

## Key Result Area 3: Develop and support our people

### Key performance indicators reviewed

Key performance Indicator	Status	Page ref
Implementation of the performance development system throughout the department.	Achieved.	49
Level of volunteer satisfaction. (Applies to SES only.)	Achieved.	90
Increased level of employee satisfaction with access to and quality of training and development programs.	Partially achieved. QAS is developing strategies to address this issue – evidenced by the Australian Training Awards recently naming QAS as Australia’s most innovative training provider, for its work in overcoming the challenges in delivering training to staff in rural and remote communities.	88
Decrease in number of workplace health and safety incidents.	Partially achieved. The department is committed to implementing its zero harm vision. This vision, although presently aspirational, will be the focus for our new Workplace Health and Safety Strategy.	75
Community perception of the professionalism of employees within the department.	Achieved.	13, 86, 87, 89, 90
Targets met or exceeded for employment of target group members.	Partially achieved. A number of initiatives are currently being implemented.	72–73
Number of Emergency Services Cadet Groups/Community First Responder Groups supported.	Achieved.	58, 62, 89

### Strategies reviewed

#### Strategies

- ▶ Enhance emergency management training, education, learning and development, including joint multi-agency special operations.
- ▶ Conduct joint emergency services training at state and regional level.

#### World-class training academy

The Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy is becoming a national and international centre of excellence for emergency management training.

The Whyte Island campus is currently undertaking significant expansion with the development of a new breathing apparatus, hazmat and streetscape training facility. This is a \$20 million investment over three years, that will greatly improve the quality of training provided for our staff and staff from allied agencies.

The academy’s School of Fire and Rescue Service Training plays a pivotal role in maintaining the professionalism of Queensland firefighters and officers.

One hundred recruits received training this year, up from 84 in the previous year.

During the year 53,518 training sessions were delivered to 9,052 staff and volunteers comprising 3,928 Urban and Auxiliary Officers and 5,124 Rural staff/volunteers.

The live fire training facility at the academy is used to train firefighters in realistic simulated conditions. During the year 1,034 firefighters and 677 commercial clients were trained at the facility.

The academy’s School of Ambulance and Paramedic Studies is responsible for developing and maintaining high standards of excellence in our ambulance personnel. In addition to entry level education, the School of Ambulance and Paramedic Studies, in conjunction with the Regional Staff Development Units, coordinates continuing professional development for ambulance staff. These combined programs resulted in 8,741 education qualifications being issued to staff this year.

For the third consecutive year the School of Ambulance and Paramedic Studies has managed a marked increase in the number of recruits. This increase in recruiting levels has resulted from a government commitment to address increasing demand for ambulance services.

In addition to providing training for our own staff, the School of Ambulance and Paramedic Studies is in partnership with the Queensland University of Technology, Faculty of Health, in the development of the Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedic) Program. Interest in the course from prospective students has been very high for the two years of its operation. This is evidenced by the fact that prospective students have required a very high standard of achievement to enter the course (an OP of eight). These students have undertaken six weeks of clinical placement with QAS in the first and second year.

### Strategies

- ▶ Provide suitable equipment, equitable access to development opportunities and safe working conditions for staff and volunteers across Queensland.
- ▶ Improve existing programs for volunteers to strengthen volunteer operations.

## Supporting our volunteers

Our department supports its volunteers and its network of supported volunteer organisations through a complex set of grants, subsidies and other funding arrangements. A key initiative in recent years has been our Volunteer Support Package. Through this package we have increased the level of support provided to volunteers in the SES, Surf Life Saving Queensland, volunteer marine rescue organisations and the Rural Fire Service.

This package acknowledges the many thousands of Queensland volunteers who selflessly devote their time to assisting their local communities, and helps to ensure that those volunteers are adequately resourced and able to respond.

Rural Fire Brigades were provided with training, personal protective equipment and a range of response vehicles including 35 medium attack fire appliances, 15 light attack fire appliances, 5 heavy tanker cab chassis and 10 fire fighting trailers.

EMQ provided a range of resources for SES volunteers and volunteer marine rescue organisations. Resources provided to SES included protective clothing, flood rescue boats, vertical rescue equipment, road accident rescue equipment, trailers, and other operational equipment.

EMQ also introduced a state-wide volunteer recognition initiative as part of the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the Queensland State Emergency Service.

QAS held the inaugural Community First Responder workshop, which enabled First Responders from across the state to discuss issues of relevance to these volunteers. Issues are currently being addressed through the review of policy and support arrangements.



*Mt Gravatt paramedics Lisa Pirret and Graham Wiggins with lucky mum Catherine Fitzgibbons and her little heroes Madeleine and Emily. Photo Michael Marston.*

## Girls call triple zero and save mum's life

A Brisbane woman had a lucky escape recently when her two daughters, aged six and eight, saved her life by calling triple zero (000) and caring for her until paramedics arrived. At 12:20pm on the 28th January 2006, Catherine Fitzgibbons was swimming with her two little girls when she lost consciousness and ended up face down in their backyard pool after suffering a hypoglycaemic attack. Only the night before Catherine had been discussing with her girls to always call triple zero (000) in an emergency – which is exactly what they did. Six-year-old Madeleine made the call, then eight-year-old Emily ensured her mother's head was kept above water and received instructions from the QAS Communications Centre. When the paramedics arrived, they were greeted at the security gate of the Rochedale property by Madeleine, who guided them to the pool. The first paramedics on scene – Lisa Pirret and Graham Wiggins of the Mount Gravatt Station – were at the property within 10 minutes. Lisa said the actions of Emily and Madeleine were exceptional. 'Their brave efforts and ability to act so maturely and quickly is an absolute achievement, and I have never seen anything like it,' Lisa said. 'If it wasn't for these two girls, trying to rouse mum, the situation could have been more serious.'

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### Strategy

- ▶ Improve community safety capacity by expanding the Emergency Services Cadet program in communities throughout Queensland.

### Inspiring young people to assist their community

EMQ develops Queensland's young people to assist their community in times of disaster through the Emergency Services Cadet Program. The program gives a sense of belonging, teaches young people to be responsible and assists in the development of their self-esteem. The program has been particularly successful in rural areas. It has assisted young people to grow into community-minded members, with a number going on to join the SES and other emergency services. The program also boasts tremendous diversity, with 48% of cadet members being female, 7% of cadets from an Aboriginal background, 3% from a Torres Strait Islander background, 7% that speak a language other than English and 3% who have a disability.

During 2005–06 new Emergency Services Cadet groups were established at Edmonton, Mitchell, Childers, Doomadgee and Logan, bringing the total number of cadet groups across the state to 49.

### Strategies

- ▶ Ensure effective recruitment and continuous employment strategies are developed through research-based workforce planning.
- ▶ Ensure innovative and effective recruitment strategies that encourage participation from Queensland's diverse cultural groups.

### Recruiting disadvantaged people

Since 2005 we have used continuous recruitment practices for the selection of operational basegrade recruits, including firefighters, student paramedics and student communications officers.

The continuous process allows applicants to apply at any time with applicants self-managing completion of their assessments. This process has allowed for a more targeted and consistent approach to assist and advise equal employment opportunity target group applicants through all stages of recruitment.

During the year we appointed 268 new recruits in operational roles, comprising 74 firefighters, 130 student paramedics and 64 student communications officers. Of these recruits, 98 are members of equal employment opportunity target groups.

Another recruitment initiative during the year that assisted disadvantaged groups involved engaging 36 trainees as part of the Australian Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Program. We exceeded all our equal employment opportunity targets in this initiative.

### Recruiting qualified ambulance professionals

In 2006 QAS launched its largest ever interstate and international advertising and marketing campaign, titled 'Time for a Seachange', to attract qualified ambulance professionals from around Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. A total of 51 applications have been received by 30 June with 11 appointments confirmed. Further appointments are expected.

### Strategy

- ▶ Support work and life balance, wellbeing and healthy lifestyle principles through actions whilst maintaining excellence in operational service delivery.

### Work life balance

Flexible work practices policy and procedures have been developed and implemented across the department, which includes support for employees to consider options of telecommuting, part-time work arrangements, reduced hours and job share and any other arrangements as agreed between the parties. Work Life Balance Workshops were also held in five regional locations to ensure regional access work life balance initiatives.

### Strategies

- ▶ Undertake programs that develop and sustain a highly capable, professional, ethical and adaptable workforce that is representative of the community.
- ▶ Develop workforce capability to meet our current and future organisational requirements and reflect diversity and equity requirements.
- ▶ Improve leadership capability at all levels of the department.
- ▶ Continue implementing our Strategic Workforce Management Plan, Indigenous Strategic Plan and Diversity and Equity Plan.

## Excellence in QAS training

QAS has been recognised for its investment in staff development. During the year, QAS won the Australian Training Initiative Award for its work in overcoming the challenges of delivering professional development programs to staff in rural and remote locations across the state. Queensland is Australia's most decentralized state, exemplified by the direct line distance between Brisbane and Thursday Island (2,190 km), which is further than the distance between Brisbane and Melbourne (1,374 km).

QAS undertook research emanating from the staff satisfaction survey feedback, to identify the exact nature of learners' needs and to investigate the most suitable models of blended learning as alternative solutions to meeting training needs.

This highlighted the imperative to maintain focus on rural and remote service delivery, including flexible service delivery and work practices. QAS sought to support and empower staff through improving access to, and quality of, in-service education and training. The result was the QAS Learning Organisation Initiative, which allows staff to remain in their communities while undertaking further development through means such as online learning and video-conferencing. This is less disruptive for individuals and their families. It also guarantees equitable and appropriate training coverage for staff in rural and remote communities.



## Equipping emergency leaders

The QFRS Command and Control Development Program is recognised as a leading training course for senior emergency services officers across Australia. The program outcomes produce senior officers who can demonstrate reflective practice in the management of people, resources and information in a dynamic emergency environment. It also assists them to develop an awareness of the broader implications of public sector management at senior levels.

The program is conducted as a two-week residential phase at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy in Brisbane, followed by a three-month workplace project.

The third course, held in mid-2006, attracted participants from QFRS, QAS, the Queensland Police Service, the Australian Federal Police, the New South Wales Fire Brigades and the South Australia Country Fire Service.

Developing the course to encourage interstate participation has been highly beneficial for all involved. Participants benefited from the multi-agency focus that allows discussion and debate at a broader level.



*Cutting-edge urban search and rescue training courses ensure that Queensland's firefighters and paramedics are ready to respond to building collapses.*

## Urban search and rescue

QFRS has continued to develop its urban search and rescue capability and is capable of playing a major role within Australia and our region. If called upon, QFRS can deploy a 64-person taskforce to an intrastate or interstate incident and a 40-person team of fully self-sustained Category II trained technicians and paramedics, internationally for up to 10 days.

The Urban Search and Rescue Taskforce also played a major support role during the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Larry in March 2006. QFRS deployed 120 personnel skilled in urban search and rescue to Innisfail as part of the response effort.

## Escaping flood waters

During the wet season QFRS personnel put their own lives at risk to rescue people trapped in flooded waterways.

In June 2006 QFRS commenced the Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue Training Package for QFRS operational personnel (previously they were trained externally). The target is for 120 level II Swiftwater Floodwater Rescue technicians to be trained by the beginning of the wet season in December 2006 and 2,000 level I responders to be trained throughout the state as regions implement this leading edge training package.

## Pathways for women

We aim to provide an integrated approach to the development of women at all levels throughout the department. To achieve this, Pathways for Women has been developed to ensure that all female employees are afforded opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and experience required to progress their careers. Three pathways are being developed—the Foundation Pathway, the Middle Management Pathway and the Executive Pathway. The pathways are built on a foundation of mutual obligation and support. An executive succession plan for women, called DES Express, is an element of the Executive Pathway. The program will identify high-potential female employees capable of rapid advancement to executive positions and to provide them with the mentoring, knowledge, skills, opportunities and support to achieve this. This program is a formal, structured partnership between our division heads and five high-potential women.

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## Supportive leadership

The Supportive Leadership Program is a common-sense approach to supporting each other in the workplace, particularly from a manager/supervisor perspective. This program was delivered to a total of 1,211 departmental staff across the state over the last two years, with 538 staff attending during 2005–06. Sessions were run in various locations across the state. A review of the effectiveness of the program is currently being undertaken by Griffith University and will inform future leadership development choice and direction.

## Other initiatives for women

Other initiatives for women in our department included our Women's Reference Group and participation in whole-of-government initiatives.

The function of the Women's Reference Group is to provide networks and advice on issues affecting women in their work roles and in combining work and family commitments. The group comprises approximately 90 women from across the department. The group met 12 times during 2005–06, and continues to contribute to initiatives that assist women to reach their full potential. The group also has access to resources and forums on the department's intranet. Whole-of-government initiatives we are participating in include sponsoring a number of our employees in the Queensland Women in Public Sector Mentoring Program and the Public Sector Management Program.

## First Step Indigenous traineeship program

First Step is a unique and innovative program that will change the face of our workforce. It has no parallel across government in that it is a traineeship that provides participants with a real insight into all areas of our department, as well as practical support and skills to reach their career objectives.

The purpose of First Step is to offer Indigenous people the opportunity to participate in an accredited 18 month traineeship program aimed at developing competencies and skills in specific areas that will in turn allow them to successfully apply for positions in a range of roles across the department.

The program has been widely promoted within government agencies and Indigenous community organisations, Indigenous employment agencies and Community Development Employment Project organisations throughout Queensland. As a result, 21 Indigenous people have now been selected to participate in the pilot program.

## Other Indigenous initiatives

We participated in a number of initiatives to promote employment and training for Indigenous people during the year.

These included:

- ▶ a partnership with other Queensland departments in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education to Employment Scheme, which offered 10 scholarship placements to Indigenous students in years 10 to 12.
- ▶ sponsoring four cadets in the National Indigenous Cadetship Project. This program provides assistance to Indigenous university students with practical working experience between semesters
- ▶ sponsoring two Indigenous school-based trainees. These traineeships allow students to work as paid employees and progress towards the completion of a nationally recognised qualification and complete their Senior Certificate
- ▶ sponsoring four participants in the Wal-Meta Advancement Program, which is designed to provide training for Indigenous Queensland public service employees
- ▶ partnering with the Community Development Employment Program to train 33 unemployed Indigenous people to become auxiliary firefighters
- ▶ initiating a pilot program in central region to train unemployed Indigenous people to become QAS Patient Transport Officers.
- ▶ As a result of this initiative, five Indigenous students completed their Cert III in Non-Emergency Patient Transport Officer training program in Nov 2005. Of these students, two are now working on-road as Patient Transport Officers in Mackay, two have been accepted into the Student Paramedic program, and the other is enrolled in the Cert IV QAS student program.

### Strategy

- ▶ Advance a positive industrial relations environment through partnership with relevant stakeholders.

The workforce management framework of our department is characterised by a complex environment of employing legislation, awards and industrial agreements. The industrial relations strategy has been focused towards a positive industrial relations environment and quality business outcomes for our business units.

Major achievements in the industrial relations strategy for this year included:

- ▶ the negotiation of Enterprise Partnership Agreements with QAS and EMQ Helicopter Rescue
- ▶ ongoing roster reform in the QAS resulting in more effective matches of resources to demand, creating better service delivery for the Queensland community as well as improved work life balance and workplace health and safety for employees

- ▶ bringing the department's radio technicians under a common set of conditions by aligning the former QFRS technicians with the former QAS technicians under the one award
- ▶ bringing the Response and Advice to Chemical Emergency Scientific Officers from EMQ to QFRS, providing an enhanced operational capacity and better working conditions for these officers.

#### Strategy

- ▶ Encourage staff contribution to corporate strategy through improved performance planning, staff feedback mechanisms and harvesting of innovation and ideas.

### Improving our workforce

An extensive external environment scan was conducted to consider the current relevance of issues identified in the original Strategic Workforce Management Plan and to assist in the development of future strategies. A series of regional workshops ensured regional and divisional input and feedback.

This consultation provided the opportunity to gain a snapshot of some of the external and internal strategic issues facing regional areas, and to re-examine the 'hot issues' identified in the original environment scan. The second phase of the review comprised a literature review and data analysis by investigating global workforce management issues, and public sector workforce management issues. Once the collection and analysis of the data are complete, a risk analysis and assessment of the key issues for the department and divisions will be undertaken.

### Promoting performance

A revised system of performance development planning has been implemented across the department. The system is an integrated framework for monitoring, assessing and improving performance, and for facilitating the ongoing development of employees. It aims to empower staff in their role and promote

excellence in emergency service delivery through recognition of staff performance. The revised system includes new, simplified performance and development plan templates which directly link employee objectives with the department's organisational strategy, goals and priorities.

### 360 Degree Feedback

A contemporary integrated electronic 360 Degree Feedback tool and process has been piloted. It is now planned for roll-out across the department to support our performance development system.

### Online employee exit interview survey

We are developing an online exit survey for those employees who leave the organisation. The aim is to achieve a defined and structured process to record employee feedback. The information will be used to inform workforce planning particularly, in relation to retention and leadership, Ethical Standards Unit processes and activities, as well as diversity and equity processes and activities.

### Staff surveys

The department continues to use a selection of reputable business tools to obtain staff feedback, and subsequently channels this information into organisational improvement. Two of the more prominent tools used include the Queensland Public Agency Staff Survey (QPASS), which helps to evaluate organisational climate issues, and Organisational Self-Assessment, which applies the Australian Business Excellence Framework to identify opportunities for the improvement of our leadership and management systems. The QPASS was administered by three divisions over the 2005-06 period, and the staff feedback is currently being used to guide staff satisfaction strategies that will directly and positively contribute to the development and support of our people.



## QAS helps Army medics broaden skills

**F**or two weeks each year you'll see them running as third officer on Queensland Ambulance Service units around the state.

They have the clinical skills, wear a uniform and are eager to develop a skill set not far removed from their own.

Australian Army medics began riding with QAS paramedics midway through 2004 to gain clinical experience outside a military environment and to broaden their skill base to include domestic civilian emergency medical work.

## Key Result Area 4: Contribute to national, state and local policy agenda

### Key performance indicators reviewed

Key performance Indicator	Status	Page ref
Regional representation on Regional Managers' Coordination Networks.	Achieved.	–
Recommendations implemented from the Council of Australian Governments <i>Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming Mitigation, Relief and Recovery Arrangements</i> report.	Substantially achieved. Recommendations are being incorporated into disaster mitigation, relief and recovery arrangements.	52
Ongoing departmental representation and contribution to international, national, state and local forums.	Achieved.	50–52

### Strategies reviewed

#### Strategies

- ▶ Improve multi-service response and recovery through ongoing and effective information sharing with key government agencies.
- ▶ Raise government and community awareness of emergency management policy and service approaches through enhancing our policy and research skills, communication and participation methods.
- ▶ Improve safety outcomes for the community by strengthening relationships with community stakeholders and agencies, professional and academic institutions and all levels of government.

Each division of the department has identified improvement opportunities from their response to Cyclone Larry.

#### Strategy

- ▶ Contribute to whole-of-government initiatives that strengthen Queensland's disaster management arrangements.

### Lessons learnt from Tropical Cyclone Larry

The recent experience with Tropical Cyclones Larry and Monica provided an invaluable opportunity to test Queensland's disaster management system and reflect on our response to a significant disaster event.

EMQ captured Tropical Cyclone Larry lessons learnt through numerous debriefing sessions and forums, which will continue into the second half of 2006. This is occurring on behalf of the State Disaster Management Group.

The process involves the capture of information and lessons learnt from other Queensland Government departments, government-owned corporations, local governments, the Australian Government and non-government organisations.

Our department is also responsible for coordinating the State Disaster Management Group's Review of Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements that commenced in November 2005. The capture of lessons learnt from the cyclone is absolutely fundamental to this review, which will identify opportunities to strengthen our current disaster management arrangements.

### Pandemic influenza task force

In October 2005, the State Disaster Management Group established the Queensland Pandemic Influenza Planning Task Force to coordinate planning for Queensland in the event of pandemic influenza. This task force was supported by a core group, comprised of functional agency representatives from our department as well as representatives from other Queensland Government Departments, namely Public Works, Communities, Primary Industries and Fisheries, and Queensland Health.

Our department has provided coordination to the pandemic task force by embedding it into the disaster operations section of EMQ.

The State Disaster Management Group undertook a desktop exercise called Exercise Pandora on 19 June 2006. Conducting this type of exercise is necessary to assess the response capability and provide information which can be used to revise state disaster management arrangements and plans.

Exercise Pandora was an opportunity to test strategic decision making and communication methods when responding to a large scale pandemic.

A flu pandemic is a global disease outbreak that occurs when a new influenza virus emerges with the following characteristics:

- ▶ people have little or no immunity against the virus
- ▶ it causes serious illness
- ▶ it spreads easily from person to person, so it can sweep across the country and around the world in very little time
- ▶ there is no vaccine for the virus.

The exercise showed that the State Disaster Management Group has the ability to successfully manage an outbreak of this nature.

### Strategies

- ▶ Continue to shape emergency and disaster management reform in accordance with the principles and recommendations of the Council of Australian Government's reviews, including the *Natural Disasters in Australia: Reforming Mitigation, Relief and Recovery Arrangements* report; the Council of Australian Governments National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management and the Council of Australian Government's review of hazardous materials.

- ▶ Actively support and shape emergency management policy through national forums, peak bodies and working groups.

- ▶ Develop policy research and advice, and legislative and regulatory frameworks, which enhance service delivery and community safety.

- ▶ Strengthen community safety policy and practice through alliances and partnerships at the national, state and local levels.

## Disaster Management Alliance

In July 2005, the department signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Government Association of Queensland to further enhance Queensland's disaster management arrangements. A key driver for this agreement was the need for a holistic approach to emergency and disaster management to encompass activities before, during and after an event.

The department and local governments now have a framework that fosters collaboration and coordination in achieving disaster management reform. In doing so, the alliance seeks to ensure that all levels of government are able to contribute to effective disaster management commensurate with identified risk and community needs.



Jackie Poida planted a big 'thank you' kiss on Fraser Island intensive care paramedic Mal Babb after he made a life-saving early morning mission to her Waddy Point home.