



METROPOLITAN  
**FIRE**  
SERVICE  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Government  
of South Australia



METROPOLITAN  
**FIRE**  
SERVICE  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

2023 – 2028

**STRATEGIC PLAN**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the Kurna people as the Traditional Owners of the Adelaide Plains. We pay our deepest respects to the Elders past, present, and emerging; their strength and resiliency; their connections to land, sea, and community; and their continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices.

*Thank you to Steven Schueler, Michael Haines and Rob Dridan for capturing the photographs*



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## OUR PLAN

As the Chief Executive and Chief Officer of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) I am proud to report that we have reached the midpoint of our five-year Strategic Plan, marking a significant milestone for the organisation. This point in time provides an opportunity to review the plan, ensuring it remains aligned with our strategic capabilities and continues to reflect our core responsibilities.

Our focus has been on strengthening the core elements of the Plan to ensure the MFS is well-positioned to respond to current and emerging pressures throughout the remainder of the planning period. Central to this process has been a review of our progress to date and recognition of the hard work and commitment demonstrated by our staff and stakeholders in achieving our corporate objectives and delivering on our responsibilities.

The MFS has successfully implemented several strategic initiatives that have redefined our approach to recruitment and enhanced professional development opportunities. This includes delivering Australia's first Firefighter Direct Entry Induction and Training Program, which offered an alternative pathway for entry to qualified firefighters from interstate services. For the first time, as part of the full-time firefighter recruitment campaign, we offered 'Come and Try' days, giving participants hands-on experience of what is involved in being a firefighter. To enhance firefighter development, we are delivering the Structural Firefighting in-service course at our state-of-the-art facility, providing firefighters with practical training in fire behaviour, risk assessment, and the skills and techniques needed to safely conduct fire extinguishment and casualty rescue. The MFS also delivered its first Technical Rescue Course, expanding participants' capabilities and strengthening how we think, act, and collaborate in challenging rescue environments. To support and develop our workforce, the MFS has implemented a structured performance review and development process. This ensures staff contributions are recognised, workloads and objectives align with agency priorities, and opportunities for professional growth are identified.

Our duty to serve and protect the South Australian community is a responsibility that continually drives us to evolve and adapt as an organisation. Some initiatives which have enhanced the way we respond and serve the community include the significant investment in new fire appliances, strategically positioned across metropolitan Adelaide. We have delivered a number of refurbished appliances to MFS regional stations, strengthening the operational response capability of our regional crews. These

appliances, which replaced aging fleet and equipment, ensure modern, reliable, and effective firefighting resources across all MFS areas.

I am focused on creating a safe and positive work environment where everyone feels valued and safe when delivering on our core responsibilities. Key safety initiatives achieved so far include the completion of South Australian Ambulance Service (SAAS) manual handling training, and the introduction of De-Wipe personal wipes to improve fireground decontamination, reducing the risk of harmful products of combustion being absorbed through the skin. Full-face air-purifying respirators were also rolled out, providing enhanced respiratory protection in wildfire hot zones and the urban interface. The implementation of PPE storage projects has been a key focus, eliminating PPE storage from engine rooms to improve safety and functionality. This work has included purpose-built storage solutions, station extensions, and layout modifications across multiple MFS sites.

As of 2026, we are implementing a health monitoring program to benefit the welfare and safety of our personnel through early detection, allowing prompt corrective measures to mitigate further health risks. Identifying illnesses early means better survivability for our staff, allowing them to return to work and remain active in their communities.

As we move into the second half of the Strategic Plan, our focus remains on building organisational capability, fostering innovation, and strengthening partnerships. This will ensure the MFS is well-positioned to meet future demands and continue delivering exceptional service to the community.

Page 27 provides a small snapshot of what we have achieved over the past two years, highlighting the remarkable accomplishments of MFS staff in making our agency a better place to work, and enhancing community safety and operational excellence. I am confident that, together, we will continue to build on these successes and achieve even greater outcomes for our service and the South Australian community in the years ahead.

Warmest regards,



**Jeff Swann**  
Chief Executive and Chief Officer  
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service



## WHO HELPED GUIDE OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

We engaged with a broad cross section of the community, our workforce, stakeholders, industry and government partners to develop our plan.



**1450**

Staff and stakeholders engaged over six months



**26**

Workshops held



**21**

Stakeholder groups engaged



**30.3%**

Staff participated in online feedback

## WHAT PEOPLE SHARED

This is what people told us:

“ A modern, agile and flexible emergency service that protects life, property and the economy for all South Australians.

“ An accountable organisation with transparent processes that promote excellence.

“ Modern fire service, that utilises innovative technologies.

“ Employees feel empowered to perform and have a sense of ownership of the organisation.

“ An inclusive workplace where employees feel valued and accepted for their true self.

“ Empower our people to develop themselves to be their best.

“ Values that are visible and driven at each station across the State.

“ Acknowledge and celebrate peoples hard work and dedication.

“ High emphasis on innovation and vision, developing critical thinking and talent identification

“ Focus on inclusivity and diversity.

“ Adopt a professional and sustainable approach to continuous improvement and learning.

“ Training and capability development to meet the evolving needs of emergency service response.

“ Be a world leading fire service.

## OUR ORGANISATION

### Introducing the MFS

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is responsible for protecting the community from the effects of fire, road crashes, chemical incidents and other emergencies.

We are a team of approximately 1 300 operational personnel and corporate professionals serving the community.

At the MFS, we currently operate 37 fire stations, this includes 20 across metropolitan Adelaide and 17 in regional areas across the Yorke Peninsula and Mid North, Far North and Eyre Peninsula, Riverland and Limestone Coast. All MFS fire stations provide emergency response and recovery 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### What we do

The MFS is a multi-hazard agency, well equipped to protect and serve our community in partnership with other emergency services.

Fire and rescue is at the core of what we do, however we also respond to a broad range of emergencies and provide far reaching community services.

Our responsibilities and services include:

- Building fire safety
- Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) Hazards
- Community education and engagement, including MFS Road Awareness Program (RAP) and Juvenile Fire Lighters Intervention Program (J-FLIP)
- Emerging technologies
- Fire Cause Investigation
- Hazardous Materials (Hazmat)
- Public Warnings
- Road Crash Rescue (RCR)
- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).





***Provide the best trained and appropriate resources, to protect the community, environment and economy***



***Be a world class fire service. Innovative, connected and inclusive***



## OUR IMPACT

2022 – 2023: How the MFS has serviced and supported the South Australian community.



**221**

Road Awareness Program (RAP) presentations



**430**

Community, school and educational visits



**216**

Fires investigated



**3 128**

Fire incidents responded to



**31 355**

Emergency calls



**42 848**

Total dispatches (MFS, CFS, SES)



**5.09 secs**

Average time to answer a call



**1:34.57**

Average call handling time



**3 185**

Regional incidents generating a response



**20 043**

Metro incidents generating a response



**5:51 min**

Average time to structure fires in metro



**104 secs**

Out the door time for structure fires for metro

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

To effectively serve and protect the South Australian community, we are regularly monitoring population trends, evolution of infrastructure, density of living and cultural diversity in the community.

Over the last fifty years South Australia's population has grown by over half a million people and currently sits at 1.8 million, with almost 1.4 million people living in Greater Metropolitan Adelaide.

Over time, the proportion of South Australians born overseas has also increased. Currently almost 400 000 South Australians were born overseas, and about 270 000 speak a language other than English at home.

Another significant consideration is the ageing population of South Australia. Currently the median age is 41 years and this has increased from 27 years over the last fifty years.

Households are also getting smaller in South Australia. In 2021, the average number of people who lived in each household was 2.4 people, with most households comprised of families with no children.

Living arrangements and density of living has also significantly evolved across the State. In 2021, most people lived in separate houses, 78.0%, rather than flats or apartments. However, the proportion of people who live in flats or apartments is increasing, from 6.6% 2016 to 6.8% 2021. With a notable rise in high density urban developments across Adelaide, regional and surrounds this percentage is expected to increase.

*\*Source: 2021 Australian Census.*

**1.8 million people**

**1.4 million living in Greater  
Metropolitan Adelaide**

**400 000 living in regional areas**

**400 000 South  
Australians  
born overseas**

**Median age of 41**

**270 000 speak a language  
other than English at home**

**2.4 people on average per household**

## KEEPING YOU SAFE

Our footprint extends across both metropolitan and regional South Australia, with personnel, infrastructure and equipment in place to keep the community safe and ensure we can respond effectively when an emergency occurs.



**20**

**Metropolitan fire stations**



**17**

**Regional fire stations**



**1 300**

**Approximate staff**



**115**

**Appliances**



**10**

**Specialist Aerial  
Appliances for firefighting  
and rescue operations**



**1**

**Marine Firefighting  
vessel ERV Gallantry**

# *Trusted to protect, empower & enrich our community*



## OUR PURPOSE

We are trusted to protect, empower and strengthen our communities through the provision of a sustainable fire and rescue service.



## Trust

Trusted to safeguard the irreplaceable.



## Empower our Community

By providing education, training, and resources, we will prepare individuals and the community to be safer and more prepared to face anything.



## Empower our People

Fostering a sense of ownership, motivation and job satisfaction among our staff, leading to enhanced performance, innovation, and a higher level of fulfilment.



## Enrich our People

Fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, enabling personal and professional growth, and promoting work-life balance, we aim to enhance the overall wellbeing and satisfaction of our staff.



## Enrich our Community

Our proactive approach enables us to implement preventive measures, develop robust contingency plans, and offer targeted resources to support and enhance the resilience and wellbeing of our community.

## OUR ASPIRATION

To build a world-class fire and rescue service.

## OUR VISION

To build a sustainable workforce where staff are equipped with enhanced systems to deliver a trusted fire and rescue service to the community. **We strive to be:**



### Responsive

Arriving at incidents as quickly as possible, to keep our community safe and reduce public disruption.



### Collaborative

Our operating model provides a clear and collaborative organisational structure. We contribute to a unified emergency services sector. We are connected to our community, delivering impact through education partnerships and prevention awareness programs.



### Modern

Our infrastructure footprint meets the evolving needs of the community. We are seen as an employer of choice through inclusive and industry leading recruitment strategies.



### Agile

We are a nimble workforce which is deeply connected to all segments of our diverse community.



### Innovative

We utilise and consider emerging technology to enhance our capabilities. We deliver an industry best practice service and are seen as a sector innovator.



### Accountable

We have defined success measures which demonstrate to our community, stakeholders and corporate partners how we are delivering on public value and impact.

## OUR VALUES

Following engagement across the MFS workforce, our organisational values were developed:



## STRATEGIC PILLARS

These four pillars are the foundation of our strategic plan and align to our values.



**Our  
People**



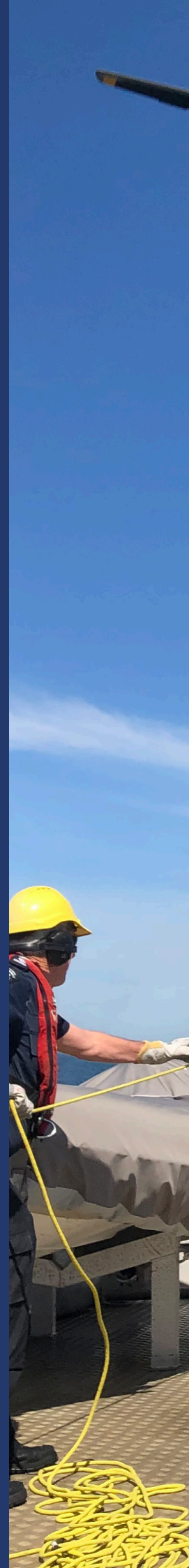
**Our  
Spirit**



**Our Corporate  
Responsibility**



**Our  
Evolution**





## PILLAR ONE



# Our People

*Connected and Supported*

### **Our pledge**

As an employer of choice, we will have a motivated high-performing, diverse and inclusive team who feel safe and empowered to bring their whole selves to work.

### **Our priorities**

1. Embed realigned values across the whole MFS workforce.
2. Develop a modern, transformational talent acquisition and management strategy for all disciplines within the MFS.
3. Focus on diversity and inclusion across all facets of the MFS.
4. Develop a progressive wellbeing framework to support all MFS personnel.

### **What success looks like?**

1. Our approach to recruitment is transformational, which laterally attracts and retains talent through a clear framework around succession planning, diversity, and professional development opportunities.
2. The MFS represents a modern and sustainable centre of excellence within the emergency services sector, a diverse workplace with a strong employee value proposition that attracts quality candidates.
3. Our disability, diversity and inclusion plan is widely actioned throughout the whole MFS workforce.
4. Our people readily have access to a progressive wellbeing framework and programs, which supports the whole MFS workforce.
5. Our people feel valued, inspired, celebrated and safe at work, through People and Culture practices which incorporate a people first approach.



**Be a role model to the community where they can see themselves reflected in our workforce and have a desire to be part of it.**

## PILLAR TWO



*Trusted and Collaborative*

### **Our pledge**

We will keep our community safe by responding and adapting swiftly, while actively educating the community in prevention awareness.

### **Our priorities**

1. Strengthen partnerships and agency unification across the emergency services sector.
2. Utilisation of technology to enhance responsiveness and MFS capabilities.
3. Realigned communications approach for the community and stakeholders.
4. Develop community and corporate partnerships to enhance MFS community presence and education programs.

### **What success looks like?**

1. Our brand aligns with community expectations and is widely understood by the South Australian community.
2. A proactive, unified emergency services sector which is highly engaged with the community.
3. Our community education programs are far reaching and elevated by the support of corporate partners, providing benefit to all parts of our community.
4. MFS delivers industry best practice service, is seen as a sector innovator and global thought leader across the emergency services sector.
5. MFS communications are a trusted, clear, and highly sought-after source of information for all parts of our community.
6. State of the art emergency services training facilities for our workforce and our partners to deliver the best outcomes for our community.



## PILLAR THREE



# Our Corporate Responsibility

*Commitment and Impact*

### Our pledge

Operating in an ethical, sustainable and responsible manner, we will foster and protect the needs of our environment, people, partners and community now and for generations to come.

### Our priorities

1. Research and invest in emerging technologies to grow MFS capabilities and community knowledge.
2. Empower the community through our education programs aligning with future and evolving risks.
3. Identify commercialisation opportunities which build engagement and capability across the community, our stakeholders and the wider emergency services sector.

### What success looks like?

1. An agile workforce which is deeply connected to all segments of our diverse community through inclusive education programs and sharing of knowledge. Including delivery of services and education for migrants, refugees and those from non-English speaking backgrounds.
2. A unified emergency services sector, collaboratively delivering emergency response, safety, education, and emerging risks.
3. Delivering community impact through alignment with corporate and education partners to develop research which informs legislation and product standards to improve fire safety and emerging alternate energy risks.
4. A proactive emergency response plan delivered to mitigate fire, hazardous environments, climate change and other environmental risks as they develop.
5. Enhance the Fire and Rescue training centre of excellence to build connectivity and collaboration across the emergency services sector, defence and corporate businesses.



## PILLAR FOUR



# Our Evolution

*Sophisticated and Progressive*

### Our pledge

Through innovation of current and emerging risks we will be a leader in fire and rescue, ensuring our service provides public and economic value through our agility and accountability.

### Our priorities

1. Review and realign operating model to provide a clear and collaborative organisational structure.
2. Review service delivery partners to ensure alignment with organisational requirements and values.
3. Review, understand and map our infrastructure footprint to create a plan for future locations based on population heatmaps, incorporating changing urban, community risks and investment in emerging technologies.

### What success looks like?

1. Our internal structure and processes have been reviewed and realigned to support organisational cohesion and efficiency.
2. Our equipment, services and workforce are progressive and contemporary, meeting the needs of our community and seen as industry best practice.
3. We clearly demonstrate to our community, stakeholders and corporate partners how we're delivering on public value and financial environmental outcomes.
4. Accreditations attained and compliance with State Government reporting requirements maintained.

“ I am truly excited about the future of the MFS and thrilled to have played a part providing feedback from the frontline. ”

## PLAN SUMMARY

Our leadership team will play a pivotal role in the delivery of this plan, including identifying strategic projects and initiatives that connect back to our key pillars.

## PURPOSE

# Trusted to protect, empower & enrich our community

## MISSION

Building a world class fire and rescue service. We strive to be:

Responsive

Collaborative

Modern

Agile

Innovative

Accountable

## OUR VALUES

Our core beliefs, set the purpose, direction and tone of our organisation.

Respect

Integrity

Teamwork

Excellence

Community

## OUR PILLARS



### Our People

Connected and Supported

As an employer of choice, we will have a motivated high-performing, diverse and inclusive team who feel safe and empowered to bring their whole selves to work.



### Our Spirit

Trusted and collaborative

We will keep our community safe by responding and adapting swiftly, while actively educating the community in prevention awareness.



### Our Corporate Responsibility

Commitment and Impact

Operating in an ethical, sustainable and responsible manner, we will foster and protect the needs of our environment, team, partners and community now and for generations to come



### Our Evolution

Sophisticated and Progressive

Through innovation of current and emerging risks we will be a leader in fire and rescue, ensuring our service provides public and economic value through our agility and accountability.

## Commitments



### Our People

Connected and Supported

- Talent Acquisition
- Promotion Processes
- Thriving Employees
- Workforce Succession Planning
- High Performing Leadership
- Flexible Working Arrangements
- Performance Management
- Contemporary HR Practices
- Learning and Development
- Industrial Advice Solutions and Dispute Management
- Regional and Retained
- Employee Value Proposition
- Modern Workforce Management and Systems



### Our Spirit

Trusted and Collaborative

- Union Partnership
- Communication and Marketing
- Globally Connected
- Strategic Alliances
- Regional Community
- National centre of excellence training facility
- Technology and Modernisation
- MFS brand engagement



### Our Corporate Responsibility

Commitment and Impact

- Emergency Management Response (Act)
- Commercialisation and Budget Sustainability
- External Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement
- Community Initiatives
- Technology and Innovation
- Research and Development - Future Technologies
- Community Partnership
- Community Engagement and Education
- Environmental and Economic Risks



### Our Evolution

Sophisticated and Progressive

- Organisational Structure
- Corporate Governance, Risk and Audit
- Cadence / Operating Rhythm
- Injury Management
- Work Health and Safety
- Service Delivery
- Innovation
- Delegation of Authority
- Financial Modelling
- Collaboration with key stakeholders through Infrastructure and Asset management
- Enterprise Agreement
- Environmental and Economic Risks
- Policy and Procedure
- Registered Training Organisation
- Continuous Improvement



S.A. METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE

## MILESTONE SUCCESS MEASURES

### ● 2023 - 2025

Since the 2023 launch of the MFS Strategic Plan to its midpoint, we have implemented a range of strategic initiatives enhancing emergency response, safety, and proactive risk management. These efforts ensure the continued wellbeing of our people and the communities we serve. Below is a snapshot highlighting what we have achieved so far:

- Delivery of the Structural Firefighting in-service course, and the first Technical Rescue Course.
- Implementation of a structured performance review and development process.
- Significant investment in new fire appliances, including additional capital budget to ensure an annual appliance procurement program.
- Introduction of new battery operated hydraulic rescue equipment.
- Co-developed the world's first Electric Vehicle Incident Foundation Training Course.
- Introduction of a Health Monitoring Program for all MFS staff.
- Rollout of PPE storage projects.
- Introduction of new Level A (gas tight) and Level B (splash) suits for HAZMAT related incidents.
- Delivery of the Australian first Direct Entry Induction and Training Program for firefighters.
- For the first time, 'Come and Try' days offered as part of Full-Time Firefighter recruitment.
- Creation of a focused marketing strategy aimed at enhancing recruitment outcomes across regional communities.
- Execution of the Marine Review.
- Implementation of De-Wipe personal wipes and full-face air-purifying respirators.
- Commercialisation opportunities that generate financial reinvestment, such as the Road Awareness Program (RAP) corporate presentation, and private fire alarms, to support organisational priorities.
- Signatory to the Equal Opportunity SA, 'We're Equal' campaign.
- Implementation of new MFS Marine responses and SES Volunteer Marine dispatch out of SACAD.
- Functional review of upper management.
- Work commenced on a Master Plan for the Angle Park Training Centre site.

### ● 2026

Our relentless focus on growth and innovation will see us build and embed modern people and culture practices. This includes conducting a comprehensive review of learning and development for all staff, implementing a new framework for staff capability and implementing new ways to recognise our staff, ensuring our people feel valued, inspired and celebrated.

A plan will be established to enhance a centre of excellence in collaboration with key partners across government and defence. The centre will aim to foster greater community connection through best-in-class education programs, including wider engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

### ● 2027

A technology-driven plan will be created to enhance response times and reduce costs throughout the fire service, embedding a contemporary employee value proposition, and empowering the community through engagement initiatives that foster knowledge and capacity-building.

### ● 2028

A global best practice learning and development framework will be created through a modern Registered Training Organisation. Other developments include the implementation of a lessons management framework and establishment of a modern workforce management structure and systems.

A plan will be undertaken to refresh the Metropolitan Fire Service brand through a fully inclusive lens. These accomplishments will highlight our commitment to excellence, innovation, and inclusivity, setting the stage for continued success in the future.



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