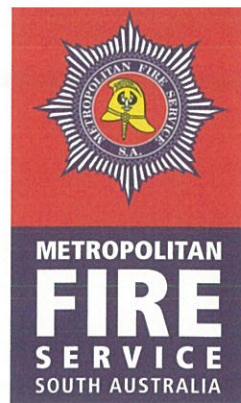


If calling please ask for: Rachel Dixon  
Telephone: (08) 8115 3906  
Reference: ESS-20-1896

Mr Lee Odenwalder  
Member for Elizabeth  
2-3, 4 John Rice Avenue  
ELIZABETH VALE 5112



99 Wakefield Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 98  
Adelaide SA 5001  
South Australia

Tel +61 8 8204 3600  
Fax +61 8 8204 3838

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

ABN 26 897 550 904

Dear Mr Odenwalder

I am writing in relation to your application made under the Freedom of Information Act 1991 (FOI Act) in which you requested access to the following documents:

*"Any submission to, or correspondence with (including, but not limited to, emails, letters, and notes), the Independent review into South Australia's 2019/20 bushfire season."*

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, and the documents to which you are given access, may be published in the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>.

A search has been conducted and nine (9) documents were located that fall within the scope of your application. In respect of these documents, I have determined as follows:

#### **Documents 1-9**

I have determined to release these documents in full.

#### **Appeal Rights**

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you are entitled to exercise your rights of review and appeal as outlined in the attached documentation.

Should you have any enquiries in relation to this matter, please contact Rachel Dixon, Freedom of Information Officer on telephone (08) 8115 3906.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Rachel Dixon".

Rachel Dixon  
**Accredited Freedom of Information Officer**

10 August 2020



**Government  
of South Australia**

**SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS**

Freedom of Information application by Mr Lee Odenwalder – *“Any submission to, or correspondence with (including, but not limited to, emails, letters, and notes), the Independent review into South Australia’s 2019/20 bushfire season”*.

<b>Doc No</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Determination</b>
1	2020-04-14 Email re: Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season – letter attached	Release in full.
2	2020-04-15 Letter to D Lane re: Independent review into South Australia's 2019/2020 Bushfire Season	Release in full.
3	2020-04-17 – Email re: Interview request for the Independent review into SAs 2019-2020 Bushfire Season	Release in full.
4	2020-04-20 Email re: Interview request for Independent Review into SAs 2019-2020 Bushfire Season	Release in full.
5	2020-04-20 Email re: Interview request for the Independent Review into SAs 2019-2020 Bushfire Season	Release in full.
6	2020-05-26 Email re: Meeting request – Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season	Release in full.
7	2020-05-26 Email re: Meeting request – Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season	Release in full.
8	2020-06-02 Email re: Submission from the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service – Independent Review of the South Australian 2019/2020 Bushfire Season	Release in full.
9	2020-06-23 Email re: Independent Review into SA's 2019/20 Bushfire Season	Release in full.

## SAFECOM: Freedom of Information

---

**From:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 April 2020 2:59 PM  
**To:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** FW: Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season - letter attached  
**Attachments:** Signed Letter to CO Michael Morgan.pdf

Hi Lisa,

Can you please draft a response letter to the letter attached.

Please acknowledge the changes and that ACFO Lindsay is no longer required.

Regards,

Michael

**Michael Morgan** AFSM MBA(HRM) AIFireE  
**Chief Officer and Chief Executive**

South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)  
 99 Wakefield Street Adelaide  
**South Australia, SA 5000**

Office: 08 82043752 Email: [michael.morgan2@sa.gov.au](mailto:michael.morgan2@sa.gov.au)

**From:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM) <Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 April 2020 9:45 PM  
**To:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS) <Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season - letter attached

Dear Chief Officer Michael Morgan

Please find attached signed letter in regards to the independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season.

Kind regards

**Lorraine Dilag** CPA  
 Project Manager  
 Independent Bushfire Review Team SA  
 Level 6, 60 Waymouth Street  
 Adelaide SA 5000

T 08 8115 3912 | F 08 8463 4054 | M | E [Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au)  
 Volunteer Recruitment Hotline T 1300 364 587



**Government of  
 South Australia**

*The information in this e-mail may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*



**Government of South Australia**

**South Australian Fire and  
Emergency Services Commission**

If calling please ask for: Lorraine Dilag

Telephone: 8115 3912

Reference: ESS-20-313

Mr Michael Morgan  
Chief Officer  
SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)  
GPO Box 98  
Adelaide SA 5001

Level 6,  
60 Waymouth Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 2706  
Adelaide SA 5001  
DX 206

Tel 8115 3900  
Fax 8115 3908

ABN 95 437 863 949

[www.safecom.sa.gov.au](http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Morgan

***INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S 2019/2020 BUSHFIRE SEASON***

I would like to thank you for your continued support in the independent review into South Australia's 2019/20 bushfire season.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, lead inquirer Mr Mick Keelty AO has made the decision to change the approach of the review. This includes the cancellation of the public forums and all face-to-face meetings. Due to these changes, the review team has also reduced in size.

Thank you for putting forward Mr Colin Lindsay to support Mr Mick Keelty, however due to the above changes to the review Mr Lindsay's services will not be required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dom Lane".

Dom Lane  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
SAFECOM**

9 April 2020

If calling please ask for:  
Mr Fletcher

Telephone:  
8204 3765

Reference: A1302150



99 Wakefield Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO BOX 98  
Adelaide SA 5001

Tel +61 8 8204 3600  
Fax +61 8 8204 3838

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

ABN 26 897 550 904

Mr Dom Lane  
Chief Executive  
South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission  
GPO Box 2706  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

*Dom*  
Dear Mr Lane,

#### INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S 2019/2020 BUSHFIRE SEASON

Thank you for your letter dated 9 April 2020, confirming the decision of the lead inquirer, Mr Mike Keelty AO to change the approach of the review into South Australia's 2019/2020 Bushfire Season in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

I acknowledge that the support and involvement of Mr Colin Lindsay, Assistant Chief Fire Officer is no longer required, given the cancellation of the public forums and all face to face meetings.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service can assist in any other way.

Yours faithfully

M. Morgan, AFSM MBA  
CHIEF OFFICER and  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

15 April 2020



Government  
of South Australia

**Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)**

---

**From:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 April 2020 2:59 PM  
**To:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** FW: Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season - letter attached  
**Attachments:** Signed Letter to CO Michael Morgan.pdf

Hi Lisa,

Can you please draft a response letter to the letter attached.

Please acknowledge the changes and that ACFO Lindsay is no longer required.

Regards,

Michael

**Michael Morgan** AFSM MBA(HRM) AIFireE  
**Chief Officer and Chief Executive**

South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)  
99 Wakefield Street Adelaide  
South Australia, SA 5000

Office: 08 82043752 Email: [michael.morgan2@sa.gov.au](mailto:michael.morgan2@sa.gov.au)

**From:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM) <Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 April 2020 9:45 PM  
**To:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS) <Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season - letter attached

Dear Chief Officer Michael Morgan

Please find attached signed letter in regards to the independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season.

Kind regards

**Lorraine Dilag** CPA  
Project Manager  
Independent Bushfire Review Team SA  
Level 6, 60 Waymouth Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

T 08 8115 3912 | F 08 8463 4054 | M | E [Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au)  
Volunteer Recruitment Hotline T 1300 364 587



**Government of  
South Australia**

MFS20 - 0512



**Government of South Australia**

South Australian Fire and  
Emergency Services Commission

If calling please ask for: Lorraine Dilag

Telephone: 8115 3912

Reference: ESS-20-313

Level 6,  
60 Waymouth Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 2706  
Adelaide SA 5001  
DX 206

Tel 8115 3900

Fax 8115 3908

ABN 95 437 863 949

[www.safecom.sa.gov.au](http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au)

Mr Michael Morgan  
Chief Officer  
SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)  
GPO Box 98  
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Mr Morgan

***INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S 2019/2020 BUSHFIRE SEASON***

I would like to thank you for your continued support in the independent review into South Australia's 2019/20 bushfire season.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, lead inquirer Mr Mick Keelty AO has made the decision to change the approach of the review. This includes the cancellation of the public forums and all face-to-face meetings. Due to these changes, the review team has also reduced in size.

Thank you for putting forward Mr Colin Lindsay to support Mr Mick Keelty, however due to the above changes to the review Mr Lindsay's services will not be required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dom Lane".

Dom Lane  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
SAFECOM**

9 April 2020



**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM)  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 April 2020 3:06 PM  
**To:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Cc:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** RE: Interview Request for the Independent Review into SAs 2019-2020 Bushfire Season

Hi Lisa

Thanks for getting in touch. Next Monday is fine.

Please be advised that interviews have already begun and we are looking to conduct all interviews by Friday 1 May 2020.

Kind regards

**Lorraine Dilag** CPA  
 Project Manager  
 Independent Review into SA's 2019/20 Bushfire Season  
 Level 3, 60 Waymouth Street  
 Adelaide SA 5000

T 08 8115 3912 | F 08 8463 4054 | M 0418 285 361 | E [Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au)  
 Volunteer Recruitment Hotline T 1300 364 587



**Government of  
South Australia**

*The information in this e-mail may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

---

**From:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS) <Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 April 2020 2:53 PM  
**To:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM) <Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS) <Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Interview Request for the Independent Review into SAs 2019-2020 Bushfire Season  
**Importance:** High

Good Afternoon Lorraine,

I understand that the MFS has been requested to submit a response regarding ***Interview Request for the Independent Review into SAs 2019-2020 Bushfire Season*** by COB today. Given a number of other pressing priorities, could you please confirm if it would be suitable for the MFS to submit this particular response on Monday?

Kind regards, Lisa

**Lisa Firth**  
 Manager, Executive Services

South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service

99 Wakefield Street, ADELAIDE, SA 5000

GPO Box 98, ADELAIDE, SA 5001

**Tel:** 08 8204 3754

**Mobile:** 0472 829 073

**Fax:** 08 8204 3838

**Email:** [Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au)

*The information in this email may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this email by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

4.  
**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 April 2020 3:43 PM  
**To:** SAFECOM:Bushfire Review Enquiries  
**Cc:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS); Fletcher, Paul (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** Interview request for the Independent Review into SA's 2019-2020 Bushfire Season  
**Attachments:** 2020-04-20 Response to SAFECOM Bushfire Review re Contact details for MFS personnel to be interviewed (A1303715).pdf  
  
**Importance:** High

Good Afternoon Seamus,

Please find attached a response from the MFS as approved by Chief Officer Morgan.

Kind regards, Lisa

**Lisa Firth**  
Manager, Executive Services  
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service

99 Wakefield Street, ADELAIDE, SA 5000  
GPO Box 98, ADELAIDE, SA 5001  
**Tel:** 08 8204 3754  
**Mobile:** 0472 829 073  
**Fax:** 08 8204 3838  
**Email:** [Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au)

*The information in this email may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this email by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

# Interview Request for the Independent Review into South Australia's 2019/2020 Bushfire Season

Response from the MFS as requested via letter dated received 14 April 2020 - as approved by Chief Officer Michael Morgan

Name	Organisational Role/ Function	Contact Details
<b>Executive Oversight of all incidents from MFS perspective</b>		
Chief Officer Michael Morgan	Executive	Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au
Deputy Chief Officer Paul Fletcher	Executive	Paul.Fletcher@sa.gov.au
<b>Duck Pond Fire Port Lincoln on the 13/11/2019</b>		
ACFO Glenn Benham	ACFO of Regional Operations	Glenn.Benham@sa.gov.au
Commander Michael Shepherd	Commander Far North & Eyre	Michael.Shepherd@sa.gov.au
Commander Garrick Lehmann	Regional Duty Officer on the day	Garrick.Lehmann@sa.gov.au
Retained Station Officer Shane Porter	Officer in charge of Port Lincoln MFS	
ROC Kevin Stewart	Rapid Assessment Team	Kevin.Stewart@sa.gov.au
A/ACFO Dave Colliar	Commander Yorke/ Mid North	Dave.Colliar@sa.gov.au
<b>Cudlee Creek Fire</b>		
ACFO Roy Thompson	State Coordination Centre Fire (SCCF) Coordinator	Roy.Thompson@sa.gov.au
Commander Rainer Kiessling	Task Force Leader	Rainer.Kiessling@sa.gov.au
Commander Stuart Dawes	Task Force Leader	Stuart.Dawes@sa.gov.au
<b>Kangaroo Island Fires</b>		
Scott Thompson	Incident Management Team	Scott.Thompson@sa.gov.au
Dale Thompson	Commander Central	Dale.Thompson@sa.gov.au
Eero Haatainen	Strike Team Leader	Eero.Haatainen@sa.gov.au
Peter Reynolds	Strike Team Leader	Peter.Reynolds@sa.gov.au
Declan Dwyer	Commander Central	Declan.Dwyer@sa.gov.au
Dave Juniper	Commander Central	David.Juniper@sa.gov.au
Guy Uren	Strike Team Leader	Guy.Uren@sa.gov.au
Station Officer Chris Castle	Deputy Incident Controller	
<b>MFS involvement from the SEC and support to the control agency</b>		
ACFO Peter Button	ACFO Coordination function	Peter.Button@sa.gov.au

APPROVED BY:



Michael Morgan  
CHIEF OFFICER and  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

20-Apr-20

**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** SAFECOM:Bushfire Review Enquiries  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 April 2020 4:07 PM  
**To:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Cc:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS); Fletcher, Paul (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** RE: Interview request for the Independent Review into SA's 2019-2020 Bushfire Season

Good afternoon Ms Firth

Thank you for your email and providing the approved list of MFS personnel.

Kind regards

**SA Bushfire Review Team**



**Government of  
South Australia**

*The information in this e-mail may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

---

**From:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS) <Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 April 2020 3:43 PM  
**To:** SAFECOM:Bushfire Review Enquiries <SAFECOMBushfireReviewEnquiries@sa.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS) <Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au>; Fletcher, Paul (SAMFS) <Paul.Fletcher@sa.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Interview request for the Independent Review into SA's 2019-2020 Bushfire Season  
**Importance:** High

Good Afternoon Seamus,

Please find attached a response from the MFS as approved by Chief Officer Morgan.

Kind regards, Lisa

**Lisa Firth**  
 Manager, Executive Services  
 South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service

99 Wakefield Street, ADELAIDE, SA 5000  
 GPO Box 98, ADELAIDE, SA 5001  
**Tel:** 08 8204 3754  
**Mobile:** 0472 829 073  
**Fax:** 08 8204 3838  
**Email:** [Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au)

*The information in this email may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this email by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 May 2020 4:41 PM  
**To:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS)  
**Cc:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** Meeting request - Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season

Good afternoon Chief Officer Morgan

The Independent Review has now reached the stage of collating a draft of the report. Mr Mick Keelty AO wishes to discuss the draft with agency heads and outline some of the findings. He is hoping to do this in a group format on Microsoft Teams unless any of the agency heads specifically object.

I will be sending through a meeting request shortly for next **Wednesday 3 June 2020 3pm – 4pm.**

Kind regards

**Lorraine Dilag** CPA  
Project Manager  
Independent Review into SA's 2019/20 Bushfire Season  
Level 3, 60 Waymouth Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

T 08 8115 3912 | F 08 8463 4054 | M 0418 285 361 | E [Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au)  
Volunteer Recruitment Hotline T 1300 364 587



**Government of  
South Australia**

*The information in this e-mail may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 May 2020 4:43 PM  
**To:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM)  
**Cc:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting request - Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season

Hi Lorraine,

That sounds great, I look forward to catching up with Mick.

Regards,

Michael

**Michael Morgan** AFSM MBA(HRM) AIFireE  
**Chief Officer and Chief Executive**

South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS)  
 99 Wakefield Street Adelaide  
 South Australia, SA 5000

Office: 08 82043752 Email: [michael.morgan2@sa.gov.au](mailto:michael.morgan2@sa.gov.au)

---

**From:** Dilag, Lorraine (SAFECOM) <[Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 May 2020 4:41 PM  
**To:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS) <[Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Michael.Morgan2@sa.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS) <[Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Meeting request - Independent review into SA's 2019/20 bushfire season

Good afternoon Chief Officer Morgan

The Independent Review has now reached the stage of collating a draft of the report. Mr Mick Keelty AO wishes to discuss the draft with agency heads and outline some of the findings. He is hoping to do this in a group format on Microsoft Teams unless any of the agency heads specifically object.

I will be sending through a meeting request shortly for next **Wednesday 3 June 2020 3pm – 4pm.**

Kind regards

**Lorraine Dilag** CPA  
 Project Manager  
 Independent Review into SA's 2019/20 Bushfire Season  
 Level 3, 60 Waymouth Street  
 Adelaide SA 5000

T 08 8115 3912 | F 08 8463 4054 | M 0418 285 361 | E [Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lorraine.Dilag@sa.gov.au)  
**Volunteer Recruitment Hotline** T 1300 364 587



*The information in this e-mail may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*



**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 June 2020 4:20 PM  
**To:** SAFECOM:Bushfire Review Enquiries  
**Cc:** Morgan, Michael (SAMFS); Fletcher, Paul (SAMFS); Button, Peter (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** Submission from the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service - Independent Review of the South Australian 2019/2020 Bushfire Season  
**Attachments:** 2020-06-01 Letter to Mr M Keelty from M Morgan re MFS Submission to the South Australian 2019-2020 Bushfire Review.pdf; 2020-06-01 MFS Submission to the South Australian 2019 - 2020 Bushfire Review.pdf

Good Afternoon,

On behalf of Chief Officer Michael Morgan, please find attached the submission from the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) to the **Independent Review of the South Australian 2019 – 2020 Bushfire Season**.

Please note that a hard copy of this submission has also been placed in the mail.

Kind Regards, Lisa

**Lisa Firth**  
 Manager, Executive Services  
 South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service

99 Wakefield Street, ADELAIDE, SA 5000  
 GPO Box 98, ADELAIDE, SA 5001  
**Tel:** 08 8204 3754  
**Mobile:** 0472 829 073  
**Fax:** 08 8204 3838  
**Email:** [Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.Firth2@sa.gov.au)

*The information in this email may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this email by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*

If calling please ask for:  
Mr Fletcher

Telephone:  
8204 3765

Reference: A1324023



Mr M Keelty AO APM  
SAFECOM  
South Australian 2019 - 2020 Bushfire Review  
GPO Box 2706  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

99 Wakefield Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO BOX 98  
Adelaide SA 5001

Tel +61 8 8204 3600  
Fax +61 8 8204 3838

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

ABN 26 897 550 904

~~MICK~~  
Dear Mr Keelty

#### **MFS SUBMISSION TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN 2019 – 2020 BUSHFIRE REVIEW**

Thank you for the opportunity enabling South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) personnel to actively contribute to the Independent Review of the South Australian 2019 – 2020 Bushfire Season.

South Australia, like much of Australia, experienced fires of unprecedented severity during the 2019 - 2020 bushfire season. The impact of the bushfires on South Australia, a small state heavily dependent on tourism, was substantial. Three individuals lost their lives, homes, businesses and properties were destroyed and national parks and reserves burnt out.

As with any devastating natural disaster, there is an opportunity to reflect on the State's collective experience and the lessons that could be learnt. The MFS acknowledges the importance of this and is working closely with relevant stakeholders and agencies.

Please find enclosed the MFS submission for your review and consideration.

Yours faithfully

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Morgan'.

M. Morgan, AFSM MBA  
CHIEF OFFICER and  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 June 2020



Government  
of South Australia

# **South Australia's 2019/2020 Bushfire Season**

## **Independent Review**

### **MFS Submission**

#### **Introduction**

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is responsible for the protection of the South Australian community from the effects of fires, road crashes, dangerous substances and other emergencies within the gazetted area of the MFS. The role of the MFS includes prevention and education, preparedness, response and recovery activities. The MFS is governed by the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005* South Australia which provides for its legislated functions and powers. The MFS is also conferred roles and functions under the *Emergency Management Act 2004* South Australia and its subordinate regulatory instruments, namely the State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP).

The MFS is an all hazards fire and rescue service that operates from 20 stations in metropolitan Adelaide and 17 stations in regional centres across South Australia. The MFS employs over 1,100 personnel in both full-time and part-time (retained) roles to provide protection to approximately 1.3 million South Australians, their property, businesses and the things they value.

The South Australian community has undergone significant changes in demography and according to '*The 30-Year Plan For Greater Adelaide (2017 Update)*' this trend is forecast to continue.

Forecast changes within the state the MFS must consider include:

- Continued population and urban growth in the greater Adelaide area.
- An aging population with increasing numbers of people requiring support and care.
- Increasing cultural diversity with some communities less aware of potential risks and hazards.
- Urban consolidation including urban corridor, high-density and mixed residency developments.
- Growth of satellite commuter and retirement communities such as Gawler and Mount Barker.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Emergency Management Act* and the SEMP, the MFS is the hazard leader and control agency for urban fire in South Australia. Further, the MFS is the control agency for Hazardous Material Emergencies and a control agency of Search & Rescue – structure (USAR) within its fire districts. It also responds to road crash and technical rescue, marine fire and rescue, bush and grass fire, swift water rescue, vertical rescue, confined space rescues and the provision of operational support to other emergency service agencies.

Whilst the MFS are considered the hazard leader for 'urban fire' per the SEMP, the MFS is responsible to respond, to and mitigate, a significant amount of urban rural interface incidents both in metropolitan Adelaide and regional fire districts. This urban rural interface risk profile is expected to increase with the boundary review that is currently underway collaboratively between the emergency services within the



Government  
of South Australia



sector. The MFS supports the South Australian Country Fire Service (SACFS) and the South Australian State Emergency Service (SASES) during major bushfires and extreme weather events respectively.

The MFS has taken significant steps towards improving and enhancing the Rural Fire Urban Interface (RFUI) capability since 2012 when it recognised this area as an increasing risk. As the number of homes within the urban interface increases, so too does the risk and the MFS prevention and response activities. Additionally, the MFS often supports the SACFS during rural fire events where our primary role has evolved from the 'protection of fixed assets' in townships into the protection of life and 'assets from the impact of rural fire'. The MFS is currently finalising the delivery of a training package to meet the national unit of competency PUAFIR204B 'Respond to Wildfire'. In addition, the MFS has implemented tablet accessible, pre-plans for major and intermediate risks in the MFS Rural Urban Interface.

## **The 2019-2020 Bushfire Season**

South Australia, like much of Australia, experienced fires of unprecedented severity during the 2019-2020 bushfire season (the season). During the season, the state experienced a combination of drought conditions, catastrophic fire danger weather for multiple days and severe and extreme fire danger periods. Fires broke out across the State, including the Cudlee Creek fires in the Adelaide Hills that burnt more than 25,000 hectares of land, and on Kangaroo Island where more than 210,000 hectares of land burned.

During the catastrophic fire conditions on 20 November 2019, the MFS Communications Call Receipt and Dispatch Centre (CRD) managed a total of 1519 calls, including 649 triple zero phone calls, dispatching resources to 378 incidents including 19 greater alarms on the day.

On December 20, 2019 (the day of the Cudlee Creek Fire) the MFS Communications/CRD Centre managed a total of 4055 calls, including 1844 triple zero phone calls, dispatching resources to 880 incidents including 21 greater alarms on the day.

During the season, the MFS responded to these and other major bushfires. MFS staff and resources were rapidly deployed in support of the SACFS to control the bushfires.

The MFS' operational contribution to the SACFS response included the provision of firefighters, strike team leaders, logistical and mechanical engineering support. The season also saw a significant rise in 000 calls and the MFS provided surge capacity call takers to meet the additional workload. The MFS also staffed specialist incident management roles including Operations Officers and Deputy Incident Controllers in the Incident Control Centres for selected major fires as well as Liaison Officers in the State Command Centre Bushfire (SCCB). The MFS provided a significant response to major incidents both intrastate and interstate e.g. Physical and Human resources were deployed at all levels throughout active firefighting and incident management positions in locations including, but not limited to, Queensland, NSW, Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island.

The impact of the 2019-2020 bushfires on South Australia, a small state heavily dependent on tourism, was substantial. Three individuals lost their lives, homes, businesses and properties were destroyed and national parks and reserves (including visitor infrastructure) burnt out.

As with any devastating natural disaster, there is an opportunity to reflect on the State's collective experience and the lessons that could be learnt. The MFS acknowledges the importance of this and is working closely with relevant stakeholders and agencies.

## Emergency management arrangements

South Australia's Emergency Management Arrangements are governed by the *Emergency Management Act 2004*.

The *Emergency Management Act 2004* establishes the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) which, among other functions, oversees the development and preparation of a SEMP and keeps this plan under review. In accordance with the *Emergency Management Act 2004*, the SEMP must detail strategies for prevention, preparedness, containment, and coordination of response and recovery operations for emergencies.

The *Emergency Management Act 2004* establishes South Australian Police (SAPOL) as the co-ordinating agency and appoints the Commissioner of Police (or their delegate) as the State Co-ordinator. The role of the coordinating agency is to facilitate the emergency response exercised by the control agency. The State Coordinator can declare a Major Incident or a Major Emergency. The power to declare a Disaster rests with the Governor. Once the Governor declares a Disaster, certain powers are conferred upon the State Co-ordinator.

Control Agencies are tasked with the management or 'Control' of operations in relation to an emergency. This is further reflected in the SEMP which assigns control agencies to particular emergencies.

Importantly, the SEMP also establishes Hazard Leaders and Support agencies. During an emergency, some agencies will be designated as Support Agencies. While they continue to command their own resources, they are subject to the direction of the Control Agency during an emergency incident. Finally, the SEMP allocates hazards to particular agencies designated as Hazard Leaders. Hazard Leaders, coordinate comprehensive planning processes including risk prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, relating to its assigned hazard.

The emergency management structure in South Australia has various in-built review mechanisms. For example, section 11 of the *Emergency Management Act 2004* provides a mechanism in which the SEMC can establish advisory groups to advise the Committee.

These advisory groups may establish 'working groups' or 'task groups' to investigate and/or inquire into particular matters. The findings from such reviews are fed into the advisory groups, up through the structure and out to the relevant agencies. Furthermore, Hazard Leaders are also responsible for the ongoing review of all plans prepared under the SEMP to ensure that all aspects of their assigned hazard have been addressed. A Hazard Leader has the authority of the SEMC to bring together any required government or non-government entities to undertake the planning, coordination and review role. This includes working with the advisory groups, Control Agencies, and Support Agencies within the emergency management arrangements.

## Key Focus Areas: PREVENTION

### 1. Reducing Bushfire Ignitions

#### 1.1 Electricity Infrastructure

- The MFS recognises electrical transmission and distribution system networks as critical infrastructure and a significant asset to defend in the face of a bushfire or other emergency. Additionally, the MFS recognises that should electrical infrastructure fail or is shut down as a precautionary measure on days of extreme fire danger, a number of essential services may be significantly impacted.
- The MFS also recognises live electrical infrastructure as a potential risk for bushfire ignition, and as such has noted them on urban interface pre plans, and risk assessments. Such infrastructure may also pose a hazard to firefighting activities including water bombing activities.
- The reinstatement of electrical infrastructure, by the appropriate authorities, is treated as one of the highest priorities of the MFS during immediate recovery phases.

#### 1.2 Arson and Operation Nomad

- The MFS is concerned with any instance of arson, in both urban and rural settings. The MFS has a long running Juvenile Firelighter Intervention Program (JFLIP). This program is designed to intervene with any behaviors identified in young people that may result in arson or dangerous fire behavior.
- The MFS believes the practices and results of Operation Nomad are of a world's best standard and have resulted in measurable reductions in rural arson activity. Accordingly, the MFS have fully supported the program since its inception.

#### 1.3 Machinery and Power Tools

- Machinery and power tools present a significant risk and are very often an accidental cause for bush and grass fire.
- Control measures are somewhat limited to education programs and information from the hazard leader SACFS.

#### 1.4 Lightning Strikes and Detection

- Outside of scope for MFS.

#### 1.5 Hazard Reduction

- The MFS understands hazard reduction burns and clearing form strategic barriers between large areas of scrub to either reduce fire intensity, or stop a fires progress.
- The MFS does not conduct any hazard reduction burns within its area, but has assisted other agencies with controlled burns in their fire districts.

## **2 Community Preparation and Resilience**

### **2.1 Community Education and Engagement**

- The MFS is very proactive in the area of community education, whether it be bushfire prevention or other programs facilitated through the MFS Community Safety and Resilience Department.
- Community education bushfire specific is developed by SACFS as the hazard leader, is co-branded and amplified by the MFS. This is then distributed on the sector agencies websites.
- The plans, programs, initiatives and arrangements in place for the 2019 – 2020 bushfire season included:
  - The MFS is involved in a combined launch at the commencement of each bushfire season with the SACFS.
  - The MFS jointly issues Fire Ban advice notices to the community in support of the hazard leader.
  - The MFS attends field days and other community events both in metropolitan and regional areas in support of the hazard leader to increase community awareness of the Fire Danger Season.
  - Provision of multi-agency, multi hazard information brochures are available at all MFS stations.

### **2.2 Home and Contents Insurance**

- Specially trained and qualified MFS Fire investigators work alongside SAPOL fire technicians regularly to determine the cause of structural and other fires. This bi lateral process is designed to be rapid, analytical and thorough to benefit all stakeholders including the property owner to ensure they can undertake their own recovery process as quickly as possible.
- The MFS supports those who have had their homes or assets affected by the impact of fire or other emergencies through rapid damage assessment (RDA).
  - Refer to section 13 of this report for further RDA information.

### **2.3 MFS Training, Development, Coordination, Support and Welfare**

- MFS current procedure is to have all frontline operational staff competent in the nationally accredited 'Respond to Wildfire' PUA FIR204B course within 12 weeks of their commencement of operational duty.
- Frontline staff whose commencement of service pre-dates this procedure are being or have been provided the training during in service courses.
- Development and implementation of vehicle & equipment training packages which are linked to skill codes in the MFS electronic rostering system for operational deployment
- Selected incident management staff have been trained in.
  - RFUI Ground Observer
  - RFUI Fire Weather
  - RFUI Strike Team Leader
    - This training is progressively being provided to more personnel
- Selected incident management staff have been trained in specialist Australasian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS) roles in.
  - Incident Controller
  - Operations Officer
  - Planning Officer
  - Logistics Officer
    - This training is progressively being provided to more personnel
- Integration of appropriately trained staff in the State Level Three (3) Incident Management Teams (IMT's)





#### **Recommendation:**

The MFS Consider:

- Training all frontline operational staff in 'Suppress Wildfire' PUAFIR303B (combination of on and off-shift training) this unit of competency expands on training provided in the unit 'Respond to Wildfire' PUAFIR204B.
- Integration of the aforementioned wildfire courses in the metropolitan and regional Staff Development Framework (SDF) (with appropriate consultation)
- Training all frontline Station Officers in MFS 'RFUI Incident Management'.
- Continuation of training for selected staff in the AIIMS.
- Seeking additional ongoing funding to facilitate the aforementioned training programs.

Benefit to the Community:

- Safer emergency operations.
- Enhanced response capability providing a more efficient response to meet the community's needs.
- Greater capability to respond to a varied scale of incidents.

#### **2.4 Farm firefighting Units**

- The MFS understands that farm firefighting units (FFU) are emerging as a prominent and effective resource in the fight against bushfire.
- As with all resources on a fire ground, FFU's should be a part of an overall incident control structure to provide strategic direction and safety.

#### **Recommendation:**

Where possible:

- FFU's should have access to the necessary communications equipment to allow the operators to function safely within an emergency organisational structure.
- FFU's and their operators should have a basic awareness of Fire Service operational procedures.
- FFU's operators should wear appropriate PPE and have burn over blankets or basic fire protection systems fitted to the FFU.

Benefits to the Community:

- An enhanced coordination of resources delivering a greater opportunity for success whilst minimising the inherent risks to the FFU operator.

## Key Focus Areas: PREPARATION

### Putting the Community First

The MFS is community focused and will establish its organisational priorities on the basis of public benefit and value. It is expected that programs and resources will prioritise community benefit and public value.

Outcomes provided by the MFS include the identification of risks to the South Australian community, minimising the frequency of emergencies and the social, environmental and economic losses associated with emergencies. Currently, due to the age of the fleet, the MFS has limited access to reserve fire appliances for training, strike team deployments and increased staffing utilised for extreme weather events in line with the Operational Level of Preparedness (OLOP).

### **3 State Bushfire Plan and State Bushfire Coordinating Committee**

3.1 Developing a new state bushfire plan.

3.2 The role of the state bushfire committee.

3.3 Developing policies and standards to reduce bushfire risk.

The MFS participates in and fully supports the state bushfire committee.

- The MFS is an active participant in the State Bushfire Committee due to the significant urban/rural fire risk in both Metropolitan and Regional South Australia, for which the MFS has legislated responsibility. This committee is an effective tool for planning and strategy relating to bushfires in SA regardless of fire districts. The state bushfire coordinating committee contributes to the development to Bushfire Management Area Plans and the development of a State Bushfire Management Plan. The MFS has observed that the Committee is comprised of a large number of stakeholders, which can impact on the discussion and timely decision making.

<b>Recommendation:</b>
------------------------

The Chair of the State Bushfire Coordinating Committee consider a review of the number of members on the committee.

Benefits to the Community:

- Possible improvement in efficiency and effectiveness of the state bushfire committee.

### **4 State Emergency Management Plan including Extreme Heat Planning**

4.1 Review of emergency planning arrangements.

- Out of scope for MFS, refer SEMC

## **5 State Development and Control planning**

### **5.1 Bush fire zoning and Local government planning.**

- Local Governments provide local planning information relevant to the MFS fire districts for consultation purposes. The MFS is provided opportunity to respond to any issues identified.

### **5.2 Roles in emergency management.**

- The MFS' involvement in emergency management at local government level is through MFS representatives embedded within the Zone Emergency Support Teams (ZEST) established during emergency events. The ZEST supports the resolution of an emergency by providing coordination of local resources.

## **MFS Preparedness**

### **MFS Strategic Plan 2018/2021**

- The vision of the MFS remains a safer and more prosperous South Australia. The MFS continues to place the highest priority on protecting lives, property, our environment and economy. We have established three strategic priorities to ensure we provide the services our community needs
- MFS Strategic Priorities:
  - Community Focus
  - Operational Excellence
  - Preparedness and Public Value.

### **MFS Chief Officers Intent**

- The MFS is firmly committed to the protection of life, property, the environment and economy through the effective and efficient application of resources.
- The MFS acknowledges that at times its resources may be challenged by out of scale events. Furthermore, the MFS recognises that a heightened level of preparedness and response will need to be required.
- Therefore, on these days, operational preparedness and response will take precedence over all other activities and staff will ensure that they are aware of their individual and organisational responsibilities as outlined in the Communications Levels of Preparedness (CLOP) and OLOP.

### **MFS State Coordination Centre Fire (SCCF)**

- Activation and staffing of the SCCF is in line with the SCCF Operations Manual. The manual describes the function, roles and standard operating procedures of the SCCF.
- The aim of the SCCF is: 'To ensure the effective management of risk and normalisation of incidents while maintaining the ongoing capability to respond to other events that affect the South Australian Community.'

- The SCCF may be activated under the following circumstances:
  - A Declared Emergency or Disaster.
  - A request for activation is received from the SEC.
  - Major Event with MFS Involvement or potential involvement.
  - Second Alarm 'A', 'B' and 'C' Risk Structure Fire/Hazardous Substance Incident.
  - Significant Weather Event.
  - Day of Catastrophic Fire Danger.
  - MFS Incident Controller may request the activation of the SCCF.
  - Multiple Incident Procedure activation.
  - An increase in the OLOP.

#### MFS Level of Preparedness

- The purpose of the MFS levels of preparedness (CLOP and OLOP) is to collect and interpret real time and forecasted data to predict surges in emergency activity.
- This enables the MFS to provide structured, precise and timely preparations at all levels, allowing the MFS to deliver an enhanced response to out of scale events.
- The actual or perceived risks triggering a change in the preparedness level may include, but are not limited to the following risks:
  - Predicted and/or Actual Fire Danger Index (FDI).
  - Severe Weather Warnings and/or Flood Warnings.
  - Major Non-Emergency Events.
  - Major Emergency Events.
  - Intelligence indicating the possibility of a Major Terrorism Event.
  - A change in the National Counter Terrorism Alert Level.
  - Multiple greater alarm events.
  - Prolonged Incident Commitment.
  - Unexpectedly high call rates causing call queuing in MFS Communications/CRD Centre.
  - One or more level two or level three incidents within or adjacent to an MFS area (Metropolitan or Regional) or statewide.
- At the commencement of the fire danger season the risk of largescale grass and bushfires increases, as too does the frequency of increased levels of preparedness. Therefore, preparations in anticipation of surges in emergency activity is undertaken.
- The MFS Communications/CRD Officer/s will constantly monitor and interrogate
  - The current and forecast weather conditions.
  - The number of emergency calls being received.
  - Any other influencing factors.
- This data, once interrogated, will be assigned a corresponding colour code listed in the OLOP document that aligns with a description of the current weather conditions, call numbers and other influencing factors. The chart below lists the six (6) Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) nationally recognised Levels of Preparedness that the MFS operates under:
  - Green
  - Yellow
  - Orange
  - Red
  - Crimson
  - Black



Government  
of South Australia



- Each status is followed by a brief explanation of the expected conditions. The Level of Preparedness for each coloured status is then divided into three functional areas:
  - Cat 1: Bushfire Danger weather conditions will include increased temperature, wind speed and low humidity.
  - Cat 2: Severe Weather. Weather conditions will include but are not limited to, damaging winds, rain, hail, and flooding.
  - Cat 3: Other for conditions such as (but not limited to) heightened security issues, terrorism, and critical infrastructure failure.
- The data is entered into a matrix, compared with a predetermined set of parameters, converting the information to intelligence that enables the MFS to adapt resource levels consistent with the current and forecast conditions.

## Key Focus Areas: RESPONSE

### 6 Call Taking and Dispatch

- The MFS operates the 24 hour Call Receipt and Dispatch Centre (CRD) on behalf of MFS, SACFS and the State Emergency Service (SES) for emergencies across the state of South Australia. The CRD Centre is based on the 5th floor of the MFS Adelaide Station.
- Currently Triple Zero (000) emergency calls for the three identified agencies and non-emergency calls (SES 132500) are answered and the South Australian Computer Aided Dispatch (SACAD) system is used to select and dispatch the appropriate resources (fire appliances, SES units).
- There are 58 Full time equivalent staff including technicians, SACAD support and admin support.

#### 6.1 000 and Dispatch of Resources

- Work processes the MFS Communications/CRD Centre follow on elevated staffing days:
  - Create incident log.
  - Transfer Bushfire hotline back to CFS.
  - Update Critical Resource Information Incident Management System Online Network (CRIIMSON) re Level of Preparedness.
  - Ensure adequate MFS Communications/CRD Centre staffing on shift and standby.
  - Prepare to go Multiple Incident Procedure (MIP).
  - Ensure overflow room and training room are ready to go live.
  - Formal shift brief with plan for operators to be in certain positions.
  - Adelaide Fire Liaison Officer in place.

#### 6.2 Preplanning of Strike Teams

- The MFS has three (3) predetermined strike teams from permanent full-time operations resources.
- Additionally, further strike teams can be formed from reserve fleet subject to availability.
- The MFS uses the OLOP to predict surges in emergency activity. Should the requirement of additional MFS strike teams be identified, off duty staff can be either placed on standby or recalled to duty to crew pre-prepared appliances.
  - See Equipment and resources section Nine (9)

#### 6.3 Public information and warnings utilised.

- Public Warnings systems and procedures that were employed by the MFS during the 2019/2020 Bushfire season include:
  - The MFS issue Advice, Watch and Act and Emergency Warning Messages for bushfire incidents in MFS areas in accordance with the national warnings framework for bushfire incidents.
  - The MFS utilises CRIIMSON to issue public warning messages. This is the same system utilised by the SACFS in South Australia.
  - MFS bushfire warnings are automatically emailed to media outlets on subscription, stakeholders, prescribed websites and social media platforms.
  - Live radio programming on local ABC radio stations during significant emergency incidents remain an important conduit for the live broadcast of:
    - Timely public information and warning messages.
    - Community interviews and information transfer.

- Issues experienced include:
  - o Issues with CRIMSON unexpectedly not being available at times on the highest risk days.
  - o MFS and other agency websites occasionally freezing and/or not functioning for short periods on high-risk days.
  - o At the MFS, one on-call staff member is responsible for the following functions:
    - o Issuing public warning messages.
    - o Social media updates.
    - o Media liaison
  - o There is potential for the on-call staff member to become overwhelmed when addressing time critical work.

<b>Recommendation:</b>
------------------------

The MFS consider separating the on call media responsibilities during protracted incidents into three independent functions assigned to separate personnel:

- Issuing public warning messages.
- Social media updates.
- Media liaison

Benefits to the Community:

- Rapid dissemination of consistent information to the community on days of extreme fire danger or impending threat.
- Increased accessibility to current and timely information relevant to the stakeholder.

## 7 **Equipment and Resources**

### 7.1 CFS/MFS appliances, communications and safety systems.

#### 7.1.1 MFS Appliances and Safety Systems.

- The MFS OLOP aims to have at least four (4) operational appliances in reserve during the entirety of the fire danger season. However, the availability of reserve appliances is regularly compromised due to the need to replace aging front line appliances for critical maintenance and repair issues.
- Since 2010 The MFS has purchased 17 new Heavy Urban Interface Pumps. All of these have been fitted with Burn Over Protection Systems (BOPS) and increased water capacity as part of an objective to broaden the safety and capabilities of MFS fire appliances.
- The MFS responded to fires in Cudlee Creek and surrounding districts in unprecedented numbers.
- MFS crews and appliances were directly involved in the successful defense of a significant number of houses, businesses, townships and critical infrastructure.
- The MFS current capability is three (3) strike teams of appliances from metropolitan operational resources. Additionally, any operationally ready appliances that are in reserve can be crewed with off duty staff if required.
- Nine (9) of the MFS appliances that attended the Cudlee Creek fires were sourced from the MFS training and reserve fleet (leaving no reserve appliances available). None of these appliances were fitted with BOPS.
- These appliances were in various states of operational capability due to outstanding repairs, maintenance orders and equipment availability.



- The MFS has two heavy roll on roll off hook trucks on duty that can be loaded quickly with 9000 litre Bulk Water Carrier (BWC) pods. There is another hook truck that can allocated a crew be used for subsequent response with off duty crew called in.
- The MFS has ten (10) small 4WD light trucks in both metropolitan and regional areas used to access fire grounds off road for both firefighting and mop up purposes.
  - These appliances are near end of life.
- The MFS has 4 Medium Urban Pumps located at regional stations.
  - These appliances are also near end of life.
- In summary:
  - A large portion of MFS appliances that were working on the Cudlee Creek fire ground were not fitted with BOPS.
  - Current MFS fleet is aging with many appliances near end of life.
  - A number of MFS strike teams operated without a bulk water carrier.
  - The MFS had no off road capability at these fires.
  - A replacement program for the regional MUP's has not yet been developed.

<b>Recommendation:</b>
------------------------

Consideration be given to seeking additional funding for:

- Further development of a metropolitan and rural urban interface capability with enhancement and modernisation of existing appliances.
- Renewal of the ageing MFS fleet, with additional ongoing funding.
- An additional two (2) heavy roll on roll off hook trucks to operate as bulk water carriers in metropolitan and regional areas.
- Additional BWC pods in metropolitan and regional areas
- Continuation of the BOPS retrofit roll out.
- A replacement program of light 4WD firefighting vehicles.
- A replacement program for regional MUPs.

Benefits to the Community:

- The MFS had immediate access to several hundred firefighting staff but limited and aged appliances to put them on.
- The modernisation of the MFS fleet would significantly reduce recurrent operational expenses.
- Broadening and expanding the capability of the MFS fleet will increase safety, flexibility, and service to the community during normal daily operations and considerably on days of extreme fire activity.
- Additional bulk water carriers will increase safety for firefighters and provide critical water supply to isolated fire grounds, improving the opportunity to protect assets under threat.

#### 7.1.2 CFS/MFS Communications

- SAGRN Radio communications are generally very good. However, there are some inconsistencies of coverage throughout the Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island. Additionally, during a major fire, with a large number of resources attached, the system can reach its capacity resulting in some crews receiving a busy signal when trying to communicate.
- The SACFS use Very High Frequency VHF communications for fire ground (tactical) communication. The MFS does not have VHF capable portable radios.
  - This makes communications between the MFS and CFS challenging, even though they may be working in the same area, and under the same command structure.





### Recommendation:

Consideration be given to seeking additional funding for MFS to update portable radio hardware to hand sets that are both UHF and VHF capable.

#### Benefits to the Community:

- With enhanced communication, all crews on the fireground being able to communicate effectively a safer, more coordinated effort could be achieved, delivering an improved outcome with the same physical human resources.

#### 7.2 Technology such as Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), mapping, line scanning.

- The MFS is constantly investigating technological advances such as AVL for MFS appliances. AVL is instrumental in safety and accountability and can be used in many different ways by various stakeholders during a large scale emergency event.
  - In a large bushfire event AVL provides the ability to notify the nearest appliance to a potential threat to human, communities or critical infrastructure.
  - When a change in fire condition occurs that may create a potential burn-over, AVL enables real time notifications and accountability of firefighting crews and appliances.
- AVL resource tracking via integration with Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) will ensure the dispatch of the closest, fastest and most appropriate resource to an incident.
- The MFS Communications/CRD Centre which serves as state call receipt and dispatch is at the forefront of MFS technology use. The addition and implementation of sector wide AVL would greatly improve service delivery to not only the MFS but the emergency services sector.
- Remote access to CAD via a cloud based system would allow for
  - Increased staffing capacity for surge events for protracted bushfire campaigns.
  - Enhanced redundancy for circumstances that may include, pandemics, decant events and infrastructure failure.

### Recommendation:

- The MFS believes that AVL should be established across the sector as a priority.
- Consider installing a Display Dashboard in MFS Communications/CRD Centre with critical information such as Resource tracking (linked to AVL) and phone queue information.
- Consider transitioning CAD into the cloud.

#### Benefits to the Community:

- With AVL on all appliances linked to CAD, the closest, fastest and most appropriate appliance would be responded to an incident, delivering a more timely, efficient and effective response.

#### 7.3 Aviation resources including Large Aerial Tankers.

- The contract to supply aviation service to fire fighting in SA is managed by the SACFS.
- The MFS can call upon these resources should a fire that requires air attack occur in MFS area.
- The MFS and the community has benefitted from effective and rapid air attack at urban interface grass and bushfires as well as structural and commercial fires.
- The MFS fully supports the SACFS air operations plan.

#### 7.4 Logistics arrangements such as Humanihuts and retardant.

7.4.1 The MFS experienced a range of logistical issues within the 2019-2020 bushfires. Many of these logistical issues are normal operational hurdles that are encountered and a resolved with the best solution available at the time.

- Accommodation and timely catering is a significant logistical issue that often creates challenges.

7.4.2 The MFS does not utilise retardants, this is more appropriately directed towards the hazard leader.

<b>Recommendation:</b>
------------------------

#### Consideration of:

- A ration pack provision be made available in a state based cache that can be rapidly deployed at campaign fire events.
- Development of a national base camp equipment cache that can be moved easily and on demand.

#### Benefits to the Community:

- Sustained safe operations from existing human resources.

## 8 Incident Management and Emergency Coordination

### 8.1 Incident management teams and facilities:

- The MFS participated in Incident Management Teams (IMT) for both Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires. These roles ranged from logistics and planning functions through to Operations and Deputy Incident Control roles.
- Mixed teams integrated well, and performed admirably.
- The MFS are undertaking further AIIMS training to facilitate additional Station Officers and Commanders for functional roles within state based IMT's

### 8.2 Operational alignment of control agency and the State Coordinator.

- Out of scope for MFS (MFS is not the control agency)

### 8.3 Functions and coordination between the:

#### 8.3.1 State Control Centre

- The MFS embeds a liaison Officer within the State Control Center to ensure timely, relevant and accurate information is shared between the control agency and the MFS SCCF.

#### 8.3.2 State Emergency Centre

- The MFS are engaged full time during SEC activations, under the coordination of SAPOL. The MFS understands that all relevant sectors of Government are generally in attendance to identify their capabilities and assist the control agency where required.

#### 8.3.3 SEICCC

- Out of scope for the MFS

#### 8.3.4 SCC

- Out of scope for the MFS

#### 8.4 Reporting to government.

- Out of scope for MFS (MFS is not the control agency)

### 9 Public Information and Warnings

#### 9.1 Alert SA

- Out of scope for the MFS

#### 9.2 Information Management systems to support improved messaging.

- Messages that are delivered by the control agency are amplified and distributed using MFS channels.

#### 9.3 Coordination across Government messaging.

- The MFS refers to the work of the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee (CCOSC) who has previously identified warnings as a national priority. Their publicly available research showed a compelling case for a nationally consistent three level warning framework with consistent application of colours, iconography and warning names.

### 10 Interstate Deployments

#### 10.1 Support to other states.

- The MFS has supplied human resources to interstate and international agencies for major incidents for many years. The current MFS development programs are expanding its capability to address this need.

#### 10.2 Coordination of resource sharing arrangements.

- The MFS deployed to NSW and Queensland via the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC). However, the MFS itself was not involved in the coordination of this response.

### Intra-state Deployments

- In recent years the MFS has been called to assist in an increasing number of emergency incidents in a support capacity outside of MFS fire districts.
- Proving support to other agencies during emergencies is a key role and responsibility of the MFS
- These deployments result in:
  - A measurable benefit to the SA community.
  - A significant increase in MFS public value.
  - A boost to MFS staff morale.
  - Greater working relationships with other agencies.



- The MFS is continually developing its capability in appliances and equipment, incident management, fire ground management, and firefighting operations. This will further broaden abilities to support any agency experiencing an out of scale event.
- The MFS has experienced some industrial challenges during the 2019-2020 bushfire season relating to intra-state deployments. However, the MFS is working with the United Firefighters Union South Australia (UFUSA) to develop a set of agreed guidelines.
- The Kangaroo Island deployment began with the SACFS contacting the MFS on call Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO). Early January 2020, the requests for MFS resources went to the on shift Commanders. At this time the increase in MFS staff being deployed became unmanageable for the on call ACFO to maintain as a single point of contact. The acquisition of firefighting staff was facilitated through the Metropolitan Commanders utilising bulk text messaging system (WHISPIR) to determine staff availability.

#### **Recommendation:**

- The MFS should continue to develop its human and physical capabilities and continue to build on the level of support available to other agencies.
- Industrially agreed guidelines for deployment should be developed a priority.
- The deployment of all personnel, should be managed by one person (or position).
  - The MFS consider embedding a deployment manager within the State Coordination Centre Fire (SCCF) during protracted deployment incidents.

#### **Benefit to the Community:**

- Greater collaboration and support amongst emergency services within South Australia ensures efficient, effective and timely responses to incidents reducing the physical and financial impact.

## Key Focus Areas: RECOVERY

### 11 Rapid Damage Assessment

- The MFS supports those who have had their homes or assets affected the impact of fire or other emergency through rapid damage assessment (RDA).
- The MFS is able to provide RDA service to the control agency and the State Coordinator from qualified firefighting staff following safe systems of work, with fit for purpose vehicles and appropriate PPE.
- The MFS utilises a live and real time tablet based Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA) tool for damage assessments. This program enables a comprehensive assessment of properties, infrastructure, community assets and environment. The data is uploaded via tablet or smart phone to an online database that is immediately live to all users including the IMT and insurance assessors. This information greatly assists insurance claims to be expedited.
- The additional information provided by RDA teams regarding potential hazards is useful information to other responding agencies and the community.

#### 11.1 Aerial surveillance and remote pilot aircraft.

- The MFS has developed an unmanned aerial capability (drones). This technology is used for information gathering and reconnaissance at emergency incidents and during fire investigation.
- The MFS capability has not yet been deployed at bush or grass fire, however it remains available.

#### 11.2 Messaging of damage impact.

- MFS RDA teams using information technology mentioned above, can supply timely and relevant information through the control agency to relevant stakeholders on demand.

<b>Recommendation:</b>
------------------------

- The MFS, SAPOL and SACFS should collaborate and further develop a standard safe and consistent rapid damage assessment functional response to large scale events.

#### Benefit to the Community:

- Safer emergency operations
- Considerably greater cognisance to incident management teams, media, SAPOL, insurance organisations, and the SA Community as to the scale of the incident
- Better prepared, and more tailored recovery operations
- Ability to expedite insurance claims.



## 12 Transitional Arrangements to Recovery

- 12.1 Australian Defence Force (ADF) Support.
- The MFS worked alongside the ADF during the Kangaroo Island complex fires.
  - The organisation, coordination and communication with ADF is outside of MFS scope.
  - A broader understanding of the ADF capabilities would enable emergency services to request their support in a timelier manner.
- 12.2 Commonwealth Assistance.
- The MFS has identified that accommodation and catering facilities are often an ongoing problem at large scale emergency events, particularly in rural and remote areas. Development of multiple national caches of equipment that could be delivered and commissioned in a timely manner would greatly assist IMT's and offer ground crews significantly enhanced conditions for rest and respite.

### **Recommendation:**

#### Consideration of:

- Development of a national base camp equipment cache that can be moved easily and on demand.

#### Benefits to the Community:

- A national cache that would provide an improved standard of rapid deployment accommodation in a cost effective manner.
- More hospitable living conditions will likely lead to increased firefighter safety, engagement and sustained operations from existing human resources.

- 12.3 Leadership and Coordination.
- AIIMS is a nationally recognised system of incident management for the nation's fire and emergency service agencies. Organisational principles and structure are used to manage fires and other emergencies (e.g. floods, storms, cyclones etc.).
  - The use of AIIMS has greatly assisted with the management of emergencies. However, coordination has been hindered when a consistent incident management system is not utilised.

### **Recommendation:**

- Continuation of standardised incident management training.
- Continuation of inter-agency training and exercising, enabling a greater understanding of each agencies capabilities.

#### Benefits to the Community:

- Standardised incident management training enhances integration of agencies delivering a cohesive approach to incident management.

## References:

- *South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Act (2005)*
- *South Australian Emergency Management Act (2004)*
- The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, 2017 Update
- The Public Safety training package PUA FIR303b Suppress
- The Public Safety training package PUA FIR204b Respond
- The MFS Staff Development Framework (Metropolitan and Regional)
- The MFS Operational Level of Preparedness
- The MFS Communications Level of Preparedness Matrix
- The Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System
- The MFS Doctrine
- The MFS Strategic Plan
- The State Emergency Management Plan
- The Chief Officers Intent

If calling please ask for:  
Mr Fletcher

Telephone:  
8204 3765

Reference: A1324023



Mr M Keilty AO APM  
SAFECOM  
South Australian 2019 - 2020 Bushfire Review  
GPO Box 2706  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

99 Wakefield Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO BOX 98  
Adelaide SA 5001

Tel +61 8 8204 3600  
Fax +61 8 8204 3838

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

ABN 26 897 550 904

~~MICK~~  
Dear Mr Keilty

#### **MFS SUBMISSION TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN 2019 – 2020 BUSHFIRE REVIEW**

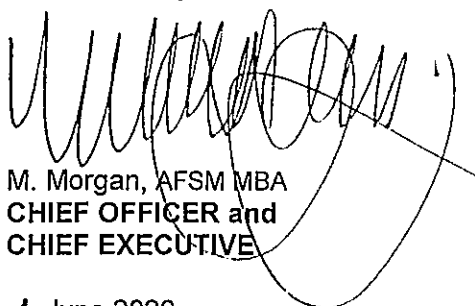
Thank you for the opportunity enabling South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) personnel to actively contribute to the Independent Review of the South Australian 2019 – 2020 Bushfire Season.

South Australia, like much of Australia, experienced fires of unprecedented severity during the 2019 - 2020 bushfire season. The impact of the bushfires on South Australia, a small state heavily dependent on tourism, was substantial. Three individuals lost their lives, homes, businesses and properties were destroyed and national parks and reserves burnt out.

As with any devastating natural disaster, there is an opportunity to reflect on the State's collective experience and the lessons that could be learnt. The MFS acknowledges the importance of this and is working closely with relevant stakeholders and agencies.

Please find enclosed the MFS submission for your review and consideration.

Yours faithfully



M. Morgan, AFSM MBA  
CHIEF OFFICER and  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 June 2020



Government  
of South Australia



**Dixon, Rachel (SAFECOM)**

---

**From:** SAFECOM Bushfire Review Submissions  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 23 June 2020 5:19 PM  
**To:** Firth, Lisa (SAMFS)  
**Subject:** Independent Review into SA's 2019/20 Bushfire Season

Dear Lisa

Mr Mick Keelty AO and the SA Bushfire Review Team would like to thank you again for your time in providing your submission.

This email is to advise you that all submissions have been reviewed and Mr Keelty and the Review Team have completed their report of findings and recommendations.

The final report will be delivered to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services on **30 June 2020** and an announcement will be made on the public release of the report.

Once released, a copy of the final report will be available online via the SAFECOM and CFS website.

Unfortunately we are unable to send copies to individuals.

Kind regards

**SA Bushfire Review Project Team**



**Government of  
South Australia**

*The information in this e-mail may be confidential and/or legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful.*