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## Letter of compliance



**Queensland Government**  
Department of **Emergency Services**

18 July 2009

The Honourable Neil Roberts MP  
Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (former Minister for Emergency Services)  
Level 24, State Law Building  
50 Ann Street  
Brisbane Queensland 4000

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Final Report for the Department of Emergency Services for the period 1 July 2008 to 26 March 2009.

I certify that this Final Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977* and the *Financial Management Standard 1997*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the Annual Reporting Guidelines for Queensland Government Agencies.

A checklist outlining the final reporting requirements is located at page 123.

Yours sincerely

Jim McGowan  
**Director-General**  
**Department of Community Safety**  
(former Director-General for the Department of Emergency Services)



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# Welcome to our final report

We are proud to present our final report for the period 1 July 2008 to 26 March 2009. It portrays our performance for that period in a clear, concise and reader-friendly manner. We recognise that this is essential for accountability purposes and we aim to affirm to the Minister, departmental staff, volunteers and the people of Queensland that we are managing resources and serving their interests wisely and efficiently.

Due to Machinery of Government changes which came into effect on 26 March 2009, this is the final report for the Department of Emergency Services (DES). The services of DES will be delivered from 27 March 2009 by the newly formed Department of Community Safety which resulted from the amalgamation of the Department of Emergency Services and Queensland Corrective Services (QCS). We provide every possible assurance that, under our new arrangements, Queenslanders will continue to receive the high standard of service and safety to which they have become accustomed.

For the past three years, the department has been rewarded with Australasian Reporting Awards (ARA) Gold Awards for Distinguished Achievement in Reporting. We are proud to have earned the right to continue to display the ARA logo in this report.

## Who we are

DES is responsible for ensuring Queensland communities are supported by, and benefit from, an effective disaster and emergency management system and essential response services. The department has three operational arms that provide fire mitigation and management services, pre-hospital patient care and patient transport services, and disaster management services.

## Our vision

A safer community and a better quality of life in Queensland through the provision of world-class emergency and disaster management services.

## Our role

We save lives, protect property and improve community safety and resilience.

## Our commitment

We will maximise coordination and collaboration across the emergency services and with our key partner agencies to ensure the most effective service delivery to the community.

## Our priorities

Our priorities are to:

- minimise the risk and impact of accidents, emergencies and disasters
- continue to improve the standard and accessibility of hospital and health services
- prepare for and mitigate the potential effects of environmental disasters
- improve the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## Our communication to you

This final report showcases the exceptional work and commitment of more than 50,000 staff and volunteers in delivering quality ambulance, fire and disaster management services.

This report provides you with information on what we delivered this year including:

- how we complied with legislative requirements
- how we are structured to best deliver and manage our services
- our performance against proposed directions
- how we seek to improve
- the challenges affecting all Queenslanders and our contribution to meeting these challenges
- current trends and opportunities
- our financial position, simply expressed.

This final report is a fundamental part of our corporate governance framework. It reflects our commitment to accountability and transparency and thereby enables the Queensland Government, through our Minister, to assess our financial and operational performance.

We aim to meet best practice reporting standards in bringing this report to our stakeholders and invite feedback on the document and its contents.

## Our readers and stakeholders

This final report, along with past annual reports for the Department of Emergency Services, can be found on our website [www.emergency.qld.gov.au/publications](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/publications).

Our readers and stakeholders comprise a diverse group including parliament, staff, volunteers, industry, community-based organisations and individual citizens.

Stakeholder feedback is important and we gladly welcome any suggestions for improvement that you may care to submit via our website [www.emergency.qld.gov.au](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au) or the Organisational Performance and Evaluation Branch, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane Qld 4001.

# Highlights

## Goal 1: Focus on front-line service delivery

- We undertook significant coordination efforts in the deployment of resources and management of staff and volunteer response to major events during the year as a result of flooding, cyclones, storms, and a marine oil spill along the South-East Queensland coast.
- We achieved substantial progress in delivery of key initiatives arising from the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Audit 2007 and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Efficiency Review 2008 to enhance our response to Queensland’s environment of high and increasing demand for service and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery.
- QAS recruited an additional 179 ambulance officers towards the full year target of 250.
- We completed six fire and rescue stations and seven ambulance stations.
- We complemented the aeromedical and air rescue capability in Queensland, with the third of three new state-of-the-art AgustaWestland (AW)139 helicopters becoming operational in Cairns.

## Goal 2: Strengthen community capability and resilience

- We commenced the 24/7 operational State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) Watch Desk initiative. The SDCC provides whole-of-Government coordination of the disaster management system for a range of large scale emergencies and disasters.
- More than 41,000 calls were made to the 132 500 State Emergency Service (SES) emergency response telephone number for flood and storm emergencies and similar events.
- The percentage of households with operational smoke alarms installed rose to over 90%.
- 1,000 metres of temporary flood barriers were procured and deployed for use in flood prone areas.
- Community First Responder groups continued to make

a significant contribution to QAS and the Queensland community, improving patient outcomes, especially in rural, remote and isolated communities.

## Goal 3: Support volunteer emergency service organisations

- We continued to support volunteers through initiatives to enhance the delivery of SES and Rural Fire Service (RFS) functions with increased levels of equipment, training, communications, personal protective clothing and vehicles.
- We significantly progressed a departmental Volunteer Management Strategy to support and develop our volunteers. This is a key commitment towards achieving the Government’s objective under *Toward Q2 – Tomorrow’s Queensland* to increase the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers.
- The QAS and the Queensland Local Ambulance Committee Advisory Council, along with Local Ambulance Committee members, continued to enjoy a collaborative and mutually supportive relationship which actively contributed to the delivery of an efficient and effective ambulance service that met the needs of communities across Queensland.

## Goal 4: Build organisational capability and resilience

- We conducted statewide Regional Performance Reviews to enhance operational and clinical ambulance service delivery across the State and will look to expand this performance review process to other departmental services.
- We increased our leadership capability through conducting 360 degree surveys for 150 senior officers with participating officers receiving individual feedback sessions.
- We conducted multi agency exercises to assess cross agency control and coordination and to examine existing agency response capability.

## Financial snapshot

The department has continued to provide world-class emergency services to the people of Queensland in an operating environment where costs and demand for services are increasing. The department has managed its fiscal responsibility in a professional manner by delivering its agreed outputs and achieving an operating surplus of \$14.368 million.

A comprehensive set of financial statements covering all of the department’s activities commences at page 73 of this report.

Financial overview	2008-09 to 26 March 2009
Revenue	\$699.941 million
Expenses	\$685.573 million
Operating surplus	\$14.368 million
Capital acquisitions	\$81.528 million
Total assets	\$1.211 billion
Equity	\$1.074 billion
Debt to equity ratio	12.77%

## More about us

We provide services throughout Queensland in all phases of emergency and disaster management (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery).

### Our divisions

- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS)
- Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS)
- Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ)
- Business Support Services (BSS)
- Strategic Policy and Executive Services (SPES)

### Our staff and volunteers

The department employs approximately 9,000 staff and is supported by many thousands of volunteers across Queensland.

### Our volunteers include:

- Honorary ambulance officers (including Ambulance Attendants, Community First Responders, volunteer emergency drivers and health service responders)
- SES volunteers
- Emergency Service Unit volunteers
- Emergency Services Cadets
- RFS volunteers
- QFRS Scientific Unit volunteers.

We also have a network of supported volunteer organisations, advisory bodies and community organisations.

### Where we are

We serve over 4.3 million Queenslanders across our vast state of 1.77 million square kilometres. Our services are delivered from over 900 emergency service locations throughout Queensland. These include 287 ambulance service locations, 239 urban fire and rescue stations, 413 rural fire brigade stations, 19 EMQ offices, 3 EMQ Helicopter Rescue air bases, 1 special operations centre, the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy (QCESA) (in three locations) and 11 communication centres.

The Kedron Park Complex, in Brisbane's northern suburbs, houses all of the emergency services' central management, the State Operations Coordination Centre (SOCC) and the SDCC. Having central management for the emergency services in one location strongly enhances communication, coordination, and collaboration in strategic planning, service delivery and disaster management. With the recent amalgamation of the emergency services and corrective services functions, central management of corrective services will be conducted largely from the State Law Building, 50 Ann Street, Brisbane.

We currently have 2,495 operational emergency service vehicles stationed throughout Queensland. These include 492 urban fire appliances, 930 rural operations appliances, 1,073 ambulance vehicles including general purpose ambulances, patient transport vehicles, operational support vehicles and special operations vehicles. EMQ also maintains seven helicopters.

## Director-General's report



Emergency services in Queensland entered an exciting new era in 2008-09 with the formation of the Department of Community Safety.

Machinery of Government changes in March 2009 brought together the

Department of Emergency Services (DES) and Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) to enhance the delivery of public health, emergency response, community safety and corrective services across the State.

As a consequence, this will be the final report for the DES.

The transition to the new Community Safety portfolio provides an opportunity to reflect on the tremendous achievements of emergency services staff and volunteers in helping and protecting Queenslanders during disasters and times of need.

The department and its service arms of QFRS, QAS and EMQ, performed strongly in 2008-09, responding quickly and comprehensively to a series of natural disasters which occurred across the State.

Major events included the severe storm which hit South-East Queensland in November 2008 causing significant damage – especially in the suburb of The Gap – and Cyclones Charlotte and Ellie, with Ellie causing major flooding in North Queensland, particularly around Ingham and the Gulf country.

The emergency preparedness and response to Cyclone Hamish was exemplary and the department played a key role in the cleanup of a large oil spill off the South-East Queensland coast.

The professionalism and dedication shown by staff and volunteers in responding to these disasters is a reflection of the excellent service the department has provided to Queenslanders over the years.

Importantly, the department's outstanding emergency services work is not just restricted to response activities. The extensive work done in emergency preparedness and community education has become a hallmark of the organisation's divisions.

The superior level of community education within the department was epitomised by the highly successful smoke alarm installation campaign. The percentage of households with operational smoke alarms installed rose to over 90% – an exceptional take-up rate by anyone's standards.

The preparedness, response and community education work has been underpinned by the outstanding contribution of our volunteers within EMQ, QAS and QFRS.

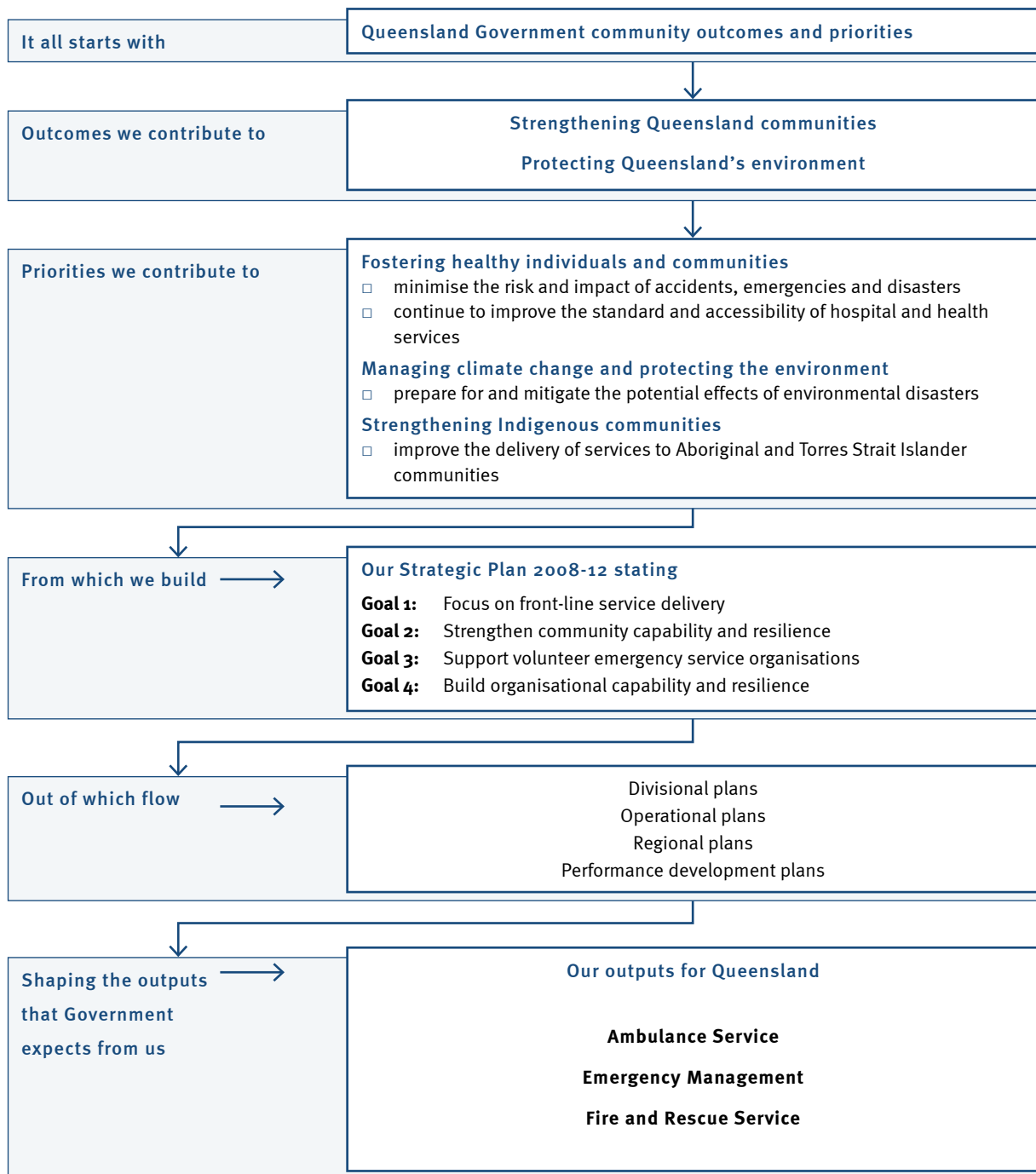
An example of the dedication shown by our volunteers is the more than 71,000 hours of operation SES volunteers performed to the end of March responding to calls for assistance in the community.

The transition to the Department of Community Safety provides an opportunity to enhance the focus on front-line service delivery for the department's operational divisions and I remain confident that 2009-10 will prove to be a landmark year for emergency services in Queensland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim McGowan'. The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim McGowan  
**Director-General**

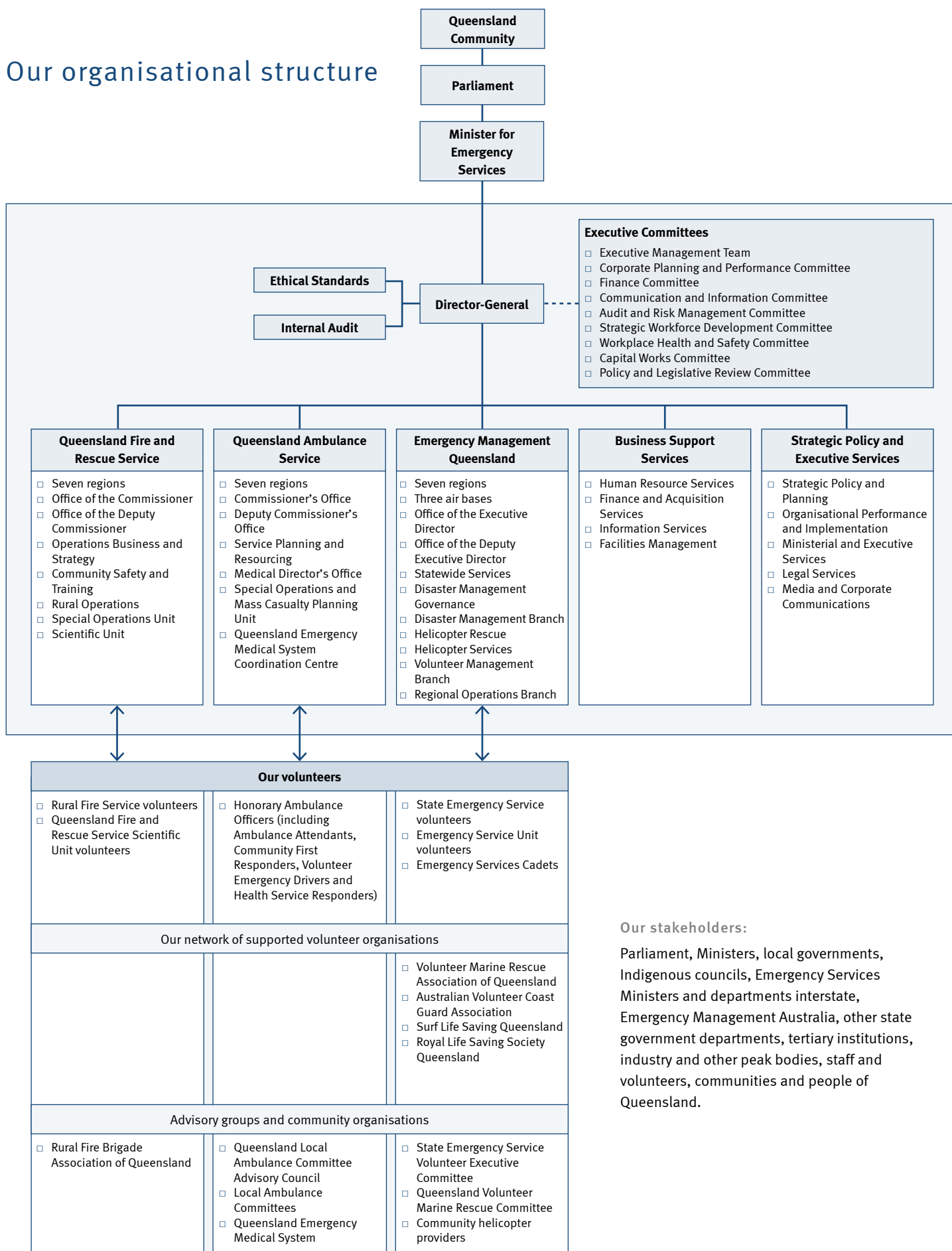
## How we focus our service delivery



The Strategic Plan is our department's key planning document. All other plans in the agency are aligned with it – even down to individual performance development plans. Our plans ensure effort is focused at all levels of activity that contribute to the Queensland Government's priorities.

Concentrating our activities and resources on achieving our four goals helps us to focus delivery of services on meeting community needs, the priorities and direction of the Queensland Government, and to ensure that our organisation remains innovative and responsive.

# Our organisational structure



### Our stakeholders:

Parliament, Ministers, local governments, Indigenous councils, Emergency Services Ministers and departments interstate, Emergency Management Australia, other state government departments, tertiary institutions, industry and other peak bodies, staff and volunteers, communities and people of Queensland.

## Executive management team



(left to right) Frank Pagano, David Melville, Gary Mahon, Jim McGowan, Gary Taylor, Lee Johnson, Arthur O'Brien

**Jim McGowan** B Econ, Dip Ed, C Dec  
**Director-General**

Jim joined the department as Director-General in September 2007. Jim has extensive experience in the public sector including General Manager, Public Sector Industrial and Employee Relations, Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), Deputy Director-General, DIR and Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General. Jim is the Government Champion for Aurukun.

**Lee Johnson** AFSM, Assoc Dip AppSc (Fire Tech), FAIM, MIFireE  
**Commissioner, QFRS**

Lee was appointed Commissioner, QFRS in January 2002. His fire service career began in 1975 as a firefighter with the Townsville Fire Brigade Board. Lee has held firefighting, officer and management positions on the Gold Coast, Rockhampton and in Brisbane. He is currently the President of the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation, and is a member of the Executive Management Council of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), currently holding the position of Deputy President. Additionally, he represents Queensland as a Director on the board of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre. Lee has been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal and the National Medal.

**David Melville** APM, M Educ Admin, Grad Cert Pub Pol, Grad Cert App Mgt, BA  
**Commissioner, QAS**

David was appointed Commissioner, QAS in April 2008. He has over 30 years experience in bringing uniformed operational service delivery to the community of Queensland. He began his uniformed career in the Commonwealth Police Force (now Australian Federal Police) in Sydney in 1976 before moving north to join the Queensland Police Service (QPS) as a Constable in 1978. David has extensive experience in operational planning, management and administration and the professional development of staff. David was awarded the Australian Police Medal as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours list in July 1998. He was also awarded the National Medal and the QPS Medal during the 1990s.

**Frank Pagano** AFSM, Grad Cert AM, GIFireE  
**Executive Director, EMQ**

Frank was appointed as Executive Director of EMQ in November 2005. Previous to his appointment, Frank assumed the role of Acting Executive Director, Counter Disaster and Rescue Services in August 2005. Frank commenced his career in emergency services as a firefighter based in Mount Isa in 1975. During his career with QFRS, Frank worked in six of the seven regions throughout Queensland in various positions and was appointed to the position of Deputy Commissioner, QFRS in late 2002. Frank is the Executive Officer to the State Disaster Management Group and holds the Air Operator's Certificate for the Government Rotary Wing. Frank also holds the Australian Fire Service Medal, National Medal, State Fire Service Medal and Centenary Medal.

**Gary Taylor** MBA, Grad Dip Government Accounting, Grad Dip EDP, B Bus (Acc)  
**Executive Director, BSS**

Gary joined the department in December 1994 as Chief Financial Officer and was appointed to this position in June 2008. Gary has held a range of senior financial and management positions in the public and private sectors in both Queensland and Victoria. Gary plays a strong governance role and provides a wealth of management expertise to the department in delivering corporate and business support services to our operational divisions.

**Gary Mahon** EMPA, JP (Qual)  
**Executive Director, SPES**

Gary joined the department in 2006 as the Executive Director, SPES. Gary's career in the public sector spans over 30 years which began in the Army where his military service included participating as an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition member. Gary has initiated and driven several of the major policy and strategic reform initiatives in the transport and road safety arena at state and national levels. Gary was awarded a Premier's Scholarship to complete his Executive Masters in Public Administration (EMPA) from the Australian and New Zealand School of Government and is committed to ensuring SPES continues to provide a vital contribution to the department through its specialist skills and knowledge in support of front-line service delivery. Gary holds the Australian Defence Medal.

**Arthur O'Brien** M Bus (Professional Accounting), B Bus (HRM)  
**Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**

Arthur was appointed as Chief Financial Officer in October 2008 and has held various senior positions with the department since January 2000. He has over 26 years experience providing services to the people of Queensland and over 14 years experience in senior management roles in a variety of Queensland Government departments. He has held a number of positions in strategic management, policy, human resources, finance, management accounting and training, as well as leading a number of major change projects for the Queensland Government. Arthur provides financial management expertise and a broad governance role to the department. He has an interest in the delivery of holistic human services, addressing issues facing Indigenous Australians and delivering meaningful services to rural and remote communities.

## Sustainability reporting

### What is sustainability?

'Sustainability' is about improving human wellbeing today without compromising the local or global environment over the long term.

As a department, we are taking every opportunity to contribute positively to such a sustainable society. Our stakeholders deserve it, our people expect it and the next generation depends on it.

### Why is it important?

Opportunities to generate prosperity and quality of life are often accompanied by new risks to the stability of the environment. To offset these global impacts, we pursue new, innovative choices and ways of thinking that address the negative impacts of our operations, products, services and activities.

This is why we take Corporate Social Responsibility seriously. Through the provision of the best possible level of emergency service, we aim to continuously improve to maximise our sustainability which is reported on, measured and responded to in the best interests of the Queensland community.

### Reporting on sustainability

In the spirit of openness and accountability, we seek to enhance the transparency of our reporting to ensure that our social, corporate, environmental and economic impacts are clearly portrayed and understood.

Transparency about the sustainability of an organisation is of interest to all stakeholders, including many that may not normally be seen as having an interest in the organisation's products or services. We have used a widely accepted standard – the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) – to ensure that we report on our levels of sustainability by using a framework of common concepts, consistent language and measurement.

### Where we are as a department

We do not claim to have all the answers to address the critical issues associated with a changing planet, however we are determined to demonstrate leadership, harness innovation, share a common ethos and foster a sustainable economy that serves society as a whole. Our significant progress has been recognised in the department's 2008 Australian Business Excellence Award.

For our stakeholders, this translates to responsible corporate citizenship and service management. For our people, it equates to DES being a great place to work.

This final report endeavours to review our social, corporate, environmental and economic performance by addressing the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines version 3 (G3) published on the GRI website at [www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org). This year we have maintained a level C application of the GRI framework. An index of GRI coverage is at page 124.

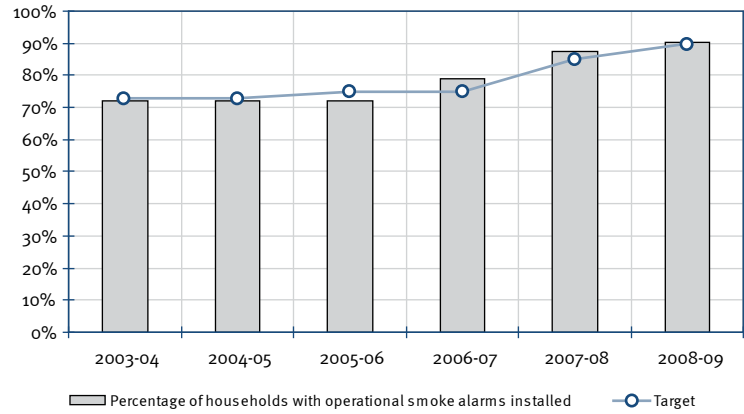
## Six year trends – a snapshot

Listed below is a snapshot of our key performance measures. More specific detail is at Appendix 1.

### Smoke alarms save lives

The increase in the percentage of households with operational smoke alarms installed, from 87.6 per cent in 2007-08 to 90.1 per cent in 2008-09, means that more Queenslanders are now safer in their homes.

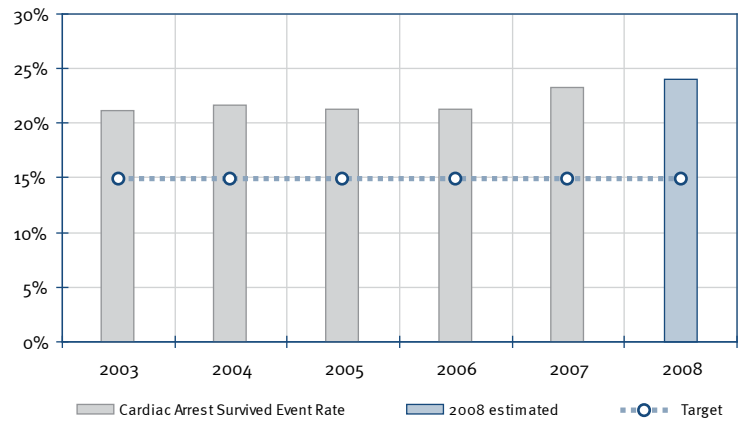
Percentage of households with operational smoke alarms installed



### Improving the likelihood of surviving heart attack

The Cardiac Arrest Survived Event Rate is an indicator of the quality of ambulance services. QAS aims to maintain the positive trend in this area through the implementation of innovations previously restricted to the hospital environment. The 2008 figure of 24 per cent is an estimate only.

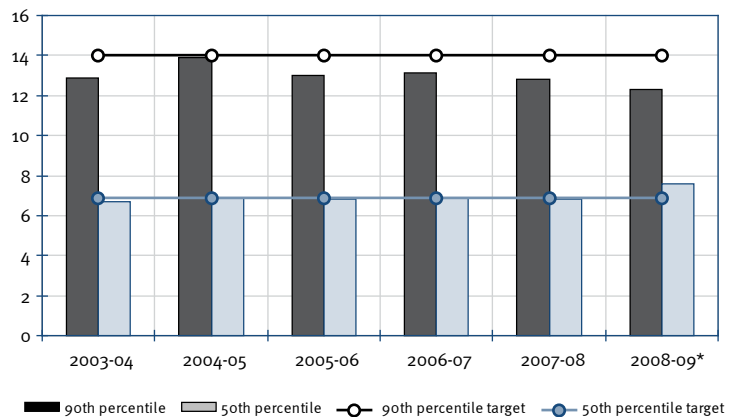
Cardiac Arrest Survived Event Rate



### Fire response

Our firefighters have continued to improve their response time performance for structural fires with a 90th percentile response time of 12.3 minutes, approximately 30 seconds faster than in 2007-08. The 50th percentile response time increased to 7.6 minutes.

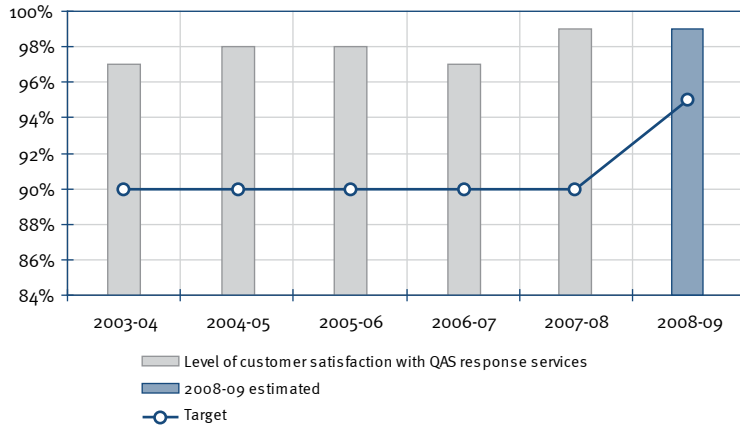
Response times to structure fires



**Maintaining our professionalism**

Our paramedics have consistently maintained the support and satisfaction of those who have called upon their services, with an estimated result of 99 per cent satisfaction. Our staff strive to provide an effective and professional response, together with personal care in moments of crisis.

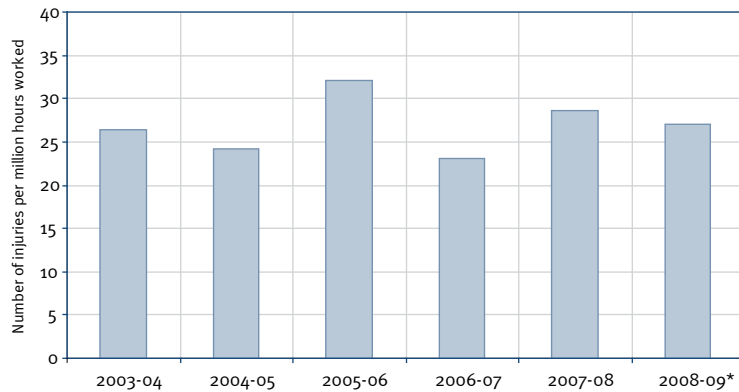
**Patient satisfaction with ambulance response services**



**Protecting our people**

We have continued to pursue the Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2007-10 with the mission of “ZEROharm – all injuries are preventable”. Our lost time injury frequency rate decreased from 28.64 in 2007-08 to 26.99 as at 26 March 2009. We remain committed to reducing the injury rate to zero.

**Lost time injury frequency rate**



## Our history and legislation

1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Bureau of Emergency Services formed within the Police and Emergency Services portfolio.</li> <li>□ Ambulance services provided by brigades run by 96 separate local committees.</li> <li>□ Fire services were provided through 81 local Fire Brigade Boards with urban and rural services operating as separate organisations.</li> </ul>
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990</i> proclaimed, replacing the Boards and creating a single statewide Queensland Fire Service under a single Commissioner and incorporating the Rural Fire Division.</li> </ul>
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>Ambulance Service Act 1991</i> proclaimed, creating a single statewide organisation.</li> <li>□ Corporate Services Division created to support the operational services.</li> </ul>
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Queensland Emergency Services (QES) established, replacing the Bureau and including a range of specialised support services including the Aviation and Chemical Hazards and Emergency Management units.</li> </ul>
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ QES renamed as the Department of Emergency Services.</li> <li>□ Support Service Business Unit established to enhance support to operational arms.</li> </ul>
1997-98	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Queensland Fire Service and Queensland Ambulance Service established as Statutory Authorities until a revised accountability framework brought them into the department with the Director-General as Chief Executive Officer, replacing the Boards of each Authority.</li> </ul>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001</i> enacted*.</li> <li>□ <i>Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2001</i> changed the status of the Authorities to divisions of the department.</li> </ul>
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> enacted, the purpose of which is to help communities mitigate, prepare for and respond to disaster events and to provide for an effective disaster management framework to ensure performance of agency functions.</li> </ul>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>The Health and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2007</i> amended the <i>Ambulance Service Act 1991</i> to allow for the conduct of root cause analyses of systems and processes if the delivery of response services is found to be significantly lacking.</li> </ul>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008</i> enacted for the purpose of ensuring buildings make sound provision for safe evacuation and maintenance of fire installations.</li> </ul>
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <i>Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2008</i> amended the <i>Ambulance Service Act 1991</i> and <i>Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990</i> to, among other things, bring into effect the recommendations of the Queensland Ambulance Audit 2007 and to improve arrangements for dealing with false calls for ambulance and fire services.</li> </ul>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Machinery of Government changes resulted in the establishment of the Department of Community Safety through the amalgamation of DES and QCS on 26 March 2009.</li> </ul>

\* Since 1 October 2008, this Act has been the responsibility of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations

### Fast Facts

On an average day this year:

- 2,037 incidents were responded to by our ambulance service across all response codes
- 160 triple zero calls were received by our fire and rescue service
- approximately 78,000 volunteers were ready to serve the community in fire management, disaster response, search and rescue (marine and land-based), surf lifesaving, chemical emergency advice, youth programs and ambulance response and community services
- our Fire Ed program was taught to 203 Year 1 students (for the 2008 calendar year)
- collectively, our EMQ Rescue helicopters and network of community helicopters flew for up to 19 hours on aeromedical, search and rescue, counter disaster or other missions across Queensland
- we fitted over 46 baby capsules
- we awarded over 145 community education first aid training certificates.