

Hon Steven Marshall MP

Premier

Hon Vincent Tarzia MP

Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services

Hon David Speirs MP

Minister for Environment and Water

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\$97.5 million to prepare SA for bushfire season

In its full response to the Independent Review of South Australia's 2019/20 bushfire season, the Marshall Liberal Government has announced nearly \$100 million of funding ahead of the upcoming fire danger season.

Today, a \$49 million action plan has been unveiled in addition to the \$48.5 million announced in July.

This means a total of \$97.5 million will be injected into the state's Emergency Services Sector and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) to equip the state with stronger resources in preparation for future catastrophic bushfire events.

Premier Steven Marshall said the comprehensive response was an integral part of creating a safer, stronger and more resilient South Australia.

"Last year's devastating bushfire season saw almost 279,000 hectares of land burnt, almost 68,000 livestock perished, and tragically, three lives lost," Premier Marshall said.

"In January this year we asked highly-respected former Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty AO to conduct an Independent Review, to look at what can be done to mitigate the impacts of bushfires on our communities into the future.

"We have responded swiftly to the Review and have already begun implementing a number of immediate action items in preparation for the 2020/21 bushfire season."

A total of 68 findings and 15 recommendations were identified as part of the Independent Review and five key themes highlighted:

- Additional support and resources for volunteers, including extra staff and equipment
- Better protection for critical assets
- Enhanced communications and technology
- Improved information before, during and after bushfires
- Improved mental health support for Emergency Services Sector

Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services Vincent Tarzia said the State Government's full response to the Keelty Review is about protecting all South Australians and ensuring those risking their safety on the frontline are protected with the best technology and equipment available.

"The conditions that gripped the state in the 2019/20 bushfire season were some of the worst on record. Blazes wreaked havoc in the Adelaide Hills, Kangaroo Island, Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, and the South East," Minister Tarzia said.

"Today we have committed an extra \$11.95 million to the Emergency Services Sector, while DEW will have a \$37 million boost.

"Our Emergency Services staff and volunteers deserve the upmost respect for their extraordinary efforts to protect lives and property. The Marshall Liberal Government's comprehensive response outlines how we can support these groups, so that South Australia is better prepared for its next bushfire emergency."

The comprehensive action plan will also improve bushfire management planning and provide more support for the State Bushfire Coordination Committee.

Minister for Environment and Water David Speirs said the \$37 million of new funding would allow the Department for Environment and Water to significantly increase hazard reduction across the state.

"We know prescribed burns play a critical role in helping reduce the risk of bushfires and providing safer access corridors for firefighters," Minister Speirs said.

"The report highlights the significant role the South Australian community has in undertaking risk reduction strategies on their own land.

"The extra \$37 million will allow us to undertake more hazard reduction across the state with the aim to increase our prescribed burns program by 50 per cent in the coming years. We will also provide further help to the community to understand their landscape risks and the options available to mitigate those risks."

The State Government has previously announced funding of \$20.3 million for new trucks and equipment for volunteers, enhanced communications and technology, and better protection for critical assets.

A further \$16.7 million in federal and state funding will be invested over five years for the South Australian Disaster Risk Reduction Grants Program. The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service will receive \$11.5m for new urban appliances.

A progress report on the 69 action items will be delivered in September 2021.

A full copy of the State Government's comprehensive response can be found online on the SAFECOM website: www.safecom.sa.gov.au