



1.1.13

Fire Mitigation Funding Program

1 Rationale

- 1.1 The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee is responsible for ensuring that adequate fire prevention and mitigation measures are carried out in NSW. While councils, public authorities, including the Department of Land and Water Conservation, and private owners/occupiers are responsible for lands under their control, the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee has funds made available to it each year, through the Rural Fire Fighting Fund, for assisting with fire prevention and mitigation measures
- 1.2 This Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy establishes the mechanisms by which the Annual Fire Mitigation Works Fund is distributed to carry out fire management activities on lands within NSW.
- 1.3 An agreement, dated 31 January 2000, has been entered into, between the Minister for Land and Water Conservation and the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (s48(2)(b), *Rural Fires Act 1997*) with respect to the reduction of bush fire hazards. That agreement forms the basis of this Policy.
- 1.4 Whilst the costs associated with this duty rest with the Department of Land and Water Conservation, the agreement recognises that they are not a firefighting authority and do not have the resources to establish a fire management capability. Accordingly, costs involved in physically carrying out the fire mitigation works can be claimed through the Fire Mitigation Works Funding Program.
- 1.5 Each relevant Land Management Authority, including the Department of Land and Water Conservation, will arrange for and fund all environmental assessments and liaison with Aboriginal Groups necessary to undertake the planning phase of the designated fire mitigation works, for any works proposed to be carried out on their respective lands.
- 1.6 If all funds within the Fire Mitigation Works Funding Program are exhausted the Department of Land and Water Conservation will meet the costs of carrying out essential works, on their land tenures, within the limits of their budget.



- 1.7 In exercising any function that affects the environment, the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and Bush Fire Management Committees must have regard to the principles of ecological sustainable development. [Sections 48(3) and 51(2) of the Rural Fires Act 1997].

2 Policy Principles

- 2.1 It is the Coordinating Committee Policy that, because of the limited availability of funds, their use needs to be prioritised.
- 2.2 Bush fire mitigation works, including fire trails, should be located in the position that provides the best strategic, both operational and environmental, advantage. Accordingly, the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee recognises that protection to any particular parcel of land can at times be more effectively achieved by locating the works on adjacent lands or at other locations.

3 Procedures

The following information details the roles and responsibilities of the different committees and sections of the Rural Fire Service.

3.1 Bush Fire Management Committee

- (a) Proposals are likely to be generated by the Department of Land and Water Conservation, other members of the Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) or by the general public.
- (b) Proposals should be submitted on the attached form (see Appendix "1"). All parts of the form must be filled in.
- (c) A costing for the works to be completed must be included on the form, as this will form the basis for allocating funds.
- (d) The Bush Fire Management Committee will collate and prioritise the proposals, in accordance with Table "1" of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy and ensure that their BFMC priority number is included on the top right hand corner of the form.
- (e) Proposals are to be determined in line with works as identified in the Bush Fire Management Committee's approved Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.



- (f) The relevant land manager will arrange for an environmental review of the proposed works, including any necessary liaison with aboriginal groups. On satisfactory completion, the relevant land manager will authorise for the works to be undertaken, pending successful funding.
- (g) On notification from the Regional Office of the Bush Fire Management Committee's allocation, the Bush Fire Management Committee will enter agreements with the respective Land Management Agency, Fire fighting Authority or Contractor to undertake the approved fire mitigation works.
- (h) The Bush Fire Management Committee must maintain appropriate records to track all proposals, approvals and contracts with respective Land Management Agencies, Fire fighting Authorities and Contractors.
- (i) The Bush Fire Management Committee Executive Officer is to co-ordinate at a local level all "Completion of Works Accounts Forms" (see Appendix 2) from the Land Management Agencies, Firefighting Authorities or Contractors for submission to Regional Office Fire Management Committees will be advised by February each year of any approvals for funding.

3.2 Rural Fire Service Regional Office

- (a) The Rural Fire Service Regional Office will collate proposals for all Districts within their Region. They will check the proposals for consistency against current approved Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and make initial recommendations for funding in line with existing Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy. (See Appendix 3).
- (b) All of the collated Bush Fire Management Committee proposals, and the initial recommendations from the Region, are to be forwarded to the Planning Services Section of the Rural Fire Service Head Office, by the end of the second week of June each year.
- (c) On notification from Planning Services of the Regional allocation, the Regional Office shall forward the information to the Districts within their Region.
- (d) On receipt of the accounts, from the Bush Fire Management Committees, the Regional Office shall ensure that the claim is in accordance with their



maintained records. The Regional Office, assuming an auditing role, may undertake an inspection of the works to ascertain its bona fides. The accounts will be forwarded to the Rural Fire Service Finance Section for payment.

- (e) The Regional Office will maintain records to support their functions.

3.3 Rural Fire Service Planning and Environment Section Head Office

- (a) The Planning Services Section of the Rural Fire Service will collate the proposals and initial recommendations from all Regions and check them for consistency with the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee policy.
- (b) The Planning Services Section shall act as executive support to the Working Party of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, calling the meetings and ensuring that all papers are provided for the Committee to undertake its functions.
- (c) When the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee has approved the allocations, Planning Services shall notify each Region of their allocation and provide copies of the proposals that have been approved.
- (d) Planning Services shall maintain the statewide records on behalf of the Working Party for reference by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.

3.4 Rural Fire Service Financial Services Section Head Office

- (a) The Financial Services Section of the Rural Fire Service will collate the budgets and ensure that all claims submitted in relation to Fire Mitigation works are paid in accordance with the guidelines put in place by this policy and the Public Finance and Audit act 1983.
- (b) The Financial Services Section shall act as support by promptly paying claims submitted by Regional Managers.
- (c) Financial Reporting is maintained by the Compliance Clerk in the Finance section in accordance with timely and accurate accounting data entered by the Expenditure Officer. Reports may be provided to Planning Services and regional Managers, on request, throughout the financial year, to ensure that budgets are strictly adhered to.

3.5 Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Working Party

- (a) The Working Party will be comprised of members from the Rural Fire Service Planning Services Section, the Department of Land and Water Conservation, an officer of the Rural Fire Service Association, and other



members as deemed appropriate by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.

- (b) The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Working Party will critically analyse each proposal, and consider the initial recommendations from Regions, in accordance with Bush Fire Coordinating Committee policies.
- (c) The Working Party shall make recommendations to the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee on the allocations to each Bush Fire Management Committee, on an individual works proposal basis.
- (d) A representative of the Working Party shall present its recommendations to the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee at their first available meeting.
- (e) The Working Party shall meet in March each year to reallocate any unspent funds in accordance with the established policy.
- (f) The Working Party shall allocate funds to small ad hoc proposals that arise outside of the normal funding system, from the contingency funds set aside from the initial allocations. The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee delegates to the Chair the ability to approve these contingency allocations.
- (g) The Working Party will provide the BFCC with an annual report detailing expenditure and other relevant matters.

3.6 Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

- (a) The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee shall approve and or amend the recommendations presented by the Working Party.
- (b) The Chairman of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee shall approve the expenditure of any contingency funds or the reallocation of funds. All such approvals will be included on the next available Agenda of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, for members' information.

4 Who is responsible for implementing the Policy?

- Bush Fire Management Committee;
- Rural fire Service Regional Office;
- Rural Fire Service Planning Services Section, Head Office;
- Rural Fire Service Financial Services Section, Head Office;
- Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Working Party;
- Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.



5 Issue

This Policy was considered by the Corporate Executive Group on 5 February 2002.

6 Legislation and references

- Rural Fires Act, 1997
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995
- Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974
- Public Finance and Audit Act 1983
- Treasurers Directions

7 Amendments

8 Document owner

The owner of this Policy is the Executive Director Corporate Services.

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Phil Koperberg AM, AFSM, BEM
Commissioner

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2002



Appendix 1

Works Proposal and Funding Application Form
BFMC

		Priority
	ID No <i>BFCC use only</i>	Allocation <i>BFCC use only</i>
Bush Fire Management Committee		Rural Fire District or
Activity Name		Fire District
Activity Type		Treatment Area km/ha
Hazard Reduction Fire Mechanical		
Fire Trail Maintenance New Fire Trail		
Other (Please describe)		
Brief Description of Activity		
(Include relationship to Crown Land if proposed activity is occurring on other land tenure)		



Bush Fire Risk Management Plan Zone

Asset Protection
Strategic Fire Advantage

Land Management
Fire Exclusion

Tenure

Percentage (%) of Activity

Unoccupied Crown Land

Reserved Crown Land (No Trustee) (Includes Soil and Water Corp Lands)

Reserved Crown Land (Community Trust) Trust Name

Reserved Crown Land (Other Trustee) Trust Name

Crown Land - Long Term Lease or License

Crown Land - Short Term Lease or License

Other DLWC Managed Land

Crown Land Administered by Public Authority Agency

Private Property and Perpetual Leases

Other



Summary of Costs

Activity	Area (ha) or Distance (km)	Cost DLWC lands	Cost Other lands	Total Cost	Requested bid
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SIGNATURES

Agency

Name
Signature

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BFMC EO

Name
Signature

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Appendix 2

COMPLETION OF WORKS FORM

Bush Fire Management Committee:

Rural Fire Service Regional Office:

**Land Management Agency /
Firefighting Authority / Contractor:**

Activity Name:

Type of Work

Treatment Area (km/ha)

Hazard Reduction

Fire

Mechanical

Fire Trail Maintenance

New Fire Trail

Other (Please Describe)

Date Completed

Funds previously approved

Actual Costs of Works

Invoice(s) (please attach to form) Invoice Number(s)

Signed Print name (CAITALS)

Position



Appendix 3

NSW RFS REGION
FIRE MITIGATION WORKS FUNDING / REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Bush Fire Management Committee:

Activity Name	Activity Type ¹	BFMC Request \$	BFMC Priority	BFRMP Zone ²	% of Tenure(s) ³	Regions Priority	Working Party Recommendation

¹ = Indicate either fire trail construction (FTC), fire trail maintenance (FTM), or bush fire hazard reduction works (BFHR).

² = Specify either Asset Protection Zone (APZ), Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ), Land Management Zone, or Fire Exclusion Zone (FEZ) from the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

³= Specify % of land tenure(s) as indicated from Table 1 Priority Matrix of the BFCC Policy Document.