SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Strategic Directions

2022 - 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER

The South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) prides itself on being a reliable and trusted volunteer-based organisation building safe and resilient communities. Its mission is to minimise the loss of life, injuries and property damage from emergencies and natural disasters.

The past year has seen SASES staff and volunteers operationally active with callouts to over 10,470 incidents including routine searches, rescues and responses to weather-related emergencies. SASES has also had a heavy commitment in support of other agencies and interstate deployments to assist other jurisdictions. These included the provision of operational support to the South Australia Health, South Australia Police and South Australia Ambulance Service (for COVID-19 response), and deployment of significant resources interstate including to NSW in February, March and April 2022 to assist with the east coast flooding event.

These updated strategic directions provide guidance on the service's priorities to enhance capability and manage its growing operational commitments. The service's focus and training efforts must continue to respond to both forecast and unforeseen challenges. In this regard, the service will maintain a primary focus on supporting its frontline people and the communities they serve.

The SASES continues to respond to changing risk profiles in extreme weather and increasingly significant events which at times involves multiple hazards. These strategic directions also consider changing societal trends and the likely impact on our business models. Declining volunteerism across all sectors in society creates challenges for on SASES to maintain an effective volunteer workforce. This will continue to be a priority with the implementation of the *New Pathways* program with a focus on recruitment and retention, youth programs, partnerships and adaptation to more flexible models of volunteers. SASES will also focus strongly on maintaining the necessary skills sets for the diverse range of activities our volunteers undertake. An important priority will be new initiative to establish a new SASES unit at Willaston. The South Australian Government has committed to establishing this new site in response to the rapid and significant growth in residential properties in the area, the significant risk profile largely due to regular flooding of the Gawler and South Para rivers, and the poor coverage of the area from existing SES units at Salisbury and Kapunda. Along with the other goals and objectives this plan will drive and focus the efforts of staff and volunteers to meet the challenge of serving the people of South Australia ensuring that SASES continues to grow its reputation as a reliable and trusted volunteer-based organisation building safe and resilient communities.

SASES exercises authority on behalf of the South Australian Government and manages significant financial, physical and human resources on its behalf. Further details on are contained in the SASES Annual Business Plans endorsed by the SAFECOM Board each year.

I am proud of the contribution this agency has made to safer communities over the last three years. Our people are our strength, and the staff and volunteers have demonstrated significant resilience and an ability to adapt to circumstances that were not foreseen or specifically planned for. The next three years will build on this legacy as we work together, embracing new approaches, and doing some things differently to help South Australians. I encourage all members to embrace the agency's purpose, goals, objectives and the strategic priorities outlined in this plan.

Chris Beattie
Chief Officer

SASES PURPOSE

Vision

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

Mission

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

Roles

SASES is established as a volunteer- based emergency service and exercises responsibilities as Control Agency for flooding, extreme weather and structural collapse and as a Hazard Leader for extreme weather including storms and heatwaves.

Operational functions include responding to floods and storms; assisting police, health, and the two fire agencies in dealing with any emergency; as well as assisting in carrying out prevention, preparedness, response and recovery operations and undertaking rescues.

The rescue and support services SASES volunteer units provide include:

- storm damage and flood mitigation
- general rescue
- road crash rescue
- structural collapse and confined space search and rescue
- urban search and rescue (USAR)
- land search
- air observation
- animal rescue
- vertical rescue of all forms (cliffs, caves and structures)
- marine search and rescue (rivers, lakes and sea)
- swiftwater rescue
- incident management
- operations and logistics support
- base camp and staging area management.

In addition to volunteer response training and operations, SASES is also involved in community education and emergency management activities including planning, training and support to zone emergency management committees.

Purpose

At the strategic-level the service remains focused on building resilience to natural disasters, enhancing strategic partnerships and supporting *Stronger Together - South Australia's Disaster Resilience Strategy* as well as the national reform agenda set by the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. At the operational-level SASES remains committed to building capability to foster disaster resilience in communities, deliver a coordinated and well managed response to emergencies, sustain a motivated and well trained volunteer workforce and remain a high performing, ethical and well managed agency.

Roles and goals

SASES roles and associated outcomes/ goals can be summarised as follows:

ROLE	OUTCOME/ GOAL
Emergency management and Hazard Leader	Disaster resilient communities
Emergency service and Control Agency	Coordinated, well-managed emergency response
Volunteer based organisation	Sustainable, well-trained volunteer workforce
Responsible government agency	Ethical, well-managed agency

SASES APPROACH TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

SASES has undertaken a comprehensive environmental scan to determine its strategic priorities for the coming three years.

This process includes executive strategic planning sessions and submissions from SASES management, staff, SASES volunteers and the SASES Volunteer's Association on the most significant risks, challenges, and opportunities for the agency.

An assessment of national policy and priorities included a review of directions from organisations such as the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), Natural Hazards Research Australia (NHRA), Emergency Management Australia EMA which now incorporates the former National Recovery and Resilience Agency (NRRA) and the Australian Climate Service. and policy guidance from the new National Partnership Agreement for Disaster Risk Reduction, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, the Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework, and the Profiling Australia's Vulnerability and Australian Disaster Resilience Index Framework.

State policy and priorities were also reviewed including recent directions from the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC), and a review of key documentation such as the State Emergency Management Plan and *Stronger together – South Australia's Disaster Resilience Strategy.*

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report confirms that global average temperatures. The report showed that some parts of Australia had already recorded increased average temperatures of 1.4C since 1910 and a significant rainfall decrease across southern Australia, with further drops in annual rainfall expected. In line with the state is experiencing more severe weather events with increasing frequency. The state's Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025 acknowledges that communities across South Australia are experiencing the impacts of a changing climate and are responding in a variety of ways. SASES will contribute towards this plan by assisting communities to reduce risk, adapt and build resilience by engage with the community about the increasing frequency and severity of emergencies and disasters; building the capability and capacity of the agency to mitigate and adapt to climate related risks, including an adaptive volunteer workforce; embedding climate change adaptation into emergency services governance, policy and decision-making.

This plan is heavily influenced by SASES' mandate to deliver on the South Australian Government's key project and policy priorities including the rollout and implementation of Automatic Vehicle Location

across agency fleet, delivery of a new SASES service site at Willaston, adoption of flexible volunteering models, improving data and digital innovation, and enhancing resilience through planning and the built environment.

Emerging risks identified included effects of climate change, cyber-crime, ongoing COVID-19 impacts (social and economic), increasing compliance requirements, vulnerable ICT systems and support, emerging biosecurity risks associated with Indonesian outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease and Lumpy Skin Disease, generational changes, demographic changes, aging population (incl workforce), volunteering challenges, ageing assets and escalating building costs.

The review process identified a number of emerging opportunities including leveraging Digital SA initiatives, greater use of technology to support operations, increased automation, utilisation of remotely piloted aircraft (drones), development of a common operating picture and common incident management knowledge and resource portal, increased utilisation of information systems to improve internal and external service delivery, new partnerships, greater emphasis on being customer centric as well as investment in planning and disaster prevention and preparedness.

Lessons learned came from recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements following the 2019/20 bushfire season and South Australia's Independent Review into South Australia's 2019/20 Bushfire Season.

The SASES Control Agency report into the Statewide flooding event of January and February 2022 also identifies a number of capability gaps, planning and system deficiencies and cross-government opportunities for improvement.

Key external stakeholders include the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Department of Environment and Water (Hazard leader for Flood), SAPOL, SAAS, SA Health, Bureau of Meteorology, SESVA, EMA, other emergency service agencies (SACFS, SAMFS, SAFECOM), local government organisations, and communities. All of these organisations and individuals have an interest in SASES activities and expectations about the services provided.

Internal stakeholder requirements have been derived from results from a range of recent surveys including the biennial SES "Pulse" survey, the "I Work for SA survey", and an ICAC Awareness survey.

SASES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following table details the SASES goals, objectives and associated priority strategies that will be pursued over the next three years.

Goal: **Disaster resilient communities**	
Objectives	*Priority Strategies 2022 - 2025*
1. Risks identified, understood and managed	• Support Zone Emergency Management Committees to undertake long-term emergency management planning, risk assessments and mitigation strategies
	• Support Local Government emergency management planning
	• Align strategic location of facilities to changing community risk profiles
	• Extend SASES footprint to meet service level gaps
	• Contribute to review of the State Emergency Management Arrangements
2. Communities educated and prepared	• Implement the Community Engagement and Resilience Program
3. Hazard plans in place	• Maintain the hazard plan for Extreme Weather
4. Leverage and influence the national research agenda	• Identify, leverage and contribute to the national research agenda
5. Create and sustain strategic partnerships that support community resilience	• Identify, build and sustain key partnerships
Goal: **Coordinated, well-managed emergency response**	
Objectives	*Priority Strategies 2022 - 2025*
6. Emergency events/incidents responded to and managed effectively, efficiently and in a timely manner	• Build incident management capacity
	• Develop online portal of resources for each SASES capability
	• Implement new ways of working to enhance emergency management coordination, collaboration and interoperability
	• Develop catchment flood plans
	• Maintain SASES response plans
	• Review deployment processes and protocols
	• Publish contemporary doctrine
	• Establish and test contingency sites
	• Address capability gaps identified through lessons learned processes

Objectives	Priority Strategies 2022 - 2025
7. Timely and effective public information and warnings	• Embed a customer centric approach and build public information capability, resources and systems
	• Ensure consistency with new Australian Warnings System
	• Finalise and champion national adoption of new National Heatwave Warnings Framework (NHWF)
8. Resilient information systems and resources	• Enhance digitally enabled capability within operational management systems
	• Implement Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) capability
	• Enhance ICT resilience and governance

Goal: Sustainable, well-trained volunteer workforce

Objectives	Priority Strategies 2022 - 2025
9. Volunteer workforce supported and sustained	• Implement New Pathways – Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program
	• Provide training and development to improve skills in managing volunteers
	• Support Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) services
	• Improve volunteer recognition
10. Volunteers trained and prepared with skills to respond	• Implementation and management of New Training Pathways
	• Review / update training content, materials and delivery models
	• Implement programs to increase new skills and prevent loss of existing volunteer skills
	• Improve and enhance training facilities and equipment
	• Support implementation of EMERALD program
	• Develop Risk and Capability module within EMERALD

Goal: Ethical, well-managed agency

Objectives	Priority Strategies 2022- 2025
11. Effective governance systems in place	• Monitor and evaluate the agency's governance framework
	• Finalise and implement the revised Risk Management Framework
	• Improve accuracy of timesheets
	• Bona fide reports reviewed regularly by managers and discrepancies flagged

	• Develop and implement a fatigue management strategy
	• Maintain compliance with *National Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2021*
12. Continuous improvement and innovative solutions pursued	• Sustain customer centric services
	• Further improve lessons management processes
	• Explore opportunities for digital improvement and innovation
13. Values-based work culture embedded	• Implement and monitor diversity and inclusion plan
	• Implement Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment Policy
	• Implement Reconciliation Action Plan
	• Maintain contemporary values-based culture and standards of behaviour
	• Review and update disciplinary doctrine
14. Safe working environment maintained	• Enhance mental health and wellbeing
	• Implement action plan to address SAFEWORK SA audit findings
	• Improve workforce health, safety and compliance
	• Deliver mental health first aid program to increase peer support numbers
15. Physical and human resources are well-managed	• Monitor the revised Capability Management Framework
	• Embed the revised Capability Management Framework and Resource Allocation framework
	• Implement Learning and organisational development key strategies (stage 1)
	• Enhance coordination of education and training strategies
	• Develop contemporary organisational development strategies
	• Enhance strategic asset and infrastructure planning
	• Implement Procurement framework including forward planning
	• Enhance facility maintenance program
	• Transition to Across Government Facilities Management Agreement (AGFMA)
	• Incorporate climate change considerations into agency plans

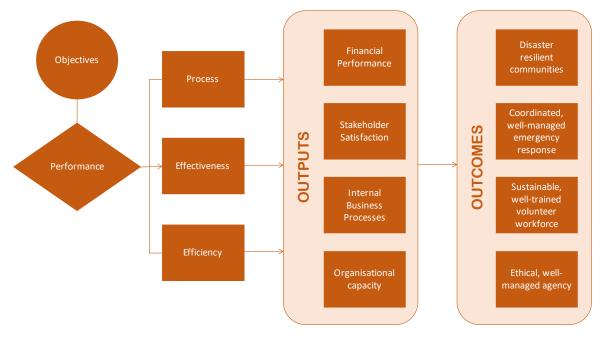|	
	• Transition to the new Emergency Services Headquarters and Sector Control Centre
	• Develop and promote a graduate recruitment program
	• Prepare for new terms and conditions proposed within the Enterprise Agreement (EA) for the Public sector for SASES employees as a Flexible Workplace Agreement
	• Mechanisms to prevent the unauthorised use of purchase orders and credits cards etc exist and are maintained
	• Bank and deposit accounts are maintain in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, Treasurer's Instructions and WOG (whole of government) contracts
	• Personnel's leave balances are monitored and actively managed to ensure the employee benefits liability is kept to a minimum
	• Strengthen governance arrangements to deliver minor construction works internally

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Better information improves agency accountability and contributes to improved community safety outcomes by driving better service delivery within SASES.

The SASES is committed to continuous improvement of its performance reporting by improving the quality and scope of data collection and data definitions and investigating and resolving data comparability issues in performance indicators.

The agency's current reporting framework remains valid and includes data collection and analysis for:

- **Report on Government Services:** a national report which informs improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of government services
- **Budget Paper No. 4 Agency Statements:** presents the State Government's current and estimated revenue, expenses and performance measures by agency
- **Organisational performance and activity reporting:** provides monthly performance and activity data to the SASES Governance Reporting and Review Group
- **SAFECOM Board Monthly Report:** provides monthly details on a range of operational matters to the SAFECOM Board
- **Annual Report:** reports on business priorities and performance against budget.

OUTPUTS *Technical efficiency indicators* measure the efficiency with which annual business actions are delivered

OUTCOMES *Performance effectiveness indicators* measure the effectiveness of the three-year priority strategies to achieve SASES' objectives