

Annexure F

Reporting and Monitoring

Bush Fire Risk Management



Planning
together



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1 Introduction

Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) must continually monitor bush fire risk in their area and progress towards the completion of all the treatment strategies listed in their Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP). The BFMC must make constant reference to the BFRMP to ensure that all relevant parties are meeting the arrangements and provisions it contains and should ensure that the BFRMP data and treatments remain current.

To manage the implementation of the BFRMP, BFMCs must develop an Annual Works Plan (AWP), which identifies the proposed treatment strategies to be implemented each financial year. At the end of the financial year, BFMCs must report their progress to the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) via an Annual Report.

This Annexure covers the requirements for BFMCs in monitoring and reviewing the BFRMP, developing the AWP and preparing the Annual Report. It should be read in conjunction with BFCC Policy 1/2023 and the BFMC Handbook.

2 Review of the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

The *Rural Fires Act 1997* (the Act) requires a BFMC to submit a draft BFRMP to the BFCC within each successive five-year period following the constitution of the BFMC (section 52). The BFMC must continuously monitor bush fire risk throughout the five year period to ensure the BFRMP remains current, and may choose to review the BFRMP at any time if significant changes in context or risk occur. A review of the BFRMP may be triggered by a range of circumstances including:

- Changes to the BFMC administrative boundaries, organisational responsibilities or legislation;
- Significant changes to assets at risk within or adjacent to the BFMC area (for example a new residential development, land use change or an environmental issue);
- A significant bush fire event that occurs within or adjacent to the BFMC area; and
- Significant weather events which affect the bush fire fuels.

Any amendment to the BFRMP that requires the risk assessment data to be re-processed (**Annexure B – Guidelines for Preparation of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans**) is considered a significant amendment and the BFMC must go through the formal public exhibition and approval process (**Annexure D – Communications & Annexure E – Submission and Approval**).

A minor amendment to the BFRMP, such as a BFMC name change (but not a boundary or organisation change) or wording in a Focus Area risk profile (that does not change the intent or location of the Focus Area) may be made without the need for public exhibition.

Proposed amendments should be submitted to the RFS for review. The RFS will determine whether a proposed amendment is significant and requires the data to be re-processed.

A register of amendments will be recorded in the BFRMP and made available to the BFCC.

During the implementation and monitoring of the BFRMP, a BFMC may identify the need for additional treatment strategies to reduce the bush fire risk in their BFMC area. These can be managed through the AWP (see section 3), but will not be considered BFRMP treatments.

3 Developing an Annual Works Plan

The BFMC must make constant reference to the BFRMP to ensure that all BFMC members (or relevant parties) are meeting the objectives and provisions it contains. Monitoring the implementation and performance of BFRMP treatments allows a BFMC to self-audit its progress towards reducing the bush fire risk to the community.

To ensure continuous compliance with the BFRMP, the BFMC must prepare an AWP for each financial year.

The BFRMP identifies a list of treatments to reduce the risk in each Focus Area over a five-year period (fuel management, ignition prevention, community preparedness and response – **See Annexure B**). It also identifies fuel management treatments to reduce the risk outside of Focus Areas. The AWP must specifically identify which treatments will be implemented in the upcoming financial year. Focus Areas treatments must be prioritised (priority 1) over non Focus Area treatments (priority 2).

Fuel management treatments are mapped in the BFRMP Fuel Management Register (FMR) and the BFMC simply identifies which of the treatments will be included in the AWP. However, community preparedness, ignition prevention and response treatments are broadly described in the BFRMP, and the BFMC must determine detailed activities for each of these treatments during the development of the AWP. Further research, consultation, analysis and discussion may be required to identify appropriate activities.

For example, if a BFRMP Focus Area treatment is 'Community Engagement; risk awareness', the BFMC would need to determine what activity or suite of activities will meet the objectives of the treatment. The BFMC would need to consider the risk profile of the Focus Area and the intent of the treatment and they would need to decide what activities may best reduce the risk. The BFMC may implement a one off activity such as a harvesting campaign, or they might choose to undertake a pre-season community meeting every year to meet the treatment.

The RFS are available to support and assist BFMCs in developing AWP activities that meet the intent of their BFRMP treatments.

The AWP must be developed by the whole BFMC in a tenure blind approach and not by individual member agencies/organisations.

During the development of the AWP (and throughout the monitoring and review process), the BFMC may identify additional treatments that are not included in the BFRMP but are complementary to BFRMP treatments or considered essential in reducing the bush fire risk in the BFMC area. If additional treatments are identified, BFMC members would need to agree (by consensus) to include them in the AWP (see BFMC Handbook). Additional treatments are not BFRMP treatments, but may be considered BFMC priority 3 treatments in the AWP.

Before the BFMC meeting

BFMC members should review the BFRMP as well as the previous years' AWP and Annual Report. Treatments not completed in the preceding AWP must be carried over unless there are specific circumstances preventing their implementation. If a treatment is not carried over, the BFMC must document the reason.

Members that are listed as a responsible agency for treatments in the FMR should review the FMR and be prepared to propose fuel management treatments for the upcoming financial year. Analysing the BFRMP before the meeting will give BFMC members a greater understanding of the works they are responsible for and will ensure they are able to make practical decisions and commitments during the meeting.

If necessary, local stakeholders (such as RFS volunteers, Aboriginal communities, conservation and landcare groups) may need to be further engaged to discuss the Focus Area risk profiles and provide suggestions for activities that meet the intent of the Focus Area treatments.

BFMC meeting

BFMC members should be provided with sufficient time to review and discuss the Focus Area treatments in their BFRMP. Stakeholder feedback and any supporting data (for example, Social Vulnerability Index data or local mapping) should be tabled for consideration.

During the meeting, BFMCs should undertake the following four steps:

1. Determine Focus Area Treatments

The BFMC should review each Focus Area and identify which of the fuel management treatments from the FMR will be included in the AWP (priority 1).

The BFMC should then review each Focus Area and determine the community preparedness, ignition prevention or response treatments to be included in the AWP. Proposed activities will need to be described for these treatments and responsible agencies will need to be identified.

Although the AWP is for the upcoming financial year, the BFMC will need to consider how treatments will be implemented over the 5-year life of the plan to ensure that all treatments are undertaken.

2. Determine Non Focus Area Treatments

The BFMC should identify the fuel management treatments from the FMR that will be included in the AWP as priority 2 treatments.

3. Consider Additional Treatments

BFMC members may table non BFRMP treatments for consideration and BFMC endorsement. Additional treatments can be included in the AWP as priority 3 treatments.

4. Prepare AWP

The BFMC must prepare a draft AWP for BFMC review. The BFMC must use a BFCC approved template. An interim template will be provided (see Appendix 1) whilst the process is being integrated into Guardian.

In order to best serve the interests of the community as a whole and meet the objectives of the BFRMP, the development of an AWP should be approached as a cross-tenure exercise. Land managers need to be prepared to consider comments and suggestions from the BFMC regarding their priorities. All BFMC members need to be engaged in the process of developing and implementing treatments even if they extend beyond their individual boundaries.

In preparing the AWP BFMC members should:

- Be realistic about the allocation of treatments and the capacity of land managers to carry out the works; and
- Ensure that the AWP reasonably addresses the treatment strategies in the BFRMP such that over the life of the plan they will all be completed.

Review and Endorse AWP

The decision to endorse the AWP must be made by consensus and explicitly recorded in the minutes of the BFMC meeting or out of session. The process for decision-making during a BFMC meeting should be consistent with the BFMC Handbook. If consensus is not reached by the BFMC, concerns can be referred to the BFCC for resolution.

The BFMC should have a draft AWP by May 31 and ensure an endorsed AWP is made available to the BFCC by June 30.

4 Monitoring an AWP

The BFMC must continuously monitor progress towards the completion of the treatments listed in the AWP. It is the responsibility of the BFMC to determine when a BFRMP treatment is listed as complete. As described in Section 3, some treatments will require multiple activities over a number of AWP, for example community engagement. Fuel management in BFRMP Asset Protection Zones or Fire Breaks is considered a recurring treatment and multiple inspections and activities will be undertaken in each AWP.

Each BFMC member responsible for implementing treatments in the AWP should monitor their progress in the AWP template provided (Appendix 1)* and must report on their activities at every BFMC meeting. All BFMC meetings must include a standing item to review the AWP progress.

*Templates and monitoring capabilities will be built into GUARDIAN to assist BFMC members in linking their activities to the BFRMP and monitoring the progress of the AWP and BFRMP throughout the year. It will also allow BFCC members to monitor progress.

5 BFRMP Annual Reporting

BFMCs have a legislative requirement (section 51 of the Act) to report annually to the BFCC on their progress in implementing their BFRMP (if a BFMC has recently amalgamated there may be more than one BFRMP to report against). An Annual Report must be made available to the BFCC by August 1 each year.

All treatments included in the AWP will be reported against. The BFRMP Annual Report will address the following:

- Treatments completed as planned in the AWP;
- Treatments identified in the AWP that were not completed. BFMCs should provide advice on why the planned activities were not implemented; and
- Any additional treatment activities completed that were not planned in the AWP.

The template is provided in Appendix 1.

6 Auditing

Under the Act the Commissioner may conduct an audit of the implementation of the BFRMP. These audits may also be undertaken at the request of the BFCC.

RFS will coordinate the audits as an ongoing review of BFCC and BFMC functions, plans and outcomes. The audits will ensure plans are fit-for-purpose and any opportunities for improvement are identified and actioned.

Appendix 1 Annual Works Plan Template*

2024/2025 Annual Works Plan					Monitoring Progress					2024/2025 Report			
BFRMP Treatment ID	Treatment Name	Focus Area	Priority	Responsible Agency	Activity GuardianID	Activity Name	Activity Responsible Agency	Activity Status	Activity Comment	Treatment Status	Treatment Comment	Reason if Incomplete	Rollover to next AWP
CT.RP.PI.285	Pre Incident Plan Repton	Repton	1	~	NA	Pre-incident Plan Repton	RFS	Complete	14/09 Draft PIP reviewed by BFMC. 23/10 PIP endorsed.	Complete			NO
CT.BN.PL.278	Community Engagement; Planning; Bellingen	Bellingen	1	~	CE20250923 10035	Bush Fire Survival Plan Workshop	Council, RFS	Complete	4 workshops undertaken. 57 attendees.	Partially Complete	Additional CE activities required (street meetings) in order to meet BFRMP treatment.		YES
CT.BN.AP.18	Cross St APZ, Fernmount	Bellingen	1	Council	APZ2024050 01441	Cross St APZ	Council	Complete	Undertaken Q1, Q4	Complete-recurring	Ongoing inspection & slashing activities.		YES
CT.CR.LM.200	Red Rock HR, Red Rock	Corindi / Red Rock	1	NPWS	HR22024060 124553	Red Rock HR, Red Rock	NPWS, RFS	Complete	Spring burn proposed. EA, Burn Plan & Control lines in place. Undertaken 04/9.	Complete			NO
CT.XX.SF.249	Little Newry HR, Urunga	~	2	FCNSW	HR20230611 24369	Little Newry HR	FCNSW	Complete	Undertaken 23/4. Low Intensity, patchy burn.	Complete			NO
NON BFRMP	Smiths Street HR	~	3	RFS	HR22023060 124245	Smiths Street HR	RFS	Incomplete	Autumn burn proposed. EA, Burn Plan & Control lines in place.	Incomplete	HR scheduled twice. 16/4 cancelled due to smoke modelling concerns. 12/5 cancelled due to rain.	Weather conditions unfavourable	YES

* This is an example template demonstrating the data available. The AWP and Annual Reporting process is being integrated into GUARDIAN. In the interim, BFMCs will be provided with a reporting tool to manage their AWP, monitoring and Reporting.