

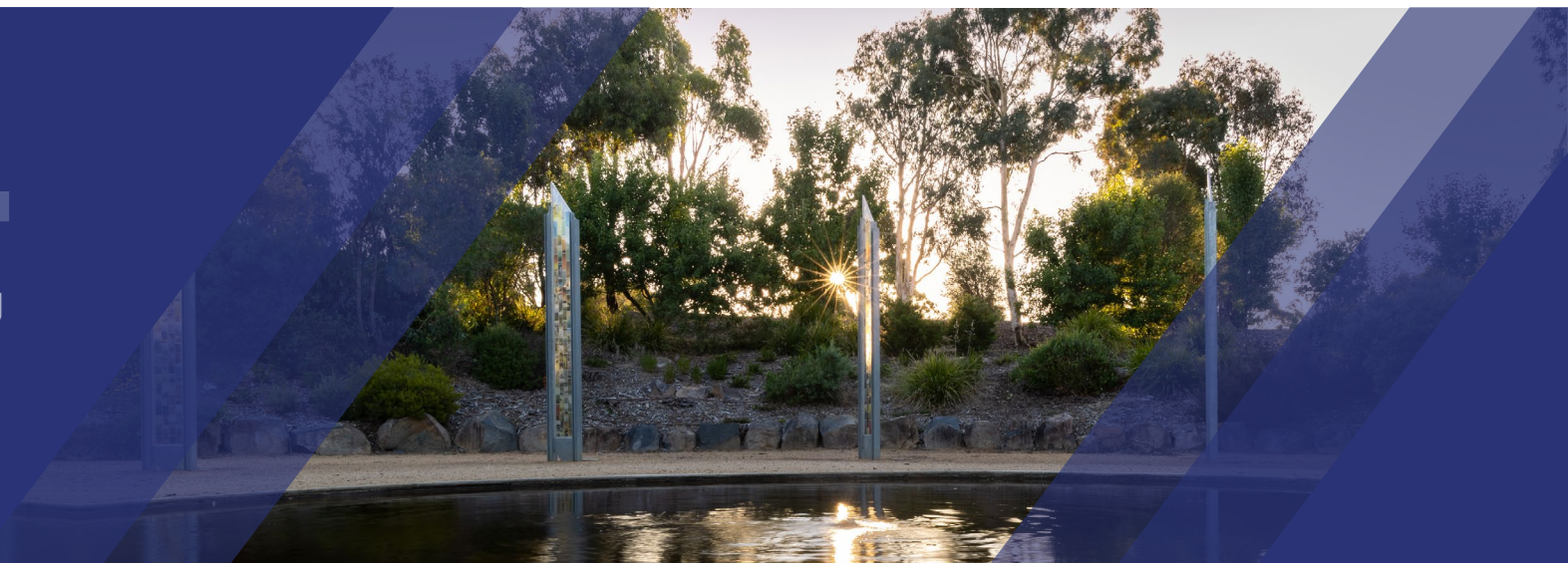


ACT
Government



ACT
EMERGENCY
SERVICES
AGENCY

2024
-27



ESA STRATEGIC PLAN

A Return to Fundamentals



Acknowledgment of Country

The Emergency Services Agency (ESA) acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. The ESA acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

As an organisation with a deep interest in how the environment shapes who we are and what we do, the ESA feels a special sense of respect for First Nations peoples, their cultures, and their elders past and present.

Contact for this report

General enquiries about this report should be directed by email to: JACSEnquiries@act.gov.au.

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FROM THE ESA EXECUTIVE

The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) is committed in its mission to provide nation-leading emergency management for a safer ACT. With a vision to be the trusted Agency for emergency management in the ACT Community, the ESA has established strategic objectives to guide its efforts.

Our Strategic Plan is meticulously crafted through stakeholder engagement, legislation and policy, ACT Government priorities, trends, and future considerations.

This comprehensive strategy serves as the foundation for the ESA's organisational pathway, focusing collective efforts on common goals and objectives. At the core of our strategic focus are six distinct themes: Back our people, Balance our services, Engage the community, Prioritise the important, Anticipate systemic risk and Streamline asset management.

The themes support us to achieve the strategic objectives using a collaborative approach which will ensure we not only meet but anticipate the ACT Community's present and future needs while looking after the wellbeing and development of our people. Strategic planning will enable the ESA to determine what is paramount and how to allocate resources thoughtfully, ensuring the most effective response to emergencies.

Additionally, collective motivation is important in fostering a cohesive dedicated staff and volunteer cohort that work seamlessly to fulfill the ESA's mission and in turn the wider vision of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) as set out in the [JACS Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#). This ensures executive and operational decision-making processes are enhanced, facilitating informed choices in conditions of uncertainty and risk.

Our dedication to meticulous planning, safety, and forward-thinking is clear in our Strategy, which fortifies our mission and charts a path for the ESA of the future.

It is now more than two decades since our four operational Services, ACT Fire and Rescue, ACT Ambulance Services, ACT Rural Fire Service, and the ACT State Emergency Service came together to form the ESA, supported by the ESA Enabling Services. The Strategic Plan provides the framework to continue our work together over the next 4 years.

The ESA executive acknowledge the personal commitment of our workforce across all areas of the ESA. We invite you to join us on this journey, to be a part of our collective efforts, and to help us shape a future where safety, resilience, and community well-being are paramount.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNWAVERING SUPPORT
AND DEDICATION TO OUR MISSION.**

WHAT THIS PLAN IS DESIGNED TO DO

The Strategic Plan is the tool we use to outline how we are going to deliver on our organisational promise and meet our legislative requirements in the years ahead. At its heart, it is an exercise in applied problem solving.

THE PLAN IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST WITH:

- ▶ **Organisational alignment:** It will focus the ESA's collective effort towards a common set of goals and objectives
- ▶ **Prioritisation:** It will provide a means to determine what is important allowing for the appropriate allocation of scarce resources
- ▶ **Executive and operational decision making:** It will facilitate better choices under conditions of uncertainty and risk, and
- ▶ **Motivation:** It will provide a sense of purpose for every member of the ESA team, regardless of station or role.

THE PLAN ASKS AND ANSWERS THREE QUESTIONS:

▶ First: Who are we?

This includes the ESA organisational mission, vision, values, outcomes, and everything that makes us distinctive. It also includes reference to the broader strategic context that shapes how others see us, and how we see ourselves.

The material addresses fundamental identity questions that every member of the Agency has asked themselves at one time or another. The audience is broad and includes the wider Canberra community and beyond.

▶ Second: What do we do?

This includes a deeper dive into our organisational goals and the strategic outlook to 2027. It is an interesting mix between the very familiar (what we turn up to do in our jobs at the ESA today) and the potentially very speculative (what our jobs could look like in four years time).

The material sets a baseline for business and action planning through 2024-27. The audience is a mix of ESA staff and volunteers, external stakeholders, and the community, interested in the functional purpose of the Agency, and how it all fits together.

▶ Finally: How do we win?

This includes analysis of the challenges and strategic objectives we choose to confront, in order to succeed as an organisation moving forward. This content is ours to define and manage. It reframes all of us as problem solvers, ready to take on an uncertain future.



WHO ARE WE? ESA'S UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

The 2003 Canberra Bushfires instigated a series of reforms designed to streamline emergency management across the Territory. Among these initiatives were the passage of the Emergencies Act 2004 and the creation of the Emergency Services Agency (ESA), Australia's first unified emergency management organisation. The ESA has been a business unit of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (formerly the Department) since 2006.

THE ESA'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE:

► *Nation-leading emergency management for a safer ACT*

We achieve this mission through a flexible institutional structure that brings together four frontline service organisations: the ACT Ambulance Service (ACTAS), ACT Fire and Rescue (ACTF&R), the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS), the ACT State Emergency Service (ACTSES), two Enabling Services (Corporate and Operations) with support from the Commissioner's Office.

The workforce is comprised of around 800 staff and 1,600 volunteers, for a total of approximately 2,400 active ESA members.

THE ESA'S VISION IS:

► *The ACT community's trusted team for emergency management*

The ESA was created two decades ago with a view to streamline, collaborate, and create more effective capacity and capability in the Territory's emergency management ecosystem to ensure better outcomes for the community we serve.

We have won the trust and support of the ACT community in the intervening years, but we don't take this for granted. Our partnership with the people of Canberra is an ongoing project, an open-ended exchange of commitment, potential and ideas. We support ongoing engagement with First Nations people to respect, understand, and celebrate their unique culture, and to build a shared decision-making partnership in relation to emergency management.

We are committed to a safer community through emergency management in the ACT. Outcomes mapping is a high-level tool we use to define the Agency's 'end game' and benchmarks for success.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR US:

- An overall reduction in the likelihood or impact of emergency incidents in the ACT and beyond
- Individual lives saved, and reduction in the severity of physical and psychological injuries
- The preservation of the built and natural environment
- The best use of resources in the provision of emergency services
- A supported, engaged, safe and healthy workforce
- Increased individual, community, and environmental resilience to deal with those incidents that cannot be prevented, and
- Work in partnership with JACS Security and Emergency Management Division (SEMD) in the early recovery phase to support the return of individuals and communities to an acceptable way of life in the wake of incidents and emergencies.

We are committed to working in ways that adhere to evidence based fundamental standards and principles. Values are core beliefs people accept as true without question. They are important for any individual, organisation or community because they articulate, in short form, what really matters.

OUR VALUES

The ESA's values proposition starts with the ACT Public Service core values and then augments this with a set of additional values suited to our circumstances.

ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE ACT PUBLIC SERVICE WE COMMIT TO:

- ▶ **Respect**
- ▶ **Integrity**
- ▶ **Collaboration, and**
- ▶ **Innovation**

TO THIS, WE PROUDLY ADD:

- ▶ **Teamwork, and**
- ▶ **Accountability**

These values are at the core of everything we do. To build and maintain trust, we empower staff and volunteers at all levels of the ESA and across all Services to recognise behaviours which fit these values and call out those that don't.

Characterising the strategic context for this Plan inevitably takes us back to the original reforms of the early 2000s that still ring true two decades later.

The Agency's relationship to JACS is formally established in the [Administrative Arrangements 2023](#). The principal line of accountability is through the JACS Director General.

The ESA Strategic Plan also responds to the [ACT Government's Wellbeing Framework](#) which comprises 12 domains of wellbeing, reflecting key factors that impact on the quality of life of Canberrans.

The [JACS Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#) points to Safety as our core contribution. ESA analysis suggests second-order touchpoints with four other domains: Health, Environment and Climate, Governance and Institutions, and Identity and Belonging.

WHAT DO WE DO? AGENCY GOALS AND THE STRATEGIC OUTLOOK TO 2027

Organisational goals are high-level statements about what an organisation should achieve in the long run. Goals provide teams with direction and purpose and defining them is a vital step in any strategic planning process.

The ESA's organisational goals can be distilled from the Emergencies Act 2004. In particular, the 'Objects of the Act' point to a convenient and effective summary of the Agency's goals. The four-part structure of the Objects has been remarkably stable over time.

TAKING OUR CUE FROM THE ACT, THE PURPOSE OF THE ESA MAY BE SUMMARISED AS:

1. To protect and preserve life, property and the environment **1**
2. To provide for effective emergency management **2**
 - ▶ Which includes emergency prevention, preparation, response and recovery **3**
 - ▶ That takes an all-hazards approach, and **4**
 - ▶ That develops community resilience **5**
3. To provide for the effective and cohesive management of the Services, and **6**
4. To recognise the value to the community of all emergency service members and to support them in their work. **7**

The meaning of these four goals may not be obvious on first glance. The figure opposite with footnotes from the text provides a sentence-by-sentence breakdown.

FIGURE 1: BREAKDOWN OF ESA GOALS

- 1** We are on the ground delivering emergency services. We are a front-line agency, we deploy into the field. People's lives and way of life may be in our hands.
- 2** We design, build and facilitate emergency management that works. And we do that not just to support our own service offering, but potentially for whole of government.
- 3** We manage incidents and risks through the entire life cycle of emergency management, including preparation, prevention, response and recovery. The Agency's budgetary performance is explicitly linked to these criteria.
- 4** We deliberately build systems and methods of operation which can work for all possible incidents. On the ground, we adapt and deal with whatever we encounter.
- 5** We support communities up front so that they are better able to cope when incidents arise. A resilient, or anti-fragile, community that minimises its call on response services is a success story.
- 6** While the Operational Services have distinct and effective hierarchies and modes of operation, the Government and community expectation is that we will work as one.
- 7** We support our staff and volunteers, many of whom perform work under difficult circumstances. We undertake to see that they are properly equipped, trained and prepared. We embrace their diversity as a core strength.

The goals succinctly capture the work of all areas of the Agency. People generally 'see' themselves somewhere in the set of four, although many people straddle multiple goals. Examples include:

Goal 1: To protect and preserve life, property and the environment neatly encompasses the hands-on deployment work of ACTAS, ACTF&R, ACTRFS and ACTSES.

Goal 2: To provide for effective emergency management aligns with a large segment of the work of the Operations Branch, which spans a broad cross-section of support activity from intelligence and communications, to workshop repairs and logistics.

Goal 3: To provide for the effective and cohesive management of the Agency and Services is a clear legislative mandate of the ESA Commissioner's Office, and includes governance, finance, Agency coordination and several other high-level functions.

Goal 4: To recognise the value to the community of all emergency service members and to support them in their work has a clear home in the Corporate team, with well-established people programs in the wellbeing, training, workforce coordination and culture space.

This list is not exhaustive, and ESA's functional categories will change over time. This should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the structural alignment of work areas against the goals.

Progress toward the goals is never a fixed enterprise. In preparing the Plan, we conducted horizon scanning workshops to help clarify ESA's strategic outlook to 2027, and to test our underlying assumptions.

Several drivers became prominent through a PESTLE review (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental). Figure 2 provides a summary. The most prominent driver here, in the Environment domain, is clearly climate change.

A sensitivity analysis was subsequently conducted to gauge the impact of the PESTLE drivers on the ESA's goals. The take-home message here is that the drivers will be felt very unevenly across the organisation, and their predictability also varies widely. A careful mix of traditional and agile planning will be required to face all contingencies.

FIGURE 2: PESTLE REVIEW OF ESA'S STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

POLITICAL: The ESA provides advice to the Government of the day to ensure the best possible outcomes for the ACT Community in emergency situations.

ECONOMIC: The ACT economy is projected to remain robust through the forward years, returning to trend growth of 3.5% by 2027. However, inflation, supply chain issues and a weaker international position will likely continue to impact budgets.

SOCIAL: The ACT's population is forecast to grow at high rates through the early years of the Strategic Plan, almost 10,000 per year or 2.25% in 2023-24, before moderating. This will occur in lock step with an ageing demographic, and potentially expanded socio-economic vulnerabilities.

TECHNOLOGICAL: By 2028, Canberra will be well into the Government's roadmap to electrify the city. The five-year period of the ESA Strategic Plan may also see artificial intelligence introduced across ACTPS functions.

LEGAL: The last five-year review of the *Emergencies Act 2004* was completed in 2021, and resulted in several novel amendments, including the introduction of 'resilience' as an object of emergency management. The next review is due for 2026 and more work in the resilience space can be expected.

ENVIRONMENTAL: The possible impacts of climate change are already being felt in the Territory with intensified events such as the 2019-20 Bushfires, and three consecutive La Nina events (2020-2023). This will likely continue and compound in the years ahead. In tandem, the ACT Government is aiming to achieve net zero emissions from government operations by 2040.

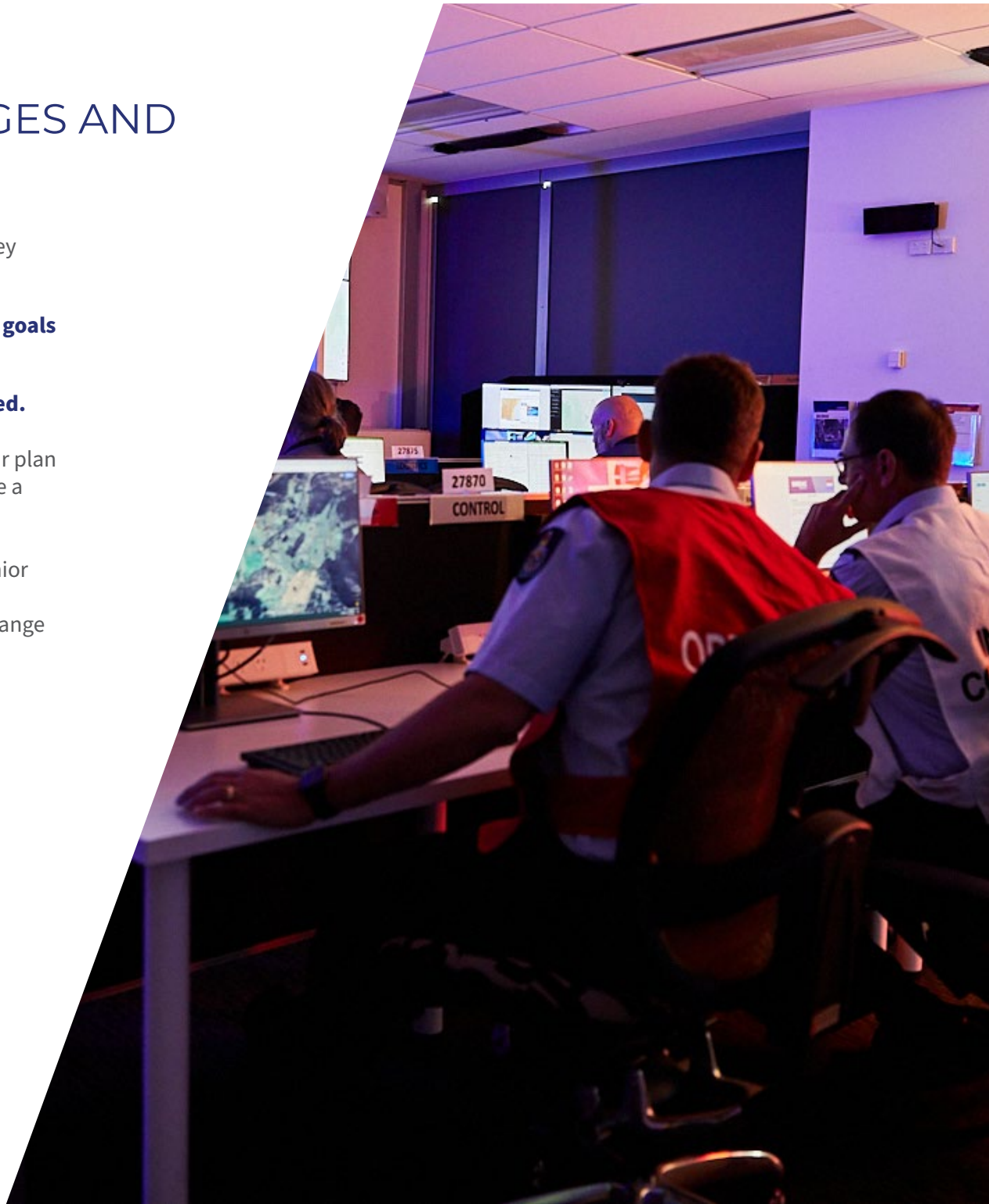
HOW DO WE WIN? CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

How we win in the years ahead focusses on the relationship of two key elements:

- ▶ **The challenges we choose to address to achieve our high-level goals and purpose, and**
- ▶ **The strategic objectives or solutions to the challenges identified.**

This section of the plan moves through six of these ‘action pairs’ – our plan themes – and asks every member of the Agency workforce to become a problem solver.

The list was developed through a combination of interviews with senior stakeholders, desktop analysis of Agency documents, and multiple workshops. Together it constitutes a full agenda of organisational change and renewal.



THEME 1: BACK OUR PEOPLE

CHALLENGE

Recruiting, retaining, developing and caring for the ESA workforce is our number one challenge as an organisation. This is not an issue unique to the ESA – emergency management agencies across Australia and beyond struggle with this most fundamental of tasks.

Tight labour markets, changing workforce expectations, demographic shifts, the increasing sophistication of emergency management technology, and, perhaps most importantly, the increasing intensity of the work, have all conspired to complicate the experience of staff and volunteers.

The impact on the volunteer Services is particularly acute as long-established norms and expectations around voluntary services are changing. Exploration to understand appropriate support for the Volunteer Services is vital to maintain this critical function. The proportion of volunteers to staff overall needs to be kept in mind here; note figure 3 for reference.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

We commit to making ESA the employer of choice for emergency management staff and volunteers in the nation.

Acknowledging the unique personal commitment of ESA staff and volunteers, the Agency will provide meaningful work and career pathways, support individuals through the best and worst of all that emergency management entails and grow a culture of inclusion that values each person's unique contribution.



TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE ESA AIMS TO:

- ▶ Define Agency-wide staff and volunteer value propositions, including detail of what it means to be an employer of choice in the emergency management space, and the benefits this represents for individuals. 'Workforce strategy' documents would be developed in consultation with staff and volunteer representative organisations.
- ▶ Develop an inclusion roadmap, building on broader ACTPS diversity benchmarks and guidance. As part of this, the Agency would commit to becoming a model for 'women in emergency services' (WIES) through a revitalised WIES program; and providing matching initiatives for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including First Nations peoples, people with disabilities, and people from the LGBTI community.
- ▶ Conduct a comprehensive review of staff and volunteer wellbeing across the Agency, and associated support programs. The result would be an honest assessment, a snapshot in time of how we're doing, and proposals to bolster and fine tune support arrangements where they are needed.
- ▶ Refresh the Agency's Learning and Development (L&D) offerings to build a culture of continuous learning, leveraging workforce data and the changing work habits of individuals in contemporary organisations.
- ▶ Work with JACS to align key HR policies and processes, including artefacts related to recruitment, performance management, retention, leave, mobility, flexibility, WH&S, discrimination and harassment, termination, and complaints.
- ▶ Align critical HR processes and functions (both internal and external).

FIGURE 3: BREAKDOWN OF ESA STAFF & VOLUNTEERS, JUNE 2023



Source: ESA inserts to 2022-23 JACS Annual Report

This theme aligns with the following strategic objective under the [Justice & Community Safety Directorate Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#):

- ▶ **Strengthening community safety** - [Page 13](#)
- ▶ **Building community and business resilience to emergencies, disasters and disruptions** - [Page 15](#)

THEME 2: BALANCE OUR SERVICES

CHALLENGE

Organisational silos are an inevitable consequence of technical specialisation and the need to ensure accountability. The task is to make sure they are balanced against competing goals, like capturing the benefits of scale and maintaining interoperability.

The four ESA Frontline Services and the Enabling Services are united in their commitment to best practice emergency management. However, their technical and practical pathways to this common goal differ widely, as do sector drivers.

External factors such as technological advancements, population growth and community expectations have created challenges for each of the services differently; and due to this, each service has responded individually to their respective operational responsibilities with these factors in mind.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

In much the same way as the ESA embraces diversity among individual staff, we will embrace the differences between the Services, and recast points of distinction as opportunities to leverage. Mindful of our proven capacity to pull together in a crisis, we will strive to uncover and learn from the best in each other, and to recommit to a single enterprise.

This theme aligns with the following strategic objective under the [Justice & Community Safety Directorate Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#):

- ▶ **Strengthening community safety** - [Page 13](#)

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE ESA AIMS TO:

- ▶ Research areas of shared interest, goals and common practice across the Services, and use these to inform a 'Commitment to Collaboration' formally endorsed by the heads of Service and the Commissioner.
- ▶ Conduct one or more cross-Service policy projects on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR), all hazards and/or community resilience with a view to staking out the forward agenda on these key components of 'effective emergency management'; run the project(s) as a quasi-taskforce with suitably capable staff and volunteers from all the Frontline and Enabling services; consult externally on drafts.
- ▶ Conduct a review of corporate activity across the Services (e.g. finance, information management, ICT, business rules and planning, project management, staff and volunteer workforce coordination and welfare, governance, etc); choose a small number of areas where there are clear gains to be made from standardisation; plan and pilot collaborative works within those areas; scale, consolidate, repeat.
- ▶ Develop and maintain an organisational chart down to Section level identifying roles and incumbents at all levels; appoint Service representatives to ensure inputs are up-to-date; place the chart on the Agency's website.
- ▶ Develop an internal communications strategy to market the above, and to promote the importance and benefits of shared values and goals.

THEME 3: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

CHALLENGE

The ESA has an intimate connection with the Canberra community. The vast majority of staff and volunteers point to serving the community as the key reason they joined the Agency in the first place, and the source of their continued commitment.

Community expectations in the ACT around the Agency's services for emergency management are high and increasing. We have some of the shortest call-out times for services in the country (see Figure 4 for details), for example, and this is largely accepted as normal.

Canberra is also the seat of the Commonwealth Government, and this implies a heightened security and risk environment placing further pressure on the emergency services, while the 2019-20 bushfires, three consecutive La Niña storm seasons, and COVID-19 events saw prolonged periods of Service personnel on an emergency footing.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

While ensuring our baseline response communications is industry best practice, we will recalibrate our emergency management communications toward greater community outreach and education.

The Agency will become a national leader in emergency management communications and long-term community engagement.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE ESA AIMS TO:

- ▶ Where opportunities exist, further automate the Agency's baseline response communications, ensuring best practice use of contemporary technology and channels.

- ▶ Coordinate through the Services development of a long-term community communications and education plan, including key messages on the ESA service offering and learning targets. As part of plan development, ESA researchers will make full use of the substantial body of knowledge that already exists in this space in other Australian jurisdictions and the non-government sector (e.g. Red Cross).
- ▶ Become a home for emergency service planning and delivery expertise in a small number of areas of direct relevance to the ACT community (note, this list does not need to be comprehensive). Consider as a priority the following: climate change, First Nation's issues and priorities, social vulnerability and resilience; build this understanding into the communications plan. Note: this action may cross over with several other themes considered in this Strategic Plan.
- ▶ Model our outreach efforts against best-in-class and seek to fill-out and leverage these links. Are we doing enough, for example, in building networks with the health and community services sector?
- ▶ To support ongoing education and training for volunteer services that undertake community engagement.

This theme aligns with the following strategic objective under the [Justice & Community Safety Directorate Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#):

- ▶ **Strengthening community safety** - [Page 13](#)
- ▶ **Caring and supporting people at a higher risk of vulnerability** - [Page 14](#)
- ▶ **Building community and business resilience to emergencies, disasters and disruptions** - [Page 15](#)

THEME 4: PRIORITISE THE IMPORTANT

CHALLENGE

Leadership and management at all levels of the ESA face a ‘bias toward action’ due to the immediacy of emergency management work, and a business culture that prioritises operations over backend enabling activity.

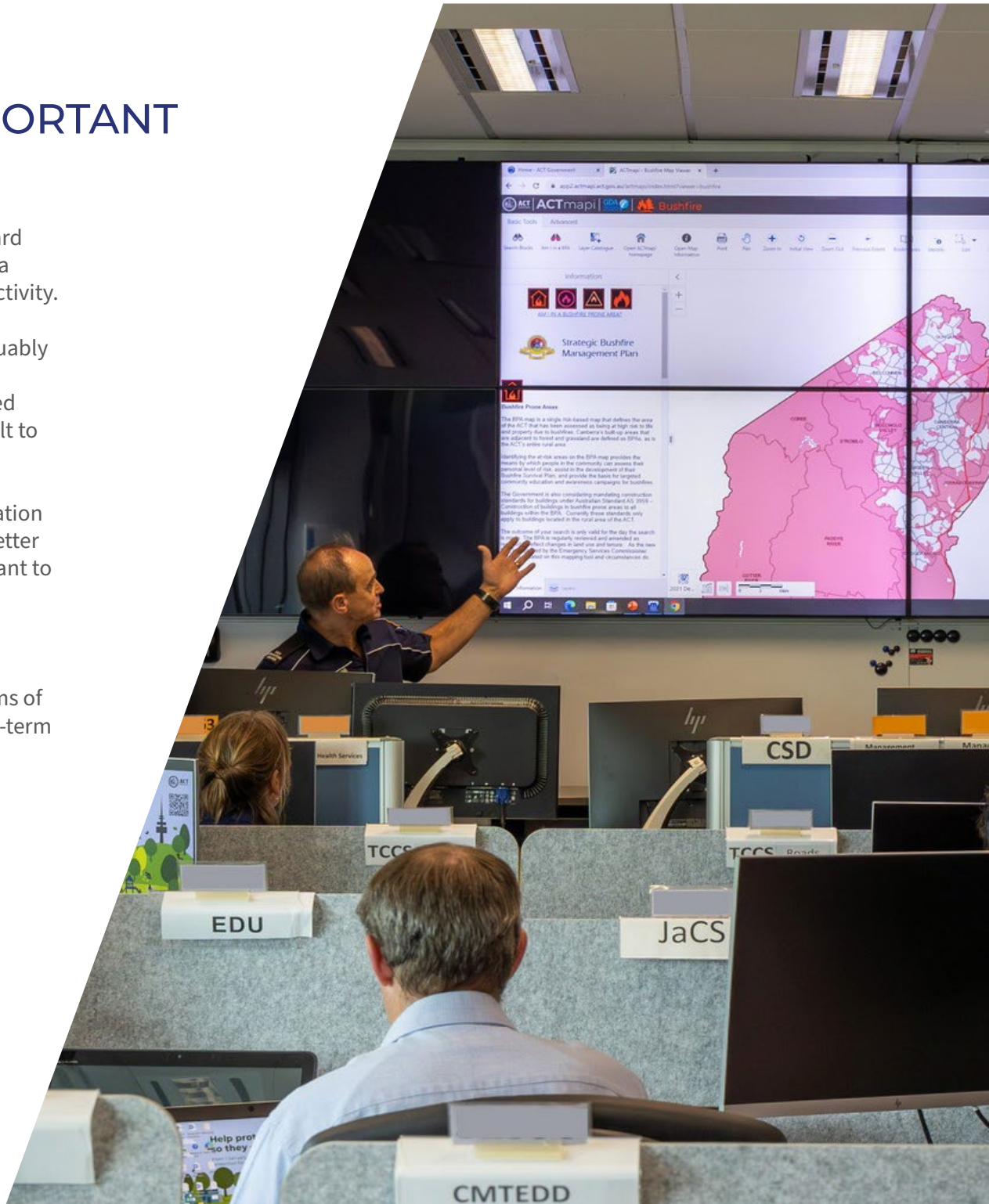
This issue has deep roots and may have compounded over time. Arguably the 2019-20 bushfires, and the last three years of COVID and severe weather, have resulted in an organisation that is perpetually ‘switched on’ with occupational health impacts that are both subtle and difficult to pinpoint.

Taking time to think is often the best thing to do, even when the situation would seem to demand the opposite. Any action is not necessarily better than no action. In an environment that prioritises action, it is important to consider longer term objectives.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

We will deliberately create space for behaviours, tasking and programs of work that are forward-leaning, including business planning and long-term strategic thinking.

The Agency will develop capability and executive support to free up leadership and management roles to ‘do less of the doing,’ and to undertake more of the up-front conceptual and design work. In tandem, the Agency will also create more opportunities for junior staff to take on responsible tasks and roles.



TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE ESA AIMS TO:

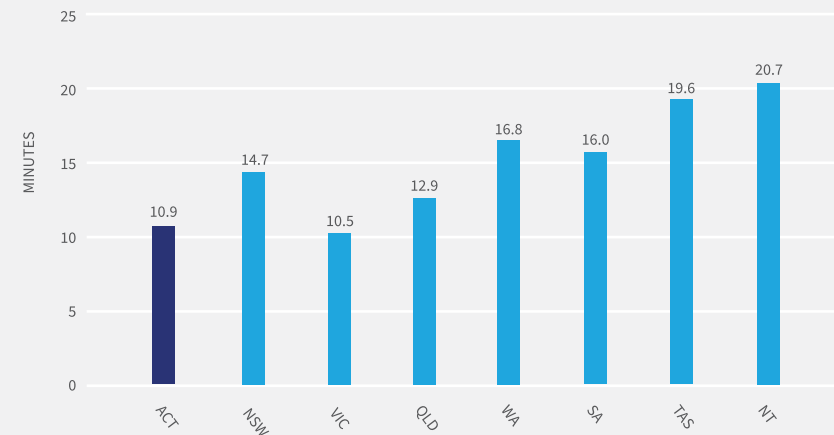
- ▶ Develop a working group that reports directly to the Executive with a mandate to focus 4-5 years out, and charge it with producing a number of position papers addressing critical emergency management issues. The team could take a lead role in the cross-Service policy projects mentioned in the ‘Balance our Services’ theme.
- ▶ Conduct a functional stocktake of all Agency projects and programs and in consultation across the Services, develop a schema and process for prioritising them. Ascribe high and low priority to the full set of activities; commit to resourcing the work in a manner consistent with the priority given; develop an overarching change plan to exit out of lowest-priority and legacy works; use the stocktake for ongoing monitoring and reporting to/for the Executive.
- ▶ Mandate a consistent set of project planning templates, leveraging existing JACS materials and aligning with budget and governance structures.
- ▶ Ensure recruitment is consistent with whole-of-government benchmarks; expedite recruitment at all levels, but particularly for leadership and management roles; make full use of whole-of-government merit lists for generalist roles.
- ▶ Review delegations and strive to push down decision making to the most appropriate level under enterprise agreements and Agency directions.

This theme aligns with the following strategic objective under the [Justice & Community Safety Directorate Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#):

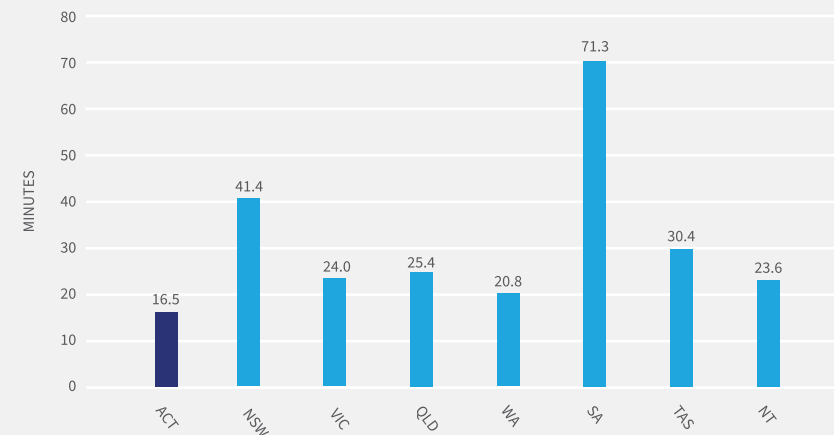
- ▶ **Strengthening community safety** - [Page 13](#)

FIGURE 4: EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPONSE TIMES BY JURISDICTION

Structure Fire Response Times (90th Percentile)



Ambulance Response Times (90th Percentile)



Source: Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services (2023)

THEME 5: ANTICIPATE SYSTEMIC RISK

CHALLENGE

The ESA confronts an overall increase in systemic risk in its operating environment due to several meta-trends, including climate change, population increase (see Figure 5), demographic shifts, and urban/suburban expansion.

This means the risk associated with every emergency hazard may be elevated in the years ahead (e.g. fires and emergency hospitalisations will be more likely and more difficult to manage) and could combine in potentially new and unpredictable ways.

Anticipating systemic risk can be difficult for larger organisations because a traditional focus on discrete risks and tailored treatments will neglect to address critical interdependencies. The result can be a blinkered view of what drives individual hazards, and a lack of preparation for cascading failures.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

We will seek to augment and bolster our risk management capability, lifting the current (exemplary) focus on individual hazard management to a deeper engagement with uncertainty and systemic risk.

The Agency will increase the risk literacy of all ESA staff, but especially the mid-level management and leadership cohorts, and overhaul risk systems and processes to trickle-down best practice emergency risk management.

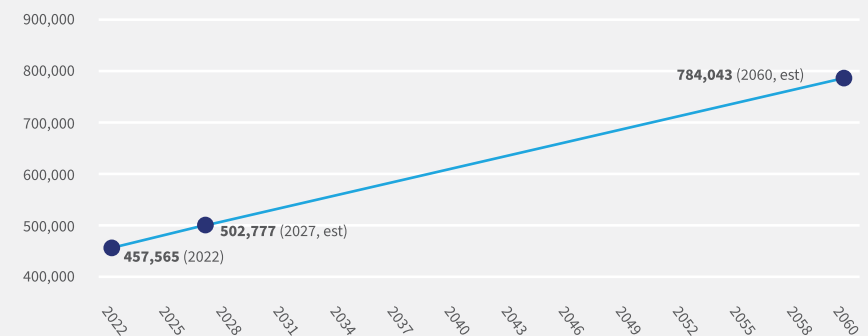
This theme aligns with the following strategic objective under the [Justice & Community Safety Directorate Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#):

- ▶ **Strengthening community safety** - [Page 13](#)

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE ESA AIMS TO:

- ▶ Commence a conversation with the Multi-Hazards Advisory Council on system-level risk. At a time appropriate to both parties, consider conducting a dedicated project on systemic risk and its implications for the Agency's service offering.
- ▶ Realign the Agency's data and research resources to better facilitate an agency-level focus on risk. The ESA's Data Working Group will provide an excellent foundation for this work. The task moving forward will be to enable this group to spend more time on forward-focused work, including forecasting and projection.
- ▶ Review and update the ESA's risk management framework to support improved systemic risk identification, assessment and awareness in partnership with other government risk managers.
- ▶ Invest in targeted training opportunities to cultivate skills to prepare and respond to systemic risk, and insights beyond immediate context.

FIGURE 5: ACT PROJECTED POPULATION INCREASE



Source: ACT Government, population projections 2022-2060

THEME 6: STREAMLINE ASSET MANAGEMENT

CHALLENGE

Technological change has increased across a range of emergency management assets, from remote sensing equipment to fire trucks.

Australia-wide, keeping pace with this evolving landscape is proving difficult for emergency service agencies, and the ESA is no exception. ICT investment and maintenance is a particular pain point.

The fundamentals of good asset management are well established in evidence based practice, and point to the importance of appropriate governance arrangements (e.g. asset management plans in place for all assets), information systems (e.g. effective monitoring and reporting regimes), and asset management capabilities (e.g. staff with suitable experience in managing asset maintenance and disposal schedules).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Noting the longer-term productivity gains from combined investments in technology and soft capital (new business processes, skills development), we will transition legacy systems and commence the process of purchasing off-the-shelf, modular solutions for all key technology classes. And this in particular with regards to ICT.

As per the JACS ICT Strategic Plan, we will enable more integrated planning and prioritisation of our technology portfolio, more sustainable and secure systems, and improved data and information management.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE ESA AIMS TO:

- ▶ Develop an integrated asset management plan for the Agency, covering all asset classes, including facilities, equipment, fleet and workshop; consider fit with ICT.
- ▶ As part of the asset management plan, develop a technology policy to guide exit from all legacy systems and tailored solutions, and to facilitate transition to standardised technology classes (e.g. modular, off-the-shelf solutions) wherever possible.
- ▶ Streamline asset management systems across the Agency, including parallel systems that may be running in various areas.
- ▶ Conduct an audit of all legacy and tailored ICT solutions and assess the capacity for exit and replacement with off-the-shelf software and hardware, develop a plan for delivery and maintenance.
- ▶ With the ICT simplification process in train, scan the horizon for opportunities to leverage emerging technology, including generative AI.

This theme aligns with the following strategic objective under the [Justice & Community Safety Directorate Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#):

- ▶ **Strengthening community safety** - [Page 13](#)

IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout the 2024-27 reporting period, ESA will be required to deliver on the Strategic Plan. Reporting on the Strategic Plan will become part of the usual business reporting. This section briefly details some of the particulars of implementation.

To ensure Plan success, some restructuring and firming of governance lines will be required. An individual lead from the Executive will be established as the face of the Plan, with a mandate to report to the ESA Executive and to bring forward critical initiatives and updates.

Responsible action leads within all the Services will also be established, with quarterly meetings for monitoring and reporting. Each action lead will be assigned one theme to champion.

Within the opening months of the Plan, initiatives will be concretely linked to organisational change and reform; The Agency will commit to a program of renewal over the forward four years.

There are important dependencies across the focus areas, so the work of the Plan will proceed over three phases (while noting that at least some activity can be commenced immediately for all six themes):

COMMENCEMENT PHASE

- ▶ **Theme 1 - Back our people**
- ▶ **Theme 2 - Balance our services**

INTERMEDIATE PHASE

- ▶ **Theme 3 - Engage the community**
- ▶ **Theme 4 - Prioritise the important**

CONSOLIDATION PHASE

- ▶ **Theme 5 - Anticipate systemic risk**
- ▶ **Theme 6 - Streamline asset management**

Each phase will be roughly 18 months to two years apiece, factoring in overlaps. An appropriate amount of time should set aside for implementation planning before commencing phase activity.

Strategic Plan priorities will be cascaded down the organisation through a remodelled business planning process. As staff and volunteers engage with the plan, it will be important to consider the three questions:

- ▶ **Who are we?**
- ▶ **What do we do?**
- ▶ **How do we win?**

The Strategic Plan implies the Agency commits to doing things differently. We welcome the test of our capability and fortitude that this will entail.

ACT WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT ALIGNMENT

ESA's core contribution to the ACT Government's Wellbeing Framework is through the lens of the Safety Domain. This is exemplified by our mission, to be the **nation-leading emergency management for a safer ACT**, and our vision to be **the ACT community's trusted team for emergency management**.

Ultimately the substance of the ESA Strategic Plan 2024-2027 is to further the task of ensuring Canberrans are safe and secure by demonstrating a timely and effective response when safety incident occurs and assisting the ACT community to prepare for the increasing risks of major adverse events; both now, and into the future as our population grows.

THE AGENCY'S PROVISION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, ALONG WITH OTHER SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE WILL:

- ▶ Support community resilience to those emergencies that cannot be avoided, and
- ▶ Indirectly contribute to people's general sense of confidence and wellbeing, which is a vital enabler of daily life in the Territory.

THE ESA ALSO HAS IMPORTANT SECOND-ORDER TOUCHPOINTS WITH FOUR OTHER WELLBEING FRAMEWORK DOMAINS:

- ▶ Health (e.g. ESA first responders are present during life-threatening events)
- ▶ Environment and Climate (e.g. emergency prevention frequently overlaps with general environmental stewardship)
- ▶ Governance and Institutions (e.g. ESA successes in the field support trust in government), and
- ▶ Identity and Belonging (e.g. ESA's work requires a particular connection with place, and enables community through visible acts of service).

ESA is embedded in, and functions with the broader ACT Government. We work in concert with colleagues across the Public Service for a better Canberra.



2024
-27

ESA STRATEGIC PLAN

A Return to Fundamentals