



Newsletter

for Fire Management Area Committees

Issue 013 | September 2021

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- **New SharePoint site for FMACs**
- **Moving forward with the Bushfire Risk Management Framework**
- **Staffing changes and recruitment opportunities**

There have been some significant changes over the last couple of months. Firstly, I am thrilled to announce I have been re-appointed to the Chair of State Fire Management Council (SFMC) for a three-year term.

I am looking forward to continuing several projects and initiatives, including improvements to the Bushfire Risk Management Framework, implementation of the SFMC Strategic Communications and Engagement Strategy and continuation of the Red Hot Tips program.

I have also been invited to sit on the Steering Committee for the review of the Fire Permit System. The project has recently commenced, and we will make sure we provide you with updates and opportunities for input as they arise.

We have also just launched our new SharePoint site, which will provide a central repository of information for SFMC and FMAC members. This is your site, so please let us know if you would like anything included.

There have also been several staffing changes, updates on these are included in the newsletter. One of the most significant is that Debra Pope will be leaving SFMC after being appointed to the position of Manager, Fuel Reduction Program. Deb's position will be advertised soon, and we encourage you to share the opportunity with your networks.

Thanks again for your collaboration and support, I am looking forward to what the next three years have in store.

Ian Sauer
Chair, SFMC

People Movements

SFMC Membership

- **Emma Fitzpatrick**, the new Director of Community Fire Safety, has commenced as the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) Chief Officer nomination on SFMC. Emma brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and has a great handle on the SFMC role, having previously been the Senior Advisor to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
- **John Atkinson** has been re-appointed as the Tasmania Farmers and Grazier Association (TFGA) representative. John will also continue his term on the Red Hot Tips Advisory Group, where he has played a critical role in providing advice on the new look Red Hot Tips program.
- **John Fisher**, the Manager Bushland, Parks and Recreation with City of Hobart, has been appointed as the new Local Government Association of Tasmania representative. John is also the Chair of the Hobart Fire Management Area Committee and has extensive experience in fire and emergency management across Queensland, New South Wales and now Tasmania. John has held senior positions with State Forests NSW, ACT Rural Fire Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

SFMC Staff

- Debra Pope has been appointed as the Manager of the state-wide Fuel Reduction Program. Deb has been with SFMC for the last five years. Deb was instrumental in the development of the Tasmanian Vegetation Fire Management Policy, implemented the new SFMC Strategic Directions Framework, established SFMC Network Events, facilitated various stakeholder opportunities for consultation and most recently the development and implementation of the Red Hot Tips program. Deb's role with SFMC will be advertised in the coming weeks.
- Hannah Matthews has left SFMC to take on a business manager role within Community Fire Safety. Hannah has provided extensive support to the Bushfire Protection Planning project and has led the development of the new SharePoint site. Elisa Lang has taken on Hannah's role in Hobart and will be assisting with FMAC coordination along with Karina Lowe based out of TFS Northern Region.

Red Hot Tips

- Gill Basnett finished her contract with the Red Hot Tips program and was successful in a new role as the National Feral Cat and Fox Management Coordinator with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions. Gill has been integral in the establishment and coordination of the revised Red Hot Tips program. Her dedication and commitment to both the program and Red Hot Tips team has been truly appreciated.
- David Fulford has completed his contract with Red Hot Tips and has returned to his position as Regional Burn Coordinator with the Bushfire Risk Unit in the North West. We thank David for his hard work and significant contribution to setting up the new look Red Hot Tips.

Bushfire Protection Planning Project

- Adrian Pyrke has completed the first stage of the Bushfire Protection Planning project. Adrian has worked tirelessly to develop a framework to ensure consistency of process across FMACs. I would like to thank Adrian for all his hard work and extensive knowledge.



SFMC Update

At the last SFMC meeting:

- Craig MacKinnon has been appointed as the Project Manager to move forward the **TFS Fire Permit Review** project. Craig will provide reports to SFMC on the project implementation.
- **FMAC Implementation Reports** were tabled. One common concern was **burning around vineyards**. It was acknowledged that Bushfire Risk Unit Community Engagement Officers can provide support to FMAC members with communication with vineyard owns and Wine Tasmania.
- SFMC endorsed the continuation of the **Bushfire Risk Management Planning project** recently completed by Adrian Pyrke. Once a new Project Officer is appointed a FMAC Chair workshop will be held to communicate the project intent and commence consultation with members. This will also include project recommendations and review of the current FMAC Terms of Reference.
- Louise Mendel, Project Manager for the **Australian Fire Danger Rating System** project provided an update on the Tasmanian implementation timeline. The project is in the early stages of key deliverables including the development of a communications and engagement strategy, stakeholder identification and change management engagement. For further information or please contact Louise at AFDRS@fire.tas.gov.au.
- A number of new FMAC representatives were appointed.
Welcome to:
 - Anthony Mann who represents Private Land Conservation Program (DPIPWE) on Hobart and Midlands FMACs.
 - Anna Povey who represents Private Land Conservation Program (DPIPWE) on the North East FMAC.
 - David Wise who represents SFMC Forest Products on the Southern FMAC.

FMAC SharePoint is live!

We have been toying with the idea of a FMAC intranet for a couple of years, and after a few technical issues to make sure security and access was possible for our broad range of stakeholders, the platform is **now live!**

The FMAC SharePoint site will provide a repository of information for FMAC members, including:

- agendas and meeting papers,
- calendars and events (including FMAC meetings),
- FMAC newsletters and communication
- development opportunities and events
- SFMC events and opportunities for consultation.



This means the What's New and Calendar of Events will no longer be published in the newsletter, this information will now be available on SharePoint more regularly.

The site is accessible to all FMAC members. Members have access to the main SFMC landing page and separate team sites for each FMAC. We want the site to promote collaboration, so members will have access to each other's team sites. This will allow collaboration on documents and access to key information and opportunities.

Each individual FMAC team site can be accessed via the drop-down list from FMACs at the top of the page. These sites will be available to all but contain specific FMAC information such as meeting dates and documents.

Another great feature is that each site has a 'Forum' option. This will enable any FMAC member to start a forum topic and include relevant attachments. For example, if you are working on a policy or document that you would like input from FMAC colleagues, you can post it here and seek feedback. To start with introduce yourself on the FMAC members; meet and greet forum. The Forum menu is located on the State Fire Management Council home page next to documents.

For now, we have started off with the basics and will add new content and features as we all get more familiar with using it. We would also love your feedback once you take a look around, at the bottom of the SFMC landing page there is a feedback questionnaire. We have also added some suggested names for the site, we also would welcome any suggestions.

How to access the site:

All FMAC members will receive an email with details on how to access the new site. If you have not received an email by 10th September 2021 or require assistance, please phone 6166 5618 or email FMAC@fire.tas.gov.au.

Update: Bushfire Protection Planning Project

The first stage of the Bushfire Protection Planning Review project has now finished. The project commenced in September 2018 with the employment of Adrian Pyrke as the Project Officer. The broad objectives of the project were to provide a framework and process for the Fire Management Area Committees (FMACs) to undertake strategic bushfire risk assessment for their areas in a consistent way; and then prepare fire protection plans that document effective mitigation actions for the highest priorities.

This project was, however, just the start of the journey. The first cycle of the risk assessment is completed and FMACs have prepared new plans, now called Bushfire Risk Management Plans, for identified priority areas and risks.

Thank you very much to all the many people who contributed to this project and were so essential to shaping the outcomes. The full spectrum of organisations who are members of the ten FMACs, and not just the FMAC members, collectively contributed thousands of hours of time at many meetings, workshops and on individual tasks.

A special thank you to the planning and risk assessment staff of the Bushfire Risk Unit within TFS, they added the project to their already busy works programs and provided the bulk of the technical design and support.

The most important outputs of this project were as follows:

- **Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines 2020** – outlines the risk management framework that was developed for the FMACs and provides the details of the bushfire risk assessment method that underpins the current Bushfire Risk Management Plans. The [guidelines](#) can be downloaded from the SFMC website.
- **Risk assessment training** was offered to all FMAC members and delivered in August and September 2020 at Devonport, Launceston, Hobart and King Island.
- **Bushfire Risk Management Plans (BRMP)** – new plans were written for all FMACs, based on the risk assessment, that present a risk register and a treatment plan for the highest priority assets and values that were identified. The [BRMPS](#) can be downloaded from the SFMC website. The mapped assets and values of the risk registers, and associated priority scores, can also be viewed in detail on LISTMap.
- **State Bushfire Risk Management Plan 2021** – presents the highest priority assets and values identified by the risk assessment, at the state level, including human settlement areas, production forests, natural values and critical infrastructure. The plan also proposes treatment strategies that would apply across the state to mitigate bushfire risk.
- **Final Report Bushfire Protection Plan Project 2021** – the purpose of this report is to make recommendations about the steps and decisions required at this time and where the current FMAC arrangements and risk assessment can be improved. This report will be communicated when a new Project Officer has been appointed and consultation can be undertaken.
- The project has provided FMAC with a **process for developing BRMP based on a more objective assessment of bushfire risk** than has been used in the past. The process is not perfect, however, and many lessons were learned during the project that need to be addressed. Bushfire risk management is ongoing, and the next cycle can consider the recommendations for improvements presented in the final report, for example:
 - Identify and allocate the resources (i.e. people) that are required to support an ongoing risk management framework for FMAC, including the risk assessment, BRMP development and implementation.
 - Consider the number of FMAC primarily to provide efficiency for member organisations, options were included in the final report and will be workshopped with FMACs in the next stage of the project.

- Make technical improvements to the risk assessment method such as data storage and how consequences and likelihood are calculated.
- Ensure that the assets and values included in the risk assessment reflect the needs of FMAC member organisations.

Funding has now been approved for a new two-year project position that will commence in 2021, to support ongoing bushfire risk management by FMACs. The general objectives of the new project will be to refine the risk assessment methodology, as well as support the implementation and reporting of the new Bushfire Risk Management Plans and consider improvements to the current FMAC role and structure. This position will be advertised in the coming months on www.jobs.tas.gov.au.

Fire Management Infrastructure Data

The Tasmania Fire Services' Bushfire Risk Unit is currently undertaking a number of state-wide planning initiatives to facilitate delivery of bushfire risk mitigation. This includes:

1. Development of Strategic Fire Management Plans for high priority Human Settlement Area clusters identified in Bushfire Risk Management Plans. In accordance with treatment number 3 of the State Bushfire Risk Management Plan, these plans may include fire management zone maps, existing and proposed fuel breaks, and existing and proposed strategic fire trails.
2. Development of a technical standard (code) for the construction, maintenance and categorisation of fire management infrastructure, including fire trails, fuel breaks and water points.
3. Consolidation of a state-wide, tenure-blind spatial layer identifying fire trails, fuel breaks and water points.

This work will facilitate the strategic prioritisation and funding of fire trails, fuel breaks and water points for construction and maintenance, thereby enhancing community safety and incident management capabilities.

Many of you will have already been sent a request to assist in this important work, to supply of your agency or organisations current fire trail, fuel break and water point data. All data will be held securely by the Tasmania Fire Service, will not be made publicly available, and there are no ongoing obligations to your agency in supplying this data.

Future work will look to establish formal protocols and workflows for the ongoing sharing, maintenance, and consolidation of this data.

If you would like to discuss further or have not received a request please contact Planning Coordinator, Daniel Hoar, at daniel.hoar@fire.tas.gov.au or phone 0448 531 900.

TFS looks forward to collaborating with your agency on this important bushfire safety initiative.

SFMC Profile

Suzette Weeding

Suzette has been the Forestry corporation representative (nominated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry corporation) on State Fire Management Council for nearly five years.

I have worked in the Tasmanian Forest Industry for 20 years in a range of land management, policy, forest certification and forest conservation management related roles. I am currently General Manager Land Management with Sustainable Timber Tasmania. I am passionate about sustainable management and use of our natural resources, particularly wood and forest products.

My personal interests include gardening and sport - particularly netball and horseriding. I spend much of my spare time running two teenagers around! I also have a massive collection of plants and rarely manage a trip into a nursery or hardware store without adopting a new one!



How do your skills and experience assist in your role on SFMC?

I think I bring a practical a land management skill set to the SFMC. Experience in private and public production forestry provides a broad focus in fire management. I am conscious of adding value and contributing to effective and practical solutions for issues.

What do you believe has been your main contribution, biggest success or highlight in your time on SFMC?

Working collaboratively with an experienced range of land management professionals. The SFMC bring together with different backgrounds, interests and experience focused on a common goal . Understanding how to make fire management policies and practices effective across all tenures is one of the key strengths of the SFMC.

Spotlight on Tamar FMAC



Peter Groves – Chair, Tamar FMAC

Peter Groves is the current Chair of the Tamar FMAC.

Peter has been significantly involved in fire and emergency management over the last 15 years, as a volunteer firefighting, working in Local Government and Chair of both Tamar and North East FMACs.

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

I have worked in Local Government in Northern Tasmania for 13 years in various roles relating to emergency management, community development, risk and procurement. I also served as the Chair of the North East FMAC from 2009-2013.

I have been an active volunteer firefighter with Tasmania Fire Service for 15 years and been on interstate deployments to Victoria and NSW.

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

My mixture of firefighting experience coupled with my knowledge and understanding of community engagement gives me a unique way of looking at issues in relation to FMAC activities.

My role as Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator also gives insight into relationships with response agencies stakeholders and communities. I have undertaken formal training through EM college in Mt Macedon and leadership training at the Australian Institute of Police Management in NSW.

I was the serving chair of the North East FMAC when the first bushfire mitigation plans were implemented approximately 10 years ago.

Leigh Walters – Deputy Chair, Tamar FMAC



Leigh Walters is the Deputy Chair of the Tamar FMAC.

Leigh has over 20 years' experience working in conservation management and has been representing private land conservation on FMACs since 2014, which he considers a privilege.

Leigh is currently the Operations Manager with the Tasmanian Land Conservancy.

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

I have been a FMAC member since 2014 representing private land conservation interests. I grew up near Mt Arthur in northern Tasmania, then travelled throughout Australia and Asia/Europe for around 10 years. I love Australian Salmon fishing on the beaches of the north and east coasts.

I have worked in the conservation management area for 20 years, spending the first seven years with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TGFA) and the past 13 years with Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC).

Working for two very different organisations has given me a good understanding of the different pressures that apply to managing rural land. Representing private land conservation owners is a privilege, I hope I bring an understanding of nature conservation to the FMAC.

The Operations Manager role at TLC is very diverse, focusing on conservation programs and management of all TLC properties. TLC properties are managed for nature conservation, carbon sequestration and recreation. Our aim being to allow nature to flourish, which really means focussing on reducing the threats to nature whether weeds, feral animals, illegal access or unplanned fire.

Growing up in northern Tasmania, I consider myself to have a good understanding of the landscape and communities and how these have changed in the past 50 years. This understanding, combined with 20 years land management experience and spending time on various bushfires over the past 8 years or so, gives me some knowledge that I hope contributes to identifying fire management issues in the Tamar region.

What do you believe has been your main contribution or biggest success as an FMAC representative?

The FMACs have created a great environment where people from all sectors of the Tasmanian community can have input into fire management issues or concerns within the region.

I have made great connections at TFS, and with the diverse range of industries that are a part of the FMAC. Having spent a few years as deputy-chair of the Tamar FMAC I hope that I have allowed people to be listened to and have their views considered.



Twelve months in and Red Hot Tips is on fire!

Red Hot Tips has received further funding from the State Government to continue providing practical bushfire management support to farmers and landholders. Registered landholders have been actively engaged in planning and managing bushfire risk on their properties, conducting 189 planned burns covering over 4 000 hectares of privately-managed land.

Hands on experience has been key to increasing landholder confidence and skills in planned burning and is a significant part of Red Hot Tips. To provide this experience, Facilitators have held training burns across the State, working with multiple landholders with assistance from volunteer brigades, TFS staff and other stakeholders such as Forico, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, Parks and Wildlife Service and Sustainable Timber Tasmania.

Facilitators have also been busy, undertaking farm visits, providing over the phone advice and mentoring landholders undertaking planned burning, running burn plan workshops and holding information sessions.

The Red Hot Tips team have also developed, and are trialling, a simple Burn Plan template. This helps landholders think through their requirements and design burns to meet their outcomes. Writing down a plan helps with identifying what preparation is needed, what resources are required, reminds landholders to communicate with neighbours and other stakeholders, helps with obtaining fire permits if required and defines what conditions are needed to burn successfully.

Burn Plan workshops have also been held across the state. Facilitators guide participants through filling out a plan and landholders walk away with a completed Burn Plan ready to implement. Workshops provide detailed information on fuel hazard assessment, fire behaviour, site conditions, asset identification, potential risks, safety, pre-burn preparation, resources, ignition plans, communication, weather prescriptions and what to do after the burn.

The Red Hot Tips team will also start attending FMAC meetings to discuss where links can be made between FMAC and RHT priorities and outcomes. If you know an area that you think could benefit from an information session letting people know what the program offers or have a landholder that might be interested in support, please get in touch with one of the Facilitators.



Practical bushfire management

Find us on 

Email: RedHotTips@fire.tas.gov.au
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