

# Queensland Bushfires Review

Report 2: 2019-20

## QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

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### Overview - 2019 Sarabah, Peregian Springs and Stanthorpe Bushfire Event

Queensland faced unprecedented bushfire conditions in 2018 and 2019, with record breaking temperatures, catastrophic fire weather ratings, low humidity, high winds and long-term drought affected areas.

The 2019-20 bushfire season officially commenced on 1 August 2019 and ceased on 31 January 2020. Queensland experienced a challenging start to the season, with the Sarabah, Peregian Springs and Stanthorpe bushfires in September 2019 and this continued with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' attendance at more than 8000 bushfire incidents during the season and more than 7.7 million hectares burnt. The community impact has been significant, with 49 homes destroyed and devastating effects on businesses and environmental values.

### Review

Given the consecutive difficult seasons of 2018 and 2019, the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services requested the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) undertake further monitoring of Queensland's disaster management arrangements with regard to bushfires. The 2019 Bushfires review was undertaken with consideration of the recommendations from the comprehensive *2018 Queensland Bushfires Review Report 2: 2018-19* (2018 Review report).

The IGEM found a clear demonstration of changes to disaster management arrangements from those seen in the 2018 Review report and identified good practice is being used across disaster management arrangements. The maturation of lessons management across the disaster management sector is also evident.

Appendix C to the Queensland Bushfires Review Report 2: 2019-20 (the 2019 Review report) outlines the priority assessment undertaken by IGEM of the 2018 Review report recommendations. The IGEM identified four recommendations as requiring immediate implementation (1, 2, 12 and 22). The IGEM considers recommendations 1, 12 and 22 have been implemented and recommendation 2 is well placed to be completed.

### Government Response

The Queensland Government notes the insights contained within the 2019 Review report.

The Queensland Government is committed to making Queensland the most disaster resilient state in Australia, and is focused on improving our disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts to meet the challenges ahead.

Queensland's disaster management arrangements have proven to be responsive and scalable, providing a strong and accountable framework to respond to the challenges Queensland has faced during recent natural disasters. These arrangements are based on partnerships between the community and groups at the local, district, state and federal levels, with local level capability forming the frontline of disaster management.

Queensland Government agencies will continue to drive implementation of IGEM recommendations and prioritise critical mitigation activity to safeguard the Queensland community.