



State Bushfire Coordination Committee

MINUTES

Meeting 6/8

19 August 2022

09:00 – 12:00hrs

Ground Floor Training Rooms, Emergency Services Headquarters

Attendance	<p>Mr Mark Jones QFSM Ms Anthea Howard Ms Kylie Egan Mr David Lindner (<i>online</i>) Mr Mark Ashley (<i>online</i>) Ms Fiona Gill Mr Graeme Brown (<i>online</i>) Ms Justine Drew (<i>online</i>) Mr John Moyle Ms Sarah Reachill (<i>online</i>) Mr Bill McIntosh Mr Troy Fountain (<i>online</i>) Mr Peter White (<i>online</i>) ACO Brett Loughlin ACFO Peter Button C/Supt John De Candia APM Mr James Crocker</p>	<p>Chairman (<i>ex officio</i>) Executive Officer Member, Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) Deputy, Country Fire Service Volunteers Association (CFS VA) Member, Conservation Council of South Australia (CCSA) Member, Department for Environment and Water (DEW) Member, Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) Member, Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Member, Local Government Association of SA (LGA SA) Member, Native Vegetation Council (NVC) Member, Outback Communities Authority (OCA) Member, Planning and Land Use Services, Department for Trade and Investment (PLUS-DTI) Member, Primary Producers SA (PPSA) Member, SA Country Fire Service (SACFS) Member, SA Metropolitan Fire Service (SAMFS) Deputy, South Australia Police (SAPOL) Member, SA Water</p>
Apologies	<p>Mr Ivan-Tiwu Copley OAM JP Mr Andrew Cadd Ms Monique Blason Mr Michael Garrod AC Stuart McLean</p>	<p>Member, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AAR) Member, CFS VA Member, ForestrySA Member, Landscape SA Member, SAPOL</p>
Observers and Guests	<p>Mr Aidan Galpin Mr Troy Horn (<i>online</i>) Ms Paula Slutzkin</p>	<p>Observer, SACFS Observer, ForestrySA Administrative Support, SACFS</p>



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1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees and gave an Acknowledgement of Country, and opened the meeting at 9:03am. He then noted observers and remote attendees.

2. Apologies

The Chair noted the online attendees, observers, and apologies received, and welcomed new members to the Committee.

3. Safety Briefing

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

4. 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.

5. Confirmation of Previous Minutes of Meeting

The draft minutes of the State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC) meeting of 20 May 2022 were considered for confirmation.

The Committee resolved as follows:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2022 are confirmed as a true and correct record.

Moved: Mr John Moyle

Seconded: ACO Brett Loughlin

Carried.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

6.1 Status Report

The Chair referred to the briefing note circulated, and invited the Executive Officer to provide a verbal update.

6.1.1 SBCC Membership

The Executive Officer noted new members previously welcomed by the Chair, and mentioned further changes to come due to upcoming retirements.

6.1.2 Australian Fire Danger Rating System Update

The Executive Officer noted the briefing on the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS), due to commence on 1st September 2022.



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ACO Loughlin (SACFS) informed the Committee that CFA in Victoria will run the new rating system side by side with their current older model, as they do not feel they are in a position to make a wholesale switch at this point in time. SACFS will manage cross-border nuances, but doesn't anticipate that there will be any major challenges.

6.1.3 Roadside Signage – Remote Areas Fire Risk

The Executive Officer reminded the Committee that the matter of roadside signage was raised in the post season review, with regard to remote camping and associated bushfire risks.

She noted a project that was commenced some time ago to put in place signage highlighting fire risk along roadsides in the northern and western areas of the state. Conversations have been undertaken between SACFS and DIT with regard to this. A preliminary commitment was made under the former government to support the installation of signage, however this is no longer where this stands.

Mr Brown (DIT) noted that the discussions had previously were quite high level and conceptual; however, the detail of who would be doing what and how it would be funded had not yet been resolved. As such, it is an issue that still needs to progress and go through the process of being put up as a new initiative, to see where it lies with the new government.

The Executive Officer noted previous conversations with Mr McIntosh (OCA), regarding the OCA project that had a broader implication on this issue, and invited him to speak to this.

Mr McIntosh noted that a lot of work is being done around developing the Aussie Travel Code ('the Code'), which focuses on visitor awareness and behaviour. He noted the possibility for fire-risk messaging to be consistently presented in this, but acknowledged that while the Code is a work in progress, there is a need for something to be done quite quickly.

The Executive Officer noted the need for the conversation to continue between OCA and DIT, to see what opportunities there are to coordinate the messaging within the Code, but also what opportunities there may be moving forward with the AFDRS transition.

6.1.4 Update on Outback and FMNY BMC Boundary Re-alignment discussion

The Executive Officer noted that the Outback Bushfire Management Committee (BMC) have provided the SBCC with a concrete option that they are very keen to pursue. The Flinders Mid North and Yorke (FMNY) BMC have unfortunately had to reschedule their meeting, and have not yet discussed this. Final options will be brought back to the SBCC at the November meeting.

The Chair noted that it is not ideal for important business to be held up by scheduling, and suggested the importance of having business methods not reliant upon scheduling.

The Committee resolved as follows:

That the State Bushfire Coordination Committee note the status report provided on matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 20 May 2022.

Moved: ACO Brett Loughlin

Seconded: ACFO Peter Button



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Carried.

7. Correspondence

The Committee considered and noted the correspondence list. No questions or comments were raised regarding the correspondence register.

8. Business items

8.1 State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025 – Implementation Update

The Chair referred to the briefing note circulated regarding the implementation of the *State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025*.

8.1.1 BMAP 2.0 Update

The Executive Officer invited questions regarding the BMAP 2.0 Update. She reiterated that there has been an extensive process to survey the market and identify the options to progress this. As part of the Request for Information (RFI) process, over the previous few weeks demonstrations were given from three possible suppliers who stood out, and a final discussion was had with the steering committee the day prior to the SBCC meeting. There is a fairly clear proposal moving forward. The primary issue moving forward is the quantum investment which is a matter that now needs to be discussed with the Minister.

No questions were raised, and the Committee noted this briefing.

8.1.2 Interim BMAP Process – Annual Bushfire Risk Reduction Planning

The Executive Officer reminded the Committee that in November 2021 there was a recommendation made to adjust the BMC meeting format, to provide for a post-season review at the beginning of the year; a session over winter to facilitate the development of annual risk reduction plans, utilising the existing Bushfire Management Area Plans (BMAPs); and a pre-season co-ordination meeting.

She noted significant work has been undertaken with all BMCs to develop annual Risk Reduction Plans; and the briefing outlines a summation of how this has progressed. As it has been the first time these have been developed, it had not been an entirely smooth process, but there has been good engagement in the process and collaboration among the majority of the stakeholders in the BMCs. There are two BMCs still to meet (FMNY and Kangaroo Island). However, the remainder of the Risk Reduction Plans are being collated by the Bushfire Management Planning Unit (BMPU) in preparation for their approval by the agencies who are committing to delivering the activities; followed by their endorsement by the BMCs; and finally by the SBCC. It is expected that the endorsement by the BMCs and the SBCC will occur out-of-session.

The Executive Officer noted that no significant amendments have come up thus far through the process, and that only items that sit within the existing minor amendment framework (endorsed by the SBCC in 2021) have been raised. All agencies were asked to focus on what they can



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realistically deliver as priority activities for high risk areas over the coming 12 months. A challenge is that agency planning cycles and budget processes differ significantly. This was further complicated by the dual (state and local government) election cycle this year, which has impacted timing of budgets. However, the Risk Reduction Planning process has commenced a more consolidated and collaborative approach to the implementation of bushfire management activities, and as such is a step forward.

The recommendation put to the Committee is to agree to the proposed endorsement process for the endorsement of the Risk Reduction Plans.

In response to a question about how amendments will be managed, the Executive Officer noted that minor and major amendments will be managed as per the amendments policy endorsed by the SBCC in November 2021. There is a legislative requirement for public consultation in relation to major amendments, which is a 6-week period, and as such if any major amendments arise, they will be packaged up for public consultation.

Clarification was requested regarding what exactly the SBCC was planning to ask the Chief Executives (CEs) to endorse at this point in time.

The Executive Officer noted that the CEs will be asked to endorse the proposed activities they are committing to undertake. She noted that in the invitation to provide information for the Risk Reduction Plans, agencies were asked to provide information on those activities that specifically related to land under their control and management. The same principle applies to their endorsement – that it is, agency endorsement will be sought only in relation to activities on land under their care and control.

The BMCs and the SBCC are required under the FES Act to provide oversight of the implementation of BMAPs. As such, these committees will review the Risk Reduction Plans in order to test them against the requirements of the legislation: from a BMC level, that it is consistent with the BMAP; and from an SBCC level that it is consistent with the provisions of the State Bushfire Management Plan and the BMAPs. This is really an assurance role.

No corporate endorsement process has not been undertaken in relation to the implementation of BMAPs up until this point. Everything in this process over the last decade has been done at a staff level, without any formal invitation for agencies to commit at a corporate level to what they are documented to deliver in the BMAPs. The intention is to provide this check and balance function. This is the reasoning behind all correspondence that has been undertaken over the last 18 months being directed to the chief executive level.

In response to a further question regarding whether the Plans should first be endorsed by the BMCs, prior to going to the CEs of the member agencies, the Executive Officer clarified that it is necessary for the individual agency's information to go to them first for approval. Through the Annual Reporting process, some BMC Members sought to alter information that had provided by other organisations, and it was made clear that this was not to occur, as the BMCs have no authority to change information that has been signed off by individual agencies.

The Chair noted that the legislative construction of the arrangement means that things do not



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flow smoothly. The Executive Officer noted that this is one of the matters that is in the scope of the governance review. Within the constraints of current arrangements, the intention is for corporate entities to have the final say in what they are proposing to undertake. If a BMC identifies that there is a major conflict in a proposal then this would be raised. However, the intention of the Risk Reduction Planning workshops has been to encourage member agencies/organisations to discuss the activities put forward. It is appreciated that it is challenging to meet this objective where there is only a single workshop for each BMC to facilitate this. However, there is a capacity issue both for SACFS in supporting the process, and for the BMC members who are required to attend. While it has been an imperfect process, it is a step forward from past practice.

The Chair noted that once the chief executives of BMC member organisations are engaged, many of these issues that are being discussed will be mitigated; as they will have a keener interest in the outcomes and a desire to ensure processes work as fluently as possible.

Mr Moyle (LGA SA) noted that from an LGA perspective, consulting with the chief executives is essential, as there are 68 of them across the state. He noted that having sat on a BMC, he is not sure that people at the table at BMCs are representing the chief executives' views or have the authority to sign-off.

Ms Gill (DEW) suggested that it may be different for the state agencies, and asked whether the intention is to build an accountability because of a concern that the chief executives of smaller organisations do not have the visibility of what their staff have said that their organisation was going to do.

The Executive Officer noted that a number of issues were brought to light through the Annual Reporting process, which highlighted that internal governance arrangements regarding these matters are diverse across the approximately 90 organisations who were invited to contribute to the annual report. She reiterated the importance of not documenting information on behalf of other organisations without the appropriate level of endorsement, because it exposes both those organisations and SACFS as the agency providing support to the committees.

In response to a question about who the target audience of the BMAPs and the work of the BMC is, the Executive Officer noted that the way the BMCs are currently framed and the model they were based upon is agency focused, and is about coordinating the activities of land management and other agencies with an interest in bushfire and emergency management. Part of the reform intended in the next generation of BMAPs aims to broaden their focus and have a greater engagement in the community resilience and risk reduction, as pitched in the State Bushfire Management Plan actions. The framework to deliver this will be complex; but that is the intention moving forward.

The Chair pointed out that across the states there are very few attempts to produce anything like a statewide bushfire risk assessment; and notes that it is a single example of an approach to resilience that could be used to approach other risks easily.

With regard to a question on process and timing, and whether state agencies will get a package of all nine Risk Reduction Plans or nine individual plans, the Executive Officer noted that this was a



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point of current discussion, given that seven out of the nine are ready to prepare for the CE endorsement process, and two have been delayed. She suggested that the main issue is that it is delaying the information being in the public domain (i.e., being published on the SBCC/BMC website). She expressed willingness to take views from agencies on the preferred option, bearing in mind that waiting for the committees that are still to meet will cause delays.

Ms Gill (DEW) expressed a preference for all nine Risk Reduction Plans to come as a package.

Mr McIntosh (OCA) suggested that the issues encountered through this process imply that there needs to be an ongoing conversation within the agencies about their ability and commitment to deliver strategies that are identified at a regional level as being highly important to mitigate risk; as when this communication breaks down the ability to deliver the outcomes is compromised.

Mr Brown (DIT) expressed an understanding of the difficulties of trying to coordinate a state-wide approach to these matters, given that DIT have struggled to ensure that there is appropriate representation by people who are fully briefed on what they can and can't say on behalf of the agency; and how they can better coordinate this internally. DIT have put in place structures to ensure that communication across each of the different committees is now in place, so that it can be better understood what is happening across each of the different regions, and can provide guidance to them in terms of what DIT can provide. Mr Brown expressed no specific preference for whether the nine Risk Reduction Plans come as a package or individually.

The Committee resolved as follows:

The Committee notes the briefing regarding Interim BMAP Process – Annual Bushfire Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) and endorses the process for endorsement of risk reduction plans, as follows: provision of draft risk reduction plans to agency and organisation Chief Executives for endorsement, followed by endorsement of the plans at BMC level, and then by the SBCC. The BMCs and SBCC may endorse these plans out of session where required. Any proposed major amendments to BMAPs will be identified and managed separately from this plan endorsement process to comply with FES Act requirements.

Moved: ACO Brett Loughlin

Seconded: Mr Graeme Brown

Carried.

8.1.3 Governance Review Update

The Executive Officer referred to the briefing note, emphasising that with some assistance from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and PIRSA, a suitable contractor has been identified to support the preparation of the discussion paper, with the intention to have this back to the SBCC before the end of the year.

The framework previously endorsed for the governance review has been provided to the contractor with relevant updates; along with a substantial amount of prior input on the matter that has come through a number of different avenues, including the consultation on the development of the State Bushfire Management Plan.



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The Committee noted the briefing.

8.2 SBCC 2021-2022 Annual Report

The Chair thanked all member agencies for their contributions, noting that while the Annual Report for 2020-2021 was a good first step, this year's Annual Report is better and more comprehensive. He noted in particular the improved focus on local government and the BMCs, suggesting that this may encourage more introspection and reporting from member agencies in the coming years.

ACO Loughlin (SACFS) noted the table on page 21 of 135. He suggested that this is an important piece in the Annual Report, combining and providing some summary totals of treatment actions that have occurred across the state of South Australia. To be able to report these figures to government can help provide assurance to our communities that we take this seriously, and that a large amount of work is happening in this space.

The Chair agreed with the importance of this, but suggested that much more qualitative data is needed, as knowing simply how many hectares were burned gives no indication of important details such as whether it was quality burning; if it resulted in a reduced risk for a high bushfire risk area; whether fire breaks were created; etc.

Mr Moyle (LGA SA) pointed out that the number of respondents included in this table seems rather low. He noted that his council of employment is working towards having systems in place to be able to gather this sort of information internally, such that it will be able to report back upon this in the future. He suggested that while the Annual Report is already an excellent document, it is on a continuous improvement curve as more information can be gathered.

The Executive Officer noted that all numeric data received was included in that table, that each council was counted as a separate entity. She pointed out that the table was modelled on a Western Australian (Department of Fire and Emergency Services) approach, which was also a voluntary survey.

A suggestion was made to change the wording of the heading so that it was clear that this was only the data provided by those who were able to report on this, rather than being a summary of all fuel management activities across the state, and it was agreed that this would be a useful clarification.

ACO Loughlin (SACFS) expressed hope that this table would encourage agencies that did not or could not contribute to this data to work towards the more professional and transparent approach that the collection of and reporting on this data can provide.

Ms Gill (DEW) noted that the SBCC hasn't set parameters for how the information is collected in a consistent way, so for some agencies reporting on these things wouldn't be meaningful or would be inconsistent. She suggested that if questions are raised regarding the numbers of people reporting that it should not be a case of targeting those who didn't report, but instead pointing out that we as a sector and a Committee have work to do in setting parameters for what gets collected, and focusing on the outcomes and the qualitative data, as the Chair had suggested earlier.

The Chair noted that in some European jurisdictions they would include large bushfires in similar fuel reduction statistics, as they also result in large scale 'fuel reduction' – as it technically is, since those areas will not burn the following year.



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No further questions or comments were raised.

The Committee resolved as follows:

That the SBCC endorse the 2021-2022 annual report for submission to the Minister by 31 August 2022.

Moved: Mr Bill McIntosh

Seconded: Ms Justine Drew

Carried.

8.3 Bushfire Management Committee Nominations

The Chair tabled an amended briefing on the Bushfire Management Committee nominations, which was considered by the Committee.

8.3.1 BMC Member Nominations

No questions or comments were raised, and the Committee resolved as follows:

That the SBCC confirm the requested appointments as being from agencies prescribed by the SBCC in the composition of the BMCs, and appoints the persons listed to the relevant BMC for the remainder of the current three year term of BMCs.

Moved: Mr John Moyle

Seconded: ACFO Peter Button

Carried.

8.3.2 Limestone Coast BMC New Member Position

The Chair referred to the correspondence from the Limestone Coast Bushfire Management Committee circulated with the papers.

Ms Gill (DEW) noted that this is a very exciting development, as the Committee has noted for some time the importance of First Nations involvement at both a state and regional level. She enquired as to whether from a governance perspective they are being appointed as a full voting member, whether the legislation allows for this, and if this provision could encourage other BMCs to go down a similar path.

The Executive Officer informed the Committee that the membership of the BMCs is established by the SBCC in the standing resolution (dating from approximately 2011), which includes a clause that members may include persons representing Traditional Owners as appropriate. Specifically with regard to Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation, they have been attending the Limestone Coast BMC as observers, and have been keen to work with some of the local agencies, councils, and brigades; so the intention is really to formalise this arrangement. She further noted that there are a number of BMCs that are discussing First Nations engagement; and suggested that it is preferable that relationships develop at a regional level and progress more organically with provision for membership where there is interest, rather than membership being designated at a state level.

Mr Crocker (SA Water) noted that it is also important to keep in mind that one First Nations group



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does not speak for all First Nations groups; so there is a need to be mindful of aiming for the appropriate representation and diversity of representation, ensuring that other Traditional Owner groups are heard as well.

The Executive Officer noted that there are very complex interactions between the different legal frameworks around representation for Indigenous Australians as well; with regard to freehold land, Native Title, pending Native Title, and so on. As such, considerations around this particular recommendation are that some of these wider issues need to be considered as part of the overall review of composition in the governance review. However, rather than delaying this engagement until the review has progressed, the intention is to get Burrandies on board now, and then continue the broader conversation within the governance review.

The Committee resolved as follows:

That the SBCC endorse the inclusion of a position for a First Nations member on the Limestone Coast BMC from the Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation.

Moved: Ms Justine Drew

Seconded: Mr Graeme Brown

Carried.

8.4 Agency Matters (verbal updates)

8.4.1 Organisational Changes - SACFS

The Chair invited ACO Loughlin (SACFS) to provide an overview on the recent organisational changes within SACFS. Along with the recruitment to the director-level positions mentioned at the previous meeting, there has been some minor restructure, including the renaming of positions. This will influence the SACFS membership on the SBCC, with Ms Alison May leading the Community Risk and Resilience portfolio. She will become Deputy to the Member, as in her role she will support the Bushfire Management Planning process.

He further noted that the current meeting will be CO Jones' last meeting as Chair; and acknowledged the work done by CO Jones to lift the functioning of the committee significantly to become the high-performing committee that it now is: outwardly-facing, very transparent, and able to produce documents like the Annual Report. He thanked him for his leadership, and recognised the legacy that he is leaving behind.

8.4.2 Member's Call

The Chair invited members to raise any matters.

Mr McIntosh (OCA) advised the SBCC that his term as Presiding Member of OCA finished on 30 June and noted that he would confirm with OCA that they intended him to continue as Member on the SBCC.

Ms Gill (DEW) updated the Committee on the Memorandum of Administrative Arrangement (MoAA) with ForestrySA. DEW will continue to deliver fire management services for ForestrySA in the lower Limestone Coast Region in 2022/23, following a 12-month extension of the MoAA



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between the agencies. This includes fire management responsibilities in the Native Forest Reserves, consistent with the bushfire preparedness, prevention, response and recovery (PPRR) model adopted in the SA State Emergency Management Plan. ForestrySA remains the landholder and will continue to report to Government on its Community Fire Protection and Community Forestry service obligations. The MoAA also ensures that collaborative arrangements within the local forestry industry, ForestrySA, SACFS, and DEW are supported and maintained.

Ms Drew (PIRSA) reiterated the earlier points made about the AFDRS, and highlighted that there has been really good engagement between the SACFS AFDRS team and stakeholders to bring them along with the change. With regard to the smoke management policy, she noted that this has progressed, and there is a response pending back to SACFS regarding this.

The Chair noted that it is Mr John Moyle's (LGA SA) final meeting with the SBCC due to his retirement, and on behalf of the Committee thanked him for his contributions.

9. Other Business

No other business was raised.

The Chair addressed the Committee, and thanked everyone for their engagement and professionalism, and wished the Committee well for its continued success.

10. Meeting Close

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.21am.

Next meeting: 18 November 2022.

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

Brett Loughlin
Chair, State Bushfire Coordination Committee