

**TASMANIA
FIRE SERVICE**
and
**STATE
EMERGENCY
SERVICE**



Tasmania Fire Service



Our Strategic Plan 2024–2028

VERSION 1.0

NOVEMBER 2023



Acknowledgement of Aboriginal People and Country

Tasmania Fire Service and State Emergency Service respectfully acknowledge Palawa/Pakana (Tasmanian Aboriginal people) as the Traditional Owners and continuing custodians of Lutruwita / Tasmania.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience of Palawa/Pakana, who have cared for Country for thousands of years and continue to care for Country, Waterways, Sea and Sky Country through their strong connections to culture, families and Community.

We acknowledge and pay our deepest respect to Elders past and present and recognise their important role as knowledge holders and sharers.

We acknowledge and value the contributions of Tasmanian Aboriginal people to the work and achievements of our dedicated teams of volunteers and staff.

This is a managed document that is subject to regular review and update if required. Changes will only be issued as a complete replacement.

Version	Release date	Approval authority	Primary authors	Support editor
1.0	November 2023	TFS-SES Executive	M Lowe, C Ames	C Noonan

Foreword



Tasmania Fire Service and the State Emergency Service have long and proud histories of service to the Tasmanian community.

As vibrant and responsive organisations, we have constantly evolved and must continue to evolve in response to changes in community needs and expectations, and

the altered dynamics of the physical, social and economic environments in which we operate.

In developing and implementing our strategic plan, we are taking positive steps to unite our organisations and our people behind a shared vision, mission and the strategic priorities that we have collectively identified.

That doesn't mean losing our organisational identities and purposes; it simply means making the most of the ways in which we know we can work better and more seamlessly together to serve the community, leverage new opportunities and achieve shared goals.

I commend the scope and objectives of this plan and encourage you to work closely and collaboratively with your colleagues as we strive to turn our vision into reality.

Jeremy Smith

Acting Chief Officer



As two of Tasmania's most trusted emergency service organisations, we are united by our strong and unwavering commitment to keeping our communities safe and resilient to the threat and impact of emergencies.

While it's not always possible to predict when and how change will occur, our ability to work

together to overcome challenges, align our efforts and thrive through periods of change will provide us with a robust foundation for future success.

This strategic plan is the result of extensive consultation, research and engagement with our highly respected workforce of dedicated staff and volunteers. Through this process, we identified common themes and developed strategies to strengthen and more closely align our governance, culture, systems and practices.

As a catalyst for achieving positive organisational outcomes while working together to keep Tasmanian communities safe, we are confident that this plan will support our combined efforts in rising to the challenges of today as we build the organisation of tomorrow.

Mick Lowe

Executive Director SES and Volunteers



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Introduction

As the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) continue to evolve to meet community needs and organisational demands, it is more important than ever before to ensure that our organisations are aligned behind a shared vision and mission.

The objective of this strategic plan is to articulate our unity of vision and mission, leveraging our shared strength of purpose to address the issues of today so we are better prepared to respond to the challenges of tomorrow.

This is the output of extensive research, analysis and consultation, including individual meetings and group forums with both internal and external stakeholders at local, regional and state levels.

Our plan is consistent with and complements the *State Fire Commission Corporate Plan 2023-24 to 2026-27*¹ and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM)'s *Future Focus 2020-2023*², building on our previous joint strategy: *Framing the Future 2017-2022*.



The document is structured in four parts:

Our past provides the context of our collective histories and rich heritage.

Our present identifies the key elements of our current and emerging operating environments that will shape the way we evolve to meet future challenges.

Our future sets out our vision, mission, common values and the lines of effort (workstreams) we will progress across our three priority areas of community, people and business.

Our path provides a summary of next steps and the strategic initiatives we will progress and monitor through the implementation of our Strategic Action Plan.

The Strategic Action Plan will be a working document that is routinely reviewed and updated to prioritise and track progress under each line of effort, informed by the necessary sequences and timelines of key initiatives. This work will be undertaken in collaboration with the relevant business units of TFS, SES and the department's Business and Executive Services division (BES).

We will use our strategic documents to provide clear direction, transparency and accountability for the management and operations of TFS and SES over the next five years. Both documents will be managed and maintained by the Office of the Chief Officer (TFS) on behalf of the TFS-SES Executive, who will regularly monitor and evaluate progress to ensure that our strategic direction and activities remain on track and consistent with changes in our operating environment.

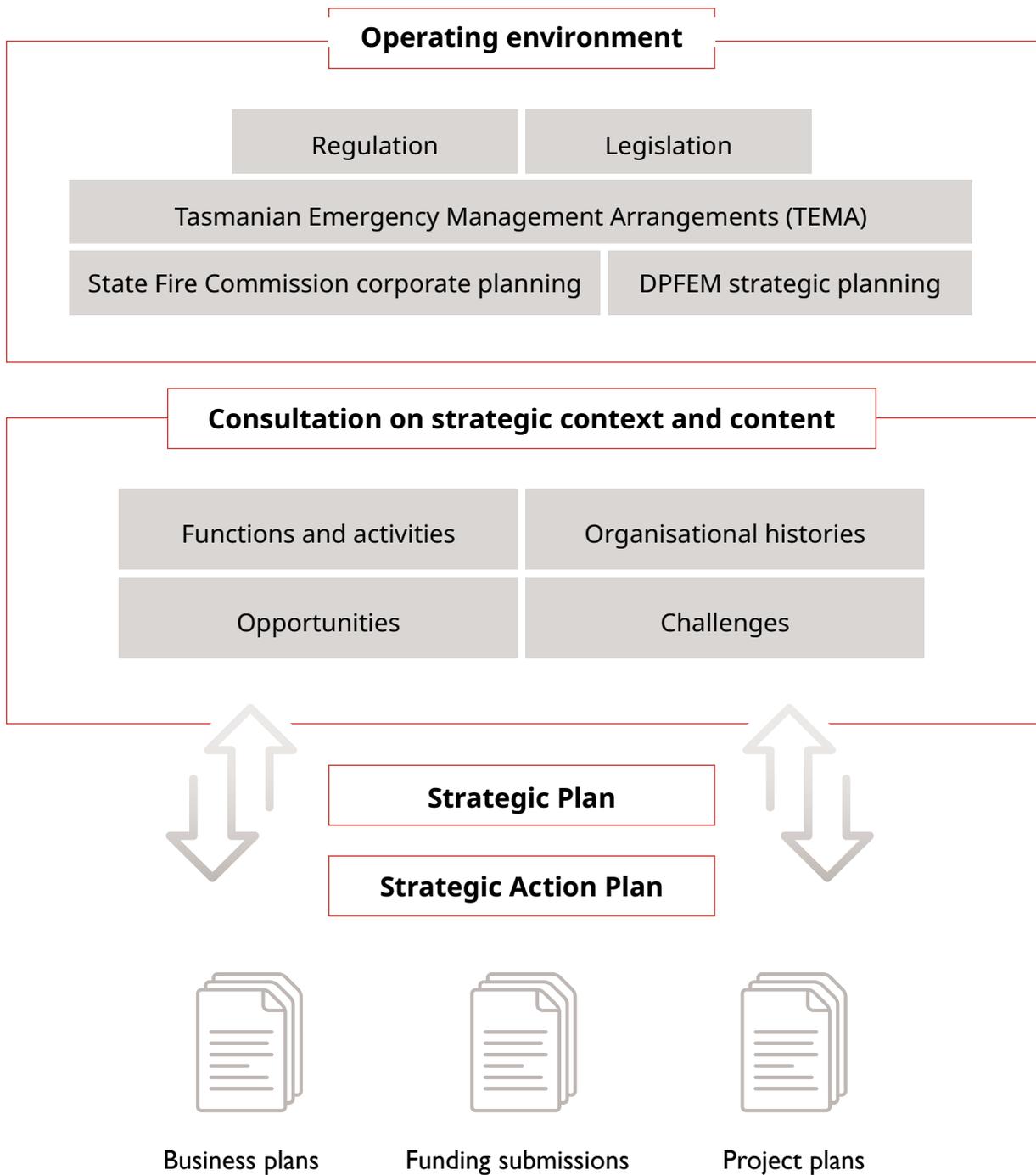
In January 2023, the Premier announced the intention to formally unite TFS and SES under the banner of Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services (TFES) within DPFEM. As consultation on draft legislation to support the proposed structural change is ongoing, we will continue to be proactive in looking to the future and building on our reputations as progressive organisations that have always been – and always will be – responsive to the needs and expectations of Tasmania and Tasmanian communities.

Consultation and collaboration

This strategic plan was developed collaboratively and with significant input from frontline workers (paid personnel and volunteers), unions and professional associations, policy, planning and business administration teams and senior executives across TFS, SES and BES.

The TFS-SES Executive acknowledges and thanks all contributors for their active and positive engagement with this important work.

An overview of the strategic planning and consultation process is provided below.



Our past

The history of TFS began in 1827, with establishment of the original fire brigade in the colony of Hobart Town.

The underpinning legislative authority for the early fire brigades of Hobart and Launceston was eventually established through the Fire Brigade Act of 1883.

The original fire brigades were founded on the dedication of retained volunteers who lived and worked close to the fire stations. In 1910, permanent staff units were required to live on site at the stations.

Almost 70 years later, the *Fire Service Act 1979*³ came into effect, amalgamating all operational fire services statewide, with strategic direction provided by the State Fire Commission as the overarching statutory authority.

SES's history of serving the Tasmanian community began more than 75 years ago, with its unique lineage founded on the Civil Defence Legion established during World War II.

After the war, the Legion's emphasis gradually shifted from civil defence to natural disaster preparedness and response.

In 1974, the government of Tasmania established the Civil Defence and Emergency Service.

Two years later, the Emergency Services Act was passed, establishing SES as we know it today.

In 2006, that legislation was replaced by the *Emergency Management Act 2006*⁴, providing SES with a range of updated functions and powers.



Our present

TFS and SES have statutory functions, roles and responsibilities across the full emergency management spectrum of Prevention and mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR).

Before we can flourish as strong and united organisations, we must establish shared understandings of our roles and responsibilities, issues, risks and future challenges.

Our core functions and various roles as Hazard Advisory Agency, Response Management Authority and functional Support Agency for different emergencies are prescribed by legislation and described in the *Tasmanian Emergency Management Arrangements (TEMA)*⁵.

Elements of the *Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy*⁶ and *Tasmanian State Disaster Risk Assessment*⁷ are also incorporated into the business-as-usual of both organisations.

Fire management and response

- Management of community protection planning and fire safety programs
- Regulation of fire protection industry and maintenance of building safety standards
- Vegetation fire management and bushfire mitigation programs
- Application of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System and the Australian Warning System
- Management of state and regional firefighting operations for bushfire, structural fire and hazardous material incidents (including intelligence, air operations, warnings and public information)

Flood and storm management and response

- Management of community protection planning, engagement and flood and storm safety programs
- Management of flood mitigation and mapping programs
- Application of the Australian Warning System
- Management of state and regional operations for floods and severe weather (including intelligence, modelling, warnings and public information)

Other roles

- Coordination of multi-hazard preparedness activities at municipal, regional and state levels
- Operational dispatch and communications
- Development of policies and advice across administrative, legal and governance frameworks for emergency management
- Support for land use planning and environmental risk management
- Road Crash Rescue response
- Search and Rescue support
- Technical Rescue response and support
- Support for pollution management and decontamination
- Support for the State Fire Management Council and the State Emergency Management Committee and subgroups
- Support for Regional and State Emergency Management Controllers

Demographics



Tasmania Fire Service

Tasmania Fire Service

217

brigades

STAFF:



600 includes 320+ career firefighters



VOLUNTEERS:

4000+ Average age: 46



State Emergency Service

37

units



38



680+ Average age: 47



female male

Core SES values

Professionalism

This means we:

- uphold the SES Principles and Code of Conduct
- diligently pursue ongoing skills development and learning
- challenge and innovate, take action to fix problems
- are accountable for our actions
- protect the good image and reputation of SES
- are safety conscious for one another and the community

Respect

This means we:

- contribute towards a united and supportive team
- communicate well and regularly
- are compassionate, understanding and empathetic
- are equitable and value diversity at work and in the community
- treat all people with dignity, respect and honesty
- build good working relationships within and outside SES

Commitment

This means we:

- commit to helping others, are dedicated to duty
- stay proudly connected to our communities
- safely challenge individual and team abilities
- attend training and operations, but know when to have a break
- don't just join for ourselves, but stay for the team
- support the volunteer ethos

Integrity

This means we:

- communicate clearly, consistently and with accuracy
- are honest, trustworthy and discreet
- have realistic expectations of ourselves and others
- lead by example, with honour and strength of character
- are ethical and values-driven
- look after ourselves and each other and seek help if we need it

Core TFS values

Service

We value:

- serving the Tasmanian community
- being responsive to community needs
- being progressive and delivering quality services

Professionalism

We value:

- dedication and pride in our organisation
- being skilled, efficient, committed and innovative
- using our collective capabilities to deliver an excellent service
- being accountable for our actions

Integrity

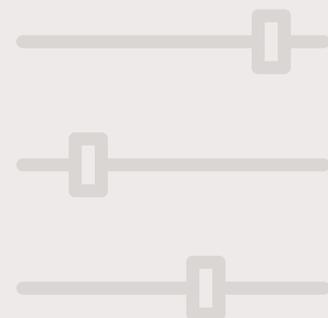
We value:

- being trustworthy and ethical
- treating each other fairly and honestly
- having the courage to do the right thing

Consideration

We value:

- each other
- working together to achieve our goals
- treating each other with respect and understanding
- being supportive, compassionate and helping each other



Our operating environment

Climate change

As emergency service organisations, we are on the frontline of mitigating and responding to the impacts of climate change. As the frequency and severity of natural disasters increase, there is a corresponding increase in the incidence of, and risks associated with, fire, flood and storms. We are witnessing longer duration vegetation fires that behave in new and different ways. Over the last decade alone, Tasmania has experienced three major floods, with a parallel increase in the frequency and severity of storms. The direct and indirect influence of climate change requires ongoing adjustment of current and projected service delivery and operational response across urban, rural and remote areas. At international, national and state levels, there is increasing pressure on emergency services, including growth in demand for the cross-jurisdictional deployment of support resources.

Community expectations and resilience

Our communities have increasingly higher expectations of contemporary standards and professionalism, from supporting disaster resilience, prevention and risk mitigation, to helping local communities prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Tasmanians are generally very well-networked and have high expectations of the frequency and variety of communications they should receive before, during and after an emergency. To respond effectively to these expectations, we must be well-trained, strategic and proactive in how, when and where we provide community support, while continuing to ensure timely, reliable and competent response capability.

Changing demographics

Demographic change continues to impact the delivery of emergency services in Tasmania. The increased urbanisation of major centres and overall population growth have altered the risk profiles of structural fire, bushfire, flood and storm events. This is compounded by Tasmania's ageing population, which not only increases the size and vulnerability of at-risk cohorts, but also limits the pool from which we draw our highly-valued volunteer workforce. This is further compounded by the higher average age of our paid workers – particularly career firefighters – which presents a unique challenge that must be carefully managed now and into the future.

Partnerships

As emergency services, we rely on our relationships with other emergency service organisations and divisions of the department, non-government partner organisations and community groups, professional associations, unions and emergency management stakeholders across all tiers of government. It is critical that these relationships are maintained and strengthened to ensure our future effectiveness.

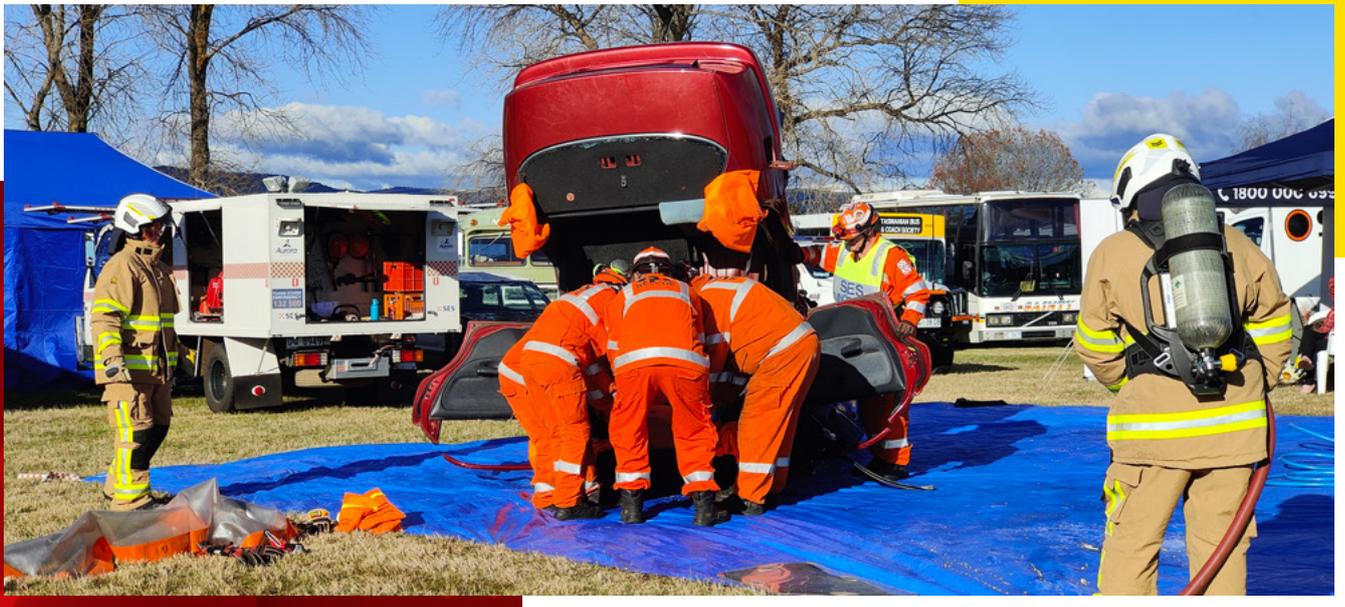


Volunteering

The statewide operational capability of almost all SES and most of TFS is volunteer based. In an environment where competition for volunteers has never been higher, we require high levels of commitment from our volunteer cohort, including the need to comply with contemporary volunteer expectations, diversity, screening, governance and capability requirements. Our organisations must continue to evolve in accordance with contemporary standards, trends and developments, as we strengthen our focus on recruiting, training, equipping, supporting and retaining volunteers in all regions of Tasmania.

Technology

The opportunities and impacts of new technology and data-led insights are significant and ongoing, critically influencing how we communicate, develop and implement strategies and tactics for operational response, manage risk, support community resilience and preparedness, implement training and development for our workers, manage our assets, fleet and equipment, and more. As the adoption of new technology is invariably accompanied by sizeable financial and labour costs, we must be methodical in evaluating options and requirements, and pragmatic when choosing the areas in which to invest.



Challenges and opportunities

To develop the organisation of tomorrow, we must rise to the challenges of today, build on past successes and take advantage of the opportunities that will ensure our future success.

In consultation with our combined workforces, we identified challenges we must overcome and areas in which we can improve.

As we pursue our vision and mission, we must:

- foster and embed a culture that is positive and based on respect, trust, accountability and shared values, while embracing and encouraging diversity and inclusion
 - identify and effectively manage risks collaboratively and in accordance with DPFEM's risk management framework
 - develop and enhance policy and doctrine that is accessible, contemporary, current, accurate, fit-for-purpose and consistently applied across all regions of the state
 - ensure a consistent and contemporary program of training and professional development for paid and unpaid workers with core primary and relevant secondary roles, including leadership and management, as appropriate
 - procure and manage our assets and equipment transparently and consistently at a statewide level, ensuring that our procurement and maintenance structures, systems and processes are efficient, transparent and contemporary
 - establish and articulate optimal, risk-based levels of operational capability and competency down to brigade and unit levels, to support proactive prioritisation of training requirements and the allocation of resources
 - synchronise internal business systems and cycles so that critical timelines and processes for budget submissions, project funding and other routine business-as-usual implications are clearly aligned, understood and communicated
- continuously monitor and review our organisational structures and establishments to ensure that they continue to meet contemporary and projected needs and requirements
 - maintain appropriate levels of governance and oversight to ensure ongoing compliance with our statutory, regulatory and organisational functions and objectives
 - support and grow our volunteer workforce in a way that meets contemporary standards, expectations and requirements
 - communicate openly, frequently and well, with information flowing up, down, across and between brigades, units, districts, regions, business units and executives
 - create an environment in which our future organisational structures and culture can thrive and that respects the rich heritages of TFS and SES while realising the positive benefits of closer alignment and unity.



Our future

Our purpose

is to keep Tasmanian communities safe from and resilient to the impacts of fire, flood, storm and other emergencies.

Our vision

is to be progressive, professional and unified organisations that the Tasmanian community trusts to help prevent, prepare for and respond effectively to fire, flood, storm and other emergencies.

Our mission

is to work together to protect life, property and the environment by:

- promoting and supporting community safety and resilience to fire, floods and storms
 - responding effectively to emergencies, and
 - enabling smooth transition from response to recovery.
-

Our common values

Our common values have been drawn from and reflect the combined meaning and intent of the core values of TFS and SES, as described earlier in this document.

These values are the foundation upon which we will develop and grow as a respected and responsive service organisation that cares about its people and its community. In putting our values into practice, we respect, support and value each other and the broader Tasmanian community, while working as one to achieve our shared vision and mission.

Integrity

We are trustworthy, dedicated, ethical and reliable in providing responsive service to the communities in which we live and work. We take great pride in our work and show strength of purpose and courage to do the right thing.

Collaboration

We work together to develop strong relationships and establish effective two-way communication channels that are robust, transparent and responsive to the needs of our colleagues and our communities.

Accountability

We are transparent, responsible and accountable for individual and collective decisions and actions. We are conscious of costs and resources as we work hard to be skilled and efficient, overcome challenges, resolve issues and innovate.

Respect

We respect and value the contributions of every individual and their respective organisations. We support the work and wellbeing of others and demonstrate compassion and understanding in fulfilling our everyday duties.

Equity

We treat each other and others fairly and honestly. We are progressive and work hard to establish environments that actively encourage diversity and inclusion across our workplaces.

Our strategic priorities

Community

at our very core

Our objective is to enable safe and resilient communities.

Delivering effective and reliable services for Tasmanian communities is the heart of who we are and what we do. Our volunteers live, work and participate in the communities they support. Our organisations provide vital support, working with local groups and individuals to help build resilience and minimise the worst impacts of fire, flood and severe weather.

Our emergency management functions and arrangements underpin the work we do to support our communities in the areas of prevention, risk mitigation and preparedness for timely and efficient response by frontline staff and volunteers statewide. When preparing for and responding to imminent events, we work proactively and inclusively with all affected communities.

Our lines of effort to support our community over the next five years are:

- **Resilient communities**
- **Trusted and capable response**

People

our most critical asset

Our objective is to empower a safe, capable, diverse and sustainable workforce.

We are people-centric organisations with a dedicated workforce of staff and volunteers of all ages working across all phases of emergency management. To continue to provide high levels of contemporary service, we must support, empower and keep our people safe, and provide development opportunities to ensure that they are well-trained and appropriately equipped.

We must ensure safe workplaces, manage risks and support the physical and mental wellbeing of personnel throughout their careers and as they transition to retirement. We will implement standards and processes to meet our legal, organisational and moral responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from harm. We will communicate authentically and cultivate a culture that is characterised by positivity, transparency, collaboration, diversity and inclusion, and that recognises the knowledge, experience, abilities and contributions of all.

Our lines of effort to support our people over the next five years are:

- **Workforce development**
- **Training and innovation**
- **Policy and doctrine**

Business

the basis of capability

Our objective is to develop an agile, effective and resilient organisation.

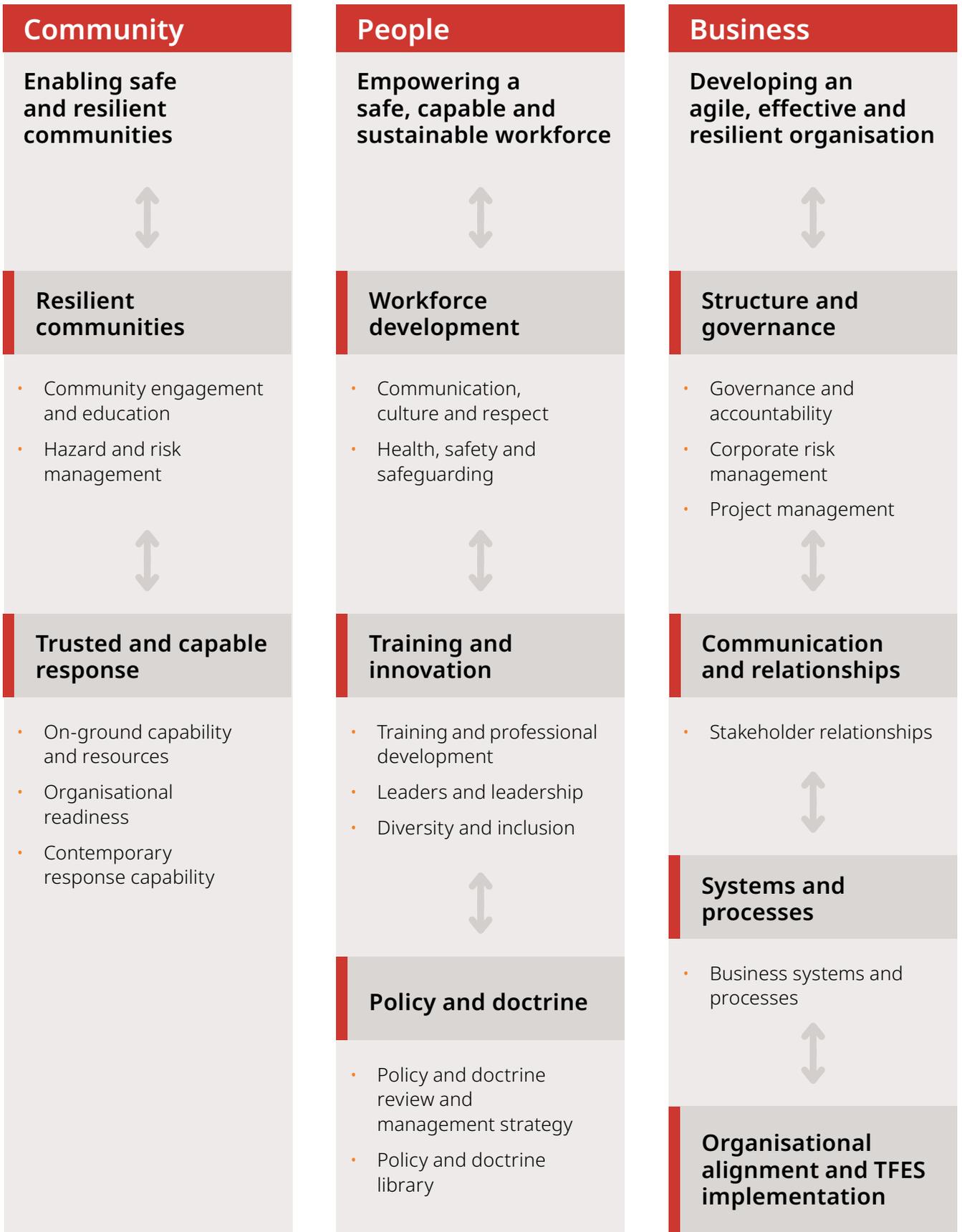
Good governance and business practice is the foundation of great performance. Contemporary systems and processes are essential components of resilient and effective organisations. In adopting an agile and flexible approach to business functions and activities, we will be well-positioned to respond to future change.

Investing in leadership and accountability at all levels is key to our success. We must continue to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, as we progress organisational alignment and an evidence-led, risk-managed approach to decision-making. In this way, we will be well-placed to support our people, our colleagues and all Tasmanians.

Our lines of effort to support our business over the next five years are:

- **Structure and governance**
- **Communication and relationships**
- **Systems and processes**

Our path



Next steps

The histories of TFS and SES are testament to our strong, collective ability to adapt and change to meet the needs and expectations of the Tasmanian community.

As we move towards the next phase of our evolution, it is important that we do so with a clear and shared understanding of where we have come from, where we are now and where we need to go.

This strategic plan has been developed to support both organisations through changes that will and may occur over the next five years, helping us to articulate what we need to achieve and why this is important to our dedicated workforces and the people of Tasmania.

To successfully implement our strategic plan, we need to develop clear and shared understandings of what we must achieve. Our Strategic Action Plan describes in more detail when and what specific action we will take to progress this work, supported by the indicators we will use to measure and report on our success in achieving our objectives. The Strategic Action Plan also sets out the necessary sequences and comparative timelines of our priorities and focus areas.

TFS-SES Executive will report biannually to the organisations on progress against our strategic plan, as we work collaboratively to respond to the ever-changing dynamics and demands of the environment in which we operate.



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