



BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE **HANDBOOK**



Acknowledgements

This second edition of the Bush Fire Management Committee Handbook has been prepared for the NSW Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) by a working group established by the Standing Advisory Subcommittee of the BFCC. Preparation of this second edition was enhanced through the involvement and input of organisation and non-government representatives. Specific thanks goes to the following persons;

Peter Belshaw - Local Government (Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee)

Margaret Cameron - NSW Farmers (Southern Tablelands Bush Fire Management Committee)

Eric Claussen - National Parks and Wildlife Service

Bob Conroy - Nature Conservation Council of NSW (Member of the BFCC)

Adam Dewberry - Fire and Rescue New South Wales

Julie Holden - Department of Industry – Crown Lands (Member of the Shoalhaven BFMC)

George Schneider - Department of Industry – Crown Lands (Member of the BFCC)

Dennis Howard - NSW Rural Fire Service Volunteer (Chair of the Mid North Coast BFMC)

Mark Sugden - NSW Rural Fire Service (Executive Officer for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai BFMC)

Jon Gaibor - NSW Rural Fire Service (Support – NSW RFS Headquarters)

Patrick Schell - NSW Rural Fire Service (Support – NSW RFS Headquarters)

Michelle Willoughby - NSW Rural Fire Service (Support – NSW RFS Headquarters)

Limitations / Disclaimer

This Handbook contains information to assist in understanding the role and responsibilities of BFMCs operating in NSW.

It does not contain information relating to bush fire management, fire behaviour, environmental considerations or the management practices or attitudes of particular organisations/agencies. For more information on these matters, refer to the information provided by member organisations/agencies and training offered by a number of providers.

An understanding of these things will enhance the ability of members to contribute effectively and productively to BFMC discussions.

© State of New South Wales through the NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE 2020 on behalf of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee. The NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE encourages the availability, dissemination and exchange of public information. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this material for personal, in-house or non commercial use, on the condition that you include the copyright notice © State of New South Wales through the NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE 2019 on all such uses. In the event that you wish to copy, distribute, display, download, store, or use this material for a purpose other than personal, in house or non-commercial use, you must obtain permission from the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee by writing to the following address:

Commissioner
NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
Locked Mail Bag 17
Granville NSW 2142

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

While the material within this BFCC Brand Guidelines is current at the time of writing changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the material. Individuals are responsible for ensuring they have the most current version of this publication.

The information and material contained herein is general in nature and is intended for your use and information. The NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE (NSW RFS) disclaims, to the extent permitted by law, all warranties, representations or endorsements, express or implied, with regard to the material contained herein. The NSW RFS does not warrant or represent that the material contained herein is free from errors or omissions, or that it is exhaustive. Users should exercise their own skill and care with respect to its uses. You must not assume that this material will be suitable for the particular purpose that you had in mind when using it.

The NSW RFS disclaims any liability (including but not limited to liability by reason of negligence) to the users of the material for any loss, damage, cost or expense whether direct, indirect, consequential or special, incurred by, or arising by reason of, any person using or relying on the material and whether caused by reason of, any error, omission or misrepresentation in the material or otherwise. Users of the Website will be responsible for making their own assessment of the material and should verify all relevant representations, statements and information with their own professional advisers.



Foreword

New South Wales is one of the most bush fire prone places on earth. Fire is a significant risk to people, their livelihoods and our communities across the State.

The unique framework for coordinated bush fire risk assessment, mitigation and suppression is testament to the ability of agencies and stakeholders to work together towards a common goal.

These arrangements are what makes NSW a leader for fire fighting and bush fire risk mitigation around the world. With the framework in which we operate, we are continually making significant steps forward in minimising the risk and associated impacts of bush fires.

The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) is the State level multiagency forum where collaborative NSW policy is developed to ensure that community safety is paramount.

This framework is then implemented in communities across NSW that are protected through the work carried out by the local Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs), which are established by the BFCC. BFMCs are made up of local representatives and are legislatively responsible to prepare a Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, a Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan and an Operations Coordination Plan for their area.

However, these local Committees do so much more than just preparing these Plans. They represent the interests of their communities and the connections within them. They provide a forum where relationships are built between stakeholders who work collaboratively to identify community assets at risk of bush fire and commit to undertaking work to protect them.

This revised BFMC Handbook is a milestone in the efforts towards providing our local BFMCs with improved guidance and tools to help with protection of life, property and the environment.

Key features of the BFMC Handbook include an easy to use format with hyperlinks that allow related information to be readily accessed. It includes enhancements to standard templates and documents that can assist the operations of a BFMC. I am confident that the revised BFMC Handbook will advance the delivery of Committee functions by providing guidance on a range of relevant matters.

The introduction of a BFMC Charter also gives focus to the activities of a Committee and supports new members in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

The BFMC Handbook has been developed by a Working Group, made up of representatives of BFMC member organisations from across NSW. It has been designed to inform all members in different positions of their roles and responsibilities and how best to contribute to the functioning of their Committee.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the production of the new BFMC Handbook and more broadly, to the people contributing to improving community safety through BFMCs around the State.

Shane Fitzsimmons

Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Chair

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Limitations / Disclaimer	2
Foreword	3
INTRODUCTION	6
PART A - BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND MEMBERSHIP	7
1. What is a Bush Fire Management Committee?	7
1.1 Overview of Coordinated Fire Fighting in NSW	7
1.2 Relationship between a BFMC and the BFCC	8
2. Functions and Responsibilities of a BFMC	9
2.1 Operations Coordination Plan	9
2.2 Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.	9
2.3 Fire Access and Fire Trail Plans.	10
2.4 Annual Works Program	10
2.5 Prioritise funding applications	10
2.6 Regularly report on its activities.	11
3. Recommendations to the NSW RFS Commissioner.	11
3.1 Make recommendations regarding bush fire danger periods	11
3.2 The Fire Classification Group	11
4. Work and Actions Out of Scope for BFMCs	11
4.1 A BFMC cannot assess or give approval for hazard reduction work	11
4.2 A BFMC is not a fire fighting authority	12
4.3 A BFMC cannot propose, undertake, veto or direct hazard reduction works.	12
5. Membership	12
5.1 Eligibility	12
5.2 Representation	12
5.3 Other organisations/agencies	13
5.4 Member responsibilities	13
5.5 Induction.	14
5.6 Alternate Members	15
5.7 Changing members	15
5.8 Removing members	15
6. Chairperson	16
6.1 Who is the Chairperson?	16
6.2 Role and responsibilities	16
6.3. Absence of Chairperson	16
7. Executive Officer	17

7.1 Role	17
7.2 Managing the workload	17
7.3 Executive Officer limitations	18
7.4 Conducting business without the Executive Officer	18
PART B - BFMC GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS PROCESSES	19
8. Good Governance	19
9. Meetings	19
9.1 Extraordinary meetings	19
9.2 Quorum	19
9.3 Conducting business out of session	20
9.4 Meeting agendas and standing Items	20
9.5 Meeting papers	20
10. Decision Making by Consensus	20
10.1 Conflict resolution	21
11. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests and Conflicts of Interest	22
12. Subcommittees	22
13. Changes to the BFMC	22
13.1 Changing the name of a BFMC	22
13.2 Amalgamation of BFMCs	23
14. Managing Observers and Guests	23
15. Making and Recording Decisions	23
15.1 Minutes	23
16. BFMC Records and Files	24
16.1 Membership list and contact details	24
17. Dealing with sensitive information	24
17.1 Open access to information and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009	25
17.2 Privacy and personal information	25
18. Public Visibility and Image	25
19. Budget, Finances and Resources	25
20. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting on Performance	25
20.1 Annual performance evaluation	25
20.2 External evaluation of performance	25
APPENDICES	26

Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) are an integral part of the framework of coordinated bush fire risk assessment, mitigation and suppression in NSW. These Committees are guided by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC), its policies, guidelines and templates. This document provides the foundations for a successful BFMC. If additional support is required please contact bfmcsupport@rfs.nsw.gov.au or the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Community Resilience team. Any enquiries related to the BFCC should be directed to the NSW RFS Committees and Projects Team via committees@rfs.nsw.gov.au



PART



BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND MEMBERSHIP

1. What is a Bush Fire Management Committee?

BFMCs are established under the provisions of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act) and the *Rural Fires Regulation 2013* (the Regs).

BFMCs are groups of people with technical expertise, experience and local knowledge who work together for bush fire management purposes, and who can collaboratively develop better bush fire management decisions than anyone acting alone.

Members are drawn from particular organisations and agencies, as specified by the Act. Each person is there to deliver comprehensive bush fire management to the community, while also aiming to represent their organisation and achieve outcomes that are consistent with their organisation's objectives.

BFMCs are subordinate to the BFCC and are subject to its directions. BFMCs are not council committees, nor are they NSW RFS committees; they are responsible to the BFCC.

Every rural fire district and fire district in NSW with a reasonable risk of bush fires is covered by a BFMC. BFMCs are generally based on Local Government boundaries and can include one or many. The BFMC area covers all tenures both private and public. Appendix A shows all BFMCs currently established in NSW.

1.1 Overview of Coordinated Fire Fighting in NSW

The BFCC is a NSW statutory body representing the Crown, established under the provisions of the Act and the Regs. It meets 4 times a year. The BFCC is the parent of all BFMCs and determines the requirements for their operations through policy and directions.

The BFCC provides a forum through which a broad cross-section of Government and non-Government organisations with an interest in bush fire prevention, mitigation and suppression can come together to develop and progress policies that provide a coordinated, agreed approach.

The coordinated approach to bush fire management across agencies and tenures has enormous benefits for NSW. It facilitates improved efficiencies and ensures that all organisations involved work to a common goal of better prepared and more effective bush fire management across the State.

The BFCC does not have a role in fire fighting operations, although it reviews major bush fire suppression operations to identify opportunities for improvement.

The BFCC has one permanent Standing Committee: the Standing Advisory Subcommittee (SAS). The SAS is responsible for investigating and making recommendations on issues referred by the BFCC or the Commissioner of the NSW RFS. They typically meet at least 4 times every year, ahead of the BFCC meeting.

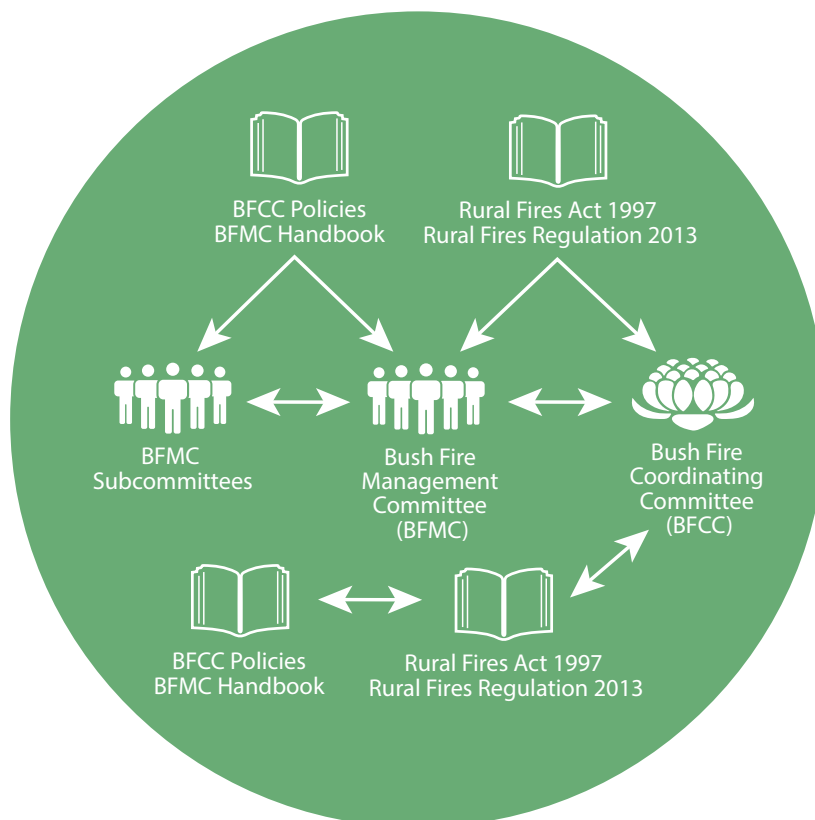


Figure 2. Structure of Coordinated Fire Fighting in NSW

1.2 Relationship between a BFMC and the BFCC

1.2.1 Responsibilities of the BFCC to BFMCs

The BFCC will:

- ▶ Provide advice and policy direction to BFMCs on bush fire management issues.
- ▶ Provide guidance and instruction to BFMCs on required tasks.
- ▶ Contact BFMCs when any decision affecting BFMC business is made by the BFCC, or when the BFCC becomes aware of any such change made by others.
- ▶ Provide a forum for dispute resolution for BFMCs where local attempts to reach agreement have failed.
- ▶ Provide approval and endorsement for Operations Coordination Plans (OCP), Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMP) and Fire Access and Fire Trial (FAFT) Plans.

1.2.2 Responsibilities of BFMCs to the BFCC

BFMCs are to:

- ▶ Operate in accordance with all policy, guidelines and instructions issued by the BFCC.
- ▶ Submit draft plans to the BFCC as required by the Act.
- ▶ Submit reports as required by the BFCC.
- ▶ Refer issues and recommendations with wider policy implications to the BFCC where necessary.
- ▶ Refer any matters considered relevant or likely to be of interest to BFCC for its information and consideration.
- ▶ Make available copies of the minutes of BFMC meetings for the BFCC.

2. Functions and Responsibilities of a BFMC

Section 52 of the Act requires each BFMC to prepare a Draft OCP, a Draft BFRMP and a Draft FAFT Plan.

2.1 Operations Coordination Plan

An Operations Coordination Plan (OCP) is established under Section 52 of the Act. This plan outlines the arrangements for effective and efficient co-ordinated fire fighting practices across the BFMC area. It also identifies what actions are to be taken and contains information on any agreements in place.

Under the Act, a draft plan must be submitted to the BFCC within 12 months of the establishment of a BFMC. A new draft plan must be submitted within each successive 2 year period following the constitution of the Committee. Reviews and amendments can be made more frequently, if required. The BFCC Policy for Management of Bush Fire Operations sets out the detailed requirements for preparation of these plans.

Once a plan has been approved by the BFCC, the BFMC must make constant reference to it to ensure that all relevant parties are meeting the arrangements and provisions it contains. Some provisions will only have force when a bush fire incident is running; others need to be monitored continuously. The monitoring of compliance with the plan needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis, irrespective of fire activity or lack thereof, so that non-compliance does not become evident only during a bush fire fighting operation.

2.1.1 Maintain an Operations Coordination Manual.

Each BFMC must maintain an Operations Coordination Manual. Requirements are detailed in the BFCC Policy for Management of Bush Fire Operations.

2.1.2 Prepare a Pre-season Checklist

Each BFMC must prepare a Pre-season Checklist every year. Requirements are detailed in the BFCC Policy for Management of Bush Fire Operations.

2.2 Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

A Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP) is a strategic document that identifies community assets at risk and sets out a five-year program of coordinated multi-agency treatments to reduce the risk of bush fire to these assets. Treatments may include such things as hazard reduction burning, community education, emergency planning and establishing community fireguard groups.

Under the Act, a draft plan must be submitted to the BFCC within 12 months of the establishment of a BFMC. Draft plans updated for current circumstances must be submitted within each successive 5 year period following the constitution of the BFMC. Reviews and amendments can be made more frequently, if required. The BFCC Policy for Bush Fire Risk Management sets out the detailed requirements for the preparation of these plans.

Once the plan is approved by the BFCC, the BFMC must make constant reference to it to ensure that all relevant parties are meeting the arrangements and provisions it contains. The monitoring of compliance with the plan needs to be carried out continuously. The BFMC needs to monitor progress towards the completion of treatments listed in the BFRMP, and the timeliness of the works. The BFMC needs to be aware of any delay in completion of treatment works, and to recommend amendments to the planned programs to compensate.

2.2.1 Prepare an Annual Ignition Prevention Plan.

Each BFMC is to prepare an Annual Ignition Prevention Plan that identifies strategies designed to address the occurrence of bush fires within their area.



2.3 Fire Access and Fire Trail Plans

A Fire Access & Fire Trail Plan (FAFT Plan) identifies the appropriate means of accessing land to prevent, fight, manage or contain bush fires. The BFCC Policy for Fire Access and Fire Trails and the NSW RFS Fire Trail Standards sets out the requirements for the preparations of these plans.

A FAFT Plan shall:

- ▶ Be prepared in accordance with the instructions of the Fire Trail Standards.
- ▶ Include all trails that form the fire trail network along with other access ways.
- ▶ Be prepared with a planning horizon of 5 years.

Under the Act, an initial draft plan must be submitted to the BFCC prior to the 30th June 2020. A new draft plan must be submitted within each successive 5 year period from 30th June 2020. Reviews and amendments can be made more frequently, if required. The BFCC Policy for Fire Access and Fire Trails and the NSW RFS Fire Trail Standards sets out the detailed requirements for the preparation of these plans.

Once the plan is approved by the BFCC, the BFMC must make constant reference to it to ensure that all relevant parties are meeting the arrangements and provisions it contains. The monitoring of compliance with the plan needs to be carried out continuously. The BFMC needs to monitor progress towards the completion of fire trail projects listed in the FAFT Plan, and timeliness of the works. The BFMC needs to be aware of any delay in completion of works, and to recommend amendments to the planned programs to compensate.

2.3.1 Fire Trail Treatment Register

FAFT Plans need to include a financial year treatment register, which sets out a schedule for when trails will be upgraded and inspected.

As per the NSW RFS Fire Trail Standards, the treatment register needs to be submitted to the NSW RFS Commissioner concurrently with the FAFT Plan, and by the 31st May each year.

2.4 Annual Works Program

As required by the BFCC Policy for Bush Fire Risk Management, BFMCs are required to prepare an Annual Works Program (AWP) for each financial year. The AWP should encompass the treatment works identified in the BFRMP and FAFT Plan.

All major land managers and organisations/agencies should participate in the development of the AWP and submit their planned activities to the BFMC for consideration.

Land managers and organisations/agencies need to be prepared to accept comments and suggestions from the BFMC as to recommended variations to their AWP, in order to best serve the interests of the community as a whole.

Progress against the plan should be reported at each BFMC meeting, and it should help drive land managers' programs in terms of bush fire risk management on an ongoing basis. Monitoring performance against planned tasks allows a BFMC to self-audit its progress towards making its community safer from bush fire.

2.5 Prioritise funding applications

All land managers, public and private, are obliged under Section 63 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to undertake certain actions to prevent the occurrence and minimise the spread of bush fires. Each public land manager is expected to commit its own resources to meet these obligations. However, there is funding available through the NSW RFS to assist public land managers to carry out additional works to those supported by their internal budgets.

Under BFCC Policy, one of the key principles underpinning the allocation of bush fire mitigation funding in NSW is that advice on local priorities is sought from BFMCs. Whilst local priorities will typically be informed by the AWP, BFRMPs and FAFT Plans, the BFMCs may be requested to assess and rank funding applications for their area. This information is then used to assist in the allocation of funding across both the BFMC area and the State; to ensure that the greatest protection to assets at risk from bush fire is delivered throughout NSW.

2.6 Regularly report on its activities

BFMCs must report on their activities and other matters relevant to their area to the BFCC. The BFCC specifies the reporting requirements for each BFMC. An annual report is required on the activities the BFMC carries out over a financial year, which is due for submission to the BFCC on 1st August.

3. Recommendations to the NSW RFS Commissioner

As outlined in Section 1.2, a BFMC can make recommendations to the BFCC on matters relating to bush fire prevention, mitigation and response. In addition, a BFMC can also make recommendations to the NSW RFS Commissioner for bush fire danger periods and fire classification in its area.

3.1 Make recommendations regarding bush fire danger periods

The NSW RFS Commissioner may vary the bush fire danger period for an area from that prescribed by Section 81 of the Act, on his own initiative or on the recommendation of the BFMC. Any recommendation from the BFMC should be provided to the Commissioner in writing, and must detail the reasons for the variation requested. The Commissioner may also decide to vary the period on their own initiative, but must first consult with and take into account any recommendations made by the BFMC.

3.2 The Fire Classification Group

The Fire Classification Group consists of the BFMC members who represent fire fighting authorities. The group has a very specific role in facilitating the coordinated management of fires involving more than one fire fighting authority.

The fire classification groups has four tasks:

- ▶ Recommend to the relevant fire fighting agency when a fire is classified at Class 2.
- ▶ Recommend to the relevant fire fighting agency a Class 2 Incident Controller.
- ▶ Recommend to the NSW RFS Commissioner classification of a fire at Class 3.
- ▶ Recommend to the NSW RFS Commissioner a Class 3 Incident Controller.
- ▶ Details of how these tasks are to be carried out are contained in BFCC Policy for Management of Bush Fire Operations.

4. Work and Actions Out of Scope for BFMCs

The BFMC is not a legal entity, it is neither a fire fighting authority nor an environmental approval authority. Therefore, there are a range of things it cannot do, which are outlined below.

4.1 A BFMC cannot assess or give approval for hazard reduction work

A BFMC is not an approval authority. Any environmental and other necessary assessments and approvals must be sought from the relevant approval authorities, by the organisation concerned.

A BFMC has no authority to prevent a land owner/ manager or other person carrying out work on land. While a BFMC may advise that works are inappropriate for bush fire hazard reasons or not required for bush fire management purposes, it has no authority to prevent the works.

4.2 A BFMC is not a fire fighting authority

The BFMC has no authority to direct fire fighting agencies or rural fire brigades in any manner. A BFMC has no power to conduct or take part in fire fighting or fire prevention operations (Clause 15(3) of the Regs).

4.3 A BFMC cannot propose, undertake, veto or direct hazard reduction works

The proponent for hazard reduction works or other physical work should be the owner of the land, or the organisation intending to carry out the work. Although BFMCs may not propose works, they will and should be identifying works through a tenure blind process within the BFRMP and FAFT Plan context.

A BFMC has no power to undertake works. If members of the BFMC undertake work, they do it under the auspices of their organisation. A BFMC cannot veto, direct or force land owners / managers or any other person to undertake or cease works. Further the BFMC cannot enter into any contract.

5. Membership

5.1 Eligibility

Membership of a BFMC is set by Clause 14 and 18 of the Regs, which specifies that, unless the BFCC determines otherwise, the listed agencies are to be invited to become members of a BFMC. Appendix B provides background information regarding each eligible organisation.

Where any of the listed organisations/agencies exist within the BFMCs area they must be invited to provide a member of the BFMC, unless the BFCC determines otherwise in a particular circumstance. If the BFCC makes any variation, the BFMCs concerned will be advised in writing.



Invitations to eligible organisations and agencies are issued by the BFMC on behalf of the BFCC. Unless otherwise advised by the BFCC, every effort should be made to contact the organisations/agencies listed.

There is no obligation for any person or organisation invited to be a member of a BFMC to accept that invitation, although full participation is strongly encouraged by the BFCC.

Organisations and agencies can choose who they will provide as a member of a BFMC, within the scope provided by the legislation. Their decision as to whether or not they want to provide a member, must be recorded in the minutes of the BFMC meeting following the issue of the invitation.

5.2 Representation

In choosing BFMC members and alternates, organisations and agencies need to ensure that the person satisfies the eligibility requirement of the Regs. They should also give consideration to which person most clearly has the experience and knowledge to contribute to discussion. The representative needs to be able and confident to make decisions on behalf of their organisation.

Local authorities need to ensure that their nominated member, for the purposes of Clause 14(c), has responsibility for the performance of the local authority's functions respecting the environment or bush fire management. Ideally, the nominated member should be responsible for implementing those activities as identified in a BFRMP and FAFT Plan.

5.3 Other organisations/agencies

Clause 14 provides for members to be drawn from other organisations and agencies, which exist in a BFMCs area, subject to the approval of the BFCC. If a BFMC wishes to add members other than those specifically provided for by the Regs, it must seek the approval of the BFCC. The request must be made in writing to the BFCC, explaining the reasons for requesting the additional member.

The types of organisations/agencies that are to be considered under this provision include those with a significant land management or fire fighting responsibility within the BFMCs area of responsibility.

In determining whether to allow any additional member, the BFCC will consider the desirability of the addition and will consider if the need could be satisfied in some other manner (such as the person attending meetings as an observer).

5.4 Member responsibilities

A BFMC member has a number of responsibilities, which need to be met in order to assist the Committee in exercising its functions. The key responsibilities of a member are outlined below.

5.4.1 Represent their organisation's interests on the BFMC and participate in discussion and decision-making.

Members must ensure they understand their own organisation's role, responsibilities and policies on bush fire management issues. It is a member's responsibility to ensure that the BFMC understands the roles and responsibilities of their organisation in terms of bush fire management activities. Members should endeavour to express the full range of opinions and needs of their organisation, including the risk of adopting or not adopting particular courses of action.

As specified in the BFMC Charter, a BFMC is required to conduct its business based on consensus decision-making. Members should ensure they:

- ▶ Participate and communicate constructively to achieve consensus on all issues.
- ▶ Help develop and use mechanisms that encourage resolution of issues.
- ▶ Work together inclusively and cooperatively.
- ▶ Negotiate with other members to resolve conflicting issues and make balanced decisions.

Members are not on the BFMC purely to represent their organisation. Members of a BFMC have a dual role. Firstly, members of the BFMC have been selected from their organisation so that the Committee has a broad range of potential expertise available to it. Secondly, members have a role in committing their organisation to specific works and actions in the local area.

Members should decide what appears to be the best outcome for the community, and then consider how their organisation might contribute to achieving that outcome.

Members need to inform and educate themselves about the business of the BFMC. All members should strive for the effectiveness of the Committee and be willing to provide explanations and suggestions. A BFMC is made up of a variety of people working together as a team. It should not be a meeting of organisation representatives with adversarial or narrow-minded attitudes.





5.4.2 Provide advice, information and reports

Members must make available to the BFMC all data and information they are aware of which is relevant to the BFMCs work, excepting privileged 'commercial in confidence' information.

Members must provide regular reports to the BFMC on the activities of their organisation with regard to the OCP, BFRMP, FAFT Plans, hazard reduction, fire fighting and any other relevant activities.

5.4.3 Report back to their organisation

Members need to keep their organisation informed of the decisions of the BFMC and provide regular feedback to the BFMC.

Members should report back to their organisation to inform and seek opinion on BFMC activities. Without this feedback and two-way communication, the usefulness of the BFMC is limited.

5.4.4 Contribute to the work of the BFMC

All members of the BFMC are equal, and have equal responsibilities. The Executive Officer (XO) is the Secretary and the Chairperson maintains order. All members are responsible for getting the Committee's business done.

If the Committee fails to do something it is required to do, the failure falls on all members. Members need to take an interest in ensuring that the work of the Committee is carried out in a timely fashion, even if their organisation has a limited involvement in the particular task.

Members are not expected to do all the work personally – for example, the XO is responsible for producing the minutes, but they may have an administrative assistant attend the meeting with them, take notes and draft minutes for them to check.

All members of the BFMC are equally responsible for the carriage and discharge of the Committee's obligations as everyone else. Members are not there just to update others on what their own organisation has done.

5.4.5 Attend meetings

Attendance of meetings by all members is critical to ensure BFMCs can exercise their functions.

Members must attend meetings regularly and on time. Members should advise the XO if they cannot make the meeting and send an alternate in their place if possible. Only unavoidable absences are acceptable. Sending an alternate should not become a standard practice. See the Section 5.6 for more details.

Non-attendance puts the BFMC at risk of being without a quorum. All members count towards the calculation of the quorum. If members are not intending to turn up regularly, or have other commitments that seriously limit their involvement, they should not be a member. Instead, they should find someone else from their organisation who can attend and contribute. Alternatively, if an organisation's interest is only on isolated issues, they should advise the BFMC that they do not wish to provide a member, but ask to have an observer attend meetings when such issues arise.

5.4.6 Prepare for meetings

Members must prepare adequately for each meeting. All members must carefully read the minutes of the previous meeting, the agenda and any papers that are circulated. Any queries or business arising should be identified, and preferably notified to the XO in advance, so that they can be included on the agenda for the meeting, if necessary. Members must check any actions that they are responsible for and be ready to report to the Committee on progress made. This includes risk treatments and other activities identified in the BFRMP, FAFT Plan, OCP and / or the AWP.

5.4.7 Contribute to development of plans and other tasks as required

All members are expected to participate in the preparation of plans, other documents and projects. All members should be given the opportunity to participate in BFMC tasks and projects.

5.5 Induction

All members, when joining a BFMC, should be given a briefing on their role on the BFMC by their own organisation.

They should be provided with an introduction to the BFMC by the XO, including an explanation of:

- ▶ The purpose and functions of the BFMC.
- ▶ The BFMCs area of responsibility.
- ▶ The structure of the BFMC (i.e. the members and the organisations/agencies they represent; any subcommittees and working groups and their composition and functions).
- ▶ Protocols relating to the management and administration of the BFMC.
- ▶ Any current planning, plans and activities of the BFMC.
- ▶ The legislative framework within which the BFMC operates.

They should also be provided with either copies (or links to the locations) of the below documents

- ▶ The BFMC Charter and the BFMC Handbook.
- ▶ Any current plans and any draft plans currently in preparation.
- ▶ The last set of meeting minutes.
- ▶ A list of all current BFMC members and their contact details.

From time to time, the NSW RFS will work with the BFCC to provide additional training for BFMC members.

5.6 Alternate Members

Where required, a BFMC member may send an alternate to attend a BFMC meeting. The alternate has the same voting rights and responsibilities as the member. It is recommended that all member agencies pre-identify an alternate member. Having a regular alternate will assist in sharing the work load and ensure continuity of organisation attendance.

Alternate member representatives need to be provided to the XO in writing prior to the first meeting of the calendar year. At any time when an alternate is required to attend a meeting, the nominated member should advise the XO in writing.

It is up to the member to tell their alternate what they may or may not commit to on behalf of their organisation. An alternate needs to ensure that they understand the role of the BFMC and the implications of its deliberations and decisions. Alternate members need to be able to speak and undertake commitments on behalf of their organisation.

Sending an alternate must not become a standard practice. Although attendance of an alternate member in an observer capacity is encouraged. It is up to the member to ensure their alternate receives appropriate induction.

5.7 Changing members

The organisation must advise the BFMC as soon as possible of any change to its representation. Changes to representation must be provided in writing to the XO. Member organisations should ensure the correspondence is sent by someone with appropriate authorisation and delegations. The XO must arrange for the recording and updating of membership information.

5.8 Removing members

If a member is failing to adequately participate in BFMC business, the Committee should attempt to resolve the situation with the individual concerned, their organisation, within the BFMC and as a last resort the BFCC. An attitude aimed at encouraging appropriate participation should be maintained.

The BFCC may give a direction to an organisation to provide a substitute representative if problems cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Where all attempts made are unsuccessful in getting a member to attend meetings, the BFMC can pass a motion to remove the member. However, this can only occur following written advice to the member, their organisation and the BFCC. In addition, it must be demonstrated that the non-attendance of the member is impacting the ability of a BFMC to perform its functions.

Further to this, every eligible organisation who does not have current member representation should be given the opportunity to nominate a member at the commencement of each calendar year.

6. Chairperson

6.1 Who is the Chairperson?

The members of the BFMC elect the Chairperson annually. The Chairperson is a member of the BFMC, but cannot be the XO or a member referred to in Clause 14(b) or (c) of the Regs. As such, the following BFMC members are eligible for the Chairperson role:

- ▶ The Mayor, Councillor or senior representative of the Council.
- ▶ Nature Conservation Council of NSW
- ▶ One of the NSW Rural Fire Brigade representatives
- ▶ NSW Farmers Association
- ▶ Local Aboriginal Land Council
- ▶ A member approved by the BFCC under Clause 14(h)

When electing the Chairperson consideration should be given to electing a Deputy / Alternate Chair. In the case of the Chairperson not being available the Deputy Chair can become the Acting Chair and fulfil the responsibilities of this important role.

The Chairperson holds office, subject to any rules made by the BFCC, for a period of 12 months. A Chairperson is eligible for re-election for subsequent terms and no gap is necessary.



6.2 Role and responsibilities

The Chairperson role is in addition to and separate from their responsibilities as member. The Chairperson presides at BFMC meetings and signs correspondence. Under the directive of the Chair, the XO can sign certain correspondence as agreed to by the Committee. The Chair must sign all correspondence to the BFCC.

In addition, the Chairperson must also:

- a) Ensure the BFMC carries out its statutory responsibilities and any directions from the BFCC. While the BFMC is collectively responsible for meeting its objectives, the Chairperson must guide and, where necessary, direct the Committee so that it remains focussed on set tasks and maintains momentum in performing its business.
- b) Determine the agenda for each meeting of the Committee, noting that the XO will assist with this task.
- c) Ensure BFMC meetings are held in a timely manner and that required documents and reports are submitted by due dates.
- d) Provide leadership to the Committee in its deliberations and facilitate consensus outcomes.
- e) Establish and foster a cooperative working relationship within the Committee.
- f) Approve the attendance of guests and observers at the BFMC meeting.
- g) Ensure meetings are effective, giving everyone a fair and equal chance to be heard and participate in the deliberations of the Committee. The Chairperson needs to manage the discussions to ensure that everyone's view is heard and understood, and no one feels excluded.

6.3. Absence of Chairperson

If the Chairperson or previously elected deputy is absent, members present at a meeting of the BFMC must elect one of the members present to Chair that meeting.

When the election of an Acting Chairperson is necessary, the members who are not eligible to be Chairperson, should not act in the position. The XO should never Chair the meeting.

7. Executive Officer

The XO is a member of the NSW RFS or Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW), as specified by Clause 18 of the Regs.

7.1 Role

The XO of a BFMC is also a member of the BFMC. The role is in addition to and separate from their responsibilities as member.

The XO is essentially a Secretary and the focus of the role is to assist the Chairperson and the BFMC to be effective and meet their obligations. To carry out this role, the XO will need to be very familiar with the business of the Committee. The XO needs to have a good understanding of the legislative framework, policies and procedures that impact on a BFMC.

Generally the XO's duties include:

- ▶ Prepare agendas, minutes and BFMC correspondence.
- ▶ Compile reports and business papers.
- ▶ Book, prepare and arrange meetings.
- ▶ Collate apologies.
- ▶ Maintain, manage and hold BFMC files and records.
- ▶ Maintain membership records and contact details.
- ▶ Distribute BFMC correspondence.
- ▶ Distribute copies of correspondence from the BFCC as soon as it is received.
- ▶ Provide induction material.
- ▶ Distribute any other relevant information to BFMC members in a timely manner.

7.1.1 Assist Chairperson

The XO needs to assist the Chairperson to carry out their role. The XO should consult with the Chairperson prior to each meeting and discuss:

- ▶ The matters listed on the agenda.
- ▶ Other matters which the XO is aware that are likely to arise during the meeting.
- ▶ Who should be called on to inform / brief the BFMC on matters during the meeting.

7.1.2 Assist BFMC

It is the XO's responsibility to know about the issues, actions, reports and plans for which the Committee is responsible. The XO needs to advise the BFMC what it needs to get done and suggest timetables. It is helpful for the BFMC if the XO can make it very clear what the Committee needs to achieve at each meeting. The agenda should highlight current issues, tasks required and due dates to ensure that people turn up ready to complete the business of the day. Appendix C includes templates and guides to help manage the business of the BFMC.

The XO needs to be able to answer queries on the mechanics of BFMC business. The material contained in this Handbook should assist with most enquiries. Further advice can be sought through the BFCC.

The XO needs to pass on all information to the Committee. It is not the XO's role to decide what does and does not get passed on in full to BFMC members. The XO is an administrative assistant rather than a filter or gate-keeper for the Committee.

7.2 Managing the workload

An XO must remember to separate the work required of them as XO, and what is expected of them as a BFMC member as they are not one and the same.

In the past, there has been a tendency for some XOs to take on more work than is actually required of the position. At times this has been due to the XOs enthusiasm. Other Committees have developed unreasonable expectations of the XO and how much work they should do. It is essential that all XOs strive to ensure that they work within the role set by the BFCC. Other Committee members must respect and adhere to the dimensions of the XO position.

XOs can use the resources they have available. XOs can use other staff from their own organisation. They can also see if another organisation can help with administrative items such as taking minutes, posting letters and preparing meeting rooms. While the XO is responsible for the tasks, they don't necessarily have to do everything themselves.

7.3 Executive Officer limitations

There is no additional status or standing attached to the position of XO in terms of rights to speak or vote at the BFMC. The XO is also a member of the BFMC and in that capacity has the same speaking and voting rights as any other member.

The XO does not "own" or "run" the BFMC, and care needs to be taken to ensure that this perception does not develop. The XO does not have the right to speak

on behalf of the Committee. The Chairperson speaks on behalf of the Committee, when required.

BFMC correspondence is signed by the Chairperson and not the XO. The exception is where the BFMC has instructed the XO to do something in particular, usually a routine task, such as sending a copy of the meeting minutes to the BFCC where it has waived the need for the Chairperson to sign. The correspondence must be exactly as per the BFMC instruction.

An XO should not make a practice of doing things without BFMC meeting endorsement, unless to do something absolutely urgent that cannot wait. This does not include something that should have been done at a meeting but was forgotten.

Where the BFMC has to report on its activities, this means the Committee needs to report, not the XO. The XO must not prepare and submit reports 'on behalf of' the BFMC. The XO's job is to prepare the report or submission based on information provided by the Committee. If an organisation's input is expected or required, but is not provided, this may be noted in the draft report or submission. It is essential that all members are involved in the review and reporting cycle so that they are aware of BFMC successes and shortcomings, and can self-audit to ensure that they are not the cause of any delays. An XO must not attempt to hide failures by preparing the report themselves and submitting it without full review.

7.4 Conducting business without the Executive Officer

There is no provision for the XO role to be delegated or transferred to any other person. However, it is important to note that in accordance with section 34 and 35 of the Act, a person acting as the fire control officer in a rural fire district may exercise all the functions of the position. This includes performing the XO role for the BFMC. Similarly, for fire districts, a person acting in the position of Zone Commander as directed by the Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner can also assume the XO role.

An XO may make arrangements to assist them in their role, but this must not be confused with delegation. A BFMC meeting may go ahead even if the XO is absent. While this is undesirable in terms of managing the paperwork, the presence of the XO is not essential for the meeting to proceed. If the XO cannot attend, those present need to choose someone to take notes and draft minutes, to pass on to the XO for completion. Although the XO may send a delegate for them as a member, their delegate does not take on the XO function.



PART



BFMC GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

8. Good Governance

It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that the BFMC carries out the activities enumerated in the BFMC Charter to ensure compliance with its responsibilities under the Act. The function of good governance in the public sector is to ensure that entities act in the public interest at all times. Acting in the public interest requires:

- ▶ Strong commitment to integrity, ethical values, and the rule of law;
- ▶ Openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

The nature of the cross representation of the membership of the BFMC promotes good governance. Members should conduct themselves in accordance with their own organisation's code of conduct and ethics.

This BFMC Handbook and associated BFCC Policy provide the basis of an effective Committee. Appendix D provides additional guidance for BFMCs on good meeting practice.

9. Meetings

Most BFMC business is conducted within meetings. The frequency of meetings need to be sufficient to deal with Committee business, and to meet statutory requirements, objectives and other obligations.

At least two meetings must be held each year. The need for more meetings will vary, to some extent, between Committees. When determining the frequency of meetings, the BFMC will need to consider the actions and timeframes necessary for the achievement of its objectives and tasks.

To facilitate an efficient and effective working environment, a calendar of BFMC meetings should be prepared prior to the start of each year. Having determined the frequency of meetings, it is possible and preferable to forecast the meeting dates for the upcoming 12 month period. A template for a BFMC calendar can be found in Appendix C.

When preparing the schedule of meetings, consideration should be given to the meetings of adjacent BFMCs as many organisation members sit on more than one Committee.

9.1 Extraordinary meetings

Where there is a pressing need, any member with the support of two other members can request in writing that the Chairperson call an extraordinary meeting. The Chairperson can call an extraordinary meeting at any time. The Chairperson must then convene a meeting within 15 days.

9.2 Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of people required to be present in order for a meeting to proceed.

The quorum for a meeting of the BFMC is half of its members (rounded up to the nearest whole number). That is, at least half of the current members must be in attendance for a meeting to go ahead. Processes for the management of membership and alternates are an important tool to assist in determining if a quorum is present.

If all members in attendance wish to proceed with a meeting without a quorum, all decisions will need to be ratified through the out of session process. It is acceptable for members to participate via teleconferencing, and their presence is to be counted into the quorum.

Be careful of the business to be transacted at meetings where some members will be absent. The principle to remember is that the Committee is there as a forum to ensure all views are heard and considered when bush fire management decisions are made. It goes against this principle to allocate business to meetings on the basis of which members will and will not be attending. The BFCC strongly discourages action, which leads to rescission motions as this would indicate that the Committee is not functioning in the spirit of cooperation.

If the number of members making apologies prior to a scheduled meeting leaves the Committee unable to form a quorum, the meeting should be deferred and members advised accordingly. Early advice is essential, particularly where members have to travel considerable distances for the meeting. A revised date for the meeting should be arranged as soon as possible.

9.3 Conducting business out of session

There will be times when matters must be dealt with and no quorum is present or key stakeholders are absent from the meeting. At these times, the members present may proceed to discuss the matter, with records of their discussion later circulated to the other members for comment out of session. If no unresolved objections are found, the XO may collate the responses to form the decision of the BFMC, applying the quorum rule to the number of responses required. The outcome for the matter should be tabled at the BFMC's next meeting. If objections arise that cannot be resolved out of session, the matter should be deferred until the next meeting. An urgent meeting may need to be called in some circumstances.

The BFMC may transact any of its business at a meeting at which some or all members participate by telephone, or other means, but only if any member who speaks on a matter during the meeting can be heard by the other members.

The BFMC may transact any of its business without a formal meeting if required, by the circulation of papers/motions among all the members. Papers may be circulated among the members by email, post or any other agreed means.

9.4 Meeting agendas and standing items

The agenda is the plan for the meeting. It is a list of matters the BFMC is to deal with and provides the order in which they will be addressed. The more carefully the agenda is compiled, the more

constructive the meeting is likely to be. An agenda template is included in Appendix C, which includes some recommended standing items.

Agendas are prepared by the XO and approved by the Chairperson. Any member can request items be included on the agenda.

9.5 Meeting papers

Members should be provided with as much information as possible about issues to be discussed, prior to the meeting. This enables them to understand the issues and to establish their organisation's position prior to the meeting, minimising the need for issues to be deferred to subsequent meetings. It also allows them time to absorb and consider the issues, enhancing efficiency and effective decision-making.

In addition to the agenda and copies of correspondence, it is preferable to provide a business paper containing a short overview on items requiring decision. Business papers are prepared by the XO using information provided by members, and approved by the Chairperson.

Agenda and business papers should be circulated at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

When a member is required to provide a report to the BFMC it should be in a written form. It may be only a dot point brief, which the member elaborates on during the meeting.

10. Decision Making by Consensus

The BFCC requires that BFMCs must ensure all decisions to be made by consensus. Consensus is a decision that is 'consented' to by all the members of the Committee. 'Consent' does not imply that everyone must be completely satisfied with the outcome. Reaching decision by consensus means that all the members contribute to the degree that suits them and they all understand and accept the decision and are prepared to support it. As such, there may be different levels of consensus reached at the BFMC:

- ▶ Everyone enthusiastically supports the decision.
- ▶ Everyone is satisfied with the decision.
- ▶ Everyone can live with the decision.
- ▶ Not everyone agrees with the decision but will accept the outcome and not object to it.

Where consent is given with reservations, contrary views should be recorded in the minutes where required.

Should the BFMC be unable to reach consensus and the issue requires resolution, advice can be sought from external persons such as a subject matter expert or support staff from the NSW RFS Headquarters. If consensus still cannot be reached, the issue can then be referred to the BFCC for advice and possible determination. When writing to the BFCC, the BFMC Chairperson should highlight and document the differences of opinion.

Consensus decision-making enables the Committee to fully consider the issues and views of all the members to develop a resolution, which is acceptable to the group. It also assists the Committee to:

- ▶ Explore, understand and respect a diverse range of views (including limitations) leading to practical solutions.
- ▶ Be well-informed and make quality decisions.
- ▶ Identify common elements on which actions can be planned and decisions based.

The advantage of decision-making by consensus is that the all of the Committee 'owns the decision'. Some of the key principles that underpin decision-making by consensus include:

- ▶ Members develop and agree on the Committee's decision-making process.
- ▶ Issues being considered are outcome-driven and relevant to all interests represented on the Committee.
- ▶ Members with an interest in the issue being considered are aware of or involved in the process.
- ▶ Members who formally participate in or provide information for the process do so voluntarily.
- ▶ The Committee's decisions are consistent with its basic values, principles, objectives and targets.
- ▶ The process is flexible and adaptable to changing needs.
- ▶ Members have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively throughout the process.
- ▶ Members acknowledge and accept each other's value, interests and knowledge.
- ▶ The process identifies realistic timeframes.
- ▶ The process includes a commitment to implementation and monitoring.

10.1 Conflict resolution

There may be occasions when one member's opinion will differ significantly from other members of the BFMC. There may be times when discussions become heated and positions or actions are not agreed upon.

Some general skills in conflict resolution can be invaluable in these situations.

BFCC Policy for Dispute Avoidance / Dispute Resolution gives a good overview of conflict resolution and how to avoid conflict. It advises that conflicts should be resolved, wherever possible, at the location and as close to the time of the original disagreement as possible. This allows for difficulties to be overcome and relationships within the BFMC to be maintained wherever possible.

11. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests and Conflicts of Interest

Members need to be aware of the potential for conflicts between their role on the BFMC and their other interests. Pecuniary interests are particularly important.

If a member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter being considered by the BFMC, and the interest appears to raise a conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties in relation to the matter, the member must, as soon as possible after becoming aware of it, disclose the nature of the interest to the BFMC.

A disclosure to the BFMC that the member:

- a) is a member, or is in the employment, of a specified company or other body; or
- b) is a partner, or is in the employment, of a specified person or
- c) as some other specified interest relating to a specified company or other body or to a specified person,

is a sufficient disclosure of the nature of the interest in any matter relating to that company or other body or to that person. No further details are required or can be demanded of the member.

Details of any disclosure made must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. After a member has disclosed the nature of an interest in any matter, the member must not be present during any deliberation or decision with respect to the matter, unless the BFMC determines otherwise. In some cases, the member may still be able to fully participate.

Conflicts of interest should be a standing Agenda Item and need to be declared as the beginning of each BFMC meeting.



12. Subcommittees

Due to the size and complexity of some tasks particularly the preparation of plans, it may be necessary for BFMCs to establish Subcommittees to assist them in undertaking their functions.

The BFMC may not delegate any of its functions to a Subcommittee. All recommendations by Subcommittees must be referred to the BFMC for decision. Care must be taken to ensure that Subcommittees do not subsume the role of the Committee itself. Subcommittees may investigate issues and develop draft plans or programs but all decision-making must be referred to the BFMC.

The Subcommittee must only consist of either members of the BFMC or organisation representatives that have been nominated by their BFMC member. Each Subcommittee must have a Convenor who is responsible for coordinating the work of the group. The Subcommittee may seek input from people or organisations/agencies who are not part of the group.

The procedures for calling meetings of a Subcommittee and for the conduct of those meetings are to be determined by the BFMC. A Subcommittee may determine these procedures where a direction has been issued from the BFMC.

For the purpose of oversight, it is recommended a BFMC member is appointed to oversee the activities of the Subcommittee to ensure objectives are being met and the groups work remains in scope.

Appendix E provides further information and supporting documentation for Subcommittees

13. Changes to the BFMC

13.1 Changing the name of a BFMC

The BFCC has the authority to change a BFMC name. A BFMC may request a name change by writing to the BFCC, explaining the reasons for the requested change. This will need to be supported by the Committee and minutes demonstrating endorsement will need to accompany the request.

13.2 Amalgamation of BFMCs

BFMCs may only be amalgamated, split or otherwise altered with the approval of the BFCC. A request for amalgamation or alteration can be made in writing to the BFCC, explaining the reasons for the change requested, in accordance with the BFCC Policy for BFMCs.

When writing to the BFCC, the BFMC should provide any supporting information including a copy of the minutes showing the decision and confirming the attending members reached a quorum.

Amalgamations and establishment of new BFMCs may also be carried out by the BFCC as a result of external factors (e.g. changes to Local Government boundaries).

14. Managing Observers and Guests

An observer is any person who attends a meeting but is not a member of the BFMC. With approval from the Chair, an observer or guest may be invited by the Committee to attend for any number of reasons such as contributing or making a presentation on a particular subject, or for administrative reasons such as recording the minutes.

An observer or guest should:

- ▶ Attend only with the BFMCs concurrence (which can be either prearranged or granted at the start of a meeting). The BFMC may decide that certain observers may be in attendance only while the matter relevant to them is being considered.
- ▶ Make presentations or comment only at the request of a member and/or the invitation of the Chairperson. Observers must not propose or vote on motions.
- ▶ Not intrude on the BFMCs deliberations or decision-making processes.
- ▶ Observe all confidentiality and operating protocols of the BFMC, as well as any other conditions of attendance specified by the BFMC.

The record of attendance in the minutes should clearly distinguish between members and observers. There is a tendency for additional organisation personnel to attend meetings in an observer capacity as they are directly involved in their organisational responsibilities. However, over time regular observers tend to merge with the representatives and actively participate in BFMC decision-making. This scenario can be managed by clearly documenting the status of attendees at each BFMC meeting.

15. Making and Recording Decisions

It is important to ensure that everyone is clear on the precise nature of the decisions they are making. Decisions should be affirmed and recorded in



sufficient detail to stand alone. Anyone should be able to tell, from the minutes, what decisions were made at a meeting. As a guide to whether the minutes are clear enough, anyone reading them should understand exactly what was resolved and be able to explain the actions to be taken.

15.1 Minutes

The minutes of a meeting are the official record of decisions made and progress on activities. They are a tool to assist the BFMC in working towards its objectives and a record of the actions to be taken.

Formal minutes must be taken for all BFMC meetings.

In the case of Subcommittees, the decision as to whether formal minutes or summary notes are used will depend on the group, the convenor and its purpose. In either case, the record of the meeting must be presented in a form that is easily used as a working document. It must at least, indicate the issue discussed and the decision taken including who has the responsibility for action.

The minutes do not need to be a verbatim record of who said what. However, they need to document important points that underpin the decisions made.

Because the decision by consensus method is used in BFMCs, it is not usually necessary to record the mover and seconder details unless specifically requested. The decision can simply be recorded as “The Committee resolved to ...” or “The Committee agreed to...”

The discussions that led to the decisions are rarely needed except when it may be useful to know the nature of reasoning behind a particular decision. In this case, it is still only necessary to record the discussion in point form.

Decisions (or resolutions) should be given an identifying number to facilitate their monitoring to completion. The numbering system to be used is year/sequential decision number (19/1, 19/2.... 20/1 etc.). The decision numbers restart at 1 each year.

Draft minutes should be prepared and distributed as soon as possible after the meeting. This allows members to review the minutes whilst the meeting is fresh in their minds and allows them to advise the XO of any changes required. It also reminds them of the actions they are expected to undertake before the next meeting. Waiting until the next meeting to issue the minutes is unacceptable.

A meeting minutes template is included in Appendix C.

16. BFMC Records and Files

Files must be created and maintained for each BFMC. Key elements of BFMC business such as agendas, minutes and notice of meetings must be in writing. All other BFMC documents including papers, reports, minutes (draft and adopted), tabled documents, correspondence in and out (including emails) must be filed.

BFMC files are available for perusal, in their entirety, by any member of the Committee. They should be available during normal office hours at the office of the XO. Files for the current calendar year should be available at BFMC meetings. A member should not need to give advance notice of wanting to read the file, only sufficient to ensure someone is in the office where it is held to physically provide it.

BFMC files are not available for perusal by persons other than BFMC members (that is, other organisation staff, BFMC observers, the public etc.) without the express approval of the BFMC or in accordance with a request under Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

16.1 Membership list and contact details

It is necessary for the running of the BFMC to collect and use the names and contact details of BFMC members. These details will normally be made available to the BFCC, to organisation staff assisting the BFCC (at present, the NSW RFS), and to organisation staff providing the XO function. Details will also be available to other BFMC members.

Additionally, organisations and agencies will have access to details of all BFMC members from their own organisation. Those with access to the information will be instructed that the data must only be used for conducting BFMC business.

17. Dealing with sensitive information

All proceedings in the BFMC are confidential until the Committee has agreed otherwise, or where the provider of the information advises that it is publicly available and no restrictions apply to its release.

At times, BFMCs will discuss issues, which may be sensitive or controversial. Information provided and subsequent discussions must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and must be kept within the confines of the BFMC. A member's discussions within their own organisation regarding meeting proceedings should be limited to those with specific responsibilities pertinent to the business of the BFMC.

In some circumstances (e.g. discussions on Persons of Interest for arson), relevant agencies may seek to convene out of session to talk over a sensitive issue in detail and report back to the BFMC as appropriate. BFMC members must respect the confidentiality of their deliberations and any privileged information with which they may be provided.

17.1 Open access to information and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

BFMCs are bound by *The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPAA) which provides rights to information that are designed to meet community expectations of more open and transparent government. It encourages the routine and proactive release of government information, including information held by the providers of goods and services contracted by government agencies.

17.2 Privacy and personal information

BFMCs are bound by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIPA) is about the collection, management and release of personal information. For the purposes of the PPIPA, the BFCC (and consequently its subsidiary BFMCs) is taken to be a public sector organisation. The PPIPA requires that a public sector organisation must not collect personal information about people unless:

- a) the information is collected for a lawful purpose that is directly related to a function or activity of the organisation, and
- b) the collection of the information is reasonably necessary for that purpose.

There are specific requirements for the handling and access to any personal information that has been collected. Refer to the PPIPA for more information

18. Public Visibility and Image

BFMCs usually have a very limited public profile; usually organisations/agencies do their own media. However, there may be times when it is appropriate for a BFMC to issue media releases or comment. These must be approved and signed by the Chairperson (not the XO). Members need to ensure that the message is clearly delivered as from the BFMC, not the organisation to which the Chairperson belongs. Media releases or comments issued by a BFMC must not be inconsistent with BFCC policy. Assistance and advice can be sought from the BFCC.

The BFMC may wish to consider having an open public forum or targeted engagement sessions, during periods of public exhibition of BFRMP's, FAFT's or following public concerns regarding fire management issues within the area. These types of community engagement activities may be particularly worthwhile for matters that are relevant to multi-agency risk management planning or operations.

19. Budget, Finances and Resources

BFMCs are not legal entities in a financial sense. That is, they cannot expend or receive monies. A BFMC cannot conduct works, or engage contractors to conduct works. It has no budget nor financial responsibility.

Members must provide finances for the hire of meeting rooms, provision of refreshments or meals, document production, photocopying and the like. In practice, the basic administrative costs are often carried by the organisation providing the XO, or the local council. The BFMC needs to discuss this issue and come to agreement on who will bear what costs.

BFMC members should share access to resources necessary to carry out the Committee's work, such as printers, photocopiers and meeting rooms.

20. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting on Performance

20.1 Annual performance evaluation

BFMC need to undertake an internal review of their performance on an annual basis, as a minimum this should be checking that they have met all their functional requirements. It should also review whether the identified treatments in a BFRMP and a FAFT Plan have been undertaken.

During such audits, it is advisable for the Committee to nominate an audit leader, usually the XO.

20.2 External evaluation of performance

BFMC may be required to participate in an external audit. The external audit will include compliance with reporting and activities as specified in the bush fire management plans, and review the attendance, record keeping and business process of the Committee.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - NSW BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

APPENDIX B - BFMC MEMBER ORGANISATION'S PROFILES

APPENDIX C - CHECKLIST AND TEMPLATES

APPENDIX D - GOOD MEETING PRACTICE

APPENDIX E - SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE BFMC

APPENDIX F - LEGISLATION, POLICY AND USEFUL LINKS

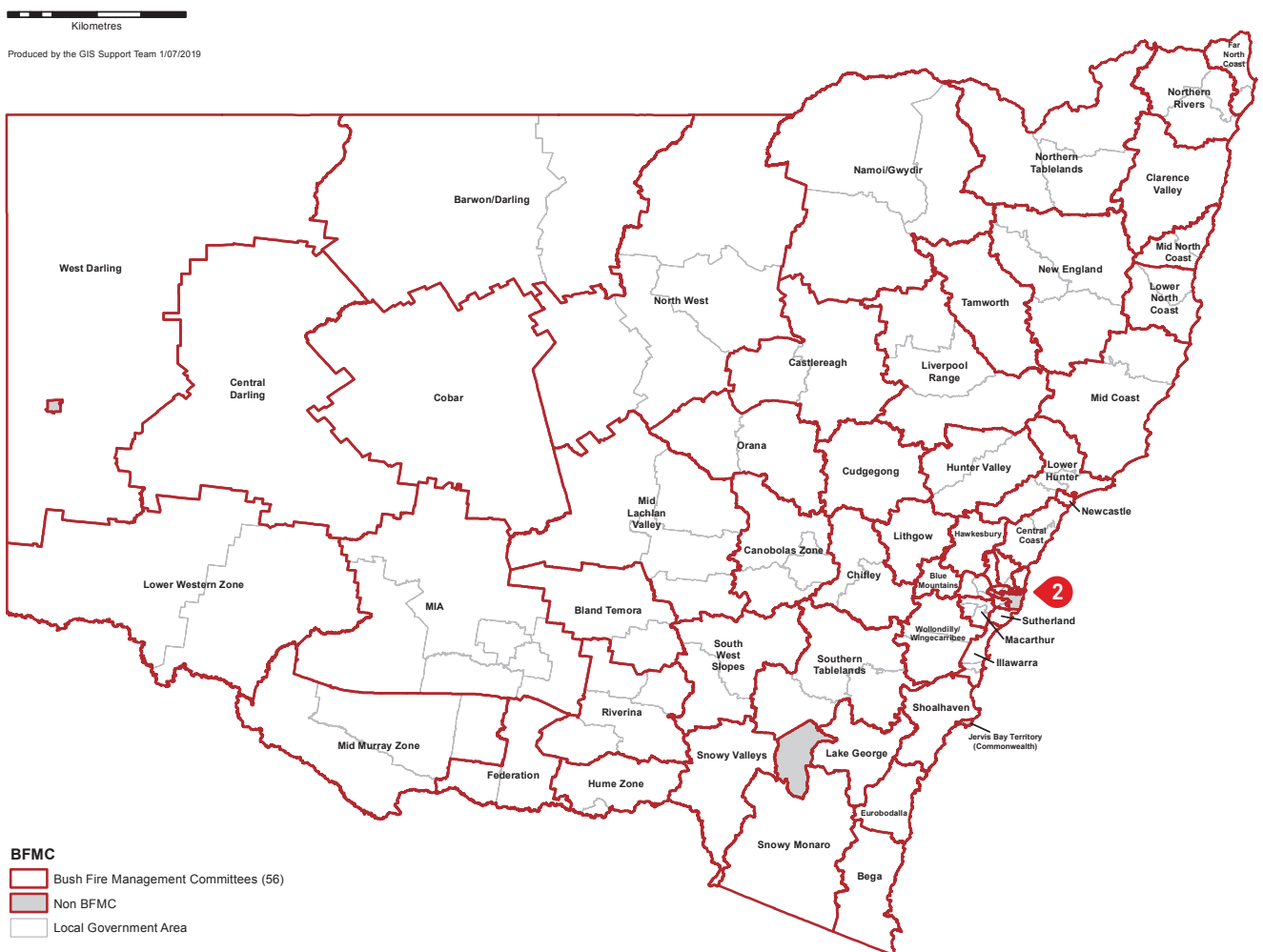
APPENDIX G - ABBREVIATIONS

APPENDIX H - GLOSSARY

APPENDIX



NSW BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES



BFMC

LGA

Barwon/Darling

Brewarrina - Bourke

Bega

Bega Valley

Bland Temora

Bland - Temora

Blue Mountains

Blue Mountains

Canobolas Zone

Blayney - Cabonne - Cowra - Orange

Canterbury - Bankstown/Georges River

Canterbury - Bankstown - Georges River

Castlereagh

Gilgandra - Warrumbungle

Central Coast

Central Coast - Lake Macquarie

Central Darling

Central Darling

Chifley

Bathurst - Oberon

Clarence Valley

Clarence Valley

Cobar

Cobar

Cudgegong

Mid-Western

Cumberland Zone

Fairfield - Blacktown - Penrith

Eurobodalla

Eurobodalla

Far North Coast

Ballina - Tweed - Byron

Federation

Berrigan - Federation

Hawkesbury

Hawkesbury

Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai

Ku-ring-gai - Hornsby

Hume Zone

Greater Hume - Albury

Hunter Valley

Singleton - Muswellbrook

Hunters Hill/Lane Cove/Parramatta/Ryde

Hunters Hill - Lane Cove - Parramatta - Ryde

Illawarra

Wollongong - Kiama - Shellharbour

Lake George

Queanbeyan-Palerang

Lithgow

Lithgow

Liverpool Range

Liverpool Plains - Gunnedah - Upper Hunter

Lord Howe Island

Lord Howe Island

Lower Hunter

Port Stephens - Dungog - Cessnock - Maitland

Lower North Coast

Nambucca - Kempsey

Lower Western Zone

Wentworth - Balranald

Macarthur

Liverpool - Camden - Campbelltown

MIA

Carrathool - Griffith - Hay - Leeton - Narrandera - Murrumbidgee

Mid Coast

Port Macquarie Hastings - Mid Coast

Mid Lachlan Valley

Parkes - Forbes - Lachlan - Weddin

Mid Murray Zone

Edward River - Murry River - Murrumbidgee

Mid North Coast

Bellingen - Coffs Harbour

Mosman/North Sydney/Willoughby

Mosman - North Sydney - Willoughby

Namoi/Gwydir

Gwydir - Moree Plains - Narrabri

New England

Uralla - Walcha - Armidale

Newcastle

Newcastle

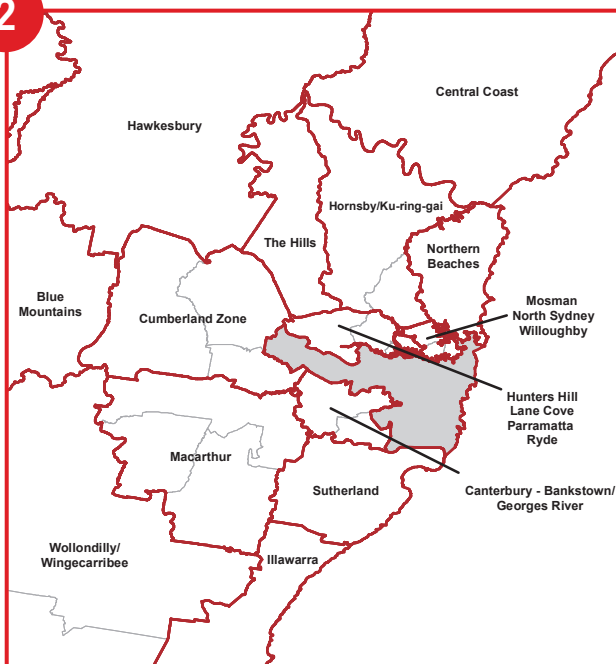
North West

Coonamble - Bogan - Walgett - Warren

1



2



Northern Beaches

Northern Beaches

Northern Rivers

Kyogle - Lismore - Richmond Valley

Northern Tablelands

Inverell - Tenterfield - Glen Innes Severn

Orana

Narromine - Dubbo

Riverina

Junee - Coolamon - Lockhart - Wagga Wagga

Shoalhaven

Shoalhaven

Snowy Monaro

Snowy Monaro

Snowy Valleys

Snowy Valleys

South West Slopes

Cootamundra Gundagai - Hilltops

Southern Tablelands

Goulburn Mulwaree - Upper Lachlan - Yass Valley

Sutherland

Sutherland

Tamworth

Tamworth

The Hills

The Hills

West Darling

Unincorporated

Wollondilly/Wingecarribee

Wollondilly - Wingecarribee

APPENDIX



BFMC MEMBER ORGANISATION'S PROFILES

The membership of a Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) can consist of a range of organisations that are committed to the cooperative management of bush fire and its associated risks. The following provides a brief overview of the organisations involved and their roles in the community.

Local Authority / Councils

Councils operate under the framework of the *Local Government Act 1993*. It is important to note that Councils, as managers of land and built assets, also have statutory responsibilities under a range of other Acts and regulations, such as obligations regarding the maintenance of biodiversity and preservation of cultural and heritage values. These other obligations are often critical considerations when planning and implementing bush fire risk management work. Councils provide a wide array of assets, services and advice to their communities and as a result of their comprehensive roles, are able to provide a significant amount of data that can be utilised by a BFMC. Further, Councils often need to manage an array of competing issues when implementing bush fire risk management works. Wherever possible, Councils will try to facilitate delivery of identified works for the protection of the community.

<https://www.lgnsw.org.au/>

Western Lands Commissioner

The Western Division of NSW comprises some 32.5 million hectares, 42% of the land area in NSW. The vast majority of the Western Division is Crown Land, administered under various Crown Lands Acts, in particular the *Western Lands Act 1901*, by the Department of Industry through the Western Lands Commissioner.

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/what-we-do/crown-land/western>

Lord Howe Island Board

The functions of the Lord Howe Island Board are to undertake the care, control and management of the Island and trading affairs on the Island, including:

protection and conservation of fisheries, flora and fauna; water supply, sewerage, drainage; public health; roads and public facilities generally; tourist trade; and dealings in leases etc. The management of bush fire impacts on the Island also falls within the responsibilities of the Board.

<https://www.lhib.nsw.gov.au/>

Roads and Maritime Services

The Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is the NSW State Government organisation responsible for the following

- ▶ managing the road network and optimising travel times;
- ▶ providing capacity and maintenance solutions for road and maritime infrastructure;
- ▶ educating and licensing drivers and vessel operators;
- ▶ registering and inspecting vehicles and vessels;
- ▶ improving road and maritime safety.

The RMS manages 18,036 km of State roads including 4,317 km of national highways. This includes facilities such as traffic lights, roundabouts, signs and line marking. It also manages nearly 3,000 km of regional roads and local roads in the unincorporated area of NSW. Other areas of RMS interest include 5,287 bridges, major culverts and 22 tunnels.

The RMS also manages the activities and infrastructure for the 2,137km of coastline and 32,242km² of navigable waterways, 47 commuter wharves and 3,463 maritime aids to navigation.

<https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/>

Government Property NSW

Property NSW is focused on excellence in property, infrastructure and places. They manage the State's significant property portfolio and its places, which results in better visitor experiences and services for the people of NSW. Property NSW is the brand name encompassing the entities of the former Government Property NSW (GPNSW), the former Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA), Teacher Housing Authority of NSW (THA) and Waste Assets Management Corporation (WAMC).

<https://www.property.nsw.gov.au/>

Fire and Rescue NSW

The NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) is the NSW government organisation responsible for managing fire emergencies in the major cities, metropolitan areas and towns across rural and regional NSW. It is also responsible for protecting the State from hazardous material incidents and by extension of this capability, the consequences of terrorism. It has 6,800 firefighters, approximately 7,000 community fire unit members and 455 administrative and trade staff.

<https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Police Force

The NSW Police Force is Australia's oldest and largest police organisation and one of the biggest in the English speaking world.

The main functions of the NSW Police Force are preventing, detecting and investigating crime, monitoring and promoting road safety, maintaining social order, performing and coordinating emergency and rescue operations, traffic control, communications, intelligence analysis and anti-terrorist negotiation.

<https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/>

Electricity Distribution Network Service Providers

Essential Energy

Essential Energy is owned by the NSW Government. It is responsible for building, operating and maintaining Australia's largest electricity network. It provides essential network services to 95 per cent of NSW. It also provides water and sewerage services to 20,000 customers in far west NSW.

<https://www.essentialenergy.com.au/>

Ausgrid

Ausgrid is one of the largest private distributors of electricity on Australia's east coast, providing power to over 1.7 million customers. Their network is made up of substations, power lines, underground cables and power poles, spanning 22,275 square kilometres throughout Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter Valley.

<https://www.ausgrid.com.au/>

Endeavour Energy

Endeavour Energy is responsible for the safe and reliable supply of electricity to 2.4 million people in households and businesses across Sydney's Greater West, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, Illawarra and the South Coast. Endeavour Energy is owned by both the state and private industry.

<http://www.endeavourenergy.com.au>

Local Land Services

Local Land Services is made up of 11 regions, with each region governed by a board of local community representatives. Board members work closely with landholders and local communities to identify and deliver services relevant to local needs. Local boards are a mix of Ministerially-appointed and elected board members. The local boards have legislated functions with four main focus areas including strategy, community engagement, advocacy and advice.

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/>

Transport for NSW

Transport for NSW is the lead organisation of the NSW Transport cluster. Their role is to lead the development of a safe, efficient, integrated transport system that keeps people and goods moving, connects communities and shapes the future of our cities, centres and regions. They are responsible for strategy, planning, policy, regulation, funding allocation and other non-service delivery functions for all modes of transport in NSW including road, rail, ferry, light rail, point to point, regional air, cycling and walking. Agencies operating under this cluster include Sydney Trains, NSW Trains, State Transit and Sydney Metro.

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/>

National Parks and Wildlife Service

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is responsible for developing and maintaining the parks and reserve system, and conserving natural and cultural heritage in NSW.

NPWS manages more than 860 parks and reserves covering more than 7 million hectares, approximately 9% of NSW. They manage a variety of protected areas, including national parks, nature reserves, World Heritage areas, rainforests, beaches, alpine areas and sites of great cultural and historic significance. About 90% of the area of these parks and reserves is prone to bush fires. As a 'fire fighting authority', NPWS has a statutory role in assisting other fire fighting authorities and NPWS's neighbours in the management of bush fires. NPWS is committed to the work that the BFMCs undertake.

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/>

Crown Lands

Crown Lands is responsible for the sustainable and commercial management of Crown land. Covering approximately 48% of all land in NSW. Much of this Crown land is managed as reserve or under lease or licence. There are 35,000 Crown reserves managed by appointed Crown Land Managers as a partnership between government and the community. Local councils, professional boards, not-for-profit organisations and individual community-based volunteer boards all play a role in managing Crown reserves. In addition there are around 54,000 leases and licences enabling the use of Crown land across the state for a range of commercial, agricultural, industrial, community, residential and private uses. The Department is also responsible for investigating Aboriginal land claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

Whilst the area of lands directly managed by Crown Lands may be small compared to other public land managers, these lands are often strategically important for bush fire mitigation, being located directly on the urban-bushland interface.

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands>

Nature Conservation Council (NCC)

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) was established in 1955 to provide a shared voice for community environmental organisations from across the State. The NCC maintains an active interest in both the environmental impact of bush fires and the use of fire as a natural tool in achieving conservation objectives. Under the Act, the NCC has a statutory role on Bush Fire Management Committees, the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council and the NSW Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC). The NCC is also represented on the BFCC Standing Advisory Subcommittee and contributes to other BFCC policy working groups.

NCC bush fire representatives aim to ensure that the identification and ongoing conservation of significant natural and cultural heritage values is properly considered during all bush fire prevention, planning, mitigation and suppression activities. Our representatives have an interest and relevant qualifications and experience in a wide range of areas including wildlife conservation, protected area management, natural resource management and fire ecology. Representatives are also part of a wide network of both local and state conservation groups and specialists and are guided by the NCC Bush Fire Policy available on their website.

<https://www.nature.org.au/>

NSW Rural Fire Brigades

The Rural Fire Brigades are part of the NSW Rural Fire Service. They consist of entirely volunteer members who are involved in front-line fire fighting and support roles across 95% of the State. Incidents and activities they attend include bush, grass, house and structure fires, storm damage, search and rescue, motor vehicle accidents, community education and bush fire mitigation.

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Farmers Association

The NSW Farmers' Association is a dynamic, innovative and voluntary industry body whose members are representative of the whole farming community in NSW. Through its commercial, policy and lobbying activities it provides a powerful and positive link between farmers and the public, government and local authorities. Bush fire management impacts on members' business, livelihood, residence and family, with individual economic impact being a key driver of representation. Our BFMC representatives have practical land management and fire-fighting expertise together with experience in history and impact of fires, asset and treatment identification, bringing ideas and outcomes of other farmers from around the State, who collectively manage about 70% of the rural landscape.

<http://www.nswfarmers.org.au/>

Local Aboriginal Land Council

Local Aboriginal Land Councils are autonomous bodies created by the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. Their objective is to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal persons within their Council's area and other persons who are members of the Council. There are 120 Local Aboriginal Land Councils in NSW.

<http://alc.org.au/>

Forestry Corporation of NSW

Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) is a Public Trading Enterprise responsible for sustainably managing more than 2 million hectares of public native forests and an expanding estate of hardwood and softwood planted forests. Its goal is to manage the forests under its care to provide the widest range of benefits to the present and future generations of people in NSW. FCNSW is also a 'fire fighting authority' which has a statutory role in assisting other fire fighting authorities in the management of bush fires.

<https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/>

NSW Rural Fire Service

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) was established on 1st September 1997, by the Rural Fires Act 1997. It is the successor of an organisation that has been around for 100 years - known as the NSW Bush Fire Brigades.

While the NSW RFS does not own any land, it is responsible for fire suppression and prevention activities in over 95% of NSW.

The NSW RFS plays a key role in managing bush fire hazards across the State, and also provides advice to landowners, developers and councils about bush fire protection measures required for new and existing developments.

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>

8 Principles for Good Meeting

1. Be punctual and prepared

- ▶ Arrive to the meeting and return from any breaks on-time.
- ▶ Ensure you are prepared to contribute to the Bush Fire Management Committee and address any items that have been allocated to your organisation.
- ▶ Bring a positive attitude and a willingness to collaborate with other members.

2. Stay mentally and physically present

- ▶ Be present, and don't attend to non-meeting business.
- ▶ Listen attentively to others and don't interrupt or have side conversations.
- ▶ Treat all meeting participants with the same respect you would want from them.

3. Actively participate in discussions

- ▶ Share your thoughts, ideas and contribute to the discussions.
- ▶ Ask questions and provide constructive feedback.
- ▶ Clearly articulate any points of disagreement and offer practical solutions.

4. Allow others to participate

- ▶ Provide an opportunity for others to share their views with the Bush Fire Management Committee.
- ▶ Actively listen to other members and do not interrupt them.
- ▶ Respect each other's thinking and value everyone's contributions.
- ▶ Be open to new ways of doing things and learn from the experiences of other members.

5. Be clear, concise and stay on topic

- ▶ Ensure you understand the topic being discussed before contributing. It's OK to ask questions before providing input.
- ▶ Keep your comments relevant, brief and to the point.
- ▶ Do not simply repeat what others have said or bring up previous conversations.
- ▶ Avoid using acronyms and phrases that can be misunderstood.

6. Attack the problem, not the person

- ▶ Capture the different perspectives of the broad Bush Fire Management Committee membership. This will assist in achieving the best outcomes.
- ▶ Challenge the idea, respectfully and openly, without being confrontational.
- ▶ Do not criticise or belittle the views of other members.
- ▶ Stay professional in your conduct and do not be personal with your comments.

7. Reach consensus and record action items

- ▶ The Chairperson will facilitate consensus on any Bush Fire Management Committee decisions.
- ▶ Any issues and action items arising from the discussion must be noted in the meeting minutes.
- ▶ Ensure that you act on any action items that are assigned to your organisation.
- ▶ The Chairperson should provide a summary of action items at the closure of the meeting.

8. Document outcomes and share learnings

- ▶ Record resolutions to problems and assigned tasks.
- ▶ Openly provide relevant information to all Bush Fire Management Committee members.
- ▶ Consult with adjoining Bush Fire Management Committee, Local Emergency Management Committees and other stakeholders to discuss any common issues and share learnings or outcomes.

Recognising Aboriginal Culture

In line with the NSW Public Service Commission document A Guide to Aboriginal Cultural Protocols for NSW Government Sector Events, it is appropriate for an Acknowledgement of Country to occur at the opening of each Bush Fire Management Committee meeting. Where there is a member of the Aboriginal community present at the meeting, they should be given an opportunity to deliver the Acknowledgement of Country to the Bush Fire Management Committee. Should this offer be declined, the Chair or a nominated person should offer the Acknowledgement of Country.

An example of a statement of Acknowledgement to Country is:

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet today (insert appropriate name here) and the Elders, past and present. I acknowledge the ongoing connection that Aboriginal people have to this land and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land. I would also like to acknowledge any Aboriginal people that are present here today.

A copy of A Guide to Aboriginal Cultural Protocols for NSW Government Sector Events can be accessed via the following website:

<https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/workplace-culture---diversity/diversity-and-inclusion/aboriginal-workforce-/aboriginal-cultural-protocols/a-guide-to-aboriginal-cultural-protocols-for-nsw-government-sector-events>

APPENDIX



LEGISLATION, POLICY

Rural Fires Act 1997

Part 3 Division 2 Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/part3/div2>

Part 3 Division 3 Bush Fire Management Committees

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/part3/div3>

Part 3 Division 4 Preparations of draft bush fire management plans

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/part3/div4>

Part 3 Division 5 Public participation in preparation of plans

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/part3/div5>

Part 3 Division 6 Clause 62A - Performance audit of implementation of bush fire risk management plans

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/part3/div6/sec62a>

Part 4 Division 1 Duty to prevent bush fires

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/part4/div1>

Schedule 1 Constitution and procedure of Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1997/65/sch1>

Rural Fires Regulation 2013

Part 3 Bush Fire Management Committees

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2013/488/part3>

Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policies

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/publications/corporate-governance-and-planning/bush-fire-coordinating-committee-policies>

Bush Fire Mitigation Funding

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/about-us/grants>

Other Relevant Legislation

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2009/52>

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/133>

Useful Links

Bush Fire Risk Management Plans

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/publications/bush-fire-risk-management-plans>

Community Protection Plans

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/publications/community-protection-plans>

Emergency Management Plans

<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/publications/plans/plans.aspx>

Local Emergency Management Planning

<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/?id=94>

National Parks & Wildlife Services

▶ Plans of Management - <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/plans-of-management>

▶ Fire Management Strategies - <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/fire/fire-management-strategies/search-fire-management-strategies>

Seed Environmental Data Portal

<https://www.seed.nsw.gov.au/>

myRFS

<https://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au/>

SIXmaps – NSW GIS Data

<https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>

Planning Portal – Property Information

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/>

Planning for Bush Fire Protection

https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/86519/DPP1007-Planning-for-Bushfire-Protection-2018-280818-D22.pdf

Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code

https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/24332/Bush-Fire-Environmental-Assessment-Code.pdf

NCC Online Training Video – Undertaking Online Biodiversity Searches

<http://fireandrestoration.org.au/searching-for-threatened-species/>

APPENDIX



ABBREVIATIONS

ACT RFS	Australian Capital Territory Rural Fire Service
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ARTC	Australia Rail Track Corporation
APZ	Asset Protection Zone
BFCC	Bush Fire Coordinating Committee
BFEAC (Code)	Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code
BFMC	Bush Fire Management Committee
BFRMP	Bush Fire Risk Management Plan
CL	Crown Lands
CPP	Community Protection Plan
DFCO	Deputy Fire Control Officer
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
FEZ	Fire Exclusion Zone
FRNSW	Fire and Rescue New South Wales
FAFT	Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan
FCO	Fire Control Officer
FC NSW	Forestry Corporation Of NSW
GIPAA	<i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i>
HR	Hazard Reduction
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEMC	Local Emergency Management Committee
LGA	Local Government Area
LLS	Local Land Services
LMZ	Land Management Zone
NCC	Nature Conservation Council
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSP	Neighbourhood Safer Place
NSW FA	New South Wales Farmers Association
NSW RFS	New South Wales Rural Fire Service
OCP	Operations Coordination Plan
PBP	Planning For Bush Fire Protection
PPIPA	<i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i>
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
SFAZ	Strategic Fire Advantage Zone
The Act	<i>Rural Fires Act 1997</i>
The Regs	<i>Rural Fires Regulation 2013</i>
XO	Executive Officer

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY



Asset Protection Zone - A fuel-reduced area surrounding a built asset or structure which provides a buffer zone between a bush fire hazard and an asset. The APZ includes a defendable space within which firefighting operations can be carried out.

Bush Fire - An unplanned fire burning in vegetation including grass; also referred to as wildfire.

Bush Fire Danger Period - a period fixed by or under Section 81 or 82 of the Act as a bush fire danger period.

Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Work - involves the following activities:

- a) The establishment or maintenance of fire breaks and fire trails on land, and
- b) The controlled application of appropriate fire regimes or other means for the reduction or modification of available fuels within a predetermined area to mitigate against the spread of a bush fire

But does not include construction of a track or road.

Bush Fire Coordinating Committee - as constituted under Part 3 of the Act.

Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code - has the same meaning as referred to under Section 100A of the Act.

Bush Fire Management Committee - a Bush Fire Management Committee constituted under Part 3 of the Act.

Bush Fire Management Plan

- a) a plan of operations, or
- b) a bush fire risk management plan, or
- c) a fire access and fire trail plan.

Bush Fire Prone Land - has the same meaning as it has in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Bush Fire Risk Management Plan - a plan prepared under Part 3 Division 4 of the Act for the purpose referred to in Section 52.

Commissioner - the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Council - a council, county council or joint organisation within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Community Protection Plan - a fine scale document that consists of a Bush Fire Survival Map, a Bush Fire Preparation Map and an Operational Brigade Map.

Crown Land - as defined in the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*.

Designated Fire Trail - a fire trail that is the subject of a direction under Section 62L or an agreement under Section 62M, that in each case provides for the establishment of a fire trail for the purposes of Part 3B, but does not include a registered fire trail. If the fire trail is not yet wholly or partly created, the fire trail is nevertheless taken to be a designated fire trail situated on the land concerned.

Ecological Sustainable Development - has the same meaning it has in Section 6 (2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*.

Executive Officer - as constituted under Section 50 (1) of the Act is to be the fire control officer for the Bush Fire Management Committee's area; or under Section 50 (1A) of the Act is to be a member of Fire and Rescue NSW nominated as Executive Officer by the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW.

Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan - means a plan prepared under Part 3 Division 4 of the Act for the purposes referred to in Section 54A.

Fire Brigade - a fire brigade within the meaning of the *Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989*.

Fire Control Officer - a fire control officer of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Fire District - land within a fire district constituted under the *Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989*.

Fire Exclusion Zone - Areas of fire intolerant assets for which it is appropriate to exclude fire (eg- rainforest, fire intolerant vegetation communities, fire sensitive cultural/historic heritage sites, pine plantation, commercial crops).

Fire Fighting Authority - is one of the following:

- a) the NSW Rural Fire Service,
- b) Fire and Rescue NSW,
- c) the National Parks and Wildlife Service,
- d) the Forestry Corporation of NSW, e) any other body prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this definition.

Fire Trail Standards - the Fire Trail Standards under Section 62K of the Act.

Land Management Zone - To meet relevant land management objectives in areas where APZs or SFAZs are not appropriate.

Local Authority - means

- a) in relation to land that is situated within an area within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993* - the council of the area, or
 - b) in relation to land within the Western Division (other than land referred to in paragraph (a)), person appointed under Section 7A of the Act, or
 - c) in relation to Lord Howe Island - the Lord Howe Island Board.
- Local Emergency Management Committee - means a Local Emergency Management Committee constituted under Part 2 of the *State Emergency and Rescue Act 1989*.

Local Government Area - means an area as constituted under Part 1 of Chapter 9 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Neighbourhood Safer Place - land or a building designated as a neighbourhood safer place under Section 62C of the Act.

Plan Of Operations - a plan prepared under Division 4 of Part 3 for the purposes referred to in Section 53 of the Act.

Planning for Bush Fire Protection - a document prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service, which identifies best practice for developing in bush fire prone areas.

Registered Fire Trail - a fire trail that is registered in the register of certified fire trails referred to in Section 62O of the Act.

Rural Fire Brigade - a rural fire brigade formed under Part 2 of the Act.

Rural Fire District - a rural fire district within the meaning of Part 1 of the Act.

Strategic Fire Advantage Zone - To provide strategic areas of fire protection advantage, which will reduce the speed and intensity of bush fires, and reduce the potential for spot fire development; to aid containment of wildfires to existing management boundaries.

Tree - a bush, shrub, scrub, timber, grass or vegetative or other material.



BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

committees@rfs.nsw.gov.au

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
Locked Mail Bag 17
Granville NSW 2142