



Joint Select Committee on Road Safety

Inquiry into measures that can be taken to reduce trauma and deaths on Australian roads.

Submission by:

Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC)

who are:

The National Council for Fire and Emergency Services

CONTENTS

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2	OVERVIEW OF AFAC AND ITS ROLE.....	3
2.1	AFAC Strategic Directions	4
2.2	AFAC is a Not for Profit Company.....	4
2.3	AFAC Manages the National Resource Sharing Centre	5
2.4	AFAC is a managing partner in the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience.....	5
2.5	AFAC Manages the National Aerial Firefighting Centre	5
2.6	AFAC Leads the Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme	6
3	SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	6
	Appendix 1: AFAC member organisations	8

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the *Joint Select Committee on Road Safety inquiry into measures that can be taken to reduce trauma and deaths on Australian roads*. (Inquiry). The submission is based on consultation among AFAC membership (refer Appendix 1: AFAC member organisations) as well as our broader understanding of the context of the Inquiry.

This submission begins with an overview of AFAC and its role within Australasian Fire and Emergency Services (**Section 2**). **Section 3** is a response to each of the terms of reference provided by the Inquiry.

Considerable savings and efficiencies can be leveraged through optimisation of resources, greater standardisation, supporting national programs, national resource sharing, developing better tools and business systems, and utilising and supporting research through collaboration and cooperation.

AFAC, with its collaboration groups, partnerships and initiatives such as the National Resource Sharing Centre, National Aerial Firefighting Centre and the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience, are important national capabilities within Australia to support these goals.

We ask the Inquiry to note that the submission should not be taken as the position of any single AFAC member. Also, some of our members will have contributed to the Inquiry through jurisdictional submissions, and nothing in this submission should be taken as implying that our members do not fully support their jurisdictional submissions where made.

2 OVERVIEW OF AFAC AND ITS ROLE

AFAC is the National Council for Fire, Land Management and Emergency Service authorities in Australia and New Zealand, representing 31 member and 21 affiliate members, comprising permanent and part-time personnel and volunteers, totalling 288,000 firefighters and emergency workers. The list of AFAC member organisations is provided in Attachment 1. Land management, fire and emergency management agencies are proactively involved in AFAC. AFAC engages with members through a collaboration model as well as event facilitation, professional development and by influencing regulations and standards. It exists to support the fire and emergency service industry, making communities safer and more resilient. AFAC has no direct role in the delivery of services to the community. AFAC also currently plays no role in representing its members in industrial matters.

AFAC facilitates national collaboration through the [AFAC Collaboration Framework](#), which encompasses 34 groups, technical groups and networks. AFAC members regularly come together to share knowledge, utilise research and create solutions that shape practice and guide the industry's development. In this way, the AFAC Collaboration Framework adds value to and is highly regarded by the fire and emergency services industry and ultimately enhances community safety.

These groups, technical groups and networks, organised across the five Strategic Priorities identified by the Sector, offers agencies the opportunity to collaborate, share ideas and initiatives and learn from agencies across Australia and New Zealand. These groups provide a core knowledge capability within AFAC, engaging over 800 senior agency personnel from AFAC's 32 agencies and leads to the development of national doctrine that is critical to the consistent utilisation and application of research and knowledge.

AFAC's most significant intellectual property is the suite of doctrine publications which articulates good practice based on the knowledge and experience of our members and informed by research

where it is available. It's evidence-based, constantly reviewed and vested as the official view by the AFAC National Council and sector leaders.

2.1 AFAC Strategic Directions

The work of AFAC is directed by the [Strategic Directions for fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand 2017–2021](#). The Strategic Directions provide clarity on intent and identifies actions at a national level for fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand. AFAC recognises that a collaborative approach is critical to achieving the Strategic Directions which gives fire and emergency services a national voice and broader impact, while enhancing collective capabilities.

The five Strategic Directions are:

1. Supporting resilient communities through risk reduction;
2. Providing trusted response and facilitating the transition to relief and recovery;
3. The source of credible and timely information;
4. Effective governance and resource management; and
5. Informed by knowledge and research.

2.2 AFAC is a Not for Profit Company

AFAC is a Not for Profit company, effectively owned by the fire and emergency agencies. This has proved to be a highly efficient and collaborative which has been in place for over 25 years. AFAC has existed and thrived as its purpose is to support the fire and emergency agencies and it does this in the absence of a Federal Government Constitutional mandate. AFAC and its members does not wish to see this change and sees no reason for the current approach to change. AFAC manages three companies and four business units and the AFAC business units are represented below:

- National Resource Sharing Centre
- Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
- National Aerial Firefighting Centre
- Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme



2.3 AFAC Manages the National Resource Sharing Centre

AFAC established the [National Resource Sharing Centre](#) (NRSC) in 2016 tasked with the sourcing and coordination of interstate and international resource deployments. AFAC is the conduit for international resources from New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America. The AFAC NRSC coordinates and facilitates international and interstate deployments through its established partnerships and national arrangements, authorised by the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee (CCOSC). AFAC NRSC is recognised by CCOSC as an enabler of national capability for fire and emergency services.

The AFAC NRSC also develops and maintains the national Arrangement for Interstate Assistance (AIA); pursues collaboration opportunities with international jurisdictions including developing appropriate deployment arrangements where practical; maintain the National Statement of Capability for Fire and Emergency Services and provide support, if requested, to jurisdictions involved in deployments. (<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/planning-arrangement-for-interstate-assistance>). Its value has been clearly demonstrated in supporting the management of large-scale incidents, facilitating interstate and international deployments and AFAC is clearly the primary coordinator for international firefighting resources.

There is a clear demand for a national resource sharing capability, maintaining national visibility of availability and resources deployed and a clear understanding of the need for its further development.

2.4 AFAC is a managing partner in the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) develops, maintains and shares knowledge and learning to support a disaster resilient Australia (www.aidr.org.au). Building on extensive knowledge and experience in Australia and internationally, AIDR works with government, communities, NGOs, not-for-profits, research organisations, education partners and the private sector to enhance disaster resilience through innovative thinking, professional development and knowledge sharing.

2.5 AFAC Manages the National Aerial Firefighting Centre

The National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) is a business unit of AFAC formed in 2003 by AFAC with the agreement the Australian States and Territories, with the support of the Australian Government, to provide a cooperative national arrangement for the provision of aerial firefighting resources for combating bushfires. Since 2018, NAFC has operated as a business unit of AFAC, the National Council of fire and emergency agencies.

NAFC coordinates the leasing of a national fleet of specialised firefighting aircraft on behalf of State and Territory emergency services and facilitates the sharing of these aircraft between States and Territories during the fire season, by maintaining a Resource Sharing Agreement. The collaborative arrangements for the national aerial firefighting fleet have been instrumental in protecting communities and saving lives and property over past bushfire seasons.

NAFC's purpose is to deliver improved aerial support to states and territories through national collaboration and cooperation; delivering excellence and a safe, effective and efficient aerial capability; supporting and enhancing fire and emergency management in Australia.

2.6 AFAC Leads the Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme

The Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (EMPS) exists to advance the cause of professionalisation in the practice of emergency management in Australia and New Zealand. 'Professional' and 'Professionalisation' refer to the technical and ethical standards of practice that we set for ourselves: professionalisation is open to everyone regardless of whether they are paid or volunteer, and regardless of the particular emergency management function they undertake.

There are currently 24 EMPS Certified Practitioner and EMPS Registered Practitioner roles open for application (refer Appendix 3: EMPS credentials currently open for application). They range from Incident Management Team functions to specialist operational roles.

3 SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) measures to support the Australian Parliament's ongoing resolve to eliminate road crash fatal and serious injuries with a focus on ways to achieving Vision Zero by 2050;

AFAC recommends that Australian Parliament achieve Vision Zero in partnership with the Federal and State/Territory Governments including emergency service agencies that respond to these incidents, along with other impacted industries such as insurance.

(b) the effectiveness of existing road safety programs across Australia; opportunities to improve them and encourage broader take-up of effective approaches;

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have a road safety programme targeting Year 11 and 12's titled Road Attitudes and Action Planning (RAAP) which was developed back in 1996. It is designed as a preventative strategy to provide information to young people about road safety so that they can make an informed decision to mitigate risks and consequences by planning ahead. RAAP is presented in the school environment by operational firefighters who have experience with the trauma involved with vehicle crashes. They bring the credibility of someone who experiences dangerous situations and incidents on a regular basis with continual exposure to the consequences of road crashes.

For the last financial year, 306 program presentations were conducted to approximately 27,700 young persons across Queensland in mainstream and non-traditional schooling systems, restorative justice programs, and in partnership with the PCYC, and community youth organisations. Other Fire Services have shown a keen interest in the program to establish a similar road safety programme.

AFAC supports this as an example of agency initiatives that are recommended to be developed and supported by both Federal and State/Territory Governments, along with a monitoring and evaluation program to measure and improve the effectiveness of such programs.

(c) opportunities for government policy in health, education, industry, transport and other areas to contribute to road trauma elimination, integrating Safe System principles;

AFAC encourages the development and enhancement of strong relationships and partnerships with the regulatory and transport industries, to utilise synergies and develop road safety alongside governments, regulators and industry. Where at all possible, AFAC will encourage our members to work towards a nationally consistent approach to engagement with regulators and industry.

AFAC encourages engagement, contribution to and participation in research and relevant data gathering, to build the body of knowledge in relation to advancements in freight distribution, vehicle design, road safety and alternative fuels.

AFAC advocates for effective collection, monitoring and utilisation of relevant data by member agencies and with other industries. This will assist in informing research that supports advocating for regulatory change. Data and subsequent strategies need to be continually assessed as to their relevance and effectiveness, due to the rapidly emerging nature of technology in the industry. This is to be underpinned by sustainable approaches that consider social, economic and environmental impacts.

AFAC conducts an annual collection of a specified set of incident data, aggregating this data in a national database (AIRSNAT). AFAC is the current custodian. This includes data relating to transportation-related incidents. By design however, the focus of the recorded data relates to the activity undertaken at the scene by emergency services and not the cause of the incident.

Because AIRSNAT data is focused on response activities, not causal analysis of motor vehicle-related incidents, we encourage opportunities to partner with organisations and Government departments that already collect causation-related data. AFAC is currently preparing a data strategy, advocating for the accurate collection, analysis and sharing of incident data to lead to more effective community outcomes. It is anticipated that this will substantially increase the amount and relevance of data collected by AFAC member agencies that relates to the causes of transport accidents.

(d) opportunities to embed road trauma prevention across Australian Government portfolios and agencies; and

AFAC advocates for joint, embedded road trauma prevention strategies inclusive of fire and emergency service agencies comprising its membership.

Road Crash Rescue is a critical service delivered on a daily basis by emergency response agencies providing extrication and emergency life support services. There is opportunity to further address the physical and mental impacts of road trauma, particularly with reference to the emergency service agencies who respond to these incidents. AFAC recommends that any prevention strategies should consider these impacts. Data coordination, harmonisation and collation will continue to be a focus to inform road safety policy.

(e) opportunities to reduce road trauma in the workplace, working with Work Health and Safety agencies and employers across Australia; including a focus on heavy vehicles and the gig economy.

AFAC encourages the development and enhancement of strong relationships and partnerships with the regulatory and transport industries, to utilise synergies and develop road safety alongside governments, regulators and industry. Where at all possible, AFAC will encourage our members to work towards a nationally consistent approach to driver training, engagement with regulators and industry.

AFAC creates and maintains the nationally endorsed [skill sets and competencies](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/prescribed-burning-training/) as part of the Public Safety Training Package (<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/prescribed-burning-training/>). The competencies are supported by training material produced in coordination with its member agencies. A national library of training material is maintained by AFAC on its website, for its members. Various areas of work are included such as the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS), bushfire response and suppression, prescribed burning, aerial firefighting and other technical aspects addressing various levels of skill.

APPENDIX 1: AFAC MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Full Members (32)

Australian Capital Territory

ACT Emergency Services Agency
ACT Parks Conservation Service

New South Wales

Fire and Rescue NSW
NSW Rural Fire Service
Forestry Corporation of NSW
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSW State Emergency Service

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services
Bushfires NT

New Zealand

Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Queensland

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

South Australia

Department for Environment and Water (National Parks and Wildlife Service)
ForestrySA
South Australia Country Fire Service
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service
South Australian State Emergency Service
South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission

Tasmania

Sustainable Timber Tasmania
Parks and Wildlife Service
Tasmania Fire Service
Tasmania State Emergency Service

Victoria

Country Fire Authority
Forest Fire Management, Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
Fire Rescue Victoria
Parks Victoria
Victoria State Emergency Service

Western Australia

Department of Fire and Emergency Services
Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service

National

Air Services Australia

Department of Home Affairs, Emergency Management Australia

Parks Australia

Affiliate members (22)

Australasian Road Rescue Organisation

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Australian Red Cross

Brisbane City Council

Bureau of Meteorology

Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations

Department of Conservation New Zealand

Department of Health and Human Services, VIC

Emergency Management Victoria

Geoscience Australia

Hong Kong Fire Services Department

HQ Plantations Pty Ltd

Melbourne Water

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management

National SES Volunteers Association

NSW Environment Protection Authority

NSW Volunteer Rescue Association

Office of Emergency Management NSW

Pacific Islands Fire Service Association

State Emergency Management Committee Secretariat WA

Surf Life Saving Australia