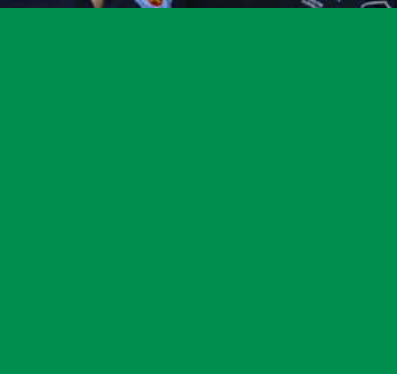




Metropolitan Fire Service Culture and Diversity Plan 2021-24



*A more inclusive,
values-based culture.*



METROPOLITAN
FIRE
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SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Government
of South Australia

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'The Metropolitan Fire Service is one of the oldest fire services in the world. We are actively seeking to modernise our culture and diversify our workforce so that it better reflects the community we serve.

We are seeking to create a better workplace culture for all and progress our culture to one that is embracing of differences and moving beyond stereotypes.'

MFS Chief Officer
Michael Morgan AFSM

Foreword

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) holds a special position of trust and responsibility in the eyes of the South Australian community. As one of the professions most trusted by the public, it is imperative that we show leadership when there are members of our community who are disadvantaged, at risk, or in need.

I believe the MFS can and should be a role model for other organisations and our community. This means where necessary we must take visible action to address inequity. The MFS has demonstrated a clear commitment to championing social causes. We support programs including White Ribbon, the Champions of Change Coalition and the CEO Sleepout because they clearly align to our commitment to protect the broader South Australian community and make South Australia safer.

The MFS Strategic Plan outlines our commitment to continuing to provide high quality emergency services. However, our plan also identifies a number of areas where we can improve the services we provide or better support our employees. We have also recognised and are addressing the need to develop a safer, more contemporary workplace culture and ensure our workforce increasingly reflects the community it serves.

Our MFS Doctrine demonstrates our commitment to our organisational values and the key principles that we believe will foster operational excellence and employee safety. The Doctrine also communicates the behaviour we expect of all our employees. I want the MFS to be a workplace of choice, where all employees feel safe and valued for their contributions, irrespective of their background, gender and ethnicity. I want us to recognise and value the exemplary behaviour of the vast majority of MFS employees while having the capacity to ensure early intervention and support where behaviour does not meet our shared expectations.

I believe our organisation, its workforce and culture should reflect the values and demography of the community it serves. In 2017 we commissioned a report by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner (EOC) to evaluate the culture and demography of the MFS. The report found the MFS has a culture characterised by shared values of professionalism, integrity, respect, responsibility and accountability. These are all positive elements of culture that are reflected in our service to the community.

However, the EOC report also identified a male-dominated, hierarchical culture with barriers to increased diversity. Furthermore, although not widespread, the EOC report and the 2018 'I Work for SA' survey identified isolated instances of intimidation, bullying and harassment and sexual discrimination. I would like to make it clear that these behaviours have no place in the MFS under any circumstances.

The MFS is making a clear commitment to employee wellness. We have a much clearer picture of the physical, cognitive and emotional demands placed on emergency service employees, their families and peers. Our organisational culture needs to recognise the difficulties and costs associated with a career in the emergency services and provide visible support to all in need.

The MFS is implementing strategies that will ensure employment in the MFS is positive, inclusive, safe and sustainable for current employees and those who seek to join us in the future. Where necessary we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the MFS is an accessible employer for more members of our diverse community.

I am committed to initiatives that will enhance our workplace culture and diversity.

These initiatives include:

- Developing a contemporary, inclusive and safe workplace culture.
- Ensuring we recruit a more diverse workforce, representative of our community with the right capabilities and behaviours.
- Providing visible leadership and support to programs that foster equity and diversity.
- Developing Employee Wellness initiatives that support a healthy, safe and sustainable workforce.
- Employing 'best practice' change management strategies that include information, communication and education to explain the need for change and the potential benefits.

Michael Morgan, AFSM
MFS CHIEF OFFICER



Strategic Context

Our community and our organisation



Strategic Context

Our community

The MFS is responsible for the protection of the South Australian community from the effects of fires, road crashes, dangerous substances and other emergencies.

The South Australian community has undergone significant changes in demography over the past decade and this trend is forecast to continue.

Our forward planning includes the need to address the following trends:

- Continued population and urban growth in the greater Adelaide area will increase the total number of emergency incidents.
- An aging population with increasing numbers of people requiring support and care may result in an increase in domestic fires and road crashes.
- South Australia will see increasing cultural diversity with 17.4% now speaking a language other than English at home (*ABS, 2016, Census Data*).
- Urban consolidation including urban corridor and high-density and mixed residency developments will present new fire and road use risks.
- Due to the increasing use of synthetic materials and contemporary open plan designs, fires that do occur will burn hotter and faster with the potential to cause greater life risk and property/economic loss.

Our community has also seen significant change in terms of cultural beliefs and attitudes. This has included clear expectation that non-inclusive, discriminatory or culturally insensitive behaviours do not belong in the contemporary workplace.

Finally, there is an expectation that publicly funded organisations will be transparent, accountable and use their resources effectively and responsibly.

Our organisation

The MFS employs over 1,100 employees to protect approximately 1.3 million South Australians and the things they value. Our current workforce is professional, highly motivated and experienced.

Many of the response roles our employees perform are mentally, emotionally and physically demanding. We are increasingly aware of the long-term wellness risks associated with emergency services delivery that our employees face. However, we must also recognise that some of our employees do not feel as safe or as valued within our workplace culture as they should. Independent review of our organisation found instances of intimidation, bullying and harassment, sexual discrimination and bias. These findings must be emphatically addressed.

Our current workforce demographic does not represent the community it serves. Although over 50% of South Australia's population is female over 95% of our workforce is male. Culturally diverse groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also under-represented within the MFS. Although firefighting places many demands on employees we believe the MFS should be an employer of choice for community minded individuals who are physically fit and emotionally resilient irrespective of gender or ethnicity.

Our organisation is seeking changes in the following areas:

- Modernising our workplace culture and behaviour so that a career in the MFS is rewarding, inclusive and safe for all employees.
- Committing to recruiting a workforce that reflects the values and demography of the community it serves.
- Providing more effective, consistent and visible leadership (internally and externally) for culture, diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Improving the physical, mental and emotional wellness of our workforce.
- Ensuring required organisational change is implemented effectively through engagement, communication and education that recognises existing strengths and weaknesses and effectively conveys necessary improvements.

Organisational Values

We are committed to organisational values that are consistent with those of the South Australian community and broader Public Sector. As one of the professions most trusted by the public we believe it is imperative that we show leadership when there are members of our community who are disadvantaged, at risk, or in need.

We expect our organisational values to guide our day-to-day decision making and behaviour. The MFS is implementing a Respectful Behaviour Policy that will allow us to better recognise and value the positive behaviour of MFS employees. We also consider this policy as essential for recognising the behaviour of those who support our culture, diversity and inclusion strategy and managing the behaviour of those who passively or actively block change. When necessary this policy will also be a key initiative to address instances of inappropriate behaviour.

Our values, and expected behaviours are outlined in more detail in the MFS Organisational Doctrine.

Community

We will put the needs of our community first

As an agency we put the needs of the community before our own. The MFS aims to work with the community to enhance public safety and maintain the quality of living we enjoy in South Australia.

We support programs and activities including White Ribbon, Pride March, Champions of Change Coalition and the CEO Sleepout because they align with our values and our commitment to protect the community. We believe a workforce more representative of our community will help us better understand and meet our community's needs.

Safety

We will take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure the safety of the public and our employees

The MFS is committed to minimising the risks to our employees by providing appropriate training and instruction, fit for purpose equipment and safe systems of work.

An inclusive and contemporary workplace culture will be safer and more rewarding for all employees.

Professionalism

Our employees must be experts in what they do, committed to achieving the highest standards

As emergency service professionals tasked with protecting life and property our employees must be experts, capable of making life and death decisions in an instant. They must possess the professional knowledge, skills and technical excellence to operate in high-risk environments.

Achieving the highest possible standards requires us to embrace new and different ways of thinking.

Teamwork

Teamwork is essential in all aspects of emergency service provision

Our employees must be able to work towards common goals and support each other for the benefit of the community.

Effective teams have the ability to accept and improve by embracing differences in capabilities and thinking.

Loyalty, respect and integrity

We will act with courage, tenacity and in the best interest of the public

Our employees are committed to doing the right things in the right way. We encourage all MFS employees to speak up or act when they see something wrong.

Responsibility, accountability and quality

We aim to provide the best possible service and value to our community

The MFS aims to provide the highest possible standard of emergency services to the community.

We are responsible for evaluating our performance and implementing effective change when necessary.

Learning and improvement

We seek to do things even better in the future

We consider career-long learning to be essential to the safety of our employees and the public.

We see education as essential for firefighting safety and implementing lasting organisational change.



Enhancing Culture and Diversity

Our Culture and Diversity Vision

An inclusive emergency service organisation that reflects its community, where all feel respected, safe and valued.

Our culture will be inclusive and differences will be respected, appreciated and incorporated to develop a modern, effective and adaptable fire service. Our workforce will have a greater appreciation of the benefits of diversity and inclusion and feel valued, safe and supported. We will see increasing diversity in those seeking careers with the MFS and be considered an employer of choice by our community, peers and workforce. We will continue to experience high retention levels in MFS.

Our Culture and Diversity Mission

To employ effective change management to modernise our culture, improve the wellness and diversity of our workforce and take a leading role in addressing structural and cultural barriers to diversity and inclusion.

We recognise the need to implement meaningful and lasting change that includes clearly defining and managing our cultural and behavioural expectations and implementing systems that will remove barriers to increased diversity.

Implementing our Vision and Mission

We recognise that diversity enriches workforce culture, brings different ideas, communication methods and approaches to problem solving that will benefit our organisation and community.

We have established five key strategic priorities to implement our Culture and Diversity Vision. These are:

1. Culture and Behaviour

Our objective is to develop a more inclusive, values-based culture. We will improve workplace performance, safety and wellbeing by clearly defining and communicating our organisational values, principles and expected behaviours through the MFS Doctrine. We will develop systems that recognise and reward positive behaviour and effectively manage inappropriate behaviour.

2. Diversity and Inclusion

Our objective is to develop a workforce more representative of our community. We will continue to review and address organisational barriers to attracting diversity to recruit a workforce that reflects the community we serve.

3. Inclusive Leadership

Our objective is to become a role model for culture and inclusion. We will provide leadership for progressive culture, diversity and inclusion through initiatives that increase collaboration, consultation and education.

4. Employee Wellness

Our objective is to develop a healthy, safe and sustainable workforce. We will continue to support and provide our existing wellness programs as well as implementing new programs that have been commissioned on the back of research and employee surveys.

5. Change Management

Our objective is to find innovative and flexible ways to create lasting change. Every time we implement change or a new initiative we will employ principles of 'best-practice' change management including articulating the need for that change.



Strategic Priorities

Culture and Behaviour, Diversity and Inclusion, Inclusive Leadership, Employee Wellness and Change Management

Strategic Priority 1: Culture and Behaviour

Develop a more inclusive, values-based culture

We believe that to achieve a more diverse workforce we must have an inclusive, values-based culture. We have defined our organisational values, principles and expected behaviours through the MFS Doctrine. However, these must be consistently and continuously communicated and reinforced until they are embedded throughout the MFS.

Where we are now

External reviews of the MFS have provided us with a clearer picture of our cultural strengths and weaknesses. For example, the Equal Opportunity Commission found that our culture is characterised by shared values of professionalism, integrity, respect for each other and authority, responsibility and accountability. Pride in, and loyalty for the job is strongly evident.

Independent review of our organisation found instances of intimidation, bullying, harassment and discrimination. We recognise that some of our employees do not feel as safe or valued within our workplace culture as they should.

What we will do

Ensure our cultural and behavioural expectations including our key organisational values and principles are effectively communicated to all MFS employees by:

- Embedding the key values, principles and behaviours outlined in the MFS Doctrine in role descriptions and learning and development programs.
- Delivering Diversity and Inclusion training to all MFS employees.
- Including assessment of Doctrine-based behaviour in all MFS selection and promotions processes.

We will develop systems that promote a workplace culture that is modern, inclusive and safe. This will include:

- Implementing a comprehensive Respectful Behaviour Policy that recognises appropriate behaviour and manages inappropriate behaviour.
- Addressing discrimination and bias by providing clear direction, training, development and coaching to our employees.
- Recognising appropriate behaviour by embedding our key principles and behaviours in all role descriptions and selection processes.
- Promptly identifying and addressing instances of inappropriate workplace behaviour.
- Providing appropriate support to employees who have been affected by poor culture and behaviour.

What will success look like?

The success of this program will be measured against the extent to which changes in our organisational culture and behaviour can be validly measured.

We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Future reviews of our workplace culture will show greater recognition and understanding of our values, principles and behavioural expectations.
- Our respectful behaviour policy will be implemented, resulting in early identification and intervention and a reduction in inappropriate behaviours. While we may see a short-term increase in the identification of inappropriate behaviour we expect to see a decline in the longer term.
- Appropriate values and behaviours will be recognised as an essential criteria for employment and leadership roles within the MFS. The appointment of employees who support cultural reform and diversity and inclusion will increase the likelihood of successful change.
- All MFS employees will have received training supporting organisational culture and values, and our expected behaviours.

'The MFS has taken significant steps to progress organisational culture but we still have a journey ahead.'

Michael Morgan AFSM
MFS Chief Officer



'Like most fire services across the globe, we are actively seeking to modernise and diversify our workforce so that it better reflects the community we serve.'

Michael Morgan AFSM
MFS Chief Officer



Strategic Priority 2: Diversity and Inclusion

A workforce more representative of our community

We believe that we cannot provide the best possible service if we do not actively engage and consult with our community to understand their risks, priorities and the things they value. We believe that developing a workforce that is more representative of the people we serve will help us maintain and further develop community trust and respect. The EOC has also highlighted the benefits of greater diversity and these should be clearly communicated across our workforce. A more diverse and inclusive culture not only assists us to attract people to our organisation but also supports retention of existing employees.

Where we are now

Despite largely positive perceptions of our organisation's culture, many of us recognise that our workforce is homogeneous and mostly comprised of white, Anglo-Saxon males. Although the commitment and dedication of our employees to their community is never in question, there is a risk that there is too much conformity of thinking and problem solving.

We recognise there are currently barriers to increasing the diversity of the MFS workforce. Some of these barriers are cultural while others are systemic and will require changes to the way we make decisions and manage workforce programs.

What we will do

Address organisational barriers to increased diversity.

- Communicate a clear vision for culture, diversity and inclusion.
- Implement training for all leaders to help embed principles of diversity, inclusion and equality across the organisation.

Continue our commitment to increasing the diversity of our workforce so that it reflects the values and demography of the community it serves. This will include:

- Actively promoting firefighting as a career of choice to those who are under-represented and ensuring all recruitment processes are valid, fair and free of bias.
- Ensure that MFS employees involved in recruitment and selection activities receive training in assessment processes that are free from bias.
- Utilise applicant demographic data to continuously review and improve recruitment strategies.

What will success look like?

The success of this program will be measured by positive changes in our organisational attitudes towards diversity and inclusion and greater diversity in individuals applying for and gaining employment with the MFS. We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Future reviews of our workplace culture will show more positive attitudes towards inclusion and diversity including greater respect and understanding of persons from diverse backgrounds.
- We will have reviewed our recruitment, promotions and selection processes to identify and address any elements of conscious or unconscious bias or barriers to increased workforce diversity.
- We will see an increase in the diversity of applicants for employment within the MFS.
- We will achieve measurable increases in the number of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities gaining employment with the MFS.
- We will see an increase in the number of women applying and achieving promotion to higher ranks within the MFS.
- Greater equality in development opportunities for operational and non-operational employees.

Strategic Priority 3: Inclusive Leadership

A role model for culture, diversity and inclusion

As a prominent and proud emergency service organisation in South Australia, the MFS must be a role model for other organisations and the broader community. The MFS holds a unique position of trust and respect within the community and we are acutely aware that our attitudes, behaviour and conduct can influence public opinion.

Where we are now

The MFS has proudly supported key diversity and inclusion initiatives. These include contributing to the Champions of Change Coalition initiative, becoming a White Ribbon Accredited workplace in 2017, establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC) and joining the Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC National Diversity Project.

There are still challenges to be addressed before we can claim to be true leaders in supporting culture, diversity and inclusion. As the EOC report identified, our workforce currently holds differing views concerning the nature and value of increased diversity.

What we will do

Externally, we will continue to support culture, diversity and inclusion initiatives and forums and share our successes and challenges. We will also:

- Collaborate with, learn from and support other government agencies and emergency services organisations nationally and internationally.
- Improve the representation of firefighting as a progressive, inclusive and diverse industry.

Internally we will provide leadership for culture, diversity and inclusion through initiatives that increase collaboration, consultation and education. This will include:

- A clearly communicated vision for diversity and inclusion, visible across the organisation that is aligned to organisational values and expected behaviours.
- Identifying role models and change ambassadors within the organisation who have the respect of their peers and can champion culture, diversity and inclusion.
- More clearly and effectively communicate the need for and benefits of increased diversity and inclusion to our existing workforce. This will include formal training and the development of support forums that foster dialogue and progress including a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- Provide training for all employees in supervisory positions with the expectation they will take a leading role in communicating and promoting the inclusive, values-based culture and behaviour defined in the MFS Doctrine and the South Australian Public Sector Values and Behaviours Framework.

What will success look like?

Effective leadership should produce meaningful changes in attitudes and behaviour associated with diversity and inclusion. We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Future reviews of our workplace culture will show positive changes in perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion and diversity with increasing numbers of MFS employees supporting diversity and inclusion events and activities.
- We will have provided organisation wide Diversity and Inclusion training and awareness that outlines our Culture and Diversity plan and addresses bias, discrimination and expected behaviours.
- Addressing culture, diversity and inclusion will be seen as core elements of a leadership role within the MFS and a pre-requisite for contesting a leadership role within the agency.
- All MFS employees involved in recruitment, promotions and selection activities will have received training in valid assessment and processes that are free from bias.
- We will be regarded by our peers as a leading agency in the support of diversity and inclusion initiatives.





'The challenge (for the MFS) now is to optimise preventative measures so that those who volunteer their services to protect the community, are able to have a long career without adverse consequences to their mental and physical health.'

Professor Sandy McFarlane
Director of The University of Adelaide's Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies

Strategic Priority 4: Employee Wellness

A healthy, safe and sustainable workforce

The MFS recognises that maintaining physical capability and emotional resilience over an extended career in the emergency services places unique demands on employees. Most emergency service employees deal with considerable stress and confront significant injuries, trauma and fatalities during their careers. The MFS Health and Wellbeing Study (University of Adelaide – Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies, 2017) highlighted that lifetime trauma exposure is high in the MFS.

We also recognise that employees face significant and lasting wellness risks associated with experiences of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and bullying. Successfully managing these risks requires both reducing the contributing behaviour and the provision of caring and effective support to those affected.

Where we are now

The MFS invests heavily in programs that support the wellness of our employees and their families. These programs include:

- The MFS Employee Support Program - including Employee Assistance, Health and Wellbeing Surveys and Transition to Retirement Study.
- Firefighter Health and Fitness Program - including the Functional Fitness and Health Check Programs.
- Our safety program aligns to the key principles of the Building Safety Excellence (BSE) in the Public Sector.
- Injury and Illness Management to provide professional care and support to injured employees.
- Mental Health - the MFS is the first Emergency Service in Australia to have a Gold Workplace Accreditation in Mental Health First Aid.

The EOC report confirmed that MFS employees face wellness challenges arising from cultural and behaviour issues in the workplace. Furthermore, as we increase the diversity of our workforce these challenges must be urgently addressed so that affected employees are provided with immediate appropriate support.

What we will do

The MFS will continue to support and provide our existing wellness programs as well as implementing new programs that have been commissioned on the back of research. These include:

- Research and review of firefighter functional fitness and retirees' support requirements.
- Ensuring the MFS has the right organisational structure and sufficient resources to support the health and wellness of our employees by implementing a new Wellness and Safety Department.
- Ensuring the sustainability of existing employee support services to meet the challenges of an aging and increasingly diverse workforce.
- Enhancing the visibility of our embedded safety systems to the BSE principles of Safety Leadership, Wellbeing and Engagement, Risk Management and Performance Measurement.
- Continuing our research and workforce studies to ensure appropriate health and wellness strategies can be developed, implemented and shared across the sector.
- Continue development of flexible working arrangements for MFS employees.

What will success look like?

The success of this priority will be measured by our ability to implement systems that improve the long-term physical, mental and emotional wellness of our employees. We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- We will have implemented a new and expanded Wellness and Safety Department.
- We will have developed a voluntary firefighter health check program that allows employees to provide their treating physician with additional information concerning firefighter exposures and health risks.
- We will have implemented additional programs that support the wellness of MFS retirees, employees who have experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace and family members of employees.

Strategic Priority 5: Change Management

Find innovative and flexible ways to create lasting change

The MFS does many things extremely well. However, the organisation is entering a period of workforce renewal and there is a need to clearly define our expectations for new and existing employees.

The strategic direction is more likely to achieve its aims if all MFS employees, and particularly those who will lead its implementation clearly understand the importance (urgency) and benefits.

Where we are now

The MFS as an organisation has committed to enhancing culture, diversity and inclusion. This includes the development and implementation of many key initiatives that are already helping to drive change. These include:

- The MFS Doctrine, Respectful Behaviour Policy and the incorporation of behavioural assessments in MFS recruitment, promotion and selection processes.
- White Ribbon Accreditation, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Champions of Change Coalition.

The EOC report identified potential barriers to organisational change within the MFS. These barriers include the organisation's hierarchical, paramilitary structure and cultural factors including command-based decision-making, a culture of not speaking out, resistance to change of practice and superior attitudes of uniform employees towards non-operational staff.

What we will do

Every time we implement change or a new initiative we will employ principles of 'best-practice' change management including articulating the need for that change. We will:

- Gather base-line data on existing culture, diversity and inclusion in the MFS.
- Ensure we employ effective communication and information strategies to share a credible

and consistent Culture and Diversity vision across our dispersed workplaces.

- Develop and implement action plans for each initiative, program and project that supports the MFS culture and diversity strategic objectives.
- Develop and implement a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework that allows the success of change to be evaluated and potential improvement strategies identified.
- Employ change management processes that include engaging local opinion leaders with credibility to champion change and support their peers in understanding why change will benefit the MFS, its employees and our community.
- Ensure appropriate consultation and engagement processes are used to support organisational changes.

What will success look like?

The success of this program will be measured by our ability to implement meaningful, measurable and lasting change. This will require the collection, evaluation and reporting of base-line and longitudinal data. We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Data will show measurable changes in demography and employee attitudes and behaviours. This will include changes in the diversity of both MFS recruit applicants and employees.
- We have implemented and communicated a clear and consistent Culture and Diversity and Inclusion plan across the MFS through information, education and training that is also linked to ongoing career progression within the MFS.
- We will have successfully implemented our Respectful Behaviour Policy organisation wide and use this to promptly and effectively respond to both positive and inappropriate behaviours in the workplace.
- Our employees applying for leadership positions within the MFS will clearly articulate their understanding of MFS cultural and behavioural expectations and support for diversity and inclusion.



Change Projects

Key projects that support our Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives





Strategic Project: MFS Doctrine

Alignment: Strategic Priority 1: Culture and Behaviour

We believe that firefighting and our work in MFS is thinking and values-based. We believe it is essential that we define and communicate the values and principles that will help us more effectively and safely protect our community and employees. Paramilitary organisations often face criticism for being overly hierarchical and stifling independent thought and criticism. The MFS is placing clear priority on developing a learning organisation, where all employees participate in decision-making and are prepared to speak up if they see something that is wrong or can be improved.

Where we are now

The MFS Organisational Doctrine was first published in 2018. It was developed to clearly define and communicate our values, principles and expected behaviours in ways that will be meaningful to our employees. The doctrine is authoritative but not overly prescriptive and aims to enhance operational safety and performance as well as organisational culture and behaviour. The doctrine has been embedded in key staff development programs from recruitment onwards and doctrine-based behaviours are now assessed in all MFS promotions processes. Fully embedding the doctrine will still require time and resources in order to ensure all MFS employees receive appropriate training, development and mentoring.

What we will do

We will improve workplace performance, safety and wellbeing by clearly defining and communicating our organisational values, principles and expected behaviours through the MFS Organisational Doctrine. We will:

- Ensure all MFS employees are aware of the culture and behaviours expected within the MFS.
- Require all MFS employees in leadership positions to demonstrate MFS values and principles.

- Embed the key values, principles and behaviours outlined in the MFS Organisational Doctrine in role descriptions, learning and development programs and key organisational policies and procedures.
- Ensure cultural and behavioural expectations defined within the MFS Organisational Doctrine are effectively communicated to all MFS employees through information, formal training and leadership.
- Include assessment of doctrine-based behaviour in all MFS selection and promotions processes to ensure all future leaders in the MFS provide evidence of appropriate values and behaviours.

What will success look like?

The success of the MFS Organisational Doctrine will be evaluated on the extent that it has improved organisational culture and behaviour, and operational performance, safety and consistency. Success indicators for the Doctrine include:

- We will have clearly communicated the doctrine and key principles and best practices to all MFS employees through appropriate information sharing and learning and development programs. Applying these principles, best practices and behaviours will be recognised as an essential criteria for employment and leadership.
- All MFS Position Information Documents (PID) will align with and reinforce organisational values and behaviours.
- We will have enhanced policies and procedures that outline key principles to ensure our employees feel safe and respected.
- All MFS employees will have received training supporting organisational culture and diversity, our expectation behaviours. The doctrine will be embedded in our staff development framework, aligned to promotions processes and post incident review systems.



'There is still a journey ahead for the MFS. Yes, we have come an extremely long way in recent decades, but we are not there yet. Again, I encourage you to read through the EOC Report and see the issues that have been raised.'

Michael Morgan AFSM
MFS Chief Officer



'As a prominent and proud government emergency services agency in South Australia, the MFS must be a role model for other organisations and the broader community.'

SA Commissioner for Equal Opportunity

Strategic Project: Respectful Behaviour Policy

Alignment: Strategic Priority 1: Culture and Behaviour

We believe that the development of a contemporary, inclusive and values-based culture is a critical prerequisite to developing the MFS as the organisation we wish it to be. We believe that to develop a diverse and inclusive workforce we must have an inclusive culture. Clearly defining our cultural expectations through our values, principles and expected behaviours underpins all of our organisational strategies.

Where we are now

The vast majority of MFS employees conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, putting the community first and often putting themselves at risk to protect the community. However, the MFS currently lacks a systemic approach for the consistent recognition of positive behaviour or the early intervention in cases of inappropriate behaviour.

What we will do

We will develop a Respectful Behaviour Policy and systems that promote a workplace culture that is modern, inclusive and safe. This will include:

- Promoting a positive and productive workplace environment and a culture consistent with MFS doctrine, values and principles as well as the expectations of the broader community.
- Ensuring all individuals are provided with a workplace where they feel safe and are treated equally, fairly and with respect.
- A fair and comprehensive Respectful Behaviour Policy based on principles of natural justice that encourages positive behaviour and promptly manages inappropriate behaviour.
- Providing appropriate support to employees who have been affected by inappropriate behaviours.

What will success look like?

The success of the MFS Respectful Behaviour Policy will be evaluated on the extent to which it has improved our workplace culture and behaviour. Success indicators include:

- We will have provided appropriate training to our management employees that includes principles of behaviour management, natural justice, fairness, equality, discrimination and bias.
- We will have clearly communicated the behaviours expected of all MFS employees through appropriate information sharing and learning and development programs. Appropriate values and behaviours will be recognised as an essential criteria for employment and leadership roles within the MFS.
- Our Respectful Behaviour Policy will be implemented and in use. This will allow us to more quickly identify and respond to instances of inappropriate behaviour. While we may see a short-term increase in the identification and reports of inappropriate behaviour we expect to see a decline in the longer term.

Strategic Project: Recruitment

Alignment: Strategic Priority 2: Diversity and Inclusion

MFS firefighter recruitment campaigns now attract more than two thousand applications. Historically, the overwhelming majority of these applications have been male (approximately 96% in 2014) and low number of applicants from CALD or Aboriginal backgrounds. We recognise the importance of developing a workforce that is more representative of our community and believe this will help us to better understand the needs and priorities of our community. There are significant benefits of greater diversity and we aim to more clearly communicate these across our workforce.

Where are we now?

The MFS has implemented strategies to attract greater gender and cultural diversity of firefighter applicants. This has included more effective communication, marketing to those who may not have considered a career in firefighting.

The MFS has also taken steps to remove identified barriers to a broader range of applicants. For example, the MFS removed the prerequisite to hold a full Medium Rigid Driving License prior to the 2016 recruitment campaign as this was seen as a barrier to gender and cultural diversity. This change contributed to an increase in female applications from 4% in 2014 to 12.15% in 2016. The MFS continues to maintain female representation in applicants in excess of 10% in both 2018 and 2019 public campaigns.

What we will do

We remain committed to recruiting a workforce that reflects the values and demography of our community. Accordingly, we will continue to develop and implement strategies that increase diversity of persons seeking and gaining employment with the MFS.

We will actively promote firefighting as a career of choice to those who are under-represented by:

- Continuing to develop and roll out a portfolio of marketing tools and recruitment strategies to promote firefighting careers to under-represented demographics.
- Continually improving the existing MFS recruitment website to make information relevant, accessible and inclusive.
- Delivering information sessions designed to better educate potential applicants and increase awareness of the process and the role.

We will ensure all recruitment processes are valid and free of bias by:

- Regularly reviewing recruitment processes.
- Ensuring our recruitment processes recognise the measurable organisational and community strengths and benefits of diverse applicants.
- Ensuring that all employees involved in recruitment and selection activities receive appropriate training in assessment processes that are free from bias.

What will success look like?

We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- We will have established recruitment, promotions and selection processes to identify and address any elements of conscious or unconscious bias or invalid barriers to increased workforce diversity.
- We will see an increase in the diversity of applicants for employment within the MFS, that is more reflective of the community we serve.
- We will achieve measurable increases in the number of women, Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities gaining employment with the MFS.
- All MFS employees involved in recruitment, promotions and selection activities will have received training in principles of valid assessment and assessment bias.

'I commend the MFS for taking this important step in becoming a more inclusive, respectful and safe organisation that better reflects the community it serves.'

SA Equal Opportunity Commissioner





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“The first step any organisation that wants to bring in any form of cultural change is to ensure that there is strong understanding of why such a change is important and the benefits that it will bring.”

