



Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting  
5 year plan

**2011-16**



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Manager, Corporate Communication  
Airservices Australia  
GPO Box 367  
Canberra City ACT 2601  
Telephone (02) 6268 4867  
Fax (02) 6268 5688

Web address of this report: <http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/media/corporatepubs/default.asp>

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The Airservices Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Group is responsible for the provision of rescue and fire fighting services at 21 of Australia's busiest airports.



## About this plan

The Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) 5 year plan provides both a map for the future direction of the group and identifies the challenges we face as one of the largest fire fighting organisations in Australasia.

Our goal is to ensure Airservices continues to provide an efficient, effective, competitive and internationally acclaimed ARFF Service to 2016 and beyond.

We must develop strategies to meet the expectations of the government, our customers and the community at large.

For further information on any aspect of this report, please contact Airservices at the address inside the front cover.

## Overview

This plan provides a blueprint for ARFF to face the challenges and opportunities likely to be encountered by the group in the next five years. It acknowledges the changing face of the airline industry and the workforce at large and outlines important initiatives and support strategies key to the notion of 'future proofing' the service.

We aim to:

- continue to improve service delivery to our existing and future clients
- protect the health and safety of ARFF staff
- be environmentally compliant and responsible
- improve organisational effectiveness
- be fiscally pro-active and responsible
- improve leadership and management throughout the group
- increase diversity
- continue to support effective stakeholder outreach and involvement
- benchmark ARFF tactics and operating procedures against world's best practice
- provide and maintain quality equipment and facilities
- seek commercial opportunities to expand our services to new or existing clients.



ALEXANDROW

LEADS

## Development of the plan

In developing this plan, Airservices has taken into account key strategic, tactical and operational documents and plans.

### External drivers

The plan supports agreed international and domestic standards for the provision of aviation rescue and fire fighting activities, including regulations set by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

### Internal drivers

The plan aligns ARFF's long term activities with the Airservices Corporate Plan 2010-15 and the Minister's Statement of Expectations. It also maintains consistency with the policy thrust set out in the 2009 National Aviation Policy White Paper.

### The Airservices Corporate Plan 2010-15

The plan outlines our goals of:

- delivering excellent core performance by continually improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of our services
- building a high achieving organisation by continually pursuing improvements in service delivery
- delivering the future by making preparations in advance of increased projected operational and servicing requirements.

The plan attends to the specific requirements laid out in other Airservices functional planning documents including the Long Term Safety Plan, Environment Management Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Air Traffic Management Services 5 Year Plan and the Technical and Asset Services Group Strategic Plan.

## ARFF today and in 2016

ARFF 2016	
<b>Fire Fighters</b>	
Superintendents	7
Station Commander	24
Fire Commanders	76
Station Officers	94
Fire Fighters	572
Admin and Support	5
<b>Engineering and Maintenance</b>	
Senior Managers	3
Admin and Support	3
Emergency Vehicle Technicians	37
EVT Apprentices	6
<b>Head Office</b>	
General Manager	1
Senior Managers	8
Admin and Support	5
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>841</b>

Airservices is the world's largest provider of aviation rescue and fire fighting services, with over 740 operational and support personnel based around Australia.

Our level of service ranges from the provision of Category 6 to Category 10 services at the 21 busiest Australian airports as determined by Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) regulations.

These dictate the required category (based on the size of aircraft serving the airport), the foam and water requirements, response times and discharge rates.

ARFF also provides structural fire fighting, first aid, motor vehicle accident rescue and alarm monitoring and despatch services at aerodromes. ARFF possesses a water rescue fleet designed to assist passengers in the event of an aircraft ditching at aerodromes with large bodies of water within a kilometre of the runway thresholds.

### Future demand

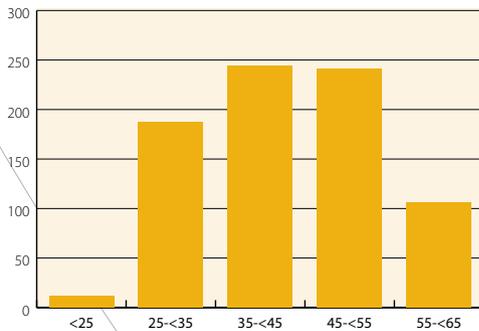
Based on projected growth within the aviation sector, Airservices expects to expand ARFF services within the next two years into Port Headland and Coffs Harbour and may need to increase the Category rating at certain other aerodromes. On the other hand, decline in passenger numbers at other aerodromes may lead to a rationalisation of one or more stations.



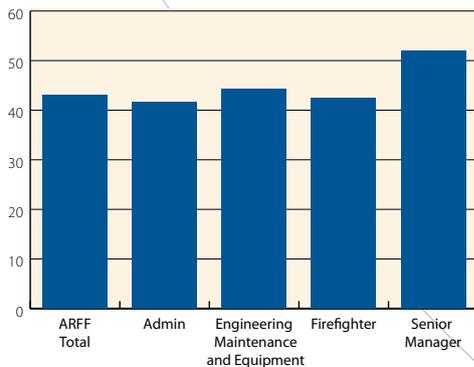
## People

As more staff become eligible for retirement, we are implementing a multi-faceted approach to leadership succession and workforce planning. Our goal is to ensure we have the right number of fire fighters, officers and emergency vehicle technicians (EVTs) to meet future demand and demographic shifts.

**Figure 02** – Age profile of ARFF staff, 2011.



**Figure 03** – Average age of ARFF staff, 2011.



### Fire fighters

ARFF trainees graduate from the Airservices Learning Academy in Melbourne. Progression through the ranks to Fire Commander occurs through a combination of academic achievement, selection (beyond the Leading Fire Fighter level) and time in rank.

As ARFF is the only provider of aviation fire fighting skills in Australia, all senior officers are sourced internally. Careful delivery and management of training is imperative to ensure sufficient senior officers will be available.

Up to 100 additional officers will be required over the next five years to meet increases in service demand, operational requirements and natural attrition.

### Emergency vehicle technicians (EVTs)

Airservices places a great deal of emphasis on maintaining high quality fire and emergency vehicles. The supply of appropriately qualified and experienced emergency vehicle technicians (EVTs) is challenging as they are the only technicians capable of maintaining the Rosenbauer range of emergency vehicles. As a result, a comprehensive apprenticeship program has been developed and recently implemented.

## Training

Our fire fighters rely on a schedule of initial and recurrent training to prepare them for a wide spectrum of aircraft emergencies. A centralised training facility planned for Melbourne will become the premier aviation training facility in the southern hemisphere. Improvements in training will also see station-level training reviewed, updated and improved over the next five years.

## Upcoming retirement challenge

The significant number of staff who are either at, or close to the average ARFF retirement age of 60, coupled with a projected tightening of the broader labour market, present a significant challenge for maintaining a skilled and experienced ARFF workforce (see figure 02). ARFF is working closely with the Airservices People and Change group to develop recruitment and other people strategies to manage the age profile of the ARFF workforce in recognition of this demographic challenge.

## Diversity and equal opportunity

In line with Airservices broader strategic goals and to meet the demographic challenges outlined above, ARFF is committed to increasing the diversity of its workforce and providing equal opportunity to employees.

Fire brigades in general tend to have a low percentage of operational female staff. The ARFF workforce is no exception with only 8 female officers (1.3 per cent of the ARFF workforce) in 2009-10. Indigenous employees are also under-represented, at only 1.5 per cent of the total workforce.

Increasing the diversity of our workforce will be a real area of focus over the period of this plan – starting with a foundational review of our workforce culture.

## Culture Review

ARFF commissioned a multi-phase Culture Review in 2010 that will run through the next five years. The review is a key component in our desire to 'future-proof' the ARFF. It seeks to understand what kind of workplace we will need to have and the skills we will need to provide in order to deliver services into the future.

## Strategies for implementation by 2016:

- conduct annual refresher training to all senior operational and head office staff and biannual training at the station officer level and below
- develop a centralised training syllabus and rotation scheme that will see all operational fire fighters cycled through the Melbourne training facility every three years
- implement culture review initiatives
- achieve a more diverse workforce that reflects the broader community we serve.



## Assets

ARFF manages over \$90 million of assets associated with fire stations, equipment, appliances, response vehicles, aerial ladder vehicles and personal equipment. A detailed asset management plan monitors the age and condition of all ARFF assets.

### Fleet renewal program

A vehicle renewal program was initiated in 2003 which replaces the ageing large fire vehicle (Mk5 and Mk6) fleet with the Mk8 ultra-large fire vehicle (ULFV). The renewal program will reduce the average vehicle age from over 20 years to 10 years by 2014.

In total, the program will replace:

- 33 Mk5/6 vehicles with Mk8 vehicles
- 11 large fire vehicles with Mk9 vehicles for Hamilton Island and training purposes.

In addition, the renewal program will see:

- the establishment of aerial vehicles following the introduction to Australia of the Airbus A380 and an anticipated upgrade to Category 10 services at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and likely Perth
- the purchase of two new domestic response vehicles (DRVs) for Brisbane and Perth.

By 2014, ARFF will have reduced its vehicle fleet from eight types to four, with 80 per cent of vehicles Mk8. This will significantly reduce the need for differential engineering, operational, documentary and training requirements.

### Strategies for implementation by 2016:

- establish a Benefits Realisation Program (BPR) by 2011 to maximise the value of our fleet renewal project
- review service maintenance schedules and implement cost savings
- review the current ARFF reserve fleet and seek opportunities to rationalise
- commence planning for our Fire Vehicle Replacement project 5 to replace Mk7s towards the end of their operational life (around 2020) as well as the next generation vehicles to replace the Mk8s.

## Services

Our service delivery model focuses on the delivery of effective and efficient aviation rescue and fire fighting services and setting a national standard across the ARFF network.

### **Service provision for non-aviation facilities**

Challenges and opportunities are presented by the National Aviation Policy White Paper with regard to the provision of ARFF services for non-aviation facilities. This includes ensuring ARFF has the capacity to meet future expansion requirements. The mining boom and establishment of a world-class centralised training facility present opportunities within the secondary aviation industry.

### **Graduated services**

To support the aviation industry, ARFF intends to develop and progress a Graduated Services model to improve fire safety and emergency response capability at regional and remote aerodromes that support mining ventures. This provides opportunities to develop additional revenue sources in areas not previously regarded as within ARFF's regulatory responsibility.

### **Training**

As the only domestic provider of ARFF services in Australia, we are interested in examining new opportunities to develop commercial and strategic linkages with the broader aviation rescue and fire fighting industry in Australia and in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Other services

ARRF will continue to work with Defence to provide effective services to joint user facilities at Townsville and Darwin.

ARRF also provides a range of aviation-related training to our domestic airline and airport owners such as training of cabin crew and fire wardens. We are mindful of the importance of this kind of training to our key stakeholders.

### Strategies for implementation by 2016:

- monitor, review and improve operational capabilities to ensure the ARFF model is fit for purpose, cost effective and presents value for money
- investigate graduated services and decide on a model that best supports the industry
- ensure our skills, resources and training are world's best practice
- investigate commercial opportunities domestically and within the Asia-Pacific region
- work closely with local, state and territory fire brigades, airport owners and other stakeholders to confirm responsibility of fire alarm monitoring and response to non-aviation facilities within an aerodrome.



**MURITA**  
MLK4-30

**FIRE**

**FIRE**

BH 71 GG

## Quality, safety and environment

Our safety, compliance and environment goals over the next five years focus on contributing to the achievement of Airservices three strategic objectives: delivering excellent core performance, building a high achieving organisation and delivering the future.

### Compliance

Our compliance goal to 2016 is to effectively manage all legal, regulatory and other compliance-related risks.

### ARFFSAFE

ARFFSAFE was established to increase awareness and understanding of operational and occupational risks through ARFF specific safety promotion and timely communication of safety information, including lessons learnt.

It aims to protect the long term health and wellbeing of staff by adopting a proactive approach to safety management. ARFFSAFE comprises four management subgroups, each lead by a safety champion: PeopleSAFE, MechSAFE, OpsSAFE and ProjectSAFE. Each group reports to the senior management oversight group.

### Environmental management

A key goal over the next five years is to minimise our environmental footprint through a range of activities, including water recycling and reducing black smoke fires used for training purposes.

The development of an Environment Management Plan (EMP) will be guided by the principles of ISO 4001.

### Strategies for implementation by 2016:

- reduce workplace injuries and illnesses and support effective rehabilitation strategies
- maintain an environment management plan to allow the continual improvement of ARFF services while minimising impact on the environment
- operate in a way that protects soil and water resources in the aerodrome areas in which ARFF operates
- develop, enhance and engage staff in ARFFSAFE
- implement a regular and meaningful benchmarking program with other ARFF operators.

## Finance

ARFF strives to meet operating, maintenance, equipment and asset requirements while maintaining a budget that provides a return on investment for government and value for money for our customers. Over the past five years we have made a significant investment in our fleet renewal program, construction of new fire stations, refurbishment of existing stations and upgrading fire alarm monitoring systems.

Airservices will commit over \$135 million in capital expenditure to ARFF services through to 2016. This reflects the organisation's commitment to ensure that ARFF is well placed to meet the needs of all stakeholders now and into the future.

We will also undertake several cost-saving initiatives in both supplier costs and direct labour costs to minimise any overlap or waste in operating expenses.

### **Strategies for implementation by 2016:**

- continue to implement cost saving initiatives
- seek opportunities to grow revenue via initiatives that are directed at expanding our business and increasing the value to our existing clients
- increase productivity by improving our cost structures and improving the utilisation of our assets.

## Stakeholder management

We are committed to developing and maintaining an active process of engagement with all stakeholders.

Our stakeholder management process recognises that consultation is a two-way process. It means informing stakeholders about progress with our business plans, listening to stakeholders' views, and responding to their legitimate concerns.

### **Strategies for implementation by 2016:**

- continue to work with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the Department of Infrastructure and Transport to ensure the initiatives in the 2009 Aviation Policy White Paper are implemented in consultation with all stakeholders
- finalise contractual arrangements with the Department of Defence at Townsville and Darwin and investigate opportunities for further collaboration
- liaise with airlines to ensure a value-for-money ARFF model is maintained
- ensure Memorandums of Agreement are agreed between airports, metropolitan fire brigades and other emergency services to safeguard continuation of services in all events
- strengthen our collaboration with the United Firefighters Union (UFU), the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia (APESMA) and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) to ensure they are made aware of proposed significant initiatives with a material impact on ARFF staff
- work with Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), International Aviation Fire Protection Association (IAFPA) and Women and Firefighting Australasia (WAFA) to ensure that the interests of aviation fire fighting are maintained and improved.



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