

# Managing bushfire risk in WA through policy and programs – October 2020

The approach of the Hazard Management Agency for Fire

Tim McNaught – Director Office of Bushfire Risk Management, Rural Fire Division

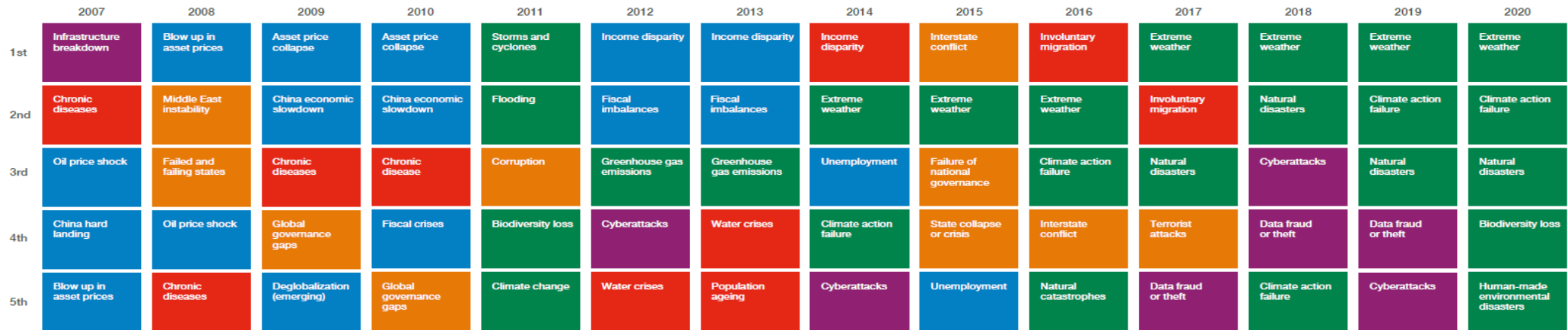


FOR A SAFER STATE

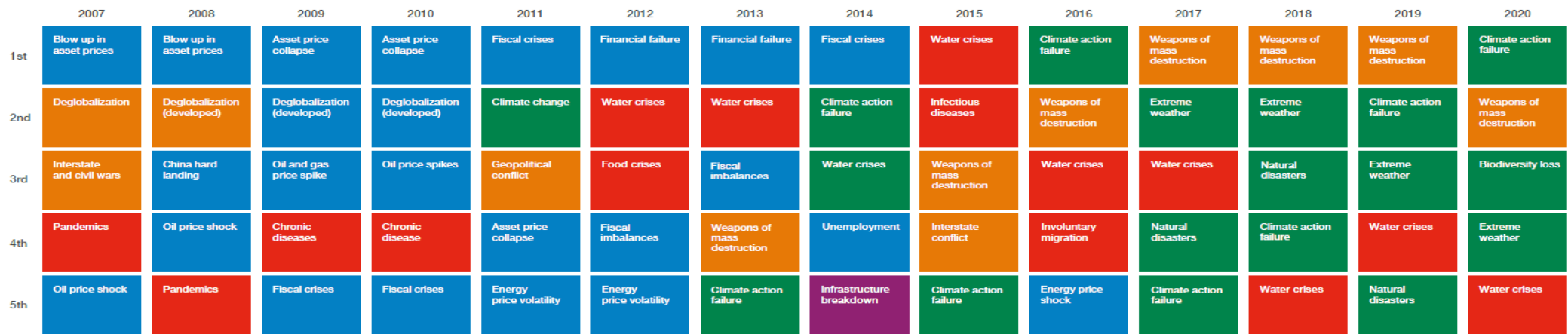


Figure I: The Evolving Risks Landscape, 2007–2020

Top 5 Global Risks in Terms of Likelihood



Top 5 Global Risks in Terms of Impact



■ Economic  
 ■ Environmental  
 ■ Geopolitical  
 ■ Societal  
 ■ Technological

Source: World Economic Forum 2007-2020, *Global Risks Reports*.

Note: Global risks may not be strictly comparable across years, as definitions and the set of global risks have evolved with new issues emerging on the 10-year horizon. For example, cyberattacks, income disparity and unemployment entered the set of global risks in 2012. Some global risks have been reclassified: water crises and income disparity were recategorized as societal risks in the 2015 and 2014 *Global Risks Reports*, respectively.



Figure II: The Global Risks Landscape 2020



# A changing climate

Warming and drying climate influencing the scale and impact of natural hazards globally.

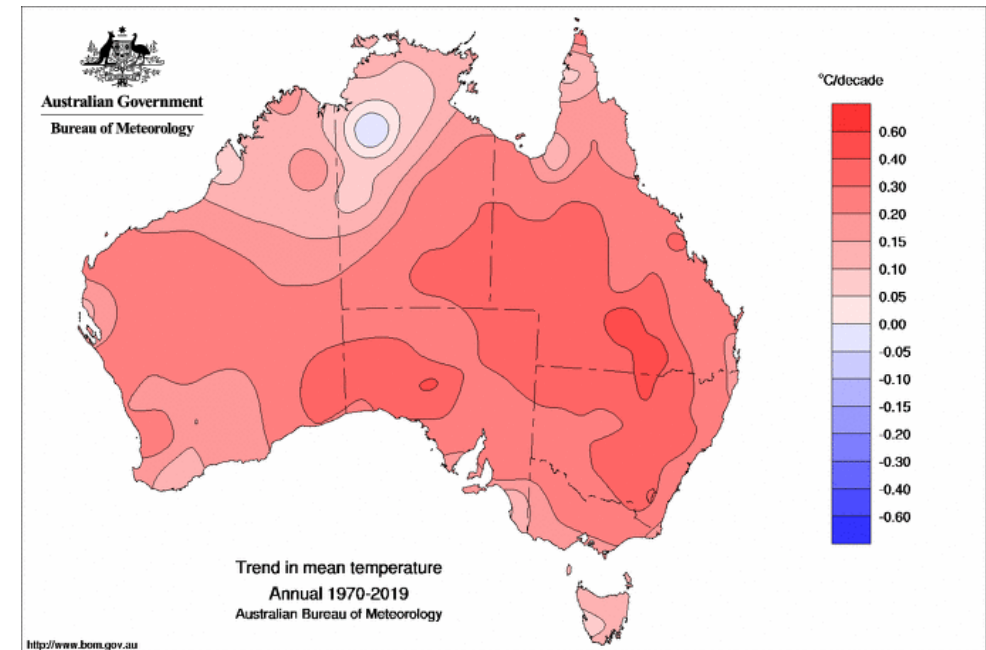
Changing climate dominating the focus of governments globally. Former long-term impacts being realised now and short to medium term challenges.

Increasing risk, community focus and government responses make for an increasingly complex policy space for natural hazard management.

Government, businesses and the communities becoming more adaptive as awareness of the impacts of a changing climate increases and become more apparent to the individual.

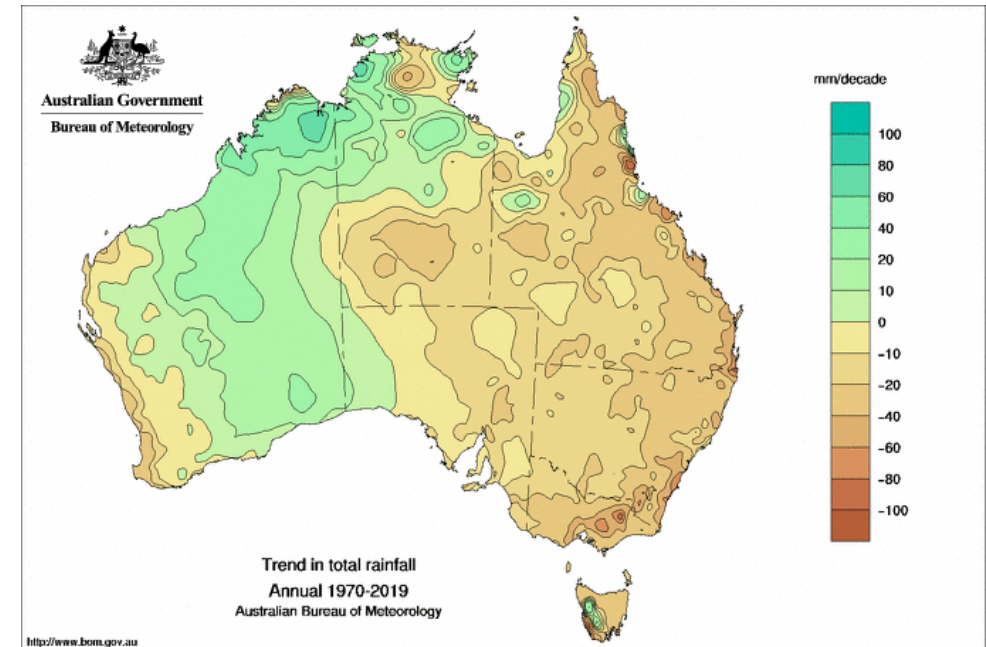
2019/20 Summer bushfires an awakening moment for Australia and the impacts a changing climate is having at a national scale, the communities and their values.

For WA first year the northern summer bushfire season merged with southern summer bushfire season.



© Commonwealth of Australia 2020, Australian Bureau of Meteorology

Issued: 27/05/2020



© Commonwealth of Australia 2020, Australian Bureau of Meteorology ID code: AGCD v2

Issued: 31/08/2020



FOR A SAFER STATE

# Western Australian Bushfire Reforms 2018

Waroona Bushfire January 2016 prompted a change in focus of government and the Hazard Management Agency for Fire

2017 new government and change in leadership at DFES

23 April 2018 Bushfire reforms:

- creation of a Rural Fire Division within DFES
- \$50 million towards mitigation (\$35 million ongoing) – Local government led Bushfire Risk Management Planning
- Bushfire Centre of Excellence – training and research

Broader reform – integration of Office of Emergency Management and State Emergency Management Committee Secretariat into DFES





FOR A SAFER STATE

# Western Australian Bushfire Management - Governance

## Legislation

- Consolidation of the Emergency Services related Acts (*Fire Brigades Act 1942, Bush Fires Act 1954, Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*)
- Inter-relationship with other legislation i.e. native vegetation, biodiversity conservation

## Committee structure and constitution

- State Bushfire Advisory Council (Cabinet appointed positions – WALGA, volunteer associations, UFU, BOM, agencies) – provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Minister for Emergency Services and FES Commissioner - <https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/publications/Pages/statebushfireadvisorycouncil.aspx>
- Interagency Bushfire Operational Committee – guide interagency collaboration efforts (DFES, DBCA, WALGA)
- Bushfire Operational Committee (LG led) providing advice to DFES Operations



# Western Australian Bushfire Management - Policy

- State Bushfire Management Policy – overarching policy bringing together all elements that support management of bushfire in Western Australia and supports reporting to Government
- Planning in bushfire prone areas (CSIRO developed Map of Bushfire Prone Areas, State Planning Policy 3.7 and associated Guidelines)
- Guidelines for Preparing a Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRM Plan)
- Integration of bushfire elements in interrelated policies and strategies – i.e. Djarlma Plan
- Collaboration in evolving policy areas such as smoke management (government/non-government)
- Resource sharing locally, regionally, nationally and internationally a growing challenge





FOR A SAFER STATE

## Western Australian Bushfire Management - Programs

BRM Planning - \$50 million investment (\$35 million ongoing for mitigation activities)

Cross sector training (BCoE) including cultural burning

Projects – \$50 million Australian Fire Danger Rating System and associated communications

Resource sharing local, state and national level – i.e. AFAC's National Aerial Firefighting Centre

DFES Assurance Program for planned burning

Research programs – agency and local government level supported through National Disaster Resilience program, Bushfire Natural Hazards CRC, local governments and agencies.





# Western Australian Bushfire Management - evolving the approach

Review and enhancement of existing programs – i.e. BRM Planning

Cultural and traditional burning broader scale – connection of science with culture

Alternative strategies to reduce the fuel and structure – ecological thinning

Improved community warnings – smoke, AFDRS (consistency across Australia prompting actions)

Royal Commission – influence on jurisdictional management of bushfire (other natural hazards)  
potential enhancement of information sharing, investment in programs/projects and resource sharing  
across jurisdictions. Due 28 October 2020.



Questions?

DFES Office of Bushfire Risk Management – [obrm@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:obrm@dfes.wa.gov.au) - (08) 9395 9584

