



Communique

Meeting Held - Friday 13 August 2021

Status Report

The Committee noted the progress of several matters arising from the May meeting:

- **Amendments to the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA)***

The *Fire and Emergency Services (Governance) Amendment Act 2021* was proclaimed on 29 July 2021 and came into effect on 2 August 2021. This amendment gives effect to the SBCC annual reporting requirement to the Parliament through the Minister.

- **State Bushfire Coordination Committee Membership**

Nominations from the Conservation Council of SA, the Native Vegetation Council and Landscape SA have been put forward to the Minister, Cabinet, and the Governor to fill current member and deputy vacancies on the SBCC.

- **Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) Update**

An update was provided on progress with on project management and stakeholder engagement, noting:

- An operational trial of the new AFDRS will run this coming fire season (2021-2022).
- Fire Prevention Officers have been invited to volunteer as Fuel State Editor (FSE) users this fire season.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding the potential re-alignment of Fire Weather Districts.
- Engagement is occurring across sectors, including: health and human services, planning and infrastructure, education, fire and emergency management, critical infrastructure, energy and mining, land and resource management, science and research, local government, industry and community stakeholders.
- A communications strategy is being developed for the AFDRS implementation phase from September 2021 – March 2022.

State Bushfire Management Plan – Implementation Process

The Committee noted that the Minister had released the State Bushfire Management Plan on 29 July 2021. Significant work has been undertaken over the past few months to 'renovate the foundations' of key systems and processes in the executive support functions provided by SACFS to the SBCC and Bushfire Management Committees to support implementation and ongoing reform. Preparation of detailed implementation planning for the State Bushfire Management Plan will recommence once recruitment of additional positions to the SACFS Bushfire Management Planning Unit has been completed (expected late August-early September 2021).

SBCC Annual Report 2020-2021

The Committee approved the format and content of the first annual report to the Minister and Parliament and agreed to review and endorse the report out of session, prior to its submission to the Minister in early September.



SBCC and BMC Branding and Website

New branding for the SBCC and BMCs was presented to the Committee, and the development of the new Committee website outlined, with its launch expected in Spring 2021. The initial focus of the website is providing a platform to support a distinctive identity for the Committees and greater openness and transparency for their operations.

Code of Practice for Broadacre Burning – Consultation Report

The Committee considered feedback provided on the proposed update of the Code to include guidance regarding smoke management and noted that most feedback addressed other matters in the Code, and that there was not consensus in the feedback on whether the Code should be a mandatory or voluntary document.

Recent regulatory changes have introduced complexities regarding the status of 'codes of practice', and further advice is currently being sought on the implications of these. The Committee agreed to address the process in two parts, deferring the progression of the Code to SACFS to undertake further review following receipt of legal advice, and supporting the development of a separate broad State-level policy on smoke management together with relevant agencies and stakeholders. The latter was proposed to encompass industry and community requirements, as well as public health and environmental protection. The Committee supported SACFS as hazard leader to coordinate the development of this policy. Both documents will return to the SBCC for review in due course.

BMC Listening Tour

The Committee considered a report on matters raised by Bushfire Management Committees during a 'listening tour' undertaken by the Executive Officer between March and May 2021. Matters raised were themed into governance, Bushfire Management Area Plans and Implementation of the Plans and associated activities. There was strong alignment between the themes raised and the directions for reform and improvement of these processes identified in the State Bushfire Management Plan. The feedback will be retained for the State Plan implementation process. The Committee noted the practical needs identified to support private property preparedness by improving options for green waste management and increasing the number of contractors working in this area.

Bushfire Management Committee Nominations

The Committee approved a number of late nominations for the new term of Bushfire management Committees.

Other Business

The Committee discussed the significance of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It was noted that the focus of the state-level assessment to be undertaken as part of the implementation process for the State Bushfire Management Plan would include existential risk from bushfire in the context of climate change.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Friday 12th November 2021.

(Communique issued 25 August 2021)