

## COMMUNIQUE

The State Bushfire Advisory Council (SBAC) met at the Bushfire Centre of Excellence temporary facility in Pinjarra on 7 September 2020.

### **Council Membership**

There have been a number of personnel changes to the membership that are currently being progressed through Government.

Mr Will Carmody, representative for Western Australian Farmers, was nominated and appointed as the new Deputy Chair of the SBAC. Mr Carmody replaces Ms Pexton, who vacated the position to move to a new role in June 2020.

### **State Bushfire Management Policy**

The draft State Bushfire Management Policy documents were provided to SBAC at the March 2020 meeting. A small working group has since been established to progress the development of the draft policy, with updates being provided and feedback sought through the SBAC meetings. Members discussed and provided feedback on areas for improvement to drafts developed in 2018 by the predecessor committee to SBAC. The SBAC also provided feedback on the list of key stakeholders for consultation on the policy.

### **Sustainable Bushfire Mitigation**

SBAC was provided with an overview on the Bushfire Risk Management (BRM) Program and its journey from a project to the current state as a permanent program embedded within DFES. This included the development of relationships with local government, reflected in the growth in the number of local governments now involved with the BRM Program. SBAC was provided with information on funding sources utilised for mitigation and an explanation of the Mitigation Activity Fund (MAF) Grants Program for local governments. Resourcing constraints to the implementation and review of BRM Plans were noted, and DFES undertook to develop a position on future delivery models for the continued roll out and potential further expansion of the BRM Program.

### **Land Use Planning Reform**

The SBAC was provided with an update on bushfire protection land use planning reforms, focusing on the major review of the Map of Bushfire Prone Areas and State Planning Policy 3.7. This review is a collaboration between DFES, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, with support from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

### **Bushfire Centre of Excellence**

SBAC was provided with an update on the progress of the Bushfire Centre of Excellence (BCoE), and a number of its key initiatives and projects.

- **Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS)**

National project commenced in 2014 over three phases – Feasibility, Development and Implementation. DFES has commenced scoping and planning for the AFDRS WA Implementation Project. DFES is leading this interagency project, including stakeholders from DBCA, WALGA and BOM. To facilitate this, a new subcommittee of the Interagency Bushfire Operations Committee has been established, with the first meeting to be held 15/09/20. Local governments have been surveyed to identify their needs. AFDRS is expected to be rolled out across Australia in 2022. A link to the AFAC AFDRS is provided for further information: <https://www.afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs>

- **BCoE Training**

The BCoE training calendar has been updated for the remainder of 2020 and is available on the BCoE webpage <https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirecoe/documents/Bushfire-Centre-of-Excellence-Training-Calendar.pdf> 165 courses have run across the state utilising new courses with a further 81 scheduled. New Courses under development include: Fire Weather Course, Assist with Planned Burning and Machine supervision review.

- **Volunteer Bush Fire Service Training Advisory Group (VBFSTAG)**

A new VTAG for BFS is being established. The terms of reference are being developed in consultation with the AVBFB. Representation will include a member from each ROAC/DOAC and two AVBFB representatives and will be chaired by Superintendent Training, BCoE. This group provides a significant opportunity to shape training for BFBs at a strategic level.

- **Burn SMART**

The Burn SMART campaign was launched in June 2020. The campaign targeted small landholders in the Jarrah Forest, Swan Coastal Plain and Warren Biogeographic Regions. The Burn SMART guide was developed including dedicated fact sheet, leaf moisture method and checklist.

- **Traditional Fire Program**

The purpose of this program is to gather and incorporate traditional and cultural knowledge about fire practices into the BCoE. This program will support regions and communities to develop, implement coordinate and promote existing and future traditional fire programs and activities by further developing skills and knowledge.

- **BCoE Website**

The BCoE website has been updated and now provides more detailed information on the Centre and more dynamic features to provide a better user experience. The link to new webpage is: [www.dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirecoe](http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfirecoe)

- **BCoE new facility update**

The building design was developed by a multi-stakeholder working group. Key features include training rooms and outdoor training spaces, open spaces for public meetings, workshops and briefings, interpretative learning centre, Aboriginal themes incorporated into the design, artwork and interpretive information. The administration and training wings link off a central foyer to form a boomerang shape. Landscaping will reflect fire design guidelines indigenous and local heritage and local vegetation. Planned completion in December 2020.

## SBAC Meetings

The next SBAC meeting is scheduled for 7 December 2020.

For SBAC related information or enquiries, please email [RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au)