



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2024





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# COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD



For more than 65 years, the NSW State Emergency Service has been there for our local communities. But our role doesn't stop at just responding to floods, storms, and tsunamis. We also work hand in hand with our communities to help them prepare for emergencies and provide search and rescue, community first response, and even large animal rescue services.

We have been talking with our members and stakeholders, asking them to reflect on who we are, what we do, and where we want to be in the future. We have used these conversations to create our new Strategic Plan, which will guide us over the next three years and help us achieve our new Mission and Vision. Thank you to everyone who participated in this process. It is your input that makes me confident this plan is taking us in the right direction and is aligned with our collective vision for the NSW SES.

Our new Strategic Plan is built around the three things that are most important to us:  
**Our People, Our Community and Our Capability.**



For each of these priorities, we have identified goals we aim to achieve over the next three years. Together, these three priorities ensure the NSW SES remains focused on our Vision and delivering on our Mission of saving lives and creating safer communities.

Our Service is made up of thousands of dedicated Members who give their time to support our communities. We want **Our People** to feel safe, valued, empowered and engaged. By doing so, we will enable a diverse, trusted, and capable emergency service that can better support the people of NSW.

By working with **Our Community** we will ensure that they are prepared for and able to manage the impacts of emergencies. You'll notice that in this plan there is renewed focus on community preparedness and resilience, as well as collaboration with partners and stakeholders. This reflects our new Vision of being a trusted, volunteer-based emergency service, working together to deliver excellence in community preparedness and response.

In an increasingly complex and changing environment, continuous improvement in **Our Capability** is essential. A future-focused approach to building our capability will enable us to make informed decisions and remain a contemporary, agile and trusted leader in emergency management.

Through this plan, it is my hope that we build on the dedication of our membership and the achievements of the past, continuing to grow and develop our Service to be ready for the future. I look forward to working together with you all to put this plan into action.

**Carlene York APM**  
**Commissioner**  
**NSW State Emergency Service**

# ABOUT THE NSW SES



## THE MOST VERSATILE AND WIDELY USED EMERGENCY SERVICE IN NSW

### WE ARE THE COMBAT AGENCY FOR:



FLOODS



STORMS



TSUNAMI

### WE ALSO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH:



Search and rescue operations



Community education



Incident response and support



Medical emergency support



Community preparedness and planning



Bushfire support

### WE ALSO PROVIDE INTERAGENCY SUPPORT:

- NSW Rural Fire Service
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- NSW Police Force

- NSW Ambulance
- NSW Health
- Other NSW Government Agencies

**10,000**

Members across >260 units

**97%**

are volunteers



In 2019-2020,  
we responded to

**>48,000**

requests for help

**50%+**

increase vs  
3 years prior



### OUR SERVICES ARE ENABLED BY NSW SES SUPPORTING CAPABILITIES

- Recovery support
- Research and hazard planning
- Incident management
- Operational communication
- Community engagement and partnerships



Established  
in 1955



24-7  
365 days



Community  
focused



Operates under  
SERM Act 1989  
& SES Act

# BUILDING OUR PLAN TOGETHER



In September 2020, the NSW SES embarked on a collaborative process to develop its new Strategic Plan. The key phases of our development process are shown above and outlined below:

## LISTEN

- We sought input from our Members through a survey, capturing their views about the future direction of the NSW SES and what matters most to them.
- We conducted over 30 interviews with internal and external stakeholders and partners.

## ANALYSE

- We reviewed all Member and stakeholder feedback to identify themes and insights.
- We analysed our current environment to identify the internal and external forces impacting our agency.
- We conducted extensive research and consultation with sector experts and our Senior Leadership Team.
- We reviewed our previous Strategic Plan (2016-2021), identifying lessons learnt.
- We identified the strategic drivers and trends that inform the new Strategic Plan.

## COLLABORATE

- Based on this feedback and analysis, our Senior Leadership Team was engaged through a series of workshops to agree on our Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities.
- Working groups made up of Members from across the Service were formed to collaboratively develop and refine the Strategic Plan.
- The work was shared with leaders to obtain their feedback and input, and a draft plan was developed.

## SEEK FEEDBACK

- The draft Strategic Plan was shared with our Members to ensure we are clear and aligned on our future direction.
- We sought feedback from Members about our plan and how we will implement it.

## FINALISE

- In preparation for the formal launch of the new Strategic Plan, we completed a cascaded business planning process.
- We also shared the final Strategic Plan with our key stakeholders and set up a formal process for review of the delivery of our Plan.



# OUR MISSION OUR VISION



**OUR NEW MISSION AND VISION REPRESENTS THE ORGANISATION THAT WE WANT TO BE, WHAT WE ARE TO THE COMMUNITY AND WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US.**

## OUR MISSION

### SAVING LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

- ✔ **SAVING LIVES**  
There is nothing more important than the lives around us and saving those who require our assistance.
- ✔ **CREATING SAFER**  
Supporting communities in preparation for and during floods, storms and tsunamis will increase their safety and reduce the negative impact of events, both mentally and physically.
- ✔ **COMMUNITIES**  
The community is at the heart of everything we do. We want to work with communities so they can recognise their risks and build resilience.

## OUR VISION

### A TRUSTED VOLUNTEER-BASED EMERGENCY SERVICE, WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- ✔ **TRUSTED**  
We want to build upon the strong brand we already have and continue to be trusted by the community, our key partners and stakeholders.
- ✔ **VOLUNTEER-BASED**  
Without our volunteers, we would not be here. They are at the core of the SES and sacrifice their time to deliver an essential service to the community.
- ✔ **WORKING TOGETHER**  
We want greater collaboration both within and outside the SES. We want to work together wherever possible to ensure the community is receiving the best possible support.
- ✔ **DELIVER EXCELLENCE**  
It's about setting the bar high and striving to provide the best service and response we can. As an agency we are committed to driving continuous improvement and innovation.
- ✔ **PREPAREDNESS**  
Preparation is essential to minimising the impact of emergencies. We want communities to understand their risks and be able to mitigate, prepare for and deal with emergencies if and when they arise.
- ✔ **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**  
We provide community support and expert response capabilities, helping individuals during their time of need.

# PLAN ON A PAGE



## OUR MISSION

SAVING LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

## OUR VISION

A TRUSTED VOLUNTEER-BASED EMERGENCY SERVICE, WORKING TOGETHER TO DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

|                  |  <b>OUR PEOPLE</b>   |  <b>OUR COMMUNITY</b>   |  <b>OUR CAPABILITY</b>   |
|------------------|---|--|---|
| INTENT           | Our people are safe, valued, empowered and engaged to enable a diverse, trusted and capable emergency service   | Communities across NSW are prepared for and able to manage the impacts of emergencies  | Continuous improvement in capability to provide recognised, contemporary, agile and trusted leadership in emergency management  |
| GOALS            | 1.1 Embed our safe, inclusive and ethical culture<br>1.2 Enhance our own capabilities and behaviours<br>1.3 Promote our volunteering ethos  | 2.1 Build upon existing community resilience through targeted needs-based community engagement<br>2.2 Deliver a contemporary and collaborative approach to flood planning and preparedness<br>2.3 Raise the profile of NSW SES through effective public promotion and dissemination of information<br>2.4 Build effective partnerships and stakeholder engagement  | 3.1 Strengthen capability to remain ready and equipped to manage emergencies<br>3.2 Enhance systems and processes so they are responsive, integrated and efficient<br>3.3 Put data to work for an intelligence and knowledge led organisation<br>3.4 Ensure our assets, facilities and resources are fit for purpose and future-ready to enable us to support our communities |
| OUTCOME MEASURES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased Member engagement and satisfaction</li> <li>✓ Improvement in safety awareness and outcomes</li> <li>✓ Targeted growth in our Member base that reflects changing community needs, risk and diversity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase in community members that understand and act on their flood, storm and tsunami risk</li> <li>✓ Increased community and stakeholder recognition of the NSW SES as a trusted voice on flood, storm and tsunami</li> <li>✓ Increased consideration of flood risk in strategic land use planning decisions</li> <li>✓ Improved collaboration with partners and stakeholders outside the NSW SES</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improved training availability and effectiveness</li> <li>✓ Continual capability improvement in our combat and supporting roles</li> <li>✓ Improvement in integration and accessibility of business and operational systems</li> <li>✓ Improved availability and quality of data and intelligence</li> </ul>                         |

## VALUES



TRUST



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY



SAFETY AND SERVICE

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 OUR PEOPLE



## OUR PEOPLE ARE SAFE, VALUED, EMPOWERED AND ENGAGED TO ENABLE A DIVERSE, TRUSTED AND CAPABLE EMERGENCY SERVICE.

We will drive a unifying culture and prioritise investment in leadership and development. In an increasingly complex environment, our people will be supported to remain agile and responsive to the changing needs of our communities. We will empower our members and drive a safety culture, supporting resilience and wellbeing. Our values and focus on diversity and inclusion will be reflected in our engagement with each other, our partners, and our communities.

## OUR GOALS

### 1.1 EMBED OUR SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ETHICAL CULTURE

- Invest in mental health and wellbeing strategies to support our members as they operate in an increasingly complex environment
- Embed ethical, inclusive and values-led behaviours, recognising we aspire to be as diverse as the communities we represent and serve
- Enhance our organisational approach to safety, continuous learning and empowerment

### 1.2 ENHANCE OUR OWN CAPABILITIES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Deliver leadership, command and management programs to develop and support current and future leaders
- Ensure talent and succession planning is developed and embedded
- Provide opportunities for professional and personal skills development for our people
- Demonstrate accountability and good governance across our service

### 1.3 PROMOTE OUR VOLUNTEERING ETHOS

- Deliver a contemporary volunteering strategy that positions us for the future by continually improving how we recruit, retain and recognise all our members
- Identify ways to promote greater connectivity, trust and collaboration across all areas of our Service



### WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE IN THREE YEARS

- A positive member experience and values-led culture
- Enhanced leadership and command capabilities in our members
- Embedded health and wellbeing services in a safety-focused organisation
- Ethical member behaviour and misconduct awareness and prevention
- A workplace culture of diversity and inclusion
- Enhanced recruitment, retention and recognition of all members



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# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 OUR COMMUNITY



## COMMUNITIES ACROSS NSW ARE PREPARED FOR AND ABLE TO MANAGE THE IMPACTS OF EMERGENCIES.

We will continue to strengthen our collaboration with communities, government and non-government organisations, utilising mutual expertise to understand and build on the unique level of resilience within each community. Informal relationships and formal partnerships will be strengthened to mitigate the impact of floods, storms and tsunami on communities. We will both maintain and develop new relationships with non-government and private organisations and learn from our partners' experience in support of a safer NSW.

## OUR GOALS

### 2.1 BUILD ON EXISTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH TARGETED NEEDS-BASED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Update and implement our community engagement strategy
- Further develop and implement a consistent approach to prioritising engagement activities
- Measure and improve the effectiveness of NSW SES community engagement programs
- Work with government, non-government and community organisations to implement leading practice in community engagement

### 2.2 DELIVER A CONTEMPORARY AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO FLOOD PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS

- Implement a contemporary community-focused flood planning framework
- Prioritise the review and update of existing flood plans
- Engage with consent and planning authorities to influence development decisions in key flood-prone areas

### 2.3 RAISE THE PROFILE OF NSW SES THROUGH EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- Review, develop and distribute tailored and timely information and warnings using contemporary approaches
- Partner with agencies to improve the delivery of targeted public information and awareness campaigns
- Implement media messaging that focusses on the Mission of the NSW SES

### 2.4 BUILD EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Develop and implement a partnerships and stakeholder engagement strategy and framework
- Increase our mutually beneficial strategic partnerships
- Lead innovative multi-agency emergency management programs and strategies

### WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE IN THREE YEARS

- Communities know, understand, accept and act to reduce their flood, storm and tsunami risk
- NSW SES is the trusted voice on preparing for and responding to floods, storms and tsunami
- NSW SES is recognised as the emergency management leaders in floods, storms and tsunami
- Communities understand, appropriately act on NSW SES warnings
- NSW SES proactively partners with community, government and non-government organisations to create safer communities
- Informed, resilient communities make safer decisions before, during and after emergencies
- Consent and planning authorities integrate NSW SES feedback into development decisions



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# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 OUR CAPABILITY



## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE RECOGNISED, CONTEMPORARY, AGILE AND TRUSTED LEADERSHIP IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT.

In an increasingly complex and changing environment, we will continue to develop and evolve our capability, ensuring we can support our communities into the future and remain recognised as leaders in emergency management. A focus on building our capability - whether it be our operational capability, technology or business processes - will enable us to make informed decisions and be ready and able to support the communities of NSW.

### OUR GOALS

#### 3.1 STRENGTHEN CAPABILITY TO REMAIN READY AND EQUIPPED TO MANAGE EMERGENCIES

- Enhance training to strengthen our capability as the combat agency for flood, storm and tsunami
- Implement risk-based targeted development and skill retention pathways for Members
- Ensure we are future ready through sustainable resource planning and efficient asset management
- Embed the Capability Framework and implement improved capability planning processes

#### 3.2 ENHANCE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES SO THEY ARE RESPONSIVE, INTEGRATED AND EFFICIENT

- Enable members through technology that enhances the way they access and use information
- Ensure our integrated systems and processes are contemporary, compliant, fit for purpose, secure and easily adaptable to change
- Ensure our policies and procedures are focused on the end user and aligned with our systems and processes

#### 3.3 PUT DATA TO WORK FOR AN INTELLIGENCE AND KNOWLEDGE LED ORGANISATION

- Build a strong intelligence based decision-making culture based on analytics and quality data
- Promote the release, sharing, use and protection of trusted information
- Promote a learning culture, using knowledge and lessons management to enhance our operations
- Collaborate with our key partners and utilise research to support enhanced knowledge and informed decisions

#### 3.4 ENSURE OUR ASSETS, FACILITIES AND RESOURCES ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE AND FUTURE-READY TO ENABLE US TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES

- Make informed capital investments
- Develop strategic facility and equipment management plans to support a collaborative, technology-driven future
- Deliver major capital programs including the Fleet Replacement Program and Stay Safe Keep Operational program (SSKO)
- Develop a human resource plan to achieve the best use of the organisation's most valuable asset - its human resources - and identify gaps in capacity to achieve the vision, mission and priorities of the NSW SES

#### WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE IN THREE YEARS

- Members have the skills, equipment and technology they need to support our communities
- Decision making is enabled by quality data and intelligence
- Streamlined, accurate information is delivered to communities
- Resources, processes and systems are aligned to our Capability Framework and Targeted Operating Model
- Strong training partnerships are in place and leveraged
- Improved resource utilisation and collaboration with other Emergency Service Organisations
- ICT systems and services are cost-effective, reliable, compliant and resilient to threats



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# MEASURING SUCCESS



## THE SUCCESS OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN WILL BE DEMONSTRATED BY:

|  <b>OUR PEOPLE</b>   |  <b>OUR COMMUNITY</b>   |  <b>OUR CAPABILITY</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased Member Engagement and satisfaction</li> <li>✓ Improvement in safety awareness and outcomes</li> <li>✓ Targeted growth in our Member base that reflects changing community needs, risk and diversity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase in community members that understand and act on their flood, storm and tsunami risk</li> <li>✓ Increased community and stakeholder recognition of the NSW SES as a trusted voice on flood, storm and tsunami</li> <li>✓ Increased consideration of flood risk in strategic land use planning decisions</li> <li>✓ Improved collaboration with partners and stakeholders outside the NSW SES</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improved training availability and effectiveness</li> <li>✓ Continual capability improvement in our combat and supporting roles</li> <li>✓ Improvement in integration and accessibility of business and operational systems</li> <li>✓ Improved availability and quality of data and intelligence</li> </ul> |

### The NSW SES will also track and monitor delivery of annual business plans, and regularly reports on the following Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of volunteers
- Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTEs)
- Number of Requests for Assistance (RFAs)
- Response times
- Number of dwellings destroyed by storms, floods and tsunamis

Progress against the strategic plan will be regularly communicated to NSW SES Members and Stakeholders.



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