

# Terms of Reference

## Mission Statement

To enhance the efficient and effective management of bushfire related risk in Tasmania in order to protect life, property and significant community values.

## Accountability

The functions and role of State Fire Management Council (SFMC) are contained in these Terms of Reference. SFMC recommends and reports on vegetation fire management to the Minister for Police and Emergency Management, and the State Fire Commission.

## Functions

The legislated functions of SFMC, as described in Sections 14 -21 of the *Fire Service Act 1979* are:

1. To develop a state vegetation fire management policy to be used as the basis for all fire management planning.
2. To advise and report regularly to the Minister on such matters relating to the administration of the Fire Service Act, as it applies to vegetation fire management, either responding to Ministerial requests or bringing matters to the Minister's attention.
3. To provide advice to the State Fire Commission regarding the prevention and mitigation of vegetation fires.
4. To perform such other functions relating to the prevention or mitigation of vegetation fires as the Minister may direct.
5. To establish a committee for each fire management area of Tasmania, who will coordinate fire management activities within its fire management area.
6. To consider an annual fire protection plan for each fire management area and either approve, approve with modifications or reject the plan.

## Role

1. To provide strategic direction for fuel reduction.
2. To advise stakeholders in relation to policy, legislative frameworks, resourcing, responsibilities, best practice and standards in the context of bushfire related risk.
3. To encourage coordination and to the extent necessary integration of the relevant strategies of agencies involved in the management of bushfire related risk.
4. To provide oversight of fire management area committees.
5. To liaise with agencies, volunteer fire brigades and community groups for the purpose of understanding community values, volunteer needs and information exchange.

6. To promote:
  - Community understanding of bushfire risk, the role of planned burns, other hazard reduction and land management methods, fire prevention techniques and community preparedness;
  - Research into continuous improvement in the management of bushfire related risk; and
  - Harmonious working relationships across agencies, communities and volunteers;
7. To review and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of bushfire related risk, including:
  - The state of bushfire related risk throughout Tasmania;
  - The effect of planned burning and other land management techniques;
  - The nature and availability of resources of agencies with responsibilities for the management of bushfire related risk;
  - The efficacy of legislation pertaining to bushfire related risk; and,
  - The state of community knowledge and preparedness.
8. To provide guidance and direction for the Tasmanian Fire Research Fund, which was established in 1994 to provide coordinated research on behalf of Forestry Tasmania, the Parks and Wildlife Service of DPIPWE and the Tasmania Fire Service.

## **Guiding Principles**

SFMC will be strategic and outcomes focussed and will not be responsible for delivery of the outputs or operational policy. It will work with limited resources and will need to determine the best use of resources to meet its objectives. The following principles guide this process:

- Bushfires are understood, accepted and respected.
- Management of bushfire risks are a shared responsibility for the whole community.
- Decisions for risk treatment strategies are made within a risk management framework.
- Protection of lives is the highest consideration.
- Fires are managed according to the landscape objectives.
- We engage communities, to build their awareness and capacity.
- Performance is monitored, reported and improved upon.

In the course of performing their duties, members will encounter confidential information. State Fire Management Council members will respect the confidentiality of information provided in the course of all meetings.

## **Membership**

All members are appointed by the Governor.

Appointment will be made on the basis of competency, not simply as a representative of an organisation or stakeholder group, to ensure that membership reflects the best possible set of skills to enhance delivery of key functions.

An independent Chairperson is to be nominated by the Minister for Police and Emergency Management who meets the following criteria:

- independent from any organisation represented on the State Fire Management Council;
- broad leadership experience in the community with a strong commitment to improving efficient and effective management of bushfire related risk in Tasmania;
- a good communicator with experience or ability to be the public face of bushfire management and engage with the media as such;

- an ability and desire to focus SFMC on achieving its objective through inspirational leadership, well developed chairing skills and/or significant board or governance experience and a structured and rigorous approach to SFMC's functions; and
- a commitment and capacity to lead an evidence-based approach to bushfire risk management based on the principles in these Terms of Reference.

The Chair's role will be to lead public discussion of bushfire management issues, work with government, stakeholders, the community and the media to mobilise prevention efforts, and to change the culture in Tasmania to accept fire as part of living in Tasmania.

Other membership is prescribed in Section 14 of the *Fire Service Act 1979* as follows:

- the Chief Officer of the Tasmania Fire Service;
- a nominee of the Chief Officer;
- the chief executive officer of the Forestry corporation;
- a nominee of the chief executive officer of the Forestry corporation;
- the Director of National Parks and Wildlife;
- a nominee of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife;
- a person nominated by the Tasmanian Farmers' and Graziers' Association;
- a person nominated by the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania; and
- a person nominated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

Other than the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife, the chief executive officer of the Forestry Corporation and the Chief Officer of the Tasmania Fire Service, all members are appointed for a term of 3 years, and may be eligible for re-appointment.

The Governor may remove an appointed member of the Council from office if he is satisfied that member:

- has become incapable of carrying out their duties;
- has misconducted themselves in the performance of the duties of their office;
- has, without leave of the Council, been absent from 3 or more consecutive meetings of the Council;
- has applied to take, or takes, advantage of any law relating to bankruptcy, or has compounded or entered into an arrangement with their creditors; or
- has been convicted in this State of a crime or an offence that is punishable by imprisonment for a term of 12 months or more, or has been convicted of a crime or an offence which would, if committed in this State, be a crime or an offence so punishable, or has been convicted, whether in this State or elsewhere, of a crime or offence for which he has been sentenced to imprisonment.

Where an appointed member of the Council dies or ceases to hold office otherwise than by reason of the completion of term, the Governor may appoint a person to fill the office for the remainder of the term for which the vacating member was so appointed.

The Governor may remove from office a member of the Council appointed on the nomination of an organization if he/she is satisfied, having regard to the information supplied by the organization or the bodies that nominated the member, that the member is no longer qualified to represent that organization or those bodies on the Council and the Governor may appoint a person nominated by the relevant nominating organization or bodies to fill the office for the remainder of the term for which the member removed from office was appointed.

An appointed member may, by instrument in writing under their own hand addressed to the Governor, apply to resign from office, and they vacate that office on the acceptance of the application by the Governor.

## **Role of the Chair**

The Chair is the public advocate for State Fire Management Council.

The Chair's role is to lead public discussion of bushfire management issues, work with SFMC members, government, stakeholders, the community and the media to mobilise prevention efforts, and to change the culture in Tasmania to understand fire as part of living in Tasmania.

The Chair will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Be the first point of contact and the 'public voice' of the State Fire Management Council, including presenting live media releases and being available in person for media events;
- Focus the State Fire Management Council on achieving its Objective;
- Report to the Minister on the activities of State Fire Management Council;
- Undertake public duties on behalf of the State Fire Management Council;
- Lead State Fire Management Council meetings;
- Undertake consultation or briefings as required on behalf of the State Fire Management Council; and
- Undertake quarterly meetings with the respective Shadow spokespersons on bushfire management upon the request of the Minister.

## **Meeting Requirements**

State Fire Management Council meetings will be undertaken as follows:

- The chairperson of the Council must convene a meeting of the Council at least once in each 3 month period
- The chairperson of the Council shall convene a meeting of the Council when required to do so by 3 or more members of the Council.
- In the absence of the chairperson from a meeting of the Council, the members present shall elect one of their number to preside at the meeting.
- Five members constitute a quorum of the Council.
- A question arising at a meeting of the Council shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting on the question and, in the event of an equality of votes, the chairperson or other member presiding at the meeting may exercise a second or casting vote and, if that right is not exercised, the matter stands adjourned to the next meeting of the Council.
- Other than the preceding points, Council may regulate its own proceedings in such manner as it thinks fit.
- A resolution on an issue may be passed without a meeting - if agreed to by five (5) members it is to be taken as having been passed by a meeting of SFMC.

## **Sub Committees**

The State Fire Management Council may establish sub committees to progress work programs and issues in relation to specific areas of expertise. These sub committees must comprise existing SFMC members and will operate proceedings as they see fit.

## **Reporting**

The State Fire Management Council will report directly to the Minister for Police and Emergency Management.

By the end of June each year, or as otherwise agreed with the Minister, SFMC will submit an annual report to the Minister on its activities for inclusion in the annual report of the State Fire Commission.

By the end of June each year, or as otherwise agreed with the Commission, SFMC will submit an annual report to the Commission on the activities of fire management area committees for inclusion in the annual report of the State Fire Commission.

## **Administration**

The State Fire Management Council will be supported by the Tasmania Fire Service.

## **Review**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed within 2 years operation of the State Fire Management Council.