Ladner	Captain, Ledge Point Volunteer Bushfire Brigade
83.	Shire of Irwin	Peter Summers	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
84.	Shire of Mundaring	Adrian Dyson	Manager Community Safety and Emergency Management
85.	Shire of Mundaring	Nigel Morgan	Chairman, Darlington Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
86.	Shire of Mundaring	Gary Rowles	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
87.	Shire of Mundaring	Michael Hare	Glenn Forrest Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
88.	Shire of Murray	Robert Wilson	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
89.	Shire of Northam	Simon Peters	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
90.	Shire of Northam	Murray McGregor	Captain, Irishtown Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
91.	Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale	Kim Maddern	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
92.	Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale	Jim Johnson	Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
93.	Shire of Toodyay	John Hansen	Fire Control Officer, Toodyay Central Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
94.	Shire of Toodyay	Craig Stewart	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
95.	Shire of Toodyay	Rob Koch	Community Emergency Services Manager

96.	Shire of Waroona	John Twaddle	Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
97.	State Emergency Management Committee	Dr Ron Edwards	Chair, State Emergency Management Committee
98.	United Firefighter Union of Western Australia	Leigh Bishop	Member
99.	WA Farmer's Federation	Dale Park	Past President
100.	WA Local Government Association (WALGA)	Mel Pexton	Manager Emergency Management
101.	WA Local Government Association (WALGA)	Paul Camins	Executive Director Development Services, City of Albany
102.	WA Local Government Association (WALGA)	Robert Marlborough	Manager Governance, Shire of Murray
103.	WA Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association	Neil Hawkins	Executive Member

## **Bushfire Mitigation Forum 2018 Feedback Evaluation**

Event participants were asked to complete a brief feedback survey at the end of the Forum. Completed forms were returned by 53 of the participants (approximately 50 per cent of attendees). Approximately half of survey respondents self-identified as representing a volunteer brigade, group or unit.

The feedback survey asked participants to rate their level of agreement with four statements about the Forum using a 5-point Likert scale. The results were as follows:

1. 79 per cent of survey respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, that event participants had the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the design of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence.
2. 90 per cent of survey respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, that event participants had the opportunity to voice their issues, ideas and perspectives on bushfire mitigation in WA.
3. 90 per cent of survey respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, with the statement 'I would recommend that others attend similar events in the future'.
4. 74 per cent of survey respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, with the statement 'I plan to contact people I met during the Forum to support our activities to protect WA communities from bushfire'.

In addition, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about their experience of the event. Responses to these questions were coded and categorised for analysis. In response to these questions, 86 per cent of respondents identified either or both of the workshops as their favourite session. Survey comments reiterated the value of these brainstorming sessions, noting that it allowed participants to 'get down to the nuts and bolts of what we do'. Participants were also asked for their views on how the event could be improved in the future. Comments were varied but broadly emphasised the importance of getting the right mix of individuals for small team discussions, prioritising detailed, working-level discussion in the event program, the importance of holding such events regularly, and the need to communicate and track outcomes.