

South Australian
State Emergency Service

Strategic Directions

2011 - 2015

Building safe and resilient communities



Government
of South Australia



Message from the Chief Officer



The South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) is blessed with first class hard working staff and volunteers who are passionate, productive and who regularly deploy to support our communities in times of emergency.

The SASES falls under the governance of the SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM). The SASES Strategic Directions builds on the focus areas outlined in the SAFECOM Strategic Directions and describes how the SASES will contribute to the state-wide priorities and address our challenges over the coming four years.

The SASES will continue to implement strategies to ensure it is responsive to organisational and community risks while remaining focused on rescue and operational response services and emergency management outcomes that contribute to a safe and resilient community.

Together, we will concentrate in the coming years on reducing the impacts from flooding, storms and extreme weather, enhancing emergency management capabilities and improving levels of community resilience.

The SASES faces some daunting challenges including the ability to generate capability, particularly in remote and rural areas, where volunteer numbers are declining. This is a complex issue, exacerbated by an increasing workload for SASES units, increasing training requirements and a declining base of trainers and assessors. There are however, many opportunities for growth including rebalancing our services to better support community resilience outcomes through education and risk awareness initiatives and developing robust incident management capabilities.

Implementation of the actions outlined in the Strategic Directions will enable our organisation to be well positioned to meet the current and future expectations of Government and the community, as well as to deliver on our mission to minimise loss of life, injuries and damage from emergencies and disasters.

Through committing fully to the Strategic Directions over the next four years, I am confident that our challenges will be met and new opportunities realised. I have no doubt that the level of satisfaction with our service will continue to rise along with the esteem with which our dedicated volunteers are already held in the community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Beattie'.

Chris Beattie
Chief Officer

Our work



Our Vision

A reliable and trusted volunteer based organisation building safe and resilient communities.

Our Mission

To minimise the loss of life, injuries and damage from emergencies and natural disasters.

Our Role

The SASES is a community based volunteer organisation established by the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* to provide an emergency response service across the State.

The SASES has a number of legislative roles including:

- Exercising responsibilities as a Functional Service and Control Agency for flood and extreme weather and Hazard Leader for extreme weather
- Responding to floods and storms
- Assisting SA Police, SAMFS and SACFS in dealing with any emergency
- Carrying out prevention, preparedness, and response and recovery operations under the Emergency Management Act 2004
- Undertaking rescues.

Our Context

The plans and legislation that we need to take account of include:

- South Australia's Strategic Plan
- South Australian Fire & Emergency Service Commission (SAFECOM) Sector Strategic Plan 2010-2015
- SA Emergency Management Act, 2004
- South Australian Fire & Emergency Services Act, 2005
- Council of Australian Government National Disaster Resilience Strategy
- SA State Emergency Management Plan.

Our Operating Principles

1. We will provide a safe and healthy working environment.
2. We will ensure that all SASES personnel are trained, supported and equipped to do their job well.
3. Our decisions are based on knowledge and an understanding of risks.
4. Our resources will be directed towards reducing loss of life, injuries and damage from floods, storms, extreme heat and other emergencies.

Our Values

Our values drive our behaviours and inform our decisions. They also align with the South Australian Government's Code of Conduct.

Our People & Communities

Our staff, volunteers and the communities they service are at the heart of the organisation. We value our people for their knowledge and ideas. Through providing a safe work environment, working collaboratively with our stakeholders, promoting equity and diversity and fostering a spirit of teamwork we will value and develop our people and communities.

Building Trust & Respect

We build trust by being timely, responsive and reliable. We build respect by conducting our business with integrity and honesty. We treat others as we would wish to be treated and challenge when we see something is wrong.

Being Accountable

We are accountable, transparent and ethical. We will communicate well and drive down the level of decision making. We will do what we say we will do to meet expectations and we only promise what we can deliver.

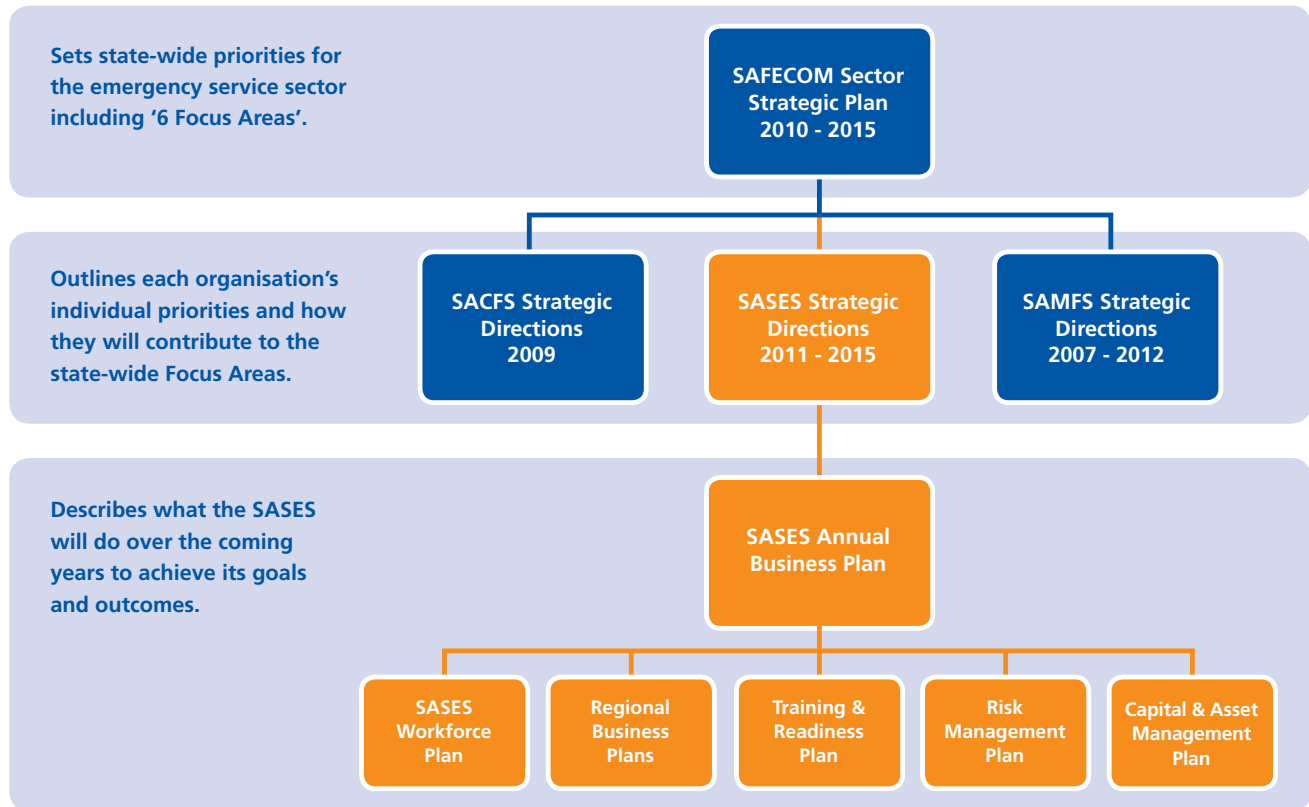
Being Professional

We strive for business excellence and high performance. We take pride in our work and we value the contribution of others. We succeed by encouraging and generating new ideas. We trust our people to deliver. We take measured risks and encourage creative thinking.

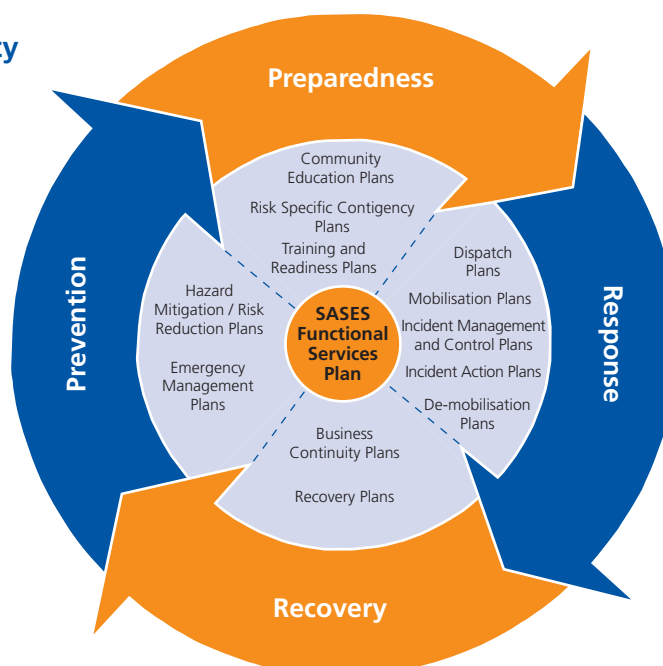
Our planning framework



The SASES is one of three emergency service organisations which collectively form the SA Fire and Emergency Services Sector. The SASES Strategic Directions support the focus areas and priorities outlined within the SAFECOM Strategic Plan.



SASES emergency planning and the emergency management framework



The challenges



Some of the key challenges and future trends which the SASES will need to consider include:

A Changing Climate

Climate change predictions for South Australia include increasing temperatures and a decrease in winter rainfall. There are projected to be more extreme weather events with more hot spells, intensive rain events and possibly higher wind speeds. There are likely to be more bushfires, droughts, storms and floods. The likely increase in extreme events means that in the future the SASES will be faced with more incidents and possibly of a greater magnitude. To be able to respond will require being efficient with resources and a focus on doing what is important.

Increased Community and Political Scrutiny

As a result of a number of recent disasters within Australia there is more media and political scrutiny on how emergencies and natural disasters are managed. Now more than ever before the community is looking to organisations such as the SASES to be able to prepare for and respond accordingly to emergencies and natural disasters.

Changing Approach to Emergency Management

The recent disasters and events coupled with the likelihood of future increased exposure to hazards, changing vulnerabilities, escalating disaster costs and increased uncertainty of risks, have resulted in a renewed focus internationally and locally on large scale natural disasters and the ability to provide co-ordinated support.

The National Emergency Management Committee (NEMC) was tasked by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to drive and co-ordinate the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. This Strategy outlines new roles, expectations and focus on building community resilience.

New Legislation

As a result of the introduction of the Emergency Management Act 2004 and its associated State Emergency Management Plan, the SASES role has expanded from being one of incident response to having additional responsibilities such as Control Agency for flooding and extreme weather, Hazard Leader for extreme weather and support to the emergency management framework.

In addition the SA Fire & Emergency Services Act 2005 created the SASES as a legislated administrative entity in its own right. With this came new emergency management responsibilities, mandate and compliance.

Increased Focus on Community Resilience

The resilience approach envisages that individuals, households, businesses, governments and communities will recognise and understand current and potential future risk, take action to reduce exposure and vulnerability and be better able to respond, recover from and adapt to change from emergencies and disasters of all types.¹

As the Hazard Leader and Control Agency for extreme weather in South Australia, the SASES is responsible for increasing community awareness and preparedness relating to extreme weather events.

The Need to Do More with Less

While the demands on the SASES are growing, like all other State Government funded bodies, there is also a need to be more efficient.

The SASES needs to determine structures and strategies which will enable it to manage increasing demands in compliance, administration and incidents in a tight fiscal environment.

¹ COAG National Disaster Resilience Statement. December 2009

Our goals, outcomes and actions

Focus Area 1 Leadership



Goal

To have a common direction and shared vision of best practice emergency management based on community needs.

Outcomes	Priority Actions
1.1 Leaders in state-wide and national emergency management reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contribute to state-wide and national emergency management outputs.- Ensure that all operational doctrine aligns with national best practice standards.- Actively contribute to national emergency management reform processes, taskforces and inquiries.
1.2 Strong and effective partnerships with our communities and stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify opportunities to integrate services with partner agencies to improve the effective and efficient use of resources.- Review and identify opportunities for better engagement between staff and volunteers.
1.3 An organisation with demonstrated commitments to its people, safety and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implement a fit for task wellbeing program.- Integrate health and safety education and training into the SASES training framework.- Review and reform rostering arrangements for all staff to ensure compliance with award conditions and enhance work-life balance outcomes.- Implement an organisation-wide plan to ensure WorkCover conformance.
1.4 A culture of leadership supports the Service directions, priorities and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implement a formalised unit visit program for SASES Executive and Managers.- Implement new service-wide communications strategy.

Performance Indicators

- All SASES units have a sustainable volunteer base (as outlined in the Volunteer Workforce Plan).
- Members report a higher level of satisfaction with the level of communication and engagement (as compared to 2009 survey).
- Target 40% reduction in reportable injuries by 2015.
- Annual business plans are developed and published by 31 July each year.



Goal

For all South Australian communities and governments to recognise and understand their risks and to take action to reduce the likelihood and consequences from emergencies and disasters.

Outcomes	Priority Actions
2.1 Sound knowledge and understanding of the risks disasters pose to our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with partner agencies to identify risks to SA from extreme weather and floods and contribute to all hazard management. - Review legislative provisions, standards and plans against changing risk profiles for South Australia. - Foster and develop partnerships with local government, industry and the non-government sector to access critical risk information. - Seek funding and partnership opportunities for research and programs to improve understanding of risks (such as climate change).
2.2 Individuals and communities are aware of their hazard risks and are adequately prepared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify methods to share and disseminate information on risks for the benefit of the community. - Ensure that vulnerable individuals have access to information and training. - Develop and implement a community engagement and awareness program that meets the needs of vulnerable sectors of the community. - Undertake baseline market research on the levels of awareness and understanding of risks in the community. - Expand the FloodSafe program.
2.3 South Australian communities are undertaking measures to be resilient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement community education and capacity building programs to enhance local capacity to mitigate and recover from disasters. - Prepare guidelines and information to support community efforts in resilience-based planning. - Develop and annually review Zone Risk Treatment Plans and Emergency Management Plans. - Include risk management and risk reduction processes in education and training programs for staff, volunteers, partners and stakeholders.

Performance Indicators

- Hazards are identified for each SASES unit area and appropriate contingency plans are in place.
- All Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMC) are meeting at least 4 times per year and have risk plans in place that are annually reviewed.
- Every unit delivers at least one community engagement and education activity each year.
- The FloodSafe Program is expanded by five council areas each year.

Our goals, outcomes and actions

Focus Area 3 Operational Preparedness



Goal

To be prepared to the highest standard for all extreme weather and flooding emergencies and rescue operations.

Outcomes	Priority Actions
3.1 Well equipped with modern assets, infrastructure, equipment and technology enabling best practice service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop and implement a rolling capital plan for major equipment items, vessels, fleet and systems.- Develop and implement an asset management system.
3.2 Highly skilled and trained volunteers and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop a new training framework.- Undertake performance reports for all staff and key volunteer leaders and prepare individual development plans.- Implement a web-based course management system.
3.3 Modern and appropriate training and operational doctrine.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop an SASES Learning and Development Plan which addresses identified skills acquisition and maintenance needs.- Review and where appropriate, reform operational service delivery models to better reflect risks and community needs.- Review and update Standards of Emergency Response to ensure they reflect identified risks.

Performance Indicators

- Risk based service delivery model is developed and implemented.
- A modern user friendly operational policy and procedures framework is developed and implemented.
- New SASES Training Framework fully implemented by 2013.
- Integrated multi-agency response plans for specific risks are prepared, exercised and validated.



Goal

To provide timely and effective response to communities experiencing extreme weather and flooding emergencies and rescue and operational support to Police and other emergency service organisations.

Outcomes	Priority Actions
4.1 All emergencies are responded to in a timely and effective manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor and benchmark response standards against state and national emergency management arrangements and standards. - Revise call receipt and dispatch arrangements to ensure that the closest most appropriate resources can be deployed by the SASES Communications Centre when activated. - Review and update a safety system for incident response.
4.2 Effective and reliable incident management framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the SA Common Incident Command and Control Management System. - Implement a standardised electronic operations management system. - Develop incident management capabilities and identify performance measures and triggers. - Develop a standardised integrated decision making framework. - Integrate risk based data into all decisions regarding response capabilities through the Emergency Services Delivery Standards program.
4.3 Working collaboratively with Police and other emergency service organisations to effectively manage emergencies and disasters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Service Level Agreements and / or Memoranda of Understandings with key stakeholders outlining roles, responsibilities and expectations. - Integrate non-government partners into response planning at local, regional and state levels.

Performance Indicators

- Standardised system of incident management adopted and implemented.
- All units are meeting relevant standards of emergency response.
- Data by incident type and unit location indicates no net increase in average response times.

Our goals, outcomes and actions

Focus Area 5 Recovery



Goal

To provide effective support and recovery services to ensure the well being and future readiness of our members and to allow the seamless transition of disaster impacted communities to recovery.

Outcomes	Priority Actions
5.1 Communities impacted by extreme weather and flooding are supported to effectively recover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop and implement a policy position for SASES in relation to recovery.- Review SASES training and doctrine with respect to recovery and implement changes to align our practice with agreed sector positions on recovery roles.- Define SASES services that help communities recover from emergencies and build partnerships with recovery stakeholders.- Implement a lessons learned capability to support adaptation and future disaster planning.
5.2 SASES staff and volunteers are supported to effectively recover from incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increase the number of SASES peer support officers within the Stress Prevention and Management Program (SPAM).- Prepare and implement a SASES Welfare and Support Plan.
5.3 Our organisation is able to recover from the impact of emergencies and readiness for future events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop and document post operation procedures and policies regarding restoration of equipment, supplies and personnel.- Develop and implement a service-wide policy and procedure related to post-disaster assessments which consider the effectiveness of prevention/mitigation, preparedness activities and response and recovery operations.- Annual review, update and exercise of the SASES Business Continuity Plan.

Performance Indicators

- Business Continuity Plan is prepared, exercised and validated.
- All major incidents undergo a debrief post impact assessment.
- All personnel involved in any incident with the likelihood of physiological harm offered peer support within 24 hours.
- Lessons learned capability is developed and implemented.



Goal

To be a high performing, serviced focussed, volunteer based organisation.

Outcomes	Priority Actions
6.1 A sustainable volunteer base that is satisfied and motivated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a Volunteer Workforce Plan that identifies membership requirements, sustainability needs, recruitment strategies, development of our personnel and retention strategies. - Develop and implement communication tools to support volunteer engagement. - In partnership with relevant agencies develop and implement a rolling Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community engagement and recruitment program.
6.2 Effective and efficient management of physical, financial and human resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement an action plan to reduce environmental impacts, carbon footprint and minimise waste to landfill. - Continuous improvement strategies identified and business processes reviewed and streamlined. - Effective and efficient management of human, physical and financial resources in line with government legislative standards and policy.
6.3 Modern, dynamic and flexible organisation meeting community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and regularly review the SASES Strategic & Business Plans. - Implement the 2011-12 Workforce Plan including the new organisational structure. - Develop a suite of performance measures to improve our ability to measure success. - Identify opportunities to grow the organisation. - Formalise regular and accessible service-wide internal communications.

Performance Indicators

- 20% increase in total volunteer numbers by 2014.
- The new workforce structure is fully implemented by 2013.
- 25% increase in membership from culturally diverse groups from 2010 numbers.
- Meet and exceed all WorkCover and the Public Sector performance targets.



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