



Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee

MEETING MINUTES

DOC21/42911

Meeting:	No. 97 Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC)
Location:	Via MS Teams: Berrigan Meeting Room, NSW RFS, 4 Murray Rose Ave, Sydney Olympic Park
Date and time:	6 May 2021 – 1030
Members:	Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM, NSW Rural Fire Service (Chair) Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys APM, NSW Police Force Mr Robert Pallin, Nature Conservation Council of NSW Mr Graham Brown, NSW Farmers Association Cr Keith Rhoades AFSM, Local Government NSW Ms Naomi Stephens, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service Mr George Schneider, NSW Department of Industry – Crown Lands & Water Ms Sonya Ramke, Office of Emergency Management (Resilience NSW) Dr Ross Dickson, Forestry Corporation of NSW Mr Greg Wardle, Rural Fire Service Association Mr Robert Conroy, representing Minister for the Environment
Other Attendees:	Deputy Commissioner Peter McKechnie, NSW Rural Fire Service Deputy Commissioner Kyle Stewart, NSW Rural Fire Service Assistant Commissioner Stuart Midgley AFSM, NSW Rural Fire Service Assistant Commissioner Rebel Talbert, Director, Community Resilience Mr Charlie Jacobs, NSW Aboriginal Land Council Ms Renee Austin, NSW Farmers Association Mr Scott Campbell, NSW Rural Fire Service Association Mr Kim de Govrik, Public Service Association Superintendent Greg Houston, Fire & Rescue NSW Mr Carl Hollis, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service Ms Merilyn Madden, Lomman Reporting Services
Apologies:	Deputy Commissioner Jim Hamilton AFSM, Fire & Rescue NSW (rep by Superintendent Greg Houston) Councillor Julie Griffiths, Local Government NSW Dr Leigh Pilkington, NSW Department of Primary Industries Mr Scott Donohoe, Fire & Rescue NSW Mr Rod Chetwynd, Fire Brigades Employees' Union Mr James Christian, NSW Aboriginal Land Council Ms Natalie Rotumah, NTSCorp
Minutes by:	Ms Dianne Kelly, NSW Rural Fire Service

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to Meeting 97 of the BFCC and noted apologies for Deputy Commissioner Jim Hamilton represented by Superintendent Greg Houston, Cr Julie Griffiths, Dr Leigh Pilkington, Mr Scott

Donohoe, Mr Rod Chetwynd, Mr James Christian represented by Mr Charlie Jacobs, and Ms Natalie Rotumah.

The Chair declared the meeting open at 1030.

2 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3 Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of BFCC meeting 96 held on 17 March 2021 were tabled.

Decision 97.1 The Committee resolved to endorse the minutes of meeting 96 held on 17 March 2021 for signature by the Chair.

4 Open Action Items

The Action Items were tabled and all actions discussed. The Action Items have been updated in accordance with the discussions.

Decision 97.2 The Committee resolved to note the status of actions.

5 Correspondence

The Correspondence Register was tabled and was noted by the Committee. No other correspondence was tabled.

Decision 97.3 The Committee resolved to note the Correspondence Register.

6 Standing Items

6.1 The Status of Operations Co-ordination Plans

The Status of Operations Coordination Plans report dated 5 March 2021 was tabled at the meeting and taken as read. The Committee noted that due to changes in Local Government Areas, the Operations Coordination Plans for Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and Mid Murray Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) are on hold pending BFMC boundaries being finalised.

Decision 97.4 The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Operations Coordination Plans.

6.2 The Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans

The Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMP's) was tabled and taken as read. The Committee noted that the draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plans for Central Darling, Cumberland Zone, Barwon Darling and Liverpool Range have now been approved.

Decision 97.5 The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.

6.3 Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails Plans

The Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails (FAFT) Plans was tabled and taken as read.

Decision 97.6 The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails Plans.

7 Standing Advisory Subcommittee Report

Mr McKechnie tabled the Standing Advisory Subcommittee (SAS) report and noted that work remains underway on BFCC Policy 1/2008 – Bush Fire Risk Management and BFCC Policy 2/2006 – Management of Bush Fire Operations. It was also noted that the review of BFCC Policy 1/2007 Section 44 Payment and Reimbursement Criteria and Payment Procedures is subject to further discussion with Resilience NSW.

Decision 97.7 The Committee resolved to note the Standing Advisory Subcommittee Report.

8 Hazard Reduction Report

The Hazard Reduction Report was presented by Assistant Commissioner Midgley. It was noted that with recent favourable weather during April 2021 enabled a slight increase to the number of Hazard Reduction Works being undertaken. For the period April to July 2021 lower than average rainfall is expected which may allow for further Hazard Reduction Works to be undertaken.

Decision 97.8 The Committee resolved to note the update on hazard reduction and properties protected activities.

Business Papers

9 NSW Bush Fire Inquiry Update

Mr McKechnie provided an update on the NSW Bush Fire Inquiry, noting that the multi-agency report to NSW State Parliament is anticipated to be tabled late May 2021.

The Committee also noted that in line with the amendment to the Bush Fires Amendment Bill 2020, the report will be tabled out of session to members.

Action 96.1 The Secretariat to circulate the multi-agency report to NSW State Parliament out of session to the Committee.

Decision 97.9 The Committee resolved to note the update on the NSW Bush Fire Inquiry.

10 Review of BFCC Policy 1/2008 Bush Fire Risk Management

Ms Talbert provided an update on the progress of the implementation of the new Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMPs), noting that Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley plans are anticipated to be available for public exhibition by 30 June 2021. It was also noted that positive feedback has been received from Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) participating in the trial.

The Committee were advised of the importance of relevant agencies attending the BFMC workshops to gain an understanding of the new process.

Ms Talbert added that the review of BFCC Policy 1/2008 is underway in conjunction with the trial of the new process and will incorporate feedback from participants.

Decision 97.10 The Committee resolved to note the update on the implementation of Policy 1/2008 Bush Fire Risk Management.

11 NSW RFS Fire Trails Standards

Ms Talbert provided an update on the progress of the review of the NSW RFS Fire Trail Standards, noting that during July 2021, work will commence with the Australian Road Research Board to assist in conducting the review. The review is anticipated to be completed by June 2022.

Decision 97.11 The Committee resolved to note the update on the NSW RFS Fire Trails Standards.

12 General Business

12.1 Update on the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code

The Committee noted that the update of the Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code (the code) is linked to Guardian, with user acceptance testing now underway. The Guardian activity management model is anticipated to go live shortly and is planned to be linked with the code.

12.2 Rollout of Guardian Training

The Committee noted that upcoming training on the new Guardian system will be provided as a train the trainer model with BFMCs and aligned agencies.

12.3 Hazard Reduction media coverage

The Committee acknowledged the challenge faced by agencies when conducting hazard reduction works and lack of acknowledgement by media outlets. It was noted that NSW RFS advise the media outlets of all agencies involved in HR works.

12.4 Bush Fire Risk Planning Team

The Committee extended its appreciation to the Bush Fire Risk Planning Team and in particular Mr Patrick Schell for the collaborative and consultative approach undertaken with both the BFCC and SAS over the years.

12.5 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BFCC is to be held as follows:

Date	Start time	Location
12 August 2021	1030	Berrigan Meeting Room, NSW RFS Headquarters

Decision 97.12 The Committee resolved to note the items of General Business raised.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 1128.

Minutes approved by BFCC Chair, Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM on 12 August 2021.