

**Steering Committee for the Review
of Government Service Provision**



Report on Government Services 2024

Emergency management (part D)

Produced by the Productivity Commission
on behalf of the Steering Committee for the
Review of Government Service Provision.

The Productivity Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.

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Report on Government Services 2024

PART D: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2024

Produced by the Productivity Commission for the Steering Committee for Review of Government Service Provision. The content for this PDF is generated from the online, interactive publication. Data below are the most recent at the time of preparing the report. In some cases, charts and tables may present data for a single jurisdiction. To access data for all jurisdictions and the most current data available, go to: www.pc.gov.au/rogs

D Emergency management

Main aims of services within the sector

Emergency management services aim to reduce the risk of, and adverse effects from, emergency events on people, communities and the environment. An emergency event is one that endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and requires a significant and coordinated response, for example, fires, rescues, medical emergencies and natural disasters.

Services included in the sector

There are various emergency services involved in the emergency management sector.

The Emergency management sector in this report includes detailed information in the 'Emergency services for fire and other events' section ([section 9](#)) on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of service provision and the achievement of outcomes for:

- fire services - prepare for, prevent, respond to and assist recovery from fire and other events
- state and territory emergency services - largely volunteer organisations that respond to and provide assistance during and after emergency events.

Although this report largely focuses on emergency service provision by fire service organisations and state and territory emergency services, effective emergency management relies on the collaborative effort of a range of government and non-government stakeholders including:

- local, state, and federal governments (e.g., fire and rescue services, land management agencies, reconstruction agencies)
- volunteers and volunteer organisations
- critical infrastructure owners and operators
- the not-for-profit sector and non-government organisations.

A more comprehensive explanation of the roles and responsibilities of government and non-government stakeholders involved in emergency management is available in the Australian Emergency Management Arrangements Handbook (Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience [AIDR] 2023).

Ambulance services (for medical emergencies) and police services (for public safety issues) are also involved in the emergency management sector. The health section of this report presents further information on the performance of ambulance services ([section 11](#)) and the justice section presents further information on the performance of police services ([section 6](#)).

Hospital emergency departments also provide services related to emergency events. Further information on public hospital emergency departments is available in section 12.

Marine and lifesaving rescue and coast guard organisations also have some emergency management responsibilities. However, data on these services are not included in this report.

Government expenditure in the sector

Total government expenditure for fire services and state and territory emergency services (STES) in this report was \$6.4 billion in 2022-23 (table D.1), an increase of 8.7% from the previous year. Fire services (including WA STES) was the largest contributor (93.1%) (STES contributed 6.9%, excluding Western Australia) (table D.1). For the 2021-22 financial year (the most recent financial year for which data is available across all sections), this represented around 1.6% of total government expenditure covered in this report.

Information on ambulance services and public hospitals expenditure is reported in the Health sector overview and information on police services expenditure is reported in the [Justice sector overview](#).

Select year:

2022-23

Table D.1 Government expenditure, fire and STES services

By jurisdiction, 2022-23 (2022-23 dollars) (\$m)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Fire services	1,661.2	2,165.1	924.8	617.6	270.5	134.1	111.8	59.4	5,944.7
Total	1,892.7	2,283.8	955.7	617.6	312.6	142.9	115.4	65.3	6,386.0
State and territory Emergency Service organisations	231.5	118.7	30.9	na	42.1	8.8	3.6	5.8	441.3

Source: tables 9A.14 & 9A.15
na Not available.

Data tables are referenced above by a '9A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) is available for download from section 9 (in Excel and CSV format).



Emergency management policy settings

Three key legal frameworks guide Australian emergency management processes (AIDR 2023):

- National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (Council of Australian Governments [COAG] 2011)
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015)

- National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (Commonwealth of Australia 2018).

These frameworks outline key priorities and principles for emergency management policy including:

- the need for a greater focus on natural hazard prevention, mitigation and preparedness
- shared responsibility for emergency management between a range of stakeholders including community, business and government
- the importance of managing disaster risk.

Shifting focus to prevention, mitigation and preparedness

Australia's emergency management arrangements are underpinned by what is known as the 'comprehensive approach' which recognises four phases of emergency management: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) (AIDR 2023). These phases are not always distinct or sequential. For instance, activities that promote recovery by "building back better" can also mitigate the impact of future hazards.

In recent decades, national emergency management frameworks and inquiries including the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (COAG 2011), the Royal Commission into National Disaster Arrangements (Commonwealth of Australia 2020), and the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Natural National Disaster Funding Arrangements (Productivity Commission 2015) have emphasised the need to shift focus from response and recovery efforts to prevention, mitigation and preparedness efforts.

Prevention and mitigation

Prevention measures aim to remove or reduce the impact of future hazards. Mitigation measures accept that events will occur and try to lessen the inevitable impact of natural hazards. Examples of prevention and mitigation measures include:

- community education and awareness
- critical infrastructure protection
- ensuring access to publicly available geologic and topographic mapping and hazard monitoring services
- implementing specific hazard and disaster risk research studies (AIDR 2023).

Preparedness

Preparedness refers to the ability to be ready for, or plan action in response to or in recovery from a hazard. Examples of preparedness measures include:

- developing household emergency plans and preparing emergency kits
- developing tailored response and recovery plans
- public warning systems (AIDR 2023).

Case study: Flood mitigation, prevention and preparedness efforts in Queensland

Floods are the most expensive and second most deadly type of natural disaster to occur in Australia (Australian Climate Service 2023). Queensland is one of the most flood-prone states in Australia. In the summer of 2021-22, South East Queensland experienced flooding that resulted in an estimated cost of \$7.7 billion for the state. This figure includes tangible costs

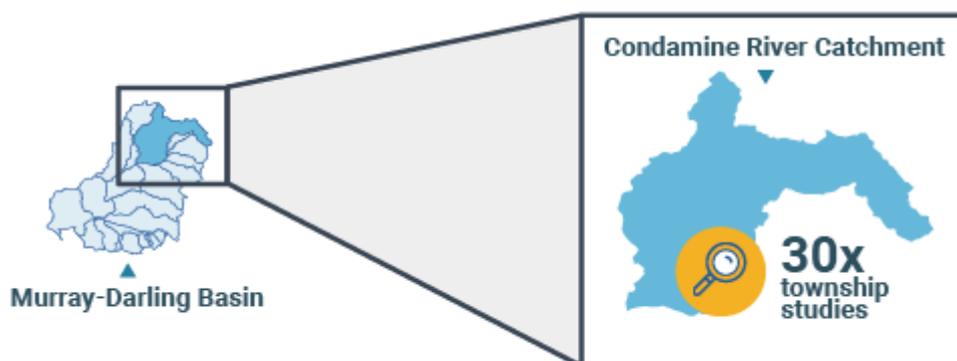
such as damage to residential, commercial and public infrastructure assets, as well as the estimated health and social costs (Deloitte Access Economics 2022).



Local governments hold primary responsibility for flood risk management in Queensland, but various state-level agencies play a role in policy making, governance and service provision, including the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA), the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP), and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). Together, these agencies are implementing flood mitigation, prevention and preparedness measures to safeguard Queensland residents and communities from future floods.

Flood studies

Flood studies are detailed technical examinations of flood behaviour that are essential for informing prevention, mitigation and preparedness efforts (AIDR 2017). After the devastating 2010-11 floods in Queensland, the Toowoomba Regional Council undertook flood studies for 30 townships and the Condamine River Catchment in one of the largest series of flood study projects undertaken by a local council in Australia (QRA 2023).



Community awareness

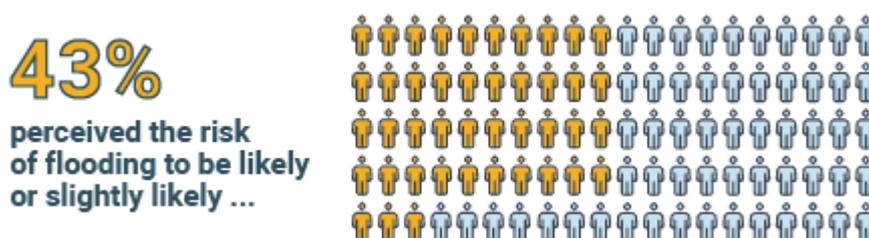
Increasing community awareness of natural hazards helps to mitigate the effects of emergency events by assisting individuals and communities to prepare. Examples of community awareness programs undertaken by government agencies in Queensland include:

- The Queensland Reconstruction Authority's Get Ready Queensland program, which promotes household and community resilience to a range of natural hazards including floods through local government disaster dashboards, emergency service expos, business continuity workshops, school visits and information resources for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (QRA 2023).

- The QFES 'If it's Flooded, Forget it' community safety advertising campaign, which ran between October 2022 to April 2023 to discourage driving in flooded areas. The campaign was broadcast widely on radio, television, digital and social media (QFES 2023).

Household preparedness

Creating household emergency plans is a key part of individual and family emergency preparedness and often an intended outcome of the community awareness programs run by emergency services. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' 2022 survey of community attitudes to hazard preparedness indicated that the proportion of Queenslanders who perceived the risk of flooding to be likely or slightly likely was 43%, and of these, only 21% felt very prepared for floods.



The survey asked respondents if they had made specific property changes to reduce the impact of natural hazards and found that:

- 15% of respondents indicated that they had raised, relocated, replaced materials or sealed a building for flood protection
- 15% had installed back up energy to power essential services to their homes
- 14% had installed/maintained a storm/wind/flood/fire break (Ipsos 2022).

Flood warnings

Effective flood warnings alert communities and emergency services about approaching floods and encourage those at risk to take protective action. Flood warning infrastructure such as rain and river gauges monitor water height and rainfall levels in a catchment. This data is then used to predict the expected scale and location of a potential flood. Past reviews of the flood warning infrastructure in Queensland include:

- a performance review of Queensland's rainfall and river gauge network in 2015 which identified priority local government areas for future infrastructure improvements (Kellogg Brown & Root 2015)
- the Fitzroy Regional Resilience Strategy (Flood) which reviewed flood warning infrastructure at the catchment level in the Fitzroy region of Queensland during 2019-20 (AIDR 2022).

These reviews have informed attempts to improve Queensland's existing flood warning systems, including the Flood Warning Infrastructure Network (FWIN) (a program developing a network of flood warning gauges). In 2022, \$7 million of the larger \$75 million 2021-22 Emergency Response Fund for Queensland was designated for the Flood Warning Infrastructure Program. In addition, in 2023, the Australian government agreed to provide \$236

million to improve priority flood warning infrastructure over the next 10 years across Australia (AIDR 2022; QRA 2023).

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Report on Government Services 2024

PART D, SECTION 9: RELEASED ON 29 JANUARY 2024

9 Emergency services for fire and other events

This section focuses on performance reporting for emergency services for fire events. Descriptive information is included on emergency services for other events, with performance reporting to be developed for future Reports.

The **Indicator results** tab uses data from the data tables to provide information on the performance for each indicator in the **Indicator framework**. The same data is also available in CSV format.

Data downloads

[9 Emergency services data tables \(XLSX 292.9 KB\)](#)

[9 Emergency services dataset \(CSV 802.8 KB\)](#)

Refer to the corresponding table number in the data tables for detailed definitions, caveats, footnotes and data source(s).

[Guide: How to find what you need in RoGS \(PDF 288.5 KB\)](#)

Context

Objectives for emergency services for fire and other events

Emergency services for fire and other events aim to reduce the adverse effects of events on the community (including people, property, infrastructure, the economy and the environment).

Governments' seek to provide emergency services that:

- contribute to the community's management of risks and its preparedness, through the promotion of risk reduction and mitigation activities
- are accessible, responsive and sustainable.

Governments aim for emergency services to meet these objectives in an equitable and efficient manner.

Service overview

An emergency event is an event that endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and requires a significant and coordinated response. A fire event is an incident that is reported to a fire service organisation and requires a response. Fire events include (but are not limited to):

- structure fires (that is, fires inside a building or structure), regardless of whether there is damage to the structure
- landscape fires, including bushfires and grass fires, regardless of the size of the area burnt
- other fires, including vehicle and other mobile property fires, and outside rubbish fires.

Other events that require an emergency response from fire services or state and territory emergency services include road crash rescue, floods, storms and other natural disasters.

Roles and responsibilities

Fire service organisations and state and territory emergency services (STES) are some of the primary agencies involved in providing emergency services for fire and other events. The role of these organisations varies across jurisdictions but commonly includes prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities.

Each state and territory government operates multiple emergency service agencies, which service different populations and geographic areas according to specified governance arrangements (see table 9.1 below). Fire service and STES organisations work closely with other government departments and agencies that also have responsibilities in the case of fire and other emergency events.

This section covers the finances and activities of urban and rural fire service organisations and STES. For selected tables and jurisdictions, the fire service organisation data includes finances and activities of the relevant land management agencies.

Table 9.1 Agencies with responsibilities for emergency services for fire and other events, 2022-23

NSW	Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW); NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) (the fire agencies); National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); Forestry Corporation NSW (FCNSW) (for fire response on their managed lands) and NSW State Emergency Service (SES) (for flood, storm and tsunami).
Vic	Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV); Country Fire Authority (CFA); Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).
Qld	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) (Fire and Rescue Service); Rural Fire Service; State Emergency Service; the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (QPWS&P) and Department of Environment and Science (including national parks, state forests and world heritage areas).
WA	WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).
SA	South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service; South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) and Forestry SA and SA State Emergency Service (SES).
Tas	Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) (for urban, structural and privately managed rural land); Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service (PWS) (for national parks and other reserves, including future potential production forest lands); Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT) (for declared forest land/State forest) and Tasmania State Emergency Service (SES) (for floods, storms/severe weather, coastal inundation (storm tide)).
ACT	ACT Fire and Rescue; ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS); ACT Parks and Conservation Service and ACT State Emergency Service (ACTSES).

NT	NT Fire and Rescue Service; Bushfires NT; Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT and NT Emergency Service (NTES) (for cyclone, earthquake, floods, storm surge and water damage and tsunami).
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Funding

Nationally in 2022-23, the total revenue of fire service organisations was \$5.5 billion (including Western Australia STES), a real increase of 5.4% from 2021-22.

STES revenue (excluding Western Australia) was \$437.3 million, a real increase of 14.1% from 2021-22. This was driven by a \$36.3 million increase in government grants and appropriations in Victoria. A single department is responsible for both fire and emergency services in Western Australia and revenue cannot be separately reported for their state emergency service (including volunteer marine rescue) (table 9.2).

Select year(s):

Multiple values

Table 9.2 Fire service organisations and State and Territory Emergency Services (STES) organisations revenue

By jurisdiction, by year (2022-23 dollars) (\$m)

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Fire service organisations	2022-23	1,623.1	1,818.7	904.8	556.9	306.9	141.0	97.1	73.9	5,522.3
	2021-22	1,472.1	1,752.8	871.6	547.7	316.0	141.8	96.4	42.3	5,240.6
	2013-14	1,308.6	1,421.0	738.8	405.2	246.8	88.0	74.6	38.7	4,321.7
STES organisations	2022-23	235.0	119.5	30.9	na	41.2	4.5	1.7	4.5	437.3
	2021-22	235.3	82.2	23.9	na	30.2	5.4	1.6	4.7	383.3
	2013-14	105.0	66.0	12.2	na	na	5.8	2.3	3.7	195.1

Source: tables 9A.1 & 9A.2

na Not available

Data tables are referenced above by a '9A' prefix and all data (footnotes and data sources) is available for download above (in Excel and CSV format).



Funding models to resource fire service organisations and STES organisations differ across jurisdictions. For fire services in four jurisdictions (New South Wales, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory), nearly 50% or more of revenue was from government grants in 2022-23. In the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, the proportion was over 90%.

Levies were the largest source of revenue (over 60%) in 2022-23 in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania (table 9A.1).

For STES in 2022-23, state or territory government grants provided over 90% of revenue for Victoria, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Levies were the largest revenue source in New South Wales and South Australia (over 80%) (table 9A.2).

The Australian Government provides funding to state and territory governments through programs including:

- the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, which provide assistance with relief and recovery efforts following an eligible natural disaster. In 2022-23, the Australian Government provided \$2,432.7 million in cash payments to states and territories (Australian Government 2023). This figure differs from the estimate in table 9A.3, which reflects payments to states and territories on an accrual basis. Allocations vary across jurisdictions and over time depending on the timing and nature of natural disaster events
- the Preparing Australian Communities Program Local, which supports projects that mitigate or reduce the risk, impact and consequences associated with large-scale natural hazards. In 2022-23, the Australian Government spent \$27.9 million on this fund (table 9A.3)
- the Disaster Risk Reduction Fund, which supports initiatives to reduce the risk and limit the impact of disasters in line with the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework. In 2022-23, the Australian Government provided \$20.9 million in funding under this program (table 9A.3)
- the Emergency Response Fund, which complements existing sources of funding for emergency response and disaster recovery. In 2022-23, the Australian Government committed \$325.0 million from the Emergency Response Fund (table 9A.3).

In 2022-23, the Australian Government also provided \$1.4 billion in financial support to eligible individuals affected by a disaster (table 9A.3).

Size and scope

Human resources

Nationally in 2022-23, 23,480 full-time equivalent (FTE) paid personnel were employed by fire service organisations, with the majority (75.4%) being firefighters. A large number of volunteer personnel (188,067 people) also participated in the delivery of services in 2022-23, a decrease of 2.7% from 2021-22. Nationally, the numbers of volunteer personnel (both firefighters and support staff) have decreased by almost 16% over the reported time series (table 9A.4).

For STES, the majority of personnel were volunteers. In 2022-23 there were 24,703 STES volunteers, similar to 2021-22. There were also 2,703 paid staff in 2022-23. The proportion of volunteer and paid personnel and the nature of their roles varied across jurisdictions (table 9A.5).

Demand for emergency services

Fire service organisations and STES provide emergency response and rescue services for a range of fire and other emergency events. Nationally in 2022-23, fire service organisations attended 413,570 emergency incidents, of which 79,063 were fire events. Fire service organisations also responded to other incident types including road crash rescues, floods and storms, and other hazardous conditions. The number of emergency incidents that fire service organisations responded to over the past five years increased by 5.7% (table 9A.6).

In 2022-23, STES organisations (excluding Queensland) attended 95,411 incidents, the majority of which were storm and cyclone events (54.2% or 51,746 events). The number of incidents requiring STES attendance over the past five years has increased by 36.4% (table 9A.7).

Indicator framework

The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, effectiveness and efficiency, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of emergency services for fire events.

The performance indicator framework shows which data is complete and comparable in this report. For data that is not considered directly comparable, text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. [Section 1](#) discusses data comparability and completeness from a report-wide perspective. In addition to the contextual information for this service area (see Context tab), the report’s statistical context ([section 2](#)) contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this section.

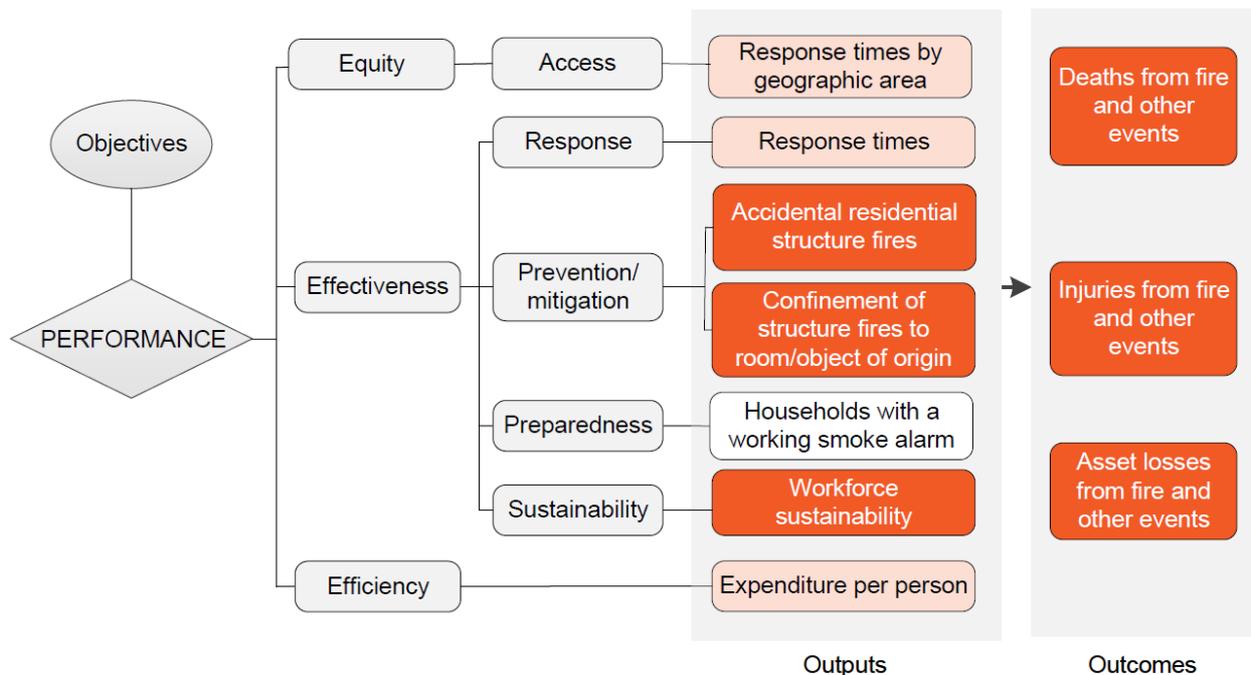
Improvements to performance reporting for emergency services for fire and other events are ongoing and include identifying data sources to fill gaps in reporting for performance indicators and measures, and improving the comparability and completeness of data.

Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see section 1). Output information is also critical for equitable, efficient and effective management of government services.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (see section 1).



Key to indicators*

- Text Most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete
- Text Most recent data for at least one measure is comparable and complete
- Text Most recent data for all measures is either not comparable and/or not complete
- Text No data reported and/or no measures yet developed

* A description of the comparability and completeness is provided under the Indicator results tab for each measure

Text version of indicator framework

Performance – linked to Objectives

Outputs

Equity – Access

- Response times by geographic area – most recent data for all measures is either not comparable and/or not complete

Effectiveness – Response

- Response times – most recent data for all measures is either not comparable and/or not complete

Effectiveness – Prevention/mitigation

- Accidental residential structure fires – most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete
- Confinement of structure fires to room/object of origin – most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete

Effectiveness – Preparedness

- Households with a working smoke alarm – no data reported and/or no measures yet developed

Effectiveness – Sustainability

- Workforce sustainability – most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete

Efficiency

- Expenditure per person – most recent data for all measures is either not comparable and/or not complete

Outcomes

- Deaths from fire and other events – most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete
- Injuries from fire and other events – most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete
- Asset losses from fire and other events – most recent data for all measures is comparable and complete

A description of the comparability and completeness is provided under the Indicator results tab for each measure.

Indicator results

This section presents an overview of 'Emergency services for fire and other events' performance indicator results. Different delivery contexts, locations and types of clients can affect the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of emergency services.

Information to assist the interpretation of these data can be found with the indicators below and all data (footnotes and data sources) is available for download above as an excel spreadsheet and as a CSV dataset. Data tables are identified by a '9A' prefix (for example, table 9A.1).

Specific data used in figures can be downloaded by clicking in the figure area, navigating to the bottom of the visualisation to the grey toolbar, clicking on the 'Download' icon and selecting 'Data' from the menu. Selecting 'PDF' or 'Powerpoint' from the 'Download' menu will download a static view of the performance indicator results.

1. Response times by geographic area

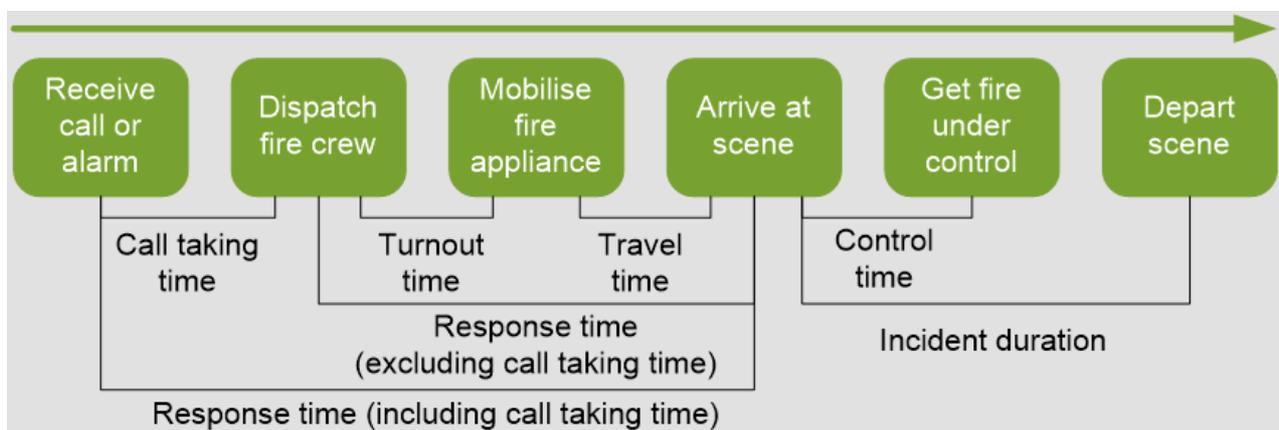
'Response times by geographic area' is a proxy indicator of governments' objective to provide fire services in an equitable manner.

'Response times by geographic area' is defined as the time taken between the arrival of the first fire crew appliance (that is, fire engine, truck or other fire emergency vehicle) at the scene of a structure fire and:

- *initial receipt of the triple zero (000) call at the communications centre (including call taking time), by remoteness area.* Response time (including call taking time) reflects jurisdictions' overall responsiveness to the notification of a structure fire
- *dispatch of the responding fire crew (excluding call taking time), by remoteness area.* Response time (excluding call taking time) reflects service organisations' responsiveness to the notification of a structure fire.

Response times are measured for emergency calls only.

Response times are calculated as the time (in minutes) within which 50% of first responding fire crews arrived at the scene of a structure fire and the time (in minutes) within which 90% of first responding fire crews arrived at the scene of a structure fire. The diagram below illustrates the steps involved in responding to an emergency from the initial receipt of an emergency call.



Many factors influence response times by geographic area including:

- land area

- population size and density
- dispersion of the population (particularly rural/urban population proportions), topography, road/transport infrastructure and traffic densities
- crew configurations, response systems and processes, and travel distances - for example, some jurisdictions include responses from volunteer stations (often in rural areas) where turnout times are generally longer because volunteers are on call as distinct from being on duty.

Similar response times across different geographies suggest equitable access by area. Low numbers of structure fire incidents often exist in remote and very remote locations. This can contribute to large fluctuations in response times in these areas.

In 2022-23, the time within which 50% of the first responding fire crew appliances arrived at the scene of a structure fire within major cities ranged from:

- 6.2 to 9.2 minutes including call taking time
- 6.0 to 7.6 minutes excluding call taking time (table 9.3).

In 2022-23, the time within which 90% of the first responding fire crew appliances arrived at the scene of a structure fire within major cities ranged from:

- 9.3 to 13.6 minutes including call taking time
- 8.8 to 11.4 minutes excluding call taking time (table 9.3).

Response times are generally longer for all jurisdictions in regional and remote areas, compared to major cities (table 9.3).

Data is not comparable across jurisdictions, but is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time.

Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):

Multiple values

Select measure:

Including call taking time

Excluding call taking time

Select percentile:

50th percentile

90th percentile

Table 9.3 Response times to structure fires

Including call taking time, 50th percentile, by jurisdiction, by remoteness, by year (minutes)

		NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Major cities	2022-23	7.2	6.2	8.1	9.2	7.4	..	7.4	..
	2021-22	6.9	6.0	8.3	9.4	7.3	..	7.5	..
	2013-14	7.1	6.4	7.4	8.1	na	..	7.2	..
Inner regional	2022-23	10.3	8.9	8.7	16.2	13.6	7.9
	2021-22	10.1	8.6	8.4	15.0	13.0	8.0
	2013-14	10.4	8.7	7.9	11.3	na	7.8
Outer regional	2022-23	11.0	9.4	8.7	9.5	12.1	10.0	..	7.0
	2021-22	11.4	10.1	8.3	11.3	11.7	13.2	..	9.2
	2013-14	10.5	9.3	8.8	10.1	na	11.7	..	7.4
Remote	2022-23	10.8	13.5	6.8	16.2	13.4	10.6	..	5.8
	2021-22	13.9	15.3	7.2	17.6	15.0	18.5	..	9.2
	2013-14	10.0	np	10.4	13.8	na	9.3	..	7.5
Very remote	2022-23	10.8	..	9.7	16.2	11.1	7,208.9	..	6.2
	2021-22	7.3	..	9.6	16.9	15.1	25.3	..	12.6
	2013-14	11.2	..	9.7	11.3	na	na	..	9.4

Source: table 9A.9

na Not available. np Not published. .. Not applicable

2. Response times

'Response times' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide emergency services that are accessible and responsive.

'Response times' is defined as the time taken between the arrival of the first fire crew appliance (that is, fire engine, truck or other fire emergency vehicle) at the scene of a structure fire and:

- *initial receipt of the triple zero (000) call at the communications centre*. Response time (*including* call taking time) reflects jurisdictions' overall responsiveness to the notification of a structure fire
- *dispatch of the responding fire crew*. Response time (*excluding* call taking time) reflects service organisations' responsiveness to the notification of a structure fire.

See Response times by geographic area for further information on the scope and calculation of response times.

Shorter response times suggest that services are more accessible and responsive.

In 2022-23, the time within which 50% of the first responding fire crew appliances arrived at the scene of a structure fire statewide ranged from:

- 6.4 to 9.8 minutes including call taking time
- 4.3 to 8.1 minutes excluding call taking time.

In 2022-23, the time within which 90% of the first responding fire crew appliances arrived at the scene of a structure fire statewide ranged from:

- 11.2 to 17.9 minutes including call taking time
- 8.6 to 15.7 minutes excluding call taking time (figure 9.1).

■ Data is not comparable across jurisdictions, but is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time.

■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year:

2022-23

Measure:

■ Including call taking time

■ Excluding call taking time

Select percentile:

● 50th percentile

○ 90th percentile

Figure 9.1 Response times to structure fires

By call taking time, 50th percentile, statewide, by jurisdiction, 2022-23 (a)



Source: tables 9A.9 & 9A.10

(a) Data including call taking time is not available for SA prior to 2014-15.

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3. Accidental residential structure fires

'Accidental residential structure fires' is an indicator of governments' objective to contribute to the community's management of risks through the promotion of risk reduction and mitigation activities.

'Accidental residential structure fires' is defined as the rate of accidental residential structure fires per 100,000 households, by selected equity groups.

Accidental residential structure fires are fires that are not deliberately lit and could have been reduced or prevented with effective education programs.

For the first time, this report includes data on the rates of accidental residential structure fires for the following selected equity groups:

- people from regional and remote areas according to ABS remoteness area classifications
- people living in low socio-economic areas according to ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) quintiles.

Household rates for equity groups are calculated using ABS Census estimates of households (occupied private dwellings) and thus rates are only available for Census years.

A low or decreasing incidence of accidental residential structure fire indicates greater community preparedness. Similar rates across remoteness areas and SEIFA IRSD quintiles suggests similar

levels of community preparedness across equity groups. Higher rates might indicate opportunities to improve community preparedness for particular equity groups.

The rate of accidental residential structure fires per 100,000 households should be interpreted with caution. In particular, rates are affected by differences across jurisdictions in distinguishing accidental residential structure fires from structure fires resulting from other causes.

Nationally, in 2022-23, the rate of accidental residential structure fires was 55.5 per 100,000 households, a decrease from 68.6 in 2021-22 and the lowest rate over the past 10 years (85.6 per 100,000 households in 2013-14) (figure 9.2).

The most recent data available on the rate of accidental residential structure fires per 100,000 households, by selected equity groups, is for the period 2021-22. Nationally, in 2021-22, the rates of accidental residential structure fires were:

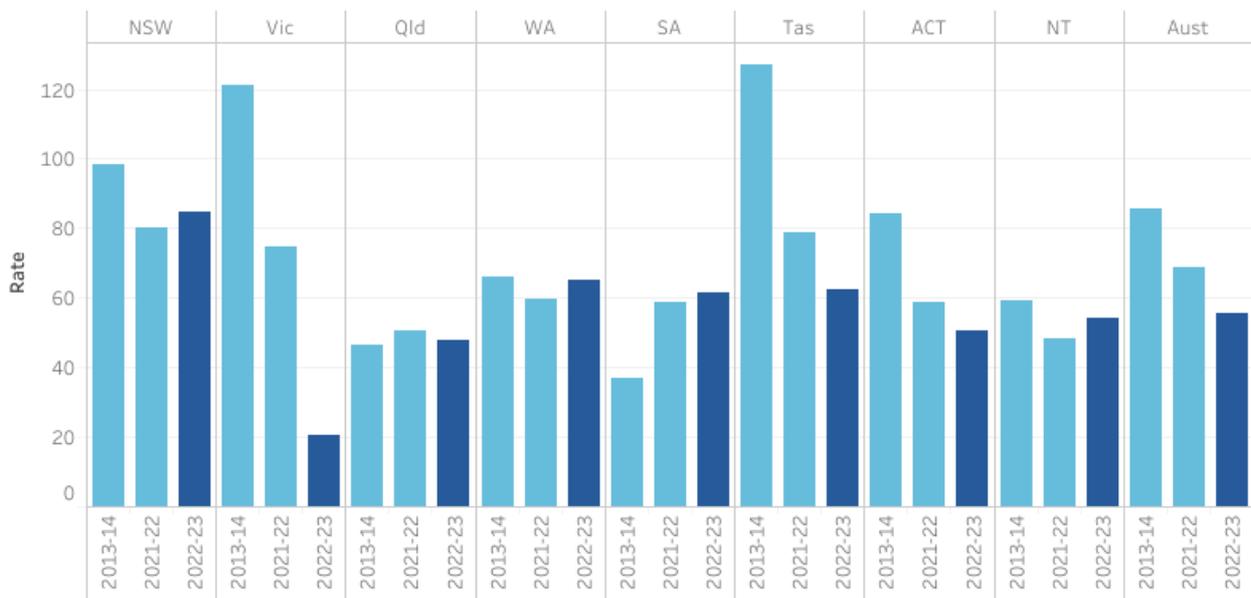
- higher for households in major cities (83.0 per 100,000 households) compared to remote and very remote areas (67.2 and 38.4 per 100,000 households, respectively)
- higher for households in the lowest socio-economic areas (96.0 per 100,000 households) compared to the highest socio-economic areas (63.2 per 100,000 households) (table 9A.11).

Supporting data on accidental residential structure fires by smoke alarm status is available in table 9A.12. Refer to Households with a working smoke alarm for more information.

- Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions.
- Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):
Multiple values

Figure 9.2 Accidental residential structure fires
Per 100,000 households, by jurisdiction, by year



Source: table 9A.11

4. Confinement of structure fires to room/object of origin

‘Confinement of structure fires to room/object of origin’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to contribute to the community’s management of risks through the promotion of risk reduction and mitigation activities.

‘Confinement of structure fires to room/object of origin’ is defined as the proportion of structure fires confined to the room, part room or object of origin, by ignition type.

Structure fires include building fires and fires in buildings confined to non-combustible containers. Structure fires without a value attributed to confinement are excluded.

The ignition types reported separately are all; accidental; incendiary and suspicious; and other.

A high or increasing proportion of structure fires confined to the room, part room or object of origin is desirable.

Nationally in 2022-23, 76.3% of structure fires were confined, a decrease from a slight ten year high of 78.6% in 2020-21. The rate of confinement in 2022-23 was highest for accidental structure fires (83.5%) and lowest for structure fires by other ignition types (56.8%). The rate of confinement for incendiary and suspicious structure fires in 2022-23 was 66.1% (figure 9.3).

■ Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):

Multiple values

Select ignition type:

- All
- Accidental
- Incendiary and suspicious
- Other

Figure 9.3 All structure fires that were confined to the room/object of origin
By jurisdiction, by year



Source: table 9A.13

5. Households with a working smoke alarm

'Households with a working smoke alarm' is an indicator of governments' objective to contribute to the community's management of risks and its preparedness.

'Households with a working smoke alarm' is defined by the proportion of all households with a smoke alarm that is operational/has been tested (manually in the past 12 months).

A high or increasing proportion of households with an operational smoke alarm indicates greater community preparedness.

Data is not yet available for reporting against this indicator.

Administrative data on accidental residential structure fires by smoke alarm status is available in table 9A.12. Nationally in 2022-23 (excluding New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory), 22.7% of accidental residential structure fires had a complete Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS) smoke alarm operation code. The smoke alarm operated in 64.6% of these fires, but in other instances was not present (23.8%), did not operate (5.9%) or the fire was too small to activate the smoke alarm (5.8%) (table 9A.12).

Refer to Accidental residential structure fires for more information.

6. Workforce sustainability

'Workforce sustainability' is an indicator of governments' objective to provide emergency services that are sustainable.

Firefighter workforce sustainability concerns the capacity of the firefighter workforce to meet current and projected demand.

'Workforce sustainability' is defined by two measures:

- 'workforce by age group' - the proportion of the firefighting workforce (headcount) in 10-year age groups (under 30, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59 and 60 years and over)
- 'workforce attrition' - the proportion of the firefighting workforce (FTE) who exited the organisation.

The firefighting workforce comprises any person employed or remunerated by the fire service organisation who delivers or manages a firefighting service directly to the community and who is formally trained and qualified to undertake firefighting duties. It includes permanent, part-time and other employees. It excludes the support workforce (non-firefighting staff).

A low or decreasing proportion of the workforce in younger age groups and/or a high or increasing proportion of the workforce in older age groups suggest potential workforce sustainability problems as older age workers enter retirement. High and increasing levels of staff attrition also suggest potential workforce sustainability problems.

Nationally in 2022-23, 64.6% of the firefighter workforce (headcount) was aged under 50 years. This proportion has decreased over the reported time series (67.9% in 2014-15) (figure 9.4).

■ Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

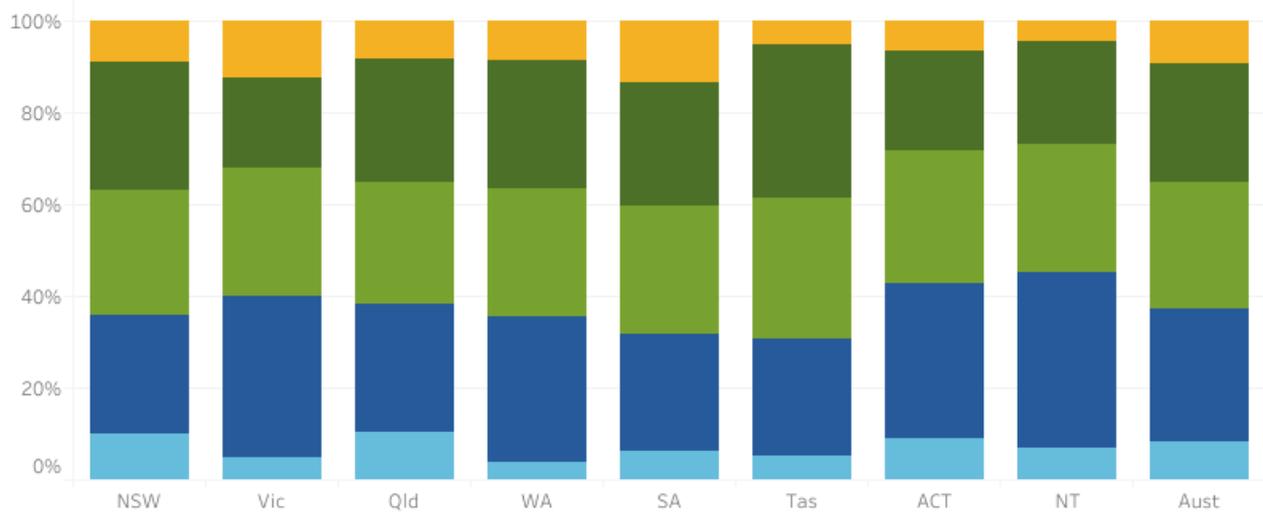
Select year:

2022-23



Figure 9.4 Measure 1: Firefighter workforce (headcount)

By age group, by jurisdiction, 2022-23



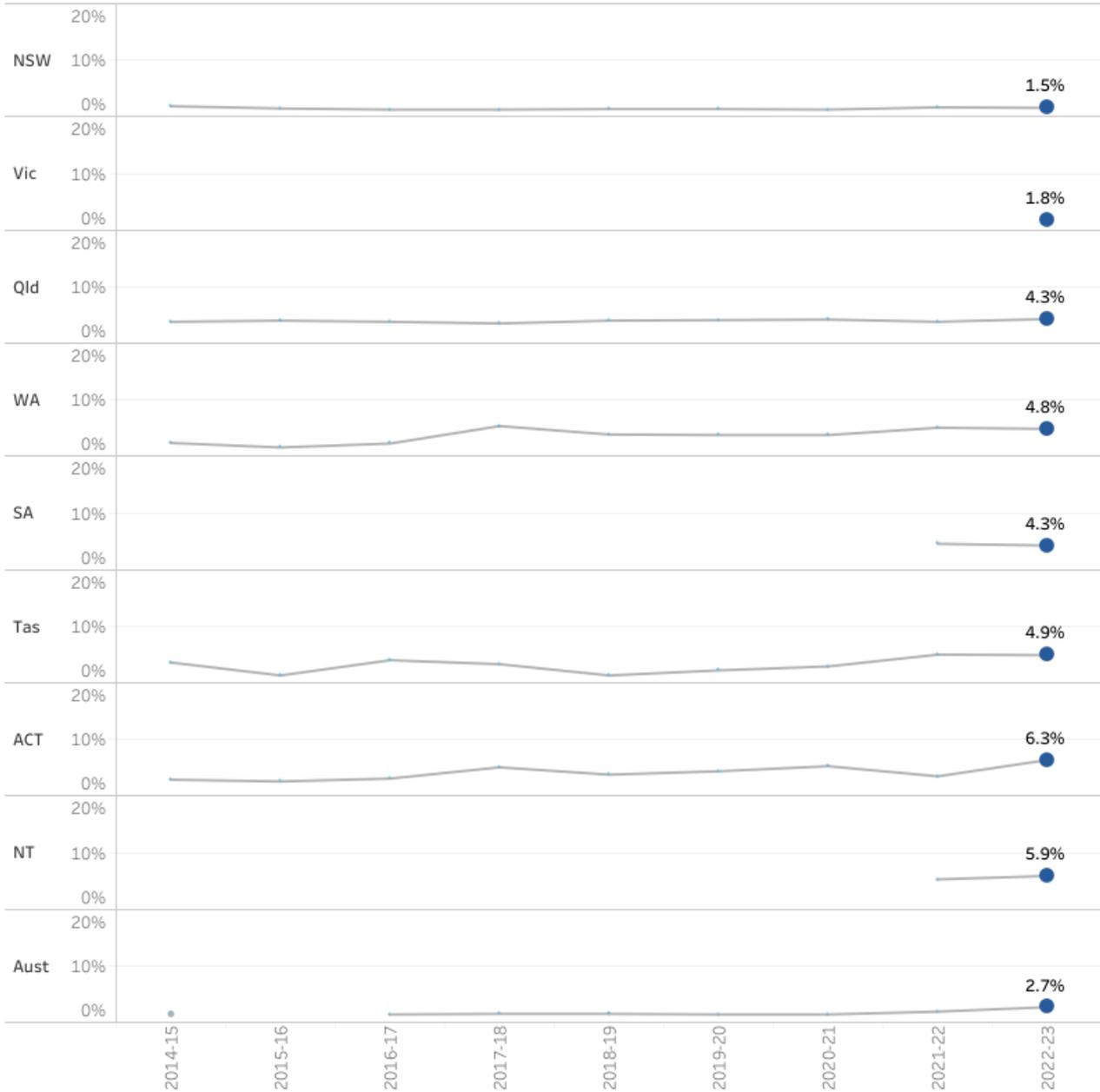
Source: table 9A.4



Nationally in 2022-23, the firefighter workforce (FTE) attrition rate was 2.7%, an increase from 1.9% in 2021-22 (figure 9.5). Headcount attrition rates are also provided in table 9A.4.

- Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.
- Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Figure 9.5 Measure 2: Firefighting workforce attrition (FTE)
By jurisdiction, by year



Source: table 9A.4

(a) Data for Victoria is not available for 2014-15 to 2021-22; Data for South Australia and the Northern Territory is not available for 2014-15 to 2020-21; Data for Australia is not available for 2015-16.

7. Expenditure per person

'Expenditure per person' is a proxy indicator of governments' objective to provide emergency services in an efficient manner.

'Expenditure per person' is defined as total fire service organisation expenditure per person in the population.

All else being equal, lower expenditure per person suggests greater efficiency. However, efficiency data should be interpreted with caution. High or increasing expenditure per person may reflect deteriorating efficiency. Alternatively, it may reflect changes in aspects of the service (such as improved response times), increased resourcing for fire prevention or community preparedness, or changes in the characteristics of fire events (such as more challenging fires).

Expenditure per fire is not used as a measure of efficiency because an organisation that works to reduce the number of fire incidents could erroneously appear to be less efficient due to fixed capital and labour costs.

The role of volunteers needs to be considered when interpreting this indicator. Volunteer personnel provide a substantial proportion of fire services (and emergency services more generally). While training and equipment costs associated with volunteers are included in the cost of fire service provision, the labour costs of providing fire services would be greater without volunteers (assuming these functions were still performed).

Time series data for real recurrent expenditure and capital costs (including associated costs for the user cost of capital) for each jurisdiction is reported in table 9A.14. Information on the treatment of assets by emergency management agencies is presented in table 9.5 in the Explanatory material.

Nationally in 2022-23, total fire service organisation expenditure per person in the population was \$226, an increase from \$214 per person in 2021-22 (figure 9.6). This is the highest level in the past 10 years except for the 2019-20 Australian bushfires year (\$235 per person). Expenditure data disaggregated by labour, capital and other costs is available in table 9A.14.

- Data is not comparable across jurisdictions, but is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time.
■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

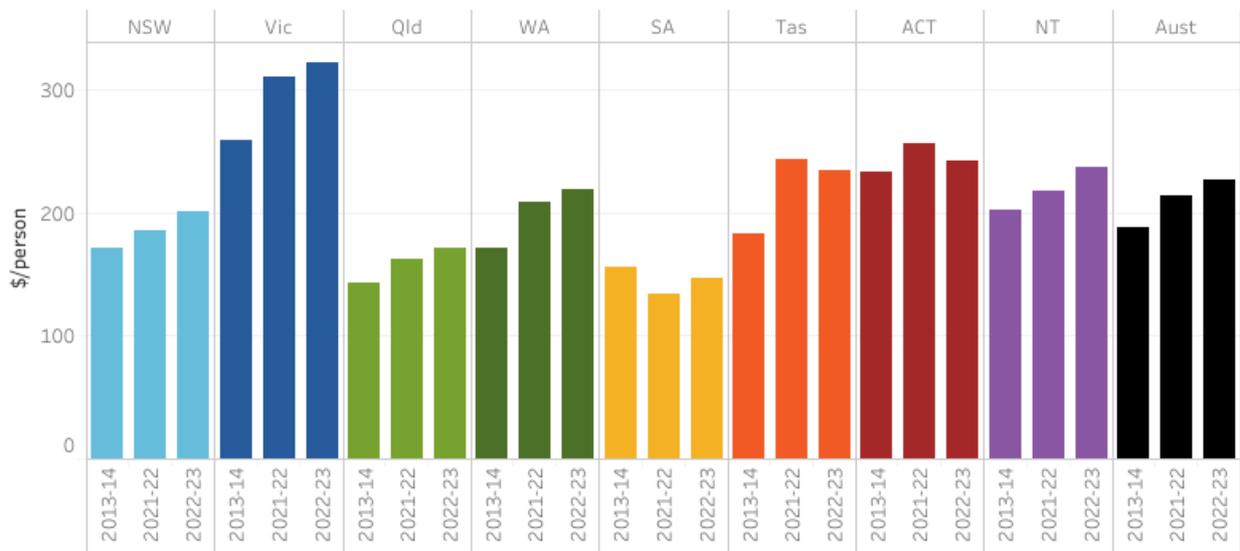
Select year(s):

Multiple values

Jurisdiction:

■ NSW
 ■ Vic
 ■ Qld
 ■ WA
 ■ SA
 ■ Tas
 ■ ACT
 ■ NT
 ■ Aust

Figure 9.6 Fire service organisation expenditure per person
By jurisdiction, by year (2022-23 dollars)



Source: table 9A.14



8. Deaths from fire and other events

'Deaths from fire and other events' is an indicator of governments' objective to reduce the adverse effects of emergency events on the community (including people, property, infrastructure, the economy and the environment).

'Deaths from fire and other events' is defined by three measures:

- fire death rate - deaths, per million people, where the underlying cause of death was fire related to smoke, fire and flames, and including all (structure and landscape) fires
- landscape fire death rate - deaths, per million people, resulting from landscape fires only as confirmed by a coroner or inquest or provisionally by the incident controller or by media reports
- exposure to forces of nature death rate - deaths, per million people, resulting from exposure to forces of nature, including flood, earthquake and excessive natural heat.

Annual fire and exposure to forces of nature death rates can be volatile because of the small number of fire and exposure to forces of nature deaths and the influence of large irregular events. No deaths or a decreasing rate of fire and exposure to forces of nature deaths is desirable.

Nationally in 2022, the annual fire death rate was 5.0 deaths per million people (129 fire deaths) (figure 9.7).

Nationally in 2022-23, the landscape fire death rate was 0.1 per million people (2 landscape fire deaths) (figure 9.7).

Nationally in 2022, the exposure to forces of nature death rate was 3.1 per million people (81 exposure to forces of nature deaths) (figure 9.7).

Road traffic death rates are reported as contextual information in table 9A.16. Further information on road deaths (per 100,000 registered vehicles) and traffic accident hospitalisations are available in the [Police services](#) section of this report.

■ Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

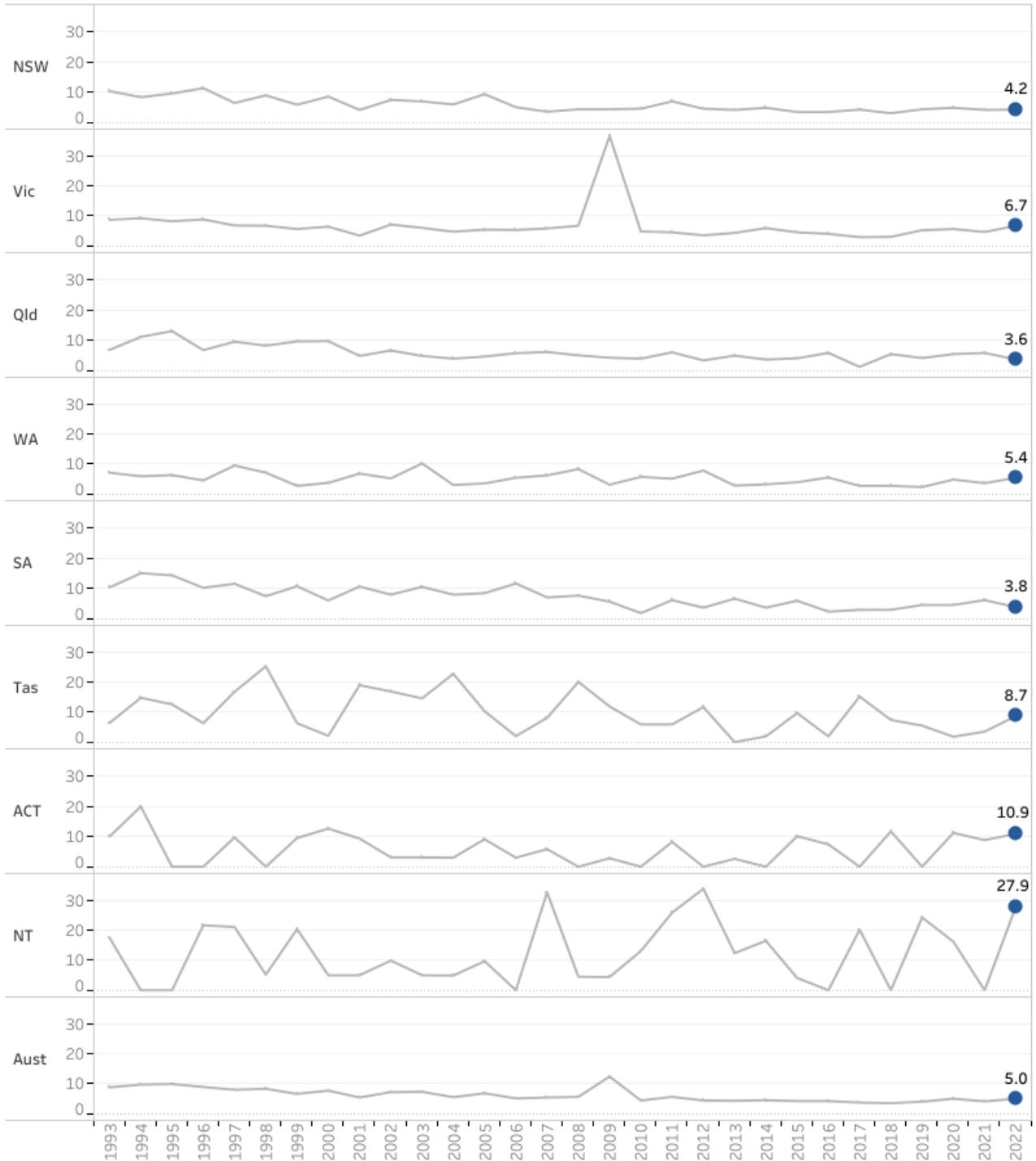
■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select measure:

- Measure 1: Fire deaths
- Measure 2: Landscape fire deaths
- Measure 3: Exposure to forces of nature deaths

Figure 9.7 Measure 1: Fire deaths

Deaths per million people, by jurisdiction, by year (rate)



Source: table 9A.16

9. Injuries from fire and other events

'Injuries from fire and other events' is an indicator of governments' objective to reduce the adverse effects of events on the community (including people, property, infrastructure, the economy and the environment).

'Injuries from fire and other events' is defined by two measures:

- total fire injuries - rate of hospitalised fire injury cases per 100,000 people (annual data)
- extreme weather-related injuries - rate of hospitalised injury cases per 100,000 people resulting from extreme weather-related events, reported separately for heat, bushfire, cold, rain and storms (sum of three years).

Estimates of injuries from fire and other extreme weather-related events are based on hospital separations data in the National Hospital Morbidity Database. Data excludes admitted patients transferred from another hospital, patients who died in hospital and patients admitted for rehabilitation.

Numbers and rates of fire injury hospitalisations are disaggregated by the following selected equity groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from regional and remote areas (based on the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard remoteness area structure)
- people from low socio-economic areas (based on the ABS Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, with quintile 1 being the most disadvantaged and quintile 5 being the least disadvantaged).

No fire or extreme weather-related injuries or a decreasing number and rate of injuries is desirable.

Nationally in 2021-22, there were an estimated 2,192 hospitalised fire injury cases (table 9A.17), equating to a rate of 8.5 per 100,000 people (table 9A.17). Rates were higher for non-Indigenous people, people living in major cities and people living in the lowest socio-economic areas (quintile 1) (figure 9.8a).

■ Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select disaggregation:

- Indigenous status
- Remoteness area
- SEIFA

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Non-Indigenous people

Select year:

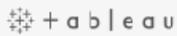
2021-22

Figure 9.8a Measure 1: **Hospital admissions due to fire injury**
Per 100,000 people, by Indigenous status, by jurisdiction, 2021-22 (a)



Source: table 9A.17

(a) There are no very remote areas in Victoria; no major cities in Tasmania; no outer regional or remote areas in the ACT; no major cities or inner regional areas in the NT.



Nationally, for the three-year period 2019-20 to 2021-22, there were an estimated 2,744 hospitalised extreme weather-related injury cases, equating to a rate of 10.7 per 100,000 people over the three-year period. Most extreme weather-related hospitalisations were the result of heat (78.1%), followed by bushfire (10.9%), cold (7.0%), and rain and storms (4.0%) (figure 9.8b).

■ Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Extreme weather event:

■ Heat

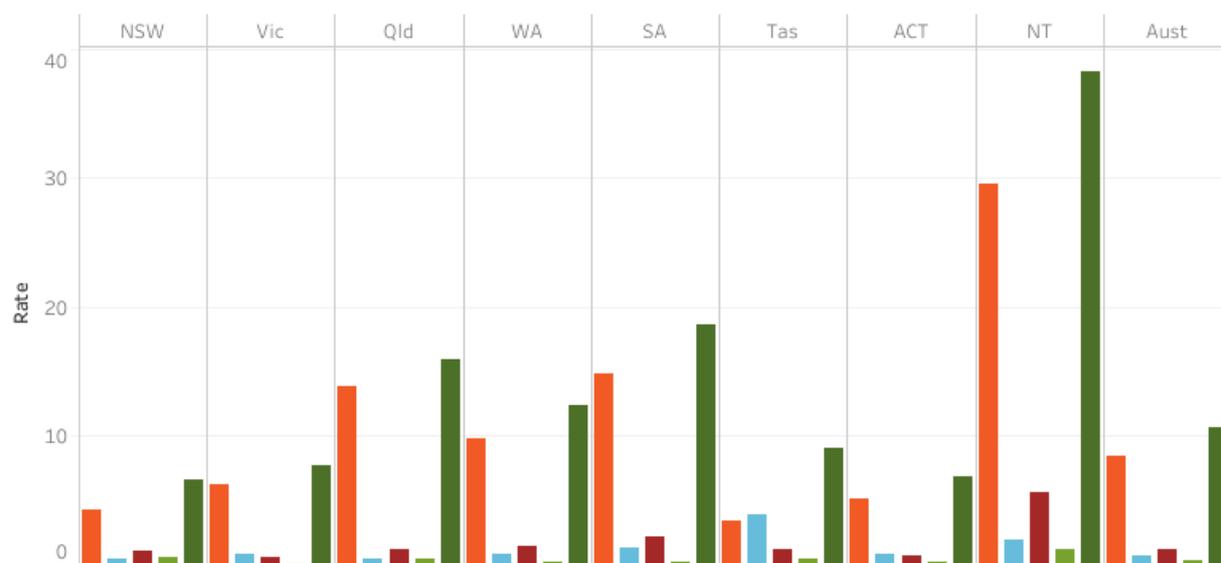
■ Cold

■ Bushfire

■ Rain and storms

■ Total

Figure 9.8b Measure 2: **Extreme weather-related injury hospitalisations**
Per 100,000 people, by extreme weather event, by jurisdiction, 2019-20 to 2021-22



Source: table 9A.18

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10. Value of asset losses from fire and other events

'Value of asset losses from fire and other events' is an indicator of governments' objective to reduce the adverse effects of events on the community (including people, property, infrastructure, the economy and the environment).

'Value of asset losses from fire and other events' is defined by two measures:

- fire events - the estimated monetary value of the damage to domestic (household) property and contents caused by fire and firefighting operations based on insurance claims, reported separately for bushfire and non-bushfire events
- other major weather events - the estimated monetary value of the damage to domestic (household) property and contents caused by other major weather events (e.g., flood, storm) based on insurance claims.

These measures comprise the value of all insurance claims, including those for major events (defined as total claims greater than \$100 million). As a result, there is potential for volatility across the time series due to the unpredictability of major events.

The value of household insurance claims from fire events and other major weather events reflects efforts to reduce the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies on communities. Lower or decreasing asset losses from fire and other major weather events is desirable.

Data should be interpreted with caution as insurance claims may not reflect actual asset losses due to:

- under insurance - insurance payouts are limited by the estimated value of assets a policy holder provides when taking out insurance (and not all assets lost in fire and other major weather events are insured)
- new for old policies - new for old policies replace an old asset with a new equivalent
- excess policies - small losses from fire and other weather events are not recorded where no insurance claim is made. Policy holders might not make an insurance claim for small losses given the requirement for policy holders to pay an excess.

Data reflects approximately 70% and 80% of the potential domestic and commercial insurance markets, respectively.

Nationally in 2022-23, the value of household fire event claims per person in the population was \$29.37 (excluding bushfire event claims), this figure increased slightly to \$29.45 including bushfire event claims (figure 9.9).

Nationally in 2022-23, the value of other major weather event claims per person in the population was \$81.42 (figure 9.9).

The average value of the 6,596 total fire event insurance claims (including bushfire event claims) for households was \$117,288 in 2022-23. The total value of household asset losses from all fire events was \$773.6 million in 2022-23 (table 9A.19). Supporting data on commercial fire event claims (reported separately for bushfire and non-bushfire events) is available in table 9A.19.

The average value of the 33,266 other major weather event insurance claims was \$64,293 in 2022-23. The total value of household asset losses for other major weather events was \$2.1 billion (table 9A.20). Supporting data on commercial major weather event claims is available in table 9A.20.

Some negative values are reported in average and total value of claims (tables 9A.19–20). Negative values are the result of delays finalising insurance claims for large events, insurers revising their reserves, and third-party recoveries.

The bushfire events captured across the reported time series are:

- the 'Black Summer' bushfires - November/December 2019
- Pinery Bushfires - November 2015
- New South Wales Bushfires - October 2013.

■ Data is comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time.

■ Data is complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period.

Select year(s):

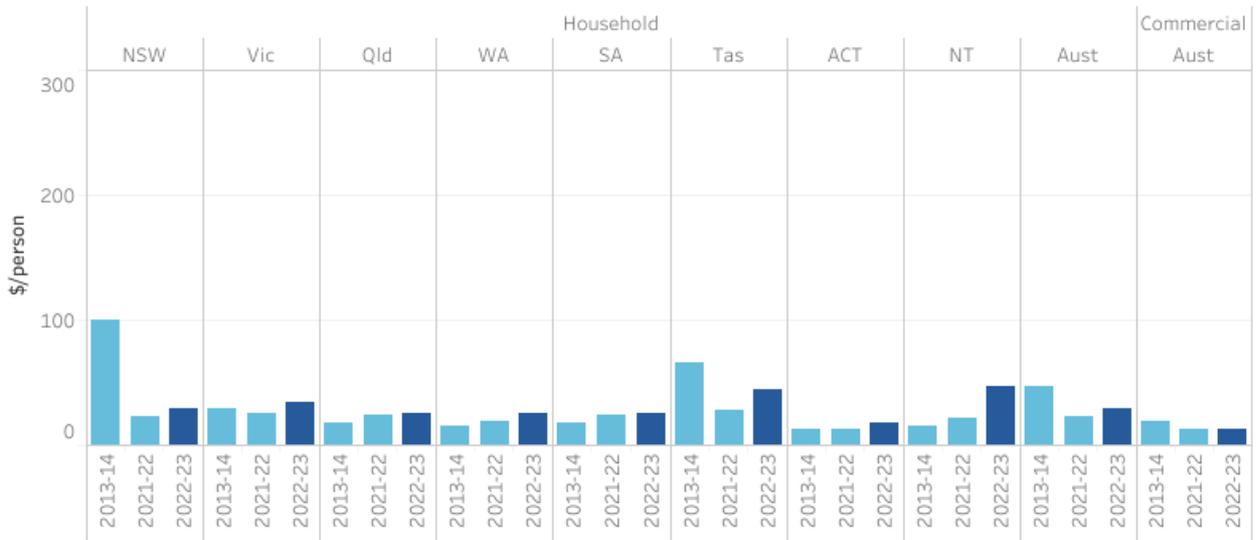
Multiple values

Select measure:

- Fire event insurance claims, excluding bushfire
- Total fire event insurance claims, including bushfire
- Other non-fire weather event insurance claims

Figure 9.9 Fire event insurance claims, excluding bushfire

Total value of claims per person in the population, by jurisdiction, by year (2022-23 dollars)



Source: tables 9A.19 & 9A.20

Explanatory material

Interpreting efficiency data

Table 9.5 Treatment of assets by emergency management agencies^a

		NSW ^b	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT ^c	NT
Depreciation method	Depreciable assets	Straight-line	Straight-line	Straight-line	Straight-line	Straight-line	Straight-line	Straight-line	Straight-line
Revaluation method	Land	Fair or market value	Deprival or market value	Fair or market value	Fair value based on current market value or basis of existing use	Market value	Fair value or historical cost	Market value	na
	Buildings	RFS: Fair or market value; FRNSW: Depreciated Replacement Cost for fire stations	Deprival or market value	Fair or market value	Fair value based on current market value or basis of existing use	Market value	Fair value or historical cost	Market value	na
	Other assets	RFS: Fair or market value; FRNSW: fire appliances: Depreciated Replacement Cost; Other P & E: Depreciated historical cost.	Deprival or market value	Fair or market value	na	Market value	na	na	na
Frequency of revaluations (years)	Land, buildings	3	1-5	1-4	Annually	6	5	3	na
	Other assets	5	1-5	1-4	Historical cost	6	na	na	na
Useful asset lives (years)	Buildings	40	12-66	15-80	40	40-50	33-100	30-40	40
	Specialist equipment	RFS: 10; FRNSW: 15-30	2-50	3-20	10-15	10-20	5-25	10	5-10
	IT equipment	3-5	3-5	3-5	3	5	5-10	4	na
	Other vehicles	RFS: 3-5; FRNSW: 2-15	2-20	2-10	5-25	15-20	5-10	7-15	5-15
	Office equipment^e	RFS: 5-10; FRNSW: 5-20	2-20	3-10	10-15	10	3-10	10	na
	Other equipment^f	–	3-20	3-10	5-15	10	3-10	10	na

		NSW ^b	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT ^c	NT
Threshold capitalisation levels (\$)	Buildings	RFS: 10,000; FRNSW 3,000	All	10,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	na
	IT equipment	RFS: 10,000; FRNSW 3,000	1,000	5,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	na
	Other assets	RFS: 10,000; FRNSW 3,000	1,000	5,000	5,000	10,000	10,000	5,000	na

a Market value is the current (net) value market selling price or exchange value; deprival value may be either the depreciated replacement cost of an asset of a similar service potential or the stream of its future economic benefits. **b** The assets used by the NSW Rural Fire Service are largely vested in local government. Accordingly, although issues such as asset depreciation and useful lives may be guided by Service policies, local government policies will prevail in other areas. **c** Treatment includes all four response agencies: the ACT Fire and Rescue, the ACT Rural Fire Service, the ACT State Emergency Service and the ACT Ambulance Service. Assets have been manually apportioned. Apportionment process varies from previous years. **d** Estimated as 1/depreciation rate. Asset lives for some assets have been grouped with other classifications. **e** For some jurisdictions, office equipment includes furniture and fittings. **f** For some jurisdictions, other equipment includes information technology. **na** Not available.

Source: State and territory governments (unpublished).

Key terms

Terms	Definition
Expenditure	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> salaries and payments in the nature of salaries to fire personnel capital expenditure (such as the user cost of capital) other operating expenditure (such as running expenditure, contract expenditure, training expenditure, maintenance expenditure, communications expenditure, provision for losses and other recurrent expenditure). <p>Excludes interest on borrowings.</p>
User cost of capital	The opportunity cost of funds tied up in the capital used to deliver services. Calculated as 8% of the current value of non-current physical assets (including land, plant and equipment).
Human resources	<p>Any person delivering a service, or managing the delivery of this service, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> firefighters (qualified paid and volunteer firefighters) support personnel (any paid person or volunteer directly supporting operational providers, including administrative, technical and communications personnel).

Terms	Definition
Revenue	Revenue received directly or indirectly by fire service organisations on an accrual accounting basis, including:
Government grants	Grants, as established in legislation, from the Australian, state, territory and local governments.
Levies	Revenue from levies, as established in enabling legislation, raised on insurance companies and property owners.
Preparedness	Actions/programmes designed to strengthen the overall capacity and capability of a community to manage disasters; and procedures planned for during a non-disaster response period to be actioned during a disaster response period to minimise the loss of life, injury and damage to property when a disaster occurs.
Response	Actions taken in anticipation of, during and/or immediately after a disaster to ensure that its effects are minimised, and that affected people are provided with immediate care, relief and support.
Volunteer firefighters	All personnel engaged on an unpaid casual basis by the emergency service organisation who deliver or manage a firefighting service directly to the community and who are formally trained and qualified to undertake firefighting duties, but do not receive remuneration other than reimbursement of 'out of pocket expenses'.
Volunteer support staff	All personnel engaged on an unpaid casual basis that are not remunerated and are principally involved in the provision of support services. For fire service organisations, this includes any staff whose immediate client is the firefighter. These can be people in operational support roles provided they do not receive payment for their services other than reimbursement of 'out of pocket expenses'.

References

Australian Government 2023, *Final Budget Outcome 2022-23, Part 3: Australia's Federal Financial Relations*.