

FACT SHEET

Fire Service Amendment (State wide strategic management of vegetation for the mitigation of bushfires) Bill 2012

- The *Fire Service Amendment (State wide strategic management of vegetation for the mitigation of bushfires) Bill 2012* will align the responsibility for the management of bushfire fuels across the State in recognition that it is a shared responsibility across all sectors including the public arena. It will bring together the various stakeholders that manage land across the State to work collectively to effectively manage vegetation fuels for the mitigation of bushfires.
- The amendments form part of the Tasmanian Government's commitment to implement recommendations from the 2009 Victorian bushfires.
- The proposed changes to the *Fire Service Act 1979* allows the TFS to better align the management of bushfire fuels with the relevant stakeholders across the State and will allow a consolidated and strategic approach to occur. The responsibility for managing Fire Management Area Committees will move from the State Fire Commission to the State Fire Management Council. This will provide the following benefits;
 - Clearer functions of the Council in relation to preventing and mitigating bushfires;
 - The ability of the Council to declare any part of the State a Fire Management Area;
 - Reporting from Fire Management Area Committees directly to the Council in relation to fire management issues;
 - State Fire Management Council to report to the State Fire Commission annually on the activities of Fire Management Area Committees; and
 - The ability for the State Fire Management Council to review Fire management Area boundaries to ensure they are most appropriate based on risk and topography.

- The proposed amendment of the *Fire Service Act 1979* will refine representation on Fire Management Area Committees to that of a more strategic level with stakeholder involvement from the major land based managers within the Fire Management Area.
- The focus of Fire Management Area Committees will be that of;
 - Preparing a fire protection plan for the Fire Management Area;
 - Identify and prioritise bushfire vegetation risks and prioritise strategic works to mitigate any perceived risks.
- The Bill will provide for the incorporation of Special Fire Areas into Fire Management Areas to provide a consistent approach across the State.
- Fire permit officers will be appointed by the Council in recognition that the stakeholders that sit on the Council are better positioned to assess appropriate skills, qualifications and experience that would enable a fire permit officer to carry out their duties competently.
- The Bill will add a clear interpretation to the *Fire Service Act 1979* of the meanings of the terms;
 - Fire Management; and
 - Fire Protection Plan.