



**State Bushfire
Coordination
Committee**



**Government
of South Australia**

Communique

Deferral of February SBCC meeting

Unfortunately on the scheduled date for the SBCC meeting – 24 February – the State experienced the worst forecast and actual fire danger day for the season, with Total Fire Bans declared in 8 of the 15 districts.

A revised meeting date was then set for 11 March. However, unfortunately the Committee could not achieve quorum on that date (a situation exacerbated by the number of vacancies on the Committee – as outlined below) and a decision was taken to defer the meeting.

Following consultation with Committee members, it has been agreed to re-schedule the May meeting of the Committee to 5 May.

Urgent business for the Committee was addressed through an out of session vote, notably matters relating to the boundary amendment for the Outback and Flinders Mid North and Yorke Bushfire Management Committees (BMCs), and the endorsement of mid term membership nominations for a number of BMCs.

SBCC Membership Update

Over the past few months the SBCC has had a number of membership vacancies arise due to retirements and personnel moving roles.

As a consequence, nominees for the following organisations are currently being considered for appointment by the Governor:

- Local Government Association of South Australia (Member and Deputy)
- Department for Infrastructure and Transport (Member and Deputy)
- SA Country Fire Service (Member and Deputy)
- SA Metropolitan Fire Service (Deputy)
- Outback Communities Authority (Member and Deputy).

It is anticipated that new appointments will be finalised ahead of the 5 May meeting.

Flinders Mid North Yorke and Outback Bushfire Management Areas – Boundary Amendment

Following an out of session vote, the Committee has endorsed:

- *the change of names for the Outback and Flinders Mid North Yorke Bushfire Management Committees to 'Flinders and Outback' and 'Mid North Yorke', respectively.*



State Bushfire Coordination Committee



- *the proposed amendment of the current Outback and Flinders Mid North Yorke BMAPs to reflect the proposed boundary adjustments for the Bushfire Management Committees, to be undertaken pursuant to s.73A(8)(b) of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA) following the gazettal of the boundary adjustments.*
- *the conduct of an out of session vote of the Committee following the gazettal of the boundary adjustments to endorse: a) the revised Membership of each of the Outback and Flinders Mid North Yorke Bushfire Management Committees and b) the Members and Deputy Members of the Outback Committee.*

The formal process to seek endorsement and gazettal of the boundary amendment is now underway. This requires

The Outback and Flinders Mid North and Yorke BMCs are working through practical transitional arrangements to assist members moving from the Mid and Yorke BMC into the Outback BMC.

Grain Harvesting Code of Practice

A working group involving representatives from SACFS, PIRSA, SAPOL and Grain Producers SA (GPSA) has been formed to review the 'cease harvest' threshold in the grain harvesting code of practice.

A communique from the first meeting of the working group held on 1 March is attached.

Bushfire Management Committee Membership

The Committee endorsed mid-term membership nominations for several BMCs through an out of session vote.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Friday 5 May 2023.

This will be a formal meeting followed by a workshop to consider the risk reduction planning process.

The Committee will also be discussing the mid-term review of the State Bushfire Management Plan at its formal meeting on this date.

(Communique issued 31 March 2023)

OFFICIAL

Grain Harvesting Code of Practice Review Working Group
Joint working group with South Australian Country Fire Service, Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Grain Producers South Australia, and South Australian Police

Communique

Grain Harvesting Code of Practice Review Working Group

Meeting Held – Wednesday 1 March 2023

At the first meeting of the Grain Harvesting Code of Practice Review Working Group the group initiated the review by acknowledging the importance and impact of the 'cease harvest' threshold, agreeing on the terms of the review, sharing experiences to date, and agreeing on next steps.

The 'cease harvest' threshold must strike the right balance between managing the risk of fire and the operating requirements of grain harvesters. Farmers do not want to put their property, or their neighbouring properties, at risk. However, dry and hot conditions, which can be high risk for fire, are required for harvesting.

Scope of the review

The group agreed on the terms and agreed on the following scope for the review:

Use best available data (including 2022 season) to determine the most appropriate and easily interpreted 'cease harvest' threshold to restore confidence in the system.

Timeframe

The group agreed on the schedule for the review agreeing to provide a recommendation by the June 2023 to support an August 2023 target for the launch of the revised Grain Harvest Code of Practice (GHCoP) ahead of the 2023-2024 harvest season.

Support for re-establishing previous conditions

The group agreed that the 'cease harvest' threshold (using Grass Fire Danger Index or GFDI) had worked well under the superseded GHCoP. However, the transition from GFDI to Fire Behaviour Index (FBI), made necessary by the implementation of the national approach to fire danger ratings under AFDRS, has not gone smoothly and there is a need to review the threshold to ensure that the new approach is consistent and appropriate. The group agreed overall that the aim is to re-establish the conditions previously in place under the superseded approach.

FBI is not an exact replacement for GFDI

The group discussed how FBI is not an exact replacement for GFDI. The FBI is a more advanced measurement but it relies on a greater number of inputs and is significantly more susceptible to fuel loads. Whereas GFDI uses fewer inputs and is more susceptible to weather conditions.

Due to the greater number of inputs in the FBI model there is also a need to make bigger assumptions, especially in the context of GHCoP.

OFFICIAL

Grain Harvesting Code of Practice Review Working Group

Joint working group with South Australian Country Fire Service, Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Grain Producers South Australia, and South Australian Police

Simplicity is key

The group agreed that a simple approach will provide the best outcome. However, assumptions will need to be made to support a simple approach and these will be a focus at the next meeting.

The group agreed that the aim will be to establish an approach that can be provided in a table form due the following benefits:

- Can be done offline; does not require connectivity.
- Supports the measurement of weather conditions in the paddock.
- It will support weather measurements at 2m and 10m.
- Can be provided on a sticker.
- Is consistent with the format of the previous approach that was well accepted.

The group acknowledged that assumptions will be required to support this approach and agreed to make underlying assumptions a focus at the next meeting.

Next steps

The group will review the findings of an initial review of GFDI and FBI calculations for GHCoP to begin the discussion.

Next meeting will be held on 29th March 2023.

(Communique issued 15 March 2023)