



STATE BUSHFIRE COORDINATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting 6/3

14 May 2021

The International Visualisation Centre (IVC), 19 Young St, Adelaide

09:00 – 12:00hrs

Attendance

ACO Georgie Cornish	Chair (<i>ex officio</i>)
Ms Anthea Howard	Executive Officer
Ms Kylie Egan	Member, Bureau of Meteorology
Mr Mark Ashley	Member, Conservation Council South Australia
Ms Fiona Gill	Member, Department for Environment and Water
Mr Graeme Brown	Member, Department for Infrastructure and Transport
Ms Justine Drew	Member, Department of Primary Industries and Regions
Mr John Moyle	Member, SA Local Government Association
Mr Bill McIntosh	Member, Outback Communities Authority
Mr Peter White	Member, Primary Producers SA
ACFO Peter Button	Member, SA Metropolitan Fire Service
Ms Ali Walsh	Member, SA Power Networks
Ms Brook Swaffer	Member, SA Water
Ms Denise LeBlond	Deputy, Attorney-General's Department - Planning and Land Use Services
Mr David Lindner	Deputy, Country Fire Service Volunteers Association

Apologies

Mr Mark Jones QFSM	SA Country Fire Service
Ms Anita Allen	Member, Attorney-General's Department - Planning and Land Use Services
Mr James Crocker	Member, SA Water
Mr Andrew Cadd	Member, Country Fire Service Volunteers Association
Ms Merridie Martin	Deputy, Native Vegetation Council
ACO Brett Loughlin	Member, SA Country Fire Service
Ms Tammy Moffat	Deputy, SA Country Fire Service
AC Noel Bamford	Member, South Australia Police
A/AC John Venditto	Deputy, South Australia Police
Ms Monique Blason	Member, ForestrySA

Observers and Guests

Hon. Vincent Tarzia	Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services
Mr Oliver Everett	Advisor to the Minister
Mr Adam Schutz	Observer, Native Vegetation Council
ACO Fiona Dunstan	Presenter (Item 8.1) and Observer, SA Country Fire Service
Mr Gavin Wornes	Presenter (Item 8.1), SA Country Fire Service



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Ms Farhana Fadjar
Ms Sonia Post
Mr Andrew Patten
Ms Amy Riebe
Ms Paula Slutzkin

Presenter (Item 8.1), SA Country Fire Service
Observer, SA Country Fire Service
Observer, SA Country Fire Service
Observer, SA Country Fire Service
Administrative Officer, SA Country Fire Service

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees and opened the meeting at 09:03hrs, followed by an Acknowledgement of Country.

The Chair acknowledged the National Firefighters Memorial Service being held that morning in Canberra, for fire and emergency service personnel who have died in the line of duty.

Mr Mark Ashley joined the meeting at 9:05am.

2. Apologies

The Chair noted the apologies received, and the observers present in the room.

3. Safety Briefing

The Executive Officer outlined the evacuation procedures for the building and the location of exit and meeting points.

4. Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services – Hon. Vincent Tarzia

The Chair invited Minister Tarzia to speak prior to commencing the business of the meeting.

The Minister thanked the committee for their work, and acknowledged the importance of the National Firefighters Memorial Service. He noted that the recent passage of amendments to the *Fire and Emergency Services Act* would mean that the Committee now reports through Parliament. Although this would increase the Committee's workload, the Minister commented that it would increase the transparency of the bushfire management process. He congratulated the committee and its member agencies and organisations for supporting the community through the 2020-2021 fire season, and expressed his gratitude for the work of the committee.

The Chair thanked the Minister for taking the time to attend the SBCC meeting.

The Minister left the meeting.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest/Probity Matters

The Chair asked for a declaration of any Conflicts of Interest or Probity Matters, and asked that any conflicts that arose throughout the course of the meeting be declared and managed at that point in time. None were raised at the outset of the meeting.

6. Confirmation of Previous Minutes of Meeting

The draft minutes of the State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC) meeting of 19 March 2021 were considered for confirmation.

Ms Ali Walsh noted a correction to be made on page 10 of the minutes, under SAPN's Agency Report, correcting a typographical error in her title.

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The Committee resolved as follows:

That the draft minutes of the previous SBCC meeting held on Friday 19 March 2021 be taken as read and confirmed as a true and accurate record, subject to the correction previously described.

Moved: ACFO Peter Button

Seconded: Mr Peter White

Carried.

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

7.1. Status report

The Chair noted that the *Fire and Emergency Services (Governance) Amendment Bill* passed through Parliament on May 11th, and is now awaiting assent and proclamation.

The SBCC noted the briefing provided regarding the status of matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2021.

No questions were raised regarding the matters contained in the briefing.

Noted.

8. Correspondence

The correspondence received and sent by the SBCC between 10 March 2021 and 7 May 2021 as circulated with the meeting papers was considered by the SBCC.

The SBCC noted the correspondence list.

Noted.

9. Business items

9.1. Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) Briefing

The Chair invited Ms Fiona Dunstan, Mr Gavin Wornes, and Ms Farhana Fadjar to present a briefing to the SBCC on the AFDRS.

Following the briefing there was a question and answer session, summarised below:

- It is planned to develop a 'handy tool' or reference to assist the transition from the McArthur model which informs existing Fire Danger Index calculations, and this could be complemented by other resources such as a mobile app.
- Each jurisdiction will take ownership and responsibility for data updates supporting the calculations sitting within the AFDRS. This may occur annually.
- 'Total Fire Ban' (TFB) remains as a term, but will relate to the 'extreme' category. The AFDRS is recalibrating the scale of fire danger. TFBs will still exist but will be decoupled from the fire danger ratings. Forecasting will be more accurate, so declaration of TFBs should be more refined.
- The Top End (Northern Territory/northern Western Australia/northern Queensland) is trialling the AFDRS within the next month or so; and the intention is that it will work in parallel with the current system, so that a comparison can be made and refinements made as needed. For the southern half of the country the projected release timing is the 2021-22 season.

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A short recess was taken at 10:14am.

The meeting recommenced at 10:25am.

9.2. State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025 – Final Endorsement

On behalf of SACFS Chief Officer Mark Jones, the Chair thanked all Members for their extensive input into the development of the draft Plan, and further input during the public consultation phase.

Late submissions from the State Emergency Service (SES) and Native Vegetation Council (NVC) were tabled, and time was given for members to consider these.

The Executive Officer then gave an overview of the elements included in the briefing on the Plan.

Committee Members were provided with all submissions received throughout the public consultation period, including:

- communications from the YourSAy site;
- direct correspondence and submissions received; and
- full Survey Monkey data.

To assist SBCC members to review this information, summarised and tabulated versions of the feedback have also been provided. The briefing package also included media coverage, and a summary of the social media outreach.

All submissions were reviewed in detail and matters of direct relevance to the Plan were identified and considered to generate amendments to the draft.

Matters of relevance to the implementation stage of the Plan have also been collated and have been retained for later consideration. For example, there were numerous comments relating to the Bushfire Management Area Plan (BMAP) review, which will be held for that process.

Specific matters were noted relating to the late submissions received (as tabled):

- The SES submission refers in its entirety to the existing BMAP handbook. As such, all comments will be retained for that review process;
- The majority of the comments received from the Native Vegetation Branch had already been addressed, while some additional comments have been incorporated into the Plan.

Items from the submissions were classified as follows:

1. Amendment generated;
2. Hold for implementation actions;
3. Noted; and
4. To be referred to relevant agency.
 - For example, items that relate to SACFS operations will be compiled and formally referred through the Chief Officer for review and consideration of that agency.
 - Many other SBCC member agencies and organisations will have feedback similarly referred to them, notably where the matters refer to legislation and policy within the portfolio of the relevant Minister.

All of the elements of all submissions were tabulated in Attachment 4B to the briefing,

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and classified using the numbers above.

Following this classification process, the comments generating specific amendments to the Plan were extracted and tabulated in Attachment 4 to the briefing. Some of these amendments were copy edits, and some addressed matters of substance.

The briefing notes some major amendments (summarised below). However, this is not an exhaustive list of all amendments made.

- The Attorney-General's Department (Planning and Land Use Services) updates to ensure accuracy of the content of the Plan in relation to the full enactment of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (PDI Act)*, noting that this occurred during the development of the Plan.
- Of note, based on the feedback received during the public consultation period, a number of additional actions were included into the 'governance' objective ("to set out strategies for coordination and integration of bushfire management"):
 - SBCC Action 2.2, to review the structure and composition of the SBCC and Bushfire Management Committees (BMCs). In response to:
 - A range of comments regarding, for example:
 - The relationship with the Fire Prevention Strategic Alliance (also raised in the Keelty review);
 - The relationship with the Heads of Agencies group (land management agencies and the SACFS);
 - The representation of Indigenous Australians;
 - The representation of the forestry industry.
 - A number of structure and composition issues that have been highlighted within the BMCs.
 - SBCC Action 2.5, regarding identification of data gaps and improving data utilisation to support bushfire risk assessments.
 - This is a State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) priority;
 - Although it was embedded within another recommendation, it has been elevated into the governance area.
- A need was identified to provide further clarification regarding environmental approvals processes, emphasising that this reference includes regulation, policy, and impact assessment.
- Clarification has been added that the BMAP handbook review will include review of existing standards previously endorsed by the SBCC, including the Zone Standards, and the Risk Assessment Process for Environmental Assets.
- A number of additional Coordination Actions have also been included, i.e.,
 - Farm Fire Unit integration: there is a project underway regarding the management of Farm Fire Units within the SACFS framework, following the Keelty review;
 - Including environmental impact assessment as part of damage assessment;

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and

- Cross-border coordination arrangements: this was raised consistently in the submissions from the forestry industry and primary industries.

It was re-emphasised that the intent of the Coordination Action tables was to capture what organisations within the sector are already doing, and the intention is that they will be live documents that will be updated.

These tables were not intended to include aspirational projects, as to do so would require due process to engage all the relevant parties who would have responsibility for delivery of those actions.

As such, comments regarding aspirational Coordination Actions were not included in the Plan, but will be retained for consideration as SBCC actions identified in the Plan are implemented.

- In response to a number of comments made about recovery, it has been re-emphasised that recovery sits under the Emergency Management framework, and within the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). The SBCC's interest in recovery is confined to the transition to recovery. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) gave clear guidance about how they wished this separation to be expressed within the Plan, and their recommendation has been adopted.

Since the proof provided to the SBCC was disseminated, several further minor edits have been identified - largely copy edits. These also address a late submission from the Native Vegetation Branch. A schedule of these amendment was attached to the briefing (Attachment 4A).

Under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (FES Act)* there is a requirement that, once the Plan is endorsed by the SBCC, it is provided to the Chief Officers of SACFS and SAMFS for their final review and endorsement, before being formally provided to the Minister for endorsement.

The committee was invited to present any questions regarding the briefing, and to discuss the recommendation noted in the briefing.

It was noted that in correspondence received prior to the meeting, A/AC John Venditto (SAPOL) expressed support for the recommendation outlined in the briefing, with the exception of the first dot point regarding publication of the submissions received. While not present at the meeting and not able to vote on the matter, A/AC Venditto had noted that he would prefer to only have published those parts of the submissions that were accepted and actioned in the draft Plan.

The Chair invited Members for put forward any questions related to the briefing, prior to a discussion of the first dot point under the recommendation.

In response to a question from Ms Denise LeBlond (AGD-PLUS) regarding how the late submission from the NVC would be managed, the Executive Officer responded as follows:

- Matters already addressed in the briefing:
 - p.25 - Coordination Actions
 - Tables intended to capture existing actions, rather than aspirational actions. Hold for later discussion.
 - p.36 - Coordination Actions – Recovery

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- SBCC and SBMP role only relates to transition to recovery.
- Feedback noted, but no changes made:
 - Page 18, Figure 12 – extent of environmental costs and losses:
 - With regard to this table more generally – it has been confined to life and property only, as it is not currently possible to provide consistent information in relation to all categories of economic and environmental assets across all of the incidents.
 - To be held for the State Risk Assessment, in the implementation stage.
 - Page 19, third dot point (expansion of revegetation):
 - Reviewed internally, but decision was made that current phrasing accurately expresses what needs to be said.
- Amended / included in amendments already made:
 - Page 14, Figure 8:
 - No change made to the infographic, but amendments have been made to the footnotes, and notation added that the figure is not exhaustive.
 - The level of complexity and interaction between the regulation and policy matters cannot be exhaustively presented in an infographic of that size.
 - Page 15:
 - Section already amended in the Plan.
 - Page 39 (glossary):
 - Glossary has been amended to include NVC.

Ms Fiona Gill (DEW) questioned whether there may be a risk that people may misuse the infographic on page 14 (Figure 8) as a guide to action, and as such whether a disclaimer should be included that this is a guide only and 'should not be used'. The Executive Officer noted that the SBMP is framed as a strategic management plan, and is not designed to provide advice to landholders on specific bushfire protection activities.

Mr Adam Schutz clarified the NVC's perspective and suggested noting that landholders are responsible for interpreting the requirements, and providing a link to the source of the relevant information.

The Executive Officer acknowledged the risk and suggested that a link to the Native Vegetation website is included, with a disclaimer that the infographic is not intended as a detailed representation of the legislation.

The Chair suggested that it may be useful to add a sentence into the introduction from the Chair, emphasising that this is an strategic document, rather than a handbook. There was general agreement with this suggestion.

The Chair then opened discussion regarding the first recommendation from the briefing:

That the State Bushfire Coordination Committee:

- *publish on the SBCC page of the SACFS website all public submissions received regarding the draft Plan, including the YourSAy discussion posts and survey responses*

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summary;

In response to questions regarding whether persons making submissions were made aware that their submissions could be public, and whether anything is to be gained by publishing, the Executive Officer noted that no statement was made at the outset as to whether submissions would be made public, as this was a matter for the SBCC to determine.

Ms Gill (DEW) suggested that as it was not made explicit at the outset, her view was that full submissions should not be published. Given that content of submissions varied greatly from high-level strategic issues through to low-level details, she suggested that a document outlining the high-level themes contained in the feedback, and noting that items not relevant to the Plan have been referred to the relevant agency/organisation. She also noted that people could access the full submissions via a Freedom of Information process if required.

The Executive Officer indicated that she could draft a summary of key amendments and circulate it to the SBCC for review.

In response to a question from Mr Mark Ashley (CCSA) regarding whether all submissions had received a response, the Executive Officer noted that all submissions were acknowledged, and people were thanked for their submission, but detailed feedback had not been given.

Mr Ashley referred specifically to a YourSAY discussion board post seeking a clarification, and the Executive Officer informed the committee that the clarification was given, and further comments were responded to by informing the individual that submissions would be considered with all submissions at the end of the consultation period. This was the standard response given to all feedback received.

Ms Ali Walsh (SAPN) expressed that she felt it was important to note in the summary document that changes were not incorporated into the Plan would be retained for future use and/or referral.

The Chair noted a number of options regarding publication of submissions:

1. Provision of all submissions in the public domain;
2. Listing of organisations and individuals who made submissions;
3. Generic analysis of types of submissions that were received.

Mr Mark Ashley (CCSA) requested a further option, and noted a preference, that the choice to be made public or not be given to all those who made submissions. He also noted his view that a key factor in engaging the conservation sector is transparency, and that full transparency in this situation would show maturity and accountability and may help build trust.

The Chair put to the SBCC to consider Mr Ashley's suggestion amongst the alternatives.

Ms Fiona Gill (DEW) noted that it is not the SBCC's responsibility to publish submissions through the committee's processes; and suggested that individuals and agencies/organisation have the option to make their own submissions public.

Mr Graeme Brown (DIT) expressed agreement with Ms Gill. No other preferences were expressed.

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The committee then considered an amendment to the recommendation:

That the State Bushfire Coordination Committee:

- *publish on the SBCC page of the SACFS website a list of all agencies, organisations and individuals (as per point 2 contained in the briefing) who made submissions, together with a summary document of the key themes, changes made to the draft Plan, and matters to be retained for future reference regarding the draft Plan; and,*

Moved: Ms Fiona Gill

Seconded: Mr Bill McIntosh

Carried. (Mr Mark Ashley dissented).

The amendment being carried, the Committee then considered the amended recommendation:

That the State Bushfire Coordination Committee:

- *publish on the SBCC page of the SACFS website a list of all agencies, organisations and individuals (as per point 2 contained in the briefing) who made submissions, together with a summary document of the key themes, changes made to the draft Plan, and matters to be retained for future reference regarding the draft Plan; and,*
- *note the summary of submissions made and actions taken to address points made; and,*
- *endorse the additional schedule of minor amendments to the final draft Plan for inclusion prior to its finalisation for printing; and,*
- *endorse the final draft Plan document for provision to the Chief Officers of the SA Country Fire Service and the SA Metropolitan Fire Service for their review and endorsement; and,*
- *pending the endorsement of the Chief Officers, formally submit the final draft Plan to the Minister for final approval; and,*
- *pending approval of the final draft Plan by the Minister, publish the Plan on the SBCC page of the SACFS website, and provide the Plan to BMCs.*

Moved: Ms Fiona Gill

Seconded: Mr Bill McIntosh

Carried.

9.3. State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025 – Initial Works Plan

The Chair introduced item 8.3, noting that it was predicated on the assumption that the State Plan would be approved.

The Executive Officer emphasised that significant is needed to develop the works plan, and that at this stage the document is essentially an overview of what is planned to be done.

She noted some important dependencies in relation to a number of the actions, and progressing these will form the next step in developing the works plan once the State Plan is formally signed off.

One critical resourcing dependency noted was that the SACFS are still in the process of recruiting a number of staff who will support the implementation process.

Further, there has not yet been an opportunity to engage with stakeholders to discuss the works plan in greater detail, and it is not appropriate to foreclose what different agencies and

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stakeholders would like to or be able to contribute.

There are also matters where Crown advice will need to be sought – i.e., in relation to the integration of the Hazard Leader Plan – and the advice received will provide critical direction.

As the briefing paper notes, there are a number of key principles that need to be considered:

- Appropriate governance and authorisation will impact timeframes and progression of actions.
- Both the SBCC and the BMCs meet quarterly. Work needs to be done to improve synchronisation of these meetings from 2022.
- There are also some key actions currently not resourced:
 - The State Risk Assessment, with a significant whole body of work involved in engaging stakeholders and developing resourcing options in a collaborative way.
 - Funding for software redevelopment to support the review and redevelopment of Bushfire Management Area Plans.

She noted it is important that the SBCC Secretariat within SACFS ensures the committee is aware of those matters, so that the process is transparent, and the limitations are known.

In response to a questions from Mr Graeme Brown (DIT) regarding what the next steps are for the Plan, the Executive Officer noted key areas that have been identified as priorities:

- Governance review is a pressing need at both a State and BMC level. It is hoped to provide a scoping paper to the SBCC at the August meeting.
- The section 105 component of the proposed Code of Practice for Private Land Fuel Management, noting work already undertaken by local government, particularly with relation to the standards for the issuing of 105F notices.

Mr Brown noted that there is significant work in the initial works plan that will take place over several years. The Executive Officer confirmed that the initial concept plan will expanded to develop a works programme to support implementation of the State Plan, following consultation with external stakeholders.

Ms Fiona Gill (DEW) noted that it is difficult to see where priorities lie, and suggested that the SBCC needs to determine its view of the priorities. She also noted that the Government's response to the Royal Commission will lead to work behind the scenes for agencies assigned tasks to deliver to support that response.

She suggested that the SBCC could be presented with a paper that shows alignment between the response and the implementation of the Plan. She noted her previously expressed concern that the Committee was endorsing a State policy document ahead of the release of the response to the Royal Commission, and this may result in the SBCC needing to align these two pieces of work.

The Chair noted that there are elements of the Government's Royal Commission response in relation to which SACFS has sought correction. She reiterated that this is an initial overview of items that – should the Plan be endorsed – the SBCC will consider taking forward. She noted that this is a start to the conversation, but there are a number of things that will also need to be included in this process.

Ms Denise LeBlond (AGD-PLUS) queried the next stage for the works plan, and Ms Ali Walsh (SAPN) suggested the possibility of a 'priorities' column.

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In response, the Executive Officer noted that the next stage in developing the works plan will be to engage stakeholders and seek feedback on key dependencies, noting that SBCC priorities could not be established until this is done. She also noted the importance of considering external influences that will impact upon the timelines for the works plan. For instance, the regulatory policy review process is likely to be impacted by 2022 being a State election year.

The Chair suggested that it be clearly noted that this is a working document, and that any questions related to this item be directed to the Executive Officer.

The committee resolved:

That the State Bushfire Coordination Committee note the initial progression of the works plan for the State Bushfire Management Plan, including that it provides an overview of proposed works to commence delivery of the SBCC Actions contained within the Plan (pending its final approval), and that further detailed project plans and issues papers will be presented to the Committee in due course.

Moved: Mr Graeme Brown

Seconded: Ms Justine Drew

Carried.

9.4. Annual Reporting 2020-2021

The Executive Officer noted the ongoing preparation of a template to address the SBCC's reporting requirements under the recently passed legislation, and the need to obtain useful and relevant information to be incorporated into the first annual report to Parliament. She noted the opportunity that reporting brings: as well as celebrating key achievements, it will provide Parliament with a direct line of sight into resourcing gaps.

Part of this process is considering the best way to obtain information from the BMCs to understand where they are at in the implementation of BMAPs, without singling out individual agencies or organisations, in order to establish an initial benchmark. An approach that has been identified is to ask BMCs to collectively review where they are at in terms of implementing risk treatments to address bushfire risk to 'Very High' or 'Extreme' risk assets, in order to identify what has and hasn't been done, and the resource gaps.

Mr Bill McIntosh left the meeting.

The Executive Officer noted the complexity of annual report timing, as the existing BMC and SBCC schedules don't align well. The aim is to have an annual report draft prepared and circulated to the SBCC by early September, giving a few weeks for consideration before it has to be with Minister (by the end of September).

She asked the committee to consider any ideas or suggestions for elements that member agencies/organisations would like to be incorporated into the report; and to be aware of the timing and endorsement issue. In the future the SBCC would need to adjust the timing of meetings to ensure that they address the reporting deadlines.

The committee resolved:

The State Bushfire Coordination Committee note the briefing provided on annual reporting for the SBCC and BMCs, and resolve to consider the process for formal endorsement of the

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annual report at the August meeting of the Committee.

Moved: ACFO Peter Button

Seconded: Mr Peter White

Carried.

9.5. Bushfire Management Committee Membership

The Executive Office informed the committee that the BMC membership call was currently open, closing on the 21st of May.

As noted in the briefing, there have been matters raised about membership and composition of the BMCs. The SBCC will have the opportunity to capture these issues during the full review of structure and composition following from implementation of the State Plan in due course.

The SBCC is required to endorse all BMC nominations under the *FES Act*. It was therefore proposed that all nominations would be disseminated for consideration early in the week of the 24th May, and then we will need to endorse them, via one of two methods:

- (a) A special meeting of the SBCC is called for Friday 4th June 2021 to consider and endorse the nominations.

or

- (b) An online vote to endorse the nominations is conducted between Friday 4th June 2021 and COB Monday 7th June 2021.

Both options give a two-week period to consider all the nominations. This timing is needed to ensure business continuity, as the current term of BMC membership expires on the 30th June 2021.

In response to a question from Mr Peter White (PPSA), the Executive Officer confirmed that the membership term for BMCs is three years.

In response to a question from Ms Justine Drew (PIRSA), the Executive Officer confirmed that SBCC consideration of nominations is largely procedural matter, as responsibility rests with each of the agencies and organisations to go through proper process to nominate their representatives.

The Executive Officer noted that there are a number of vacancies, and that because of the historical composition of the BMCs, there have not been representatives in some positions for quite extended periods of time. Organisations or agencies in this position who contacted the Secretariat with questions following the call for nominations were advised that if they were able to provide a representative it would be ideal, but it was recognised that the composition of the BMCs needs review to ensure the most appropriate representation.

Ms Fiona Gill (DEW) noted that past iterations of the SBCC had raised concerns that the SBCC doesn't see anything about the nominees apart from their name, and as such it has been difficult to make a decision as to whether to approve the nominees or not. A concern had been that this is a 'rubber stamping' exercise, that doesn't allow for conversations to be had about key strategic issues related to the membership of BMCs. She suggested that the SBCC could bring extra rigour to BMCs by better aligning meeting dates, and having greater strategic oversight of the BMCs to enable them to be more effective.

The Executive Officer noted that it is clear that there are issues with BMC composition, and that a wholesale review is necessary but is not feasible at this point for the start of the new

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membership. Proposed major review of the structure and composition of the BMCs, and the governance systems that sit around them, are part of the actions of the State Plan.

The Chair noted that there are many interdependencies, but the committee is hamstrung by the dates for the new membership in 2021, meaning that new members need to be appointed to BMCs to ensure business continuity – which may feel like ‘rubber-stamping’. She suggested that while the SBCC should consider how to make this more strategic in future, it is not feasible to address this before the current BMC term expires at the end of June.

The committee considered the two options for endorsing the nominations, and there was **unanimous agreement** with the 2nd option: an online vote to endorse the nominations, conducted between Friday 4th June 2021 and COB Monday 7th June 2021.

9.6. Code of Practice for Broadacre Burning – Draft for Consultation

The Chair invited Ms Justine Drew (PIRSA) to brief the SBCC on the draft Code of Practice (CoP) for Broadacre Burning.

Ms Drew noted that the main purpose of the business item was to present the updated draft CoP to SBCC members for their consideration, and suggested that, due to time constraints, it may be fitting to respond to any initial questions and to set a date for feedback on the draft.

Ms Ali Walsh (SAPN) noted that there were some confusing elements of the table:

- It was unclear what the numbers in the green and red boxes are referring to – she assumed these are wind speed, but this is unclear. She suggested adding m/s or km/hr (or applicable) may make it more apparent.
- The table implies that it is not possible to conduct a broadacre burn below the values shown in the table (because they are all red) – presumably this isn’t true; but this is currently unclear.

Ms Drew noted the importance of considering for the roll-out how the CoP is communicated and how compliance will be encouraged.

The Executive Officer then addressed questions received prior to the meeting from Mr David Lindner (CFS VA) regarding whether the CoP is mandatory or not. She noted that the CoP was updated most recently in 2015, at which point it was endorsed by PPSA, Grain Producers SA, SACFS, and the SBCC. CoPs are legal documents within the *FES Act*.

However, there is a question as to why it is a Code of Practice as opposed to a management guideline. Historically and in many jurisdictions, CoPs are not necessarily mandatory, and could be voluntary self-regulation codes. As such it should be considered during the consultation process whether this is intended to be a self-regulation piece for the sectors, or a mandatory code. When it was originally conceived it was an industry self-regulation document, and it is only due to a new regulatory framework being developed around it that it has become, almost by default, a legal document.

Mr Lindner noted needing to clarify whether it is a CoP or a guideline, as if it is an enforceable CoP, it puts pressure on volunteers as if they attend a fire it is then a potential crime scene. This which would change the management of the incident. Furthermore, he noted that it needs to be considered who would be enforcing a CoP.

The Executive Officer suggested that it would be appropriate to formally address this distinction during the consultation process, and noted that the Code is not currently drafted as a readily enforceable document.

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In response to a comment regarding the potential inclusion of the health impacts of smoke, Ms Drew noted that the impacts of smoke aspect could apply to a lot of things. However, smoke management was originally included in the Code in relation to grains and wine. She suggested that the question of whether this should be broadened to include other impacts of smoke is an issue for consideration by the SBCC.

Ms Fiona Gill (DEW) noted that it does seem important to include some mention of the health impacts of smoke, and suggested that a similar document needs to be developed to address smoke management for hazard reduction burning in native vegetation. She noted that smoke management is heavily regulated in some jurisdictions, and ideally a more agile approach would be adopted.

Mr Peter White (PPSA) proposed that while there is a clear need to address the impacts of smoke more broadly, this document should specifically address farming.

The Chair noted the importance of gaining clarity on the scope of the document, and recognised the need for it to sit alongside numerous other related documents or bodies of work. She suggested that due to time constraints the SBCC should plan to consider this at a later date.

In response to a question from Mr White regarding the BoM's forecasting and communication of inversion layers to farmers, Kylie Egan (BoM) noted that while these are not forecast as part of the public weather suite, it does form part of the information that is provided to DEW for their prescribed burning program, and expressed openness to suggestions of how this could be better communicated directly with farmers.

The committee resolved:

That the draft update to the Code of Practice for Broadacre Burning, incorporating significant new detail on smoke management, and averting risk to sensitive areas, including unharvested wine grapes, be provided to SBCC Members for consultation and further comment, with a view to further consideration by the SBCC at its August 2021 meeting.

Moved: Ms Ali Walsh

Seconded: Mr Peter White

Carried.

9.7. Agency Reports

The Chair tabled agency reports from SA Water and SACFS, and members were invited to speak to any matters contained in their agency/organisation report that they wished to raise. No matters were raised.

The committee resolved:

That the agency reports be noted.

Moved: ACFO Peter Button

Seconded: Mr Graeme Brown

Carried.

9.8. SBCC and BMC Website

The Executive Officer informed the SBCC that resources have been procured to develop a website for the SBCC and the BMCs, to be housed within the SAFECOM portal. The intention is to have the site developed by the end of the financial year, providing a platform to post information about the function of the committees at both levels, and to incorporate the SBMP

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and the BMAPs.

Efforts are also underway to resource redevelopment of the BRIMS software in order to virtualise the current Bushfire Risk Information Management System that can be directly accessible by all stakeholders. In the event that the software redevelopment proceeds, the website will also act as the portal for stakeholder access to BRIMS in future.

It is noted that SBCC minutes are now posted on the SACFS website, at the request of SBCC Chair Mr Mark Jones QFSM. SBCC minutes would also be published on the new website.

In response to correspondence received prior to the meeting from A/AC John Venditto (SAPOL), the Executive Officer noted that if any matters discussed by the committee are noted as being subject to privilege or confidentiality, they will not form part of the public-facing endorsed minutes. Only endorsed minutes will be published.

Ms Brooke Swaffer left the meeting.

To address the significant time between quarterly meetings and the posting of endorsed minutes, a communique will be published following each SBCC meeting. This will provide a summary of the matters discussed and resolutions made in a timely manner.

The committee noted the briefing provided regarding the development of a website for the SBCC and BMCs, and the intent to redevelop the BRIMS Application.

The Committee resolved:

That the State Bushfire Coordination Committee note the briefing provided regarding the development of a website for the SBCC and BMCs, and the intent to redevelop the BRIMS Application.

Moved: Ms Justine Drew

Seconded: ACFO Peter Button

Carried.

10. Other Business

The Chair asked the committee for any critical other business to be raised or matters to be carried over to the August meeting.

Ms Fiona Gill (DEW) suggested that it may be useful for the August meeting to be combined with a workshop around the implementation of the Plan. The Executive Officer noted that this may be necessary.

11. Meeting Close

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 12:18pm.

Next Meeting – Friday 13th August 2021, 09:00hrs

Endorsed by the State Bushfire Coordination Committee as a true and correct record of the meeting.



Georgie Cornish
Acting Chair, State Bushfire Coordination Committee