

Part Four
Governance and organisations

10 Governance and coordination

State and Territory governments are responsible for instituting regulatory arrangements for the protection of life, property and the environment, and have the primary responsibility for delivering emergency services, including fire and ambulance services, directly to the community. Commonwealth, State and Territory governments are also jointly responsible for developing building fire safety codes, undertaking fire related research, formulating policies and providing advice on fire safety.¹

When major bushfires affect communities and landscapes they progressively engage all levels of government. They do not recognise local government boundaries or interstate borders, nor do they distinguish between public or private land. As the size and impact of bushfires increase, so does the involvement of local and state and territory governments and the Australian Government. The efficiency and effectiveness of bushfire mitigation and management are determined by how well the three levels of government interact and the ways in which responsibilities are upheld and authority is used. This chapter clarifies those responsibilities and summarises the existing arrangements; it also proposes some changes in the areas of coordination and policy development.

10.1 The Australian Government

10.1.1 Natural disaster management

The Australian Government's role in natural disaster management is described in a number of documents, among them the *Commonwealth Emergency Management Policy Statement*², the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services*³, and *Natural Disasters in Australia* report to the Council of Australian Governments.⁴ The *Natural Disasters in Australia* report describes the Australian Government's role in relation to natural disaster management thus:

- to provide national leadership in collaborative action across all levels of government in disaster research, information management and mitigation policy and practice
- to reduce the risks and costs of disasters to the nation
- to mobilise resources when state and territory disaster response resources are insufficient
- to provide national support for disaster relief and community recovery.⁵

¹ Productivity Commission 2004, *Report on Government Services 2003*, vol. 1, Productivity Commission, Melbourne, p. 8.3.

² *Commonwealth Emergency Management Policy Statement*, viewed 21 March 2004, <www.ema.gov.au/emaInternet.nsf>.

³ Productivity Commission 2004, *Report on Government Services 2003*, vol. 1, Productivity Commission, Melbourne, p. 8.3.

⁴ Matthews, K (Chairperson) 2002, *Natural Disasters in Australia*, COAG, Canberra, p. 21.

⁵ *ibid.*

Several specific roles identified in that report are relevant to bushfire mitigation and management:

- undertaking natural disaster research of national significance
- identifying national priorities for natural disaster mitigation, in collaboration with other levels of government
- providing support for disaster risk assessment and mitigation measures, in conjunction with the states and territories and local governments
- providing information services, such as meteorological, hydrological, geophysical and other data, that support warnings and disaster management.

10.1.2 The environment

The Department of the Environment and Heritage is responsible for matters of national and international environment and heritage significance, as listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Four environment and heritage objectives are relevant to implementation of fire mitigation and management measures:

- protecting matters of national environmental significance
- reversing the decline in Australia's native vegetation and biodiversity
- reversing the decline in water quality
- improving air quality.⁶

The Inquiry evaluated environmental governance responsibilities in relation to bushfire mitigation and management only for the purpose of identifying the following national strategies, policies and standards:

- the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity
- the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation
- the National Water Quality Management Strategy
- the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure standards
- the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005
- the Natural Heritage Trust
- the National Land and Water Resources Audit
- the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development

⁶ Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage submission, p. 1.

- the National Greenhouse Strategy
- the National Forest Policy Statement.

These are important considerations, although they relate more to program implementation than to aspects of governance, as discussed in this chapter, and therefore are not explored further here.

10.1.3 Proposed additional roles for the Australian Government

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the Inquiry considers that the Australian Government can make some further specific contributions to the improvement of bushfire mitigation and management. The proposed contributions are based on the existing Commonwealth Emergency Management Policy⁷, which includes the following:

- While recognising that constitutional responsibility for protection of the lives and property of Australian citizens lies predominantly with the states and territories, the Australian Government accepts that it has a broad responsibility to support the states and territories in developing emergency management capabilities.
- In the development of Australian Government capabilities, the principles of an all-hazards, comprehensive, all-agencies approach and the concept of a prepared community will be upheld.
- The Australian Government will support state and territory measures to facilitate the recovery of communities and will provide financial assistance to the states and territories and to individuals to assist in the recovery from disasters under arrangements that will be determined from time to time.
- The Australian Government will continue to provide support to the states and territories in the development of emergency preparedness and mitigation activities. In particular, it will facilitate education, training, research, public awareness, information collection and dissemination activities, and specialised warning and monitoring services for meteorological and geological hazards, as appropriate.
- The Australian Government will encourage and facilitate further standardisation of emergency management procedures and equipment.

On this basis the Inquiry proposes that specific Australian Government assistance for bushfire mitigation and management include the following:

- the development and provision of nationally consistent and regionally relevant education programs about bushfires for all Australians
- support for volunteering as a contribution to local and national social capital

⁷ *Commonwealth Emergency Management Policy Statement*, viewed 21 March 2004, <www.ema.gov.au/emaInternet.nsf>.

- national standards and programs for the professional development of bushfire fighters
- consideration of taxation rebates for emergency service volunteers
- the long-term allocation of radio spectrum to enhance national interoperability
- facilitating the collection and sharing of climatic, spatial and ecological bushfire-related data
- nationally consistent fire signage and emergency warning.

10.1.4 Financial contributions

The Inquiry notes that at present the Australian Government makes a financial contribution to bushfire mitigation and management through the natural disaster relief arrangements, the Bureau of Meteorology, Emergency Management Australia, and Defence Force and other assistance provided in response to bushfire emergencies. It has also provided financial assistance through the National Aerial Firefighting Strategy, the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre, the Natural Heritage Trust (for natural resource management) and natural disaster mitigation programs.

10.2 State and territory governments

Comprehensive and integrated emergency management and landscape management are based on a holistic approach involving the Australian Government, the state and territory governments, and local government. Constitutional responsibility for the protection of lives, property and the environment in Australia is predominantly the domain of the states and territories.

The *Natural Disasters in Australia* report⁸ describes the state and territory responsibilities as follows:

- developing, implementing and ensuring compliance with comprehensive disaster mitigation policies and strategies in all relevant areas of government activity, including land use planning, infrastructure provision and building standards compliance
- strengthening partnerships with and encouraging and supporting local governments and remote and Indigenous communities in undertaking disaster risk assessments and mitigation measures
- ensuring the provision of appropriate disaster awareness and education programs and warning systems
- ensuring that the community and emergency management agencies are prepared for and able to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies

⁸ Matthews, K (Chairperson) 2002, *Natural Disasters in Australia*, COAG, Canberra, p. 20.

- maintaining adequate levels of well-equipped and trained career and volunteer disaster response personnel
- ensuring that appropriate disaster relief and recovery measures are available
- ensuring that post-disaster assessment and analysis are undertaken.

10.3 Local governments

The Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2003* notes that 'Local Governments in most States and Territories are involved to varying degrees in emergency management'.⁹ The *Natural Disasters in Australia* report summarised the local government role from an all-hazards perspective:

Where Local Government powers exist, Local Governments also have responsibilities, in partnership with States and Territories, to contribute to the safety and well being of their communities, which means they have an important role participating in local natural disaster management.¹⁰

In most circumstances, the principal roles and responsibilities of local governments are as follows:

- ensuring that all requisite local disaster planning and preparedness measures are undertaken
- ensuring that there is an adequate local disaster response capability, including local volunteer resources
- taking cost-effective measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters on local communities, including routinely conducting disaster risk assessments
- systematically taking proper account of risk assessments in land use planning to reduce hazards
- building public education and awareness and ensuring that local disaster warnings are provided
- ensuring that local resources and arrangements exist to provide disaster relief and recovery services to communities
- representing community interests in disaster management to other levels of government and contributing to decision-making processes
- participating in post-disaster assessment and analysis.

The Inquiry identified a number of important local government responsibilities in relation to bushfire mitigation and management:

- hazard identification and management

⁹ Productivity Commission 2004, *Report on Government Services 2003*, vol. 1, Productivity Commission, Melbourne, p. 8.4.

¹⁰ Matthews, K (Chairperson) 2002, *Natural Disasters in Australia*, COAG, Canberra, p. 20.

- planning controls to limit development in high-risk areas
- supervision of building standards in bushfire-prone areas
- facilitating local fire-prevention committees and community awareness and policing non-adherence to prevention measures
- encouraging and supporting volunteers
- coordinating local recovery
- in Western Australia only – responsibility for bushfire operational response.

Although the understanding just outlined is generally accepted by local government, application of these principles varies according to perceived local bushfire hazard, state- and territory-specific policies, and individual councils' capacity to comply.

Parts of some states and territories lie outside local government boundaries. Since the introduction of the emergency services levy in South Australia local government no longer has responsibility for funding emergency services. In the Northern Territory local governments do not have land use planning powers. In the Northern Territory and Western Australia the majority of Indigenous communities have a modified form of local government, with no income from rates; in these communities, significantly greater levels of responsibility for decision making and funding relating to community safety and welfare are accorded the state and territory governments and the Australian Government through various agencies.¹¹

10.4 Policy development and coordination

10.4.1 Coordination of the contributions of Australian Government agencies

A number of Australian Government agencies are involved in or have an interest in bushfire mitigation and management and related matters:

- Emergency Management Australia – coordinating Australian Government emergency assistance to the states and territories in the event of a major natural, technological or civil defence disaster when state and territory resources are inadequate, exhausted or unavailable
- the Department of Transport and Regional Services – the National Aerial Firefighting Strategy and natural disaster relief and mitigation programs
- the Department of Defence – assistance to the civil community
- the Department of the Environment and Heritage – the Natural Heritage Trust, matters of national environmental and heritage significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*, and national and international

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 20.

agreements in relation to biodiversity, native vegetation, air quality and water quality

- the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – forestry
- the Department of Family and Community Services – disaster recovery
- the Department of Education, Science and Training – CSIRO
- the Bureau of Meteorology – climate and weather services
- Geoscience Australia – spatial data.

Although the Inquiry considers the coordination of Australian Government operational assistance through Emergency Management Australia and the implementation of specific assistance programs through the Department of Transport and Regional Services are effective, a more coordinated approach to the full range of Australian Government involvement in bushfire mitigation and management would be beneficial. Information management, research and mitigation are just as important as response and recovery. This applies equally to bushfires and to other natural disasters.

A senior executive-level committee chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – with representation from the departments and agencies just listed and with secretariat services provided by Emergency Management Australia – would ensure that there is informed, coordinated development of bushfire-related policy throughout the Australian Government. Such a committee would also provide comprehensive advice to bodies such as the augmented Police Ministers Council and the Australian Emergency Management Committee. The committee's role could be further developed to encompass coordination in connection with policy development for other types of natural disaster.

Early establishment of this Australian Government senior executive-level committee could offer an efficient and effective means of coordinating implementation of the recommendations of this Inquiry.

Recommendation 10.1

The Inquiry recommends that the Australian Government formalise the coordination of the development of policy on bushfire mitigation and management across Australian Government departments and agencies and the provision of advice to the Australian Emergency Management Committee and the augmented Australasian Police Ministers' Council.

10.4.2 A ministerial council?

An additional ministerial council with overall responsibility for bushfire mitigation and management would improve national coordination in this area. The Inquiry is aware, however, of both the breadth of matters that would need to be dealt with and the Council of Australian Governments' general aim to consolidate, rather than expand, the number of ministerial councils. For these reasons, the Inquiry did not pursue this option.

The Council of Australian Governments currently maintains the following ministerial councils that have an interest in bushfire mitigation and management:

- the augmented Australasian Police Ministers Council – dealing with emergency services
- the Primary Industries Ministerial Council – dealing with forestry
- the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council – dealing with the Natural Heritage Trust and other natural resource management and environmental fire matters
- the Regional Development Ministerial Council – dealing with local government and planning
- the Health and Community Services Ministerial Council – dealing with community aspects of recovery.

Coordination of these ministerial councils is problematic and further highlights the need for the Australian Government to have a consistent and informed view at senior executive level.

As a separate but complementary initiative, the Australasian Fire Authorities Council – representing as it does rural and urban fire agencies and land management authorities – is well placed to provide advice and industry expertise on bushfire mitigation and management to the various ministerial councils. The Inquiry understands that similar arrangements operate in the health area, where representative bodies provide industry-specific advice to government.

Finding 10.1

A single ministerial council overseeing bushfire mitigation and management is not practical because of varying considerations that must be taken into account by the different jurisdictions and government departments and agencies.

10.4.3 The Australian Emergency Management Committee

The perception that generated a call for a ministerial council was an underlying concern that agencies responsible for bushfire mitigation and management are not well represented through existing national government-level forums. The usually episodic nature of major bushfire events adds to this perception of a lack of focus.

Although the Inquiry supports an all-hazards approach to emergency management, it considers it is also important to ensure that the perspectives, needs and expertise of fire agencies are adequately recognised and accommodated.

The COAG report on Natural Disasters in Australia recommended establishing:

new national machinery consisting of a Ministerial Council or Ministerial Implementation Forum, and a National Emergency Management High Level Group, to ensure effective collaboration and coordination of Commonwealth,

State Territory and Local Government action in implementing the reform commitments.¹²

It has been agreed that the Australian Emergency Management Committee is to be chaired by the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department. Matters requiring ministerial consideration would be forwarded to the augmented Police Ministers Council once a year to consider emergency management questions as required, including bushfire. This approach reflects the fact that in many jurisdictions the Police Minister is also responsible for emergency services.

The concern expressed to the Inquiry about this arrangement is that the Australian Emergency Management Committee, as revised, will not usually include state and territory representatives of fire agencies or a representative of the Australasian Fire Authorities Council, thereby limiting the specialist fire advice available to government at the national level.

The Inquiry considers that having rural fire representation with observer status – probably through the Australasian Fire Authorities Council – on the Australian Emergency Management Committee would be the best possible arrangement for national fire policy and decision making. It has, however, already been decided that representative bodies should not be appointed as observers to the Australian Emergency Management Committee, so the Inquiry recommends that the Australasian Fire Authorities Council and relevant state and territory fire representatives be co-opted as advisers whenever bushfire mitigation and management are on the agenda or are likely to be discussed. Such an arrangement should also be instituted for the senior officials group that supports the augmented Police Ministerial Council. The Inquiry understands that this approach has support within the Australian Emergency Management Committee.

In principle, the approach taken by the Emergency Management Committee might be satisfactory, but the Inquiry notes that such an approach relies on a formal agenda process that could lack flexibility. Balancing this concern is the fact that the states and territories must have the opportunity to ensure that questions of bushfire mitigation and management are effectively represented by their members on the Committee.

Recommendation 10.2

The Inquiry recommends that the Australasian Fire Authorities Council be co-opted as an adviser to the Australian Emergency Management Committee whenever bushfire mitigation and management are to be discussed.

10.4.4 Organisational arrangements for bushfires

Three streams of fire agency respond to bushfires in Australia:

- urban fire agencies – generally responsible for protection and response in larger urban areas; normally career or part-time firefighters

¹² Matthews, K (Chairperson) 2002, *Natural Disasters in Australia*, COAG, Canberra, p. vii.

- rural fire agencies – generally responsible for protection and response in non-urban areas, although coverage includes many rural towns and suburbs; normally or predominantly volunteer firefighters
- land management agencies – generally an element of forestry or national parks, responsible for fire management, protection and response on public lands; normally a small number of fire managers using personnel seconded from other land management functions as firefighters when required. Seasonal firefighters are also engaged by some agencies.

All three streams have either direct or indirect responsibility for bushfire response. Fire and land management authorities have direct responsibility for bushfire mitigation.

State and territory organisational arrangements for bushfire mitigation and management vary to reflect local circumstances and approaches. These variations are illustrated in the summary of existing arrangements in Appendix E.

Fire agencies have not always operated well together. In the past, there have been unfortunate disputes about responsibilities, response areas and capabilities. These practices are no longer tolerated, and progress has been made in developing closer cooperation and compatibility. However, fire services are traditionally conservative institutions; the cultures of each fire agency stream must not be cause for impairing interoperability or operational efficiency. In Chapter 8, the Inquiry emphasises the need for a common purpose during mitigation and for unity of command during operations. Some fire agencies continue to plan in isolation and establish separate incident management teams for a single fire event. This is not in the interests of the communities served by fire agencies.

The disparate fire authority cultures have increasingly been drawn together, to the extent that fire services such as the Tasmania Fire Service and the Country Fire Authority in Victoria refer to themselves as integrated fire authorities, with career and volunteer firefighters serving both urban and rural communities. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is progressing towards this approach.

Other structural initiatives – such as the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Rescue Service, the Queensland Department of Emergency Services, the proposed Australian Capital Territory Emergency Services Authority, the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner in Victoria, the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission and the Western Australian Fire and Emergency Services Authority – are drawing together policy and administrative functions and, in some cases, operational planning and response. These structures also include other emergency services. The Inquiry notes this trend and commends all concerned.

In addition, legislation in South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory calls for the land management agencies to operate as an element of the rural fire service when responding to fires. They remain independent organisations for mitigation and land management. This implies a high level of operational coordination prior to response.

In New South Wales the *Rural Fires Act 1997* identifies four ‘fire fighting authorities’ – the Rural Fire Service, the New South Wales Fire Brigades, the Forestry Commission (now State Forests) and the National Parks and Wildlife

Service – with the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service having the authority, under s. 44 of the Rural Fires Act, to take charge of fires in specified circumstances across all land tenures.

State and territory initiatives designed to improve interoperability and coordination between agencies are effective. Arrangements in Tasmania illustrate well what can be achieved through cooperative endeavour between Forestry Tasmania, the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Fire Service. Other jurisdictions have memoranda of understanding between fire agencies that facilitate service delivery.

The Inquiry is not suggesting that all states and territories should immediately move towards integrated fire services. In fact, we see merit in land management agencies' fire-suppression responsibilities remaining separate from those of fire agencies because of the relationship between land management and bushfire mitigation. Nevertheless, all fire authorities need to critically examine their mitigation and management arrangements – particularly for the rural-urban interface – to ensure that optimum efficiency and effectiveness are achieved from the available resources. The risk exposure at the rural-urban interface highlights the need for a holistic, seamless approach.

For the general public, structure is of little relevance: outcome is their sole concern at times of emergency. Coordinated service delivery and single, unified command of bushfire operations will provide the best service for the community. The effort required to coordinate disparate administrative and operational arrangements is an overhead that should be minimised or avoided. Although commitments to a coordinated approach might be present 'from the top down', much is reliant on goodwill, trust and relationships, and emergency circumstances place these elements under great pressure. Operational and legislative arrangements that best facilitate the required outcomes need to exist.

This calls for detailed collaborative planning, exercising, reviewing existing vehicles and equipment, ensuring that operational communications are interoperable and used, and having common, unified command structures. Introducing into service rural-urban pumpers in areas adjacent to interface zones is an obvious example of where fire authorities might be able to deal with challenges more effectively.

Perhaps more importantly, the attitudes of all volunteers and career staff need to be aligned to achieving the optimum operational outcome. Much work has already been done in developing a common approach, but more is needed. Cultural change is called for, and this involves sustained effort, is demanding, and takes time.

Box 10.1 The iZone project

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service iZone project is about holistic service delivery for communities in the rural-urban interface zone. It is focused on Fire and Rescue Service personnel and how they can make a difference through a shift in culture, from separateness to inclusiveness. Resolving iZone challenges covers every aspect of service delivery, from the planning of new developments through to community education and awareness, service delivery planning, and response activities.

Finding 10.2

Urban and rural fire agencies are drawing closer together, and operational coordination within land management organisations is improving. Much has been achieved in the last 20 years. This trend should be encouraged: it reduces operational vulnerability during emergencies and provides the best possible service to communities. Regardless of the structure in place, though, a single, unified command and integrated operational planning and response must exist.

10.4.5 The Australasian Fire Authorities Council

The Australasian Fire Authorities Council was established in 1993 as a result of amalgamation of the Australian Association of Rural Fire Authorities and the Australian Assembly of Fire Authorities. It is the 'representative body for fire and emergency services in the Australasian Region'¹³, and it represents fire and land management agencies very effectively. The role and membership of the Council are detailed in Appendix H.

The Council has proved a most effective industry body, serving the interests of its members through policy development, advocacy, representation, learning and facilitation. It meets formally twice a year and its CEO and secretariat facilitate standing strategy groups focusing on specific matters and manage the annual Australasian Fire Conference. The Council is expanding its ties in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Council has low administrative overheads and a very focused purpose. Because it is essentially funded by its members, there is close scrutiny of costs and expenditure. Its recent achievements are impressive, among them training support, development of national standards, advocacy and preparation of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre bid, development of the National Aerial Firefighting Strategy, development of important policies (including the 'stay or go' position paper) and facilitating the uptake of the Australian Inter-agency Incident Management System in all Australian fire agencies.

One limitation of the Council is that it exists to serve its members, who themselves are responsible to their state and territory governments. It would therefore be inappropriate for the Council to represent jurisdictions in meetings with the Australian Government. But no other body has the detailed, practical knowledge of fire agencies' service delivery and bushfire mitigation and management. It is for this reason that the Inquiry recommends that the Australasian Fire Authorities Council be co-opted to advise the Australian Emergency Management Committee when bushfire mitigation and management are being discussed; the Council is also well placed to provide policy advice to the Australian Government through the augmented Police Ministers Council.

10.4.6 The Forest Fire Management Group

The Forest Fire Management Group, which can advise the Primary Industries Ministerial Council through the Forestry and Forest Products Committee, has

¹³ Australasian Fire Authorities Council, <www.afac.com.au/about/aboutafac.html>, viewed 24 March 2004.

proved an effective coordination body for members and continues to be valued by the agencies concerned. The Group was instrumental in organising recent deployments of fire managers to the United States to assist during fire emergencies. Although the Group’s existence in part reflects the uncoordinated approach to bushfire-related matters within the Australian Government, the Inquiry considers that the Group should continue in its current form. Appendix I lists the Group’s members.

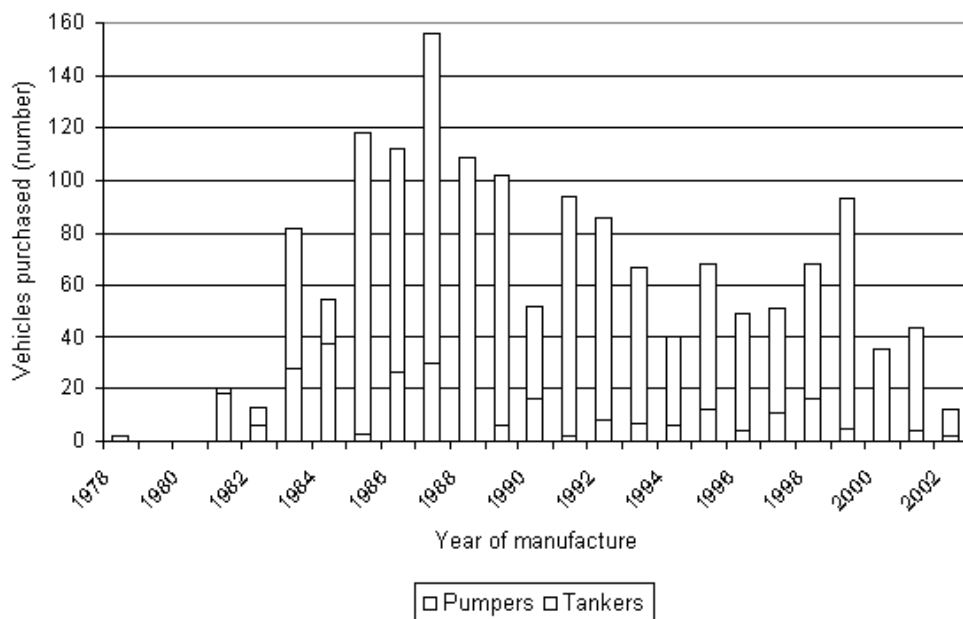
10.5 Common acquisition of equipment

In its discussion of aerial operations in Chapter 8, the Inquiry highlights the efficiencies associated with the National Aerial Firefighting Centre approach to acquiring aerial services for all jurisdictions. When the same goods or services are being sought by more than one jurisdiction, it makes sense to combine the purchase to achieve the best possible efficiencies.

The Australasian Fire Authorities Council is well placed to broker these arrangements. The Inquiry supports this approach and considers that significant savings could be achieved. The success of such an approach is, however, dependent on the adoption of common national standards.

The Inquiry was made aware of the future purchasing requirements of Victoria and South Australia in relation to rural tankers. Following the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983, both states embarked on major tanker-replacement programs. Many of these tankers will be reaching the end of their life later this current decade and will need to be replaced. Figure 10.1 shows tanker requirements for Victoria and a similar pattern – although a smaller quantity – is the case for South Australia.

Figure 10.1 Victorian Country Fire Authority: tanker requirements, 1978 to 2002



Source: Auditor General Victoria *Fire prevention and preparedness* May 2003

Table 10.1 provides a further indication of the quantity of vehicles and equipment involved in the case of Victoria.

Table 10.1 Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment and Country Fire Authority firefighting vehicles and equipment, June 2002¹⁴

Department of Sustainability and Environment	Quantity	Country Fire Authority	Quantity
Fire tankers	82	Fire tankers and pumpers	1 520
4WD vehicles with slip-on units	360	All-terrain vehicles	3
Bulldozers	37	Urban aerial appliances	6
Trailers, camping equipment, and so on	369	Mobile control, rescue, incident units, and so on	46
Brigade-owned vehicles	0	Brigade-owned vehicles	551
Staff transport vehicles	0	Staff transport vehicles	234
Communications—radios, pagers, and so on	6 125	Communications—radios, pagers, and so on	19 500
Other—pumps, chainsaws, and so on	575	Other—portable equipment, and so on	1 848
Total number of items	7 548	Total number of items	23 708
Estimated replacement value (\$ million)	39.8	Estimated replacement value (\$ million)	700.0

Figure 10.1 and Table 10.1 illustrate that tanker replacement requirements for Victoria and South Australia will approach 200 a year for a number of years. If these vehicles or even their chassis could be purchased as a combined order, the potential savings are considerable.

Other opportunities for savings as a result of group purchasing are also evident:

- personal protective equipment
- firefighting equipment
- training equipment.

Finding 10.3

The potential savings from collective purchases of major equipment items between states and territories is extensive and should be explored through the Australasian Fire Authorities Council.

¹⁴ Cameron J W 2003, *Fire prevention and preparedness*, Auditor General Victoria p. 126.