



BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE **HANDBOOK | 2024**



Acknowledgements

The BFCC acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, and the lands we travel through. We also acknowledge our Elders – past, present and emerging.

This third 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.

The Working Group included representation from:

- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- NSW Crown Lands
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- Forestry Corporation of NSW
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- NSW Rural Fire Service

Input was also provided by the Nature Conservation Council.

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 the associated BFCC Policies.

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



Commissioner's foreword

The catastrophic 2019/20 fire season challenged our established bush fire management and firefighting techniques, knowledge and experience like no other. It has since proven a catalyst for major reform, advances in resources and technology and the introduction of new approaches, policies and procedures.

Much of this change has been driven by the recommendations of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry.

This new edition of the Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) Handbook has been developed in response to recommendations of the Inquiry in relation to strengthening our cross-agency accountability and delivery and improving bush fire risk management outcomes, including through the work of the network of 52 BFMCs across NSW.

BFMCs are critical to the protection of life and property and to ensuring the effectiveness of our coordinated NSW firefighting arrangements.

Each committee brings together representatives of numerous government agencies, stakeholders and communities with expertise in bush fire mitigation, prevention and suppression, overlaid by in-depth local knowledge of their area's fire history, weather conditions, topography and assets.

This joint experience is employed in the development of comprehensive suites of plans to identify local fire risks and mitigation measures to help protect life and assets:

- ▶ Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMP);
- ▶ Fire Access and Fire Trail Plans; and
- ▶ Plans of Operation.

A number of the reforms introduced since 2019/20 are assisting the work of the BFMCs. The Next Generation BFRMPs now under development represent a great advance in risk planning, employing the latest technology and informed by additional community consultation processes. The RFS has recently published updated Fire Trail Standards and Committees now take a tenure-blind approach to bush fire hazard mitigation.

This third edition of the BFMC Handbook has now been developed to provide a reference resource to assist committees and their members in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities and implementing the changes flowing from the Inquiry.

The publication has been compiled a collaborative working group of BFCC member agencies following a survey of BFMC members and Executive Officers. This group included representatives of the RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation NSW, NSW Aboriginal Land Council and NSW Crown Lands, with the Nature Conservation Council also providing feedback.

Thank you to all who contributed to this process and to the numerous BFMC members for your ongoing work and steadfast commitment to improving the safety of communities across NSW.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Rogers', with a horizontal line underneath.

Rob Rogers

**Chair
Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee**

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This document has been developed to provide guidance and support for Bush Fire Management Committees. It aims to assist Bush Fire Management Committee members in understanding their responsibilities and provides them with the information required to establish a functional and successful Committee.

Part 1 of the Handbook describes the Bush Fire Management Committee roles, responsibilities and membership.

Part 2 of the Handbook provides guidance on governance and business processes.

This document should be read in conjunction with the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, the *Rural Fires Regulation 2022*, the BFMC Charter and Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy.

If any further support is required please contact bfmcsupport@rfs.nsw.gov.au.

Any enquiries related to the BFCC should be directed to the RFS Committees and Projects Team via committees@rfs.nsw.gov.au.

PART



BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND MEMBERSHIP

1. The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee; Bush fire prevention and coordinated bush fire fighting arrangements in NSW

The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) is a NSW statutory body representing the Crown, established under the provisions of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act).

The BFCC meets four times a year and 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. The BFCC develops policies and procedures that provide for a coordinated approach to bush fire prevention and bush fire fighting operations. The BFCC constitutes the Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) in NSW and determines their requirements and operation through policy, direction and support. BFCC membership is identified in the Act (s47).

The BFCC's 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 towards a common goal of better prepared and more effective bush fire management across NSW.

While the BFCC does not have a role in fire fighting operations, it does receive a debrief of 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 RFS.

The SAS meet at least four times a year, ahead of each BFCC meeting.

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of coordinated bush fire arrangements in NSW.

1.1 Bush Fire Management Committees

BFMCs are established under the provisions of the Act and the *Rural Fires Regulation 2022* (the Regulation).

BFMCs are groups of people with technical expertise, experience and local knowledge who work together locally for bush fire management purposes, and who can collaboratively determine bush fire management arrangements.

A BFMC is constituted for every rural fire district and fire district in NSW with a reasonable risk of bush fire. BFMCs are generally based on Local Government boundaries and can include one or many Local Government areas. A BFMC area covers all tenures both private and public. Appendix A identifies the BFMCs currently established in NSW.

BFMC members are drawn from particular organisations and agencies, as specified in the Regulation (Section 5).

Each member is there to discuss, coordinate and deliver bush fire management objectives for the local 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 RFS committees, they are responsible to the BFCC.

A BFMC may establish a subcommittee or number of subcommittees to assist them in undertaking their functions (Section 12).

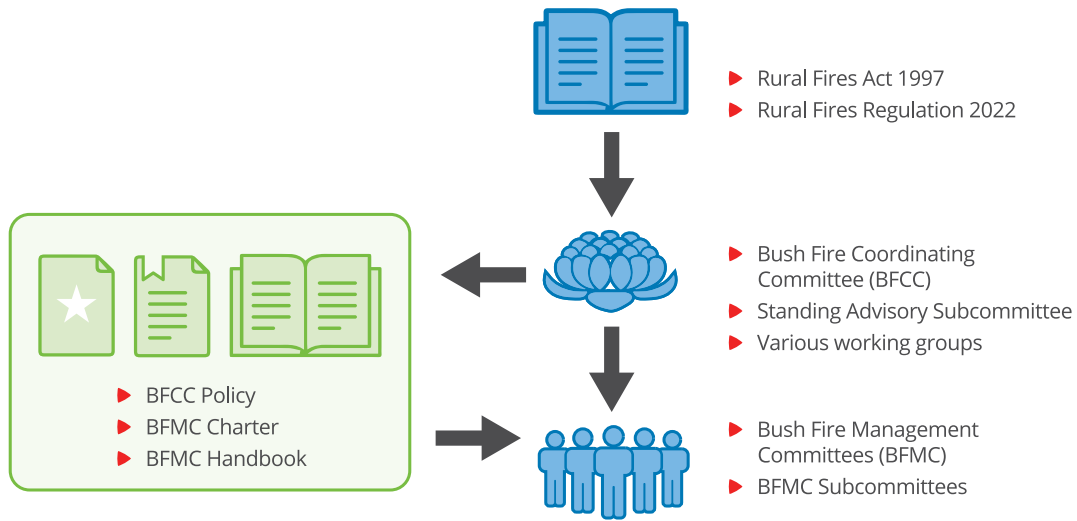


Figure 1. Structure of Coordinated Bush Fire Arrangements in NSW

1.2 Relationship between a BFMC and the BFCC

1.2.1 Responsibilities of the BFCC to BFMCs

The BFCC:

- ▶ develops policy which guides the BFMCs on bush fire management issues, the preparation of plans and other required tasks;
- ▶ provides guidance and instruction to BFMCs;
- ▶ contacts 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;
- ▶ provides a forum for dispute resolution for BFMCs where local attempts to reach agreement have failed; and
- ▶ approves Plans of Operations, Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and Fire Access and Fire Trail Plans.

1.2.2 Responsibilities of BFMCs to the BFCC

BFMCs will:

- ▶ operate in accordance with all policy, guidelines and instructions issued by the BFCC;
- ▶ prepare and submit draft plans to the BFCC as required by the Act;
- ▶ submit reports as required by BFCC and BFCC Policy;
- ▶ refer any items which have not reached consensus to the BFCC;
- ▶ refer issues and recommendations with wider policy implications to the BFCC where necessary (for example After Action Reviews);

- ▶ refer any matters considered relevant or likely to be of interest to BFCC for its information and consideration; and
- ▶ make available to the BFCC membership details, attendance and the minutes of BFMC meetings.

Time frames for the submission of draft Plans and reports as required by the Act and BFCC policies is identified in Appendix C "Bush Fire Management Committee Schedule."

2. Functions and Responsibilities of a BFMC

A BFMC has a number of responsibilities under the Act, the Regulation and BFCC policies. The key functions of the BFMC are illustrated in Figure 2.

This Handbook and the [BFMC Charter](#) provide guidance to BFMC members on the function of the BFMC and their roles and responsibilities.

The Act (s52), requires each BFMC to prepare a draft Plan of Operations, a draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP), and a draft Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan (FAFT Plan).

In accordance with s51(2) of the Act, BFMCs are to have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development in carrying out any function that affects the environment.

S62 of the Act requires a bush fire management plan to be published on the NSW Rural Fire Service website, or another NSW Government website as decided by the RFS Commissioner.

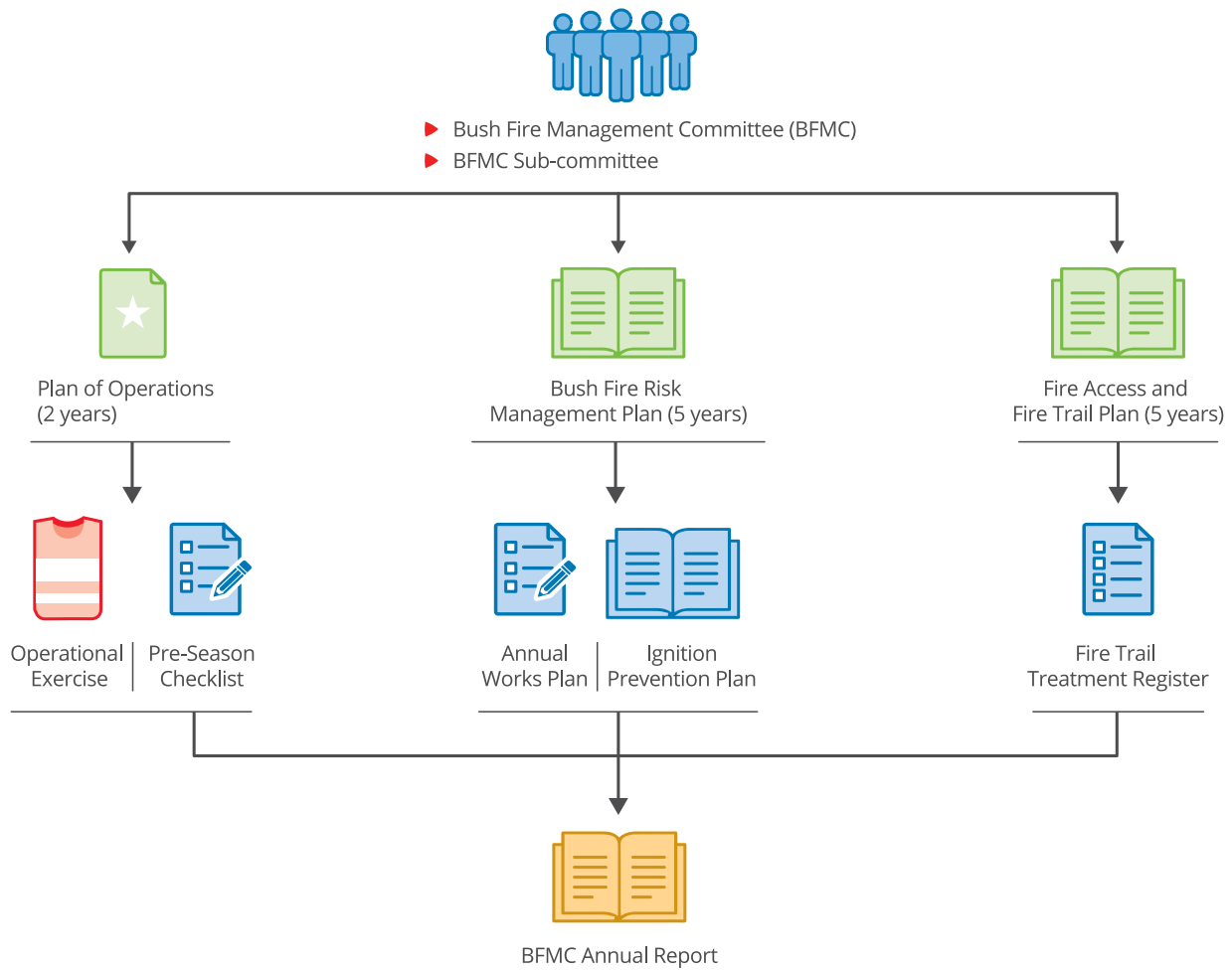


Figure 2. The Key Functions and Responsibilities of a BFMC

2.1 Plan of Operations for Co-ordinated Fire Fighting Arrangements

A Plan of Operations is established under s52 of the Act. This plan outlines the arrangements for effective and efficient co-ordinated fire fighting practices across a BFMC area.

It identifies Incident Management Team roles, key contacts and operational readiness arrangements for each Fire Danger Rating. It also contains information on any local agreements or Pre-Incident Plans in place.

Under the Act, a draft Plan of Operations 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 two year period following the constitution of the BFMC. 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 the preparation of these plans.

Once a Plan of Operations has been approved by the BFCC, the BFMC must make regular 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 Plan of Operations should be reviewed and updated where necessary, on a regular 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.

2.1.3 Operational Exercise

Each BFMC must undertake at least one scenario based operational exercise each year as per the BFCC Policy for Bush Fire Management Committees.

2.2 Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

A BFRMP is established under the Act (s52). A BFRMP is a document that maps and describes the level of bush fire risk across an area and sets out treatment strategies to minimise and mitigate the risk over a five year period.

The BFRMP identifies residential, special fire protection purpose, economic, cultural and environmental assets at risk. It describes Focus Areas and a register of coordinated multi-agency treatments to reduce the risk of bush fire across a BFMC area.

BFMCs hold local workshops to identify hazard reduction priorities for a five year planning horizon to mitigate the bush fire risk to assets for the BFMC area.

Treatment strategies may include fuel management, community preparedness, ignition prevention and response planning. BFMCs must consider the number and location of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) within their area when preparing draft BFRMPs (s54).

All NSPs require ongoing treatment by the applicable landowner to ensure the asset remains viable as a place of last resort for people during a bush fire.

Under the Act, a draft plan must be submitted to the BFCC within 12 months of the establishment of a BFMC. A new draft BFRMP must be submitted within each successive five year period following the constitution of the BFMC. Reviews and amendments can be made more frequently, if required including after a major fire. A BFRMP remains in force until replaced by another BFRMP approved by the BFCC.

Once the BFRMP is approved by the BFCC, the BFMC must monitor progress towards the completion of treatments listed in the BFRMP, and the timeliness of the works. The monitoring of compliance with the plan is carried out continuously through an Annual Works Plan (AWP) (2.2.2) and Annual Report (2.5).

The BFCC Policy for Bush Fire Risk Management and its annexures sets out the detailed requirements for the preparation of a BFRMP.

2.2.1 Ignition Prevention Plan

Each BFMC must prepare an Ignition Prevention Plan (IPP) that identifies strategies to address the occurrence of deliberate bush fires within their area.

The IPP is designed to escalate prevention measures as the potential for ignition and impact on community escalates (based on the Fire Danger Rating).

Ignition types for consideration in the IPP, include suspicious and landowner-initiated ignitions.

IPPs must be reviewed annually and made available to the BFCC.

2.2.2 Annual Works Plan

In accordance with section 11 of the BFCC Policy for Bush Fire Risk Management, a BFMC must prepare an AWP for each financial year. The AWP should identify the priority treatments from the BFRMP that will be undertaken in the upcoming year.

The preparation of the AWP provides an opportunity for BFMC members to collaborate, using a tenure blind approach, and determine the most appropriate suite of treatments for their BFMC area and community each year.

In accordance with s74 of the Act, progress against the AWP must be reported at each BFMC meeting using the template provided. Monitoring progress against planned treatments allows a BFMC to self-audit its progress towards making the community and assets safer from bush fire and completing all the treatments in the BFRMP.

Any treatments identified in an AWP that are not completed, must be carried over to the AWP for the following year.

2.2.3 Neighbourhood Safer Places

A Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) is defined by section 62C of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* as "land or a building designated as a neighbourhood safer place". NSPs provide a place of last resort for people during a bush fire. All designated NSP locations for NSW are available at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au.

BFMCs are required to consider the number and location of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) within their area.

All NSPs require ongoing treatment by the applicable land owner to ensure that the asset remains viable as a place of last resort for people during a bush fire. Therefore, all NSPs within the BFMC area are required to be treated and have been included in the Fuel Management Register.

2.3 Fire Access and Fire Trail Plans

A FAFT Plan is prepared under the Act s52(3) and 54A. A FAFT Plan provides for the identification, maintenance, certification and registration of fire trails for the purposes to prevent, fight, manage or contain bush fires. The FAFT planning process considers a wide range of factors that review the adequacy of the access system for fire fighting to provide access for the protection of life and assets in the area.

The [BFCC Policy for Fire Trails](#) and the RFS Fire Trail Standards sets out the requirements for the preparations of these plans.

A FAFT Plan shall:

- ▶ be prepared in accordance with the Guideline for the Preparation of FAFT Plans;
- ▶ be prepared tenure blind;
- ▶ be prepared having regard to the relevant Bush Fire Risk Management Plan and Plan of Operations;
- ▶ be prepared in accordance with the BFCC Policy and associated Guidelines;
- ▶ include all identified trails that form the identified fire trail network; and
- ▶ be prepared and submitted in accordance with the Act.

A draft plan must be prepared and submitted within the period notified by the BFCC following the establishment of each BFMC.

A new draft plan must be submitted to the BFCC within each successive five year period. The BFMC should aim to formally review their FAFT Plan so that it is always current. A FAFT Plan remains in force until replaced by another FAFT Plan approved by the BFCC.

Reviews and amendments can be made more frequently, if required including after all major fires. The BFCC Policy for Fire Trails and the RFS Fire Trail Standards sets out the detailed requirements for the preparation of these plans.

Once the FAFT Plan is approved by the BFCC, the BFMC must make regular reference to it to ensure that all relevant parties are meeting the arrangements and provisions it contains. The monitoring of compliance with the FAFT Plan needs to be carried out continuously.

The BFMC needs to monitor and report 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 Treatment Register, which sets out a schedule for when works will be undertaken on identified priority trails.

As per the FAFT Policy, the Treatment Register must be submitted to the RFS Commissioner as part of the FAFT Plan.

2.4 Prioritise funding applications

All land managers, public and private, are obliged under the Act (s63) 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 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 prioritise 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.

BFCC Policy, Allocation Principles for Funding of Bush Fire Mitigation Works, provides detail regarding the funding arrangements.

2.5 Annual Report

As required by the Act (s51) and defined in the BFCC Policy for [Bush Fire Management Committees](#), a BFMC must report each financial year to the BFCC on:

- ▶ BFMC meetings held;
- ▶ attendance of member agencies at meetings;
- ▶ the status and implementation progress of the BFMC Plan of Operations, BFRMP (via the AWP) and FAFT Plan (in accordance with the BFCC Policy and associated Guidelines);
- ▶ operational exercises undertaken; and
- ▶ any other matters that may be requested by the BFCC.

The Annual Report must be made available to the BFCC by 1 August each year.



3. Recommendations to the 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 RFS Commissioner for bush fire danger periods and fire classification in its area.

3.1 Make recommendations regarding bush fire danger periods

The RFS Commissioner may vary the bush fire danger period for an area from that prescribed by the Act (s81-83), on their own initiative or on the recommendation of the BFMC.

BFMCs are required to formally consider whether it is appropriate to vary their bush fire danger period annually. Any recommendation from the BFMC should be provided to the RFS Commissioner in writing, and must detail the reasons for the variation requested. The RFS 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 agencies/ 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 Group has the following roles:

- ▶ make recommendations to the RFS Commissioner in accordance with BFCC Policy Management of Bush Fire Operations and as specified in the Plan of Operations; and
- ▶ be consulted regarding any recommendation for a declaration in accordance with the Act (s44) with consideration given to a potential Incident Controller and Deputy Incident Controllers.

Refer to BFCC Policy, Management of Bush Fire Operations, for further detail regarding fire classification arrangements.

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 does not 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 must not conduct or take part in fire fighting or fire prevention operations (Regulation s16).

4.3 A BFMC does not 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 do not propose works, they will and should identify and discuss 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 the Regulation (s15), 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 a BFMCs area they must be invited to nominate a member of the BFMC. If the BFCC makes any variation to membership under the Regulation, the BFMCs concerned will be advised in writing.

Invitations to eligible organisations and agencies are issued by the BFMC on behalf of 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 Regulation. They should also give consideration to which person 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 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

The Regulation (s15) provides for additional 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 Regulation, 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 or Aboriginal groups who have an interest in Country but who are not land managers or firefighting agencies.

In determining whether to allow any additional member, the BFCC will consider whether the addition is appropriate or 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 to assist the BFMC in exercising its functions. The key responsibilities of a member are outlined in Sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.7.

5.4.1 Represent an 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; and
- ▶ negotiate with other members to resolve conflicting issues and make balanced decisions.

Members of the BFMC have been selected from their organisation so that the BFMC has a broad range of expertise available to it.

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 BFMC 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, except privileged 'commercial in confidence' information.

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

Member reports must be provided in a BFCC approved template or system in advance to BFMC meetings.

5.4.3 Report back to their organisation

Members need to keep their organisation informed of the decisions of 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 effectiveness of the BFMC is limited.

5.4.4 Contribute to the work of the BFMC

Each BFMC has an Executive Officer (XO) and a Chairperson to facilitate the meetings. However, all members of the BFMC are equal, and have equal responsibilities. All members are responsible for undertaking the responsibilities of the BFMC.

If the BFMC 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 BFMC is carried out in a timely fashion, even if their organisation has a limited involvement in a 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 or RFS delegate 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 BFMC's obligations. 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. (Section 5.6 of this handbook.)

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.

The BFMC must provide a record of attendance for every BFMC meeting and make that information available to the BFCC (BFMC Annual Report).

Appendix E provides further information that may be useful in engaging BFMC members.

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 BFMC on progress made.

This includes risk treatments and other activities identified in the BFRMP, FAFT Plan, Plan of Operations and the AWP.

Members should prepare a report of their risk treatment activities in a BFCC-approved system and ensure it is made available to the XO prior to the BFMC meeting.

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. Subcommittees may be established for specific BFMC tasks (Section 12), however all members should have the opportunity to join a subcommittee.

5.5 Induction

All members, when joining a BFMC, must be given a briefing on their role on the BFMC by their own organisation. BFMC member organisations should employ a mentoring approach to assist new BFMC members.

Members must also 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; and
- ▶ the legislative framework within which the BFMC operates.

They must also be provided with either copies (or links to the locations) of the following documents:

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

An induction training package is in development to assist XOs in managing BFMC business and members understanding their role.

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.

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.

5.8 Removing members

If a member is failing to adequately participate in BFMC business, the BFMC Chairperson 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 in getting a member to attend BFMC meetings are unsuccessful, 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.

6. Chairperson

6.1 Who is the Chairperson?

The members of the BFMC elect a Chairperson annually. The BFMC may also choose to elect a Deputy Chairperson at this time. The Chairperson is a member of the BFMC, but cannot be the XO or a member referred to in section 15(2) (a) (ii), (b) or (c) of the Regulation. 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; and
- ▶ A member approved by the BFCC under section 15(h) of the Regulation.

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 a member. The Chairperson presides at BFMC meetings and signs correspondence. Under the directive of the Chairperson, the XO can sign certain correspondence as agreed to by the BFMC.

The Chairperson must sign all correspondence to the BFCC. In addition, the Chairperson must also:

- ▶ 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;
- ▶ determine the agenda for each meeting of the BFMC, noting that the XO will assist with this task;
- ▶ ensure BFMC meetings are held in a timely manner and that required documents and reports are submitted by due dates;
- ▶ provide leadership to the BFMC in its deliberations and facilitate consensus outcomes;
- ▶ establish and foster a cooperative working relationship within the BFMC;
- ▶ approve the attendance of guests and observers at the BFMC meeting; and

- ▶ ensure meetings are effective, giving everyone a fair and equal chance to be heard and participate in the deliberations of the BFMC. 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 RFS or Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW), as specified by the Regulation (s19).

7.1 Role and responsibilities

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.

The XO must:

- ▶ prepare agendas, minutes and BFMC correspondence;
- ▶ distribute reports and relevant information;
- ▶ monitor compliance with legislation, policies and plans and advise the Chairperson;
- ▶ compile reports and business papers;
- ▶ book, prepare and arrange meetings;
- ▶ collate apologies;
- ▶ maintain and manage BFMC files and records;
- ▶ maintain membership records, contact details and record attendance;
- ▶ distribute BFMC correspondence;
- ▶ liaise with adjoining BFMC XOs and NSW RFS Area Command;
- ▶ distribute copies of correspondence from the BFCC as soon as it is received;

- ▶ provide induction material for new members;
- ▶ undertake additional tasks as identified in BFCC Policy.

Appendix C provides templates that will assist the XO to manage the business of the BFMC.

7.1.1 Assist Chairperson

The XO assists 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; and
- ▶ 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 BFMC is responsible. The XO needs to advise the BFMC what it needs to achieve throughout the year and suggest timetables to ensure the BFMC's responsibilities are met.

It is helpful for the BFMC if the XO can make it very clear what the BFMC 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.

The XO needs to be able to answer queries on BFMC business. The material contained in this Handbook should assist with most inquiries, however the XO should seek further advice from the BFCC where required.

The XO needs to pass on all information to BFMC members. 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 BFMC.

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.

It is essential that all XOs strive to ensure that they work within the role set by the BFCC and described in BFCC Policy. Other BFMC members must respect and adhere to the aspects of the XO position.

While the XO is responsible for a number of tasks, they do not necessarily have to do everything themselves. XOs can use the resources they have available from their own organisation and can also ask other BFMC members to assist with tasks.

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 BFMC. The Chairperson speaks on behalf of the BFMC, 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, for example sending out correspondence.

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 BFMC 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 BFMC. 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.

An XO may make arrangements to assist them in their role and can ask other BFMC members and resources within their own organisation to assist with managing workload (Section 7.2 of this Handbook), but this must not be confused with delegation.

Further, it is important to note that in accordance with the Act (s34 and s35), a person acting as the Fire Control Officer, including the Deputy Fire Control Officer in the absence of 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.

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.

7.5 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 Chairperson, an observer or guest may be invited by the BFMC 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; and
- ▶ 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 should be managed by clearly documenting the status of attendees at each BFMC meeting.



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 outlined 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; and
- ▶ openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

The nature of cross representation in 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 for an effective BFMC. Appendix D provides additional guidance for BFMCs on good meeting practice.

9. Meetings

Most BFMC business is conducted within meetings. Meetings may be in person or online. The frequency of meetings needs to be sufficient to deal with BFMC business, and to meet statutory requirements, objectives and other obligations.

At least two meetings must be held each year. The need for more meetings may vary between BFMCs. 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 each year.

To facilitate an efficient and effective working environment, a calendar of BFMC meetings should be prepared and distributed prior to the start of each year.

Having determined the frequency of meetings, it is preferable to forecast the meeting dates for the upcoming 12 month period and ensure the schedule is made available to all BFMC members (Appendix C).

To maximise opportunities for member attendance, consideration should be given to the days and times of meetings (Appendix E). The XO should also consider the schedule of adjacent BFMCs that have shared members.

Members must be given adequate notice of any changes to meetings dates.

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 online, and their presence is to be counted into the quorum.

The BFMC should be cautious regarding 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 BFMC is not functioning in the spirit of cooperation.

If the number of members making apologies prior to a scheduled meeting leaves the BFMC 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 online, 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 members, collated by the CO and approved by the Chairperson.

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

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

9.6 Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

In line with the NSW Public Service Commission website *Delivering an Acknowledgement of Country*, it is appropriate for an Acknowledgement of Country to occur at the opening of each BFMC 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 BFMC. Should this offer be declined, the Chairperson or a nominated person should offer the Acknowledgement of Country.

An example of a statement of Acknowledgement of Country is:

"I acknowledge (Traditional Custodians name) on the lands that we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today."

10. Decision Making by Consensus

BFMCs must ensure that all decisions are made by consensus. Consensus is a decision that is 'consented' to by all the members of the BFMC. '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; or
- ▶ 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.

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 BFMC support staff from the RFS.

If consensus still cannot be reached, the issue must be referred to the BFCC for advice and determination. When writing to the BFCC, the BFMC Chairperson must document the discussion and clearly highlight the differences of opinion.

Consensus decision-making requires the BFMC 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 BFMC to:

- ▶ explore, understand and respect a diverse range of views (including limitations) leading to practical solutions;
- ▶ be well-informed and make quality decisions; and
- ▶ 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 BFMC 'owns the decision'. Some of the key principles that underpin decision-making by consensus include:

- ▶ members develop and agree on the BFMC's decision-making process;
- ▶ issues being considered are outcome-driven and relevant to all interests represented on the BFMC;
- ▶ 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 BFMC'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; and
- ▶ 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. The BFCC Policy for Dispute Avoidance / Dispute Resolution provides guidance on 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.

Issues that cannot be resolved at the BFMC should be referred to the BFCC for advice and possible determination.

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 must 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 BFMC 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.

At least one BFMC member should be on the subcommittee to ensure objectives are being met and the work remains in scope.

Appendix F 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 BFMC 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 Bush Fire Management Committees.

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. 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.

14.1 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.

A template for meeting minutes is included in *Appendix C* of this Handbook.

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.

As 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 (24/1, 24/2.... 25/1 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.

15. BFMC Records and Files

Records and Files must be maintained for each BFMC using an online BFCC approved system that is accessible by all BFMC members and BFCC members. This includes agendas, minutes (draft and adopted), papers, reports, tabled documents, correspondence in and out (including emails) and current Plans.

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*.

15.1 Membership list and contact details

It is necessary for the running of the BFMC to record the names and contact details of BFMC members. These details will be made available to the BFCC, organisation staff assisting the BFCC (at present, the RFS), and BFMC members through an online BFCC approved system.

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.

16. Dealing with sensitive information

All proceedings in the BFMC are confidential until the BFMC has agreed otherwise, where the provider of the information advises that it is publicly available and no restrictions apply to its release or under the provisions of *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

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.

16.1 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.

16.2 Privacy and personal information

BFMCs are bound by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIPA) regarding 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:

- ▶ the information is collected for a lawful purpose that is directly related to a function or activity of the organisation; and
- ▶ 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 PIPPA for more information.

17. 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 the Chairperson on behalf of a BFMC to issue media releases or comment. These must be approved and signed by the Chairperson, not the XO. RFS Media are able to assist the Chairperson and will consult with media units within other agencies.

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 Secretariat who will source appropriate advice..

The BFMC may wish to consider having an open public forum or targeted engagement sessions, during periods of public exhibition of BFRMPs 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.

18. 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 BFMC's work, such as printers, and meeting rooms.

19. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting on Performance

The RFS Commissioner may conduct a performance audit of the implementation of bush fire risk management plans in accordance with s62A of the Act.

19.1 Annual performance evaluation

BFMCs need to undertake an internal review of their performance on an annual basis. The BFMC should check that they have met all their functional requirements.

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

19.2 External evaluation of performance

BFMCs 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 BFMC.



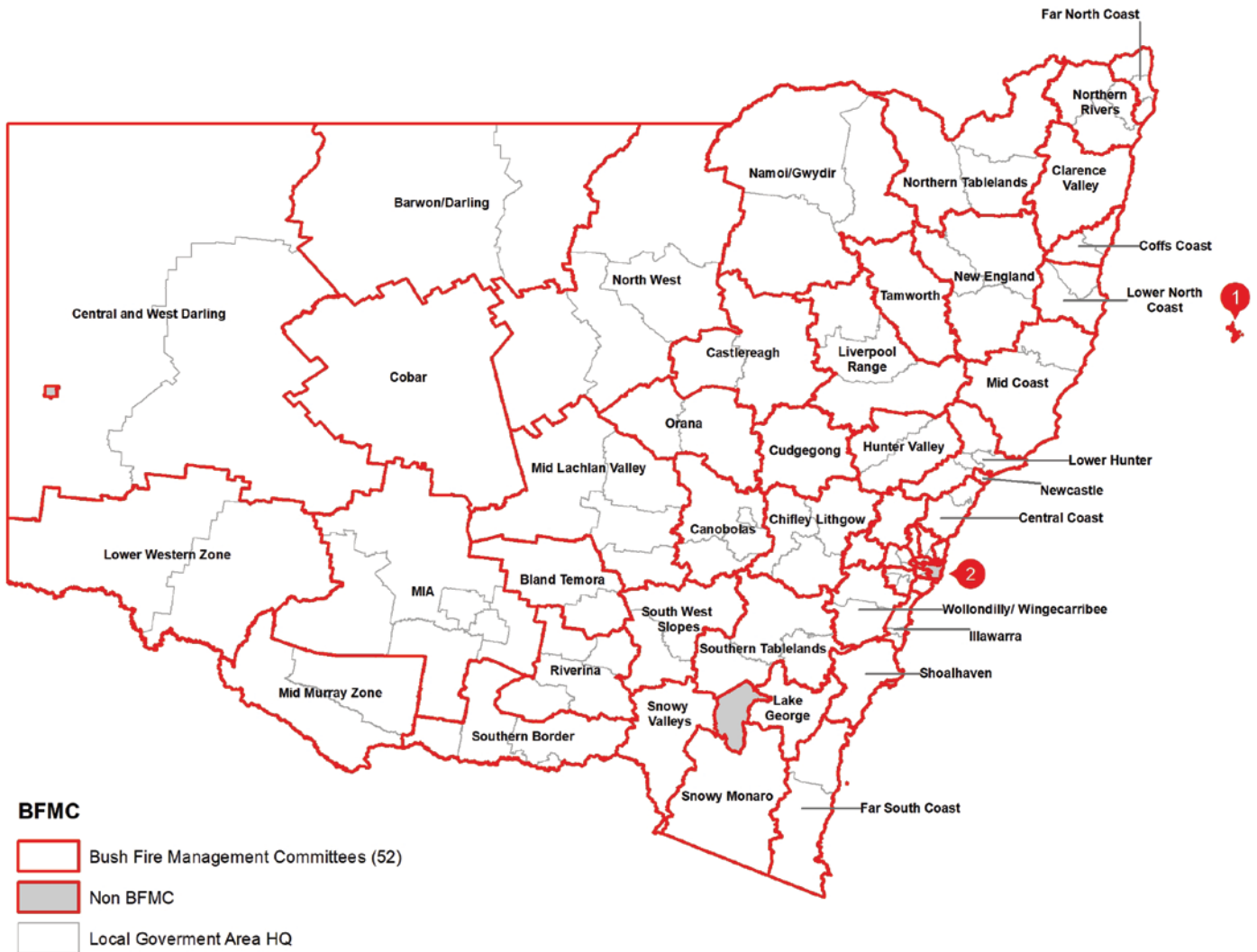
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APPENDIX

A

NSW BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES



This map is current as of February 2024.

BFMC

LGA

Barwon/Darling

Brewarrina - Bourke

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 and West Darling

Central Darling - Unincorporated

Central Coast

Central Coast - Lake Macquarie

Chifley Lithgow

Bathurst - Oberon - Lithgow

Clarence Valley

Clarence Valley

Cobar

Cobar

Coffs Coast

Bellingen - Coffs Harbour

Cudjiegong

Mid-Western

Cumberland

Fairfield – Blacktown – Penrith

Far North Coast

Ballina - Tweed - Byron

Far South Coast

Bega Valley - Eurobodalla

Hawkesbury

Hawkesbury

Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai

Ku-ring-gai - Hornsby

Hunter Valley

Singleton - Muswellbrook

Hunters Hill/Lane Cove/Parramatta/Ryde

Hunters Hill - Lane Cove - Parramatta - Ryde

Illawarra

Wollongong - Kiama - Shellharbour

Lake George

Queanbeyan - Palerang

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

Mosman/North Sydney/Willoughby

Mosman - North Sydney - Willoughby

Namoi/Gwydir

Gwydir - Moree Plains - Narrabri

New England

Uralla – Walcha - Armidale

Newcastle

Newcastle

North West

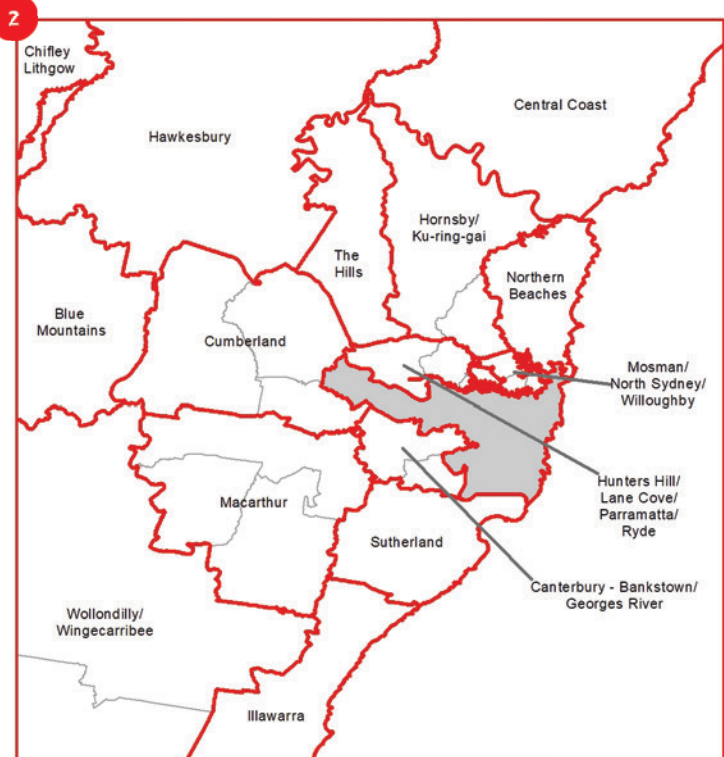
Coonamble – Bogan – Walgett - Warren

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 Border

Albury - Berrigan - Federation - Greater Hume

Southern Tablelands

Goulburn Mulwaree – Upper Lachlan – Yass Valley

Sutherland

Sutherland

Tamworth

Tamworth

The Hills

The Hills

Wollondilly/Wingecarribee

Wollondilly - Wingecarribee

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.

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

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

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

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/>

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>

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/>

Fire and Rescue NSW

Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) is the NSW government organisation responsible for managing fire emergencies in the major cities, metropolitan areas and some 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 3,546 permanent and 3,212 on-call firefighters, with approximately 4,660 community fire unit members and 515 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 a regional-focused NSW Government agency delivering quality customer service to farmers, landholders and the wider community. Local Land Service are also responsible for management of a network of Crown land Travelling Stock Reserves in New South Wales.

There are 11 LLS regions in NSW, 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/>

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 throughout our state.

NPWS manages more than 8 million hectares of land, approximately 10% of NSW, which consists of a variety of protected areas, including National Parks, Nature Reserves, World Heritage, rainforests, beaches, alpine ecosystems and sites of great cultural and historic significance.

As a 'fire fighting authority' NPWS has a statutory role in assisting other NSW fire fighting agencies and National Park neighbours in the management of bushfires. NPWS is committed to the work that the BFCC and BFMCs deliver to the NSW community.

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

Crown Lands

Crown Lands is responsible for the sustainable and commercial management of Crown land. It also includes lands in the Western Division formerly managed by the Western Lands Commissioner.

Covering approximately 42% 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 Crownland 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>

Transport for NSW

Transport for NSW is the lead organisation of the NSW Transport cluster (replacing Roads and Maritime Service in 2019). 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/>

Nature Conservation Council (NCC)

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) was established in 1955 to provide a shared voice for community environmental organisations 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 121 Local Aboriginal Land Councils in NSW.

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

Property and Development NSW

Property and Development NSW is the central property agency for the NSW government, focusing 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 and Development NSW is the brand name encompassing the entities of the former Property NSW, 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/>



APPENDIX



TEMPLATES

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1. BFMC AGENDA TEMPLATE

[Name]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting: YYYY / Number (e.g. 2024/1)

Convened by:

Attendees:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Location: Place, address, room

Date and Time:

Minutes by:



Table 1: Agenda Items

Agenda Item 1	Responsible
Welcomes and Acknowledgement of Country	Chairperson
Agenda Item 2	Responsible
Apologies	Chairperson
Agenda Item 3	Responsible
Disclosure of Interests	Chairperson
Agenda Item 4	Responsible
Confirmation of Minutes of [Year/Number] held [date previous meeting]	Chairperson
Agenda Item 5	Responsible
Business arising from previous minutes – Open Action Items Table 2	Chairperson
Agenda Item 6	Responsible
Subcommittee Reports (list Subcommittees)	(List Subcommittee Conveners)
Agenda Item 7	Responsible
Organisation Reports	(List Members)
Agenda Item 8	Responsible
Annual Works Plan	BFMC members



Agenda Item 9	Responsible
Fire Access and Fire Trail Register	BFMC members

Agenda Item 10	Responsible
Grant Funding	BFMC members

Agenda Item 11	Responsible
Seasonal Outlook	XO

Agenda Item 12	Responsible
General Business	Chair

Agenda Item 13	Responsible
Close	Chair

Next Meeting:	Date:

Table 2: Open Action Items from the Last Meeting

Reference No.	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:

Reference No.	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:



Reference No.	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:

Reference No.	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:

Table 3: Documents to be tabled

Document title	Author	Date



Table 4: Correspondence Register

[TITLE HERE]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

Date to

Correspondence in:

No.	From	Date Received	Subject	Document Reference
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Correspondence out:

No.	Subject	Date Receive	Addressed To	Document Reference
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				



2. BUSINESS PAPER TEMPLATE

[NAME]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Title:

Purpose: To note Action Assign Endorse

Background:

.....

.....

Current position:

Recommendation:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Attachments:

Name: Type here
.....

Title: Type here
.....

Contact number: Type here
.....



3. ORGANISATION REPORT TEMPLATE

[NAME]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Reference: YYYY / Number (e.g. 2024/1)

Date:

[Name of Organisation] Progress Report

Agenda Item 7	Responsible
Action Items	Provide an overview of the status of any BFMC Action Items assigned to your organisation
Bush Fire Risk Management Plan	Provide an outline of any treatment activities completed since the last BFMC meeting (or refer to completed treatments as recorded in BFCC approved online system). Provide an overview of any planned activities coming up.
Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan	Summarise any fire trail works that have been completed since the last BFMC meeting (or refer to completed treatments as recorded in BFCC approved online system). Provide an overview of any planned activities coming up.
Plan of Operations	Provide an update of any significant operational / response and pre-incident planning activities that have occurred since the last BFMC meeting. Advise of any significant changes in personnel and contacts as listed in the Plan of Operations appendices.
Training / Joint Initiatives	Include information on any past or upcoming training / joint initiatives that are relevant to the BFMC
Infrastructure	Provide an overview of any changes / enhancements to infrastructure that would be of interest to the BFMC
General	Summarise any other matters that would relate to BFMC business (e.g. tenure changes, new relevant organisation policy or plans)



4. MINUTES TEMPLATE

[NAME]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting: YYYY / Number (e.g. 2024/1)

Convened by: Chairs name – Organisation

Location: Place, address, room

Date and time: Day, date, time

Minutes by: Name – organization

Table 1: Attendance Record

Members (alternate)	Organisation	Present	Apology	Absent

Observers / Support	Organisation	Present	Apology	Absent



Table 2: Documents Referred to in the Meeting

Document title	Author	Date

Minutes

Agenda Item 1	Responsible
Welcomes and Acknowledgement of Country	Chairperson

Agenda Item 2	Responsible
Apologies	Chairperson

Agenda Item 3	Responsible
Disclosure of Interests	Chairperson

Agenda Item 4	Responsible
Confirmation of minutes of [YEAR/NUMBER] held [DATE PREVIOUS MEETING]	Chairperson

Agenda Item 5	Responsible
Business arising from previous minutes – Open Action Items Table 2	Chairperson



Table 3. Outstanding Action Items From Meeting [YYYY/Number]

Reference No. (Year/Meeting/#)	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:

Reference No. (Year/Meeting/#)	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:

Reference No. (Year/Meeting/#)	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:

Reference No. (Year/Meeting/#)	
Item Description:	Due date:
Status:	Responsible:



Agenda Item 6	Responsible
Subcommittee Reports	Subcommittee Conveners

Agenda Item 7	Responsible
Organisation Reports	BFMC member Organisations

Agenda Item 8	Responsible
Annual Works Plan	BFMC members

Agenda Item 9	Responsible
Fire Access and Fire Trail Register	BFMC members

Agenda Item 10	Responsible
Grant Funding	BFMC members



Agenda Item 11	Responsible
Seasonal Outlook	XO

Agenda Item 12	Responsible
General Business	Chair

Agenda Item 13	Responsible
Close	Chair

Table 4. Updated Action Items

Ref No.	Item Description	Responsible	Due Date	Status
YYYY/meeting/#				

Table 5. Next meeting

Date	Start time	Finish time	Location
	00.00	0.00	



5. BFMC FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE

[NAME]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Address all correspondence to: Executive Officer Address here.

Type name and surname

Your reference

Type organisation

Our reference

Type address

Phone number

DD/MM/YY

Email address

Dear.. [TYPE TITLE AND SURNAME], ...

[TYPE SUBJECT OF LETTER]

[TYPE BEGINNING OF LETTER]

Yours sincerely,

[TYPE NAME AND SURNAME]

[TYPE POSITION]



6. INVITATION FOR BFMC MEMBERSHIP LETTER (SAMPLE)



[NAME]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Address all correspondence to: Executive Officer Address here.

Type name and surname

Your reference

Type organisation

Our reference

Type address

Phone number

DD/MM/YY

Email address

Dear [TYPE TITLE AND SURNAME],

RE: Invitation for membership of [NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee

I am writing to invite you to nominate a representative from your organisation for the [NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC).

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.

The BFMC is responsible for preparing, reviewing and updating a Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, the Operations Coordination Plan and Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan, within the local area.

The Rural Fires Regulation 2013 states that a person nominated by [INSERT RELEVANT SECTION OF THE REGULATIONS SECTION 14 FOR THE ORGANISATION YOU ARE WRITING TO] located in the Bush Fire Management Committee's area, is eligible to join the BFMC.

Your organisation is not, at present, represented on the [NAME] BFMC and as such I would like to invite and encourage you to nominate a representative to join the committee.

The next general meeting will be held on [DATE] at [PLACE] at [ADDRESS]. If your organisation would like to have representation on the [NAME] BFMC, it would be appreciated if you could notify the Executive Officer prior to the above date so that appropriate correspondence and notification of events can be sent accordingly.

Your assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any enquiries or would like further information about the BFMC and its operations, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

[NAME]

Executive Officer/Chair

[NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee



7. BFMC WELCOME LETTER (SAMPLE)

[NAME]

BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Address all correspondence to: Executive Officer Address here.

Type name and surname	Your reference
Type organisation	Our reference
Type address	
Phone number	DD/MM/YY
Email address	

Dear [TYPE TITLE AND SURNAME],

Re: Welcome to the [NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee

May I take this opportunity to welcome you to the [Name] Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC), as the member representing the [ORGANISATION].

As with the previous {[ORGANISATION]} representatives I am certain we will continue the productive and collaborative relationship that has existed in the past and thank you for your willingness to be involved. We welcome the participation of {[ORGANISATION]} on the BFMC and are looking forward to your contribution to the work of the BFMC.

The Committee meets [INSERT NUMBER] times a year and you will receive confirmation of the meeting date, time and location, together with a copy of the agenda, prior to the meeting.

The remaining scheduled BFMC meetings for this year are [DATE]. Please find the minutes of the last BFMC meeting, which has been enclosed to this correspondence to provide some background.

Also enclosed is a copy of the BFMC Charter, which will provide an introduction to the BFMC and your role as a member of the Committee.

I would also like to direct you to the BFMC Handbook. This document contains additional information that will further assist you in understanding your role and expands on the information that is provided in the BFMC Charter. The BFMC Handbook is downloadable on the RFS website.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for a briefing on the role of the Committee, its Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, Plan of Operations, Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan, and the matters currently being dealt with.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

Executive Officer

[NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee



8. BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE STANDARD EMAIL TEXT (SAMPLE)

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

Call for agenda items should be sent at least of 1 month prior to the meeting of the BFMC.

Dear **[NAME]** BFMC members and delegates,

Please advise if you have any agenda items you would like added to the agenda for the upcoming (Name) BFMC meeting to be held at [time, date, location]. Suggestions for items will need to be received by [date] in order to be included in the agenda.

Can you please confirm your availability for this meeting and advise if you seek to have any observers or guests attend.

Thank you,

[NAME]

Executive Officer/Chair

[NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee

Standard Email Text – Distribution of Agendas and Business Papers.

Agendas and business papers should be sent a minimum of 7 days prior to the meeting of the BFMC.

Dear **[NAME]** BFMC members and delegates,

Attached is the agenda, business papers and related documentation for the next **[NAME]** BFMC meeting to be held at **[TIME, DATE, LOCATION]**. Please review this documentation as well as any action items assigned to your organisation and ensure you are in a position to discuss these matters at the meeting.

Draft minutes of the previous meeting [and any other supporting material] are also attached for your review and comment.

If you haven't already, it would be appreciated if you could confirm your availability for this meeting along with the attendance of any observers or guests by close of business today.

Thank you,

[NAME]

Executive Officer

[NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee

BFMC Calendar (*Sample*)



9. Bush Fire Management Committee Schedule

[INSERT NAME XXX] Bush Fire Management Committee Schedule

Establishment date of BFMC: [INSERT DATE XXX]

When	What	Who	Completed
YEARLY			
Start or end of the year	Prepare 12 months calendar of BFMC meeting dates	BFMC (Executive Officer)	
Start of the Year (or near the establishment date of the Committee)	Elect Chairperson and deputy Chairperson	BFMC	
Start of the Year (or near the establishment date of the Committee)	Contact those organisations eligible for BFMC membership and issue an invitation to provide a member to the BFMC. This should be done in writing.	BFMC (Chairperson / Executive Officer)	
(INSERT DATE)	BFMC Meeting~ YYYY/1	BFMC	
March	Consider Variation to Extend the Bush Fire Danger Period	BFMC (Subcommittee)	
(INSERT DATE)	(Name) Subcommittee Meeting	(Name) Subcommittee members	
(INSERT DATE)	BFMC Meeting YYYY/2	BFMC	
June 30	BFMC Annual Works Plan endorsed by BFMC	BFMC	
(INSERT DATE)	BFMC Meeting YYYY/3	BFMC	
August 1	BFMC Annual Report endorsed by BFMC and made available to BFCC	BFMC	
(INSERT DATE)	(Name) Subcommittee Meeting	(Name) Subcommittee members	
August 31	Pre-season Checklist made available to BFCC FAFT Plan implementation report to BFCC.	BFMC	



When	What	Who	Completed
Prior to Bush Fire Danger Period	Operational exercise undertaken Operations Coordination Manual prepared Fire Trail Treatment Register reviewed Ignition Prevention Plan reviewed	BFMC	
(INSERT DATE)	BFMC Meeting YYYY/4	BFMC	

EVERY 2 YEARS

The dates for submission are based on the establishment date of your BFMC	Prepare and submit Plan of Operations	BFMC
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The dates for submission are based on the establishment date of your BFMC	Prepare and submit Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan	BFMC
--	--	------

EVERY 5 YEARS

Submission dates are based on the establishment of your BFMC	Prepare and submit Bush Fire Risk Management Plan	BFMC
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8 PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD MEETING PRACTICE

1. Be punctual and prepared

- ▶ Arrive to the meeting and return from any breaks on-time.
- ▶ Ensure you are prepared to contribute to the BFMC 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 during the meeting.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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 BFMC 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 BFMC 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 meeting.

8. Document outcomes and share learnings

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

APPENDIX



BFMC MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Good communication and engagement practice

Although membership is not compulsory, the BFCC encourages all eligible agencies and organisations to participate in BFMC business.

BFMCs may need to be flexible and consider alternative engagement methods outside of formal BFMC meeting processes. This may be particularly important when engaging with member agencies and organisations who may not have a current representative to attend meetings but whose values, views, interests or management responsibilities may be impacted by bush fire management activities and the decisions of the BFMC.

This Appendix is designed to provide general guidance to BFMCs on good communication and engagement practice to maximise opportunities for member agencies and organisations to actively and equitably participate in BFMC business.

Barriers to active participation

Conflict with paid employment or other responsibilities

Many agency representatives are paid for their time as part of their job. However, representatives from volunteer-based or non-for-profit organisations who are not paid for their time to attend BFMC meetings may find it difficult to participate during standard business hours due to loss of wages caused by the need to take time from paid employment to travel and attend. This increases the risk of low participation in BFMC processes.

Communication breakdown

BFMC representatives may change within an agency or organisation due to leave or staff turnover. There is the potential for information and contacts to be lost in transition.

Cultural safety

The location or timing of a BFMC activity may affect how a member responds to BFMC engagement attempts.

Timing

Scheduling BFMC meetings at particular times and dates e.g. during school holidays or culturally significant events.

Accessibility

The location of meetings is important and can impact participants' level of comfort and their ability to attend. Some BFMCs cover large geographical distances meaning some representatives may have to travel far to

attend meetings in-person.

Consultation fatigue

Consultation fatigue may occur when a member sits on multiple BFMCs or other stakeholder groups.

Strategies to support good communication and engagement

- ▶ **Don't rely on a single method of communication** – Use a variety of communication and engagement methods – don't rely on a single email to get your message across. Lead with a phone call then follow up with an email to ensure your message has been received by the right person.
- ▶ **Be flexible** – consider alternative engagement methods outside of formal BFMC meeting processes. Participate in community meetings rather than asking people to join pre-determined BFMC processes.
- ▶ **Consider varying the day and time that meetings are held and the location** – maximise opportunities for representatives to attend at a time that suits their work and/or caring responsibilities.
- ▶ **Set realistic timeframes** – communicate and allow members adequate time to report back to their colleagues and communities.
- ▶ **Hold combination of face-to-face and online meetings** – tailor communication to your audience, in terms of materials, methods and communication channels. Providing alternatives to traditional in-person meetings allows people who have to travel or have other commitments flexibility, while the face-to-face gives option can support people with poor telecommunications quality.
- ▶ **Be open and transparent about the decision-making process** – set expectations about what is in and out of scope for a particular issue. The BFCC requires that BFMCs ensure all decisions are made by consensus.
- ▶ **Be mindful of consultation fatigue** – make efforts to find out who is already engaging with agencies or organisations not currently sending representatives to BFMC meetings. Seek opportunities to join a conversation or activity that is already taking place, particularly where you are consulting the same stakeholder groups.
- ▶ **Close the loop** - plan to communicate with representatives on how their input has been considered in the project or decision.

APPENDIX



SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE BFMC

Subcommittees of the BFMC

A BFMC may choose to establish a subcommittee, or subcommittees to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Rural Fires Act 1997, the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) Policy and the BFMC Charter. A subcommittee may bring together specific BFMC members (or subject matter experts from BFMC member organisations) to assist the BFMC with the development and monitoring of the following:

- ▶ Draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan;
- ▶ Draft Fire Access Fire Trail Plan;
- ▶ Draft Plan of Operations;
- ▶ Annual Works Plan;
- ▶ Funding Applications; and
- ▶ Annual Ignition Prevention Plan.

Not all BFMCs will require a subcommittee, however every BFMC should consider whether the formation of a subcommittee would improve the functionality of the BFMC. The BFMC may be able to resolve many issues itself or refer it to the appropriate member(s) to investigate and report back to the BFMC.

If a BFMC decides to establish a subcommittee, it is recommended that the number of subcommittees are kept to a minimum. The creation of multiple subcommittees that consist of the same representatives should be avoided as it may cause unnecessary complexity and confusion. However, where there is variation in the membership and expertise required to address different BFMC matters, the formation of multiple subcommittees may be necessary.

Two examples of subcommittees are provided in this appendix, however each BFMC should determine a subcommittee structure that best assists their BFMC.

Example 1: Bush Fire Risk Management Subcommittee

Scope

- ▶ Bush Fire Risk Management Plan;
- ▶ Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan;
- ▶ Fuel Management through the Annual Works Plan;
- ▶ BFMC Annual Report;
- ▶ Neighbourhood Safer Places and Community Protection Plans; and
- ▶ Funding applications.

Membership

All Land Management Agencies should be represented on this subcommittee to ensure that draft Plans are locally relevant, practical and take into account the views of key stakeholders.

Meeting Frequency

During the preparation of Plans, the subcommittee may be required to meet regularly. Following the approval and endorsement of Plans, this subcommittee may meet three to four times a year to plan and coordinate AWP, monitor and review Plans and prepare the Annual Report.

Example 2: Operations Subcommittee

Scope:

- ▶ Plan of Operations;
- ▶ Pre-season Checklist;
- ▶ Operational Exercise; and
- ▶ Ignition Prevention Plan.

Membership

Representation from fire authorities and NSW Police Service would be critical to the functioning of this subcommittee. Membership may need to be restricted due to the sensitive nature of some of the issues to be dealt with by this subcommittee (e.g. arson).

Other organisations could be invited along to these subcommittee meetings as required.



Meeting Frequency

This subcommittee may meet at least twice a year. Once before and once after the BDFP. Additional meetings may be required during the development of the Plan of Operations or during the BDFP to address any specific operational issues that arise.

Governance arrangements

Establishment of a subcommittee and the nominated members should be documented in the BFMC meeting minutes. As outlined in Section 12, the subcommittee must only consist of members of the BFMC or BFMC organisation representatives that have been nominated by their BFMC member.

At least one BFMC member should be involved in the subcommittee to oversee its activities to ensure objectives are being met and work remains within scope. A Convener must be appointed for each subcommittee. A subcommittee can investigate issues, develop draft documents or programs and make recommendations for the BFMC to consider. However, any decision-making must be performed by the BFMC.

There will be occasions where a subcommittee must deal with sensitive information in undertaking its role. Members are subject to the same confidentiality arrangement as the BFMC, which are detailed in Section 16.2 of this handbook. In some instances, it may be appropriate for specific agencies to hold detailed discussions independent of the subcommittee and report back as required.

Subcommittees should only engage in discussions on matters that have been referred to it by the BFMC. To ensure that the subcommittee is clear on its role and purpose, a Terms of Reference needs to be prepared and approved by the BFMC.

The Terms of Reference should clearly outline matters that are within the scope of the subcommittee and identify the official membership of the group. A standard template for a subcommittee Terms of Reference is attached to this Appendix.

The Convener

The Convener for the subcommittee has a similar role to the BFMC XO, which is detailed in Section 7 of this handbook. The Convener can be anyone endorsed by the BFMC. The role includes the following duties:

- ▶ Book, prepare and arrange meetings;
- ▶ Collate apologies;
- ▶ Prepare meeting agendas and minutes;
- ▶ Compile reports and any business papers for submission to the BFMC;
- ▶ Maintain and manage subcommittee files and records;
- ▶ Maintain membership records and contact details; and
- ▶ Distribute any relevant correspondence.

The arrangements in place for BFMC meetings as outlined in Section 9 of the BFMC Handbook should also be employed for subcommittee. Standard templates for subcommittee agenda, minutes and progress reports have been attached to this Appendix.

A report to the BFMC, which summarises the activities of the subcommittee since the last BFMC meeting, should be submitted to the BFMC at each meeting. This report should include copies of the agenda(s), minutes and any relevant documents tabled with the subcommittee. Where a recommendation is to be made by the subcommittee to the BFMC, a separate paper is to be prepared by the Convener, consistent with the template provided in Appendix C.

Whilst minutes should be prepared for each subcommittee meeting, they do not need to be a detailed appraisal of discussions that took place. However, they should provide some context, reasoning and background to any recommendations made by the subcommittee.



TERMS OF REFERENCE

[NAME] SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE [NAME] BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Role of the Subcommittee

The [NAME] Subcommittee has been established to carry out the following tasks:

- ▶ [INSERT TASK – e.g. prepare draft Bush Fire Risk Management Plan]
- ▶ [INSERT TASK – e.g. prepare draft Fire Access and Fire Trails Plan]

This subcommittee may also be requested by the BFMC to investigate and provide advice on specific matters relevant to the above tasks.

Membership

Membership of the [NAME] Subcommittee is outline below. At least one BFMC member must be represented on the subcommittee to oversee its activities.

Table 1: Membership of the [NAME] Subcommittee

Name	BFMC Member or BFMC Organisation Representative	Organisation	Contact Details
Convener -			

Meetings

Members of the [NAME] subcommittee will meet on a regular basis to address matters that have been referred to it by the BFMC. Dates of meetings are to be determined at the start of each year in consultation with subcommittee members.

A minimum of two weeks notice should be provided if meeting dates change or additional meetings are added.

Reporting

Following each meeting of the [NAME] subcommittee, a summary report is to be prepared by the Convener and submitted to the BFMC at its next meeting.

The report must include a copy of the agenda(s), minutes and any relevant documents tabled at the subcommittee meeting.

Where a recommendation is to be made by the subcommittee for BFMC consideration, a separate paper is to be prepared by the Convener.



[NAME] Bush Fire Management Committee

Agenda Item XXX

[Name] subcommittee Progress Report

Purpose:

To note

Recommendation:

a. That the [NAME] BFMC receives and notes the [NAME] subcommittee Progress Report.

Background:

Current Position:

Attachment(s):

Name:

Title:

Contact number:



[NAME] SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE [NAME] BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting: [MEETING NUMBER/YEAR]
Convened by: [CONVENER NAME - ORGANIZATION]
Location: [PLACE, ADDRESS, ROOM]
Date and time: [DAY, DATE, TIME]
Minutes by: [NAME – ORGANIZATION]

AGENDA

Table 1: Agenda Items

No.	Agenda item	Responsible
1	Welcome/ Acknowledgement of Country	Convener
2	Apologies	
3	Disclosure of Interests	Convener
4	Confirmation of Minutes of #/YEAR [INSERT # OF LAST MEETING /YEAR] meeting held [DATE PREVIOUS MEETING]	Convener
5	Business arising from previous minutes a. General b. Action Items	Convener
6	[INCLUDE ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED AT THIS MEETING AND ADD ADDITIONAL ROWS AS REQUIRED]	
7	Close	Convener

Next meeting: [DAY, DATE AND TIME]



Table 2. Open Action Items from the Last Meeting

Ref.	Item Description	Responsible	Due Date	Status

Table 3. Documents to be tabled

Item Description	Responsible	Status
BFMC Subcommittee Minutes	BFMC Subcommittee	
Draft Focus Areas for Bush Fire Risk Management Plan	Convener	
Draft Annual Works Plan	BFMC Subcommittee	
FAFT Plan	BFMC	



[NAME] SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE [NAME] BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting: [MEETING NUMBER/YEAR]
Convened by: [CONVENOR'S NAME - ORGANIZATION]
Location: [PLACE, ADDRESS, ROOM]
Date and time: [DAY, DATE, TIME]
Minutes by: [NAME – ORGANIZATION]

Table 1: Attendance Record

Members (alternate):	Organisation	Present	Apology	Absent
	NSW Rural Fire Service			
	Fire and Rescue NSW			
	National Parks and Wildlife Service			
	Forestry Corporation of NSW			
	[NAME] Council			
	Department of Industry – Crown Lands			
	NSW Farmers Association			
	Nature Conservation Council			
Observers / Support	Organisation	Present	Apology	Absent
	NSW Rural Fire Service			
	[NAME] Council			

Table 2. Documents Referred to in the Meeting

Document title	Author	Date
BFMC Minutes		
2024 BFRMP		
2024 FAFT Plan		



Minutes

Item 1	Welcomes and Acknowledgement of Country	Chairperson
Item 2	Apologies	Chairperson
As outlined above		
Item 3	Disclosure of Interests	Chairperson
Item 4	Confirmation of Minutes of #/YEAR [insert # of last meeting /year] meeting held [date previous meeting]	Chairperson
Item 5	Business arising from previous minutes – General and Action Items	Chairperson

Table 3. Action Items From [DATE] Meeting

Ref No.	Item Description	Responsible	Due Date	Status	Subcommittee Update

Updates have been provided on the following items:

01/18-3 Action Name

Update provided

01/19-1 Action Name

Update provided

Item 5	Matters that arise	Chairperson
Item 6	Close	



Table 4. Updated Action Items

Ref No.	Item Description	Responsible	Due Date	Status

Table 5. Next meeting

Date	Start time	Finish time	Location



APPENDIX



LEGISLATION, POLICY AND USEFUL LINKS

Rural Fires Act 1997

Part 3 Division 2 Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-065#pt.3-div.2>

Part 3 Division 3 Bush Fire Management Committees

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-065#pt.3-div.3>

Part 3 Division 4 Preparations of draft bush fire management plans

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-065#pt.3-div.4>

Part 3 Division 5 Public participation in preparation of plans

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-065#pt.3-div.5>

Part 3 Division 6 Clause 62A - Audits of bush fire risk management plans

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-065#pt.3-div.6>

Schedule 1 Constitution and procedure of Advisory Council and Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-065#sch.1>

Rural Fires Regulation 2022

Part 3 Bush Fire Management Committees

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2022-0215#pt.3>

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 and Documentation

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-052>

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1998-133>

A Guide to Aboriginal Cultural Protocols for NSW Government Sector Events

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/arts-and-culture/engage-nsw-arts-and-culture/resource-hub/aboriginal-arts-and-culture-protocols>



Useful Links

Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/publications/hazard-reduction/bush-fire-environmental-assessment-code>

Bush Fire Risk Management Plans

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/know-your-risk/bush-fire-risk-management-plans>

Community Protection Plans

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

National Parks and 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>

NCC Online Training Video – Undertaking Online Biodiversity Searches

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

Neighbourhood Safer Places (main heading, not a subheading under NPWS):

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places>

One RFS

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

Planning Portal – Property Information

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/spatialviewer/#/find-a-property/address>

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

Seed Environmental Data Portal

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

SIXmaps – NSW GIS Data

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

APPENDIX



GLOSSARY

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 Coordinating Committee	As constituted under Part 3 of the Act.
Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Work	<p>Involves the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The establishment or maintenance of fire breaks and fire trails on land, andb. 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 <p>But does not include construction of a track or road.</p>
Bush Fire Management Committee	A Bush Fire Management Committee constituted under Part 3 of the Act.
Bush Fire Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. a Plan of Operations; orb. a Bush Fire Risk Management Plan; orc. a Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan.
Bush Fire Risk Management Plan	Is a Bush Fire Management Plan prepared under Part 3 Division 4 of the Act for the purpose referred to in s52 (1)(b).
Commissioner	The Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.
Council	A council, county council or joint organisation within the meaning of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
Crown Land	As defined in the <i>Crown Land Management Act 2016</i> .
Executive Officer	As constituted under s50 (1) of the Act is to be the Fire Control Officer for the BFMC's area; or under s50 (1A) of the Act is to be a member of Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW)nominated as Executive Officer by the Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner.
Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan	Prepared under Part 3 Division 4 of the Act for the purposes referred to in Section 52(3).
Fire Brigade	A fire brigade within the meaning of the <i>Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989</i> .
Fire Control Officer	A Fire Control Officer of the NSW Rural Fire Service.
Fire District	Land within a fire district constituted under the <i>Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989</i> .



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.
Local Authority	a. in relation to land that is situated within an area within the meaning of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> - 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	Is constituted under Part 2 of the <i>State Emergency and Rescue Act 1989</i> .
Local Government Area	As constituted under Part 1 of Chapter 9 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
Member	As identified in the Rural Fires Regulation 2022
Neighbourhood Safer Place	Land or a building designated as a neighbourhood safer place under Section 62C of the Act.
Observer	A person that attends a BFMC meeting (with approval from the Chairperson), but is not a member of the BFMC.
Plan Of Operations	Prepared under Division 4 of Part 3 for the purposes referred to in s52(1)(a) of the Act.
Registered Fire Trail	A fire trail that is listed on the register of certified fire trails referred to in s62O 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.

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	Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
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	Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
SFAZ	Strategic Fire Advantage Zone
The Act	Rural Fires Act 1997
The Regs	Rural Fires Regulation 2013
XO	Executive Officer

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BUSH FIRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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