

COMMUNIQUE

The State Bushfire Advisory Council (SBAC) met at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services Cockburn Emergency Services Complex, on the 20 March 2023 for its first quarterly meeting of 2023.

The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC (the Minister) and FES Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM addressed the membership, recognising the critical work of the SBAC and meeting newly appointed members.



Wooroloo Bushfire Independent Review Recommendations Implementation

The SBAC were provided with an overview on progress of the implementation of the Wooroloo Review's recommendations. Eight of the recommendation projects provide regular reports to the SBAC. Project leads for four of the recommendations briefed the SBAC on their projects.

The SBAC noted the imminent release of the public reporting document. This report was developed by the Wooroloo Implementation Coordination Group to provide both key stakeholders and the general public with information on the progress and next steps for each of the recommendations. It is proposed these reports will be updated quarterly and reside with the Wooroloo Independent Review on the government webpage.

More information on the Implementation of the Review recommendations can be obtained by emailing RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au

Progress on the Consolidated Emergency Services Act

The SBAC members were presented with a confidential briefing outlining the progress made to consolidate the existing three emergency services Acts into a single piece of legislation. The Parliamentary Counsel's Office is working to develop an Exposure Draft Bill which will be used to consult the community on how the new Emergency Services Act might look. Once the Exposure Draft Bill is complete, it will be released for public comment in 2023. Public submissions will be open for 3 months.

Statement of Intent – State Bushfire Management Policy

The Chair advised that the newly developed Statement of Intent has been approved for publication by the Minister. Preparations for release are underway.

SBAC Strategic Priorities

The SBAC received a revised Ministerial Statement of Expectations which contained a list of the Minister's priority areas of focus. Before the meeting, SBAC members proposed several agenda items for consideration. These were discussed during the meeting with members considering best practice to prioritise and work through the list of items. Members agreed to conduct additional work outside of the meeting to establish a program of works for 2023.

A planning session will take place during the next SBAC meeting to finalise the work program.

Bushfire Mitigation Program – Royalties for Regions

The SBAC was given a comprehensive briefing regarding the Royalties for Regions (RfR) program that runs until 2023/24. The expiry of this program will need to be carefully managed so as not to negatively impact DBCA's bushfire mitigation delivery on regional UCL/UMR land or impede the assistance provided to LGAs on the management of Crown reserves.

The SBAC acknowledged this information and conveyed apprehension over the potential reduction in bushfire risk management effort should this program not continue. They resolved to include this matter in their program of works for further consideration.

The next SBAC meeting is scheduled for Friday 9th June 2023.

For SBAC related information or enquiries, please email RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au