STATE FIRE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Cover photo: Credit The Examiner
Ian Sauer (Chair, SFMC), Greg Esnouf (Centre of
Excellence for Prescribed Burning) and
Sandra Whight (Director, TFS Community Fire
Safety) at SFMC Network Event in Launceston.

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Report from the Chair

I am pleased to present the 2018-19 Annual Report on behalf of the State Fire Management Council (SFMC).

The last 12 months has been busy and productive, albeit challenging due to the prolonged bushfire season. The SFMC has continued to take a strategic, planned approach to business with the development and implementation of a new Strategic Directions Framework.

The new Framework focuses on understanding, communicating and managing risk, fostering and maintaining effective relationships, policy and research and building community capacity. These new priorities will guide the actions of SFMC through to 2022.

One of the main roles of the SFMC is to support the 10 Fire Management Area Committees (FMACs). The FMACs are responsible for developing plans which prioritise the bushfire risk for each Fire Management Area (FMA), these plans then inform the State's strategic fuel reduction burning program. The SFMC approved Fire Protection Plans developed during 2018-19 are available on www.sfmc.tas.gov.au.

Once again on behalf of SFMC members, I would like to thank all of the FMACs for their continued contribution and for supporting the Bushfire Risk Management Planning Project.

Some of the other major areas of focus for SFMC during 2018-19 included:
- Improved governance arrangements for FMACs,
- Implementation of the Bushfire Risk Management Planning Project,
- Hosting of two successful stakeholder network events, and
- Establishment of research coordination arrangements.

I would like to also sincerely thank SFMC members for their contribution, without their dedication and commitment the SFMC would not produce quality outcomes.

Next year I look forward to further implementing the new SFMC Strategic Directions Framework; enhancing the efficient management of bushfire related risk in Tasmania and making Tasmania safer.

Thank you

Ian Sauer
Chair, State Fire Management Council

About Us

The SFMC is an independently chaired body, established under Section 14 of the *Fire Service Act 1979* (the Act).

Our Mission

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

Our Role

Under Section 15 of *the Act* the SFMC has the following functions:

a) To develop a State vegetation fire management policy to be used as the basis for all fire management planning;

b) To advise and report regularly to the Minister on such matters relating to the administration of the Act, as it applies to vegetation fire management, as referred to it by the Minister and on such matters concerning vegetation fire management as, in the opinion of the Council, should be brought to the attention of the Minister;

c) To advise the State Fire Commission (the Commission) on such matters relating to the prevention and extinguishment of vegetation fires as are referred to it by the Commission or land managers and on such other matters as, in the opinion of the Council, should be brought to the attention of the Commission;

d) To perform such other functions relating to the prevention or extinguishment of vegetation fires as the Minister may direct;

e) To provide an annual report to the Minister on its activities, for inclusion in the annual report of the Commission.

Our Members

Council membership is specified under Section 14 of the Act, as of 30 June 2019 membership consisted of:

• a person nominated by the Minister (Chair, Ian Sauer);

• the Chief Officer of Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) (Chris Arnol);

• a nominee of the Chief Officer (Deputy Chief, Bruce Byatt);

• the chief executive officer of the Forestry corporation (Steve Whiteley);

• a nominee of the chief executive officer of the Forestry corporation (General Manager Forest Management, Suzette Weeding);

• the Director of National Parks and Wildlife (General Manager – Deputy Secretary, Jason Jacobi);

• a nominee of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife (Director Operations, Mark Bryce);

• a person nominated by the Tasmanian Farmers' and Graziers' Association (John Atkinson);

• a person nominated by the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (Jye Hill); and

• a person nominated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (Melanie Kelly).

Executive support to the SFMC and associated FMACs is provided by TFS and coordinated through the SFMC Executive Officer, Debra Pope.

Our Members

As at 30 June 2019

Ian Sauer was appointed as independent Chair of SFMC in October 2014. Ian is a dry-land sheep and cattle producer from Pipers Brook in northern Tasmania. He brings over 35 years' experience in agriculture, natural resource management, policy formulation, project development, management and community development. Ian is also a long serving volunteer firefighter with the Pipers Brook Brigade and has represented community groups at the Local, State and National policy level, as well as being a representative of National and State committees and Boards.

Chris Arnol was appointed Chief Officer and Chief Executive Officer of the Tasmania Fire Service on 21 March 2016. Over his 40 year career Chris has worked in three emergency service organisations. He has extensive interstate and overseas operational experience and holds a Master's Degree in Public Management (Flinders University), is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Member of the Institute of Fire Engineers (by examination). Chris is also on the Board of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), Chairs the National Aviation Firefighting Centre and represents Tasmania on the Australia and New Zealand Emergency Management Committee.

Bruce Byatt
Bruce is a second generation firefighter who began his career in January 1977 with the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade and has served with Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service, and the Country Fire Authority Victoria. Bruce now serves the Tasmania Fire Service as the Deputy Chief Officer. His career to date embraces working in five jurisdictions across Australia and serving as Deputy Chief Officer in the last three roles, providing a unique insight into the Australian fire industry.

John Atkinson
John is the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) representative on SFMC. He is mixed-enterprise farmer from the Northern Midlands with 20 years' volunteering as a firefighter and officer with the Barton Fire Brigade. John worked in the offshore oil and gas industry for 18 years as a commercial diver and supervisor and shares his experience of risk management and project planning. With a strong interest in sustainable land management, he sat on the Steering Committee of the Red Hot Tips program and continues to work with natural resource management organisations, including the Landcare Members' Council.

Steve Whiteley represents Sustainable Timber Tasmania. He has more than 30 years' experience in managing public production forest assets and operations. With a solid reputation for achieving results and adaptive leadership, Steve became CEO of Sustainable Timber Tasmania in 2013. He has successfully steered the business into a solid financial footing and is leading business improvement under a sustainability-centric business model. Steve is a Director of the Australian Forest Products Association and the Tasmanian Forests and Forests Products Network. He is a graduate of both the Oxford Advanced Management and Leadership Program and the Australian Institute for Company Directors. He holds a Bachelor of Forest Science from the University of Melbourne. Steve contributed to the 2019 AFAC Review on the 2018-19 bushfires and is on the Fuel Reduction Steering Committee. Steve is also Chair of the SFMC Research Coordination Committee.

Suzette Weeding represents Sustainable Timber Tasmania on SFMC. Suzette is a detail-oriented, environmental and forest management executive with over 18 years' experience in the Australian forest industry. She has demonstrated leadership in environmental management, strategic planning, environmental compliance and environmental certification. Suzette is an advocate of both the Australian Forestry Standard Certification Scheme (AFCS) and is a director for the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Suzette is also the deputy chair of the Forest Education Foundation. She has a Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Botany from the University of Tasmania.

Melanie Kelly is the Manager of Natural Resources at the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council on the Tasmanian east coast, and represents the Local Government of Tasmania (LGAT) on SFMC. Melanie is a trained forester and has broad working experiences in the natural resource management sector. Over the last 20-plus years Melanie has worked in both a paid and voluntary capacity in both Victoria and Tasmania. Her experience in fire management ranges from working in the Emergency Control Centre for the State Government in Victoria to her involvement with the local volunteer brigade Mayfield, near Little Swanport.

Jason Jacobi is Deputy Secretary of the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service. He has over 30 years' experience in National park and forest management, including operating his own consultancy business; as a manager in local government; and as a senior executive managing parks and forests across Queensland.
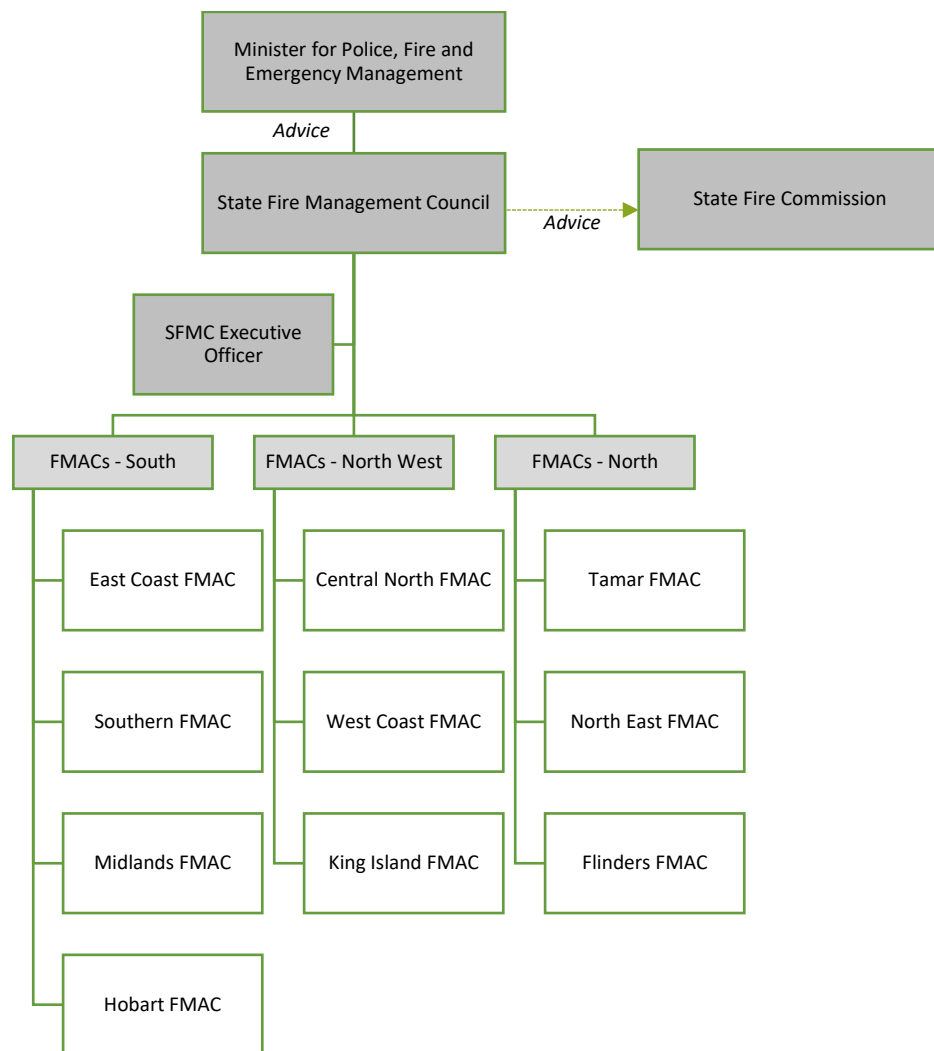
Mark Bryce is the Director of Landscape Programs with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. He has had a broad range of experience in fire management and has included roles from firefighting, incident control to fire management policy development.

Jye Hill represents the Forest Industry Association of Tasmania (FIAT) on SFMC and has over 14 years' experience in the forest industry. Jye is the Forest Resource Team Leader at Norske Skog and is experienced in fire management and training deliver and design. He manages the forestry silviculture, roading and fire management operations to ensure a sustainable and quality wood supply to the Boyer Mill. Jye is also a member of the Forest Industry Fire Management Committee and is currently the Chair of the Southern FMAC.

Our Structure

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FMACs - South	FMACs - North West	FMACs - North
East Coast FMAC	Central North FMAC	Tamar FMAC
Southern FMAC	West Coast FMAC	North East FMAC
Midlands FMAC	King Island FMAC	Flinders FMAC
Hobart FMAC		

SFMC Strategic Direction Framework

SFMC undertook a major review of the Strategic Directions Framework in 2018. The new framework will guide SFMC activities through to 2022.

Our priorities	Our strategies are to	What we will achieve	What will deliver to achieve our outcomes
Research and Innovation	Support and promote bushfire research and innovation	A coordinated and sustainable approach to research across private and public sectors in Tasmania Applied and relevant research and innovation is adopted and valued across Tasmania	Coordinate the adoption of research findings and recommendations Collaborate with stakeholders to identify applied research priorities and gaps in Tasmania Facilitate action to support bushfire research and innovation in Tasmania
Policy	Provide evidence based public policy advice and information	Research and innovation underpin policy development Stakeholders have opportunity to inform policy development	Develop and implement a policy framework to support vegetation fire management in Tasmania
Community Capacity and Awareness	Build community capacity and awareness to support bushfire resilient communities	Increased community awareness of bushfire risk and shared responsibility Increased community participation in effective mitigation activities Programs and community information support collaboration across private and public sector	Identify stakeholders and capacity gaps Identify existing programs and initiatives across private and public sector
Communication and Collaboration	Build and support public and private sector partnerships and collaboration	Communications enhance and develop stakeholder relationships Actively engage with stakeholders Engagement is planned and inclusive	Develop and maintain existing stakeholder relationships
Vegetation Fire Management Planning	Enable strategic, effective and collaborative vegetation fire management planning in Tasmania	National standards and tools are adopted to support planning and mitigation activities Planning reflects community and environmental priorities and values Bushfire risks are identified, prioritised and mitigation treatments are implemented Engaged and effective Fire Management Area Committees	Monitor effectiveness of FMACs at local and state level Monitor stakeholder inputs into FMACs Develop and implement a Fire Protection Planning Framework and tools Monitor progress and success of bushfire mitigation activities against Fire Protection Plans Maximise influence in land use planning
Governance	Facilitate efficient and effective governance and resource management	Delivery of SFMC strategic priorities Accountable and transparent decision making and reporting SFMC is legislatively compliant Engaged and active members	Develop SFMC Annual Report Develop SFMC Reporting Framework

Fire Management Area Committees

The SFMC oversees and supports the 10 FMACs within Tasmania. The primary role of a FMAC is to prepare a Fire Protection Plan (FPP) for their FMA.

FMACs identify and assess community bushfire risks in their FMA and prioritise strategic works in response to those risks, including areas for strategic fuel reduction burning.

FMACs are appointed under Section 18(1) of the Act, and they report to the SFMC.

FMAC Purpose

To provide a platform for a consistent, comprehensive and cooperative approach to strategic planning in relation to fire protection and fuel management. This will be achieved through the provision of a vital link between the local brigades, local government, land managers (both private and public), a representative of other groups or organisations as may be appropriate or identified and approved by the SFMC.

FMAC Role

Under Section 20 of the *Fire Service Act 1979* FMACs have the following functions:

a)   to co-ordinate fire management activities within its FMA, including:
   i)   community education and information; and
   ii)   fuel management;

b)   to identify and assess community bushfire risks in its FMA and to prioritise strategic works in response to those risks;

c)   to submit to the Council, on or before 30 September of each year, a fire protection plan for its FMA for the next 12 months commencing on 1 October;

d)   to ensure that its fire protection plan is consistent with:
   i)   the State fire protection plan developed pursuant to section 8(1)(d); and
   ii)   the State vegetation fire management policy developed pursuant to section 15(1)(a); and
   iii)   such instructions or guidelines as the Council may from time to time issue to the Committee regarding the fire protection plan;

e)   to advise the Council on such matters relating to fire management and the Committee's other functions as the Council may refer to the Committee;

f)   to advise the Council on such matters concerning fire management as, in the opinion of the Committee, should be brought to the Council's attention;

g)   to perform such other functions relating to the prevention or mitigation of vegetation fires as the Council may direct.

FMAC Membership

FMAC membership is defined under Section 18 of the *Fire Service Act 1979.*

FMACs usually consist of representatives from TFS (career and volunteer), Local Government, Sustainable Timber Tasmania (STT), Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), Wellington Park Trust (if included in the FMA), Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, relevant utility companies, and other large key land managers in the FMA.

Fire Protection Plans

The objective of the Fire Protection Plan (FPP) is to effectively manage bushfire related risk within the FMA in order to protect people, assets and other things valuable to the community.

In preparing the FPP, a tenure blind approach to strategic fuel management is taken to identify and prioritise bushfire risks in the landscape. These plans are reviewed annually and strategically identify work that can be done to mitigate identified bushfire risk, including areas for strategic fuel reduction burning.

The management of bushfire related risk is not the sole responsibility of any one land manager or agency. It is a shared responsibility of the whole community. The tenure blind approach to bushfire risk mitigation planning as undertaken by FMACs creates opportunities for collaboration between public and private land managers and owners and promotes the development of a centrally coordinated bushfire risk mitigation program.

FPPs can be viewed at www.sfmc.tas.gov.au.

Fire Management Areas

There are 10 FMAs in Tasmania with boundaries based on bushfire risk and topography, largely aligning to local government boundaries. Each of these FMAs is supported by a FMAC.

West Coast Fire Management Area

The West Coast FMA covers just over 1.9 million hectares and has an estimated residential population of 44,550. The FMA extends westwards from the township of Heybridge on Tasmania's north-west coast to Cape Grim on the West Coast and southwards as far as Davey Head. The fire management area encompasses Robbins Island, Hunter Island and Three Hummock Island in Bass Strait.

A substantial proportion of the FMA is formally reserved with larger reserves within the planning area including part of Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park, Franklin – Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, the Southwest Conservation Area (which all form part of the Western Tasmania World Heritage Area) and Savage River National Park in the north of the planning area.

Vegetation in the FMA is well adapted to fire and in recent times the area has experienced a high frequency of fast moving bushfires which have burnt out large areas. While the FMA contains a significant percentage of low flammability vegetation types it also contains even larger amounts of highly flammable vegetation in the form of buttongrass moorland, sedgeland, rushland and peatland as well as scrub and heathland.

Approximately 85% of land within the West Coast FMA is public land and 15% is private/freehold land. The majority (69.6%) is Parks and Wildlife Service managed land.

Hobart Fire Management Area

The Hobart FMA is approximately 110,000 ha in size. It includes the local government areas of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, Brighton and parts of Kingborough, Huon Valley and Derwent Valley.

The Hobart FMA has two very distinct geographical features; firstly the area is bisected by the River Derwent, and secondly the Wellington Range borders many Hobart suburbs to the west, creating a long urban/bush interface.

Tasmania's most extreme fire weather events often occur within, and in areas adjacent to, the FMA. Rainfall varies considerably over the area (1600mm per year on the summit of Mt Wellington to less than 500mm per year at the Hobart Airport) resulting in a highly variable bushfire season with some areas being able to sustain fire for many month of the year.

Within the Hobart FMA approximately 65% of land is private/freehold, 14% is the Wellington Park, 6% is managed by PWS and 4% by Local Government. There a number of other smaller land managers that make the remaining 10%, notably Carlton and United Brewery.

Tamar Fire Management Area

The Tamar FMA is located in the north of Tasmania and encompasses Launceston City and the Tamar River estuary. The FMA covers a total area of 859,086 ha with an estimated population of 128,000.

The area is dominated by agricultural and pastoral activities, particularly meat production, apples, berries and viticulture, with the Tamar Valley being one of Tasmania's leading wine producing areas. Within the Tamar FMA approximately 28% is public land and 72% is private/freehold land.

Flinders Fire Management Area

The Flinders FMA covers an area of approximately 206,046 hectares which includes the whole Flinders local government area and encompasses all the islands of the Furneaux Group. The Furneaux Island Group is an archipelago of approximately 50 islands located in Bass Strait between mainland Australia and Tasmania. The largest island is Flinders Island followed by Cape Barren and Clarke Island.

The Furneaux Islands have an estimated resident population of 784.

Approximately 63% of land within the Flinders FMA is private/freehold land and 37% is public land with the PWS being the main public land manager.

Southern Fire Management Area

The Southern FMA is approximately 1,037,000 ha in size and covers three local government areas (Derwent Valley, Kingborough and Huon Valley).

Much of the area is uninhabited and forms part of the South West National Park. The majority of the population are concentrated in the southern settlements of Hobart, the Huon Valley and along the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Significant populations are located around New Norfolk with smaller populations located in the Tyenna Valley.

Within the FMA approximately 14% of land is private/freehold, 73% is public/crown land and 11% is STT managed land.

North East Fire Management Area

The North East FMA is approximately 681,193 ha in size and encompasses two local government areas (Dorset and Break O'Day). The FMA covers an area bounded by the coast to the north and extending in a south easterly direction from the mouth of the Pipers Brook to just below the mouth of the Douglas River on the east coast of Tasmania.

The permanent population of the FMA is estimated to be around 13,500, although this number increases markedly during the summer period though influx of tourists and absentee landowners.

Within the FMA approximately 65% is public land and 35% is private/freehold land. A significant proportion (25%) is STT managed land.

King Island Fire Management Area

The King Island FMA covers the whole of King Island, an area of 110,975 ha. King Island has an estimated residential population of 1585 people. King Island lies at the western entrance to the Bass Strait, midway between the state of Victoria and mainland Tasmania in the path of the "Roaring Forties", a strong prevailing westerly wind that reaches over 100km per hour. The island is generally quite flat, with the highest point being 168m above sea level at Gentle Annie in the south east of the Island.

Approximately 17% of the King Island FMA is public land and 83% is private/freehold land. The management of fire risk on private land is a significant challenge for the King Island FMA.

Midlands Fire Management Area

The Midlands FMA is approximately 1,059,000 ha in size and covers two local government areas (Central Highlands and Southern Midlands). Approximately 8,000 people live within the Midlands FMA, predominately around the south east corner, closest to the outer settlements of Hobart. The Midlands FMA also contains smaller isolated communities located in the Upper Derwent Valley and Central Highlands.

Shack communities are present around a number of Highland lakes, with the population in these communities being seasonally variable.

Within the Midlands FMA approximately 52% of land is private/freehold, 26% is public/crown land 12% is STT managed land.

East Coast Fire Management Area

The East Coast FMA is approximately 393,000 ha in size and covers three local government areas (Glamorgan-Spring Bay, Sorell and Tasman). Geographically it follows the coastline from the Tasman Peninsular in the South to Bicheno in the North.

The majority of the population within the FMA are located around the south east corner, closest to the outer settlements of Hobart. The FMA also contains smaller coastal communities spread along the coast line. The East Coast is a popular tourist destination which results in a large influx of visitors particularly during the summer months.

Within the East Coast FMA approximately 55% of land is private/freehold, 30% is public/crown land 10% is STT managed land.

Central North Fire Management Area

The Central North FMA is located in central northern Tasmania and covers an area of 550,464 ha. The FMA extends westwards along the north coast from Badger Head to Heybridge. The southern part of the FMA extends westward from Golden Valley to the middle of Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

The Central North FMA has an estimated residential population of 82,000 people.

The FMA contains a mix of fertile agricultural land, wineries, dispersed rural communities and large areas of national park (including Mole Creek Karst caves and The Walls of Jerusalem National Park which is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area).

40% of Tasmania's vegetable crop is produced in the Mersey/Forth valley area in the central northern part of the FMA. Significant built infrastructure assets in the region include Origin Energy's LPG Operation at Devonport and the Alinta natural gas pipeline offtake at Westbury. Critical infrastructure within the FMA includes radio communications towers at Kelcey Tier, Mt Claude and Dazzler Range and the Orica storage facilities at Heybridge and Dulverton.

Approximately 58% of land is public land and 42% is private/freehold land. The management of fire risk on private land presents a considerable challenge for the Central North FMA.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Strategy

Support and promote bushfire research and innovation.

Outcomes

- A coordinated and sustainable approach to research across private and public sectors in Tasmania.
- Applied and relevant research and innovation is adopted and valued across Tasmania.

Key strategic initiatives

- Coordinate the adoption of research findings and recommendations.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to identify applied research priorities and gaps in Tasmania.
- Facilitate action to support bushfire research and innovation in Tasmania.

Achievements

Research Coordination

During 2018 SFMC began developing arrangements to support the coordination of research in Tasmania. SFMC STT representative Steve Whitely was identified as the sponsor for this strategic priority area.

A working group developed a Terms of Reference for the SFMC Research Coordination Committee (RCC). The purpose of the committee is to coordinate strategic research and influence future research within Tasmania, nationally and internationally.

The committee will:
- Develop a coordinated approach to prioritising, managing and adopting research.
- Coordinate research participation and foster partnerships between stakeholders.
- Provide advice on the expenditure relating to research.

Prioritising Research

Prior to the formal establishment of this RCC, SFMC resolved to commence a project to identify research priorities and gaps in relation to bushfire and vegetation management in Tasmania.

This project commenced in May 2019, with a stakeholder mapping exercise and environmental scan of current vegetation fire management research being conducted Australia-wide.

The objective of the scan was to identify:
- Stakeholders currently involved in research (Research Providers);
- Stakeholder roles/objectives in research/innovation;
- Current research and/or innovation projects/priorities;
- Research funding mechanisms;
- Research audience/stakeholder group; and
- The type of research being undertaken.

The research and innovation projects and providers included in the scope of the scan specifically applied to bushfire and vegetation management in Australia. This broad scope extended to related themes not limited to fire ecology, smoke taint, climate change, communicating bushfire risk, land use planning, community bushfire resilience, local fire conditions, fire weather and vegetation types.

Stakeholders were asked to contribute to the environmental scan, which will inform a research forum planned for 2020. The forum will identify end-user research priorities for Tasmania.

POLICY

Strategy

Provide evidence based public policy advice and information.

Outcomes

- Research and innovation underpin policy development.
- Stakeholders have opportunity to inform policy development.

Key strategic initiatives

- Develop and implement a policy framework to support vegetation fire management in Tasmania.

Achievements

SFMC provide opportunity for stakeholders to inform policy and legislative review. Some of the consultation opportunities presented to stakeholders during 2018-19 included:

- Fire Service Act Review,
- Cronstedt Review of the Management of Bushfires during the 2018-19 fire season; and
- Environmental Managment and Pollution Control (Smoke) Regulations.

Upgrades were also carried out to the SFMC website to make it easier to access current policy information under the Publications and Resources section.

The SFMC monitor the development, implementation and provide input into a number of national initiatives through SFMC meetings. During 2018-19 SFMC were involved in:

- Monitoring and input into the National Fire Danger Rating System Project,
- Consultation into the Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy; and
- Consultation informing the State Emergency Management Committee Strategic Directions.

As part of the Bushfire Protection Planning Project relationships with current legislation, policies, plans and guidelines of various stakeholders were identified. These included state and local government, private organisations and government business enterprises. SFMC will continue this identification of existing governance into 2019-20 in a broader context, this information will then be used to influence the development of a formal SFMC policy framework.

Tasmanian Vegetation Fire Management Policy

The SFMC Tasmanian Vegetation Fire Management Policy was showcased at the 2018 AFAC Conference in Perth.

The abstract on the development process was accepted for a poster presentation. Executive Officer, Debra Pope represented SFMC as the delegate and took advantage of the opportunity to make personal contact with stakeholders and highlight the work of SFMC.

The Policy and resources is available on the SFMC website www.sfmc.tas.gov.au/publications-resources.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND AWARENESS

Strategy

Build community capacity and awareness to support bushfire resilient communities.

Outcomes

- Increased community awareness of bushfire risk and shared responsibility.
- Increased community participation in effective mitigation activities.
- Programs and community information support collaboration across private and public sector.

Key strategic initiatives

- Identify stakeholders and capacity gaps.
- Identify existing programs and initiatives across private and public sector.

Achievements

Private landholder and land manager capacity building

The SFMC is committed to strategies that support shared responsibility and foster disaster resilient communities through building community capacity and awareness.

The Red Hot Tips program is aimed at improving the skill of private rural landholders to manage bushfire risk on their property, with a particular focus on planned burning. SFMC tabled a report from the Red Hot Tips stakeholder workshop held in early 2018 which identified recommendations for a future program.

A working group was established and developed a program outline, including guiding principles for a capacity building program to inform a budget submission to government to support a sustainable program for the future. The submission was presented in March 2019 for government to consider.

Photo credit: Warren Frey

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Objectives

Build and support public and private sector partnerships and collaboration.

Outcomes

- Communications enhance and develop stakeholder relationships.
- Actively engage with stakeholders.
- Engagement is planned and inclusive.

Key strategic initiatives

- Develop and maintain existing stakeholder relationships.

Achievements

SFMC Network Events

SFMC Network Events aim to foster relationships and promote knowledge sharing and collaboration between the public and private sectors involved in vegetation fire management. Two SFMC network events were held in 2018, attracting over 100 registrations.

Greg Esnouf from the AFAC Centre of Excellence for Prescribed Burning presented in Launceston on the role of the Centre and the products available to assist with prescribed burning programs. After the presentation a workshop was held giving planned burning practitioners an opportunity to utilise the products in desktop scenarios.

The second event, held in Burnie in December 2018, was very well attended. The North West Fuel Reduction Program team facilitated an informative session titled 'Before, during and after a fuel reduction burn', which detailed the stages of planning for and conducting a fuel reduction burn.

FMAC Communication

In response to FMAC feedback, the FMAC newsletter has been re-instated. Positive feedback has been received on this method of communication from members. Three newsletters were published during 2018-19.

Newsletters provide key messages from SFMC meetings, project updates, consultation opportunities, links to relevant research and publications and upcoming events.

VEGETATION FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Strategy

Enable strategic, effective and collaborative vegetation fire management planning in Tasmania.

Outcomes

- National standards and tools are adopted to support planning and mitigation activities.
- Planning reflects community and environmental priorities and values.
- Bushfire risks are identified, prioritised and mitigation treatments are implemented.
- Engaged and effective FMACs.

Key strategic initiatives

- Monitor effectiveness of FMACs at local and state level.
- Monitor stakeholder inputs into FMACs.
- Develop and implement a Fire Protection Planning Framework and tools.
- Monitor progress and success of bushfire mitigation activities against Fire Protection Plans.
- Maximise influence in land use planning.

Achievements

Bushfire Protection Planning Project

FMACs are legislatively required to produce fire protection plans (FPPs). As a result of feedback from FMACs and stakeholders, the SFMC initiated a project to, not only review the FPPs, but to investigate ways to improve the overall risk assessment framework and support tools.

The SFMC successfully applied for funding from the Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Program and subsequently employed a Project Officer. The Project Officer commenced in September 2018.

The objectives of the Bushfire Protection Planning Project are:

1. To develop a risk management framework and guidelines, and adapt a tool to the Tasmanian bushfire context to assist with the development of FMA risk assessments using methodology outlined in the Tasmanian Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (TERAG).

2. Collate and/or develop educational tools to support the bushfire risk management planning process.

3.   To facilitate FMACs and subject matter experts preparing and completing consistent bushfire risk assessments and fire protection plans.

4.   To ensure fire protection plans are useful documents at influencing bushfire mitigation.

5.   Collate and review risk treatment options identified through fire protection plans, facilitate their prioritisation at the state level and report the findings to the SFMC.

6.   Develop a framework for the ongoing review of fire protection plans.

Bushfire risk assessment

Guided by a working group drawn from FMAC member organisations and technical experts, the project team is developing an approach to bushfire risk assessment that aligns with both the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG) and the TERAG. In 2017 a risk assessment tool was released by the Tasmania State Emergency Service; an Excel worksheet which automates some calculations and standardises the inputs for the risk register. The project team are adapting this worksheet for the bushfire context.

Previously the FPPs have focused on human settlement areas; a broader range of values will be considered in the future risk assessments, for example, natural values identified as sensitive to bushfires, production forests, critical infrastructure and Aboriginal heritage. Following consultation and meetings with stakeholder groups, mapped data sets of all these values are under development.

The likelihood inputs for the bushfire risk assessments will be based on standard weather scenarios and a new analysis of updated climate records from 1990 to 2019. The likelihood is calculated for the standard weather scenarios from computer simulations of fire behaviour and ignition history.

Framework, guidelines and fire protection plan format

A second working group, drawn from FMAC members and TFS professionals, has advised on the development of the framework for bushfire risk assessment for FMACs. This framework will be included in the guidelines document for the FMACs.

A new FPP format has been developed, including a new name – Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP). The content and target audience for the new look plans reflects the advice received from FMAC members at forums in September 2018 and working group meetings.

Fire Protection Plans 2019

The most recent Fire Protection Plans developed by FMACs were approved by the SFMC in April 2019.

FPPs identify and prioritise bushfire risk in the landscape and strategically identify work that can be undertaken to mitigate that risk. These plans are fundamental to the identification of priority areas for the implementation of the whole-of-government Fuel Reduction Program and TFS community development programs.

These plans, along with Executive Summaries, are available on www.sfmc.tas.gov.au

FMAC Terms of Reference

The new FMAC Terms of Reference was approved by SFMC in December 2018. The draft principles for this document were initially developed by FMAC Chairs and representatives during the Annual FMAC Forum in 2017.

FMAC Regional Forums

SFMC hosted regional FMAC forums in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart during September 2018. These forums were open to all FMAC members within the Region with the aim to encourage collaboration between FMACs and discuss a number of topics, including the commencement of Bushfire Protection Plan Project, the new SFMC Strategic Direction and FMAC support arrangements.

During 2018, FMAC members participated in the last round of consultation on the document, ensuring that the document accurately reflected the role and responsibilities of FMACs.

The new Terms of Reference supports a number of improvements, realigning the focus of the Committees to concentrate on the key functions of: identifying strategic bushfire priorities, bushfire protection planning and collaboration.

The new Terms of Reference is available on the SFMC website at http://www.sfmc.tas.gov.au/committees.

North West FMAC Regional Forum

GOVERNANCE

Strategy

Facilitate efficient and effective governance and resource management

Outcomes

- Delivery of SFMC strategic priorities.
- Accountable and transparent decision making and reporting.
- SFMC is legislatively compliant.
- Engaged and active members.

Key strategic initiatives

- Develop SFMC Annual Report
- Develop SFMC Reporting Framework

Achievements

Effective Membership

An annual membership audit was conducted of SFMC and FMACs to ensure legislative compliance and the maintenance of a broad and effective membership. Due to changes within a number of external organisational structures a number of new members were appointed to FMACs.

Reporting

SFMC has a legislative responsibility to report regularly to the Minister and provide advice to the State Fire Commission (the Commission). SFMC provides regular advice to the Minister on a range of issues relating to vegetation fire management.

Reports are also provided to the Commission for information and inclusion in the Commission' Annual Report.

A stand-alone SFMC Annual Report is also developed and distributed to stakeholders highlighting the achievements of SFMC each financial year.

SFMC Strategic Directions

In March 2018 SFMC members and key stakeholders participated in a strategic planning day to review the SFMC Strategic Directions Framework, which were implemented in 2018-19.

The SFMC identified key themes focusing on research and innovation, policy, community capacity and awareness, communication and collaboration and vegetation fire management planning.

Members also investigated how SFMC conducts business, and identified efficiencies to become more effective in completing and reporting on strategic objectives. The future role of SFMC was also explored with outcomes informing the SFMC submission to the Fire Service Act Review.
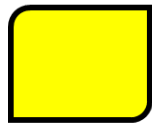
Research and Innovation
Support and promote bushfire research and innovation

Policy
Provide evidence based public policy advice and information

Community Capacity and Awareness
Build community capacity and awareness to support bushfire resilient communities

Communication and Collaboration
Build and support public and private sector partnerships and collaboration

Vegetation Fire Management Planning
Enable strategic, effective and collaborative vegetation fire management planning in Tasmania

Governance
Facilitate efficient and effective governance and resource management

Fire Service Act Review

The SFMC continued to participate as an active stakeholder in the Fire Service Act Review through:

- regular reporting from the Chair of the Review to SFMC meetings, and
- the comprehensive SFMC submission in response to the initial round of public consultation and Issues Paper late 2018.

Fire Permit Officers

SFMC have a legislative responsibility to appoint Fire Permit Officers under Section 65 of the Fire Service Act.

During 2018-19 SFMC:

- Appointed 36 Fire Permit Officers; and
- Rescinded 15 Fire Permit Officer appointments.
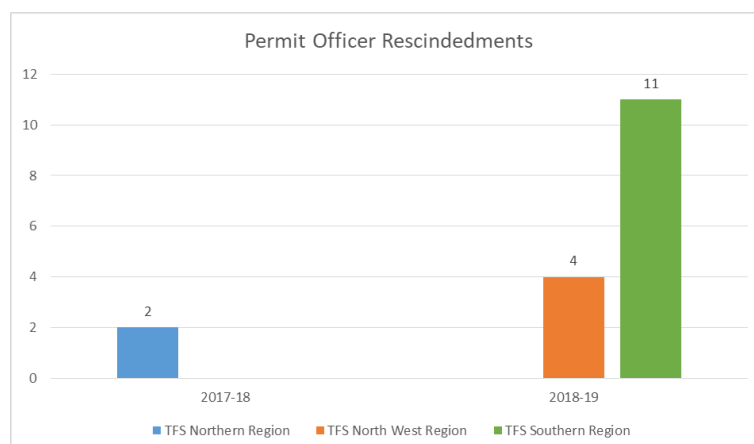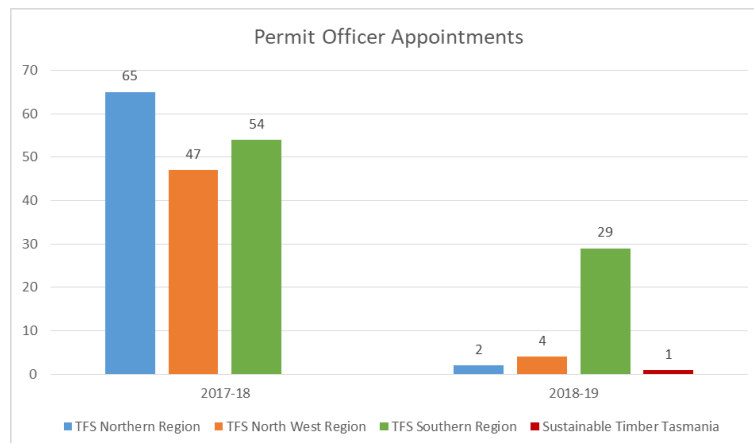
Appendix

AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
DPIPWE	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
FMA	Fire Management Area
FMAC	Fire Management Area Committee
FPP	Fire Protection Plan
PWS	Parks and Wildlife Service
SFMC	State Fire Management Council
STT	Sustainable Timber Tasmania
TFGA	Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
TFS	Tasmania Fire Service
the Act	*Fire Service Act 1979*
the Commission	State Fire Commission