



# Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee

## MEETING MINUTES

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>No. 100 Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee (BFCC)</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Koperberg Room and Via MS Teams</b>
<b>Date and time:</b>	7 April 2022 – 1030
<b>Members:</b>	Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM, NSW Rural Fire Service (Chair) Cr Julie Griffiths, Local Government NSW Cr Giacomo Arnott, Local Government NSW Mr Robert Pallin, Nature Conservation Council of NSW Mr Graham Brown, NSW Farmers Association Mr Atticus Fleming AM, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Dr Ross Dickson, Forestry Corporation of NSW Mr Scott Campbell, NSW Rural Fire Service Association Mr Robert Conroy, representing Minister for the Environment Dr Leigh Pilkington, NSW Department of Primary Industries
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Mr Scott Vale, NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment – Crown Lands (rep. Mr Schneider) Mr Scott Donohoe, Fire & Rescue NSW (rep. DC Stiffler) 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, Forestry Corporation of NSW Assistant Commissioner Ben Millington, NSW Rural Fire Service Chief Superintendent Heath Stimson, NSW Rural Fire Service Ms Renee Armstrong, NSW Rural Fire Service Mr Charlie Jacobs, NSW Aboriginal Land Council Ms Naomi Stephens, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service Mr Cameron Chaffey, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Ms Melissa O'Halloran, NSW Rural Fire Service Ms Kate Woods, NSW Rural Fire Service Ms Lesley Smith, NSW Rural Fire Service Ms Sue Priddis, Lomman Reporting Services
<b>Guest attendees:</b>	Mr Laurence McCoy, NSW Rural Fire Service
<b>Apologies:</b>	Deputy Commissioner Megan Stiffler, Fire & Rescue NSW Mr Yuseph Deen, NSW Aboriginal Land Council Mr Greg Wardle, Rural Fire Service Mr Kim de Govrik, Public Service Association Mr George Schneider, NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment – Crown Lands Mr Dominic Lane, Resilience NSW
<b>Minutes by:</b>	Ms Gillian Eshman, NSW Rural Fire Service

## 1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to Meeting 100 and noted apologies for Mr Yuseph Deen (represented by Mr Charlie Jacobs), Mr Atticus Fleming, who had to leave early (represented by Ms Naomi Stephens) and Cr Julie Griffiths.

The Chair declared the meeting open at 1035.

## 2 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared. Moved: Cr Griffith, Seconded: Mr Pallin.

## 3 Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of BFCC Meeting 99, held on 14 October 2021, were tabled. Moved: Cr Griffith, Seconded: Mr Pallin.

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**Decision 100.1** The Committee resolved to endorse the minutes of Meeting 99, held on 14 October 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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**Action 100.1** Action Items will include the name of the person who will report back to the Committee.

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**Decision 100.2** The Committee resolved to note the status of actions.

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## 5 Correspondence

The Correspondence Register was tabled and noted. No other correspondence was tabled.

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**Decision 100.3** The Committee resolved to note the Correspondence Register.

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## 6 The Status of Operations Co-ordination Plans

A draft new Operations Co-ordination Plan is with BFMC executive officers to seek feedback before being tabled to the BFCC, via SAS, for endorsement.

All BFMCs have up-to-date operations co-ordination plans, which will be in place during the next fire season.

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**Decision 100.4** 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

Existing Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (under the old policy) have been approved. Each additional plan will be developed under the new model. The first new plans, for Hunter Valley and Lower Hunter, will be placed on public exhibition within a matter of weeks.

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**Decision 100.5** The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.

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

C/Supt Stimson advised that the committee's recent approval of three FAFT plans took the total of approved plans to 14. More are expected to be signed off by the BFCC before the next meeting.

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**Decision 100.6** The Committee resolved to note the report on the Status of Fire Access and Fire Trails Plans.

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## 7 Standing Advisory Sub-committee Report

DC McKechnie tabled the Standing Advisory Subcommittee (SAS) report, which was taken as read.

DC McKechnie noted the RFS continued to work with Resilience NSW to determine how Make Safe works integrated with the new State Recovery Plan. The plan is currently undergoing another review, with the RFS liaising to ensure that Make Safe is considered.

The Sub-Committee has reviewed the existing NSW Hazardous Trees Policy against best practice and, where possible, ensured that the existing policy aligns with the new AFAC national guidelines.

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**Decision 100.7** The Committee resolved to note the Standing Advisory Subcommittee Report.

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## 8 Hazard Reduction Report

AC Midgley tabled the March Monthly Hazard Reduction (HR) Report, noting that adverse weather conditions had significantly disrupted agencies' ability to conduct hazard reduction throughout the year.

Ms Stephens noted that the figures in the RFS Guardian system were inconsistent with those in the NPWS Element system and flagged the need to discuss the format of data to ensure the exchange of information between the systems.

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**Decision 100.8** The Committee resolved to note the Hazard Reduction Report.

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## 9 NSW Bush Fire Inquiry Update

Ms Armstrong advised that at the end of the Q4 reporting to December 31 2021, 57 of the 148 recommendations (39 per cent) were completed and 91 (61 per cent) in progress.

RFS is responsible for 33 of the 57 completed recommendations and continues to be involved with 47 of the 91 in progress. Q1 reporting is currently being finalised and is due to be tabled in State Parliament on 23 May.

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**Action 100.2** Ms Armstrong will circulate the Q4 report to the Committee with the minutes.

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**Decision 100.9** 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

C/Supt Stimson tabled an update on the BFCC Policy Review, advising members that the phase three roll-out of new risk plans is continuing across the State. Members were advised that SAS Committee members were updating supporting policy documents, including ignition management zones within the bush fire management zone guidelines. The first draft of the updated policy documents are anticipated to be tabled at the next SAS committee for consultation.

The RFS and NPWS are identifying Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley Ignition Management Zones which will be submitted to upcoming Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) meetings for endorsement.

The RFS is also working with Forestry Corporation on the South Coast and Crown Lands west of the Wollemi to identify further Ignition Management Zones and the focus areas within the risk plans.

Members queried when BFMCs could expect access to Guardian data to guide the development of Bushfire Risk Management Plans. C/Supt Stimson advised that the Guardian BFMC Portal would be available within the next couple of weeks.

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**Decision 100.10** The Committee resolved to note the update on the Review of BFCC Policy 1/2008 – Bush Fire Risk Management.

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## 11 Presentation – Australian Fire Danger Rating System project

Mr McCoy spoke to a presentation on the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System project.

AC Talbert advised all jurisdictions had agreed with a national approach for design of the new alert signage. The ratings are now: 1. Moderate, 2. High, 3. Extreme and 4. Catastrophic.

DC Stewart advised the replacement of signs would not be one-for-one, with further research being undertaken to identify where signs should be located to help facilitate behavioural change.

Cr Griffith noted the importance of liaising with councils when updating FDR signs.

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**Decision 100.11** The Committee resolved to note the presentation on the Australian Fire Danger Rating project.

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## 12 Forestry Corporation Papers

### 12.1 Post-harvest and establishment burns

Dr Dickson tabled a paper seeking endorsement of the inclusion of Forestry Corporation post-harvest and establishment burns in BFCC Hazard Reduction Reporting. Members discussed how post-harvest and establishment burns fitted with existing zoning, how this would be reported and whether or not the bush fire risk assessment code applied.

AC Midgley advised that the Guardian system provided greater capability to differentiate between different types of burns, meaning that Forestry Corporation burns could be incorporated.

### 12.2 Forestry Corporation 2019-20 Bush Fire Recovery

Dr Dickson addressed the impacts of the 2019-20 fire season on Forestry Corporation assets and the levels of Hazard Reduction completed by Forestry Corporation as part of its recovery agenda.

The corporation manages more than 220,000 hectares of timber plantations around NSW, with about 25 per cent of its plantations impacted by fire. Forestry Corporation's 400 trained fire fighters put in more than 300,000 hours fire fighting across all land tenures in the 2019/20 season.

The Corporation's significant road and trail network, stretching over 60,000 kilometres, also had been impacted by both fire and flood.

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**Decision 100.12** The Committee resolved to endorse that Forestry Corporation post-harvest and establishment burns be included in BFCC Hazard Reduction Reporting and, subject to AC Midgley confirming Guardian can record the data, burns be included in Guardian Reporting.

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## 13 General Business

### 13.1 BFCC meeting in Cobar

Members discussed the Chair's proposal that two BFCC meetings a year be hosted in different regions, with the May meeting to be held in Cobar. Members expressed willingness to attend either in person or via Teams. Cr Griffith queried who would cover the travel costs for members to attend regional meetings. The Chair advised that the specific agency would normally cover the travel costs.

Dr Dickson also offered for Forestry Corporation to host a future meeting at a regional location.

### 13.2 Farm Fire Units

Mr Brown raised concerns about ongoing delays in resolving insurance concerns with Transport for NSW (TfNSW). C/Supt Stimson updated members on ongoing conversations between the RFS and TfNSW and the advocacy from the NSW Farmers Association.

### 13.3 Next Meeting

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

Date	Start time	Location
12 May 2022	1030	Cobar Fire Control Centre

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**Decision 100.13** The Committee resolved to note the items of General Business raised.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 1147.

Minutes approved by BFCC Chair, Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM on 12 May 2022.