# Assurance Program Guidelines

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# Introduction

## The Office of Bushfire Risk Management

The Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) is a business unit within the Department of Fire and Emergency Services' Rural Fire Division, tasked with supporting continuous improvement in the management of risks related to bushfire prevention in Western Australia. OBRM works with organisations with responsibilities for bushfire prevention to develop policies, procedures and practices that align to the Australian standard for risk management.

## Risk and risk management

The term 'risk' is used in two ways in the context of the OBRM Assurance Program. Firstly, 'bushfire risk' refers to the consequences and likelihood of a bushfire occurring and causing harm to things valued by the community, including:

- people and communities and the property, infrastructure and economic systems that provide for their well-being;

- places, objects and customs that support social and cultural functionality and cohesion;

- ecosystems, the taxa and communities that comprise them and the landscapes and processes that support them.

Land and fire managers in Western Australia have a shared responsibility to take reasonable measures to protect these things of value from bushfire risk. This is referred to as 'bushfire risk management' and encompasses a range of activities across the spectrum of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Fuel management is one of the primary mechanisms used to manage bushfire risk in Western Australia, and planned burning is the most widely applied fuel management strategy.

The second facet of risk considered by the OBRM Assurance Program are risks created by planned burning. While planned burning is fundamental to managing bushfire risk in Western Australia, it creates its own risks, with a range of uncertainties producing the potential for undesirable outcomes. These may include the possibility of escapes occurring, smoke affecting communities and industries, assets within the burnt area being damaged or negative environmental outcomes occurring. Organisations that implement planned burns must have rigorous arrangements in place to manage the risks associated with burning. These arrangements are collectively described as the organisation's 'risk management framework'.

## OBRM's Assurance Program

OBRM's Assurance Program examines the risk management framework of organisations involved in planned burning to confirm it adequately addresses the associated risks. This is achieved by reviewing framework elements including written policies and procedures, supporting systems, organisational culture, training and development protocols and resourcing arrangements. An important aspect of assurance is confirming the framework is reflected in good outcomes from planned burning, including that it has the desired effect on bushfire risk. This assessment may be based on field visits, discussions with staff, observations of burn implementation and the examination of monitoring and review data.

OBRM's Assurance Program aims to support continuous improvement in the organisation undergoing assurance. It is a collaborative endeavour between OBRM and the organisation, with the goal of improving outcomes for the Western Australian community. As such, the focus is on organisational learning to improve planned burning outcomes, rather than punitive interventions.
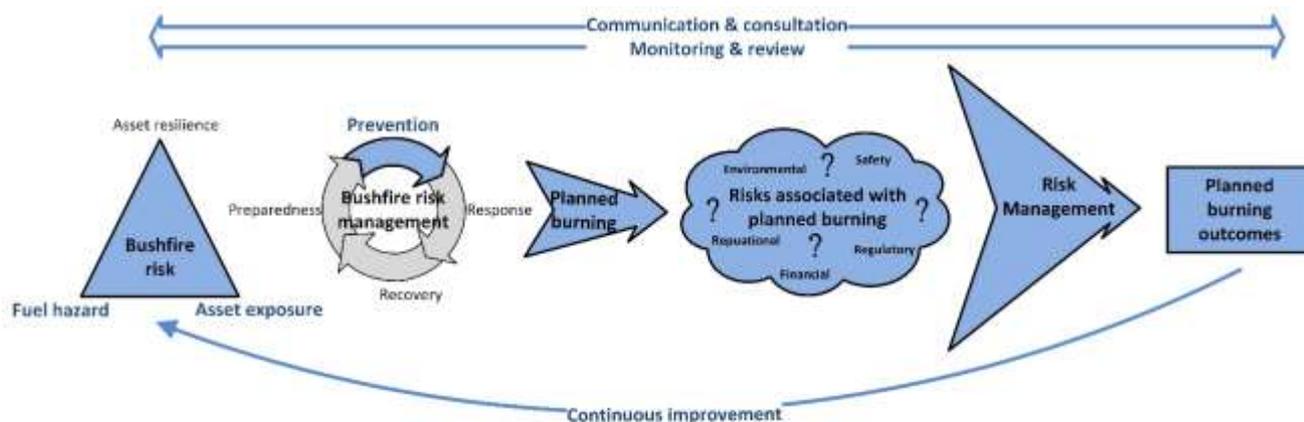
**Figure 1: Schematic illustrating the bushfire risk management process. Elements shown in blue are the subject of the OBRM Assurance Program.**

## Benefits of participation in the OBRM Assurance Program

The OBRM Assurance Program provides an organisation with an independent review of its risk management framework by an objective third party. This can significantly support the organisation's internal risk audit processes and help drive continuous improvement in organisational performance. OBRM's involvement ensures objectivity, diminishes perceptions of conflicted interests and can help to overcome cultural barriers to a transparent examination of the organisation's risk management performance.

OBRM's endorsement of an organisation's risk management framework indicates that it represents industry best practice. This can provide credibility if the organisation seeks external funding to support its bushfire risk management activities, or is required to respond to an incident review related to planned burning. The Assurance Program also provides regular, ongoing assessment of the implementation of the organisation's risk management framework and the effectiveness of its control environment. This facilitates proactive intervention by the organisation where the need for corrective measures is identified, including providing opportunities for collaborative actions to address issues that have relevance beyond a single organisation.

## Purpose of the Guideline

To be effective, risk management must be customised to reflect the organisation's context and objectives. It is not practical, or desirable, for OBRM to specify the form and content of an organisation's risk management framework. Rather, this guideline provides principles and characteristics of an effective framework for managing risks associated with planned burning. The Assurance Program will look for evidence of these in an organisation's risk management framework and practices. The guideline also describes the process by which an organisation can achieve OBRM endorsement of their approach to managing risks associated with planned burning.

## The Risk Management Standard

AS ISO 31000:2018 (the Standard) is the Australian Standard for risk management. The Standard provides the principles, framework and process for managing risk, but is not prescriptive in their application within an organisation. The Standard does not provide specific procedures for managing risk or verifying it is being appropriately managed; its content must be interpreted in the context of the organisation in which risk is being managed.

The central tenet of the Standard is that risk management creates and protects value by helping an organisation maximise opportunities and avoid negative outcomes. This tenet is supported by eight principles that should be reflected throughout an organisation's risk management framework and expressed in its operations. The principles are:

**Integrated**
Risk management is an integral part of all organisational activities.

**Structured and comprehensive**
A structured and comprehensive approach to risk management contributes to consistent and comparable results.

**Customised**
The risk management framework and processes are customized and proportionate to the organisation's internal and external context related to its objectives.

**Inclusive**
Appropriate and timely involvement of stakeholders enables their knowledge, views and perceptions to be considered. This results in improved awareness and informed risk management.

**Dynamic**
Risks can emerge, change or disappear as an organisation's external and internal context change. Risk management anticipates, detects, acknowledges and responds to such changes and events in an appropriate and timely manner.

**Best available information**
The inputs to risk management are based on historical and current information, as well as on future expectations. Risk management explicitly takes into account any limitations and uncertainties associated with such information and expectations. Information should be timely, clear and available to relevant stakeholders.

**Human and cultural factors**
Human behaviour and culture significantly influence all aspects of risk management at each level and stage.

**Continual improvement**
Risk management is continually improved through learning and experience.

Examples of how the principles of risk management can be demonstrated in a risk management framework are provided in the next section.

# Characteristics of a compliant risk management framework

The purpose of risk management is to support continuous improvement in the organisation's performance, encourage innovation and support the achievement of objectives. In the context of the Assurance Program, this means the organisation's risk management contributes to planned burning occurring safely, effectively, efficiently and in compliance with all regulatory requirements. This will lead to positive outcomes for the community and environment while protecting the organisation's reputation, social licence to operate and political capital.

An organisation's risk management framework comprises all of the arrangements in place to assist with the management of risk. It is not a single document, though a document describing the elements of the framework is recommended. An effective risk management framework will include the characteristics and components described below. OBRM's Assurance Program will look for evidence of these before endorsing an organisation's approach to managing the risks associated with planned burning.

## 1. Management provide commitment and leadership

The success of a risk management framework depends on the active and ongoing support of senior management. The following may indicate senior management are providing the required support and leadership:

- Corporate policy establishes the primacy of risk management in decision-making.

- Risk management is integrated to strategic and business planning.

- Risk-informed decision-making is supported and adequately resourced.

- Ownership of risks is demonstrated at appropriate levels of the organisation.

- Risk management performance measures are routinely monitored and reported.

- Risk management is culturally embedded in the organisation.

Management commitment and leadership contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated and structured and comprehensive.

## 2.  Governance of the risk management framework is effective

Effective governance of the risk management framework ensures appropriate oversight of the organisation's risk management program. The following indicate effective governance arrangements are in place:

- Accountabilities for monitoring and maintaining the framework are established.

- Policy requirements of the risk management framework are monitored and met.

- Principles of continual improvement are applied to the risk management framework.

- Internal and external reporting requirements are met adequately and punctually.

- Detective controls are in place to identify failures in the organisation's risk control environment.

Effective governance of the risk management framework contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated, structured and comprehensive and continual improvement.

## 3.  Scope, context and risk criteria are established

A sound understanding of the scope, context and criteria for the organisation's risk management facilitates a consistent understanding of risk and allows risk management procedures to be tailored appropriately. The following indicate the scope, context and risk criteria are adequately established.

- Organisational objectives for managing bushfire risk and their relationship to broader organisational objectives are understood.

- Internal and external factors that may influence the objectives and how they are achieved are understood.

- The level of risk that is acceptable to the organisation is defined relative to the organisation's objectives and sources of risk.

- Risk assessment tools and techniques are consistently understood throughout the organisation.

- Consequences, likelihood and risk are understood, expressed and communicated consistently and meaningfully throughout the organisation.

- The organisation's policies, processes and practices are tailored to the context in which they are applied and the users' roles and responsibilities.

- Key assumptions and uncertainties associated with activities are understood.

- Risk management information is specific to planned burning, rather than providing generic approaches.

Establishing the scope, context and risk criteria contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated, structured and comprehensive and customised.

## 4.   Responsibility, accountability and authority are assigned

A common understanding of the ownership of risks and their controls is crucial to effective risk management. The risk management framework should define responsibility for undertaking key tasks, accountability for outcomes and authority to act, in relation to management of risk exposures, maintenance of risk controls, implementation of risk treatments and acceptance of residual risk. Evidence this has occurred includes:

- The organisation's risk criteria include accountabilities for applying appropriate risk management and the required authority to take key risk management actions, such as accepting risks and authorising treatments.

- A register of risks exists that lists the ownership of each risk, and the control and treatment by appropriate positions in the organisation.

- The above are clearly communicated to, and understood by, personnel throughout the organisation.

Assigning responsibility, accountability and authority contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated, structured and comprehensive and customised.

## 5.   Risk management is integrated and linked

To be effective, risk management must be an integral part of all activities throughout the organisation. The following indicate risk management is appropriately integrated and linked within the organisation:

- The organisation's policies, procedures and practices align with the commitment to manage risk and the assigned responsibilities for doing so.

- Risk management information and processes are evident in planning and decision making.

- Information and decisions about risks are shared within and between the business unit(s) responsible for managing planned burning and other organisational programs.

- Accurate, timely information is available to support decision-making.

- Elements of the risk management framework can be mapped to all phases of planned burning from strategic planning, through program and operational planning to implementation and post-implementation review.

Integrating and linking risk management contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated and customised.

## 6.   Personnel are trained and competent

Personnel within the organisation must be trained and supported to undertake their role competently and to apply the elements of the risk management framework relevant to them. There are two facets of training and development that should be considered:

- Supporting understanding and application of the organisation's risk management framework and associated decision making processes. This ensures personnel engaged in activities related to planned burning can demonstrate an understanding of:

  o   the organisation's objectives, operating context and risk criteria as they apply to their role

  o   the purpose and appropriate application of risk aligned processes

  o   organisational procedures to identify, describe and manage risks in a consistent and meaningful way

- Developing the technical skills required by personnel to implement risk treatments or undertake related tasks. Relevant capabilities may include:

  o planning an effective burn program

  o developing plans for the safe implementation of burns

  o understanding fuels and potential fire behaviour

  o managing day-of-burn activities such as ignitions and traffic management

  o supervising staff

  o using equipment required for their role

Both facets of training and development should be supported by clear and comprehensive documentation of the organisation's procedures and systems, allowing staff to address issues in a consistent and repeatable manner. Training material and its mode and format of delivery should be flexible to accommodate varied audiences and contexts. A culture of support and improvement in staff performance should exist to maximise learning opportunities from unplanned outcomes.

Ensuring personnel are trained and competent contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated, structured and comprehensive, customised, human and cultural factors and continual improvement.

## 7.  Communication and relationship management are effective

Communication about risks and their management is essential to obtaining the information required to make informed decisions. Communication should aim to involve appropriate stakeholders in the risk management process, be timely, and be conducted in a manner suited to the audience and circumstances. The following indicate the organisation is communicating effectively in support of its risk management program:

- Processes support communication up and down the organisational hierarchy and between business units, throughout the management structure.

- The identity and expectations of a comprehensive range of stakeholders are understood and referenced in decision making.

- The degree of engagement is commensurate with the legitimacy of the stakeholder's interest in the process.

- Adequate records of consultation are kept to substantiate decisions.

Effective communication and relationship management contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: customised, inclusive, dynamic, best available information and human and cultural factors.

## 8.  Monitoring, evaluation and reporting drives improvement

The monitoring, evaluation, reporting, improvement (MERI) cycle supports risk management by ensuring the risk management framework remains robust, is applied as designed and has the desired effect on the risks associated with planned burning. Monitoring refers to the collection of data and information; evaluation relates to an analysis aimed at extracting meaning; and reporting leads to the communication of findings to support decision making. These steps drive improvement by facilitating organisational adaptation to achieve better outcomes based on the provided information. Multi-level monitoring, including third party assurance, is an important element of an effective MERI process.

The MERI process should be applied to:

- Framework elements, as described in sections 1 to 7 above. This may include:

- o  regular review and endorsement of policies, manuals and procedures

- o  ensuring the risk register is current and accurate

- o  regular scans of the strategic context to detect any significant changes

- Activities in which risk is being managed. In the context of the Assurance Program, this means applying MERI to the organisation's planned burning. This requires:

  - o  Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound objectives that relate to bushfire risk management and planned burning outcomes

  - o  indicators and assessment criteria for the objectives

  - o  documented processes to collect, evaluate and report on the selected indicators

  - o  systems for capturing and analysing the data required to report on the indicators

  - o  an organisational learning framework to support dissemination and implementation of lessons learned

  - o  routine reporting to OBRM on activities undertaken to manage bushfire risk, particularly planned burning

- Controls and treatments for the risks associated with the activity. In the context of the Assurance Program, this means applying MERI to the things the organisation does to manage the risks associated with planned burning. This may include:

  - o  records of the planning process, communication and consultation and the training and competencies of personnel involved in the activity

  - o  documentation of the implementation phase of the activity to demonstrate that all planned steps were taken

  - o  systematic assessment of the outcomes of the controls with feedback provided to control owners

  - o  safety incidents, planned burn escapes and other undesirable or unexpected outcomes investigated and understood

An effective MERI process contributes to demonstrating the risk management principles: integrated, structured and comprehensive, customised, dynamic, best available information and continual improvement.

## Documentation of the risk management framework

The elements comprising an organisation's risk management framework must be documented appropriately to ensure it effectively supports the organisation's people and processes. The names and format of these documents may vary between organisations but the following concepts should be evident within the hierarchy of risk management documents:

- A policy that affirms senior management commitment to, and leadership of, planned burning and risk management, and provides the arrangements for governance of the risk management framework.

- A strategic risk management context statement that:

  - o  describes the organisation's risk management framework

  - o  provides the organisational objectives, scope, context and risk criteria

- - defines responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities for elements of the risk management framework

  - describes how risk will be measured, monitored and communicated

  - defines an acceptable level of risk for the required range of risk sources or activities

- A risk register that identifies:

  - risk exposures

  - the probable consequences of each risk

  - how each risk may eventuate, and its likelihood

  - existing controls for each risk, and their effectiveness

  - the rating or level of each risk

  - the owner of each risk, the controls and the treatments

- Plan(s) for addressing identified risks.

- Procedures to support the consistent and effective implementation of risk controls and treatments.

- Records of personnel training and competencies, stakeholder communication, risk monitoring and internal assurance.

- A monitoring, evaluation, reporting, improvement framework, demonstrating how organisational learning will support continual improvement of the activities associated with risk management and planned burning.

In the context of the OBRM Assurance Program, these documents should demonstrate clear links to planned burning. For example, procedural documentation should include an operational guideline or manual for planning and implementing burning and risk management plans should include maps depicting the location of planned burns for an appropriate operational period.

## The National Burning Project risk management framework

The Australasian Fire Agency Council (AFAC) National Burning Project has published a body of documents to provide guidance for managing the risks associated with bushfire fuels and prescribed burning. These include an overarching risk management framework for planned burning and frameworks specific to fuel hazards, ecological risks, smoke risks and operational risks. The National Burning Project considers these risk dimensions across four phases of planned burning: strategic planning, program planning, operational planning and burn implementation (Figure 2). Structuring the organisation's risk management for planned burn around the National Burning Project framework will assist alignment with national best practices and integration with other partners in bushfire risk management.

**Figure 2: The four phases of planned burning identified by the National Burning Project. Figure from AFAC (2017) Risk Framework for Prescribed Burning – National Burning Project. Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Limited (Melbourne: Victoria).**

## The OBRM assurance review process

Participation in the OBRM Assurance Program is voluntary and initiated at the invitation of the organisation seeking to gain endorsement for their planned burning. The assurance review process is summarised in Figure 3 and consists of the following steps:

### 1.  Initiation

The participant organisation engages OBRM to provide third party assurance of its planned burning risk management framework. This is achieved via a letter of invitation from the organisation's Director General, CEO or equivalent officer to the Director of OBRM and will be preceded by informal discussions to ensure mutual understanding and support of the process.

### 2.  Scoping

The scope, context and criteria of the Assurance Program is agreed between the participant organisation and OBRM. These will be developed collaboratively by the OBRM Assurance Program Manager and relevant personnel from the participant organisation. The latter should include the delegated officer, whom will be responsible for overseeing the assurance process within the organisation. This step allows the process to be tailored to the context and interests of the organisation. It is formalised by a written agreement between the organisation and OBRM that describes the scope, context and criteria to be applied to assurance, including agreed timelines.

### 3.  Compliance review

The organisation provides OBRM access to relevant policies, manuals, procedures and other documentation that demonstrate its application of risk management to planned burning. Access to, or demonstration of, supporting systems may also be required. OBRM will assess the extent to which the presented material and observations establish alignment with the risk management standard and provide the basis for effective risk management.

The organisation's cultural alignment with risk management and application of documented procedures will be assessed via field visits and discussions with personnel involved in planning, approving and implementing planned burns. Records that demonstrate the implementation and monitoring of risk controls may also be requested. Where relevant, and in consultation with the participant organisation, a range of stakeholders may be consulted to validate observations. The location, timing and intent of these visits and consultation will be agreed in writing between the OBRM Assurance Program Manager and the participant organisation's nominated representative.

The organisation's planned burning risk management will be assessed as 'compliant' when the documentation, systems, processes and risk management culture are deemed to meet the required benchmark. If any shortcomings are identified, OBRM will work with the organisation to develop solutions before reassessing.

## 4.   Assurance review

To receive and maintain the endorsement of the OBRM Assurance Program, an organisation must demonstrate the effective application of its risk management framework over a twelve-month period. There are three requirements to meet this standard:

1. The organisation maintains an internal review process to monitor the management of risks associated with planned burning. This will also include the ability to review and report to OBRM on escaped planned burns that have unintended consequences. See 'Reviewing escapes from planned burns' (below) for more information about the criteria for reviewing burn escapes.

2. The organisation supports OBRM's efforts to complete the agreed schedule of assurance reviews in the 12-month period and the conditions listed below under 'Failure to meet the requirements for assurance' are not triggered. The program of assurance reviews will be agreed between OBRM and the participant organisation annually on a date as near as practical to the anniversary of the organisation achieving the status of 'compliant'.

3. The organisation continues to monitor assurance review findings and reports to OBRM on progress toward their resolution according to the schedule shown in Table 1. Review findings are categorised as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Categorisation of possible findings in an OBRM assurance review, including the required frequency of reporting on progress toward resolution.**

| Category | Definition | Reporting frequency |
|---|---|---|
| **Compliant** | An issue or topic is compliant with the risk management standard. | Not required |
| **Observation** | The reviewer has observed the potential for change which may achieve an element of continual improvement. | Annually |
| **Minor improvement suggestion** | The reviewer recommends change to improve compliance with the risk management standard or to improve the workability of systems, procedures or practices. | Every six months |
| **Major improvement requirement** | The reviewer believes compliance with the risk management standard is not able to be achieved, or maintained, without significant amendment to the current systems, procedures or practices. | Every three months |

## 5.   Failure to meet the requirements for assurance

OBRM endorsement of an organisation's planned burning risk management framework may be withheld or withdrawn if:

1. A mutually satisfactory review schedule cannot be developed by OBRM and the organisation.

2. The organisation fails to facilitate OBRM access to complete the agreed review schedule, within a reasonable degree of variation.

3.  The organisation fails to report and review the escape of a planned burn that has significant consequences.

4.  The organisation cannot provide evidence of progress toward resolving three or more major improvement requirements within a three-month reporting period.

5.  An OBRM assurance review returns five or more major improvement requirements.

6.  The organisation receives a negative finding from a review external to the OBRM Assurance Program that suggests a catastrophic failure of risk management. This clause may be triggered by the loss of life or significant property losses due to a planned burn or an unlawful action in relation to a planned burn.
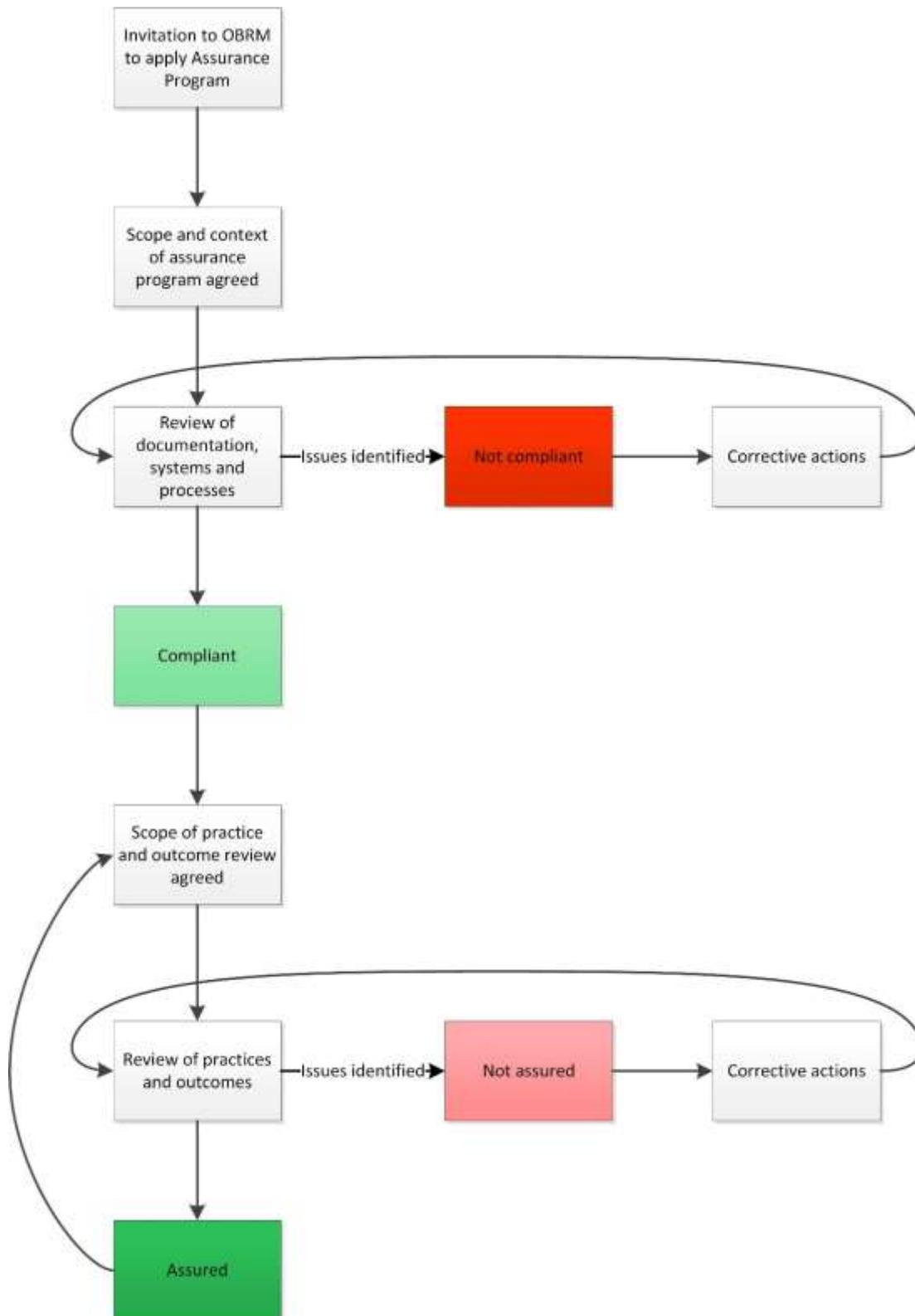
**Figure 3: Overview of the OBRM assurance review process.**

The organisation's Director General, CEO or equivalent officer will be notified in writing if OBRM endorsement is withdrawn. If this occurs, the assurance process must recommence from the 'scoping' stage for the organisation to regain its endorsed status.

# Reviewing escapes from planned burns

Effective risk management requires an organisation to learn from its experiences to improve performance. This includes undertaking post-incident reviews to understand the circumstances surrounding instances of risks being realised, and inform the design of controls to prevent any recurrence.

As part of an effective risk management framework, OBRM assured organisations are required to demonstrate the capacity to conduct a thorough review of any significant incidents associated with planned burning. A review should identify the factors that contributed to the outcome and provide recommendations for improvements to organisational processes to prevent a recurrence. The findings of a review must be made available to OBRM, including recommendations or opportunities for improvement.

OBRM will provide the organisation with assistance to conduct a review, potentially including:

- Guidance and advice in the conduct of a review and the presentation of findings.

- Appraising the review design, conduct and findings to confirm their adequacy.

- Participating in the design and conduct of the review, if the involvement of an independent body is considered beneficial.

- Designing and conducting the review on behalf of the organisation, if an independent review is considered essential.

The type of incident most likely to require a review is the escape of a planned burn. Not every escape requires review, and there is a degree of subjectivity inherent in determining the need for an escape to be reviewed. The following criteria will help to guide the decision to conduct a review:

- A burn is deemed to have escaped when it extends beyond its planned boundary or containment lines and consequently:

  o requires the mobilisation of resources which are additional to those that were required for the original burning operation; or

  o poses a threat to public safety, infrastructure or assets; or

  o requires a Bushfire Advice, Bushfire Watch and Act or Bushfire Emergency Warning to be broadcast.

- An escape may be significant enough to warrant review if it causes or credibly threatens to cause:

  o Harm to people.

  o Evacuation of people.

  o Damage or destruction of buildings or other significant structures.

  o Closure of a major transport route.

  o Significant damage to crops, stock or other financial assets.

  o Significant environmental harm.

  o Widespread or long-lasting public nuisance.

  o Widespread, ongoing media or political attention.

An organisation that experiences a significant burn escape must advice the Director of OBRM as soon as is practical of the event and its outcomes. OBRM will then work with the organisation to develop an agreed scope

and timetable for the review. These will be customised as required to suit the context, including the seriousness of the event, public interest in the event, urgency of identifying causal factors and availability of resources. The role of OBRM in the review process will also be decided. The agreed arrangements will be formalised via a letter from the organisation's CEO (or their equivalent or delegate) to the Director of OBRM. In addition to summarising the process to be followed in the review, this letter will specify the:

- Scope and terms of reference of the review.

- Composition of the review team.

- Role that OBRM will play in the review.

- Timetable for the review, including requirement for any interim or progress reports.

The findings of the review must be provided to OBRM at its conclusion. OBRM will then monitor the implementation of any recommendations or opportunities for improvement on a schedule agreed with the organisation. The effect of the implemented review recommendations will also be a focus of the organisation's assurance review program until such time as they can be demonstrated to be fully integrated to the organisation's usual business practices.

# OBRM Assurance Program protocols

The following is a generic protocol for the conduct of an organisation's Assurance Program. It will be tailored to the organisation's context during the scoping phase of the program.

## General procedures

1. A letter of agreement between the Director OBRM and the organisation's Director General, CEO or equivalent will establish the assessment and reporting protocols required to progress the alignment of the organisation's planned burning program with ISO31000:2018 – Risk Management Guidelines.

2. The nominated representative(s) from the organisation and the Office of Bushfire Risk Management (OBRM) will meet on an agreed schedule to discuss the organisation's Assurance Program. The agenda will include:

    a. assurance reviews completed since the previous meeting

    b. progress toward resolving any outstanding review findings

    c. the program of assurance reviews to be completed in the next period

    d. any other issues of relevance.

    The OBRM Assessor and other personnel from the organisation may be invited to attend as appropriate.

3. The organisation's representative will draft an assurance review schedule, with a focus on strategic themes of interest, to be discussed at the scheduled meeting. OBRM may suggest themes for review where they believe it is warranted. The draft schedule will be circulated prior to the meeting.

4. Meeting minutes will be recorded and circulated in draft to attendees, prior to finalisation.

5. In addition to the agreed program, the organisation may request, through the Director OBRM, a review of any planned burning activity in response to significant and urgent issues. OBRM may also initiate additional assessment of the organisation's planned burning program, if deemed necessary in response to significant and urgent issues.

6. The OBRM Assessor will conduct the agreed reviews with the appropriate organisation's representative(s) and have full access to the organisation's records and personnel in relation to planned burning.

7. Any issues identified by the OBRM Assessor will be discussed with the organisation's representative(s) during the review to seek clarification and comment before those issues are finalised into the Assessor's report.

8. The OBRM Assessor's findings will be documented in a report using the OBRM approved template. Each report and each individual finding will have a unique identifier.

## Response to assurance review reports

9. Within ten working days of the assessment, the OBRM Assessor's report on the identified findings will be provided by the OBRM Program Manager to the organisation's agreed representative.

10. Within twenty working days of receiving the report, the organisation's representative will respond to the findings.

    a. If as a result of that response, the OBRM Program Manager considers that no further action is required on a finding, OBRM will mark that finding closed and advise the representative by email that no further action is required.

    b. If the response includes actions to be taken to address the findings, the intended date of implementation of those actions will be included in the report.

11. The final decision to close a finding will be taken by the OBRM program Manager, informed by discussions with the organisation's representative and the OBRM Assessor.

12. If the organisation requires more time to respond to a review report, their representative may seek an extension from the Director OBRM via email.

13. The OBRM Program Manager will advise the organisation's representative whether the response to a review report is accepted within five working days of its receipt.

    a. If the response is not accepted, OBRM will provide the reasons for this and arrange a meeting with appropriate organisation representatives to seek a resolution.

    b. Should the meeting not find a resolution, the Director OBRM will specify in writing any actions required of the organisation and provide this, with a Show Cause Request, to the Director General, CEO or equivalent.

14. The receiver of the Show Cause Notice will provide a response within ten working days.

15. Once an appropriate response to all review findings has been agreed, OBRM will develop a final report that is inclusive of that response.

16. The organisation will actively monitor all outstanding findings to ensure they are addressed within the agreed timeframes. If there are any items that become overdue, the organisation's representative will advise the Director OBRM of the steps it will take to address the finding.

## Urgent Issues

17. Should OBRM identify any issue that, in their opinion, represents an unacceptable threat to people, assets or economic activity, OBRM will immediately communicate this to the organisation's representative(s).

18. The organisation's representative and the Director OBRM will discuss the issue as soon as practical and seek to agree on a resolution to it. If unable to reach agreement, the issue may be escalated to the Director General, CEO or equivalent.

19. It remains open to the Director OBRM to withdraw the OBRM endorsement of the organisations planned burning alignment to ISO31000 if an urgent issue cannot be resolved.