

CRONSTEDT REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF BUSHFIRES DURING THE 2018-19 FIRE SEASON

- 3. The timeliness and effectiveness of the fire response and management strategy, including accommodating the priorities of life, property, forest asset values, environmental and cultural values and timber production by Tasmanian fire agencies.**

The Private Forest Sector is represented on the SFMC. This Sector believe the value of commercial forests was generally underestimated and not sufficiently taken into account during the 2018-19 bushfires.

The economic impacts of the loss of private forests, or major processing facilities damaged by fire, and the flow on effects to local communities needs to be recognised and taken into account during bushfire management planning processes.

A structured inclusion into Incident Management Teams may be an option moving forward in respect to a 'Forest Industry Liaison Officer'. Additionally, education of the value of private forestry in Tasmania needs to occur. A Forest Industry Liaison Officer would assist with matters relating to private forests on behalf of the entire private forest industry.

- 4. The impact and effectiveness of fuel management programs in the fire affected areas on the management and containment of the fires.**

With increased severity and regularity of larger scale fire campaigns within Tasmania, the State Fire Management Council (SFMC) encourage strategies that support shared responsibility and foster resilient communities.

SFMC endorse and actively support the whole-of-government Fuel Reduction Program (FRP), through joint initiatives and bushfire management planning. The FRP is a critical component of managing bushfire risk in Tasmania, and mitigating the risk to communities. The Program also provides opportunity to develop and maintain skills of incident management and firefighters.

Bushfire management planning is facilitated by the SFMC through Fire Management Area Committees. Fire Protection Plans identify and assess community bushfire risks in Fire Management Areas and prioritise strategic works in response to those risks, including areas for strategic fuel reduction burning.

SFMC programs, such as the Red Hot Tips Program, build community capacity and awareness around bushfire risk and shared responsibility. These programs aim to increase community participation in effective mitigation activities, particularly planned burning on larger agricultural properties. There is a definite identified gap for further education, engagement and support to private rural landholders/managers to improve bushfire management on their properties.

- 5. The effectiveness of state, regional and local command, control and co-ordination arrangements, to include agency interoperability and the co-ordination of emergency management activities with government and NGOs.**

Additional assistance from interstate and international agencies is seen as highly important in bolstering Tasmania's resources during large scale campaigns. The private forest sector has also identified that there may be opportunity to utilise their experienced firefighting personnel and resources, and welcome the opportunity to explore these arrangements.

Use of other identified stakeholders, such as local landholders/managers and private forest managers, for local knowledge is critical and may have been underutilised during the 2018-19 bushfire season.

Agreed standards of training across the forest industry and fire management agencies needs to be investigated to increase the State's capacity and alleviate issues of capability gaps between private industry trained firefighters and existing State resources. Joint training exercises and sharing of resources during fuel reduction burns is also an opportunity to consider.

An industry-wide agreement has been suggested as one way to ensure the expertise and resources within the private forest sector are utilised more readily be used during major bushfire campaigns.

7. The use and effectiveness of aviation firefighting resources, in particular, the suitability of aircraft types for the protection of environmental values, forest assets and the rural/urban interface in Tasmania. (Note: this should also focus on the potential effectiveness of Winch capable aircraft as a first response).

The use of aircraft in the bushfire response which occurred in 2018-19 was seen as critical, however, it must be emphasized that traditional methods of firefighting must be used alongside this type of response for an effective outcome.

Aerial response has a number of limitations and must never be relied on as the only method of response; on-ground firefighting training and techniques within the State must continue to be developed to a high standard.