

COMMUNIQUE

The State Bushfire Advisory Council (SBAC) held its third quarterly meeting of 2025 on 9 September at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) offices in Kensington.

Strategic Priorities Working Group - Update

The Strategic Priorities Working Group convened in mid-August to review and update items within the Strategic Priorities workbook and to refine the agenda for the upcoming quarterly meeting.

During the quarterly meeting, members engaged in detailed discussions across all workplan items, which helped clarify key focus areas and determine next steps. Notably, the majority of agenda items were directly informed by the workbook, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.

Insurance Cover for Bushfire Mitigation - Discussion Paper

This topic has recently been added to the Ministerial Statement of Expectations priorities for SBAC. Initial discussions at the meeting helped establish a clear direction and next steps.

The DFES Office of Bushfire Risk Management has collaborated with the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) and will provide a briefing to SBAC. This briefing will offer background information, outline the current status, and support future engagement efforts to inform the development of a comprehensive discussion paper.

Consistent Bushfire Mitigation Processes on Rail Corridors

Originally raised through the Bushfire Operations Committee (BOC), this issue has now been included in the Ministerial Statement of Expectations priorities for SBAC.

Members acknowledged BOC's advice regarding ongoing challenges with fuel accumulation and the maintenance of strategic firebreaks along unused Tier 3 and Tier 4 rail corridors—particularly those near townsites and grain rail sidings. While some mitigation activities have been undertaken, significant work remains to reduce bushfire risk.

Initial discussions at the meeting helped define the focus and next steps. Further advice from Government will be sought to inform SBAC's approach to this issue.

DBCA Fuel Management Activities

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) was the first key stakeholder to present on their fire mitigation activities and planning. Their presentation, along with a facilitated discussion, provided valuable insights into the drivers behind their policy positions and operational practices.

Members acknowledged the complexity of DBCA's planning processes, which aim to balance risk reduction, target achievement, and community expectations. Challenges include limited burning windows due to weather conditions, resource constraints, and compliance with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) requirements.

Additional key stakeholders identified in the Fuel Management Activities Report will be invited to present on their fuel management practices throughout 2026.

The Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)

Following detailed papers and discussions at the July meeting, members identified the need for a policy model that supports a seamless transition of fire mitigation responsibilities as land is progressively transferred from State Government control.

Meetings are currently underway with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and Yamatji Nation Leadership to discuss SBAC's interest in the ILUA. These discussions aim to clarify expectations and ensure stakeholder support before any policy development is undertaken by SBAC.

The next SBAC quarterly meeting is scheduled for 8 December 2025.

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