OBRM Update 17 June 2016

PROJECT UPDATE – OFFICE OF BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT (OBRM)

This edition provides an update on the Local Government Permit to Burn Review, an OBRM-led project aimed at improving the coordination, oversight and consistency of planned fire activities at the local government level. OBRM is also seeking to identify a framework by which bushfire risk can be managed through best practice and a simplified regulatory structure.

Project Background

Feedback from the Permit Trial in 2014 indicated that there was a need for greater understanding and management of bushfire risk within Local Government (LG) areas in WA. This could be achieved through identifying informed tools and processes to support LGs and stakeholders undertake their roles and responsibilities. Improvement in the management of bushfire risk would be aided by a contemporary Permit to Burn and systems which would:

- Provide consistency in permit issuing practices,
- Provide a framework to support LG’s and permit holders,
- Provide flexibility to account for local/regional differences,
- Enhance understanding of roles and responsibilities,
- Reduce potential for loss from planned fire events, and
- Influence a review of DFES publications to reflect best practice and incorporate outputs of the project.

Eleven primary issues were identified from the trial and the feedback provided by local governments on the Trial report provided to each local government across the state. These could be resolved through the Working Group (WG) and Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) structures.

Project Update

After a long period of consultation with stakeholders, the second phase of the project is well underway. Whilst OBRM is facilitating the project, the outcomes of the project need to be applicable to the local government and permit holders. To achieve this OBRM has sought input from a wide range of stakeholders, particularly from local government and current and former Fire Control Officers.

So far the Project has seen the establishment of WGs that represent six zones across the state. The SRG has met twice this year. It is chaired by OBRM’s Executive Manager Tim McNaught and comprises the Chairs of the six WGs and is supported by an Executive Officer. Assistance to the SRG is also provided by Observers from WALGA, DFES’ Legal and Legislative Services and a Volunteer Representative.

Terms of Reference for the SRG have been established and these along with the minutes of the SRG meetings are published on OBRM’s webpage.

www.dfes.wa.gov.au/obrm
The initial eleven issues have been captured into “Options Papers” that will assist the WGs to conduct a SWOT analysis of potential solutions for the issues identified. The WGs are also encouraged to identify and raise issues of a local concern. These local issues can then be circulated to the other WGs to seek potential solutions from another perspective.

Next Steps

The SRG meet every two months. The Working Groups convene between each SRG meeting to develop their SWOT analyses and identify other stakeholders who may have an interest in the Project or its outcomes.

If anyone believes that they have a stakeholder interest in the Project or would like further information please contact the Office of Bushfire Risk Management at obrm@dfes.wa.gov.au

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