



SBCC and BMC Governance Review

Update – April 2022

Background

The [State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025](#) includes key actions (see below) to review the governance arrangements for the State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC) and the Bushfire Management Committees (BMCs). The governance review is to be undertaken to support improved integration and coordination of bushfire management arrangements in South Australia.

- 2.1 *Early in the life of this Plan, the SBCC will undertake a review of governance procedures and practices for the SBCC and BMCs.*
- 2.2 *During the life of this Plan, the SBCC will undertake a review of the structure and composition of the SBCC and BMCs including, but not limited to, consideration of Indigenous Australian and forestry industry representation; and the relationship with the Fire Prevention Strategic Alliance (FPSA) and the Heads of Agencies group (currently comprised of SACFS, DEW, SAW and FSA).*
- 2.3 *During the life of this Plan, an assurance and reporting framework for the SBCC and BMCs will be developed to ensure that legislative requirements are being met.*
- 2.4 *Early the life of this Plan, explore the relationship between the SBCC and State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC), and between the SBMP and the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). This will include addressing the appropriate location of the Rural Fire Hazard Leader Plan.*
- 2.5 *During the life of this Plan, the SBCC will identify data gaps and support improved data utilisation to inform State and BMC-level bushfire risk assessments.*

A range of activities have already been undertaken to improve governance and administrative processes within the available resource envelope, and a comprehensive review of governance is proposed. More information is provided on these matters below.

Ahead of conducting a comprehensive governance review, improvements continue to be identified to administrative processes. Where amendments to existing endorsed policy or guidelines are required, these are provided to the SBCC for review and endorsement.



Improvements in Executive Support Administration

During 2021, significant work was progressed within the executive support functions provided by South Australian Country Fire Service (SACFS) to both the SBCC and the BMCs to 'renovate the foundations' of key systems and processes to support ongoing reform, including the activities outlined below:



- Review and redevelopment of [membership management](#) processes for SBCC and BMCs, including obtaining Crown advice on membership matters.
- Review and redevelopment of sitting fee administrative arrangements with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Department of Treasury and Finance. These processes are currently being finalised with Shared Services.
- BMC Term Membership call – this was a substantial exercise as it was necessary to consolidate all the membership information at a State level as the first step in the process before the positions were called.
- Development and delivery (in early July 2021) of a substantial training package for SACFS Regional staff who provide executive support to BMCs, including:
 - Reset understanding of the role of BMCs
 - Overview of reform processes and introduction of the State Plan
 - Overhaul of the membership management process
 - Overhaul of records management
 - ‘Train the trainer’ for induction of BMC members
- Development and delivery of a new interim BMC member induction package encompassing governance arrangements, Bushfire Management Area Plans (BMAPs), reform processes, and the State Plan. This induction package will continue to be reviewed and updated.

Three Bushfire Management Planning Officers within the Bushfire Management Planning Unit BMPU of SACFS provide support and advice to BMC executive officers and other CFS Regional staff to assist with governance of the Committees.

2021 had a strong focus on State level matters, and during 2022 there will be greater focus on supporting and reforming the BMCs.



SBCC and BMC Governance Review

At its November 2021 meeting, the SBCC approved the development of a comprehensive discussion ('green') paper to support a review of SBCC and BMC governance.

The green paper will be provided to the SBCC for review and endorsement, prior to its circulation to SBCC member agencies and organisations, targeted non-member agencies and organisations, and BMCs.

The development of the green paper is subject to resourcing and has not progressed in the first quarter of 2022. SACFS is seeking to address this so that the review can progress, with an indicative completion date of December 2022. It is anticipated that there will be proposed legislative changes arising from the review.

SBCC also noted that SACFS will explore the relationship between the emergency and bushfire management frameworks with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Further, governance matters related to environmental approvals will be brought to the attention of the SBCC following review of the BMAP Handbook.