



BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER

1. Bush Fire Management Committees Purpose and Mission Statement

Purpose

The purpose of the Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) is to provide cooperative interaction between organisations, agencies and the community that leads to effective coordinated bush fire management throughout the BFMCs area and land adjoining.

Mission

Ensure that bush fire management is adequately assessed and designed for holistic protection of the community, based on a tenure blind, cooperative and coordinated approach that utilises community and interagency involvement.

2. Legislated Authority

BFMCs are committees established under the provisions of the *Rural Fire Act 1997* and the *Rural Fires Regulation 2013*. A BFMC is constituted by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC), under the provisions of Section 50 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

3. Legislated Functions of BFMCs

The key functions are specified in Section 51 and 52 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and Clause 15 of the *Rural Fires Regulation 2013*.

BFMCs legislated functions are:

3.1 Preparation of plans

- 3.1.1 Prepare, monitor and maintain a Bush Fire Risk Management Plan for the BFMCs area of responsibility in accordance with the policy and directions issued by the BFCC.
- 3.1.2 Prepare, monitor and maintain an Operations Coordination Plan (Plan of Operations) for the BFMCs area of responsibility in accordance with the policy and directions issued by the BFCC.
- 3.1.3 Prepare, monitor and maintain a Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan (FAFT Plan) for the BFMCs area of responsibility in accordance with the policy and directions issued by the BFCC.
- 3.2 Report to the BFCC on the implementation of each Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and Fire Access and Fire Trail Plans on an annual basis.
- 3.3 Assist the BFCC in the performance of its functions under Sections 48, 60 (2) and 63(4) of the Act.

- 3.4 Assist the BFCC by drawing to its attention, or to the attention of the Commissioner or public authorities in their area, any matter they consider relevant to the protection of life, property and the environment from bush fires.

4. Responsibilities of BFMCs

Further to the functions as prescribed by the legislation the BFCC has identified the following responsibilities for BFMCs.

- 4.1 Promote and develop coordination and cooperation between member organisations and agencies.
- 4.2 Identify and utilise opportunities for relevant multi-agency training activities.
- 4.3 Assist in the coordination of bush fire mitigation works programs in the BFMCs area of responsibility including the assessment and prioritisation of funding applications that support these activities.
- 4.4 Prepare an Annual Works Program for the BFMCs area of responsibility as per BFCC Policy for Bush Fire Risk Management.
- 4.5 Develop an Annual Ignition Prevention Plan and identify strategies designed to address the occurrence of bush fires within their area.
- 4.6 Prepare and maintain an Operations Coordination Manual as detailed in BFCC Policy for Management of Bush Fire Operations.
- 4.7 Complete a Pre-season Checklist as detailed in the BFCC Policy for Management of Bush Fire Operations.
- 4.8 Prepare and submit a FAFT Plan Treatment Register as outlined in the BFCC Policy for Fire Access and Fire Trails
- 4.9 Identify and facilitate the utilisation of opportunities for multi-organisation / agency bush fire related community education activities.
- 4.10 Undertake consultation / communication between organisations / agencies and the community on bush fire management issues.
- 4.11 Monitor and report on hazard reduction along with other bush fire risk mitigation works and BFMC activities to the BFCC in accordance with the BFCC's directions.

5. A BFMC is not a Fire Fighting Authority

A BFMC has no power to conduct or take part in fire fighting or fire prevention operations authorised by the Act, the Regulation or any other Act or statutory instrument.

6. Principles

- 6.1 All activities of the BFMC must be undertaken in accordance with the policies and directions issued by the BFCC.
- 6.2 Statutory roles and responsibilities of government agencies and rights of landholders are to be recognised and respected.
- 6.3 BFMC's are to provide a forum for discussion and familiarisation between organisations, agencies, groups and individuals, facilitating comprehensive, cooperative and coordinated bush fire management in its area.
- 6.4 All activities are to be undertaken having regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development described in Section 6 of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*.
- 6.5 All activities and decisions must adhere to the principles of good governance in the public sector. The BFMC is to ensure that it acts in the public interest at all times. The conduct of a BFMC should display a strong commitment to integrity, ethical values, transparency and the rule of law.
- 6.6 The BFMC is to work closely with its community; and balance matters relative to the protection of life, property, socio-economic values and the environment with regard to the potential impact from bush fires.
- 6.7 Decisions of the BFMC are to be by consensus.
- 6.8 Decisions must be based on a tenure blind approach.

7. Membership

Eligibility for membership is set by Clause 14 and 18 of the *Rural Fires Regulation 2013*. Although membership is not compulsory, the BFCC encourages all eligible agencies / organisations to participate at the BFMC level. Involvement of other key stakeholders (e.g. a significant land owner within the area) as a BFMC Member can also occur with prior approval from the BFCC.

8. The BFMC Handbook

To provide guidance to BFMCs, the BFCC has prepared a supporting document known as the BFMC Handbook, which contains more detail on the BFCC's requirements and offers supporting information to assist BFMCs. The BFMC Handbook is broken down into three parts.

- ▶ Part A of the BFMC Handbook provides detailed information and guidance on BFMC roles, responsibilities and membership
- ▶ Part B of the BFMC Handbook provides detailed information and guidance on BFMC governance and business processes
- ▶ Part C of the BFMC Handbook provides a number of supporting appendixes, including checklists and templates to assist with the undertaking of BFMC business.

9. Related BFCC Policies

BFCC Policy 1/2000 Dispute Avoidance - Dispute Resolution

BFCC Policy 1 - Bush Fire Management Committees

BFCC Policy 2/2006 Management of Bush Fire Operations (Amended)

BFCC Policy 1/2008 Bush Fire Risk Management

BFCC Policy 1/2011 Allocation Principles for Funding of Bush Fire Mitigation Works

BFCC Policy 1/2012 Community Safety and Coordinated Evacuations

BFCC Policy 2/2012 Notified Step for the protection of Neighbourhood Safer Places

BFCC Policy 1/2017 Fire Trails

Note. The above list of policies is current as of February 2019. The BFMC Handbook and all the latest BFCC Policies can be accessed at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au. New and updated policies will be added to the list of policies on the NSW Rural Fire Service website. The *Rural Fires Act 1997* and *Rural Fires Regulation 2013* can be accessed at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au