



# Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee

## MEETING MINUTES

DOC21/83521

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>No. 98 Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC)</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Via MS Teams:</b>
<b>Date and time:</b>	12 August 2021 – 1030
<b>Members:</b>	Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM, NSW Rural Fire Service (Chair)
	Deputy Commissioner Jim Hamilton AFSM, Fire & Rescue NSW
	Mr Robert Pallin, Nature Conservation Council of NSW
	Mr Graham Brown, NSW Farmers Association
	Cr Keith Rhoades AFSM, Local Government NSW
	Ms Naomi Stephens, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service
	Mr George Schneider, NSW Department of Industry – Crown Lands & Water
	Mr Scott Donohoe, Fire & Rescue NSW
	Dr Ross Dickson, Forestry Corporation of NSW
	Dr Leigh Pilkington, NSW Department of Primary Industries
	Mr Greg Wardle, Rural Fire Service Association
	Mr Robert Conroy, representing Minister for the Environment
	Councillor Julie Griffiths, Local Government NSW
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Deputy Commissioner Peter McKechnie, NSW Rural Fire Service
	Deputy Commissioner Kyle Stewart APM, NSW Rural Fire Service
	Assistant Commissioner Stuart Midgley AFSM, NSW Rural Fire Service
	Assistant Commissioner Rebel Talbert, Director, Community Resilience
	Mr Charlie Jacobs, NSW Aboriginal Land Council
	Ms Renee Austin, NSW Farmers Association
	Mr Scott Campbell, NSW Rural Fire Service Association
	Mr Kim de Govrik, Public Service Association
	Superintendent Greg Houston, Fire & Rescue NSW
	Mr Dominic Lane, Resilience NSW
	Mr Atticus Fleming, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service
	Mr Carl Hollis, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service
	Mr Silas Sutherland, NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment – Crown Lands
	Ms Marilyn Madden, Lomman Reporting Services
<b>Apologies:</b>	Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys APM, NSW Police Force
	Deputy Commissioner Mick Willing APM, NSW Police Force
	Assistant Commissioner Ben Millington, NSW Rural Fire Service
	Mr Yuseph Deen, NSW Aboriginal Land Council
	Ms Sonya Ramke, Office of Emergency Management (Resilience NSW)
	Mr Shane Kennedy, Fire Brigades Employees' Union
	Mr James Christian, NSW Aboriginal Land Council
	Ms Natalie Rotumah, NTSCorp
<b>Minutes by:</b>	Dianne Kelly, NSW Rural Fire Service

## 1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair commenced the meeting by acknowledging the Warawal people of the Eora Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and future. The Chair extended that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

The Chair welcomed all to Meeting 98 of the BFCC and noted apologies for Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys APM, Deputy Commissioner Mick Wiling APM, Assistant Commissioner Ben Millington, Mr Chris Ryder, Mr Yuseph Deen, Mr James Christian represented by Mr Charlie Jacobs, Ms Sonya Ramke, Mr Shane Kennedy, and Ms Natalie Rotumah.

The Chair declared the meeting open at 1030.

## 2 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## 3 Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of BFCC meeting 97 held on 6 May 2021 were tabled.

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**Decision 98.1** The Committee resolved to endorse the minutes of meeting 97 held on 6 May 2021 for signature by the Chair.

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## 4 Open Action Items

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

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**Decision 98.2** The Committee resolved to note the status of actions.

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## 5 Correspondence

The Correspondence Register was tabled and was noted by the Committee.

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**Decision 98.3** The Committee resolved to note the Correspondence Register.

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### 5.1 Request for Office of Strategic Lands as member of Macarthur BFMC

The Memorandum from Macarthur BFMC was tabled, seeking endorsement of the Office of Strategic Lands as a member of the Macarthur BFMC. The Committee considered the request and formally endorsed the revised membership of the Macarthur BFMC.

It was noted that it would prove beneficial for the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to be provided with a list of contacts for local Aboriginal Land Councils to ensure accuracy and currency.

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**Decision 98.4** The Committee resolved to endorse the inclusion of the Office of Strategic Lands as a member of the Macarthur BFMC.

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**Action 98.1** The Chair to sign the tabled memo, endorsing the inclusion of the Office of Strategic Lands as member of the Macarthur BFMC.

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**Action 98.2** The Secretariat to formally advise Macarthur BFMC of the Committees endorsement to include as member of the BFMC, the Office of Strategic Lands.

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**Action 98.3** The NSW RFS to provide the NSW Aboriginal Land Council contact information for local Aboriginal Land Councils across NSW to check for accuracy and currency.

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## **6 The Status of Operations Co-ordination Plans**

The Status of Operations Coordination Plans report dated 22 April 2021 was tabled at the meeting and taken as read. The Committee noted that the MIA and Mid Murray Zone Operations Coordination Plans are anticipated to be completed prior to the commencement of the bush fire danger period.

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**Decision 98.5** The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Operations Coordination Plans.

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### **6.2 The Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans**

The Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMP's) was tabled and taken as read. It was noted that a revised reporting dashboard will be provided at a subsequent meeting.

It was also noted the complexities faced when councils merge and ensuring BFRMP's are up to date and reflect the change. The Committee determined a policy position to cover this matter, would prove beneficial.

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**Decision 98.6** The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.

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**Action 98.4** Mr McKechnie to draft a NSW RFS policy position on circumstances where two BFMC BFRMP's are merged and will be required to create a single BFRMP plan.

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### **6.3 Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails Plans**

The Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails (FAFT) Plans was tabled and taken as read. It was noted that the Fire Trails Standards Reference Group are refining the Terms of Reference to capture processes to lodge queries and raise concerns.

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**Action 98.5** Mr McKechnie and Ms Talbert to provide a recommendation to the BFCC on the establishment of the technical side of Fire Trails, address issues of reporting and inspections, and the proposed operations of the Fire Trails Standards Group.

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**Decision 98.7** The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails Plans.

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## **7 Standing Advisory Subcommittee Report**

The Standing Advisory Subcommittee (SAS) report was tabled and taken as read. Of note, feedback has been received from National Parks & Wildlife Service on the Prescribed Burn template, this is to be further discussed at the 1 September 2021 meeting.

It was also noted that discussions with Resilience NSW are underway, to clarify understanding between make safe and recovery and the transition process from the former to the latter. This will include clear communications for stakeholders, land managers and property owners on process, agency roles and responsibilities.

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**Decision 98.8** The Committee resolved to note the Standing Advisory Subcommittee Report.

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## **8 Hazard Reduction Report**

The Hazard Reduction (HR) Report was tabled and it was noted that the annual report figures are currently being finalised and will be provided to the Committee out of session. It was also noted that the impact of wet weather with above average rainfall affected meeting state targets during 2020/21.

The Committee acknowledged the COVID safe practices undertaken to continue hazard reduction works. This includes establishing clear mitigation strategies and provide training on refined work practices. It was noted that further HR works are planned to maximise favourable weather conditions.

The Committee acknowledged the efforts of NSW RFS, NPWS and NSW Forestry in undertaking HR works during these challenging times and working to do so in a safe manner. It was also noted that NSW RFS is conducting a large number of hazard inspections across the State.

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**Decision 98.9** The Committee resolved to note the update on hazard reduction and properties protected activities.

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## 9 NSW Bush Fire Inquiry

Mr McKechnie provided a verbal update on the NSW Bush Fire Inquiry, noting that the Quarter One 2020/21 Report to Parliament was circulated to members out of session. It was also noted that Quarter two 2020/21 Report to Parliament is currently being drafted.

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**Decision 98.10** The Committee resolved to note the update on the NSW Bush Fire inquiry.

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

Ms Talbert spoke to the tabled update on the review of BFCC Policy 1/2008 Bush Fire Risk Management (BFRMP), noting that Hunter Valley and Lower Hunter BFMCs held the third risk planning workshops in July 2021 and are now reviewing the plan prior to endorsement for public exhibition. This is expected to be by September 2021.

A new risk planning process is underway for Sydney and South Western NSW, with a revised toolkit presented at the recent SAS meeting in July 2021 and circulated for comment. Currently NSW RFS staff are working through the toolkit and assist BFMC's understanding of available data, as well as determining the finalised model plan.

The Committee requested that the updated Bush Fire Risk Management Plan is provided for member's review out of session, prior to being tabled at the Standing Advisory Committee.

The Committee extended its appreciation to Ms Talbert and her team for the work undertaken in the extensive review of the policy, template and associated documents.

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**Action 98.6** Ms Talbert to circulate the updated Bush Fire Risk Management Plan be provided for review by members out of session prior to being presented to the Standing Advisory Committee.

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**Decision 98.11** The Committee resolved to note the Review of BFCC Policy 1/2008 – Bush Fire Risk Management.

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## 11 NSW RFS Fire Trails Standards

Ms Talbert spoke to the tabled update on the review of the NSW RFS Fire Trail Standards, noting that the Australian Road Research Board (AARB) is assisting with the current review of the standards. This is anticipated to be finalised during June 2022 and will include consultation between relevant agencies and the Fire Trails Reference Group on key elements of the standards and focus on operational requirements of the fire trails.

A draft is anticipated to be circulated for feedback late September 2021, to the Fire Trail Standards Reference Group late September 2021. A further update will be provided at the 12 October 2021 BFCC meeting.

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**Decision 98.12** The Committee resolved to note the update on the review of NSW RFS Fire Trails Standards.

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## 12 Presentation Native Title and Land Rights

Mr Sutherland provided the Committee a presentation on Native Title and land Rights with bush fire management activities. It was noted that BFMCs could address obligations to Native Title during the

planning and preparation of all bush fire management activities. Guidance to BFMCs on how they address their obligations to Native Title would be provided via the BFCC. The Committee also noted the legislation underpinning native title and discussed the complexities associated with conducting bush fire management activities.

The Committee extended its appreciation to Mr Silas for the informative presentation.

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**Action 98.7** The Secretariat to circulate the updated presentation on Native Title and land Rights with the draft minutes.

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**Decision 98.13** The Committee resolved to note the presentation on Native Title and Land Rights.

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## 13 General Business

### 13.1 Next Meeting

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

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

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**Decision 98.14** The Committee resolved to note that no items of General Business were raised.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 1208.

Minutes approved by BFCC Chair, Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM on 14 October 2021.