



2007 Annual Report

Highlights

- National seasonal risk outlook assessment processes instituted to identify potential high demand for resources.
- Contribution by the Australian Government of \$8.0m.
- Eight additional aircraft engaged, bringing the total fleet to 33 aircraft.
- First use of fully shared strategic aircraft, based in Canberra.
- Aerial Suppression Operations Group instituted to provide responsive, timely guidance on risk-based resource allocation during the season.
- Highly successful and safe support provided to firefighters during one of the busiest and most extended seasons in history.
- 33 million litres of suppressant and retardant delivered in 1,408 activations.
- First use of NAFC Secondary Contracts to provide streamlined access to additional aerial support.
- Announcement by the Prime Minister of \$41.2m of Australian Government funding for aerial fire suppression, delivered through NAFC over the next four years.
- International Best-Practice visit to France, Canada and U.S.A.
- Facilitation of an aerial fire suppression session at the Fourth International Wildland Fire Conference held in Seville, Spain in May 2007.
- Joint Bushfire CRC and NAFC research planning workshop held in September 2006.
- Joint WATG and NAFC Board planning workshop held in May 2007.
- Revised Funding Agreement with the DoTaRS.
- Adoption of Enterprise Risk Management policy and framework.

Company Profile

The National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) Ltd was incorporated on 30 July 2003 with the primary purpose of establishing a national capacity to deliver effective aerial firefighting support to Australian States and Territories for the combat of wildfires.

NAFC is an Australian Public Company, limited by guarantee and registered in Victoria.

The use of aircraft for fighting wildfires has been developed in Australia over many years. Following a number of serious fires that affected Australia; the Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments decided to develop a national cooperative arrangement to enhance firefighting by improving access to aerial firefighting resources and implementing systems for sharing resources across the country.

The Australian Government has subsequently provided annual funding to complement the funding for aerial firefighting provided by State and Territory Governments.

NAFC provides the vehicle for the implementation of the national cooperative approach developed between the Australian Government and the State and Territory Governments. NAFC arranges the acquisition of a national fleet of firefighting aircraft that are shared between member States and Territories. NAFC continues to develop common standards and systems to further enhance sharing of resources across Australia.

Members of NAFC as at 30 June 2006 were:

- Queensland
- New South Wales
- Australian Capital Territory
- Victoria
- Tasmania
- South Australia
- Western Australia

Directors of NAFC
as at 30 June 2007 were:

Mr N Bibby
Chief Executive Officer,
Country Fire Authority, Victoria

Ms N Brown
Chief Executive Officer,
Australasian Fire Authorities Council

Mr E Ferguson
Chief Executive Officer,
SA Country Fire Service

Mr J Gledhill
Chief Officer,
Tasmania Fire Service

Mr C Hynes
Chief Operations Officer,
WA Fire and Emergency Services Authority

Mr L Johnson
Commissioner,
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr K O'Loughlin
Chief Executive Officer,
Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre

Mr R Rogers
Director of Community Safety,
NSW Rural Fire Service

Chair's Report

2006-07 was a landmark year for Australia's National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) with many significant milestones and achievements.

Most importantly the Centre was able to significantly expand the fleet of specialised firefighting aircraft and reliably provide unprecedented levels of support to Member agencies during one of the busiest and most extended bushfire seasons in recent history. National fleet aircraft were activated to fires on 1,582 occasions and made over 21,000 firebombing drops, delivering in excess of 46,750,000 litres of suppressant/retardant.

The Australian Government endorsed the coordinated, cooperative national approach to aerial fire operations in the strongest fashion, providing additional funding for the 2006-07 season, which was followed by the Prime Minister's announcement in April 2007 of \$41.2m in ongoing funding support for aerial suppression of bushfires over the next four years.

NAFC's role in the promotion of innovation and best-practice in aerial firefighting also took a major step forward. NAFC organised and sponsored a comprehensive 'best-practice' visit of key management personnel from Member and stakeholder agencies to a number of overseas aerial firefighting 'hotspots'. The growing and very positive reputation of the Centre was also recognised when NAFC was invited to facilitate the key aviation session at the Fourth International Wildland Fire Conference.

Australian government support for aerial fire suppression

The Australian Government continued the previously agreed base level funding support for the national aerial firefighting fleet of \$5.5 million, which in turn was matched by State and Territory Governments. Recognising the potential of the 2006-07 season, the Australian Government was approached by NAFC through the Minister for Local Government,



Territories and Roads to assist with provision of additional resources. An extra \$2.5m was subsequently made available, and matched by States and Territories, bringing the Australian Government's commitment for 2006-07 to \$8.0m.

With the three-year funding arrangement due to expire at the conclusion of 2006-07, NAFC worked closely with Member States and Territories to map out the appropriate next steps in the national approach to aerial fire suppression and made further submissions to the Australian Government regarding ongoing support. These efforts were recognised with the Prime Minister's announcement on 27 April 2007 that the Australian Government would continue their support of aerial fire suppression and contribute \$41.2m to positioning and leasing of aircraft over the next four years. This announcement is a tremendous vote of confidence in the successful development of a national collaborative system, and represents a most significant milestone in the evolution of NAFC and the national approach to aerial suppression of bushfires. As well as ensuring greater capacity on-the-ground to support firefighters across Australia, the four-year term of the funding will allow more robust planning for future capacity. The continued support of the Australian Government also catalyses additional benefits with many other efficiencies and improvements flowing from the coordinated national approach and improved

collaboration and cooperation between States and Territories.

Partnerships

Partnerships are the key to NAFC's success and we would not be in such a strong position without the indispensable assistance of many partner organisations. As well as maintaining the much-valued partnership with the Australian Government, NAFC drew extensively on support from a number of other key partners, and in particular the Australasian Fire Authorities Council who continued to provide high quality management and administration services.

Another crucial partner is the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (Bushfire CRC). The NAFC Board is committed to ensuring that decisions regarding resource allocation in aerial firefighting are soundly based and appropriately reflect the risks faced by the community. During 2006-07 the Bushfire CRC provided the NAFC Board with a preliminary version of the report of the CRC's investigation into the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Aerial Firefighting in Australia. The findings of this report confirmed that aerial suppression has an important part to play and is a most valuable tool in the Australian environment, particularly by improving the probability of first attack success. NAFC looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Bushfire CRC to further develop the knowledge that will underpin future aerial operations.



NAFC Board

2006-07 saw a number of notable changes in the NAFC Board and Executive Committee membership.

In April 2007 the Chair of NAFC, Mr Euan Ferguson AFSM, was elected as President of the Australasian Fire Authorities Council and considered it appropriate that he relinquish the Chair of NAFC. I was elected to the role of

Chair on an interim basis until elections could be held on-schedule in October 2007.

On behalf of the NAFC Board I would like to place on record my great appreciation of Mr Ferguson's enthusiasm, energy and wise counsel during his period as Chair. The majority of the milestones and recent achievements of NAFC are due in no small measure to Mr Ferguson's stewardship, and NAFC is pleased he will remain as a Director.

Company Secretary Mr Len Foster AO resigned in December 2006. It is fitting here to acknowledge the efforts of Mr Foster, who was the inaugural Company Secretary and was very much a driving force in initiating NAFC and the national approach to aerial bushfire support.

Director Mr Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM also resigned in January 2007 after taking leave from his position as Commissioner for the New South Wales Rural Fire Service to stand for election to the NSW parliament. Mr Koperberg was the inaugural Chair of NAFC and guided the organisation through the challenging formative years.

The continuing success of the NAFC arrangements in 2006-07 owes a great deal to the solid foundations originally laid by Len Foster and Phil Koperberg. The NAFC Board congratulates them on their foresight and efforts in establishing NAFC and wishes them success in their respective new directions.

The retirement of Mr Len Foster as Chief Executive Officer of the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) in December 2006 saw Mr Foster hand over the reins as NAFC Company Secretary to incoming AFAC Chief Executive Officer Ms Naomi Brown. It is a great pleasure to welcome Naomi to the NAFC fold. Ms Brown has also been appointed as a Director of NAFC.

In November 2006, Mr Kevin O'Loughlin was re-appointed as the independent Director of NAFC.

Thanks

There are many individuals and organisation deserving recognition for their support of NAFC during 2006-07, so I trust I will not offend anyone by singling out the following.

With the help of the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), the Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) has extended the services of Mr Richard Alder to manage NAFC. The NAFC Board would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of DSE in making Mr Alder available. Similarly the Board would like to thank AFAC for continuing to provide capable management support during the year.

The federal Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoT&RS) administers the Australian Government's contribution to the NAFC national aerial firefighting fleet. NAFC values highly the cooperative partnership that has developed with the Australian Government and would like to thank DoT&RS Secretary, Mr Michael Taylor for his support and acknowledge the work of Mr Peter Lawler in facilitating the arrangements. The Board also very much appreciated the support of the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Hon Jim Lloyd, and his staff.

The international best-practice visit [see box on page 10] was a major undertaking for NAFC and I would particularly like to acknowledge and thank the many international organisations and individuals that took time from their very busy fire season schedules to host the visiting team.

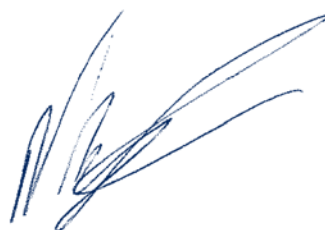
As in previous years, NAFC must again recognise the efforts and support of the staff of the various State and Territory aircraft units. The 2006-07 season proved to be particularly challenging and it was pleasing to see the efforts of this group of dedicated people ensured a safe and effective capability and the success of national collaborative arrangements.

In conclusion

NAFC continues to develop a positive profile and reputation in the local and international fire and aviation communities. This has been reinforced on a number of occasions during the year, including the invitation to facilitate the Aviation Management session at the Fourth International Wildland Fire Conference. NAFC General Manager Mr Richard Alder AFSM also addressed a number of industry forums throughout the year and appeared as an expert witness to the South Australian Coroner's Court.

The Prime Minister's announcement in May of continued funding from the Australian Government, over a four-year period is of great significance. As well as effectively validating the NAFC business model and the approach taken to the sharing of resources between States and Territories, the support will help assure the future of the cooperative arrangements, and provides us with confidence to look

ahead and continue to further develop inter-jurisdiction collaboration and national resource co-ordination and management systems. The Australian community is the ultimate beneficiary.



Neil Bibby AFSM

Chair

National Aerial Firefighting Centre

October 2007



General Manager's Report

2006-07 certainly presented a most challenging and a very rewarding year for the operation of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre.

2006-2007 fire season

In the lead-up to the 2006-2007 fire season NAFC implemented a structured process of assessing the forecast risk associated with the season, based principally on climate outlook information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. This process identified that the 2006-07 season was likely to exhibit high demand for aerial fire suppression, and that additional national capacity would likely provide a significant benefit. As it turned out, the 2006-07 season did indeed prove to be long and testing for fire fighters in the majority of bushfire-prone areas of Australia.

In accordance with NAFC's assessment of the seasonal risk, the Australian Government was approached to assist with provision of additional resources for the season. An extra \$2.5m was made available through the Department of Transport and Regional Services. This funding, which was matched by State and Territory Governments, was primarily applied to the provision of additional high-volume firebombing capacity and the positioning of that capacity in accordance with the prevailing bushfire risk.

The additional funding required a variation to the existing Funding Agreement with the Department of Transport and Regional Services. Accordingly a revised agreement was prepared and executed in November 2006.

A number of the Member States also took on additional resources as a preparedness measure. In all, over the course of the season, the number of specialist firefighting aircraft procured through NAFC reached 32, compared with the 23 we would normally find 'on-deck'.

The 2006-07 season saw a number of important 'firsts' for the national approach to aerial fire suppression in Australia. For the first time

the concept of a fully shared strategic aircraft resource was trialled. The Supplementary Shared Resource or SSR, as it became known, comprised a Type 1 High-Volume helicopter with associated Type 3 helicopter as an Air Attack Supervision platform and was initially based in Canberra. The aircraft were immediately available to support fire suppression operations in any State or Territory. Most importantly the arrangements provided for the aircraft to be pre-positioned to areas facing forecast high risk and thus maximising the probability of being available to support rapid initial attack in high fire threat areas.

The SSR concept proved to be a great success and the aircraft were regularly moved between States as fire risk peaked in different regions, and contributed significantly to fire control efforts in widely dispersed locations. Ultimately the SSR aircraft were in place for a significantly extended Service Period from the 15th of November 2006 to the 3rd of March 2007, having been deployed to fires in New South Wales on the very first afternoon, and returning from South Australia on the final day.

Another important 'first' was the use of NAFC Secondary Contracts. Secondary Contracts were originally established in 2005 to provide a streamlined mechanism for Members to obtain additional aircraft when warranted by seasonal conditions – in effect providing a readily accessible reserve capacity for seasons such as 2006-07. Three of the four NAFC Secondary Contracts were activated for 2006-07. In turn this resulted in, for example, a Type 1 helicopter being delivered from New Zealand and the newly configured tank-equipped Kaman Kmax helicopter from the United States.

NAFC assessed that the additional demands of a busy and extended season, combined with the need to manage the fully-shared SSR aircraft would require streamlined and highly responsive operational arrangements to ensure efficient resource allocation and sharing. In yet another 'first' the Aerial Suppression Operations Group (ASOG) was formed. Comprising

high-level operational personnel from States and Territories, the ASOG regularly met by teleconference through the course of the season to consider the optimum disposition of the national aircraft fleet and to provide advice to the NAFC Board.

NAFC Directors and Delegates also convened on a number of occasions during the season specifically to review overall placement of fleet aircraft with respect to fire threat, and to facilitate cooperative arrangements.

Co-ordination of a fully-shared resource required the implementation of revised procedures for sharing of NAFC contracted aircraft. With tremendous cooperation from State and Territory aircraft units, a revised set of protocols was developed in and implemented in short-order. The revised arrangements stood up extremely well under the testing conditions subsequently experienced.

As predicted, the 2006-07 fire season started early due to the very dry conditions, with the first aircraft in place on 1 August 2006 in Queensland and continued through to 14 April 2007, when the last aircraft finished up in Western Australia. The long season required an unprecedented number of extensions to the Service Periods for the majority of the contracted aircraft – in some cases by up to eight weeks.

The season was characterised by low rainfall and persistent dry conditions, especially along the eastern seaboard, in south eastern states,



including South Australia, and in the south west of Western Australia. The resultant very dry forest fuels, combined with bursts of severe fire weather, led to a very high number of ignitions, severely stretching initial attack resources. Significant fires developed in most States across the nation, with the Great Divide complex in Victoria continuing to spread for several months and extending over 1 million hectares. Throughout the country, aerial suppression played an important role in initial attack of incipient fires, supporting ground firefighters in protection of property, and limiting the spread of fires that escaped initial attack.

The high demand for aerial support over the course of the season once again reinforced the value of arrangements to have available a readily accessible aerial firefighting capacity, and to be able to cooperatively share resources to address surges in fire risk.

During the 2006-07 fire season, NAFC also supported the trial, initiated by the Australasian Fire Authorities Council, of BISI – the Bushfire Information Sharing Initiative. The BISI underlined the value of timely sharing of information between jurisdictions regarding fire risk and resource commitment and availability. NAFC believes this type of information exchange is critical to the continued optimum use of resources across the country, and strongly supports the continuation of a national approach to the sharing of standardised, near-real-time risk and resource commitment information.

As in previous years, a particular feature of the 2006-07 fire season was the continuing excellent interstate cooperation regarding aircraft movements, characterised by a high level of communication and collaboration between State and Territory agency aircraft units and NAFC during the bushfire season. A good example was the successful re-positioning of two tank-equipped firefighting helicopters from Adelaide into Western Australia to support operations at a developing incident south of Perth – another ‘first’ for 2006-07.

Despite the long and arduous season and the testing conditions it is very pleasing to report that operational standards were maintained and the season was for the most part free of incidents and mishaps.

Table 1, overleaf, shows the utilisation of the national fleet during the 2006-2007 fire season.

International Best Practice Visit

The NAFC Board had identified as a priority the need to study aerial firefighting practices overseas. This was to:

- validate Australian practices;
- identify opportunities to improve and optimise Australian operations; and
- provide development opportunities for a new generation of managers.

In August and September 2006 NAFC, in conjunction with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council, organised for a group of key personnel to visit France, Canada and the U.S.A. The visiting team comprised 15 people and was led by NAFC Board Member Mr John Gledhill. Overall, the team concluded that the majority of practices currently applied in Australia are sound and aligned with best-practice, however a number of opportunities were identified for improvement. [See box on page 10 for details].

Fourth International Wildland Fire Conference

The Fourth International Wildland Fire Conference was held in Seville, Spain from 14-17 May 2007.

In recognition of the leadership role played by NAFC in developing collaborative efforts within Australia, NAFC was asked by the Conference Organising Committee to facilitate the main aviation related activity at the Conference – a workshop on Aviation Management. The aim of the workshop was principally to identify opportunities for international collaboration in

aerial fire suppression, and in particular in those areas where safety may benefit.

The successful workshop, on 16 May, was arranged by NAFC staff and was chaired by AFAC President and NAFC Board Member Euan Ferguson. I had the privilege of presenting to the forum, along with colleagues from U.S.A and Spain. Also present were NAFC Board Members Naomi Brown and Kevin O’Loughlin and NAFC Delegate Ewan Waller. Attended by well over 200 people representing the aviation industry, government, education, research and other organisations from around the globe, the session saw presentations and panel-led discussion covering a wide range of perspectives on opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and cooperation. The workshop concluded with all parties committing to a statement of intent to continue cooperative and collaborative efforts, with a particular focus on sharing of safety-related information. This outcome may be the first step in the formation of a global alliance of organisations involved in delivery of fire-related aerial services. The session also attracted some attention from the news media, especially in Spain and Portugal.¹

Australasian Fire Authorities Council

NAFC continued to maintain a close working relationship with AFAC. For 2006-07 NAFC renewed the management services arrangement for AFAC to provide NAFC with company management and administration. I would like to acknowledge all the AFAC staff who have provided valuable support to NAFC. In particular Ms Claire Bunday adeptly managed the administration function of NAFC and Mr Trevor Essex continued his expert management of finance and accounting.

¹ The full communiqué of the workshop is available at <http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/sevilla-2007/groups/Session-Aviation-Communique.pdf>

Table 1: National Fleet Utilisation 2006-2007

				No. of activations	No. of drops	Hours flown
NSW	CH54 Skycrane	RW Type 1 HV	Bankstown	31	695	152
	Bell 206L	RW Type 3 AAS	Bankstown	39	-	188
	Bell 214B	RW Type 2	Bankstown	45	1,791	277
	AT802A	FW Type 4	Orange	57	440	274
	AT802A	FW Type 4	Gunnedah	47	438	304
	Bell 212	RW Type 2	Bankstown	122	2,546	620
	Bell 212	RW Type 2	Canberra	34	604	188
	BK 117	RW Type 2	Bankstown	72	283	386
	BK 117	RW Type 2	Bankstown	91	365	521
	KMax	RW Type 1	Bankstown	59	459	374
QLD	AS350B3	RW Type 3	Archerfield	26	299	59
	AS350B3	RW Type 3	Archerfield	22	286	44
ACT	AS350BA	RW Type 3 AAS	Canberra	62	-	175
	Bell 212	RW Type 2	Canberra	34	601	169
	Air-crane	RW Type 1 HV	Canberra	75	1,163	223
	Bell 206L	RW Type 3 AAS	Canberra	44	-	179
VIC	Air-crane	RW Type 1 HV	Essendon	40	1,293	167
	Bell 212	RW Type 2	Essendon	46	430	99
	Bell 212	RW Type 2	Essendon	46	1,038	171
	S-61N	RW Type 1	Mansfield	68	1,856	244
	Air-crane	RW Type 1 HV	Essendon	39	950	153
	Bell 206L	RW Type 3 AAS	Essendon	45	-	178
	Mil Mi-8	RW Type 1	Traralgon	50	1,625	246
	Bell UH-1H	RW Type 2	Albury	40	550	155
TAS	Bell 212	RW Type 2	Cambridge	31	386	60
SA	AT-802	FW Type 4	Mt Gambier	20	73	45
	AT-602	FW Type 4	Mt Gambier	23	69	36
	A119 Koala	RW Type 3	Adelaide	10	115	35
	A119 Koala	RW Type 3	Adelaide	9	108	34
WA	AS350 B3	RW Type 3	Perth	51	827	85
	AS350 B3	RW Type 3	Perth	50	758	82
	AS350 B3	RW Type 3	Perth	43	650	77
	AS350 B3	RW Type 3	Perth	46	691	80
	PZL M18	FW Type 4	Albany	33	133	87
	PZL M18	FW Type 4	Albany	32	122	85
TOTALS				1,582	21,644	6,252

RW – Rotary Wing
 FW – Fixed Wing
 AAS – Air Attack Supervisor Platform
 HV – High Volume

NAFC-AFAC International Aerial Fire Suppression Best Practice Visit 2006

The Directors of the Australian National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) identified a need to examine best-practice in aerial firefighting throughout the world.

An International Aerial Fire Suppression Best-Practice Visit was organised by NAFC in conjunction with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC), in August-September 2006. A total of fifteen participants from Australian States and Territories, the Australian Government, NAFC and the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) participated. The visit was jointly funded by NAFC, AFAC, the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments and the Bushfire CRC.

The visit aimed principally to identify opportunities for ensuring optimum safety, efficiency and effectiveness in Australian aerial fire suppression operations. A secondary objective was to provide development opportunities for personnel who are likely to manage aerial firefighting activities in the future.

Specific locations in France, Canada and the United States were chosen for being analogous to the types of fuels, climate and organisational arrangements likely to be encountered in Australia. The visit was timed to coincide with the likely fire season at the destinations. At the time of visiting, many locations were experiencing or had just experienced significantly above-normal levels of fire activity. Although somewhat stressful for hosts, the high levels of activity provided invaluable opportunities to fully examine systems and practices. Over the course of the 18 days a total 31 private and public sector organisations were examined.

The group concluded the majority of practices currently applied in Australia were relevant and appropriate and generally reflected best practice, however a number of refinements and improvements that could be made were identified. It was also concluded that it was important to continue to share information and strengthen ties with international colleagues. The group considered some key aspects of

Australian operations would benefit from increased investment and effort, including:

- Continued collaboration and cooperation within Australia, including:
 - development of common standards, operating practices and practice guides
 - provision of national coordination of resource sharing
- Development of more sophisticated procurement and contract management practices.
- Reinforcement of rapid initial attack as the optimum application of aerial suppression
- Implementation of a national integrated resource management and tracking system
- Development of national standard weather and risk products
- Finalisation of the current Training Resource Kit project and greatly increased focus on training generally
- Implementation of computer based simulation training
- Continued and expanded research and evaluation programs, with emphasis on measuring suppression effectiveness and on the development of risk based resource optimisation tools
- Implementation of a national after-action reporting system
- Development of a national assessment and approval system for firebombing tanks and doors
- Monitoring of developing technology, in particular large fixed-wing airtankers.

The study group has combined to produce a report, which is available from the NAFC office.

NAFC would like to express it's gratitude to the various international agencies and organisations who hosted the group and to those individuals who took time from their busy schedules to make arrangements, prepare and deliver presentations, demonstrate equipment and practices and conduct detailed discussions. In many locations, visits were at times of particularly high activity which although fortunate in many respects from the perspective of the group, placed considerable additional workload on hosts.

Wildfire Aviation Technical Group

In line with the agreement established in 2005-06 NAFC continued to provide facilitation and executive support to the AFAC Wildfire Aviation Technical Group (WATG) – a sub-group of the AFAC Rural and Land Management Group.

The Terms of Reference for WATG encompass the provision of specialist advice on training, equipment, systems of operation and procedures in relation to aviation operations at wildfires; and assisting in the development and review of national protocols for wildfire aviation operations.

During 2006-07, WATG met on four occasions and continues to make very significant progress in developing systems and material to improve and optimise aerial fire operations in Australia and New Zealand. The Wildfire Aviation Technical Group also formally assumed responsibility for oversight of the AFAC Aviation Training Resource Kit (TRK) Committee.

The Wildfire Aviation Technical Group sees the standardisation of training and certification for aircraft management and support specialists as a most important step in the continuous improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of aerial operations. With the support of NAFC and the AFAC Learning and Development Group, WATG has prioritised the development of Training Resource Kits and this will be a major focus of activity for 2007-08.

In April 2007, the NAFC Board conducted a joint strategic planning workshop with the WATG in Sydney. This valuable exercise reviewed future directions for aerial firefighting in Australia and progressed the development of a National Aerial Firefighting Strategy. Development of the strategy will now continue with the expectation it will be finalised during 2008.

Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre

NAFC also continued the strong association with the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). The Bushfire CRC and NAFC jointly convened a most successful workshop in Sydney during September 2006 to review research directions and to closely examine opportunities and priorities for aerial fire suppression research.

2006-07 provided an unprecedented opportunity to gather a wide range of operational data to further analyse and optimise aerial fire suppression in Australia. Working with the Bushfire CRC and State and Territory agency staff, NAFC was again able to facilitate the collection of valuable data throughout the season.

As noted by Mr Bibby, a preliminary version of the report of the CRC's investigation into the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Aerial Firefighting in Australia was made available to the NAFC Board during late 2006 and provided useful guidance in the further development of the national strategic approach to aerial fire suppression. The report has subsequently been published.²

Department of Transport and Regional Services

During the year, NAFC continued the valuable and productive relationship with the federal Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoTaRS), who administered the Australian Government's contribution to the NAFC national aerial firefighting fleet. I would like to endorse Mr Bibby's previous remarks regarding this partnership and also thank DoTaRS staff for their ongoing assistance.

² M Plucinski, J Gould, G McCarthy, J Hollis June 2007 The Effectiveness and Efficiency of Aerial Firefighting in Australia Part 1, Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre Melbourne

Other activities

During 2006-07 an enterprise risk management policy and framework was developed and implemented for NAFC. NAFC places a high priority on maintaining a rigorous and consistent approach to risk management. It is planned that during 2008 this will extend, in conjunction with Member agencies, to a closer examination of operational risks in aerial firefighting and the development of appropriate controls.

The future

2007-08 will see NAFC embarking on a series of major procurement processes, following on from the Australian Government's announcement of funding support for aerial firefighting over the next four years. This will also provide potential suppliers with a structured opportunity to put forward information regarding new developments and proposals for introducing new technology. NAFC is always keen to stay abreast of any developments that could ultimately offer benefits to the Australian community.

The National Aerial Firefighting Strategy is also currently under review to take into account recent advances in knowledge of climate and

demographic change in Australia and this major task is expected to be finalised during 2008.

A priority during 2007-08 will be to support the AFAC Wildfire Aviation Technical Group's work on the further development of Training Resource Kits and other training material. This will greatly assist Member's agencies to ensure that personnel are appropriately trained to utilise aircraft and to supervise and support aerial operations.

We hope that there will not be quite so much actual fire related activity but NAFC will certainly be ready to provide assistance and support to firefighters around Australia. Overall 2007-08 promises to be every bit as challenging and productive as 2006-07.



Richard Alder AFSM
General Manager
National Aerial Firefighting Centre
October 2007

During the reporting year the NAFC Board received formal presentations at Board meetings from the following commercial organisations:

- (Evergreen) Supertanker Services Inc (two presentations)
- Asia-Pacific Sciences Ltd
- Skytraders Pty Ltd (Representing 10 Tanker Air Carrier)



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Chair

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GradDip. Bus (Admin), FAICD)

Secretary

Ms Naomi Brown (GradDip. Spec. Ed.,
GradDip. Bus, GAICD)

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NAFC would like to thank the following
people for the photographs used in this
report:

Pages 9 & 13 Greg McCarthy, Bushfire CRC
Pages 2 & 12 Tim McGuffog,
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