

Queensland Fire and Rescue
Service Efficiency Review

JUNE 2008

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Executive Summary

On 22 December 2007, the Minister for Emergency Services announced a review of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) to provide assurance that resources are focussed on frontline service delivery.

The Minister noted that QFRS is performing well but that it must continue to focus on the frontline – fighting fires, attending road accidents and other rescues, and responding to chemical and hazardous material incidents. The review was to include consideration of how the QFRS will respond to ongoing service delivery challenges driven by Queensland's continued population growth, climate change, and changes in technology and regulation.

The QFRS provides a comprehensive emergency and community safety service across Queensland.

Operating Model of the QFRS

The QFRS groups its operational activities into five major service delivery areas with key activities as described below:

- Landscape fire services:
 - bush and grassfire mitigation;
 - training of permanent, auxiliaries and volunteers; and
 - aerial operations.
- Structural fire services:
 - response to structural fires;
 - alarm monitoring services (including response to unwanted alarms); and
 - training of permanent, auxiliaries and volunteers (where relevant).
- All hazards and rescue services:
 - vehicle crash attendance;
 - rescue (confined space, vertical, swiftwater, urban search);
 - natural disasters, building collapses, terrorist events;
 - response to chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary and explosion incidents; and
 - preparation and training.
- Community risk mitigation:
 - information to and preparation of the community regarding wildfires;
 - information, training and counselling for community in fire hazards; and
 - commercial education, firefighting, rescue and incident mitigation planning, training and consultancy services.

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- Buildings and infrastructure safety services:
 - advisory and building code and dangerous goods compliance inspection services;
 - fire scene investigation;
 - occupant and emergency incidents response planning for buildings and major infrastructure (excluding single residences); and
 - prosecution for non-compliant premises.

Changes in Volume and Scope of Services

Total incidents include fire and non-fire incidents, including road rescue, calls to flood and storm emergencies, hazardous chemical emergencies and false/unwanted alarms. Total incidents for QFRS have increased by 10.4% over the past five financial years from 62,214 incidents in 2002-03 to 68,661 incidents in 2006-07.

The total number of fire incidents, which make up around 28% of total incidents, have declined by 8.1% during this period (although subject to seasonal variations). The number of structural fires has increased by 9.7% while landscape fire incidents have declined by 16.3% (although the number of incidents fluctuates with an increase of 24.3% from 2005-06 to 2006-07).

Queensland Fire and Rescue Incidents

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	<i>Growth</i>
Fires in a structure, involving a structure	2,504	2,538	2,424	2,720	2,747	9.7%
Landscape fires, bush and grass	13,042	9,376	12,989	8,780	10,912	-16.3%
Other fires	5,319	5,335	5,284	5,305	5,526	3.9%
Total fires	20,865	17,249	20,697	16,805	19,185	-8.1%
Nonfire rescue calls including road rescue	9,231	10,501	11,769	13,722	16,109	74.5%
Hazardous conditions	3,078	3,760	3,046	3,202	3,304	7.3%
Calls to floods, storm and tempest and other natural disasters	2,450	2,702	2,204	2,352	2,686	9.6%
Good intent calls	4,540	4,574	4,260	4,212	4,717	3.9%
Malicious false calls	1,728	1,752	1,553	1,584	1,752	1.4%
System initiated false alarms	16,042	16,890	18,163	20,699	19,130	19.2%
Other	4,280	4,907	2,513	2,044	1,778	-58.5%
Total other emergencies and incidents	41,349	45,086	43,508	47,815	49,476	19.7%
Incident type not determined or not classified		428	n.a.	8	n.a.	
Total fires, other emergencies and incidents	62,214	62,763	64,205	64,628	68,661	10.4%

Source: ROGS 2008 Table 9A.2

Total non-fire incidents have increased by 19.7% from 2002-03 to 2006-07. Non-fire incidents include road crash rescue, calls to flood and storm emergencies, hazardous chemical emergencies and false/unwanted alarms. QFRS has experienced significant growth in the number of non-fire rescues, including road rescue, with an increase of 74.5% from 2002-03 to 2006-07. Automatic fire alarm system unwanted activations have increased over the past 5 years by 19.3%, but have declined by 7.6% in the past year.

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Authority for the Services

Authority for the services and functions undertaken by QFRS are primarily set out in the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* (the Act) and cover all the five service delivery activities of the QFRS. The “rescue” element of the QFRS was legislated in 1990, with the “motor vehicle” rescue being specified in 1998. The building and infrastructure safety services have increased significantly with the introduction of the amended legislation in 2002. This legislation was a direct response to the Childers backpackers’ hostel fire tragedy. In conjunction with the then Department of Local Government and Planning, the Act improved the safety of the community through more rigorous requirements for compliance with fire safety provisions. Its initial focus was on budget residential accommodation.

Performance Management and Benchmarking

Overall, the type of work undertaken by the QFRS is typical of other fire services including NSW, Victoria and the United Kingdom (UK).

Comparison of Eastern States Fire and Rescue Services

	NSW	Vic	Qld
Operating expenses excluding losses (\$mill)	710.1	562.2	338.3
Operating expenses excluding losses \$ per capita	103.1	108.0	80.9
Net capital expenditure (\$mill)	85.9	84.2	43.1
Net capital expenditure \$ per capita	12.5	16.2	10.3
Net assets (\$mill)	772.6	979.4	445.1
Net assets \$ per capita	112.1	188.2	106.4
Number of fire stations	1956	1203	648
Number of fire stations per 100,000 people	28.4	23.1	15.5
Number of fire brigades	2,416	1,305	1,761
Number of fire brigades per 100,000 people	35.1	25.1	42.1
Incidents attended	158,234	75,335	68,661
Incidents attended per 100,000 people	2,297	1,447	1,642
Number of fire incidents	43,252	27,384	19,185
Fire incidents per 100,000 people	628	526	459
Full-time fire officers	3,421	2,165	2,076
Auxiliary (retained) fire officers	3,233	0	2,033
Salaried support, administration and corporate staff	1,056	1,162	732
Total FTEs employed	4,736	3,327	2,971
FTEs employed per 100,000 people	68.7	63.9	71.0
Incidents per fire officer	43.0	34.8	30.7
Volunteer brigade members	77,641	59,509	36,000
Volunteer brigade members per 100,000 people	1,127	1,143	861

Source: *Fire & Rescue Service Annual Reports 2006-07, ROGS 2008*

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Annual Report benchmarking data illustrated in the table above shows that Queensland's fire services expenditure per capita is lower than Victoria and New South Wales for 2006-2007.

- Operating costs per capita are the lowest in Queensland;
- Capital investment per capita is lowest in Queensland; and
- Net assets per capita are also the lowest in Queensland.

Non-financial measures of performance indicate:

- The number of fire brigades per 100,000 people is highest in Queensland;
- The number of total incidents attended per 100,000 people is below NSW but above Victoria;
- The number of fire incidents attended per 100,000 is lowest in Queensland.
- FTEs employed per 100,000 are higher in Queensland than for NSW and Victoria.

Queensland's level of activity relative to NSW and Victoria has largely remained unchanged over the past four years in key areas such as fire incidents per 100,000 people, and hazard and rescue services per 100,000 people, except for the significant increase in Road Crash Rescue (RCR) Incidents in Queensland.

Another measure of the performance of QFRS is by timing the response by urban crews to structural fires. The response times to structural fires are higher in Queensland than in other states. On average, response times to structural fires are increasing. The QFRS considers that the likely reasons for this are the increase in population and risks, particularly in south-east Queensland. Response times are affected by increased traffic congestion, the location of stations being less than ideal given demographic changes and land use changes in the area since the station was constructed and the increasing numbers of incidents being responded to by urban crews outside urban levy boundaries.

Risk Mitigation

The QFRS has assessed there is an increased risk to the community compared to a decade ago. Coupled with the forecast demographic, environmental, infrastructure and security issues, the QFRS considers the risks to the community will continue to increase.

The increasing complexity has resulted from increases in:

- Urban-rural interface (iZone) areas;
- Numbers of buildings and other infrastructure such as tunnels;
- The potential for significant incidents including the potential for terrorism or other major incidents, freight transportation and hazardous materials incidents, and environmental standards;

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- The incidence of natural disasters due to climate change; and
- The rate of change of technology.

QFRS continues to undertake a range of measures to mitigate these risks.

Workforce Management

The majority of QFRS services are undertaken by full time firefighters and by part time auxiliary firefighters working from urban fire stations. Volunteers perform a major role in landscape fire services in rural areas and undertake some structural fire, all hazards and rescue and community risk mitigation services.

As at 30 June 2007, the QFRS had 2,690 staff comprising 2,239 firefighting staff and 451 non-firefighting staff. The QFRS is allocated 281 DES Corporate Services staff. QFRS also employs 2,033 part-time auxiliary firefighters and 36,000 rural volunteer firefighters.

The 2,239 firefighting staff comprises 75.4% of the total QFRS workforce compared to an average 74.7% of all firefighting services in Australia.

Overall, QFRS FTEs have increased by 11.6% over the last five years. The number of firefighting staff has increased by 6.8% over this period. During the same period there has been growth in QFRS non-firefighting staff of 26.0% and in corporate service allocation of 34.4%. The proportion of firefighting staff has decreased from 78.7% at June 2003 to 75.4% at June 2007.

There are 451 non-firefighting staff in the QFRS, of which 70.6% (318.4 Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) support frontline services service delivery activities. A further 134 FTEs provide general corporate services including Data and Information Management, General Administration, Executive Support and Other support.

QFRS Funding

QFRS is funded from the following sources:

- Urban Fire Levy - on privately owned properties;
- Commonwealth Contribution - on Commonwealth Crown properties;
- Charges for Services - including commercial training/consultancies/contracts, alarm monitoring, building fire safety services, emergency response incidents and unwanted alarm attendance;
- State Output Revenue - includes 1/7th Statutory Charges on State Crown properties; and
- Other Own Source Revenue – including Rural Fire Brigade contributions, grants, interest and rent.

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The total revenue of QFRS has grown steadily by 34.0% over the past five years to \$345.06M in 2006-07. Total expenses of the organisation have grown slightly more by 39.8% to \$338.50M in 2006-07. The difference in the revenue and expense growth rates has seen the QFRS surplus eroded somewhat, reduced from \$15.28M in 2001-02 to \$6.57M in 2006-07. In 2007-08, the estimated revenue of QFRS is \$362.71M with budgeted expenses of \$360.13M.

The Urban Fire Levy revenue is the largest component of the QFRS income accounting for approximately 73.1% of all revenue. The Urban Fire Levy revenue has grown steadily over the past five years at an average of 5.7% per annum as a result of CPI indexation and growth in the number of urban dwellings. No Urban Fire Levy is charged on properties in rural areas outside the gazetted Urban Fire Levy area, therefore Urban Fire Levy revenues and consolidated funds are used to fund Rural Operations and to subsidise QFRS rural Fire Brigade equipment and their operations. Rural levies where collected by local government are paid directly to rural fire brigades, or used by the local government to fund assets or services for rural fire brigades.

The major expenses for QFRS are employee expenses and supplies and services which comprise approximately 90.0% of all expenses. Employee expenses have grown at an average of 6.6% per annum and supplies and services at 12.4%. These growth factors are affected by the high level of growth in corporate service costs.

The review identified that QFRS traditional core service delivery costs in 'Structural Fire Services' have increased little over the past five years with a total growth of 16.6% between 2001-02 and 2006-07. In contrast the service areas of 'Building and Infrastructure Safety Services' and 'Community Risk Mitigation Services' have both increased by 89.2% over the same period.

Efficiencies in Service Delivery

A measure of the efficiency of service delivery can be derived by comparing the level of expenditure on a per capita and per incident basis.

Expenditure

Queensland's fire service expenditure per capita is significantly below Victoria and NSW. In 2006-07, Queensland fire service expenditure per capita was \$80.9 compared to \$103.1 for NSW and \$108.0 for Victoria. This is consistent with the lower level of fire incidents in Queensland compared to the other states.

QFRS cost per incident has remained steady between 2002-03 and 2006-07. In comparing ROGS data on expenditure, Queensland cost per incident is consistently higher than NSW but lower than Victoria.

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Redirection of Resources to Frontline Services

It is evident that the QFRS is performing well and continuing to respond to the range of complex operational incidents it faces on a regular basis. As with any complex, dynamic organisation, there are opportunities to improve the efficiency and productivity of the services delivered. The report has examined opportunities to improve efficiency through changes to the QFRS business model and through workforce productivity. There are also recognised productivity savings from a reduction on Departmental Corporate Overheads.

Within the QFRS business model there are opportunities to reduce non-priority attendance at road crash rescue incidents via a review of response protocols. QFRS has also identified potential savings and efficiencies from the rationalisation of permanent and auxiliary stations in overlapping catchment areas.

Workforce efficiencies can be achieved through the use of temporary or casual firefighters to fill short term vacancies. Within the building and infrastructure safety and community risk mitigation services there are opportunities to redirect services to the front line through reducing the non-firefighting staff in the State Office involved in Community Safety and Education.

The estimated savings from service delivery improvements and efficiency strategies are listed below. These will be re-invested in the QFRS and contribute to the overall delivery of frontline services.

EFFICIENCY OR PRODUCTIVITY SAVINGS	Annual Average Savings per annum (\$'000)
Business Model Related	
Direct cost reduction in attendance at Road Crash Rescue (from 2008-09)	351
Rationalisation of auxiliary stations operating in existing A-Class station catchments including proceeds of land sales	485
Rationalisation of A Class stations in overlapping catchment areas	714
TOTAL BUSINESS MODEL RELATED	<u>1,550</u>
Workforce Model Related	
Flexible employment strategies to offset backfill overtime for operational staff	423
Reduction in QFRS State Office costs	2,197
TOTAL WORKFORCE MODEL RELATED	<u>2,620</u>
Departmental Corporate Savings	<u>2,546</u>
TOTAL BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE MODEL SAVINGS	<u>6,716</u>

Introduction

On 22 December 2007, the Minister for Emergency Services announced a review of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) to provide assurance that resources are focussed on frontline service delivery.

The Minister noted that QFRS is performing well but that it must continue to focus on the frontline – fighting fires, attending road accidents and other rescues, and responding to chemical and hazardous material incidents. The review was to include consideration of how the QFRS will respond to ongoing service delivery challenges driven by Queensland's continued population growth, climate change, and changes in technology and regulation.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the review are:

A Analysis of the QFRS Business Model

- (i) Undertake benchmarking of the services to compare the services provided by the QFRS with other jurisdictions.
- (ii) Analyse the functions of the QFRS and the authority for these functions e.g. legislative, policy. Identify any other external factors that have influenced the provision of these functions.
- (iii) Examine the performance of the QFRS and its performance management systems, including service quality and responsiveness. Identify where resources from the corporate and Regional offices could be redirected to frontline service delivery.
- (iv) Develop strategies for improving the efficiency of service delivery, including the increase in attendance at motor vehicle accidents and opportunities to reduce attendance at unwanted alarm incidents.
- (v) Identify any factors that may result in increased risk to the community from fires and other emergencies and evaluate the adequacy of the QFRS's risk mitigation strategies.

B Workforce Analysis

- (i) Analyse current workforce management arrangements including opportunities for improvement.
- (ii) Examine methods for redirecting workload and staffing across the various service delivery areas.

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C Financial Analysis

- (i) Undertake a detailed analysis of the QFRS budget and the various funding sources that comprise the budget.
- (ii) Assess trends in expenditure at the global level and across the various service delivery areas including salary and non-salary related expenditure. In particular, examine administrative and overhead costs (including growth in non-frontline costs) to ensure that as many resources as possible are being directed to operational service delivery.

1.0 The QFRS Business Model

1.1 QFRS Services

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) provides emergency fire response and rescue services, firefighter education and training, and a range of community safety and awareness programs for industry, business and communities, as follows:

- protection of persons, property and the environment from fire and chemical incidents;
- rescue services, including vehicle extractions, confined space rescue, vertical rescue and urban search and rescue;
- fire scene investigation;
- inspection of buildings and premises and administering legislation to enforce compliance with fire safety, hazardous and chemical materials facilities management;
- community fire safety awareness and education;
- alarm monitoring and response;
- rural land management, providing advice regarding role and use of fire; and
- providing training in fire-fighting, fire safety and evacuation procedures.

Operating Model of the QFRS

The QFRS groups its operational activities into five major service delivery areas with key activities as described below:

- Landscape fire services:
 - Bush and grassfire mitigation;
 - training of permanent, auxiliaries, and volunteers; and
 - aerial operations.
- Structural fire services:
 - response to structural fires;
 - alarm monitoring services (including response to unwanted alarms); and
 - training of permanent, auxiliaries and volunteers (where relevant).
- All hazards and rescue services:
 - vehicle crash attendance;
 - rescue (confined space, vertical, swiftwater, urban search);
 - natural disasters, building collapses, terrorist events;

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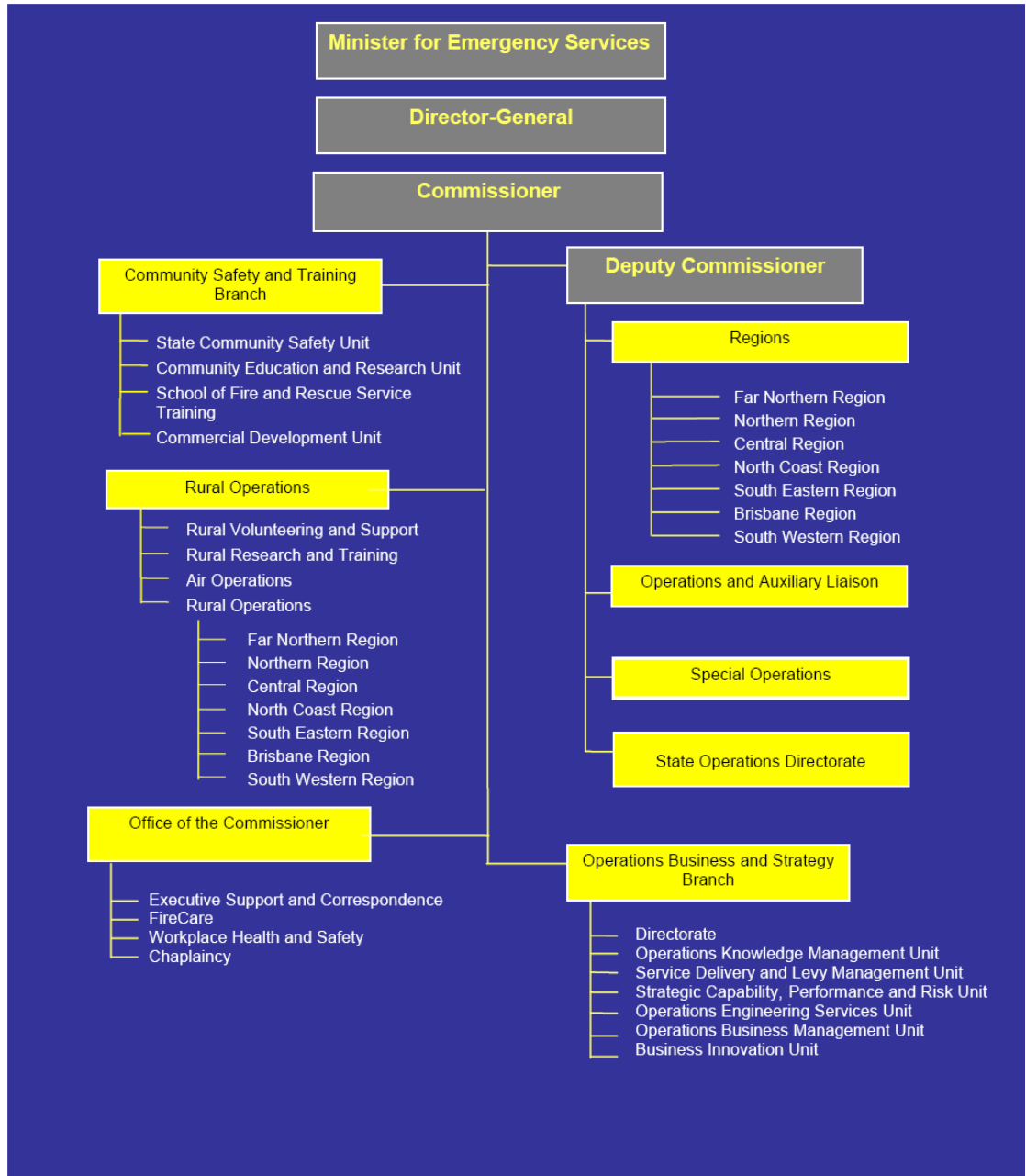
- response to chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary and explosion incidents; and
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- Community risk mitigation:
 - information to and preparation of the community regarding wildfires;
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 - commercial education, firefighting, rescue and incident mitigation planning, training and consultancy services.
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 - prosecution for non-compliant premises.

The majority of services are undertaken by full-time firefighters and by part-time auxiliary firefighters working from urban fire stations. Volunteers perform a major role in landscape fire services in rural areas and undertake some structural fire, all hazards and rescue and community risk mitigation services. Operational response is provided by approximately 2,239 permanent firefighters, 2,033 part-time auxiliary firefighters and 36,000 rural volunteer firefighters. Non-operational and administrative staff support fire and rescue operations.

The QFRS focus is on both prevention and response activities. The QFRS Operating Model incorporates these core services into Operations Management and Community Safety Operations which are supported by Operations Business Management and Professional Development. Operations Management and Community Safety Operations are frontline services of the QFRS. The majority of these services are delivered by frontline firefighters in stations, by special units that support the stations or by firefighters in units that undertake roles required by legislation.

As shown in Figure 1, the QFRS has two branches that provide Emergency response – Urban and Rural Operations. Urban Operations are provided by permanent firefighting staff and auxiliary staff. Auxiliary firefighters generally have other full-time occupations but are paid on an hourly basis for training and attending incidents. Urban Operations comprises seven geographic Regions which are led and managed by an Assistant Commissioner with a small Regional management team. Each urban Region has a number of ‘areas’ headed by an Area Director.

Figure 1: QFRS Organisational Chart



Urban Operations are delivered from 238 urban fire stations and includes seven communications centres located in each of the QFRS’ seven Regions. The purpose of each centre is to coordinate incoming calls of urgent ‘000’ calls and non-urgent calls that are related to the particular Region and to respond the appropriate QFRS resources to manage the incident.

Rural Operations is provided by 1526 Rural Fire Brigades comprising volunteer staff. The permanent staff of Rural Operations are responsible for the coordination, management and training development. The Rural Operations are also aligned to the same structure with each Region having a Regional Manager, Rural Operations. There are a seven rural areas, each coordinating a number of districts. Each area has

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an Area Director, Rural Operations. Rural Operations has a State office and is led overall by the Assistant Commissioner, Rural Operations who is accountable to the Commissioner.

The fire fleet includes approximately 480 urban appliances and support vehicles and more than 800 rural fire trucks.

Changes in Volume and Scope of Services

Total incidents for QFRS have increased by 10.4% over the past five financial years from 62,214 incidents in 2002-03 to 68,661 incidents in 2006-07 (Table1).

The total number of fire incidents has declined by 8.1% during this period (although subject to seasonal variations). The number of structural fires has increased by 9.7% while landscape fire incidents have declined by 16.3% (although the number of incidents fluctuates with an increase of 24% from 2005-06 to 2006-07).

Queensland Fire and Rescue Incidents

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth
Fires in a structure, involving a structure	2,504	2,538	2,424	2,720	2,747	9.7%
Landscape fires, bush and grass	13,042	9,376	12,989	8,780	10,912	-16.3%
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Total non-fire incidents has increased by 19.7% from 2002-03 to 2006-07. Non-fire incidents include road crash rescue, calls to flood and storm emergencies, hazardous chemical emergencies and false/unwanted alarms. QFRS has experienced significant growth in the number of non-fire rescues, including road rescue, with an increase of 74.5% from 2002-03 to 2006-07. Automatic fire alarm system unwanted activations have increased over the past 5 years by 19.3%, but have declined by 7.6% in the past year. Further detail on these activities is provided in the following sections.

Activity measures are only one aspect of performance and do not take into account the complexity of incidents. The QFRS considers that the complexity of incidents has

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increased. However, there are no performance measures available to objectively demonstrate this. One measure that may provide some approximate indication of increasing complexity is the total duration (in hours) that QFRS require to respond to incidents.

Landscape Fire Services

Landscape fire incidents are largely subject to seasonal fluctuations. Table 2 below indicates that 2004-2005 was a bad fire season, with a significant increase in the duration of fire incidents in that year. There has been a 20.1% increase in the duration of landscape fire incidents from 2003-04 to 2006-07. This compares to a 16.4% increase in the number of landscape fire incidents over the same period (Table 1).

Table 2: Total Duration (in Hours) of Landscape Fire Services Incidents Recorded in AIRS	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth
Large vegetation fires	4,089.2	5,675.2	3,631.5	4,390.2	7.4%
Small vegetation fires	1,518.4	2,777.4	1,909.5	2,491.1	64.1%
Outside rubbish fires	619.0	690.3	643.2	658.9	6.4%
Investigation only	128.1	174.5	218.6	243.3	89.9%
One third of services calls relevant to all operational areas*	151.1	140.4	110.6	120.6	-20.2%
Total Duration in Hours	6,377.6	9,283.3	6,294.8	7,660.8	20.1%

*Where service calls cannot be assigned to a specific operational category, they are grouped, divided by three and added to each of the three operational categories.

Structural Fire Services

The total duration of structural fires is set out in the table below.

Table 3: Total Duration (in Hours) of Structural Fire Services Incidents Recorded in AIRS	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth
Structural fires	3,188.4	3,245.0	3,209.7	3,252.0	2.0%
Water & smoke events	139.2	163.1	165.2	211.4	51.9%
False & unfounded calls (including UAAs)	8,429.2	8,535.8	8,978.4	8,643.2	2.5%
One third of services calls relevant to all operational areas*	151.1	140.4	110.6	120.6	-20.2%
Total Duration in Hours	11,907.8	12,084.2	12,463.8	12,227.3	2.7%

*Where service calls cannot be assigned to a specific operational category, they are grouped, divided by three and added to each of the three operational categories.

This table shows that the duration of structural fire incidents has increased marginally over the last four years by 2.6%. This compares with an increase in the number of structural fires over the same period of 8.2% (Table 1).

False and unfounded calls (“unwanted alarms”)

Unwanted alarms are the largest category of structural fire incidents responded to by the QFRS. In total, the QFRS respond to over 19,000 unwanted alarm activations from monitored fire alarm systems per year. The numbers responded to over the last four years are set out in the table below (numbers vary from Table 1 due to timing differences between AIRS and ROGS).

Table 4: Total Number of Unwanted Alarms recorded in AIRS

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Year	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total No. of Unwanted Alarms	20,200	19,146	21,390	19,393

The negative impacts of unwanted alarms on the QFRS, industry and the wider community include:

- Public complacency to activated alarms jeopardising safety;
- Reduced safety for fire crews and public as a result of the response triggered by the unwanted alarm and increased probability of traffic accidents; and
- Unnecessary costs and disruption to the community and industry.

The QFRS continues to actively address unwanted alarms through:

- Working with industry to identify and rectify the causes of unwanted alarms such as assisting with the appropriate positioning of fire alarms in buildings and rectifying line faults. The QFRS also has released Fire Alarm and Building Design Guidelines for the Reduction of Unwanted Alarms which provides building professionals with information on how to reduce unwanted alarms in new buildings. The guidelines apply to all building approval applications submitted for QFRS assessment from 1 September 2007; and
- Increasing the charge for attending unwanted alarms to provide an economic incentive to building owners to reduce unwanted alarms.

All Hazards and Rescue Services

The QFRS's role as an all hazards and rescue organisation was established in 1990, with the introduction of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*.

The nature of incidents recorded as all hazards and rescue services is broad. In the Report on Government Services (ROGS) fire and rescue service incidents are classified slightly differently from DES's Output Statement classifications. Motor vehicle related incidents are classified as 'non-fire rescue calls' in ROGS. This classification includes non-motor vehicle rescues/medical emergencies and some other incidents. Table 5 illustrates that Queensland's non-fire rescues represent a significantly greater portion of all incidents than in both New South Wales and Victoria.

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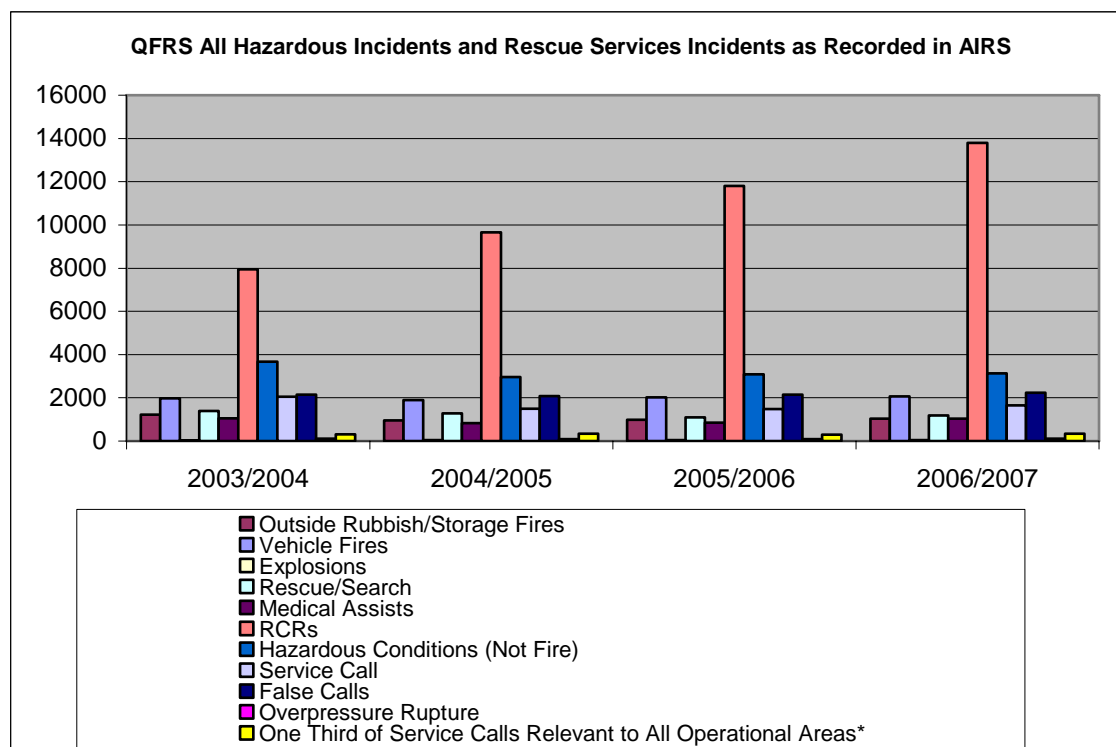
Table 5: Non-fire Rescue Calls Including Road Accidents as a Percentage of Total Incidents

	Qld	NSW	Vic
2002-03	14.84%	7.06%	10.08%
2003-04	16.73%	7.42%	11.39%
2004-05	18.33%	7.98%	11.30%
2005-06	21.23%	8.35%	9.09%
2006-07	23.46%	9.46%	11.40%

ROGS 2008 Table 9A.2

The numbers of incidents recorded in AIRS over the last four years is set out below.

Figure 2: QFRS All Hazardous Incidents and Rescue Services Incidents as Recorded in AIRS



This chart illustrates that there has not been a significant increase in most categories, other than Road Crash Rescues (RCRs). The numbers of road crashes reported in ROGS is a subset of the AIRS codes that are used to report in the Service Delivery Statement of the Department of Emergency Services (DES). To be included in ROGS, the road accident needs to involve rescuing a person involved in an accident.

Increase in Attendance at Road Crash Rescues

The QFRS involvement in motor vehicle incidents has increased by 118.7% from 2001-02 to 2006-07 (Table 6 below). The table shows that there has been a significant increase in every category of action taken by the QFRS at road accidents. However the largest increases (in volume terms) have been in the categories of “investigation only” and “remove hazard”.

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Investigation of the increase in QFRS attendances has found:

- There is a strong correlation with the increase in the number of ambulance attendances at motor vehicle accidents over the same time period;
- There has been an increase in registered heavy vehicles, total registered vehicles and numbers of licensed drivers on the road; and
- During the period 1998-2000, a protocol was initiated that prioritised calls for mobilisation by the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) FireCom call centre operators whereby a QFRS appliance was dispatched even if no extrication was required. This is normally in cases where there is no QAS resource in the near vicinity.

Table 6: Road Crash Rescue by QFRS Action Taken for each Financial Year from 2001-2007

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth from 2001-02 to 2006-07
Extinguishment including Rescue, Ventilate, Salvage	66	47	65	116	131	138	109.1%
Rescue	403	348	408	724	747	982	143.7%
Extrication, disentanglement	682	673	760	810	823	840	23.2%
Provide medical assistance, first aid, CPR to rescued persons	368	452	504	299	449	552	50.0%
Provide assistance	287	280	356	594	600	695	142.2%
Investigation only	2,332	2,724	3,182	3,826	4,984	5,779	147.8%
Remove hazard	1,622	1,893	2,125	2,229	2,983	3,520	117.0%
Evacuation	2	3	5	3	3	3	50.0%
Provide other service	43	63	85	146	170	270	527.9%
Traffic control	99	85	96	173	173	237	139.4%
Notify other agencies (QPS, QAS, other fire service)	8	17	8	27	21	42	425.0%
Hose down, wash away	94	106	84	142	152	139	47.9%
Called off en route to incident	30	26	35	79	95	125	316.7%
Standby, cover assignment	262	238	300	457	429	418	59.5%
Other action taken	14	19	20	45	38	62	342.9%
Total RCR incidents	6,312	6,974	8,033	9,670	11,798	13,802	118.7%
<i>Year-on-year growth in RCR incidents</i>	..	10%	15%	20%	22%	17%	

Extracted from AIRS database

Community Risk Mitigation Services

Community Risk Mitigation services include informing, training and preparing the community in regard to wildfires and fire hazards, as well as providing commercial education for firefighting, rescue and incident mitigation planning. The Station Management System (SMS) database also captures firefighter's time on Community Risk Mitigation. The number of hours across the range of activities is set out in Table 7 below.

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Table 7: Community Risk Mitigation Services in SMS Task Time (hours)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth
Fire Education (Fire Ed)	19,414.1	17,132.9	19,067.7	15,734.9	-19.0%
Road Accident Awareness Program (RAAP)	2,742.0	3,267.2	3,633.4	3,260.1	18.9%
Fight Fire Fascination (FFF) Program	1,053.2	931.9	2,168.9	1,702.9	61.7%
Operation Safehome	10,261.3	7,535.6	10,686.7	10,343.0	0.8%
Staff Training Courses	1,102.5	1,519.3	1,608.9	1,007.6	-8.6%
Install Smoke Alarms	5,185.4	2,880.5	3,941.7	2,526.7	-51.3%
PreSchool (Public Safety & Fire Prevention)	4,266.8	3,397.6	3,030.2	2,150.6	-49.6%
General Public Education	5,062.6	5,140.2	5,257.9	4,452.4	-12.1%
Other Public Relations	69,012.8	67,353.4	77,945.3	71,162.3	3.1%
Community Safety Reports Administration	5,595.6	7,328.1	7,092.5	7,663.9	37.0%
External Staff Training	1,797.6	1,620.3	1,959.6	1,316.4	-26.8%
Data Errors	17.0	11.0	4.0	2.1	-87.6%
Total Community Risk Mitigation Services * SMS Task Hours	125,511.0	118,117.8	136,396.8	121,322.7	-3.3%

* These tasks are directly related to Community Risk Mitigation Services only and therefore do not include Category E so the Total Task Hours will equal Community Risk Mitigation Services Employee Task Hours and not Total SMS Employee Task Hours.

Community Risk Mitigation Services are one part of the overall work undertaken across all services. The variances between the years to an extent are a reflection of the different initiatives and priorities that the QFRS has undertaken each year. The QFRS advise that the reduction in the overall figures in 2006/2007 is influenced by the increasing allocation of resources to operational response activities and building inspections. The QFRS has also provided the following explanations of some of the key variances:

- In recent years there have been ongoing enhancements to the Station Management System to improve the accuracy and quality of reporting.
- FFF is a program that is demand driven and is initiated by calls by parents of children with an unhealthy interest in fire.
- In 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 there was a concentration on *Building and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2002* buildings that impacted on the available hours to undertake other activities such as Operation Safehome.
- In 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 there was an emphasis on the iZone and undertaking additional training and exercises for staff and volunteers and also the extensive delivery of Bushfire Prepared Communities programs in iZone risk areas.
- Additional emphasis on smoke alarm installation in 2005-06 due to the implementation of compulsory smoke alarm legislation.

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Building and Infrastructure Safety Services

Building and Infrastructure Safety services include inspection services for compliance with advisory and building codes, fire scene investigation and emergency incidents response planning for buildings and major infrastructure. QFRS undertake these services to meet the requirements of the Building Fire Safety Regulation 1991 that established mandatory building fire safety compliance. All data on Building and Infrastructure Safety Services is from the SMS as there are no AIRS incidents assigned to the activities within this service. Table 8 below shows the time spent on the activities, but is only a partial representation of services provided, as it accounts for only a proportion of staff providing these services. For example, it does not include activities or time undertaken by the Regional Community Safety Managers and Building Approval Officers. SMS data captures approximately 65% of firefighter time. The QFRS is implementing measures to improve time capture by firefighters.

Table 8: Building and Infrastructure Safety Services Incidents Recorded in SMS by Task Type (hours)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Growth
Building Inspections	62,099.60	59,728.82	66,466.65	69,892.45	12.5%
Staff Training Courses	4,587.43	5,333.48	5,570.65	3,009.13	-34.4%
Fire Investigation	1,285.10	1,418.48	1,640.17	1,442.37	12.2%
Administration	25,583.57	23,528.70	20,443.83	20,316.08	-20.6%
Data Errors	3.25	75.00	7.77	9.00	176.9%
Total Building & Infrastructure Safety Services * SMS Task Hours	93,558.95	90,084.48	94,129.07	94,669.03	1.2%

* These tasks are directly related to Building & Infrastructure Safety Services only and therefore do not include Category E so the Total Task Hours will equal Building & Infrastructure Safety Services Employee Task Hours and not Total SMS Employee Task.

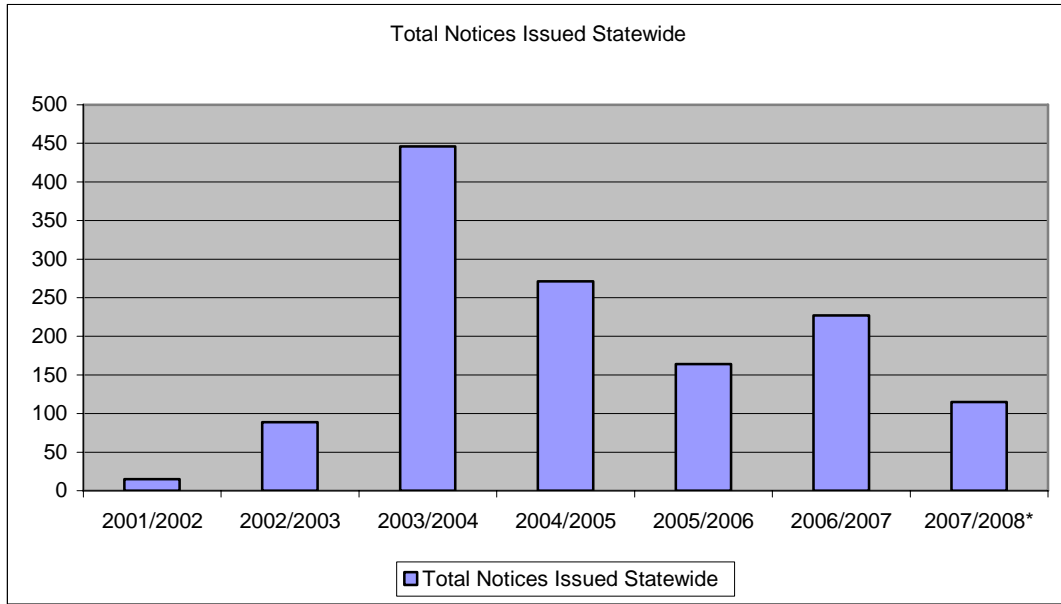
Overall, the time being spent in total only has increased slightly by 1.2% over the four years, but the mix of activities has changed, with the percentage of time spent on Building Inspections increasing by 7.4% and administration falling by 5.8%.

The QFRS also has a Compliance and Prosecution Section database which records the notices issued. The three main notices issues are:

- Infringement Notices are issued for non compliance with sections of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 and Building Fire Safety Regulation 1991;
- Section 104G Notices identify fire safety problems in buildings and give a time frame for compliance; and
- Section 69 Requisitions issued for fire safety breaches outside buildings and breaches that don't come under Section 104G.

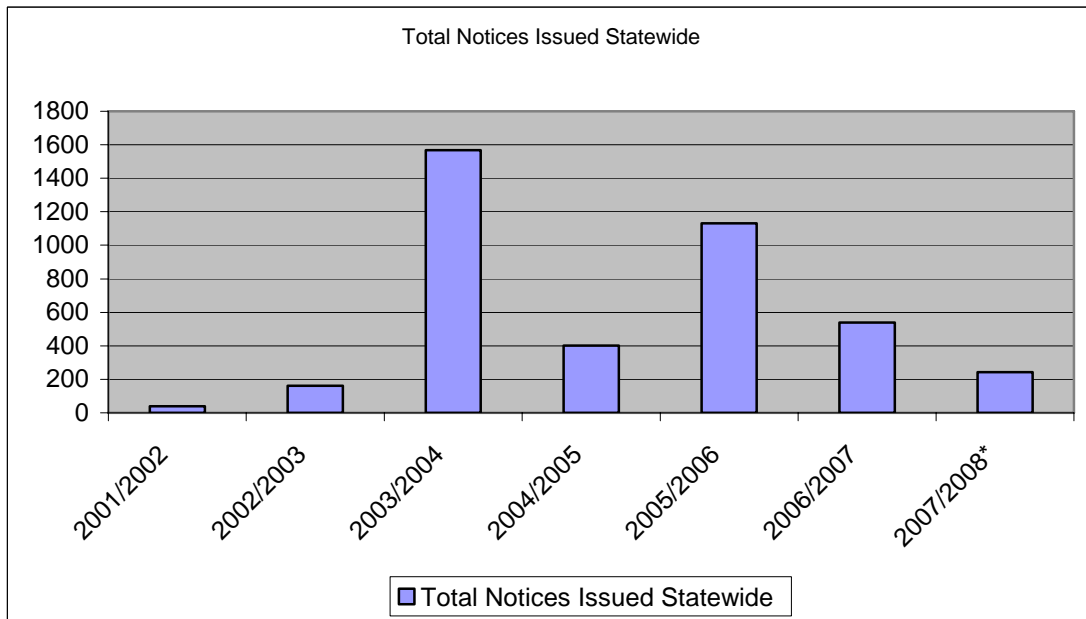
The charts below show how many of these notices have been issued each year, illustrating the spikes where new regulations were introduced.

Figure 3: Total Infringement Notices Issued



Section 104G notices issued from 2001 to 31 January 2008, are set out in the chart below:

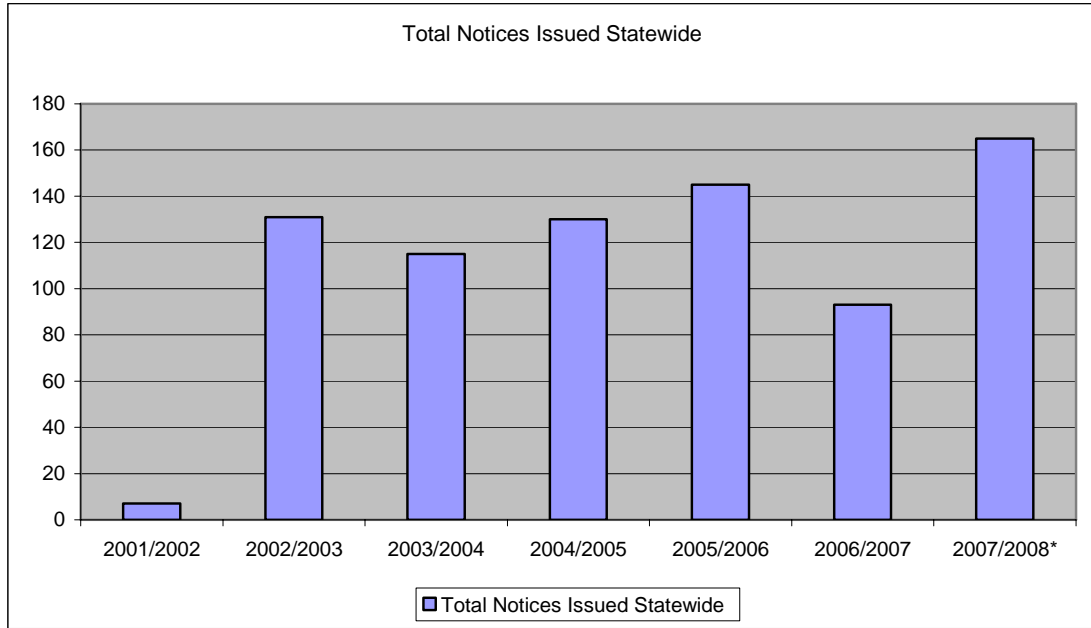
Figure 4: Section 104G Notices Issued



Section 69 Requisitions by Commissioner from 2001 to 31 January 2008, are set out in the chart below.

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Figure 5: Total Section 69 Requisitions



1.2 Authority for the Services

Authority for the services and functions undertaken by QFRS are primarily set out in the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* (the Act) and cover all the five service delivery activities of the QFRS. The “rescue” element of the QFRS was legislated in 1990, with the “motor vehicle” rescue being specified in 1998. The building and infrastructure safety services have increased significantly with the introduction of the amended legislation in 2002. This legislation was a direct response to the Childers backpackers’ hostel fire tragedy. In conjunction with the then Department of Local Government and Planning, the Act improved the safety of the community through more rigorous requirements for compliance with fire safety provisions. Its initial focus was on budget residential accommodation.

Many other government organisations rely on the QFRS as evidenced by related legislation, policies, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and plans that involve the QFRS.

Legislation

The Act established the QFRS and provided for the prevention of, and response to, fires and certain other incidents endangering people, property or the environment and for related purposes.

Section 8B sets out the following functions of the QFRS:

- a) To protect people, property and the environment from fire and hazardous material emergencies;
- b) To protect people trapped in a vehicle or building or otherwise endangered (to the extent that the service’s personnel and equipment can reasonably be deployed or used for that purpose);
- c) To provide an advisory service, and undertake other measures, to promote –
 - i. Fire prevention and fire control; and
 - ii. Safety and other procedures if a fire or hazardous materials emergency happens;
- d) To cooperate with any entity that provides an emergency service;
- e) To perform other functions given to the service under this Act or another Act;
- f) To perform functions incidental to its other functions; and
- g) To identify and market products and services incidental to its functions.

The Act was amended in 2006 to introduce the following measures:

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- Reducing the risk of home fire death and injury by making smoke alarms compulsory for all Queensland residences from 1 July 2007;
- Reducing the risk of overcrowding in high risk licensed premises, especially nightclubs, by providing a framework for the calculation, display and management of a maximum occupancy loading to facilitate safe evacuation in the event of an emergency;
- Addressing unwanted automatic fire alarms by obliging building occupiers to maintain automatic alarm systems such that they do not signal an unacceptable number of unwanted alarms; and
- Increasing penalties for building fire safety offences that result in loss of life, injury or significant property loss.

Subordinate Legislation

The *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* has two subordinate pieces of legislation:

- *Building Fire Safety Regulation 1991*; and
- *Fire and Rescue Service Regulation 2001*.

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 1991* establishes mandatory building fire safety compliance with the Act. It also requires that fire safety features and equipment in buildings continue to perform to the same standard and to provide the same level of safety as originally intended so that persons can evacuate from the building safely in the event of fire. The Regulation prescribes fees to be paid for the assessment and inspection of special fire services and the assessment for fire engineering design briefs.

The regulation applies to all buildings except for houses and buildings on mine sites. The regulation places fire safety obligations primarily on the occupiers of buildings. It impacts on the owners and occupiers of buildings, the fire protection industry (that services fire safety systems), regulatory authorities, and the general community that work in, reside in and visit buildings. The recent review of the regulation has addressed processes for the reporting of significant defects in building fire safety systems in buildings, the requirements for and definition of evacuation routes in buildings, and the requirements of owners and occupiers of buildings to train fire wardens, staff and others who use the building in the use of firefighting equipment and safe evacuation procedures.

The *Fire and Rescue Service Regulation 2001* establishes a set of responsibilities for the control and prevention of fires, funding for QFRS and prescribes urban fire levies which are collected by local governments on behalf of the QFRS.

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Other Queensland Legislation Impacting on the QFRS

There are a number of other pieces of legislation and policies that impact on the functions and activities of the QFRS. The key elements of these are described below.

- *Public Safety Preservation Act 1986* – sets out powers available to authorised emergency responders (fire Officers) following the declaration of a chemical, biological, radiological or other emergency situation.
- *Disaster Management Act 2003* – provides for the appointment and powers of fire Officers in disaster situations.
- *Building Act 1975* – establishes requirements for the inspection and testing of special fire service installations and sets out fire safety standards for budget accommodation.
- *Building Code of Australia* – The code has been given the status of building regulations by all states and territories. The code contains technical provisions for the design, fire resistance and construction of buildings and other structures covering matters such as structure, fire resistance access and egress, services and equipment.
- *Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001* – establishes requirements for on-site and off-site emergency planning, as well as for the provision of fire services for specific facilities.
- *Building and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2002* – was a direct response to the Childers backpackers' hostel fire tragedy and represented a major enhancement to enforcement of fire safety in buildings through enhanced structural compliance requirements and fire safety provisions.
- *Integrated Planning Act 1997* – establish the roles and responsibilities of QFRS in the building development and approval system.
- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* – imposes obligations on certain people such as employees and volunteers, QFRS and others who may affect the health and safety of others.

Policies

- National Firefighting Aerial Strategy – provides for coordinated deployment of aerial firefighting resources across Australia.
- Commonwealth and Queensland plans – including
 - Queensland Coastal Contingency Action Plan;

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- National Oil and Chemical Spill Plan;
 - National Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Strategy;
 - National Counter Terrorism Plan;
 - Queensland Chemical, Biological and Radiological Plan;
 - Queensland Disaster Management Plan; and
 - Queensland Counter Terrorism seven point plan.
- The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre – established to improve the effectiveness of Australia’s research and development effort, including increasing the understanding of bushfire behaviour and the ability to manage bushfires in order to reduce the risks to firefighters and the general public.
 - Queensland Government Policy on Volunteering – the DES has considerable responsibilities to its volunteers, in particular in relation to facilitating access to information, training and resources.
 - Memorandums of Understanding – between the QFRS and a number of external agencies to enhance cooperation and assistance.

1.3 Performance Management and Benchmarking

Overall, the type of work undertaken by the QFRS is typical of other fire services including NSW, Victoria and the United Kingdom (UK). The QFRS focus on risk reduction for business and the community aligns strongly with the recommendations of the independent review of the UK Fire Service in 2002.

Table 9: Comparison of Eastern States Fire and Rescue Services

	NSW	Vic	Qld
Operating expenses excluding losses (\$mill)	710.1	562.2	338.3
Operating expenses excluding losses \$ per capita	103.1	108.0	80.9
Net capital expenditure (\$mill)	85.9	84.2	43.1
Net capital expenditure \$ per capita	12.5	16.2	10.3
Net assets (\$mill)	772.6	979.4	445.1
Net assets \$ per capita	112.1	188.2	106.4
Number of fire stations	1956	1203	648
Number of fire stations per 100,000 people	28.4	23.1	15.5
Number of fire brigades	2,416	1,305	1,761
Number of fire brigades per 100,000 people	35.1	25.1	42.1
Incidents attended	158,234	75,335	68,661
Incidents attended per 100,000 people	2,297	1,447	1,642
Number of fire incidents	43,252	27,384	19,185
Fire incidents per 100,000 people	628	526	459
Full-time fire officers	3,421	2,165	2,076
Auxiliary (retained) fire officers	3,233	0	2,033
Salaried support, administration and corporate staff	1,056	1,162	732
Total FTEs employed	4,736	3,327	2,971
FTEs employed per 100,000 people	68.7	63.9	71.0
Incidents per fire officer	43.0	34.8	30.7
Volunteer brigade members	77,641	59,509	36,000
Volunteer brigade members per 100,000 people	1,127	1,143	861

Source: Fire & Rescue Service Annual Reports 2006-07, ROGS 2008

Annual Report benchmarking data is illustrated in Table 9 above and shows that Queensland's fire services expenditure per capita is lower than Victoria and New South Wales for 2006-2007.

- Operating costs per capita are the lowest in Queensland;
- Capital investment per capita is lowest in Queensland; and
- Net assets per capita are also the lowest in Queensland.

Non-financial measures of performance indicate:

- The number of fire brigades per 100,000 people is highest in Queensland;
- The number of total incidents attended per 100,000 people is below NSW but above Victoria;
- The number of fire incidents attended per 100,000 is lowest in Queensland.

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- FTEs employed per 100,000 are higher in Queensland than for NSW and Victoria.

Utilisation Rate

There is a lower rate of incident attendance per firefighter in Queensland compared with other jurisdictions. Queensland has only 30.7 incidents per firefighter (full-time plus auxiliary) compared to 43.0 in NSW and 34.8 in Victoria.

Response Times

A measure of the performance of QFRS is measured by timing the response by urban crews to structural fires. Response by crews is split into three subgroups: full-time permanent stations, auxiliary stations and composite stations. The benchmark set for all crews is a response within 14 minutes and the target for each group is 90%.

As shown in Table 10, the response by full time permanent stations has been steady at around 97% over the past five years, which is well above the target of 90%.

Composite permanent/auxiliary stations response times improved between 2002-03 and 2005-06, but declined to below the set target in 2006-07 to 89%. Auxiliary stations also exhibited a similar decline to below the target in 2006-07 to 86%.

The demand for fire/explosion responses has decreased over the past five years. As a result, one would expect an improvement in the response times due to there being less fires/explosions to attend, however the opposite is evident.

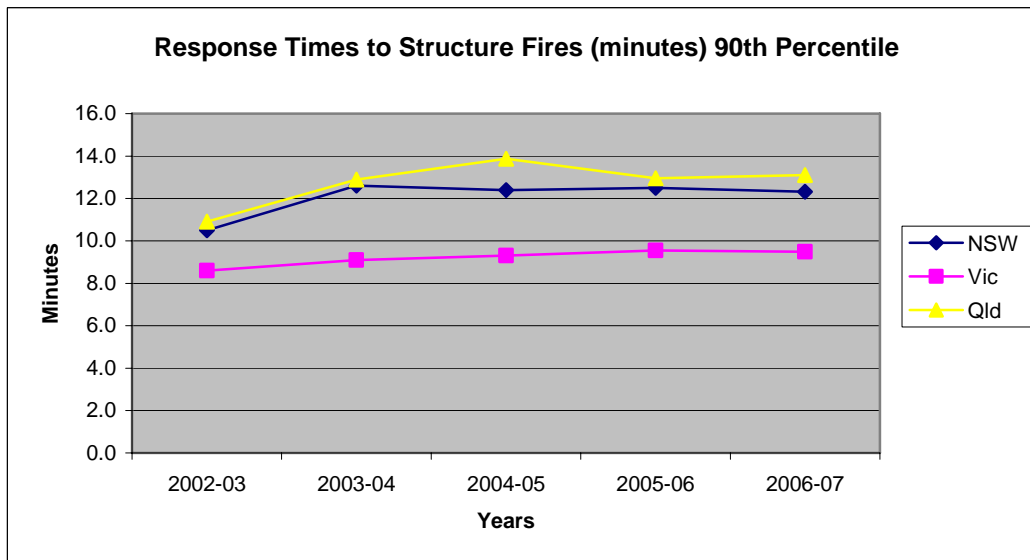
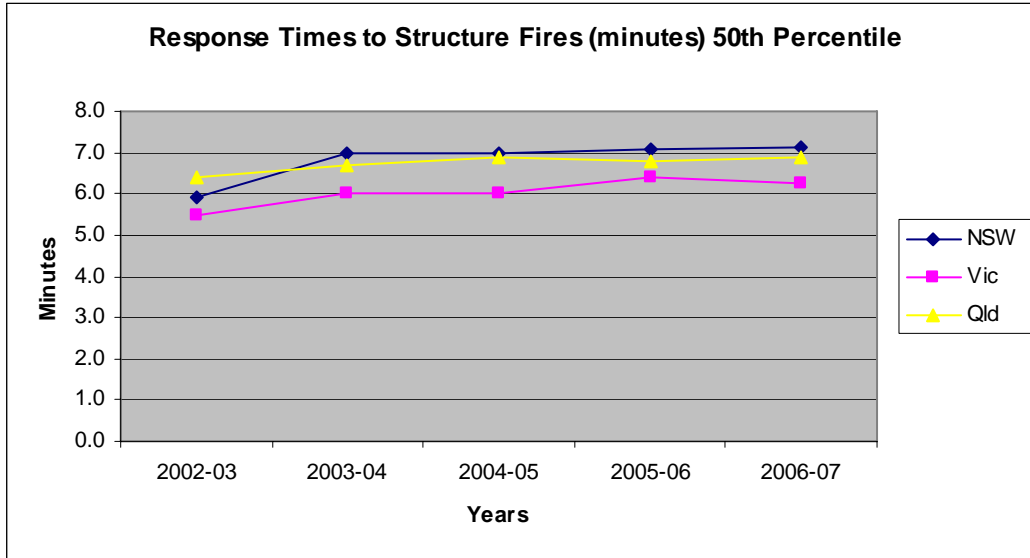
Table 10: QFRS Response Times

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Urban crew responses in 14 minutes					
Full time permanent stations	97%	97%	96%	97%	98%
Composite permanent/auxiliary stations	90%	93%	94%	96%	89%
Auxiliary stations	90%	92%	90%	90%	86%

Data extracted from the Department of Emergency Services Ministerial Portfolio Statements and figures represent estimated actuals for relevant years.

The 90th percentile response times to structure fires are higher in Queensland than in other states. Comparing the 50th percentile of responses, Queensland is slightly higher than Victoria, but tracks New South Wales (NSW) closely (Figure 6). On average, response times to structural fires are increasing. The QFRS considers that the likely reasons for this are the increase in population and risks, particularly in south-east Queensland. Response times are affected by increased traffic congestion, the location of stations being less than ideal given demographic changes, land use changes in the area since the station was constructed and the increasing numbers of incidents being responded to by urban crews outside urban levy boundaries.

Figure 6: 2008 ROGS – Response Times to Structure Fires (minutes)



Services

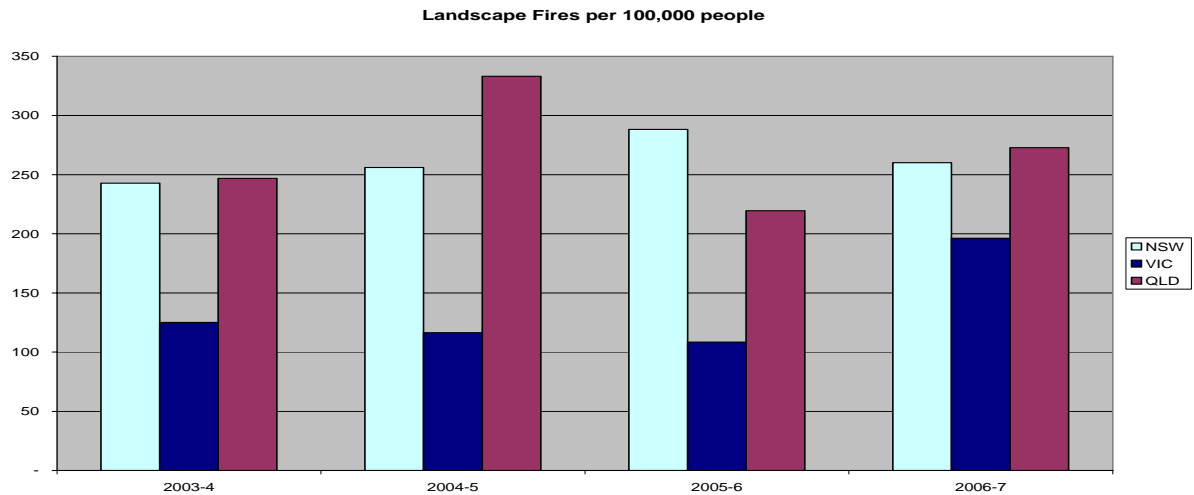
The following benchmarking information focuses on landscape fire services, structural fire services and all hazards and rescue services. There is only limited benchmarking data available for building and infrastructure safety services or community risk mitigation services. The information below provides a comparison of Queensland activity levels against Victoria and NSW. It shows that while Queensland has more landscape fires we experience lower levels of structural fires than the other states.

Landscape Fire Services

In three out of the last four years, Queensland has experienced a higher incidence of landscape fires per 100,000 people than either Victoria or NSW (Figure 7). In 2006-07 NSW had about 17,700 landscape fire incidents compared with 10,900 in

Queensland and 10,000 in Victoria. Over the past 4 years landscape incidents have increased by 16.4% in Queensland, 8.7% in NSW and by 63.3% in Victoria (although this reflects a low number of incidents in Victoria in 2003-04). While Queensland may have experienced more landscape fires than the other states in recent years, the severity and costs of the landscape fires in NSW and Victoria have been higher.

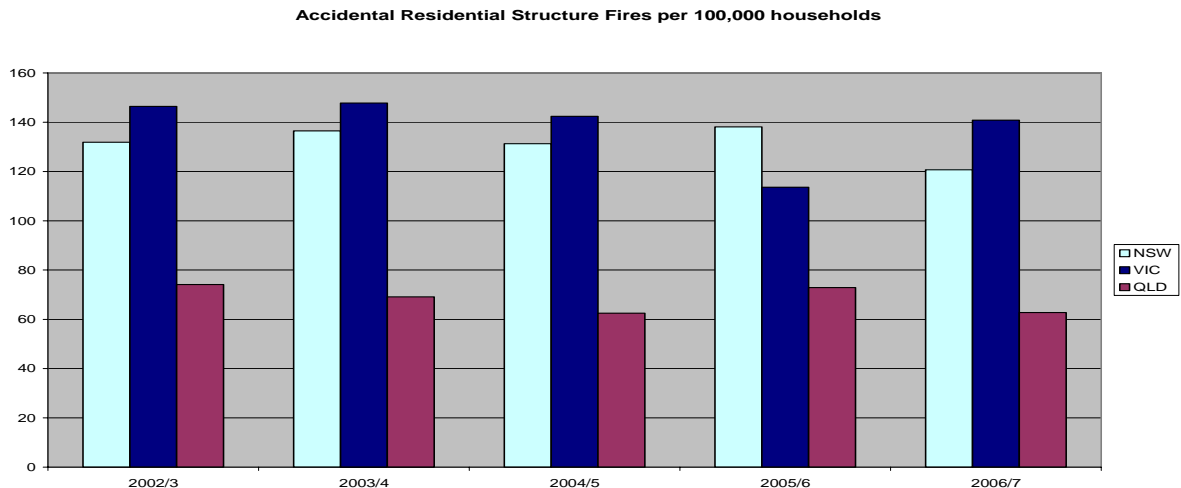
Figure 7: 2008 ROGS – Landscape Fires per 100,000 People



Structural Fire Services

The QFRS has a greater focus on prevention through community risk mitigation services and building and infrastructure safety services than NSW or Victoria. There are indications that these mitigation activities are having a flow-on effect to the reduction in the incidence of fires. The number of structural fires in Queensland in 2006-07 was 2,750 compared to 6,970 in NSW and 6,230 in Victoria. Figure 8 below illustrates the number of residential structural fires per 100,000 households in Queensland is significantly lower than in NSW and Victoria. In 2006-07 Queensland recorded just over 60 residential structure fires per 100,000 households compared with approximately 120 for NSW and 140 for Victoria.

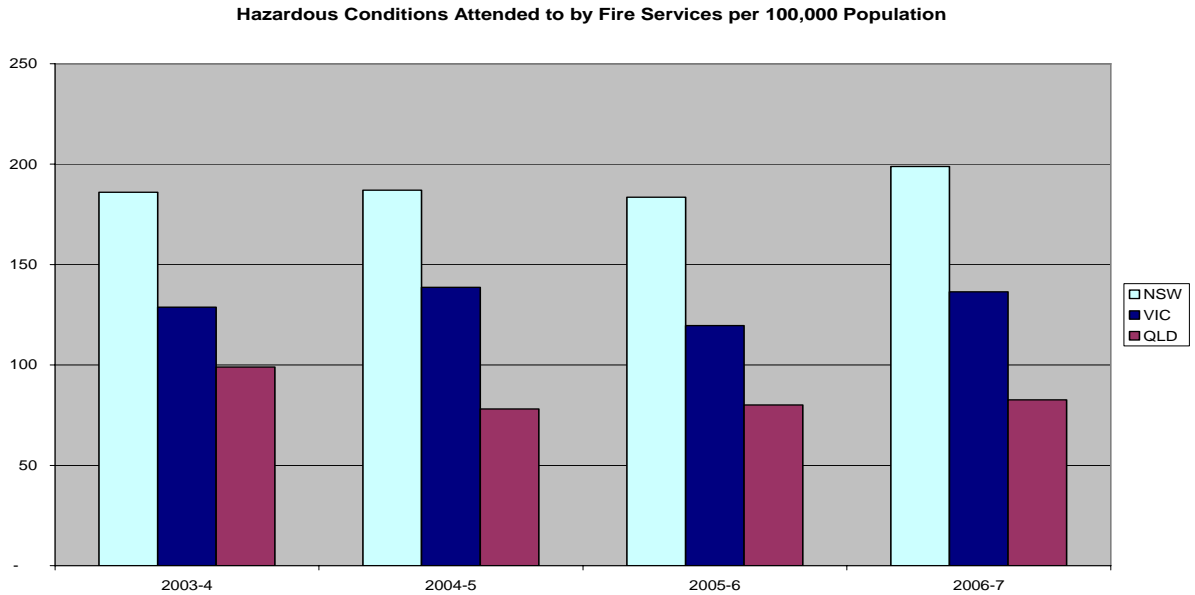
Figure 8: 2008 ROGS – Accidental Residential Structure Fires per 100,000 Households



All Hazards and Rescue Services

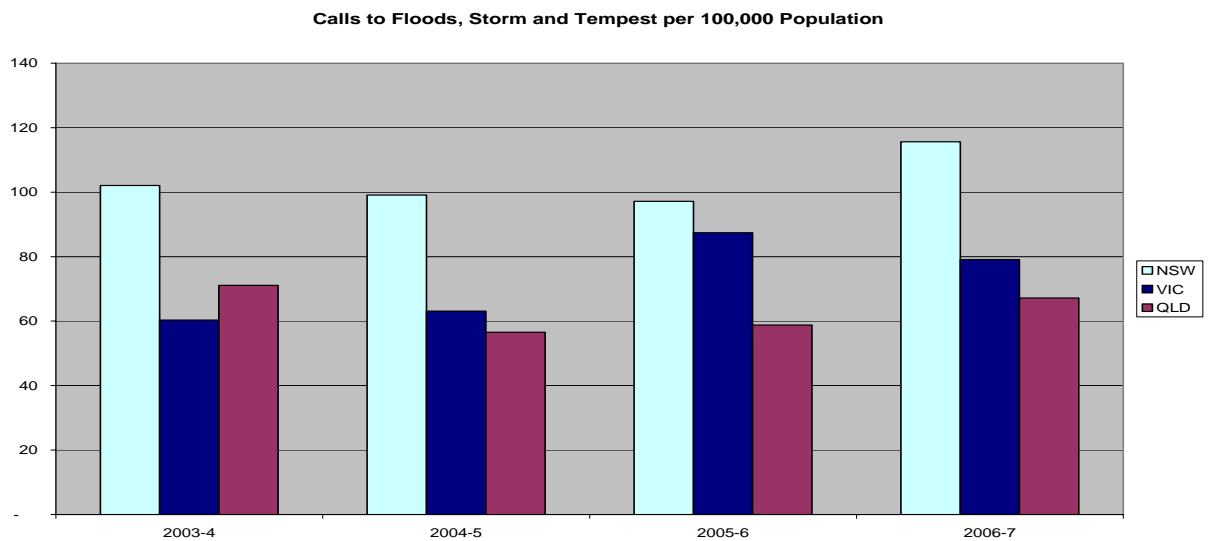
All hazards and rescue services includes types of rescues such as swiftwater, storm and hazardous materials incidents. A hazardous material incident is defined as the accidental or deliberate release of a hazardous material that can harm a person, environment or property. The number of hazardous materials incidents per 100,000 people has consistently been significantly lower in Queensland than in NSW and Victoria as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: 2008 ROGS – Hazardous Conditions Attended to by Fire Services per 100,000 Population



Calls to floods and storm incidents are shown in Figure 10 below. Again, the number of these incidents in Queensland per 100,000 people has consistently been below that in NSW and Victoria. The severe floods in Queensland in early 2008 will increase Queensland's average per 100,000 people in 2007-08.

Figure 10: 2008 ROGS – Calls to Floods, Storm and Tempest per 100,000 Population



Community Safety and Building Infrastructure Services

QFRS performance in the area of community safety and awareness is measured through various groups in the community participating in fire education programs, the number of hours spent on safety promotion and public education activities and the percentage of premises deemed to be inspected and compliant with building fire safety standards.

The focus by the QFRS on community risk mitigation and building infrastructure services, and as noted in the following indicators, suggest that this focus improves outcomes for:

- Annual fire death rate (falling since 1999-2001);
- Fire injuries (stabilised since 2002-2003);
- Property losses from structural fire per person (has fallen in 2006-2007 following on from a relatively stable period of three years).

Table 11. Average 3 Year Rolling Fire Death Rate per Million of Population

3 Year Period	Qld	NSW	Vic	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
1997-1999 [^]	8.5	6.9	5.7	6.6	9.0	14.1	6.4	10.5	7.2
1998-2000 [#]	8.7	7.8	6.1	4.7	7.3	11.3	9.6	15.6	7.4
1999-2001	7.9	6.1	5.1	4.4	9.1	12.0	9.5	17.1	6.5
2000-2002	6.9	6.7	5.6	5.3	8.2	14.8	6.3	16.9	6.7
2001-2003	5.3	6.1	5.4	7.4	9.7	16.9	7.3	15.1	6.6
2002-2004	5.0	6.7	5.8	6.2	8.7	18.1	6.2	15.1	6.6
2003-2005	4.4	7.3	5.3	5.6	8.9	15.9			6.5

[^] ROGS 2006, [#]ROGS 2007, ROGS 2008

The Average 3 Year Rolling death rate is used as fire deaths fluctuate from year to year. To help stabilise the rate and observe time trends, rates are aggregated into "rolled" averages across the observed period.

Table 12. Average 3 Year Rolling Fire Injury Rate per 100,000 Persons

3 Year Period	Qld	NSW	Vic	WA	SA	Aust
1999-2000 to 2001-2002 [^]	18.4	14.2	9.8	19.4	16.6	14.8
2000-01 to 2002-03 [#]	16.8	13.9	10.2	18.0	16.7	14.2
2001-02 to 2003-04	17.6	14.6	11.5	18.4	17.8	14.6
2002-03 to 2004-05	16.7	14.4	11.9	16.8	18.4	14.7
2003-04 to 2005-06	16.7	15.3	11.6	16.8	20.1	15.5

[^] ROGS 2006, [#]ROGS 2007, ROGS 2008

The Average 3 Year Rolling Injury rate is used as fire injuries fluctuate from year to year. To help stabilise the rate and observe time trends, rates are aggregated into "rolled" averages across the observed period.

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Table 13. 3 Year Rolling Average Property Loss from Structural Fire (2006/07 Dollars per Person)

3 Year Period	Qld	NSW	Vic	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
2000-01 to 2002-03 [^]	23		23	21	13	68	16	7	23
2001-02 to 2003-04 [#]	32	37	22	30	19	20	10	20	34
2002-03 to 2004-05	29	30	27	26	28	43	27	17	29
2003-04 to 2005-06	28	42	33	24	24	58	28	20	34
2004-05 to 2006-07	27	40	37	27	26	57	25	19	34

[^] ROGS 2006, [#]ROGS 2007, ROGS 2008

The Average 3 Year Rolling rate is used as Property Loss figures fluctuate from year to year. To help stabilise the rate and observe time trends, rates are aggregated into "rolled" averages across the observed period.

1.4 Improving Efficiency of Service Delivery

A measure of the efficiency of service delivery can be derived by comparing the level of expenditure on a per capita and per incident basis. The following section examines QFRS expenditure against Victoria and NSW.

Expenditure

Queensland's fire service expenditure per capita is significantly below Victoria and NSW. In 2006-07, Queensland fire service expenditure per capita was \$80.9 compared with \$103.1 for NSW and \$108.0 for Victoria. This is consistent with the lower level of fire incidents in Queensland compared with the other states.

Table 14. Comparison of Expenditure per Capita (2006-07)

	NSW	Vic	Qld
Population	6,889,072	5,205,216	4,182,062
Total Operating Expenses (\$m)	710.1	562.2	338.3
Expenditure per capita (\$)	103.1	108.0	80.9

Source: ABS 3101.0 (population) Annual Reports (operating expenditure)

Fire and rescue service expenditure per capita increased by 15.4% between 2002-03 and 2006-07 in Queensland.

Table 15. Queensland Expenditure per Capita

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Qld population	3,809,564	3,901,811	3,996,564	4,091,546	4,182,062
Total expenses (\$'000)	266,932	280,743	287,865	313,149	338,495
Expenditure per capita (\$)	70.1	72.0	72.0	76.5	80.9

Source: ABS 3101.0 (population) QFRS Financial Statements (total expenditure)

QFRS cost per incident has remained steady between 2002-03 and 2006-07, with a 4.0% increase over the five year period based on Ministerial Portfolio Statement Data (Table 16). It is worth noting that the trend over the five years is not one of constant growth, but an annual decline in two financial years and an annual increase in three financial years. In particular there was a marked increase of 6.5% between 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Table 16: Cost per Incident

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Costs					
QFRS Cost per incident as a proportion of output cost (MPS Data)	\$1,131	\$1,117	\$1,091	\$1,162	\$1,176
ROGS Data -					
QLD	\$5,225	\$5,337	\$5,158	\$5,340	\$5,182
NSW	\$4,923	\$4,374	\$4,458	\$4,519	\$4,778
VIC	\$6,419	\$7,335	\$7,600	\$7,834	\$11,302

MPS data extracted from DES MPS and represent estimated actuals. ROGS 2008 data. The cost per incident as measured by ROGS is an overestimate as some expenditure is not associated with incidents (e.g. Community Education). Expenditure figure for Victoria in 2006-07 is not comparable as it includes the costs of the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

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In comparing ROGS data on expenditure, Queensland cost per incident is consistently higher than NSW but lower than Victoria.

The following areas have been identified to improve the efficiency and productivity of service delivery.

Attendance at motor vehicle accidents.

As shown in Table 6 above, there has been considerable growth in QFRS attendance at RCR incidents. Approximately two thirds (67.4%) of RCR incidents attended involve 'Investigation only' or 'Removal of Hazard'.

Table 17. Road Crash Rescue Incidents

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Road Crash Rescues (QFRS attendance)	6,312	6,974	8,033	9,670	11,798	13,802
Road Traffic Crashes (Qld Transport)	22,286	22,219	23,039	23,287	23,167	n.a.
Attendance Rate	28.3%	31.4%	34.9%	41.5%	50.9%	n.a.

Growth in QFRS Road Crash Rescue Incidents is far in excess of the growth in the number of road crashes as recorded by Queensland Transport (Table 17). In 2001-02 QFRS attended approximately 28.3% of road crashes in Queensland. This figure had grown to in excess of 50% by 2005-06.

The RCR response protocols could be revised to minimise the attendance of the QFRS when it is not required. A reduction in non-essential attendances would result in a reduction in marginal costs of attendances which could be redirected to investments required in all hazards and rescue services. Savings estimates from a reduction are discussed in the Financial Analysis Section.

Station rationalisation

A number of D class auxiliary stations are currently operating inside response catchments fully serviced by 24-hour/seven days a week A Class stations. This duplicates the services already provided with no addition to the fire levy revenues. Rationalisation of D class stations would contribute towards the investment required in new stations.

There are some A class stations that have heavily overlapping response catchments. It is feasible to rationalise A class stations in these areas. The savings in operating costs

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and proceeds from sales of the land used by these stations could also contribute towards the investment required in new stations. Estimated savings from station rationalisation are provided in the Financial Analysis section.

Unwanted alarms

The QFRS continues to actively address unwanted alarms through:

- Working with industry to identify and rectify the causes of unwanted alarms such as the assisting with the appropriate positioning of fire alarms in buildings and rectifying line faults. The QFRS also has released Fire Alarm and Building Design Guidelines for the Reduction of Unwanted Alarms which provides building professionals with information on how to reduce unwanted alarms in new buildings. The guidelines apply to all building approval applications submitted for QFRS assessment from 1 September 2007;
- Increasing the charge for attending unwanted alarms to provide an economic incentive to building owners to reduce unwanted alarms; and
- Introduction of a new fire alarm telemetry system that will also contribute to the reduction in callout times and the number of unwanted alarms.

Any reduction in attendance at unwanted alarms will not directly result in cashable savings as the cost of firefighters' time will still be incurred. To increase the capacity of firefighters to undertake other core duties, and therefore reduce the rate at which additional firefighters need to be recruited, would also require the rationalisation of locations from which frontline firefighters are deployed.

Community Risk Mitigation and Building Infrastructure Services

A proportion of these activities are undertaken by frontline firefighters in stations. To the extent that these services can be made more efficient or minimised there may not be direct cashable savings as the cost of the firefighters time would still be incurred.

Direct savings in the areas of community safety and building infrastructure services that do not involve frontline firefighters are discussed under Workforce Realignment below. For example, it is unclear why the Road Accident Awareness Program (RAAP) is administered by QFRS, as this service seems more closely aligned with activities of Queensland Transport or the Queensland Police Service.

Corporate Overheads

As part of QAS Audit, the services and service delivery models for BSS, SPES and Office of Director-General have been reviewed. The shared nature of corporate support across Business Support Services (BSS) in DES results in similar corporate savings that can be applied to the QFRS. Estimated savings from the redirection of corporate overheads to frontline service delivery is detailed in the Financial Analysis section of this report.

1.5 Risk Mitigation

Increasing Complexity of Frontline Service Delivery

The QFRS has assessed there is an increased risk to the community compared with a decade ago. Coupled with the forecast demographic, environmental, infrastructure and security issues, the QFRS considers risks to the community will continue to increase.

The increasing complexity has resulted from increases in:

- Urban-rural interface (iZone) areas;
- Numbers of buildings and other infrastructure such as tunnels;
- The potential for significant incidents including the potential for terrorism or other major incidents, freight transportation and hazardous materials incidents, and environmental standards;
- The incidence of natural disasters due to climate change; and
- The rate of change of technology.

iZone

Recent fires interstate, as well as in Queensland, have exemplified the susceptibility to wildfires where the urban and rural interface meet. This is now commonly known as iZone areas. The QFRS has committed numerous risk mitigation strategies to address this risk including joint urban and rural planning, local action plans, Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping and the provision of the Bushfire Prepared Communities (BPC) programs.

An integral component in addressing the increasing risk of the iZone was the establishment of the Air Operations Unit. The Unit was established for the 2005 fire season and has established aerial fire suppression as an integral component of the QFRS' capability for wildfire management. The utilisation of aircraft for air operations in a wildfire environment is relatively new for the QFRS and while the capability is critical, the ongoing training and development of the capability is required.

Action taken by QFRS to mitigate risk

Urban and Rural operations have had to work closely together in these iZone areas to reduce risk, including better preparing residents before the wildfire season, actively supporting the bushfire CRC, joint planning between the urban and rural operations, planned reduction burns, delivering more training to staff and volunteers in fire management strategies, and by consolidating incident control and management capabilities.

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Increase in Buildings and Infrastructure

The demand for building fire safety services has grown by more than 10% annually since 2000-2001, driven by continued high levels of activity in the building and construction industries, and generated by strong growth in the State's economy and population. The *Integrated Planning Act 1997* obliges the QFRS to provide assessment of the adequacy of often extremely complex building fire safety designs within a 15-working day turn-around time. This has been coupled with the significant increase in infrastructure across the State.

Action taken by QFRS to mitigate risk

A recent area of focus to reduce risks for building occupants has been the review of the *Building Fire Safety Regulation 1991*. The regulation was reviewed to include incremental changes to increase the level of safety afforded to people within buildings against fire.

In 2007-08, QFRS also increased fees and charges to recover more costs associated with providing building and infrastructure services, as well as adopting new fees for services previously provided free of charge. This has resulted in more timely and efficient service provision with resources being devoted to the building and infrastructure workforce and an upgrade of systems.

Transportation Incidents

The nature of transportation has changed dramatically over the last ten years. Since 2000, the number of heavy vehicle and vessel incidents has increased significantly. Total freight traffic within Queensland is projected to double by 2020. The QFRS attended 13,802 motor vehicle accidents in 2006-2007 with 2,104 involving extrications. An increasing number of these accidents involve heavy vehicles. In addition, the technology in new vehicles is continually changing and the strength of the chassis and occupant cell is increasing. Rescue pumpers (fire appliances) and Rescue tenders are fitted with equipment at the time they are commissioned and have on average 15-years useful life for a rescue pumper and ten-years useful life for a rescue tender. However, with the rapidly changing technology, the QFRS needs to replace its cutters more frequently to keep pace with these changes in vehicle design. The current cutters being used by the QFRS are less effective in cutting these newly designed vehicles.

Action taken by QFRS to mitigate risk

The technology in new vehicles is continually changing and the strength of chassis and occupant cell is increasing. The QFRS continues to research vehicle construction and design in conjunction with private companies as well as the national committee focusing on road crash rescues.

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Hazardous Materials Incidents

The QFRS Scientific and Special Operations Units continue to work closely with other specialist organisations such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ports. Both the Scientific and Special Operations Units need to invest in expanding their capability to ensure that the diverse operational environments that they attend are mitigated safely with minimal impact on people and the environment. The Special Operations area within the QFRS supports the Regions by providing expertise in major incident management and other specialist operations involving major freight and vessel incidents, counter-terrorism preparation, rescues, and chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary, explosive and counter terrorism incidents.

Action taken by QFRS to mitigate risk

The QFRS Scientific Unit and Special Operations Unit continue to work closely with other specialist organisations such as the EPA and the QPS. The Special Operations Unit supports the Regions by providing expertise in major incident management and other specialist operations.

Increase in the Incidence of Natural Disasters due to Climate Change

Bushfires are an inevitable occurrence in Australia. Fire is most common over the tropical savannas of the north where some parts of the land burn on an annual basis. Climate change projections indicate that conditions in Australia are likely to become hotter and drier in future. A report from the Bushfire CRC reports that the number of 'very high' and 'extreme' fire danger days could increase by 2020, and 15%-70% by 2050. QFRS also responds to other natural disasters, for example floods, landslides and cyclones.

Action taken by QFRS to mitigate risk

To address the risk of an increase in bushfires, the QFRS has assessed it needs to increase the capability and training of rural firefighters in order to ensure adequate preparation for bush fires.

QFRS has recently expanded and upgraded incident management training across all ranks and expanded various rescue capabilities to deliver effective non-fire rescue services. Furthermore, the lessons learned from Cyclone Larry in 2005 were significant for the QFRS and are factored into strategic and operational plans.

Due to drought in Brisbane, the Brisbane City Council reduced the water pressure in some of the main pipes in Brisbane. To reduce the risk of the impact on structural fire response from the reduction in water pressure, the QFRS is currently working with the south east Queensland Local Governments to ensure they adopt and comply with the guideline produced by Local Government Infrastructure Services. This will ensure as few buildings as possible are impacted by the pressure reduction program.

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Changes in Technology

Changes in technology have improved the capability of the QFRS to respond to incidents by:

- Increasing the coordination and safety of firefighter and appliances at incidents;
- Keeping all response agencies across the sector informed of issues as they arise at the incident;
- Keep the public better informed of risks relating to the incidents; and
- Keeping the media informed.

2.0 The QFRS Workforce

2.1 Workforce Management

The majority of QFRS services are undertaken by full time firefighters and by part time auxiliary firefighters working from urban fire stations. Volunteers perform a major role in landscape fire services in rural areas and undertake some structural fire, all hazards and rescue and community risk mitigation services.

As at 30 June 2007, the QFRS had 2,690 staff comprising 2,239 firefighting staff and 451 non-firefighting staff. The QFRS also is allocated 281 DES Corporate Services staff. QFRS also employs 2,033 part-time auxiliary firefighters and 36,000 rural volunteer firefighters.

The 2,239 firefighting staff comprise 75.4% of the total QFRS workforce compared with an average 74.7% of all firefighting services in Australia. 83.7% of firefighting staff are on-shift firefighters in stations.

As a percentage of the State population, QFRS total staff has remained relatively constant since 2003-2004.

Table 18 – FTEs per 100,000 people 2006-07

	NSW	VIC	QLD
FTEs per 100,000 people	68.74	63.92	71.04
Proportion of fire staff	77.7%	65.1%	75.4%

Comparison of Queensland firefighting staff figure against NSW in fact shows that while Queensland has a higher number of FTEs per 100,000 people (71.04 in Qld and 68.74 in NSW), Queensland has a lower proportion of firefighting staff at 75.4% compared to NSW at 77.7% but higher than Victoria at 65.1% (Victoria's ratio is likely to be understated due to the inclusion of staff from the Department of the Sustainability and the Environment).

Table 19: QFRS Staffing by category – 2003-2004 to 2006-2007

Staffing by FTEs	June 2003	June 2004	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007	% Change 2003 - 2007
Firefighting Staff	2,096	2,128	2,189	2,221	2,239	6.8%
QFRS Non-firefighting Staff	358	409	407	439	451	26.0%
Corporate Service Allocation	209	167	213	250	281	34.4%
TOTAL QFRS	2,663	2,704	2,809	2,910	2,971	11.6%

Overall, QFRS FTEs have increased by 11.6% over the last five years. The number of firefighting staff has increased by 6.8% over this period. During the same period there has been growth in QFRS non-firefighting staff of 26.0% and in corporate

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service allocation of 34.4%. The proportion of firefighting staff has decreased from 78.7% at June 2003 to 75.4% at June 2007. Of all staff, 93.3% of firefighting staff are in Regions and 62.1% of non-firefighting staff are in Regions (that is, not in QFRS State Office).

There are considerable differences between the full time, auxiliary and volunteer firefighters and this represents a challenge to QFRS in managing the workforce. Full time firefighters are fully trained and paid operational professionals. Auxiliary firefighters are paid only for the hours they work and train. Auxiliary firefighters deliver community safety activities and respond to emergency incidents from their homes or places of work when called. Auxiliary firefighters work at auxiliary stations that are usually located in smaller Regional centres. Auxiliary firefighters provide the same range of services as full time urban firefighters and rely on the goodwill of their employer to leave their normal paid work when responding to an incident.

Rural fire service volunteers provide a range of services as members of Rural Fire Brigades. Volunteers train and undertake tasks to mitigate and respond to fires in their local area. They also deliver community education and hazard reduction activities to reduce risks to people, property and the environment. QFRS has the same duty of care to volunteers as it does to full time employees. There is a considerable challenge to QFRS to maintain the number and level of training of volunteers in the face of an ageing population and increasing complexity of incidents faced. QFRS has adopted a risk based approach to training to ensure training is directed where it is most needed.

2.2 Redirection of Workload and Staff across Service Delivery Areas

Non-firefighting Staff

The total number of non-firefighting staff has increased by 10.7% over the past 3 years. There are 451 non-firefighting staff in the QFRS, of which 70.6% (318.4 Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) support frontline services service delivery activities. A further 133.5 FTEs provide general corporate services including Data and Information Management, General Administration, Executive Support and Other support. Of these categories, General Administration and Executive Support staffing numbers fell by 9.4% over the last three years.

Table 20: Time series analysis of activities undertaken by QFRS Non-firefighting Staff by Sub-group

	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007	% diff from June 2005
<u>Direct support for front-line service delivery:</u>				
Commercial Services (full cost recovery)	17.66	16.39	20.1	13.8%
Community Safety and Education	35.88	40.46	47.51	35.2%
Engineering Services	55.63	58.8	51.75	-7.0%
School of Fire and Rescue Service Training (SFRST) and Regional training support	15.4	21.64	28.65	86.0%
Volunteer Support	32.5	39.97	45.75	40.8%
QFRS Workplace Health and Safety	7.97	12	18	125.8%
FireCom	93.54	102.23	94.62	1.2%
Other	11.66	10.28	12	2.9%
<u>General Corporate Services:</u>				
Data and Information Management	19	25	26.43	39.1%
Executive Support	20.6	20.2	18.08	-12.2%
General Administration	89.41	83.7	80.99	-9.4%
Other	8	8	8	0
TOTAL	407.25	438.67	450.88	10.7%

The Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) area has had the largest increase over the last three years of 125.8%. This increase is largely due to the appointment of eight Regional WHS Coordinators. The majority of these positions were previously roles undertaken by firefighters. These positions have been transferred from firefighting staff to non-firefighting staff.

Firefighting staff are able to be redirected to operations and strategic command roles for major incidents providing increased capability for sustained operations.

General Corporate Services

While the numbers involved in data information management has risen slightly, executive support and general administration numbers have fallen.

Given the small number of FTEs providing general corporate services support (Executive Support, General Administration and some of the Other category), there is

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limited capacity to redirect significant QFRS workload and staffing to either frontline services or to directly support frontline services. However, any opportunity to do so should continue to be examined.

Corporate Services Staff Allocation

Table 21 shows that there has been a 68.3% increase in QFRS allocation of Departmental overheads (Business Support Services (BSS), Shared Service Agency (SSA) and Strategic Policy and Executive Services (SPES)) over the past 4 years (compared with a 34.4% increase over the past 5 years as shown in Table 19).

Table 21: Corporate Services Allocation by Category

Category	June 2004 Category data not available at time of creation	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007	% change from 2005
<u>Business Support Services</u>					
Fleet Maintenance		5	4	4	- 20%
Property Maintenance		6	11	12	100%
Radio Communications*		24			0%
Other*		3			0%
Executives*		1			0%
Administration		33	48	31	- 6%
Finance		24	20	26	8.33%
Human Resources		23	32	45	95.65%
Information Technology		50	84	105	110%
<u>Strategic Policy and Executive Support</u>		40	46	47	17.5%
<u>Office of the DG and Internal Audit</u>		12	5	11	- 8.33%
Total	167	221	250	281	27% increase in three years, 68.3% increase in four years

Note: The SSA is not included in these FTEs. This is consistent with other jurisdictions e.g. NSW and Victoria also has shared service providers.

*Following organisational change and application of the ROGS data dictionary radio communications were included in Information Technology.

As part of QAS Audit, the services and service delivery models for BSS, SPES and Office of Director-General have been reviewed. Estimated savings associated with this review are detailed in the Financial Analysis section.

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Wage Costs

The average full time salary of QFRS employees was \$78,783 in 2006-07 (Table 22). Of QFRS staff, 32% are paid less than \$50,000 per annum, 45% of the workforce is paid between \$50,000 and \$70,000 and 23% of the workforce are paid more than \$70,000. The average full time salary has increased by 18.1% since 2002-03.

Table 22. QFRS Average Full-time Salary

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total Employee Expenses (\$'000)	177,576	187,023	202,577	218,561	234,064
Number of Full-time Equivalent Staff	2,663	2,704	2,809	2,910	2,971
Average full-time salary	\$66,683	\$69,165	\$72,117	\$75,107	\$78,783

Source: QFRS Financial Statements (employee expenses) number of FTEs (ROGS 2008)

Since 2003-2004, total overtime hours have increased by 16.0% with 37% of this overtime due to illness of other firefighters, 17% staff shortages and 15% to allow firefighters time to attend training. Since 2003-2004, the total financial cost of overtime has increased by 26.2%. These statistics are illustrated in Table 23 below.

Table 23: Overtime Expense and Total Hours 2002-2003 to 2006-2007

Years	Overtime Total (Financial Cost)	Overtime Total (Hours)
2003-2004	\$ 7,966,501	197,800
2004-2005	\$10,024,497	238,720
2005-2006	\$11,165,126	259,284
2006-2007	\$10,053,469	229,539

Absenteeism

QFRS sick leave rates have been trending down for the last three years. Average hours absent across the QFRS have decreased in the last three years with the average number of hours absent per person per year at 84.43 hours in 2004-2005 compared with 76.7 hours in 2006-2007. This is a 9.2% decrease. Compared with other agencies, the QFRS has less absenteeism than the QAS and similar levels to the QPS.

Education and Training

Firefighters spend on average 15% of their time training (based on statistics that show 15% of backfill overtime is for training). Training is largely face-to-face and is focussed on preparation, capability development for Level 1 and some Level 2 incidents and community safety activities.

Estimated savings from efficiency and productivity opportunities for the workforce are detailed in the Financial Analysis section.

3.0 Financial Analysis

3.1 QFRS Budget

QFRS Funding

QFRS is funded from the following sources:

- Urban Fire Levy - on privately owned properties;
- Commonwealth Contribution - on Commonwealth Crown properties;
- Charges for Services - including commercial training/consultancies/contracts, alarm monitoring, building fire safety services, emergency response incidents and unwanted alarm attendance;
- State Output Revenue - includes 1/7th Statutory Charges on State Crown properties; and
- Other Own Source Revenue – including Rural Fire Brigade contributions, grants, interest and rent.

The total revenue of QFRS has grown steadily by 34.0% over the past five years to \$345.06M in 2006-07. Total expenses of the organisation have grown slightly more by 39.8% to \$338.50M in 2006-07. The difference in the revenue and expense growth rates has seen the QFRS surplus eroded somewhat, reduced from \$15.28M in 2001-02 to \$6.57M in 2006-07. In 2007-08, the estimated revenue of QFRS is \$362.71M with budgeted expenses of \$360.13M.

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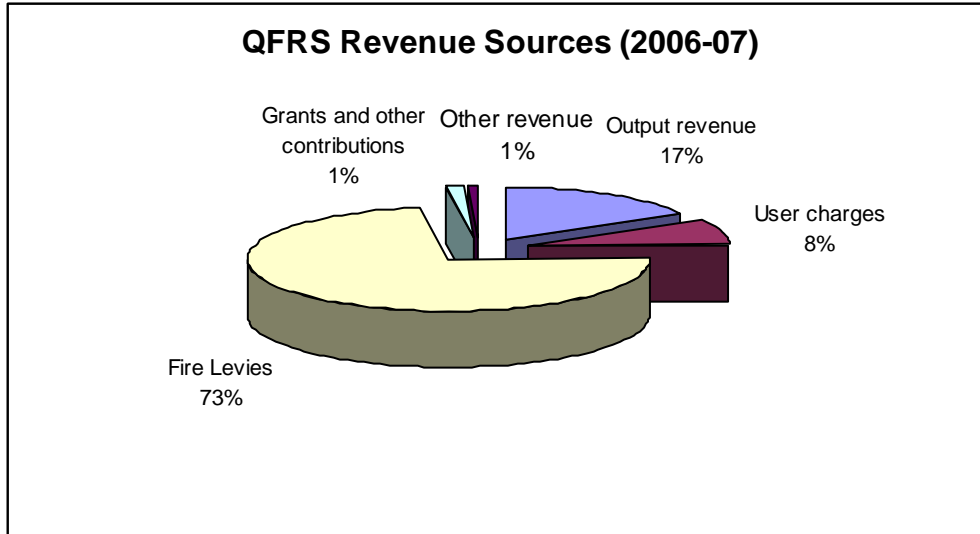
Table 24. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Revenues & Expenses

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income						
Revenue						
Output revenue	45,665	57,159	57,774	46,474	50,581	57,644
User charges	13,578	16,020	19,675	19,012	21,522	27,226
Fire Levies	191,102	202,844	213,351	224,883	238,702	252,115
Grants and other contributions	3,502	3,413	2,844	2,972	3,763	4,763
Other revenue	3,642	4,636	3,514	3,501	3,433	3,169
Gains						
Gains on sale of property, plant and equipment					556	147
Total Revenue	257,489	284,072	297,158	296,842	318,557	345,064
Expenses *						
Employee expenses	170,106	177,576	187,023	202,577	218,561	234,064
Supplies and services	39,350	47,651	51,298	57,494	64,005	70,543
Depreciation and amortisation	22,915	21,981	21,230	23,527	23,674	28,251
Grants and subsidies	106	548	519	383	1,030	1,657
Equity Return	3,422	15,032	17,231			
Impairment losses						1,108
Finance / borrowing costs	1,552	1,043	791	855	956	951
Other expenses	4,762	3,101	2,651	3,029	4,923	1,921
Total expenses	242,213	266,932	280,743	287,865	313,149	338,495
Operating surplus	15,276	17,140	16,415	8,977	5,408	6,569
Capital Expenditure						
Buildings and Leasehold Improvements	6,293	4,956	10,627	14,150	8,797	14,141
Vehicles	16,090	15,943	19,139	15,350	17,491	14,427
Other (Land, P&E, Computers, Software and Intangibles)	4,023	5,830	6,866	7,620	7,791	11,368
Total capital expenditure	26,406	26,729	36,632	37,120	34,079	39,936

Revenues

The Urban Fire Levy revenue is the largest component of the QFRS income accounting for approximately 73.1% of all revenue.

Figure 11



The Urban Fire Levy Scheme was introduced in 1985 to provide a partial funding source for QFRS. The Scheme is administered through the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990* which imposes a levy on certain properties and places a legal obligation on local government to collect the levy. The levy is set by regulation and varies according to the classification of property and class of urban district in which the property is situated. Pensioners are eligible for a 20% discount on the Urban Fire Levy payable on prescribed properties of which they are the owner or part-owner.

Table 25. Urban Fire Levy Revenues

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Gross fire levy revenue	195,508	207,362	218,206	229,874	243,882	257,256
less Pensioner discount	(4,406)	(4,518)	(4,855)	(4,991)	(5,180)	(5,141)
Net fire levy revenue	191,102	202,844	213,351	224,883	238,702	252,115

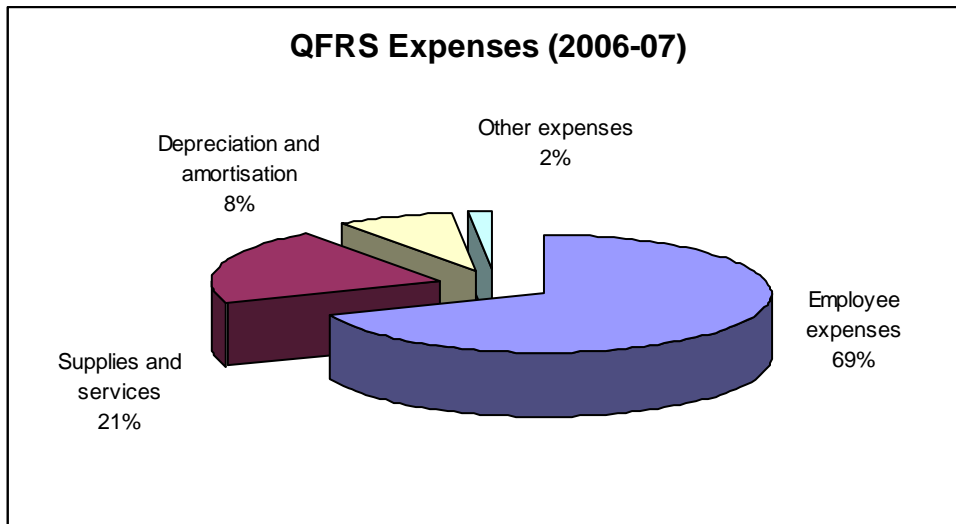
The Urban Fire Levy revenue has grown steadily over the past five years at an average of 5.7% per annum as a result of CPI indexation and growth in the number of urban dwellings. No Urban Fire Levy is charged on properties in rural areas outside the gazetted Urban Fire Levy area, therefore Urban Fire Levy revenues and consolidated funds are used to fund Rural Operations and to subsidise QFRS rural Fire Brigade equipment and their operations. Rural levies where collected by local government are paid directly to rural fire brigades, or used by the local government to fund assets or services for rural fire brigades.

The income sources with the greatest growth factor have been user charge revenue and output revenue.

Expenses

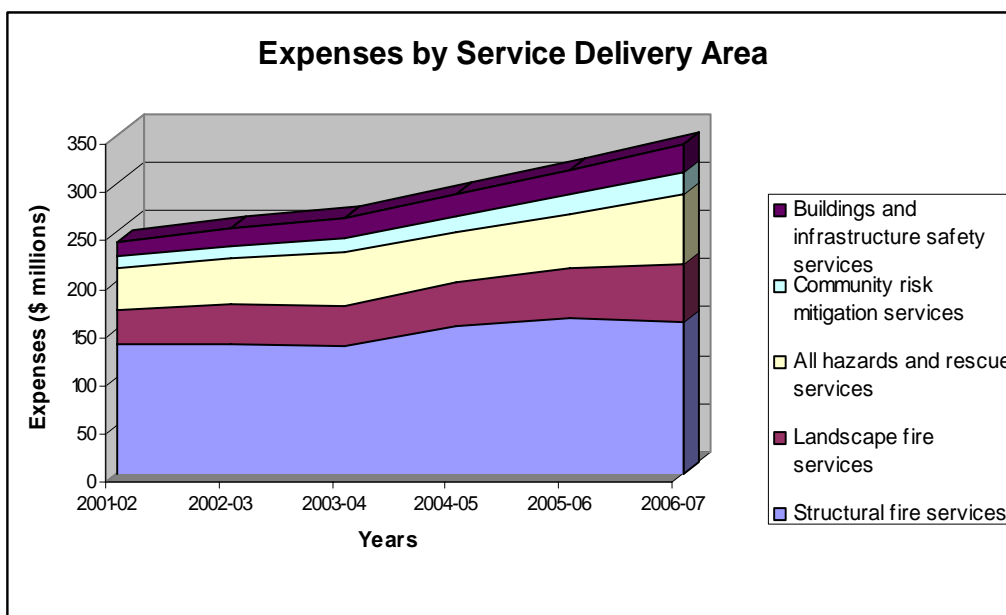
The major expenses for QFRS are employee expenses and supplies and services which comprise approximately 90.0% of all expenses. Employee expenses have grown at an average of 6.6% per annum and supplies and services at 12.4%. Both of these growth factors are affected by the high level of growth in corporate service costs.

Figure 12



The review identified that QFRS traditional core service delivery costs in ‘Structural Fire Services’ have increased little over the past five years with a total growth of 16.6% between 2001-02 and 2006-07. In contrast the non-core areas of ‘Building and Infrastructure Safety Services’ and ‘Community Risk Mitigation Services’ have both increased by 89.2% over the same period.

Figure 13



3.2 Redirection of resources to frontline services

The previous sections of this report identified a number of opportunities that could be considered to improve the efficiency and productivity of service delivery. The following section outlines the possible savings that could be derived from these efficiency measures.

Savings Associated with Road Crash Rescues

There has been significant growth in QFRS Road Crash Rescue (RCR) Incidents in recent years. There is significant opportunity to reduce attendance at RCR and free up resources. The RCR protocols could be revised to minimise the attendance of the QFRS when it is not required. QFRS has estimated that this could achieve a 10% reduction in attendance at RCR. Given the high level of growth in attendance (119% since 2001-02) this appears to be a conservative estimate.

QFRS has estimated a figure of 14,000 total RCR incidents for 2008-09, resulting in an estimated reduction of 1,400 incidents. The estimated cost for QFRS to attend RCRs comprises fixed and variable components. Only the variable part of the direct cost will be saved if the number of RCRs is reduced.

Reductions in employee expenses arise from the possibility of saving overtime expenses for Permanent Firefighters when incurred and wages for Auxiliary Firefighters when they provide the RCR response. Supplies and services expenses can be reduced from the possibility of saving on fuel and vehicle repairs and maintenance expenses.

Fixed cost components such as communications centre costs, operational preparedness and operational head office will not be able to be reduced unless there is a substantial reduction in the number of incidents as the only way to reduce fixed costs is to reduce staff and/or close fire stations and communication centres. Also, any reduction in attendance will not directly result in significant cashable savings as the cost of firefighters' time will still be incurred. However, it should increase the capacity of firefighters to undertake core duties and therefore reduce the rate at which additional firefighters need to be recruited.

The savings from a reduction in attendance at RCRs is therefore estimated to be approximately \$0.351M per annum.

Station Rationalisation

A number of D class auxiliary stations are currently operating inside response catchments fully serviced by 24-hour/seven days a week A Class stations. This duplicates the services already provided with no addition to the fire levy revenues. Rationalisation of D class stations would contribute towards the investment required in new stations.

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There are some A class stations that have heavily overlapping response catchments. It is feasible to rationalise A class stations in these areas. The savings in operating costs and proceeds from sales of the land used by these stations could also contribute towards the investment required in new stations. Estimated savings from station rationalisation average \$485,000 per annum. However, the ability to achieve this saving is dependent on overcoming difficulties in station rationalisation which often faces public opposition due to perceptions of reduced service delivery.

Direct Support for Frontline Service Delivery

The building and infrastructure safety and community risk mitigation services are largely delivered by firefighters on-shift. Whilst the delivery of these services is core to the prevention activities of the QFRS, there is some ability to redirect services to the front line in this area through reducing the non-firefighting staff in the State Office involved in Community Safety and Education.

In addition to reduced staff numbers in central office, further efficiencies can be realised through consideration of:

- Fleet including home garaging arrangements for non-operational vehicles and through more standardised emergency response vehicles;
- Travel and accommodation arrangements;
- Centralisation of fixed and mobile telephony services including streamlined billing arrangements;
- Rationalisation of desktop print, facsimile and copying equipment;
- Review of communications and publications including the greater use of advertising and sponsorship opportunities;
- Restricted use of consultants and contractors;
- Replacement of temporary agency staff with permanent staff; and
- Reducing Shared Service Agency expenses through the automation of some existing manual business processes.

It is estimated that \$2.197M could be redirected to frontline service delivery from 2009-10 with approximately \$1M being available in 2008-09.

Corporate Overhead

As part of QAS Audit, the services and service delivery models for BSS, SPES and Office of Director-General have been reviewed. \$2.91M has been identified as the QFRS share of the savings when savings are fully realised for the 2009-10 financial year. Approximately half of this amount is expected to be available in 2008-09.

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Workforce productivity

The efficiency and productivity opportunities for the workforce that have been identified are :

- Employing temporary or casual firefighters to fill short-term vacancies that result from sick leave absences rather than backfilling vacancies with permanent Officers paid overtime rates was discussed during negotiation of the 2006-07 to 2008-09 QFRS Enterprise Agreement. Modelling and analysis completed in the Brisbane Region over the past six months has demonstrated the viability of this savings. Creation of temporary/casual pools of firefighters would enable maintenance of the 1+3 crewing model while reducing overtime expenses incurred to fill short-term vacancies due to sick leave; and
- Reducing the staffing and costs of operating the QFRS State office including:
 - Reducing positions in community education, community safety and corporate services areas;
 - Savings in supplies and services in non-service delivery areas;
 - Replacing some temporary agency staff employed in roles in the SFRST and in the QFRS State office with permanent employees;
 - Defer the progressive restructure of State Office; and
 - Reducing Shared Service Agency expenses through automation of existing manual business processes.

Savings from these initiatives are estimated to average \$423,000 per annum.

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Summary

The estimated savings from service delivery improvements and efficiency strategies are listed in Table 26. These will be re-invested in the QFRS and contribute to the overall delivery of frontline services.

Table 26: Efficiency or Productivity Savings

EFFICIENCY OR PRODUCTIVITY SAVINGS	Annual Average Savings per annum (\$'000)
Business Model Related	
Direct cost reduction in attendance at Road Crash Rescue (from 2008-09)	351
Rationalisation of auxiliary stations operating in existing A-Class station catchments including proceeds of land sales	485
Rationalisation of A Class stations in overlapping catchment areas	714
TOTAL BUSINESS MODEL RELATED	<u>1,550</u>
Workforce Model Related	
Flexible employment strategies to offset backfill overtime for operational staff	423
Reduction in QFRS State Office costs	2,197
TOTAL WORKFORCE MODEL RELATED	<u>2,620</u>
Departmental Corporate Savings	<u>2,546</u>
TOTAL BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE MODEL SAVINGS	<u>6,716</u>

Conclusion

The QFRS provides a comprehensive emergency and community safety service across Queensland. It is evident from the data above that the QFRS is performing well and continuing to respond to the range of complex operational incidents it faces on a regular basis.

However, as with any complex, dynamic organisation, there are opportunities to improve the efficiency and productivity of the services delivered. The report has examined opportunities to improve efficiency through changes to the QFRS business model and through workforce productivity. There are also recognised productivity savings from a reduction on Departmental Corporate Overheads.

Within the QFRS business model there are opportunities to reduce non-priority attendance at road crash rescue incidents via a review of response protocols. QFRS has also identified potential savings and efficiencies from the rationalisation of permanent and auxiliary stations in overlapping catchment areas.

Workforce efficiencies can be achieved through the use of more flexible employment strategies. Within the building and infrastructure safety and community risk mitigation services there are opportunities to redirect services to the front line through reducing the non-firefighting staff in the State Office involved in Community Safety and Education.