

## COMMUNIQUE

The State Bushfire Advisory Council (SBAC) met at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services Bushfire Centre of Excellence in Nambeelup for their second quarterly meeting of 2024.

The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC, addressed the SBAC membership, recognising their commitment and continued work.

Minister Dawson acknowledged the incredible efforts of emergency services personnel over the recent bushfire season. He expressed the State Government's gratitude to the members of the volunteer organisations, agencies and industry bodies – not only those in response, but also in prevention, preparedness, and recovery to bushfires in WA.



Minister for Emergency Services Stephen Dawson MLC  
with SBAC Deputy Chair Will Carmody

Murray Carter, Executive Director and SBAC Chair addressed the members on behalf of the FES Commissioner, noting the Wooroloo Review Implementation process is in the final stages, thanking the SBAC for their support in this work.

### Wooroloo Bushfire Independent Review Recommendations Implementation

The update on implementation of the Wooroloo Review recommendations focussed on the closures of Recommendations 1 and 7 and an update on Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 1: That DFES lead the development of a dedicated purpose-built, appropriately equipped Multi-Agency Incident Control Centre to be built in or around the Perth Hills to deal with fires and other emergency incidents in that area.

Recommendation 7: In conjunction with WA Police and local government, DFES should undertake a review into the establishment and management of Vehicle Control Points and the use of Restricted Access Permits during major incidents.

The SBAC endorsed the closure of Recommendations 1 and 7.

Recommendation 2: That the DFES Areas of Community Engagement Focus programs be enhanced highlighting the need for landowners, in high-bushfire prone communities, to implement mitigation strategies to protect their properties and ensure preparedness for extended stay without support after fire impact.

The project lead for Recommendation 2 provided an update on the progress of this project.

The SBAC noted the update on Recommendation 2.

More information on the Implementation of the Review recommendations can be obtained by emailing [RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:RuralFire@dfes.wa.gov.au)

### Progress of the Combined Emergency Services Bill

The SBAC were provided an overview of the progress of the Consolidated Emergency Services Act. The Parliamentary Counsel's Office (PCO) is working to finalise an Exposure Draft Bill. When the draft Exposure Bill is completed it will be released for a minimum of three months public consultation.

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## Places of Last Resort (PLR)

An update on progress of the Places of Last Resort project was circulated to members with the agenda. The focus over the past 6 months has been drafting options for the nature of WA guidance on Places of Last Resort with the intent of securing legal advice on implications.

Members noted the update and were given an opportunity to provide comment.

## SBAC Strategic Priorities

SBAC priorities set by the Minister are on track with the Wooroloo implementation in its final phase and consultation on the Combined Emergency Services Bill about to ramp up. The SBAC also maintains a strategic priorities workbook, which captures identified priorities for the Advisory Council.

An ad hoc working group has been established which will meet to prioritise the SBAC work plan each year. This group will be led by the SBAC Deputy Chair.

## Review of State Hazard Plan Fire

The Council was provided with an overview of the current State Hazard Plan Fire review and the findings to date, with the first round of consultation now completed. Broader consultation on the amended draft will commence in July with a final draft expected to be submitted to the SEMC for approval in October.

## Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS)

Following a national review of the implementation of AFDRS a plan was developed to support the AFDRS transition from the implementation phase to continued operations.

The areas of focus include: Program governance and change management; community facing elements; capacity development and knowledge sharing and fire science & technology.

AFDRS improvements in Western Australia are ongoing. Additional resources have been secured to manage system requirements and implement regular data updates and support national research. Fire Behaviour models are being enhanced with improvements to fuel accumulation and soil moisture and ROS thresholds for Fire Danger Ratings and ongoing review of the performance of the Mallee-Heath fire behaviour model.

The AFDRS Team are working on collating fire behaviour observations over 23/24 using line scans and case studies of rates of spread to inform improvements. The National AFDRS team is working with CSIRO to improve the pine model which currently overpredicts the FBI.

Several science issues identified with the Mallee Heath model are being working on by the AFDRS national team to improve modelling of the FBI.

DFES is collaborating with the CFA, CFS and other jurisdictions to develop satellite-based grassland fuel load assessments.

The next SBAC quarterly meeting is scheduled in early September 2024.

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