



**STATE FIRE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**

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Cover photo: Credit Sam Tacey. A Red Hot Tips demonstration burn at a Red Hot Tips registrants property, Fingal.

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Report from the Chair

Following a few disruptive years from the effects of COVID-19 and change in staff, the SFMC has worked hard over the last twelve months, together with SFMC staff Perpetua Turner and Christina Smith, to achieve and deliver against its strategic objectives.

For 2022-2023 we have delivered:

- The SFMC submissions to the Fire Service Act Review,
- The SFMC submissions to the TFES Draft Bill which included nine recommendations.
- The coordination of the industry led, Machinery Operations Working Group, including the review of the Machinery Operations Guidelines,
- The continuous improvement of the Bushfire Risk Management Framework and annual approval of Bushfire Risk Management Plans (BRMPs),
- The review of the Fire Management Areas and Fire Management Area Committees,
- Progression on an FMAC Induction Manual (with a draft expected in early 2024), and
- Significant increase in community engagement with fire and land management through the SFMC Red Hot Tips practical landowner burning program.

The Red Hot Tips program is successfully bringing back practical burning skills into the hands of Tasmanian landowners. Since August 2020, Red Hot Tips has delivered 428 burns covering a total area of 9,332 ha. Program registrations total 268, with 60 new registrants this financial year. These considerable results have been achieved thanks to the commitment of the Red Hot Tips Coordinator and three Red Hot Tips Facilitators. Facilitators have also reached the community through 57 events, resulting in increased engagement and many new partnerships. The next year will see a strong focus towards building on this capacity.

Fire Management Area Committees (FMACs) are valued for their contribution to fire and vegetation management within and adjacent to their Fire Management Area (FMA). On behalf of SFMC members, I would like to thank all FMACs for all their work, particularly the annual revision and development of Bushfire Risk Management Plans, which effectively coordinate and influence treatment of bushfire risk in an FMA.

Finally, I would also like to thank the SFMC members and the SFMC Manager Perpetua Turner for their contribution to SFMC strategic direction and commitment to delivery.

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 in Tasmania;
- 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 2023 membership consisted of:

- a person nominated by the Minister (Chair, Ian Sauer);
- the Chief Officer of Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) (A/Chief Officer Jeremy Smith);
- a nominee of the Chief Officer (Director Capability and Strategy, Ross Hinkley);
- 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 (State Fire Manager, Katy Edwards);
- a person nominated by the Tasmanian Farmers' and Graziers' Association (John Atkinson);
- a person nominated by the Tasmanian Forest Products Association (Owen Hoffman); and
- a person nominated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (John Fisher).

Our Members

State Fire Management Council membership as of 30 June 2023 are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. State Fire Management Council members as of June 2023



A person nominated by the Minister

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 on several National and State committees and boards.

Ian resigned as Chair of the Red Hot Tips Advisory Group in 2023.

Ian is President of TasFarmers (formerly Tasmania Farmers and Graziers Association), is a member of the Fuel Reduction Program Steering Committee and Chair of the Machinery Operations Guidelines Working Group.



the Chief Officer

Jeremy Smith is Acting Chief Officer Tasmania Fire Service.

Jeremy joined the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) in February 1987 as a recruit firefighter. During his 37 years with the TFS he has progressed through the firefighting and leadership ranks holding many leadership roles, including Director Community Fire Safety, Regional Chief South, and Acting Deputy Chief Officer. Jeremy has had extensive operational experience in urban and bush firefighting and assisted with the development of the TFS remote area firefighting capability in the early 2000's. Jeremy is currently a State endorsed level III Incident Controller, a certified NIMS type IV and V Commander and Blue Card Incident Commander. He has been deployed to bushfire operations, Incident Management and coordination roles throughout Tasmania, interstate (New South Wales (2001) Victoria (2009), and Queensland (2018) and in North America in 2008 and 2012. Jeremy has undertaken the role of State Fire Controller during the extensive fire seasons of 2013, 2015-16 and 2019.

Jeremy has been the Executive Officer for the State Fire Management Council, the Tasmanian representative on the National Aerial Firefighting Centres (NAFC) Fire and Emergency Aviation Technical Group (FEATG), AFAC Rural and Land Management Group and the National Board for the development of the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System. He has made a significant contribution to Bushfire Interoperability in Tasmania through his leadership of the Multi-Agency Coordination Group which has increased Tasmania's capacity, not only to respond to fires effectively across all tenures, but also to maximise the level of preparedness across agencies.



the person for the time being holding, in the Fire Service, an office or position determined by the Chief Officer

Ross Hinkley is Executive Director Strategy and Capability at Tasmania Fire Service.

Ross has 20 years of senior leadership experience in Corporate Services, Governance and Service Delivery areas with a proven track record of managing highly complex strategic projects and operational teams across a diverse range of State Government portfolios.

Ross notes a key achievement as the establishment of corporate 'foundations' to consolidate HR, Finance, IT, Facilities, Audit, Legal Services and Emergency Management arrangements being in place from the start of a new agency, to enable a new agency to target its objectives on solid foundations.

Ross is regarded as a people person with the necessary communication techniques required to manage diverse and multiple stakeholder groups and staff.

In 2014, Ross was awarded the Public Sector Young Professional of the Year in the Public Sector Excellence Awards.

Ross is a member of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System National Board.



the Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry corporation

Steve Whiteley represents Sustainable Timber Tasmania on the State Fire Management Council.

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 Chief Executive Officer 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 (AFPA) and was the inaugural Chair of the Tasmanian Forests and Forest 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. He is a member of the State Fire Management Council (SFMC) and Chair of the SFMC Research Coordination Committee.



a person nominated by the chief executive officer of the Forestry corporation

Suzette Weeding represents Sustainable Timber Tasmania on the on the State Fire Management Council.

Suzette is a management executive with over 20 years' experience in the Australian forest industry. She has leadership in environmental management, strategic planning, environmental compliance, and environmental certification.

Suzette is Vice Chair of the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), Chair of the Australian Forest Products Association: Growers Chamber Certification Subcommittee, Chair of the Gottstein Trust, and Deputy Chair of the Forest Education Foundation.

She has a Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Botany from the University of Tasmania and is a graduate of The University of Melbourne Advanced Management Program.



the Director of National Parks and Wildlife

Jason Jacobi is the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas).

Jason leads the department, comprising Primary Industries and Water (including the Office of Racing Integrity); Biosecurity Tasmania; Marine Resources; Forest policy; Environment; Heritage; Lands Tasmania; the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service; Strategy and Business Services.

Jason holds statutory responsibility as the Director General of Lands and the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, along with the responsibility for the oversight and performance of 31 statutory bodies, trusts, boards and councils, including the Inland Fisheries Service, the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, the Forest Practices Authority, Private Forests Tasmania and the Waste and Recovery Board.

Jason has over 30 years' senior executive experience in National Park and forest management across Queensland and Tasmania.



a person nominated by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife

Katy Edwards is the State Fire Manager with the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service.

Katy has more than 25 years' experience in forest and fire management across Tasmania. In her current role, Katy has responsibility for managing the fire operations of the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service to reduce bushfire risk to reserve values, the public and adjacent property. This involves overseeing the management of fire management for over half of the land area of Tasmania.

She has a strong background from the Tasmanian forest industry including with North Forest Products, Hazell Bros., Forest Industries Association of Tasmania (currently Tasmanian Forest Products Association) and Norske Skog prior to her appointment at Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service.

Prior to commencing with the Parks and Wildlife Service Katy served as the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania representative on the State Fire Management Council for approximately 6.5 years.

Katy has also previously worked in areas of forest policy and industry representation, forest practices and environmental issues, forest management and marketing and contractor management.

Katy has a Bachelor of Forest Science from the University of Melbourne.



a person nominated by the Tasmanian Farmers' and Graziers' Association

John Atkinson is the TasFarmers (formerly Tasmania Farmers' and Graziers Association) representative on the on the State Fire Management Council.

He is a 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 initial Steering Committee of the Red Hot Tips program and is now a member of the Red Hot Tips Advisory Group. He continues to work with natural resource management organisations, including the Landcare Members' Council.



a person nominated by the Tasmanian Forest Products Association

Owen Hoffman is the Tasmanian Forest Products Association representative on the on the State Fire Management Council.

Owen is the General Manager of Reliance Forest Fibre, which owns and manages a hardwood plantation estate with operations across Tasmania and a woodchip export facility at Bell Bay.

He has over 30 years operational experience in managing native forest and hardwood plantation operations across Tasmania.

Owen is a member of the governing council of the TFPA, is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has a Bachelor of Forest Science from the University of Melbourne.



a person nominated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania

John Fisher is the Local Government Association Tasmania representative on the on the State Fire Management Council.

He has over 35 years' experience in land use management for forestry, conservation, and fire management. His qualifications include a Bachelor of Science and postgraduate certifications in emergency management and leadership. He has demonstrated leadership in land management as Manager Bushland for the City of Hobart, Regional Manager for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Deputy Chief Officer for the ACT RFS and Deputy General Manager for New South Wales Forests. He has major incident direction experience through deployments in Australia and North America. As Manager Bushland for the City of Hobart, he led a program focused on human, property, and environmental values for bushfire threat.

The following SFMC members resigned during 2022-23:

the Chief Officer

Dermot Barry **ESM** represented the Tasmania Fire Service.

Dermot is a strong leader in the emergency management sector and has proven experience leading innovation and change in the government and private sectors.

He brings more than 35 years of emergency management experience in operational and senior executive roles, most recently as Deputy Chief Officer of the South Australian State Emergency Service. Before that, Dermot was Managing Director of Worldwide Public Safety at Microsoft in the USA; he practiced as a Barrister/Solicitor at an Adelaide law firm and has over 20 years of experience as a professional firefighter with SA Metropolitan Fire Service. In 2013 he commenced an international scholarship to attend the US Fire Academy for a four-year Executive Fire Officer program graduating in 2017. In the 2020 Queens Birthday Honours he was awarded the Emergency Services Medal. Dermot resigned from the Tasmania Fire Service in June 2023.

the person for the time being holding, in the Fire Service, an office or position determined by the Chief Officer

Emma Fitzpatrick Acting Executive Director Strategy and Capability at Tasmania Fire Service represented the Tasmania Fire Service.

Executive support to the SFMC and associated FMACs is provided by TFS and coordinated through the SFMC Manager Dr Perpetua Turner (from November 2022) and SFMC Executive Support Officer, Karina Lowe (until August 2022) and Christina Smith (from February 2023).

Our Structure

The State Fire Management Council provides advice to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, the Honourable Felix Ellis, and the State Fire Commission (Figure 1.)

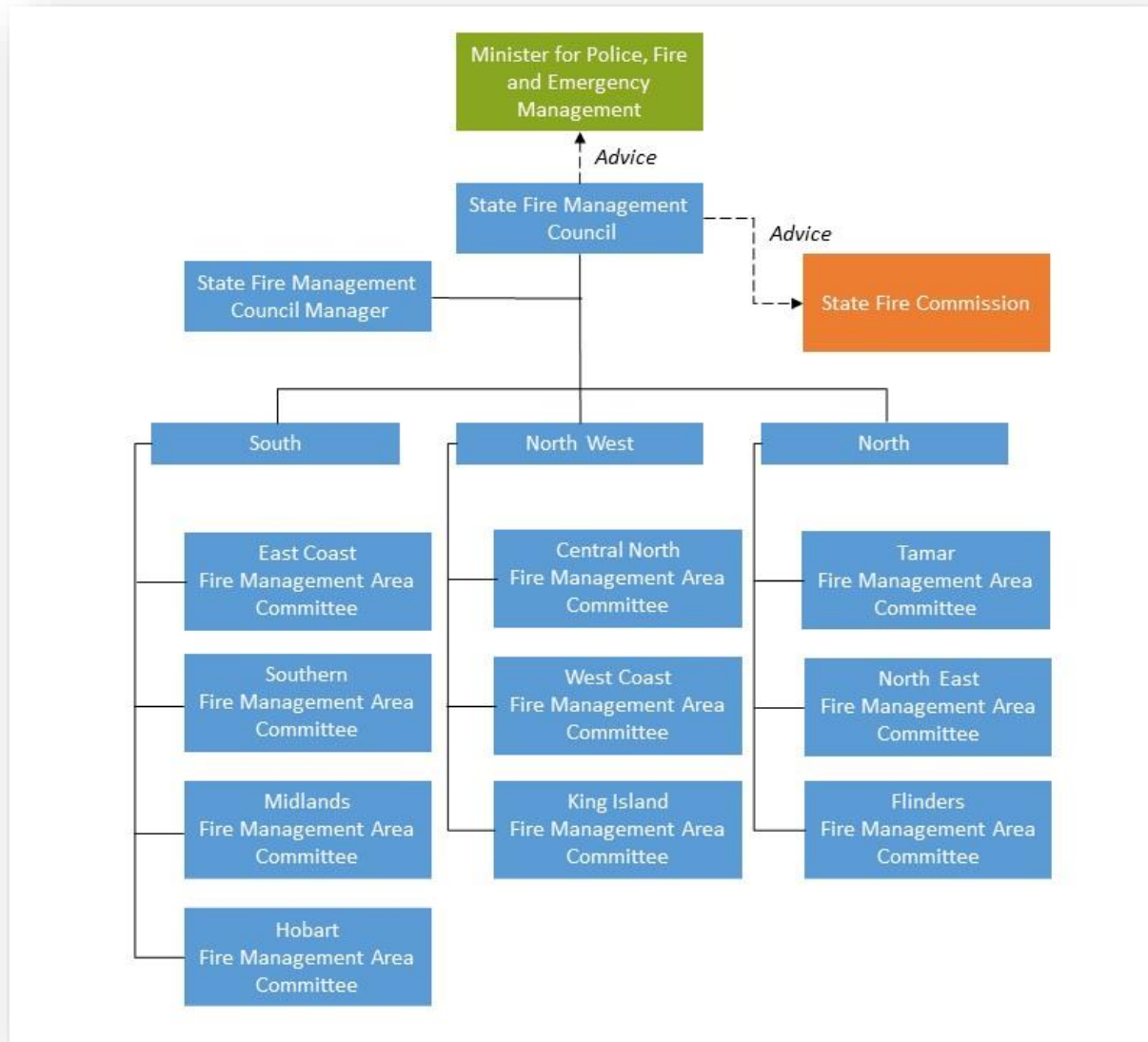


Figure 1. Governance structure of the State Fire Management Council.

Strategic Direction Framework

The Strategic Direction Framework (2018-2022) guides the SFMC priorities and activities. Due to an extended absence in SFMC management and the review of the Fire Service Act 1979 (ongoing), the review of the Strategic Direction Framework (2018-2022) will be undertaken in 2024. Table 2 below outlines priorities, aims and actions.

Table 2. Strategic Direction Framework (2018-2022) for the State Fire Management Council.

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 Areas

A Fire Management Area (FMA) is a gazetted area declared by the SFMC (*Fire Service Act 1979* s 17(1)) (Figure 2.). Geographic representation of FMA boundaries is most closely aligned with existing boundaries for local government authority, but not agencies such as Parks and Wildlife Service, Tasmania Fire Service and Sustainable Timber Tasmania. Boundaries also consider risk profile including risk type, management of risk for the area, and functionality in the area. FMAs may include more than one Local Government Authority and FMA boundaries of agencies responsible for fire management.

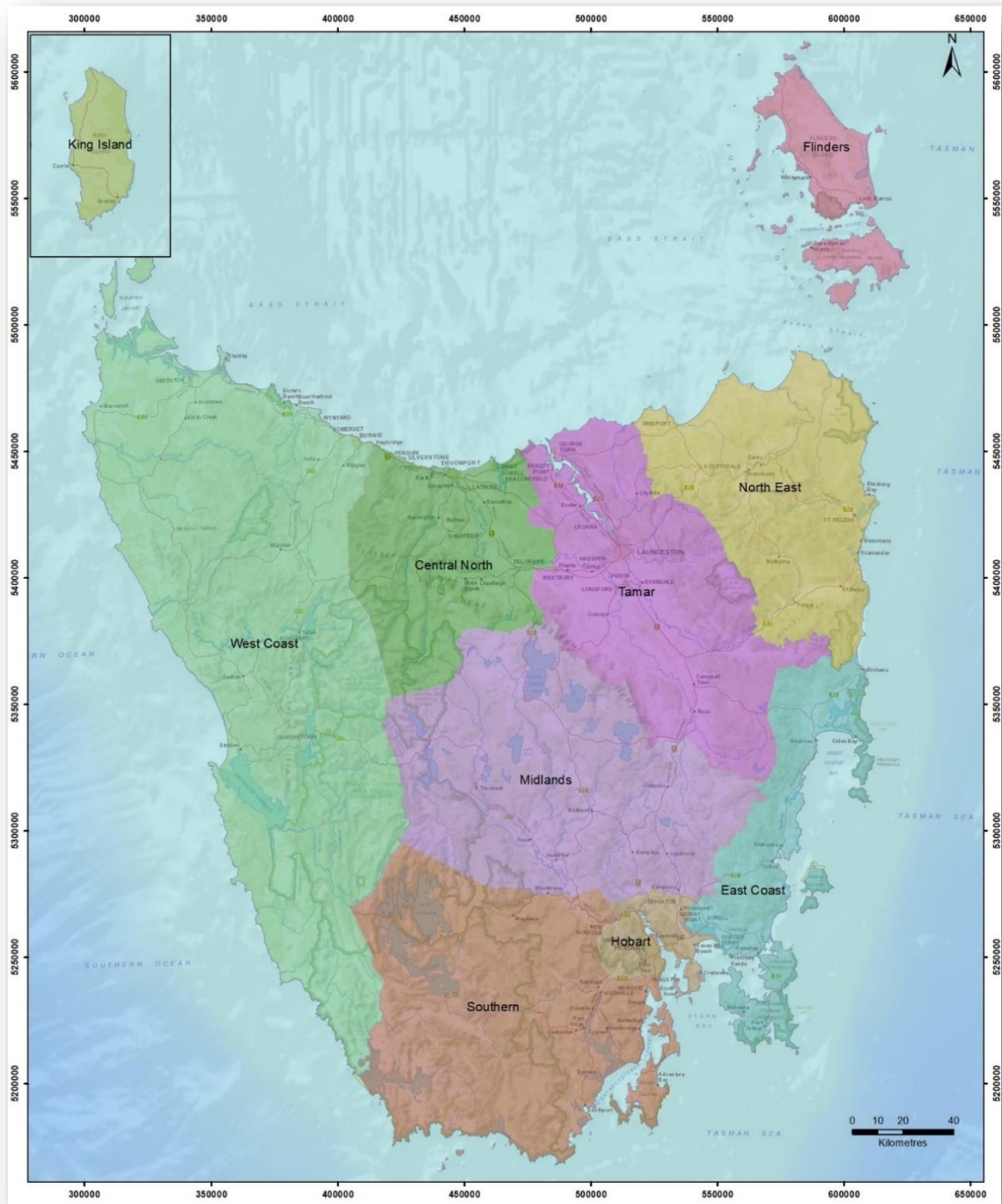


Figure 2. Location of the ten (10) Fire Management Areas in Tasmania

Fire Management Area Committees

The SFMC manages bushfire risk management across all tenures in Tasmania. This involves coordinating multiple landowners and organisations to work together through a shared responsibility approach to manage bushfire risk. This approach addresses the individual barriers such as resources and infrastructure that landowners and organisations face when working individually, and delivers a more comprehensive and cooperative model for bushfire risk management and planning.

There are ten (10) Fire Management Area Committees, established by the State Fire Management Council under the provision of the *Fire Service Act 1979* (s 18(1)). Each FMAC is representative of a Fire Management Area (FMA). The FMAC is responsible to the SFMC and is to comply with its directions (*Fire Service Act 1979* s 21(3) & s 21(4)).

The SFMC provides policy, guidance, advice, direction, and day-to-day administrative, managerial and technical support to an FMAC in respect of the performance of the FMACs functions in relation to bushfire management of Fire Management Areas. They also ensure FMAC submitted Bushfire Risk Management Plans are consistent with the [Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines 2020](#), the state fire protection plan (*Fire Service Act 1979* s 8(1)(d)) and state vegetation fire management plan (s 15(1)(a)) and are approved as per requirements of the *Fire Service Act 1979* s 20(1)(c).

FMAC Purpose

Section 20 of the *Fire Service Act 1979* sets out the functions and powers of Fire Management Area Committees. The FMAC is required to coordinate fire management activities within its FMA, including community education and information, and fuel management. Each FMAC provides a forum to enable a consistent, comprehensive, and cooperative approach to strategic planning for fire and vegetation management. The FMAC is comprised of Local brigades, local government, and managers (from public and private land with responsibility for fire and vegetation management within a Fire Management Area (FMA)). The membership of an FMAC should include an adequate range of stakeholder representatives to enable the committee to fulfill its purpose and perform its functions effectively. *Fire Service Act 1979* s 18(3) provides for members to be recommended from within the FMA area, subject to approval of 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 *Fire Service Act 1979* s 18(2) which specifies that a FMAC membership is inclusive of those listed, with additional representatives based on the unique requirements of the FMA and considered by the SFMC on a case-by-case basis for approval (*Fire Service Act* s 18(3)). Membership appointments under Section 18(2) are established by the SFMC. Membership appointments under *Fire Service Act 1979* s 18(3) may be recommended by FMACs and approved by the SFMC.

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.

Review of Fire Management Areas and Fire Management Area Committees 2023

In March 2022, the State Fire Management Council resolved to undertake a detailed review of FMACs with the aim to reduce levels of duplication occurring across FMACs. This decision was made considering response from FMAC members where some were participating in more than one FMAC, leading to a cost-benefit impost on those individuals and their organisations. In a letter to Chairs and Deputy Chairs of FMACs (27 June 2022), the SFMC committed to consultation with FMAC Chairs (and Deputy Chairs) throughout the review process.

The aim of the review was to establish areas that incorporate administratively aligned boundaries and consider bushfire risk and topography, for the responsible management of bushfire fuels across Tasmania in recognition of bushfire risk as a shared responsibility across all sectors in the public arena.

The objectives of the review were:

- a) To evaluate the effectiveness of the current 10 FMA boundaries and associated FMAC structure and function
- b) To evaluate the effectiveness of FMA boundaries and associated FMAC structure and function, as per alternative models, for example:
 - an FMA model of 6 FMAs:
 - 4 mainland FMAs, King Island FMA and Flinders Island FMA
 - an FMA model of 5 FMAs:
 - 3 mainland FMAs, King Island FMA and Flinders Island FMA
 - an FMA model with 3 FMAs:
 - 3 mainland FMAs that align with the Tasmania Fire Service boundaries, and two subregional FMACs namely King Island FMAC and Flinders Island FMAC
- c) To provide a recommendation to the SFMC.

No progress was made between March and December 2022 due to staff vacancies during that period. The SFMC Manager commenced project management in March 2023. A schedule of consultation, research and reporting was approved by the SFMC and progressed by the SFMC Manager. A survey of FMAC members was conducted, with results of a survey of FMAC members indicated that 64% of members are supportive of reducing the number of FMAs and were highly in favour of better documentation and support for FMACs. Research on FMA and FMAC history has been documented in a report and includes the research conducted for the formation of the current ten (10) FMAs (2012). This background is intended to serve as a reference point for future reviews. Results from consultation include SFMC feedback, a survey of FMAC members, workshops, communication at FMAC meetings, local government consultation and individual FMAC member responses.

Two FMAC member workshops were held, first in Hobart for southern based FMAC members and the second in Campbell Town for northern based FMAC members, noting FMAC members were free to attend either or all workshops.

Two main outcomes from the workshops were:

- a consensus for the formation of 6 FMAs for the state: three FMAs based on emergency management regions (south, north and northwest), and FMAs each for King Island, Flinders Island and Hobart based on current FMA boundaries.
- an overview of FMAC structure and function identifying areas for review and improvement

A 'Fire Management Areas and Fire Management Area Committee review' report is expected to be submitted to the SFMC in December 2023.



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

Research Coordination Committee (RCC)

The SFMC Research Coordination Committee (RCC) was established in 2019 with the purpose to coordinate strategic research and influence future research within Tasmania, nationally and internationally.

The RCC aims to:

- 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.

Activities of the RCC include:

- Updating RCC protocol to be more contemporary.
- Engagement with the Wellington Park Trust.
- Identification of capability and incident management structure.

Research collaboration

Fire Ecology Community of Practice (Fire Ecology CoP).

The SFMC contributes to national inter-government agency research coordination via membership of the Fire Ecology CoP. The Fire Ecology CoP is hosted by the National Prescribed Burning Network, an entity comprised of Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) member agencies in each Australian jurisdiction plus the Forest Fire Management Group (FFMG). The Fire Ecology CoP exists to be a community of practice for the staff of agencies involved in fire ecology field, particularly those providing their agencies with strategic guidance on the ecological considerations associated with prescribed burning and bushfire response. Fire Ecology CoP membership is generally comprised of staff from AFAC/FFMG member agencies who provide strategic advice on fire ecology to inform and deliver prescribed burns and the assessment of prescribed burning and bushfire impacts. SFMC Manager, Dr Perpetua Turner is a member.

In 2022-2023 the Fire Ecology CoP conducted three online meetings which included presentations from guest academics and government researchers, actively shared information, and resources via a dedicated Teams platform, collaborated on a Natural Hazards Research Australia funding submission (ongoing), and reviewed the Fire Ecology CoP Terms of Reference.

Research facilitation

Tasmanian Public Bushfire Preparedness Survey

Led by researchers in the Bushfire Hub University of Tasmania, this survey across all 29 Tasmanian local government areas, includes bushfire questions used in the Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2016, as well as additional questions on bushfire risk perception, planning and preparedness agreed by stakeholders. These data, together with the Department of Health Population Health Survey (2016), are expected to provide important evidence on longitudinal trends in bushfire preparedness across Tasmania. Project outputs include an available-for-future-use bushfire preparedness questionnaire, an analysis of bushfire preparedness in Tasmania and comparison with the 2016 data, public reporting on current status and trends of bushfire preparedness for each local government area, and publicly available peer-reviewed scientific publication and data.

Letters of support for the project were provided by the Manager, State Fire Management Council, and SFMC member organisations (Chief Officer Tasmania Fire Service, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association of Tasmania).

Regulatory frameworks for smoke emissions from prescribed burning

Together with the University of Tasmania and the Fuel Reduction Program, the SFMC supported a concept project aimed at better understanding of the governance framework in Tasmania for smoke emissions and the impacts of smoke, particularly in relation to prescribed burning for bushfire hazard reduction. Whilst, unsuccessful for Natural Hazards Research Australia (NHRA) round 5 funding, the NHRA invited further information due to the number of smoke management related submissions and identified research gaps. Discussions are ongoing.

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 for stakeholders during 2022-2023 included:

- The Fire Service Act Review
- TFES Draft Bill
- FMAC Terms of Reference.

The SFMC submission to the TFES Draft Bill is available here <http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/State-Fire-Management-Council.pdf>

The SFMC also maintain awareness and provide input into several other State and National initiatives, during 2022-2023 these included:

- Monitoring and input into the Australian Fire Danger Rating System Project,
- Consultation on revision of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Tasmania Fire Service and Forest Industry Fire Management Committee Forest Managers for Management of Bushfires
- Consultation on revision of the Forest Industry Fire Management Committee Fire Prevention at Forest Operations

Machinery Operations Working Group

The Machinery Operations Working Group was established in 2016 after landholders and machinery operators identified a gap with systems concerning the operation of machinery during days of Total Fire Ban. The group was instrumental in developing a proposal based on self-regulation to address issues. Subsequently, the Machinery Operations Guideline was jointly developed between industry and Tasmania Fire Service.



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

Red Hot Tips

The Red Hot Tips program is an initiative of the State Fire Management Council (SFMC). After strong success with the initial State Government funding for the 2020-21 financial year, the program secured an additional four years of funding to June 2025.

Red Hot Tips aims to educate, engage and support farmers and landholders in rural Tasmania to actively manage their bushfire risk, encouraging collaborative vegetation fire management and ecological sustainability across the landscape. The primary audience for Red Hot Tips is farmers and landholders who manage large tracts of land in rural areas of Tasmania. Through providing a central contact point and free 'one-stop service', Red Hot tips successfully guides and educates landholders on matters relating to bushfire risk.

The program is also supported by an Advisory Group. This is a group of key stakeholders from across government and landowners (Figure 3). The advisory group provide an insight of the requirement of their stakeholder groups to ensure the program remains relevant to the needs of landowners.



Figure 3. Red Hot Tips stakeholders to June 2023

The Red Hot Tips strategic plan outlines four program objectives:

1. *Build capacity and capability of landholders, or groups of landholders, managing large tracts of rural land to take appropriate and informed action to manage their bushfire risk.*

Managing bushfire risk is a recognised component of land management and planning. On-ground, practical advice on effective bushfire management planning, includes obtaining appropriate permits, and developing burn plans and property management plans. Assisting landholders and groups of landholders to understand and navigate the rural land regulatory environment is an investment in building capacity and capability.

2. *Increase the understanding of bushfire risk and the social and environmental effects of vegetation fire management activities.*

With a changing climate, fire and vegetation fire management planning and practice at the property and landscape scale is critical for regenerative and sustainable future land management. Planned burning is one of the most cost-effective methods to manage bushfire risk, either on its own, or in conjunction with other fuel reduction methods. Being prepared for bushfire well ahead of time is important to mitigate potential negative social and environmental effects of bushfire.

3. *Work collaboratively to assist each other to mitigate, and prepare for, bushfires.*

Managing bushfire risk in Tasmania is a shared responsibility between governments, fire management agencies, land managers, landholders, private industry, and the community. Through working together, forming networks and partnerships with neighbours, private industry, government and other programs, knowledge and resources can be shared. This results in more effective and sustainable bushfire risk planning and management.

4. *Vegetation fire management activities are increased and informed by the best available fire ecology research and practical operational and local knowledge.*

To achieve best practice, planning and management should use the best operational and local knowledge, together with scientific research. Successful delivery of fire science to fire and vegetation management practice at the ground level is achieved through a team of individuals whose combined knowledge and skills in ecology, land management, burn planning and fire management operations bring narrow the gap between the ecological practitioner perspective and field manager and landowners experience.

Red Hot Tips Advisory Group

The SFMC has strategic oversight of the program through the Red Hot Tips Advisory Group. The Advisory Group consists of stakeholders with specific knowledge and skills in land management, bushfire management and rural engagement across the state. The Advisory Group offers input and advice on the program set-up, design and delivery.

This may include:

- the development of program resource content and support tools,
- advice on how best to engage with stakeholders,
- input on how best to market and promote the program, and
- guidance on how to address potential barriers to success.

Advisory Group members are Red Hot Tips program champions and promote the program within their own networks and communities and support media opportunities as required.

As of June 2023, the following people are Red Hot Tips Advisory Group members:

- Sarah Jacobson
Chair
- John Atkinson
TasFarmers
- Shane Hine
Private landowner
- Rob O'Connor
Private landowner/volunteer
- Katy Edwards
Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania
- Rob Smith
Private Forests Tasmania
- Bec Downie
Private landholder

The Advisory Group met three times in the 2022-23 financial year. After leading the Advisory Group from 2020, Ian Sauer resigned as Chair in June with Sarah Jacobson accepting the role.



Figure 4. Media for appointment of Red Hot Tips Chair, Sarah Jacobson

Red Hot Tips staff

The Red Hot Tips Coordinator directs the program statewide. Three Red Hot Tips Facilitators are responsible for program delivery, with one Facilitator in each of the northwest, northern and southern regions of the state. Staff work to encourage and promote collaborative vegetation fire management across the private and public sector. Through encouraging participation from landholders, or groups of landholders managing large properties, a much needed gap in fire and vegetation management capability and capacity is filled.

Key deliverables for the Red Hot Tips program for 2022-23

For 2022-23 progression was made in many areas (Table 3).

Table 3. Red Hot Tips achievements for 2022-23.

Objective	Outcome	Measurement of success 2022-23
1. Build capacity and capability of landholders, or groups of landholders, managing large tracts of rural land to take appropriate and informed action to manage their bushfire risk.	Increased community awareness of bushfire risk and shared responsibility	60 program registrations (July 2020 – June 2023 = 268 total or 420,000ha of private land) 3 Burn workshops with 37 Participants (7 total with 76 Participants) 57 Events (July 2020 – June 2023 = 119 total) 20 FMAC meetings TFES conference RHT presentation (55 participants)
2. Increase the understanding of bushfire risk and the social and environmental effects of vegetation fire management activities.	Increased participation in effective mitigation by communities	109 registration planned burns (July 2020 – June 2023 = 428 total) 2, 583.40 ha burnt (July 2020 – June 2023 = 9,332.65ha) 5 Demonstration/Mentor burns with 17 Participants (21 Total with 69 Participants) 34 facebook posts (68 Total)
3. Work collaboratively to assist each other to mitigate, and prepare for, bushfires	Increased community awareness of bushfire risk and shared responsibility	Partnerships were established and progressed with: Private Land Conservation Programs Covenant program, Poppy Growers Association, Old Mates Day, Dairy Tasmania, Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, Primary Employers Tasmania (feature article planned for July 2023), Natural Resource Management, Rural Business Tasmania
4. Vegetation fire management activities are increased and informed by the best available fire ecology research and practical operational and local knowledge.	Increased engagement with planned burning publications and landowner technical information. Knowledge sharing through presentation	SFMC and RHT staff shared knowledge with: Private Forest Tasmania, Farmers for Climate Change Forum, SETAC (Cultural burning), Landcare Tasmania, Fire Ecology Learning Network, Fire Ecology Community of Practice

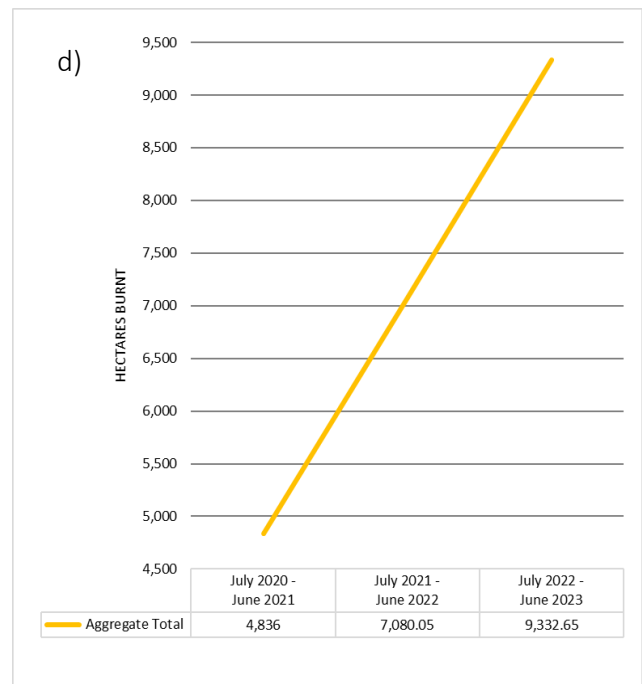
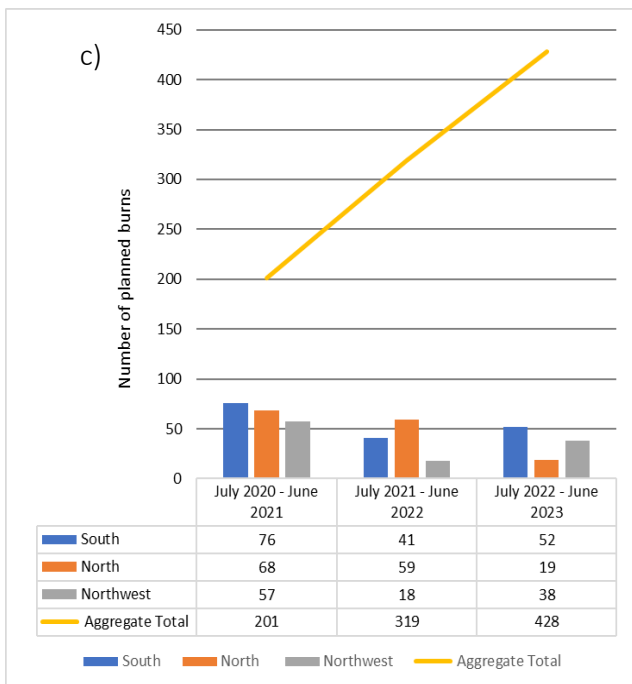
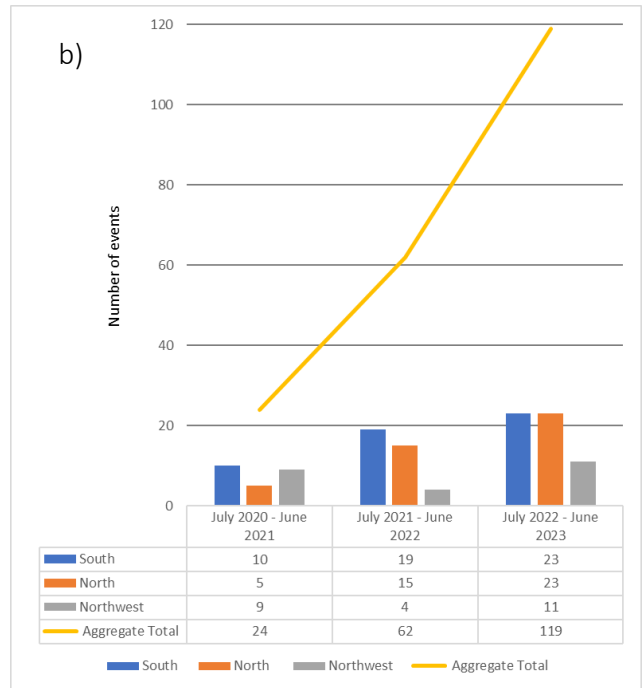
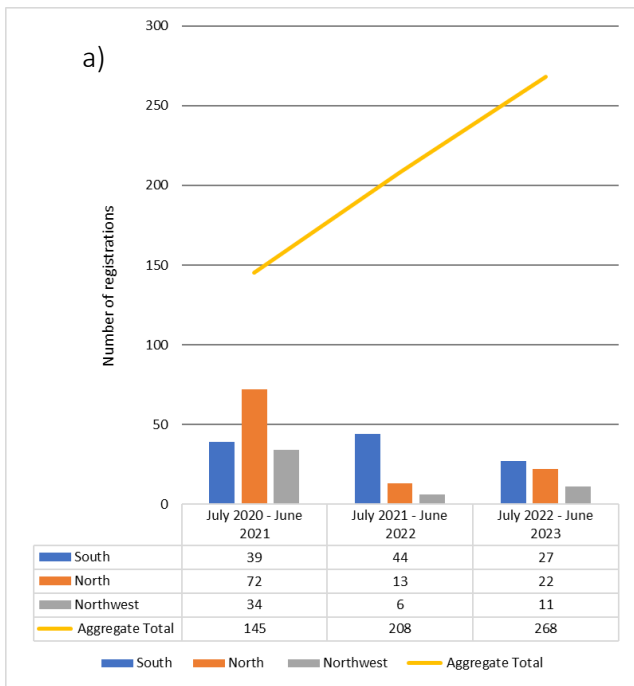


Figure 5. Red Hot Tips measurables since program initiation (June 2022), and per financial year since initiation. a) Number of RHT registrations; b) number of events; c) number of planned burns through the program; d) hectares burnt through the program

Promoting biodiversity and reducing bushfire threat.

In May 2023, Red Hot Tips Landowner, Jan Hamilton, achieved a successful fuel reduction burn in collaboration with Red Hot Tips and local TFS Volunteers.

Fuel reduction planning and burning tools were used to promote biodiversity, pasture health and to reduce bushfire threat to major assets and infrastructure.



MANAGEMENT POST FIRE

FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Red Hot Tips works with landowners to develop burn plans that identify management objectives.

Jan was supported with all planning stages, from the identification of objectives to the ignition strategy.

“The burn met our objectives and we have progressed with further burning on the farm.” Jan Hamilton

Red Hot Tips assists landowners to monitor and evaluate their burning. The success of risk mitigation strategies are assessed through follow-up conversations and post-burn evaluations.

COLLABORATION

The burn was achieved in one day, with support from local TFS Volunteer Fire Brigades.

Red Hot Tips increases community capacity and awareness of bushfires by bringing together fire management resources and landowners, to achieve successful bushfire risk mitigation.

“Returning fire to our property with the Red Hot Tips program was a lot easier than I expected. I feel more confident to use fire as a management tool for both fuel reduction and property health.” Jan Hamilton

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 foster relationships and promote knowledge sharing and collaboration between public and private sectors involved in vegetation fire management.

The SFMC hosted a successful Stakeholder Forum Event in June 2023 in Campbell Town, with the Hon. Felix Ellis, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management in attendance. Guest speaker, Simon Cook from Forico, shared his insights and knowledge on current industry practices and how these are applied whilst still preserving the environmental and ecological values of the managed landscapes. The event was attended by SFMC stakeholders and FMAC members from across the state.

FMAC Communication

The FMAC newsletter was reinstated in 2018 in response to FMAC feedback. Three newsletters were published in 2018-2019; two in 2019-2020; two in 2020-2021 and one in 2021-2022. There were no newsletters published in 2022-2023 due to staff vacancies. Email was used to update FMAC Members and SFMC stakeholders on progress of the FMA and FMAC Review and SFMC communications.

Newsletters provide key messages from SFMC meetings, project updates, consultation opportunities, links to relevant research and publications and upcoming events. Consultation with FMAC Members on newsletter format and content was undertaken in early 2023. Future newsletter content will include FMAC member profiles, FMAC Member appointments and changes, relevant staff position changes and stakeholder information.

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 Risk Management Plans (BRMPs)

Bushfire Risk Management Plans are strategic planning documents that identify priorities for the treatment of bushfire risk in the FMA. BRMPs are developed by FMACs as required under s 18 and 20 of the *Fire Service Act 1979*.

The statutory title for a BRMP in the *Fire Service Act 1979* is 'Fire protection plan'. For clarity and consistency with the objectives of the [Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines](#) and contemporary terminology, the term 'Bushfire Risk Management Plan' is used.

This BRMP aims to coordinate and influence the treatment of bushfire risk in the Fire Management Area. It identifies priorities for the treatment of bushfire risk. Section 20(1)(c) of the *Fire Service Act 1979* states that an FMAC is to submit to the Council, on or before 30 September of each year, a fire protection plan for its Fire Management Area for the next 12 months commencing on 1 October. BRMP priorities are currently being revised to comply with this clause.

The BRMP identifies which organisations or individuals are responsible for implementing bushfire risk treatments. However, details of bushfire risk treatments (e.g. operational plans, burning plans, environmental assessments) are not included in the BRMP; these are the responsibility of the identified organisations or individuals.

BRMPs are available at <https://www.sfmc.tas.gov.au/publications-resources>

Bushfire Risk Management Plans – Risk Assessment

The design and much data compilation and analysis for the BRMP Risk Assessment is done at the State level, as much of the data is collected and mapped at this scale. This ensures consistency and saves time across all Fire Management Area Committees (FMAC) and is enhanced with individual FMACs checking and validating data as well as filling in any significant gaps. The [Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines\(2020\)](#) include detail on the Risk Assessment process. Identification of areas at risk is enabled through Risk Criteria. Risk Criteria means how consequences and likelihood are classified and quantified. The Tasmanian Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (TERAG) were used to guide the Risk Criteria:

The Risk Criteria include: consequences, likelihood measures, control strength and expediency and confidence level. The Tasmanian Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (TERAG) bushfire tool automatically calculates the priority rating based on levels assigned to consequences, likelihood, and confidence. These Risk Criteria are used to develop ratings and scores for rows in the Risk Register. Detail on how each of these Risk Criteria is calculated rated or scored in the Risk Register is in the Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines.

The Risk Register and Treatment Plan are products from the bushfire Risk Assessment process that identify priorities and treatments and are central components of the BRMP. These priorities are established from a three-year risk assessment analysis, last undertaken in 2021 for all FMAs. This 2021 risk assessment is currently relevant considering the fire seasons since 2021 and is the basis for the present review of BRMPs.

Bushfire Risk Management Plans – Implementation Status Reports

Two rounds of FMAC meetings were completed in 2022-2023: Round 1, 22 November – 14 December; Round 2, 16 May to 26 July 2023. Each Fire Management Area Committee (FMAC) is required to monitor progress towards the completion of treatment works listed in the Bushfire Risk Management Plan (BRMP), including the timeliness of the works. Implementation Status Reports providing summaries of progress on treatment actions were provided to the SFMC in 2022-2023. These reports are prepared twice a year by the FMAC supported by the Bushfire Risk Unit (BRU).

Bushfire Risk Management Plan Guidelines

The [Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines](#) were written in 2020 following a process of consultation with two working groups who provided expert and stakeholder input. The guidelines are a technical reference document aimed at assisting FMACs with the development of FMA risk assessments, using methodology outlined in the Tasmanian Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (TERAG). A review of the guidelines is current with completion expected in 2023. The updated version will be publicly available.

Fire Management Area Committees

South

East Coast Fire Management Area Committee

The East Coast BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/east-coast

The East Coast FMA covers the whole of the local government areas of Tasman, Sorell and Glamorgan-Spring Bay. The East Coast FMA comprises an area of 393 000 ha, along the east coast of Tasmania, from the Tasman Peninsula in the south to Bicheno in the north.

Low and dispersed human population is evident in the Tasman and Glamorgan-Spring Bay local government areas; 70% of the areas total permanent population (22 000 people) reside in the Sorell municipality. This human population aspect in Tasman and Glamorgan-Spring Bay local government areas correlates with the major land uses, particularly the large proportion of land used for agriculture, production forestry, and conservation. The landscape of the East Coast FMA includes an almost continuous band of dry eucalypt forest stretching almost the entire length of the FMA. This could see a major fire impact a large proportion of the FMA under serious fire weather conditions. Subject matter experts advised that the risk profile for the East Coast FMA remain largely the same in 2023 as for 2020, due to the lack of any significant bushfires.

The areas at highest risk of bushfire identified in the FMA by the East Coast FMAC include:

- Towns and larger communities within the FMA, including; Coles Bay, Bicheno, Dolphin Sands, Triabunna, Orford, Dunalloy, Nubeena and Port Arthur.
- Broader areas including Nugent/Orielton/Forcett, Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas, and the Buckland Military Training Area.
- natural values and production forests, prioritised according to risk rating. However, these are still being evaluated for treatment, further analysis or monitoring and review.

Southern Fire Management Area Committee

The Southern BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/southern

The Southern FMA covers an area of approximately 1 million ha and includes three local government areas: Derwent Valley, Kingborough and Huon Valley. Population (approximately 69 000 [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021]) is centred around the southern settlements of Hobart, the Huon Valley, the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and New Norfolk, with small populations in the Tyenna Valley. Much of the FMA is uninhabited and 73% of the area is public/crown land, most of which is the South West National Park. Vegetation types with the highest percentage area within the Southern FMA are; wet eucalypt forest, moorland, sedgeland and rushland, rainforest, and dry eucalypt forest.

Due to containing some of the wettest and driest locations in Tasmania, the length of the bushfire season in the Southern FMA can vary considerably. Bushfire seasons in drier locations can run from October - April whilst bushfire seasons in areas of higher rainfall with wetter vegetation types can be limited to period December - March. The majority (84%) of the Southern FMA has been long unburnt since fire incident recording began.

Communities that the FMAC have identified during the strategic assessment process as being at high risk and as having priority for mitigation actions include:

- Underwoods Hill, Woodbridge Saddle, Woodbridge, Sunny Banks, Cygnet, Birchs Bay, Heeneys Bluff, Range Hill, Gordon, Nicholls Rivulet, Middleton, Gaylors Sugarloaf, Gardners Bay
- Sproules Road, Electrona, Oyster Cove, Red Hill, Coningham, Margate, Kettering, Lower Snug, Snug
- Cades Spur, Leslie Vale, Neika, Sandfly, Allens Rivulet, Longley,
- Southport, Hastings, Sand Hill, Lune River
- New Norfolk, Magra, Black Hills, Lawitta
- South Bruny Range, Adventure Bay
- Huonville
- Strathgordon
- Gordon Power Station
- Shorts Hill, Upper Woodstock, Sherwood Hill, Peverata
- Randalls Bay, Mount Royal, Charlotte Cove, Garden Island Creek, The Pinnacle
- Numerous forest industry assets

Midlands Fire Management Area Committee

The Midlands BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/midlands

Covering an area of approximately 1 059 000 ha, Midlands FMA is the second largest FMA with two local government areas, Central Highlands, and Southern Midlands. The large area has a low and dispersed population, which correlates with the major land uses in the area: agriculture (54.9% of land is private/freehold), production forestry (11.6% managed by Sustainable Timber Tasmania) and conservation (6.7% is crown land). The landscape includes very large, almost continuous bands of dry eucalypt forest.

Human caused ignitions are responsible for most recorded fires in the FMA. However, lightning strikes are an increasing cause of unplanned fires. There have been four very large fires (>10,000 ha) in the Midlands FMA in the past 20 years, occurring at Broadmarsh (2003), Lake Repulse (2013), Gell River (2019) and Great Pine Tier (2019).

The areas at highest risk of bushfire identified in the FMA by the Midlands FMAC include:

- highland shack communities (Arthurs Lake, Wayatinah, Bradys Lake and Great Lake), Bagdad, Campania, Oatlands, Kempton and Fentonbury/Westerway.
- natural values and production forests, prioritised according to risk rating. However, these are still being evaluated for treatment, further analysis or monitoring and review.

Hobart Fire Management Area Committee

The Hobart BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/hobart

The Hobart FMA is approximately 110 000 ha and includes all of Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, Brighton local government areas, and parts of the local government areas of Kingborough, Huon Valley and Derwent Valley. The FMA Area is bisected by the Derwent River and bounded on the western side by the Wellington Range and a long urban-rural interface.

Tasmania's most extreme fire weather events are a common occurrence within and adjacent to the Hobart FMA. The bushfire season is variable mostly due to highly variable rainfall across the FMA (e.g. 1600 mm per year on the summit of Mt Wellington; less than 500 mm per year at Hobart Airport) resulting in a highly variable bushfire season with some areas being able to sustain fire for many months of the year. The length of the bushfire season can range from December - March in areas of higher rainfall and wetter vegetation types, and October - April in areas of lower rainfall.

The following areas were identified as having potential strategic importance for Hobart FMA:

- Fern Tree, Satchell Drive, Mount Nelson, Kingston, West Hobart, Dynnyrne, Lenah Valley, South Hobart, Tarooona, Bonnet Hill, Badger Hill, Ridgeway, Sandy Bay
- Glenorchy, Chigwell, Berriedale, Claremont, Montrose, Rosetta
- Rokeby, Cambridge, Howrah, Pilchers Hill, Geilston Bay, Mount Rumney, Bellerive, Mornington, Lindisfarne, Risdon Vale, Warrane
- Old Beach, Gagebrook, Tent Hill
- Dromedary, Mount Dromedary, Clark Stewart Road, Mcshane Hills, Limestone Hill, Granton, Upper Dromedary
- Collinsvale, Fairy Glen, Glenlusk, Mount Hull
- Dulcot, Grasstree Hill, Downhams Hill
- Lookout Knob, Mountain River
- Clifton Beach, Sandford
- The Backbone, Molesworth
- Mount Stuart
- Acton Park, Lauderdale, Roches Beach, Clarendon Vale.



Northwest

Central North Fire Management Area Committee

The Central North BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/central-north

The Central North FMA encompasses an area of 540 464 ha, with a total population of approximately 82 000, the majority of which situated in the population centres of Devonport, Ulverstone, Penguin, Deloraine, and Sheffield. Transient population is found at tourist destinations such as Cradle Mountain. 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).

Much of the vegetation in the FMA has been highly modified for agriculture; non-native agricultural, urban and exotic vegetation (which includes plantations) are predominant. Fire intolerant highland, alpine and rainforest vegetation is high in the FMA compared to other FMAs. Historical data indicates fire ignitions have been predominately human based, though dry lighting events have ignited fires within the FMA.

Areas and assets that the FMAC have considered to be a priority for treatment in the FMA include:

- production forests to the west of the Mersey River on Badgers Range and Bonney's Tier, west of
- Deloraine and to the west of Wilmot River to the north of Nietta
- fire intolerant vegetation across the Central Plateau
- Hydro Tasmania critical infrastructure
- Railton Cement Works and waste transfer
- Quoiba, Spreyton, Stony Rise, Eugenana, Tugrah, Miandetta
- Tarleton, South Spreyton, Acacia Hills, Latrobe, Oppenheim Hill, Dooleys Hill, Dinsdales Hill
- North Motton, Mount Duncan, Leven Hill
- Railton
- Marsdens Hill, Penguin
- Heazlewoods Hill, Turners Beach, Brookvale Road

West Coast Fire Management Area Committee

The West Coast BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/west-coast

The West Coast FMA covers just over 1.9 million ha and has an estimated residential population of 46, 598 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). The high diversity in vegetation types in the West Coast FMA is a result of varied elevation, geology, and fire history. Whilst low flammability rainforest and related scrub has the greatest percentage area cover of all vegetation types, many of the remaining vegetation types are medium to high flammability, including of button grass moorland, sedge land, rush land and peatland as well as scrub and heathland. Vegetation is well adapted to fire with the region experiencing a relatively high frequency of fast-moving bushfires started predominantly by dry lightning and burning large areas of the FMA.

Areas of potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation within the West Coast FMA were identified (Table 4). These areas were identified through a process that utilised and combined local knowledge and computer modelling. FMAC members with specific bushfire expertise and knowledge across the area contributed to the identification of both the communities at risk and the broader strategic areas for potential mitigation activities.

Table 4. Areas of strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation identified within the West Coast FMA.

Treatment Area/Asset	Risk	Responsible Agency
Zeehan Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Zeehan and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community. Weed infested land represents a high fire risk to the community and associated critical infrastructure.	West Coast Council, PWS, TFS, and NRE.
Strahan Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Strahan and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community.	West Coast Council, STT, PWS and TFS
Rosebery Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Rosebery and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community.	West Coast Council, STT, PWS and TFS
Queenstown Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Queenstown and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community.	West Coast Council, STT, PWS and TFS
Tullah Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Tullah and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community.	West Coast Council, STT, PWS and TFS
Burnie Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Burnie and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community.	Burnie City Council, PWS, STT and TFS
Human Settlement areas from Black River through to Rocky Cape	Bushfires pose a risk to the Shack Communities of Circular Head Council and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community	Circular Head Council, PWS and TFS
Sisters Beach Human Settlement Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Sisters Beach and Boat Harbour and associated critical infrastructure supporting the community.	Waratah Wynyard Council, PWS and TFS
Arthur River Human Settlement Area and Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area	Bushfires pose a risk to the human settlement area of Arthur River and adjoining coastal and the threatened ecosystems and associated individual plant and animal species in the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area.	PWS and TFS
Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and surrounding landscape	Bushfires pose a risk to threatened ecosystems and associated individual plant and animal species.	PWS and TFS
Critical Infrastructure – communication network, power facilities, water, and transport network.	Bushfires pose a risk to critical infrastructure (through disruption of power) for the west coast region and have the potential to pose significant negative impacts for Statewide critical infrastructure.	Hydro Tasmania, Telstra, TasNetworks, TasWater, Local Government.

King Island Fire Management Area Committee

The King Island BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/king-island

The King Island FMA covers all of King Island, an area of 110 975 ha. A successful agricultural industry on the island is a result of fire being long utilised for clearing of vegetation. Approximately 70% of the land mass has been modified for agricultural purposes. This has resulted in the removal of most rainforest and wet forest vegetation types; the reduction in habitat has also resulted in a decline of native fauna.

The high agricultural productivity of the island is a consequence of the organic soils (otherwise referred to as ‘peat’) underlying the pastures on King Island. These soils are likely to be at least hundreds if not thousands of years old. Peat or organic leaf matter in soils has both a high economic and environmental value but can also be an issue for extinguishment following bushfires. Where swamps have been drained for agricultural purposes or dry out during drought years, peat if exposed to fire can be burnt away and totally and permanently destroyed. Bushfire poses a risk to peat deposits on King Island.

Areas of potential strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation within the King Island FMA were identified (Table 5). These areas were identified through a process that utilised and combined local knowledge and computer modelling. FMAC members with specific fire expertise and knowledge across the area contributed to the identification of both the communities at risk and the broader strategic areas for potential mitigation activities.

Table 5. Areas of strategic importance for bushfire risk mitigation identified within the King Island FMA.

Treatment area/Asset	Risk	Responsible Agency
Currie Human Settlement Area	Residential houses from highly flammable vegetation the community	King Island Council, PWS and TFS
Grassy Human Settlement Area	Residential houses from highly flammable vegetation the community Critical Port Infrastructure in close proximity to flammable vegetation	King Island Council, PWS and TFS
Naracoopa Human Settlement Area	Residential houses from highly flammable vegetation the community	King Island Council, PWS and TFS
Colliers Swamp	Threatened Ecosystems and associated individual plant and animal species	PWS
Nook Swamp and Lavinia wetlands	Threatened Ecosystems and associated individual plant and animal species	PWS
Pegarah Plantation	Threatened Ecosystems and associated individual plant and animal species Economic loss from potential harvest material	STT
Critical Communication, power, water and transport infrastructure	Loss of communication, power and water supply to the King Island community	Hydro Tasmania, Telstra, King Island Council, TasWater and TAS Ports
Existing Strategic fire trails.	King Island community and natural values	King Island Council, PWS, STT and TFS

North

Tamar Fire Management Area Committee

The Tamar BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/tamar

The Tamar FMA encompasses Launceston City, the Tamar River Estuary, and the Northern Midlands plains with an estimated population of 106,000 principally residing in the major population centres including Launceston, Beaconsfield/Beauty Point, George Town, Hadspen, Legana, Longford, Perth, and Westbury. Encompassing an area of 859 086 ha, the Tamar FMA includes a mixture of land use types with high conservation or agricultural value. Production in the region is dominated by agricultural and pastoral activities, particularly meat, wool, apples, berries, and viticulture, with the Tamar Valley being one of Tasmania's leading wine producing areas. Tourism, manufacturing, and mineral exploration are also important industries in the region.

The East and West Tamar ridges (either side of the Tamar Estuary) are areas that the FMAC have considered to be a priority for treatment. These ridges have the potential to lead fires into the major population centres or negatively impact minor communities.

Areas and assets that the FMAC have considered to be a priority for treatment in the FMA include:

- Bell Bay, Mount Pelion infrastructure.
- Several production forest coupes.
- Hydro Tasmania critical Infrastructure.
- High value production forests.
- Hadspen, Travellers Rest, Prospect Vale, Blackstone Heights.
- Trevallyn, Riverside, Summerhill, and West Launceston.
- Finger Post Hill, Holloways Hill.
- Nunamara, Patersonia.
- Notley Hills South, Glengarry.
- Exeter, Lanena, Grindelwald, Rosevears, Millers Road, and
- Settlers Range, Beaconsfield, Beauty Point.

North East Fire Management Area Committee

The North East BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/north-east

The North East FMA covers area of 681 193 ha and includes the local government areas of Dorset and Break O'Day. With an estimated residential population of 12 884, the major community centres include Scottsdale, Bridport, St Helens, St Marys, Fingal, and Scamander. This population is transient, with increases attributed to attractions such as mountain bike trails, golf courses and national parks, as well as to coastal areas during summer.

Agriculture, forestry/plantations, and fishing are the predominant industries that form a landscape mosaic with native vegetation. The native vegetation consists of open sclerophyll woodlands in lowlands, heath complexes on coastal plains, inland wet and dry sclerophyll forest, and some rainforest and alpine and sub alpine complexes on the upper slopes of the elevated terrain. High productivity buttongrass is also present.

The highest priority risks identified by the North East FMAC are broadly defined as:

- St Helens to Scamander, Bridport/Ockerbys Hill, St Marys, Ansons Bay, Binalong Bay/Humbug Hill, Musselroe Bay, Fingal/Mangana, Mathinna, Gladstone, Baretop/Nicks Hill.
- Fire sensitive native species and native vegetation communities
- Production forests
- Mountain Bike Trails (Blue Derby and St Helens mountain bike trails)
- Bay of Fires campgrounds
- Blackwood, Cullenswood and Duncan collieries.

Flinders Fire Management Area Committee

The Flinders BRMP is available at sfmc.tas.gov.au/committee/flinders

The Flinders FMA is an archipelago of 52 islands, the of which is Flinders Island, followed by Cape Barren Island/Truwana and Clarke Island. The total FMA area is approximately 206 046 ha, extending from approximately 10 km south of Wilson Promontory in Victoria to the northeast tip of mainland Tasmania. Over half of the Flinders FMA is private freehold land tenure. Flinders Island is home to approximately 900 residents, with a transient population in the warmer months. Agriculture, tourism, and natural and cultural assets are highly valued by the Flinders FMA community.

The vegetation types within Flinders FMA have well been mapped and documented and include heaths, scrub and dry woodlands, dry sclerophyll forest interposed with wet sclerophyll forest gullies, and remnant rainforest on Mt Strzelecki and the Darling Range.

Strategic mitigation plans for highest priority risk assets identified by the Flinders FMAC are either developed and require review or require development. It is envisaged strategic mitigation for the FMA in general will be undertaken/reviewed during the life of this BRMP to further augment risk mitigation activities.

The highest risks identified in the FMA are broadly defined as:

- The Human Settlement Areas of Lady Barron, Whitemark/Blue Rocks, Killiecrankie and The Corner on Truwana/Cape Barren Island. Fuel reduction is identified as a treatment for these areas including fuel breaks and fuel reduction burning. The primary responsibility for conducting these fuel reduction burns and fuel breaks are the Parks and Wildlife Service and Tasmania Fire Service.
- The historical site of Wybalenna. Discussions with the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) will be required to determine the site's values and how to mitigate bushfire risk.
- Communications towers at Mt Tanner, Hays Hill and Walkers Lookout. Fuel reduction opportunities.

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.

FMACs actively engaged with community and organisations to strengthen membership and representation within their FMA. This saw several changes with new members appointed to FMACs.

Reporting

The 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 were provided to the State Fire Commission quarterly along with an annual update for inclusion in the Commission's Annual Report.

This stand-alone Annual Report was developed and is distributed to stakeholders, highlighting the accomplishments of the SFMC each financial year.

Fire Permit Officers

The SFMC has a legislative responsibility to appoint Fire Permit Officers under Section 65 of the *Fire Service Act 1979*.

On 1st October 2022, all Fire Permit Officers were reappointed as part of the Fire Permit Officer project. For the data in Figure 4, the appointment of new Fire Permit Officers is only included on this date, not the existing appointments.

During 2022-2023, the SFMC:

- appointed 101 Fire Permit Officers (Figure 4); and,
- rescinded 58 Fire Permit Officers (Figure 5).

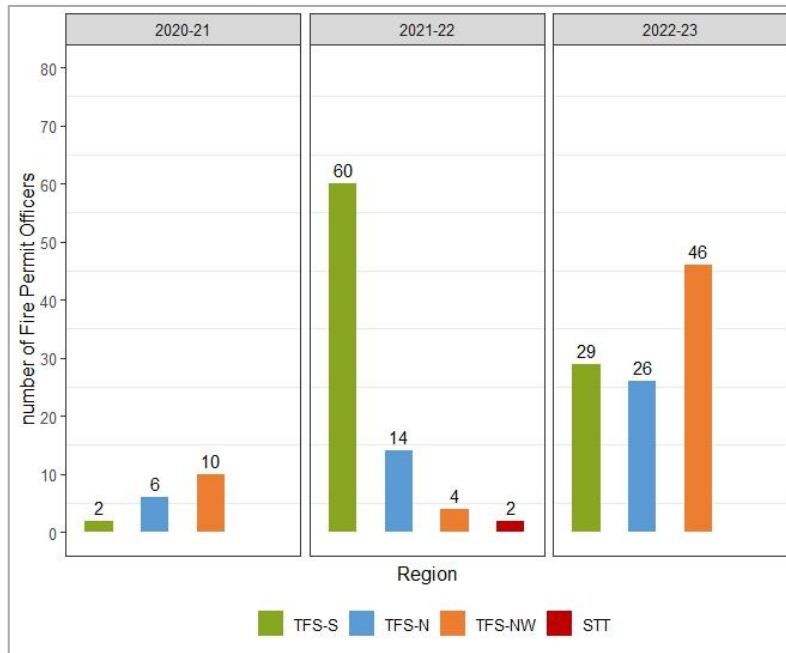


Figure 4. Permit Officer appointments 2022-2023

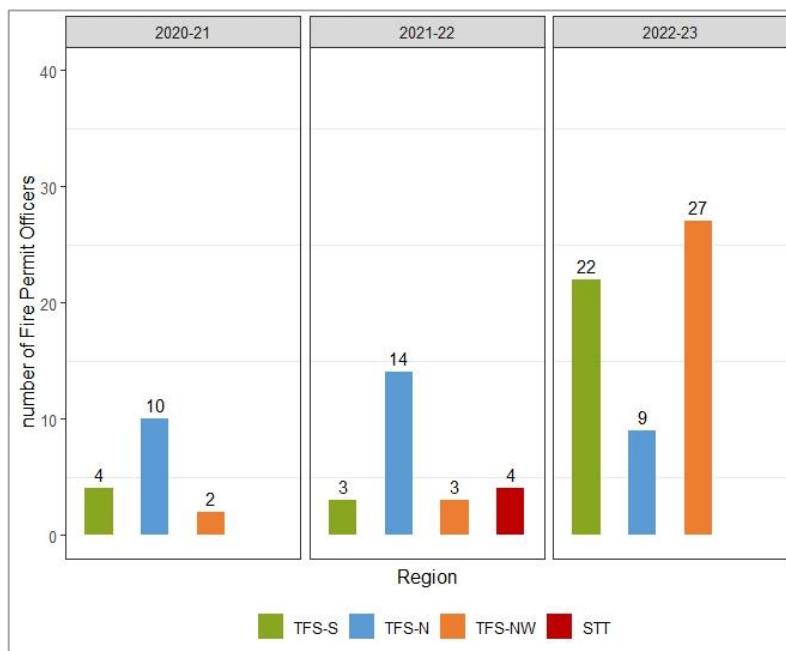


Figure 5. Permit Officer rescindments 2022-2023

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) 'Population by Local Government Area', 2021 Census QuickStats All persons, accessed 11 January 2024.

Bushfire Risk Management Planning Guidelines (2020) State Fire Management Council, Version 1.0. Available at <https://www.sfmc.tas.gov.au/document/bushfire-risk-management-planning-guidelines-2020>, accessed 11 January 2024.

Appendix

GLOSSARY

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	<i>Fire Service Act 1979</i>
the Commission	State Fire Commission

