



Newsletter

for Fire Management Area Committees

Issue 012 | December 2020

In this issue.....

- **SFMC and FMAC Member Profiles**
- **Update on the Bushfire Protection Planning Project**
- **New Australian Warning System**

The State Fire Management Council (SFMC) met late November and had another productive meeting.

I was pleased to advise members that the new version of the Machinery Operations Guideline has been published. This is a direct outcome of the industry led Machinery Operations Working Group, that the SFMC now coordinate.

Adrian Pyrke presented on the Bushfire Risk Management Framework and Project outcomes to date and discussed his approach to the final project report due in February.

SFMC approved the first stage of the Strategic Communications Strategy project, which will be communicated in the New Year, and approved the second stage of the project to develop an engagement framework and conduct a stakeholder survey.

The Red Hot Tips team also gave an overview on the program outcomes to date. There has been such a fantastic response to this program, and I am excited to see how Red Hot Tips and some of the other SFMC projects progress in 2021.

On behalf of the SFMC I would like to thank all Fire Management Area Committee (FMAC) members for your continued support during such a challenging year.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

Ian Sauer
Chair, SFMC



SFMC Profile

Farewell Mel Kelly, Local Government Association of Tasmania Representative.



Mel Kelly has been the LGAT Representative on SFMC for the past three years. Mel's term recently concluded and unfortunately Mel has not re-nominated due to a change in career path. Mel has provided us with a reflection on her time with SFMC.

In late September 2017 the Executive Officer to the General Manager of Glamorgan Spring Bay Council came to see me about the call for Nominations for a Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) representative to join the State Fire Management Council (SFMC).

As the Natural Resources Manager with Council for then 12 years, with a background in Forestry and Environment Studies and a member of the Mayfield Fire Brigade, I have long had an interest in and some practical experience in elements of vegetation fire management. I was encouraged and support by the Executive Officer and our General Manager to put my name forward and was delighted when my nomination was accepted by the Minister.

Well did I know what I was in for – not at all! My first ever gig was a two-day strategic planning session that absolutely fried my brain and it literally has been like that ever since. So much incredible work the Council does and or is involved with, and what a brains trust there is in the room!

I have really enjoyed every moment of my involvement with the Council, and I have made some great new friends and professional contacts. My exposure to and understanding of the complexity and rapidly evolving space of vegetation fire management, not only in Tasmania but nationally, has widely expanded.

The great work and depth of commitment by so many to moving things forward, despite many constraints and challenges, has left a significant impression on me.

I sincerely hope that I was able to make some useful contribution with my insights as a long-standing local government public servant on behalf of LGAT. If future opportunity to nominate for the SFMC presents itself to others in local government, with an interest and involvement in vegetation fire management, I would strongly encourage them to have a go.

For others involved or even just interested in vegetation fire management in Tasmania it is well worth while attending events and opportunities organised, or initiated by the SFMC. It is the collective insights and collaboration between key land manager stakeholders that makes things happen, and that is what the SFMC is all about.

Update: Bushfire Protection Planning Project

Project aim: to provide a consistent framework, tools, education and support for FMACs to undertake bushfire risk assessments and develop fire protection plans.

The 2020 edition of bushfire risk assessment for the Fire Management Area Committees is drawing to a conclusion.

This risk assessment has guided the treatment plans for the Bushfire Risk Management Plans (BRMPs) that will be finalised in early 2021. Several workshops, in Launceston and Hobart, were held in November with forest industry representatives to develop the treatment plans for production forests. The planning officers from the Bushfire Risk Unit (TFS) are compiling the treatment plans ready for insertion into the BRMPs.

The new BRMPs, when approved by SFMC, are intended to cover three years of implementation of risk treatments, with FMACs reporting at six monthly intervals on progress. The next cycle of risk assessment will commence in 2021, including expanding the kinds of assets considered (e.g. agriculture), updating data and making improvements.

The next stage of the project is to develop a state level plan, which currently has the working title of 'Statewide Risk Treatment Plan'. This plan will present the highest priorities identified by the FMAC risk assessments and provide strategies to support the treatment of these risks. To kick off and guide the preparation of this plan, a workshop was held with stakeholders at Campbell Town in November.

New: Australian Warning System

The Australian Warning System is a new national approach to information and warnings for hazards like bushfire, flood, storm, cyclone, extreme heat and severe weather.



EMERGENCY WARNING



WATCH AND ACT



ADVICE

Earlier this month the first stage of the new Australian Warning System was rolled out.

The changes include the way bushfire warnings are displayed on the TFS website and partner agencies, including [TasALERT](#) and ABC. From 1 December, the colours and icons (diamond to a triangle) have changed to:

- Advice (yellow),
- Watch and Act (orange); and
- Emergency Warning (red)

While the colours and icons have changed, the meanings of the levels have not, and incident controllers do not have to do anything differently when activating a warning level.

These changes are part of a nationwide review of the Australian Warning System. They are designed to bring consistency across Australia to the way incidents are displayed, with most states and territories working towards implementing them this month.

In 2021, further changes will be introduced, including changes to warning messages and calls to action.

Further information about the Australian Warning System can also be found on the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience website: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/australian-warning-system/>.

FMAC Profile

Nicholas Cooper – Chair, King Island FMAC

Nicholas Cooper, Chair of the King Island FMAC, has a passion for fire management within his Fire Management Area.

Growing up on a small island in Bass Strait where he has seen the impact of large fires change the island landscape in which he lives.

“As Chair I try to take a holistic approach to fire management on the Island and cemented the importance of a sustainable long term risk reduction to the community”.

Nicholas was appointed to Chair of the King Island FMAC in 2018, with his other responsibilities encompassing emergency management, fire abatement, compliance and was recently made Airport Manager.



How do your skills and experience assist in your participation on FMACs?

Nicholas has demonstrated skills in advocating for strong stakeholder engagement from the multiple land tenure members and trying to get a collaborative approach to larger scale land management.

“By working together and sharing resources and knowledge we all put the Island in a better place to limit the impacts and costs associated by reducing wildfires and have plans that reflect the needs and capacity of a range of stakeholders”.

What do you believe has been your main contribution or biggest success as Chair of the King Island FMAC?

As the Chair, Nicholas states some of his biggest successes as working with the Bushfire Risk Unit to complete the risk register for the Island and preparing better outcomes for rapid response with TFS.

Nicholas will continue to engage with and leverage all levels of government to ensure a safe, secure and sustainable future for fire management in Tasmania.

Red Hot Tips

Red Hot Tips has now been running now for four months. Interest and uptake from landholders and stakeholders has been fantastic, with 85 landholders registering for the program so far, covering almost 200,000 ha of land.

The Red Hot Tips team have engaged with all registered landholders and have visited many properties; providing advice, training and support tailored to their skills, resources, and requirements. So far, this has included encouraging landholders to register burns and develop burn plans; and providing useful contacts for local brigades, TFS staff and neighbours, both public and private.

Training and advice has also been provided in fuel hazard assessment and weather; resourcing options and requirements for burning; and hands-on mentoring in planned burning activities. The team have also provided advice to landholders on liability conservation covenants and fire permits.



The late Spring rains have helped us help farmers to burn this year. To date, 28 registered landholders have undertaken 49 planned burns covering more than 1,400 ha, ranging from 0.5 ha to 400 ha in size, with another seven developing burn plans for future burns. Some of these landholders had never undertaken a planned burn before, and so starting small, or going it alone, was a huge step. Others had burnt on their properties in the past, but it had not gone to plan, or it had been a long time ago, and so they wanted advice and assistance to get their confidence back. Several landholders have extensive experience with undertaking small, planned burns but needed advice and extra resources for something larger.

Bec Downie, a landholder from Bothwell, and Red Hot Tips Advisory Group member, is involved with the program because she feels "it will be a great means of bridging the gap between talking about burning, and being able to get in and get it done, when it needs to be done. Through funding the program, the Tasmanian government has provided a fantastic opportunity for landholders, fire practitioners and stakeholders to be able to share knowledge, resources and experience which will make the land safer and more productive." Bec recommends that landholders not already registered in the program, get in contact through the program webpage or email to make the most of this opportunity.



Practical bushfire management

For further information, to register or refer a landholder please contact the Red Hot Tips team:

Email: RedHotTips@fire.tas.gov.au
Web: SFMC.tas.gov.au/RedHotTips

Gill Basnett, Coordinator: 0448 297 224
Brad Williams, Facilitator (South): 0417 123 728
Garth Bennett, Facilitator (North): 0409 435 712
David Fulford, Facilitator (North West): 0428 079 993

What's New

Fire Permits

A Fire Permit Period was declared commencing Friday 4 December 2020 for the Whole State of Tasmania.

Landowners intending to light any fire in the open should register their burns by freecalling 1800 000 699 to avoid unnecessary brigade responses and obtain a Fire Permit if required.

Landcare Action Grants: managing fire regimes

The Landcare Action Grants Program is a State funded grant program delivered by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association on behalf of DPIPW.

Round Three of the program is now open, with applications closing on 23 December 2020.

For more information check out the TFGA website here: <https://tfga.com.au/environment/landcare>

5 Minute Bushfire Plan Campaign



Making a choice to leave or stay when a bushfire threatens is too late. You and your loved ones' safety and survival during a bushfire will depend on how prepared you are, and the decisions you make.

TFS recommends having a Bushfire Plan and sharing it with household members, neighbours and friends.

Don't wait, create your [5 MINUTE Bushfire Plan](#) now.

Fire Season Outlook

AUSTRALIAN SEASONAL BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK: DECEMBER 2020 - FEBRUARY 2021



The outlook for Tasmania is a normal bushfire season with a potential late start. 'Normal' still means three to four major fires over summer, with some peak days anticipated.

The State is currently experiencing significant grassland growth due to unusual rainfall patterns and excessive rain over spring, leading to a wetter East Coast and drier West Coast. These grasslands will dry out during January and we should expect fast moving grass fires to occur on days of fire danger. As heavy and peat fuels also dry out later in summer, we should also anticipate fires of that nature.

FIFMC new Guidelines

A [new procedure](#) has been developed by the Tasmanian Forest Industry Fire Management Committee (FIFMC).

The objective of the procedure is to minimise the incidence of wildfire resulting from forest and related operations. It outlines minimum fire equipment requirements for forest operations and procedures to follow to reduce the risk of fire.

2021 Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 2020

24 FMACs to submit Bushfire Risk Management Plans to SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au

JANUARY

Formatting of Bushfire Risk Management Plans

FEBRUARY

5 Bushfire Risk Management Plans submitted to SFMC for approval

26 State Bushfire Risk Management Plan is completed

TBC Flinders FMAC Meeting

TBC North East FMAC Meeting

MARCH

2 Southern FMAC Meeting

3 Midlands FMAC Meeting

TBC Tamar FMAC Meeting

15 Hobart FMAC Meeting

24 SFMC Meeting, Hobart

Agenda papers due 11 March 2021 to SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au

JUNE

17 SFMC Meeting, Hobart

Agenda papers and FMAC mid-year reports due 4 June 2021 to SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au

SEPTEMBER

16 SFMC Meeting

Agenda papers due 3 September 2021 to SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au

DECEMBER

2 SFMC Meeting

Agenda Papers and FMAC end of year reports due 19 November 2021 to SFMC@fire.tas.gov.au

TBC East Coast FMAC Meeting

TBC West Coast FMAC Meeting

TBC King Island FMAC Meeting



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