

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Rural Fire Service Queensland

Area Fire Management Groups
Project

“Boy we sure dodged a bullet this fire season”

15 August, 2012 2:51PM AEST

Potential high fire season for Southern Downs
The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service says Southern Queensland is potentially looking at one of the worst grass fire seasons in years.

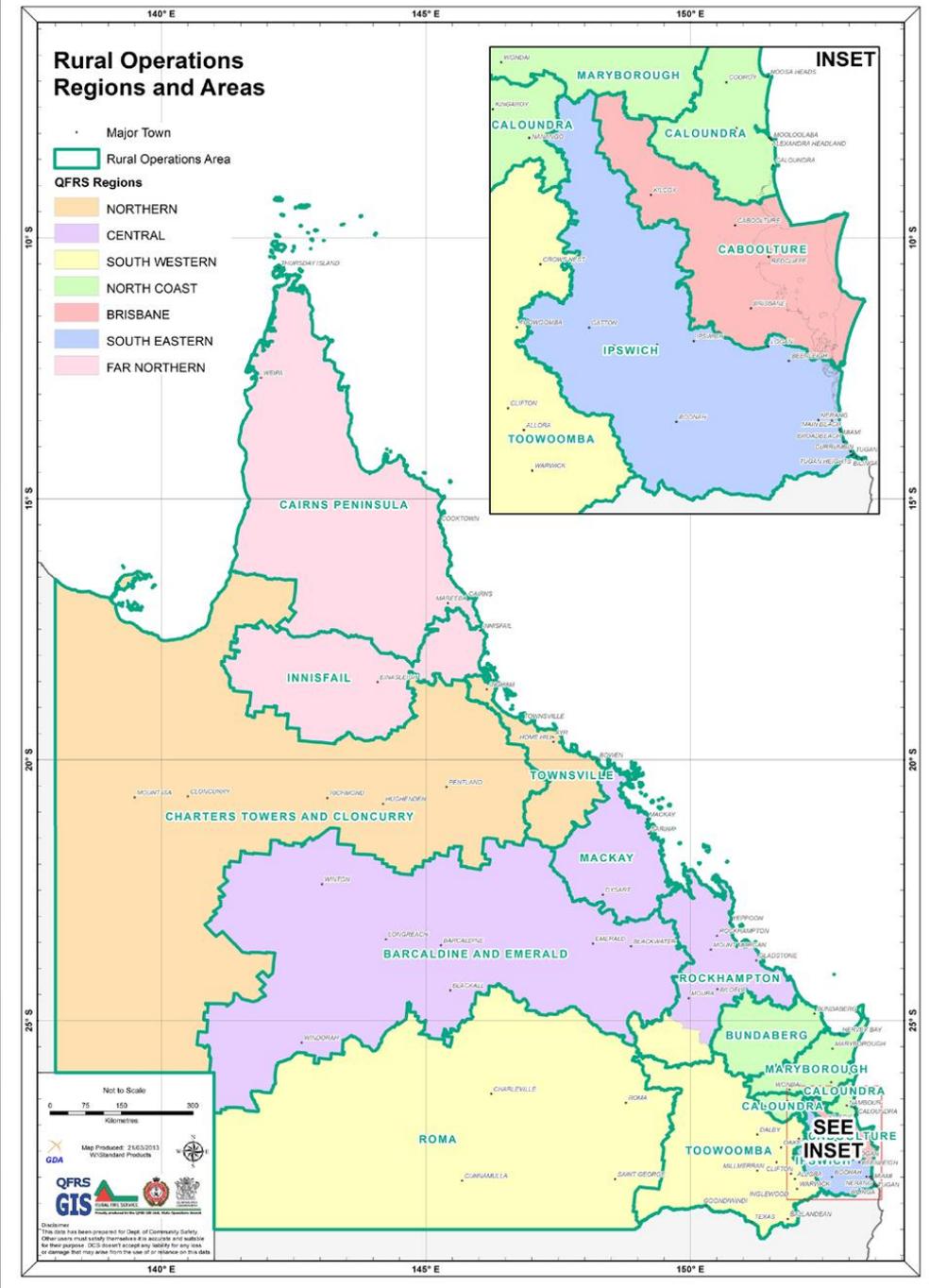
Southern Queensland's Rural Operation Manager Wayne Waltisbuhl says "We've been watching this since June, and forecasting potentially one of the worst fire seasons that we'll see for a while, as far as grass fire goes."



2009 was one of Queensland's worst bushfire seasons on record. During one 36-day period, fire fighters attended 4491 vegetation fires and many of these threatened homes and lives.



Why not take the bullets out of the gun



Malone Review into the Queensland Rural Fire Service

The management of fire risk should take place at the District level through the establishment of District Fire Management Groups which, through legislation, will be required to produce an annual Fire Risk Management Plan.

Local Government Areas

Recommendation 36: That to assist the Rural Fire Service Queensland and other agencies in managing wildfire risk, a planning system for wildfire management be established in legislation that complements the existing disaster management arrangements.

Recommendation 37: That the planning system is to have a two tiered structure comprising District Fire Management Groups and linking to the State Disaster Management Group.

Recommendations 38 – 41:- Requires RFSQ to set up Fire Management Groups throughout Queensland with a minimum of one group per RFSQ Area. Also a plan to be developed by each group in regards to addressing the bushfire risk within the area by:

- establish common goals for mitigation action
- put in place agreed actions for implementation in response to wildfire threats
- identify the impediments to more effective collaboration
- build links between agencies and individuals.

Bushfire prevention and preparedness Report 10 : 2014-15

QFES needs to do more – it can respond more efficiently to bushfires **by better coordinating activities and adopting preventative actions.**

While QFES has **a clear mandate to prepare for the threat of bushfires** in Queensland, it focuses primarily on responding to fires.

QFES does not balance preparation and response appropriately.



Victoria: Integrated Fire Management Planning

Fire Management Groups

Provide a **municipal level** forum to build and sustain organisational partnerships, generate **a common understanding and shared purpose** in regard to fire management and ensure that **the plans of individual agencies are linked and complement each other**

Legislated Functions of QFES in Fire Management

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990

8B Functions of QFES

Part of The functions of QFES is—

To protect persons, property and the environment from fire and to provide an advisory service, and undertake other measures, to promote fire prevention and fire control;



Preparedness

HAZARD / RISK
Identify the
Bushfire Hazard
and the **Risk to**
the **Area**

Prevention

MITIGATE
Reduce the
Hazard
Reduce the
Risk

PEOPLE
PROPERTY
ENVIRONMENT

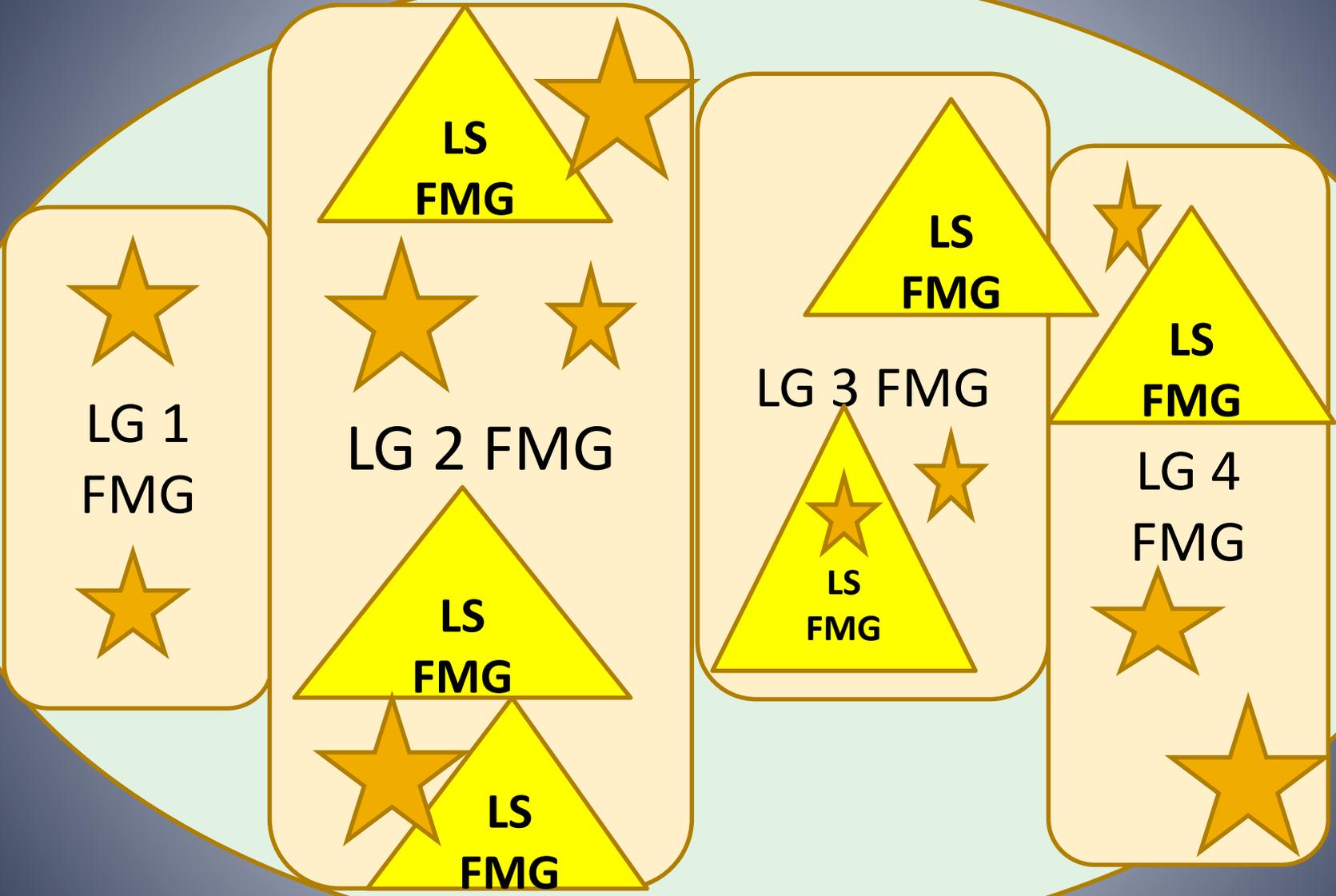
Response

RESPOND
Coordinated
Response to
Bushfires

Recovery

REVIEW
Update
Plans &
Strategies
Regularly

RFSQ Area



Bushfire Specific



All Hazards



All Hazards

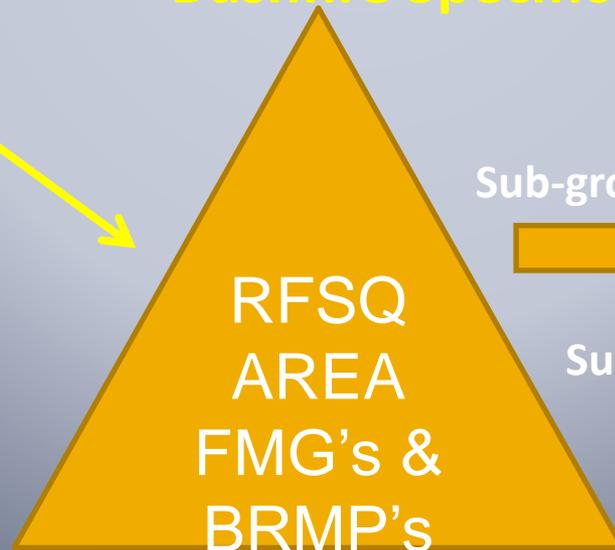


Sub-group



Sub-plan

Bushfire Specific



Advice / Operational information



Bushfire Specific



Internal agency issues that may need resolving at a higher level



We need to work smart and cooperatively

State can't afford to adopt bushfire rules

Source: [The West Australian](#), online news, [January 16, 2015](#) Author: Daniel Emerson

"Emergency Services Minister Joe Francis says the State cannot afford to "bind the Crown" to the same bushfire mitigation rules faced by private landowners.

*It is the first indication that **Cabinet will be unable to fulfil the recommendation of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services for a consistent approach to fuel load reduction no matter who owns the land.** Mr Francis conceded that if private landowners were forced to put in fire breaks and reduce fuel loads, then "morally" local, State and Federal governments should, too. But he said it was legally and constitutionally difficult to tell the Commonwealth what to do with its land, and **the State owned so much that continuing mitigation would be prohibitively expensive.**"*

BUSHFIRE RISK & HAZARD MAPPING

REVIEW

Continual
improvement

RESPOND

Efficient co-ordinated
response

MITIGATE

Fuel reduction
Community awareness
FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

HAZARD / RISK

**Identify the Bushfire
Hazard and the Risk to the
Area**

THE FUTURE

- ❑ FMG's need support from RFSQ Area Offices
- ❑ RFSQ Area Offices need support to provide FMG's with GIS, mapping and fire behaviour prediction
- ❑ FMG's need support with co-ordination of resources for mitigation works
- ❑ Rural Fire Brigades in high risk areas need to be more involved in the mitigation planning process
- ❑ Fire Wardens need to be fully involved in FMG's

On going support - QFES Office of Bushfire Mitigation??

Recommendation 16: That a Rural Fire Research and Investigation Team be established to coordinate and communicate fire research knowledge, including fire behaviour as well as coordinate fire investigations and complaints for the state.



RESEARCH

M16: It is essential that the Rural Fire Service Queensland be at the forefront of **research into fire behaviour** to ensure appropriate and **modern systems of fire management** are maintained.

District Fire Management Groups will require input from researchers on the best approach to managing fire risk in their local landscape. These staff will provide the link between the latest research and the formulation of the DFMG plan. The positions will also be responsible for ensuring fire behaviour knowledge is disseminated across the districts.

➤ Contemporary fire and research knowledge, including fire behaviour



Gather the Knowledge

- ✓ Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
- ✓ Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
- ✓ SEQ Biodiversity Group
- ✓ Universities
- ✓ River Catchment and Bush Conservation Groups
- ✓ Our own people – Rural Fire Brigade members, Fire Wardens and Landholders



INVESTIGATION

M16: A position of **Fire Investigator** is to be established in the team to lead fire investigations and develop policy, procedures and training on fire investigation. This role will be the **co-coordinator of fire investigations and complaints** for the State.

A significant point of frustration for Fire Wardens and Brigade members alike was the perceived lack of action from authorities in the prosecution of people who break the law by lighting fires without a permit.

- ❖ Un-permitted fires
- ❖ Escaped permitted fires
- ❖ Accidental fires??
- ❖ Un-claimed fires
- ❖ Bushfire Arson

M16: Consideration should be given to the establishment of positions to coordinate fire investigations at the Regional level.



Considerations

- ❑ Co-operation and intelligence sharing between QFES and QPS
- ❑ Support to Fire Wardens – Permits, Training etc.
- ❑ Support to volunteers and RFSQ staff – Training, Assistance
- ❑ Better gathering of intelligence – suspicious fires books, Inc snap
- ❑ Bring in Bushfire Investigators from state or elsewhere



Discussion

Er, Bruce ... the fire's the other way!

A FIRE engine races along a dirt track in southern Australia yesterday – desperately fleeing a vast advancing wall of smoke and flames.

This is just one of the bush fires raging across 50 miles of Victoria and New South Wales, sparked by record temperatures of 117F (47C).

So far 14 people have died in the fires, all in rural towns north of Melbourne.

