



MEETING DETAILS

The Flinders Fire Management Area Committee meeting was held on Friday 26 November 2021 at TFS Northern Regional Headquarters, Youngtown and Rose Garden Room, Flinders Art & Entertainment Centre, Whitemark commencing at 1030 hours.

1. Introduction

1.1 Attendance and Apologies

FMAC Members Present

Jacci Smith	Chair, Flinders Council
Chris Emms	Parks & Wildlife
Rick Mahnken	Tasmania Fire Service
Darren Grace	Tasmanian Farmers & Graziers Association
Fiona Maher	Aboriginal Land Council Tasmania
Rob Buck	Parks & Wildlife
Stephen Mason	Tasmania Fire Service

FMAC Members Apologies

Aronn Daw	Hydro
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FMAC Members No Response

Nick Lovegrove	TasWater
Robert Sutherland-Macleod	TasNetworks

Observers/Subject Matter Experts

Leon Murray	Tasmania Fire Service
Debra Pope	Fuel Reduction Program
Warren Groves	Flinders Council
Chris Wilson	Flinders Council
Annie Revie	Mayor, Flinders Council
Roger Brown	Tasmania Fire Service
Andrew Cargill	Red Hot Tips
Karina Lowe	Tasmania Fire Service (Minutes)

1.2 FMAC membership – election of Chair/Deputy Chair

Jacci Smith provided out of session written advice of her resignation from as Chair of the Committee.

Nominations were received to elect Flinders Council General Manager, Warren Groves to the position of Chair, and TFS Group Officer Stephen Mason to the position of Deputy Chair.

Decision
The Committee accepted the nomination of Warren Groves (Flinders Council) to the position of Chair of the Flinders Fire Management Area Committee.
The Committee accepted the nomination of Stephen Mason (Tasmania Fire Service) to the position of Deputy Chair of the Flinders Fire Management Area Committee.

1.3 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday, June 2021 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings, with the following minor amendments:

- Item 5.5 TFS Resources – Killiecrankie 4.1 should be Killiecrankie 5.1
- Correct name of council is Flinders Council, not Flinders Island Council

Moved: Jacci Smith **Seconded:** Leon Murray

2. Action Items

2.1 Outstanding Action Items

Item 4 - *“Ensure Wybalenna is included in the risk register with ALCT as lead treatment authority on the outstanding list”.*

Mayor Revie demanded more local consultation and communication throughout the strategic mitigation planning stages.

She advised that members have felt very frustrated in the past and that was raised with Jason Jacobi and Jeff Harper when they visited in June. Everything just seems to happen on the journey, and it is not good enough. She is not pinning everybody down to a schedule however she wants to see things happening.

Leon advised that this is happening now in the background. He is starting to look at the bigger picture for Flinders, determining what are the risks and where are the assets. Local mitigation plans will fall out of this, however additional data is required to complete local plans. He and Alan Tuxworth have talked to locals, and he is also talking with PWS to further initial discussions on strategic work practices. The timeframe is open ended due to the amount of work involved.

RHT visited the Island and engaged with different groups of locals to identify certain areas with issues, and they seem to be the main issues to locals. Rick feels the RHT visit was a talk fest, or exercise, that wasn't captured. It appears there wasn't the funding to engage RHT, so it didn't happen. Garth was going to undertake the burn being done in the exercise tomorrow plus 3-4 others then suddenly, he wasn't coming, and nobody knew why.

Mayor Revie wants things to work better on the Island and according to feedback from local people they haven't been. The one big issue is communication or lack of, and they need better communication on everything. If things are going to work, PWS and other agencies need to engage with Council prior to, not after they have happened or after letters have been sent. She does not believe there is a reason why this shouldn't happen.

When Tourism visited the Island in June, personnel in the tourist industry expressed concerns about Mt Tanner as they didn't know what was going to happen.

Chris wanted to know where it was thought PWS were failing in terms of communication around planning. PWS have several staff on the Island working with local personnel and on FMAC committees working on plans moving forward.

Those plans align with the Bushfire Risk Mitigation Plan (BRMP), which determines where the focus should be for PWS and private landholders and is a document they work towards in regard to mitigation strategy for Flinders Island. THE BRMP was developed from the TERAG process and identifies priority areas for protection based on that process. PWS adjusted their previous program accordingly to address some of the new items added through this process that have been highlighted for mitigation work.

Last minutes captured that locally there was a feeling that the Flinders BRMP and particularly the risk register and where Flinders sit in that, made them feel devalued strategically across the state. This occurred because of the data that was fed in during the risk assessment process and the TERAG. It didn't capture the remoteness of the Island and residents felt that the delayed response times and the social and economic risk of losing pasture and fences, given it's one of its main businesses, wasn't captured. Previous registers were pages long and never achievable, so it's been shortened and where Flinders sits and the time frames on the register is not acceptable.

When on the Island in June Jeff Harper committed to raising Flinders up the priorities in terms of the isolation and realised that Flinders should be looked at in a slightly different way. Mayor Revie has not seen the BRMP document and believes everybody on the Island should be familiar with all the documentation being used, what the priorities are and what progress PWS, TFS have made with them.

Jacci added that burn plans are still being done for private land and there is an expectation that landowners should just let people onto their land to burn it off without any knowledge of what is happening on their land.

Understories could be cleared and if it doesn't occur due to the landowner being overseas etc, they can be abated under the Local Government Act. She believes it is an obvious common-sense approach that never gets mentioned.

Chris offered some clarification about Mt Tanner as there appeared to be a misunderstanding as to why the burn has been unable to progress.

PWS are not looking to burn on private property because they can, but often the terrain and topography doesn't allow for the creation of tracks or trails outside of that private land, leaving them no choice but to come out to the most logical boundary for burn units. To do this means they have to engage with the landowner to get permission to go onto their land to light fire. PWS has no legislative protection to burn on private property. so it needs to be clearly understood that they need to ensure they have landholder permission before they can do any of the work or any lighting of fire.

Chris advised that this information has been communicated through FMAC's for the entire time he has sat on them. He stated that PWS have been trying for several years to work with Council to get support to engage with landholders without success. There has been plenty of communication back and forth

Mayor Revie said people are saying they don't know what comes out of the FMACs and what is discussed. She requested a commitment moving forward that communication be the top priority. It was agreed that it is critical for each FMAC representative to clearly communicate back to their organisations. Each representative is responsible for communicating the outcomes with their own organisation.

3. Standing Agenda Items

3.1 FMAC Membership

The Committee accepted the current membership list, noting that Fiona Maher was standing in as the representative for Aboriginal Land Council Tasmania (ALCT).

Fiona does not believe ALCT will put forward a representative as not many have strong fire knowledge. It was hoped Roy Thomas may become a representative to support Fiona, but they need to wait until ALCT meets next time to confirm.

Fiona noted that when talking about Flinders Island, only the main island is considered, whilst there is the whole Furneaux group of islands. TFS are on Cape Barren Island but there are all the other islands as well.

Another point raised when Jason Jacobi and Jeff Harper visited was the absence of emergency management plans (EMP) for the Furneaux group of Islands. There is risk on those Islands but there are no EMP's or pre incident plans. Response to incidents is very reactive.

PWS are looking at emergency planning on Deal Island as a priority due to the assets and because they have people on the Island for periods of time.

It was suggested ALCT could undertake local risk assessments, and if there was sound justification that an Island required either an EMP or a Mitigation Plan, it could be driven through the FMAC. Whoever manages the land would be the lead authority in the development of the plans.

Cape Barren Island (CBI) is a huge risk and ALCT need support with risk reduction. Other islands can be managed through cultural burning. CBI has a human settlement therefore requires an EMP.

TFS could do pre incident planning at a local level around some of the Islands, ie. response to Babels and Clark. Developing plans would require funding and a dedicated person. It is possible that ALCT could drive the process and contribute funding. ALCT would like to develop a cultural plan in conjunction with BRMP.

Leon plans to come back to Flinders in late January with the Fire Infrastructure Planner to re look at strategic fuel breaks and burn units and see what did work, what didn't; what else needs to be done. Previous burn units didn't burn as well as hoped to reduce the risk.

Decision
FMAC resolved to accept the current membership list whilst awaiting confirmation of ALCT delegate.

Action	Responsibility - Primary	Responsibility – Secondary	Due Date
TFS to speak with Trowunna Rangers and look at producing a tactical/technical level local mitigation plan for CBI where appropriate.	Leon Murray		Provide update at next meeting

3.2 Bushfire Risk Mitigation Plan (BRMP) Activity Reports

A progress update on mitigation activities for items contained within the Flinders Treatment Plan was provided. A copy of the updated Treatment Plan will accompany the meeting minutes.

Walkers Lookout Comms Tower – Leon and Fire Infrastructure Planner plan to come over in January 2022 to look at fuel breaks and fire trails. There is a large body of work involved.

Hays Hill Comms Tower – as above.

Lady Barron fire breaks and trails - will also be looked at during January 2022 visit. Need to determine which have been completed and which still require doing. Some are fire trails when they are effectively fuel breaks. Is what currently exists fulfilling its purpose?

Lady Barron - continue with Fuel Reduction program. Completed a burn a few years ago that is growing back. Need to look further around and determine where risk is coming from and how it can be treated.

Lady Barron Waste Station site – Leon to look at waste station site and determine the risk and what can be done around it.

Lady Barron Response Plan - due to be reviewed in 2023.

Baileys Lookout – Leon has drafted a letter for the chair to approve. It was discussed previously to write to DOE regarding maintenance around water tanks.

CBI existing Mitigation Plan review – this review should occur in the next year or so.

Water assets at CBI – will look at how vegetation is growing back around assets.

Killiecrankie - Within the treatment plan, Leon looks at Flinders as a whole. There are settlement areas at Killiecrankie, Lady Barron, and Whitemark and within those areas are TasWater facilities and other assets. He really looks at what zone is it, where are the highest risks, do asset protection zones or fuel breaks need establishing etc. Will discuss what PWS are doing long term.

Killiecrankie Response Plan – the review will be completed for next summer. Leon will liaise with council stakeholders early in 2022.

Whitemark – looking at Whitemark and Emita in a strategic sense.

Emita – as above There is a burn block that hasn't been completed due to the landowner passing. Part of the review is revisiting burn blocks to see if they require changing. PWS are also looking at burning around Emita.

Emita Response Plan -existing plan will be reviewed in the in future, but it won't occur this year.

Hays Hill – as above. Investigate the protection of critical infrastructure and ongoing maintenance.

Waste Station Site - Investigate options for site. It was discussed at the last meeting that Flinders Council were to develop a plan for the waste station.

TasWater Assets – establish asset protection zones around TasWater assets. This is all part of looking at the assets in the area and determining if there is enough protection or if more needs to occur.

Palana - will be in abeyance as it didn't meet the cut off that the Committee agreed to regarding any actions now. It will be reviewed later.

4. Agenda Items

4.1 Australian Fire Safety Danger Rating System (AFDRS) Project Update

Project Manager Dr Louise Mendel provided a newsletter to update members on the Australian Fire Danger Rating System Implementation Project which is occurring right across Australia simultaneously.

The Royal Commission into National Disaster Arrangements recommended a new fire danger rating system be developed. The system is being created by the National ARDR team at AFAC and is funded through NDRRGP and a \$1.3Million contribution from the Tasmanian Government. Agencies are due to transition to the new system by July 2022.

4.2 Fire Permit System Implementation Project Update

Project Manager Craig Mackinnon submitted a written update on the Fire Permit System Implementation Project.

In 2013 the Tasmanian Bushfire Inquiry recommended a review on the Fire Permit System. The review was undertaken by Wise, Lord and Ferguson in 2016 with a final report handed down in 2018. The report outlined 18 recommendations which have been endorsed by TFS and SFMC and form the scope of this project. The SFMC Advisory Group will appoint fire permit officers and the implementation of this system is linked to the review of the Fire Service Act Review. Some components won't be affected by legislative change however the online system may create delays and might not be in place by next summer.

4 project advisory groups will be compiled to identify required outcomes for each project area. Anyone interested in joining project advisory groups, please put your name forward to Craig Mackinnon via craig.mackinnon@fire.tas.gov.au.

4.3 SFMC and BRU Staffing Update

Debra Pope, Assistant Director Fuel Reduction Program spoke to the agenda paper provided for Agenda Item 4.3 – SFMC and BRU Staffing Update.

- Deb moved into the Bushfire Risk Unit as Assistant Director of the Fuel Reduction Program at the end of August 2021.
- There are currently some transitional changes getting new staff on board, with big changes occurring across the next few months.
- Rob Whittle has come across from Glenorchy City Council into the Manager SFMC position for a 6-month period.
- There will be a new Project Officer recruited to carry on Adrian Pyrke's project.
- Ian Sauer has been reappointed as Chair of the SFMC for another 3-year term.
- John Atkinson has been reappointed as the TFGA representative on SFMC
- John Fisher from City of Hobart is the new LGAT representative on SFMC
- There has been a changeover of PWS SFMC representative, with Katy Edwards replacing Mark Bryce.
- SFMC and Jeff Harper visited Flinders in June to discuss some of the challenges faced regarding burning, particularly from a landowner perspective and gave a commitment to return and undertake some work with the Red Hot Tips (RHT) program.
- Since this visit, RHT received a commitment for ongoing funding for 4 years, allowing positions to be advertised on a permanent basis.
- The Program Coordinator and Northern Facilitator positions have been advertised. Current Northern Facilitator Garth Bennett is returning to PWS.

- Brad Williams has returned to the FRP as the Operations Coordinator, and North West Facilitators David Fulford and Clinton Heyworth have both returned to their substantive FRP positions.
- Andrew Cargill has joined RHT in the south for a minimum of 6 months whilst the position is advertised permanently, and Frank Bishop has joined on a temporary contract to help out RHT.
- Feedback received indicated it would be better to delay a planned visit to Flinders by RHT in December until early 2022. Andrew and Frank will visit in February 2022 to hold a burn plan workshop and assist landholders to prepare burn plans with the aim of doing some burning possibly in conjunction with PWS and TFS by the end of April 2022. Andrew will liaise with Darren and Stephen regarding the visit.

Warren raised the possibility of combining the RHT visit with an FMAC meeting to get everybody together to discuss planned burns and gather as much understanding and involvement of the process as possible.

Darren is interested in looking at PWS planned burns when Andrew visits. The Mt Tanner burn has been planned for a number of years and it is really important that it is completed. Chris advise that Nat Brown will be on the Island undertaking planning work around Mt Tanner North. There are difficulties engaging with landholders on southern side as most are on the mainland or overseas, so this burn won't happen until those agreements are in place. PWS will be focussing on northern Mt Tanner this coming autumn as well as some burning around Emita and a 900ha north of Patriarchs to be finished off in autumn.

Chris enquired if Council or local TFS personnel could assist PWS by using a combined approach to contact landholders and assist with engagement.

Any landholders already contacted support the burn, in most cases they just can't be contacted. Could Council send letters direct to landholders on behalf of PWS to not jeopardise privacy?

Action	Responsibility - Primary	Responsibility – Secondary	Due Date
Provide a letter template and list of landholders to Jaci at Flinders Council for distribution	Chris Emms (Nat Brown)	Jacci Smith	

4.4 FMAC SharePoint Site

- FMAC SharePoint site is a work in progress and the end goal is to have all FMAC correspondence and collaboration occur via this method.
- Some members are still having trouble accessing the site.
- Email any problems or issues with access to fmac@fire.tas.gov.au. Issues will be collated and discussed with site facilitators to resolve.

Decision

FMAC resolved to note all updates.

5. Urgent business

No urgent business was raised.

6. Communication and Engagement

6.1 Key Messages from Meeting

Reporting on Remote Access Capability

In previous minutes it referenced Reporting on Capability on remote access firefighting as a standing agenda item. Rick is unsure if it is an appropriate standing agenda item.

- From a TFS perspective, remote area firefighting is undertaken by a specialist team who are flown in with a cache.
- A whole of Island exercise is being undertaken this Saturday with SES, PWS, Tas Pol, Aboriginal Community, Ambulance and TFS undertaking a 50ha burn to test agency capability. An IMT will be set up to test the capability of the control centre.
- PWS now have a winch capacity in aircraft and crews. They have a dedicated winch aircraft platform that arrives in the State on 13 December. There are 23 winch trained firefighters, including tree fallers. They will operate in a Rapid Attack program and can be deployed instantaneously. Triggers have been established around pre deployment and staging. There are almost 50 firefighters in total in the Rapid Attack program. Once capacity is established, it is planned to keep it. It will operate Statewide, where the risk is aircraft and staff will be deployed.
- PWS will use a range of prepositioning and preplanning to be in the best spot in event of a start on the Island.
- TFS have been working with Cape Barren Fire Brigade. They have completed a Level 1 Firefighter course and now have 8 fully trained members who will come over to participate in the exercise. There are also 11 junior and cadet members that Roger and Fiona have worked with and a new appliance, received 4 months ago.
- Rick acknowledged the efforts of Roger who has been able to work with the people to target training gaps and achieve these results. They have also set up an emergency operations centre on Cape Barren if an incident starts.
- One purpose of the exercise is to allow mentoring opportunities for new officers who don't currently have the experience.
- Roger is conducting a talk at the Flinders School at 1:20pm today to look and build a junior group of junior firefighters on Flinders Island as well.
- Roger thanked Fiona for the work she has put into the juniors on CBI and passed on his appreciation to her. He also thanked Bill Grace and Steve Mason for their efforts to coordinate the upcoming exercise. It is important for activities such as this to be driven from the bottom up.

Warren Groves asked if an annual review occurred of all contractors and equipment that are available to use to assist firefighting operations over summer. TFS, PWS and STT all have Fire Action Plans that include a list of contractors and machinery that have put themselves forward as willing to assist. TFS list is updated annually, prior to each fire season.

Flinders Council advise their contact details are out of date and incorrect. Rick will arrange to collate updated details for addition to contractor list.

Action	Responsibility - Primary	Responsibility – Secondary	Due Date
Liaise with Council and update contractor list to formalise what is actually on the Island	Rick Mahnken		ASAP

It would be good if committee members become familiar with SharePoint prior to the next meeting.

6.2 Report to SFMC

Leon will prepare a report to SFMC on behalf of the Chair and include:

- Mitigation activities against treatment plan priorities
- issues or barriers to prevent these activities from occurring.
- Membership updates

7. Next Meeting

7.1 Meeting Dates for 2021

Meeting dates for 2022 will be scheduled and communicated following an SFMC FMAC workshop early in 2022.

It was suggested that the meeting could coincide with RHT visiting the island in February.

Meeting Closed at 1105 hours.

Decision
FMAC resolved to accept the current membership list whilst awaiting confirmation of ALCT delegate.
FMAC resolved to note all updates.

Action	Responsibility - Primary	Responsibility – Secondary	Due Date
TFS to speak with Trowunna Rangers and look at producing a tactical/technical level local mitigation plan for CBI where appropriate.	Leon Murray		Provide update at next meeting
Provide a letter template and list of landholders to Jacci at Flinders Council for distribution	Chris Emms (Nat Brown)	Jacci Smith	
Liase with Council and update contractor list to formalise what is actually on the Island	Rick Mahnken		ASAP

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FLINDERS FMAC ACTION REGISTER

Action No.	Meeting/Action Date	Agenda Item No.	Item	Action	Responsibility - Primary	Responsibility - Secondary	Due Date	Progress Notes	Current Status	Report to Meeting
1	20 October 2020	6.1	Presentation of risk register and priorities	Ensure Wybalenna is included in the risk register with ALCT as lead treatment authority	Leon Murray		Prior to next meeting		In progress	#01-2022-
2	8 June 2021	3.2	BRMP Activity Reports	Facilitate a letter to DOE on behalf of FMAC regarding school protection around water tanks	Leon Murray		Prior to next meeting	Leon has drafted a letter for Chair to approve and send to DoE	In progress	#01-2022-
3	26 November 2021	3.1	FMAC Membership	TFS to speak with Trowunna Rangers and look at producing a tactical/technical level local mitigation plan for CBI where appropriate.	Leon Murray		Provide update at next meeting		New	#01-2022-
	26 November 2021	4.3	BRU /SFMC Staffing Update	Provide a letter template and list of landholders to Jacci at Flinders Council for distribution Chris Emms (Nat Brown) Jacci Smith	Chris Emms (Nat Brown)	Jacci Smith	ASAP		New	#01-2022
4	26 November 2021	6.1	Key Messages	Liaise with Council and update contractor list to formalise what is actually on the Island	Rick Mahnken		ASAP		New	#01-2022