

Audit and Quality Assurance Framework for Bushfire Management



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1 Background

1.1 Context

The risk of bushfire exists across numerous land tenures, both public and private, and the management of this risk is a shared responsibility between land management and fire agencies and the community.

The risk of bushfires cannot be entirely eliminated, but their impacts can be reduced by the performance of effective planning and bushfire management. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP or “the Department”) is responsible for the development of strategies and management of the following five bushfire management related activities ‘PPFRR’ to effectively manage these risks:

1. Prevention
2. Preparedness
3. Fuel Management (including planned burning)
4. Response
5. Recovery

The unpredictability of bushfires require robust processes across PPFRR, underpinned by two supporting activities: risk-based bushfire management and planning; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting, to effectively achieve the Department’s primary objectives for bushfire management on public land:

- to minimise the impact of major bushfires on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industries, the economy and the environment; and
- to maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products.

An Audit and Quality Assurance Framework is therefore a necessary tool that serves as an **overarching** guideline to promote a structured and consistent means of attaining quality assurance across the PPFRR bushfire management activities with a focus on continuous improvement.

The Audit and Quality Assurance Framework, referred to in this document as ‘the Framework’, is underpinned by a set of principles (outlined in section 1.4) which governs each of the core elements, around which the Audit and Quality Assurance Framework is structured, including:

- risk;
- governance;
- continuous improvement;
- audit;
- people and capabilities;
- process, tools and systems; and,
- community and stakeholder management.

1.2 Framework purpose

The Framework serves as the overarching quality principles and guidelines, which the Department’s Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land 2012, Bushfire Management Audit Program and additional standards, directions, guidelines, policies and procedures related to bushfire management align to, as outlined in Figure One below.

This Framework has been designed to facilitate the maintenance of standards, continuous improvement and the management of risks at all levels and across all areas relating to bushfire management.

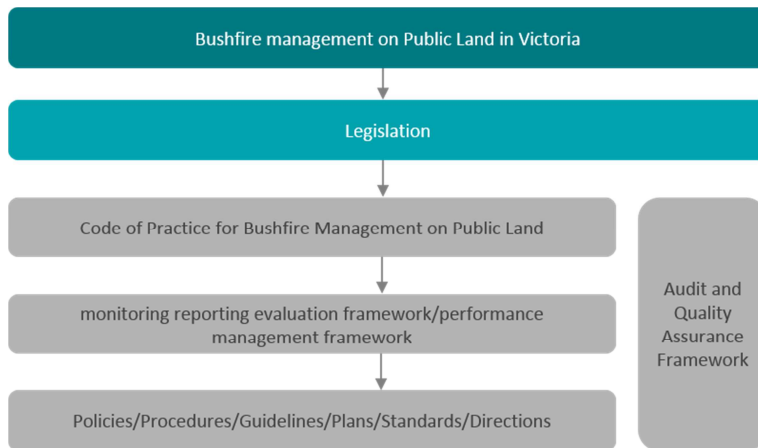


Figure One: Audit and Quality Assurance Framework

1.3 Scope of the Framework

This Framework outlines the key principles and guidelines across seven key elements, designed to promote a structured and consistent means of attaining quality assurance across the PPFRR bushfire management activities. The document has been structured to contain a chapter on each of the seven elements outlined in figure two below.

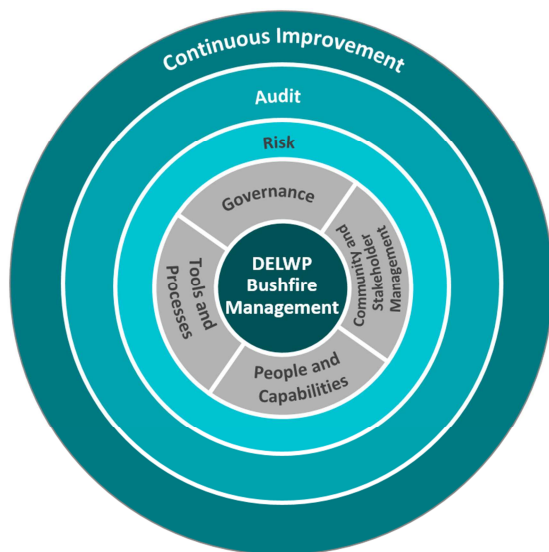


Figure Two: Seven Elements of Audit and Quality Assurance Framework

1.4 Framework principles

Principles of the Framework represent the fundamental values and norms that have been incorporated and drive the seven elements of Audit and Quality Assurance. These principles are integral to the success of sustaining a quality assurance culture and driving desired outcomes.

The following principles underpin the Framework:

1. **Collaboration and coordination** – Shared understanding of how strategies and objectives will be achieved within the Department, other agencies and the community. Effective and meaningful communication amongst all stakeholders to better manage bushfire on public land.
2. **Continuous improvement** – Analyse and evaluate outputs and incorporate learnings into future processes to ensure that the organisation is more efficient and effective in achieving quality outcomes.
3. **Outcomes focused** - Focus on the delivery of effective and consistent methods of bushfire management techniques that benefit the human life, communities, community infrastructure, industries, the economy and the environment, rather than simply a set of internal processes, documentation requirements and targets.
4. **Risk approach** – Risks will be identified, assessed, prioritised and managed to ensure that the uncertainty of the organisation meeting its objectives will be evaded, reduced, removed or altered to align with the organisations risk appetite. The prioritisation of bushfire management activities will be based on the collection and analysis of data.
5. **Leadership and behaviors** – Leaders at all levels who create a culture of unity, encouragement and recognition that empower the engagement of people to achieve the Department’s objectives.
6. **Transparency** - Openness and disclosure of bushfire management activities accompanied by the availability of all relevant information.
7. **Accountability** – A clear organisational structure that enables an individual or an area within the Department to account for bushfire management activities and demonstrate they are being managed to the government and the community.
8. **Compliance focused**– A focus on meeting regulatory obligations, industry codes, organisational standards, and ethics and community expectations in all bushfire management activities to ensure requirements are being met.
9. **Evidence based decision making**– Decisions made based on the analysis and evaluation of data and information to produce consistent and desired results.
10. **Community focused** – Protection of human life (primary), environment and the community to drive all bushfire management activities.
11. **Capability and capacity** – Staff have the ability to develop competence to effectively achieve bushfire management objectives and have the capability to perform.

1.5 Framework application

This framework applies to all bushfire management activities performed by the Department across its PPFRR activities and its two key support activities: risk based bushfire management and planning, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

1.6 Framework Definitions

The following describes key terms and their application within the context of this Framework:

Assurance – Assurance is an expression or statement designed to increase the confidence of government, management and the community in the ability of the emergency management system to plan for, respond to and recover from emergencies. Assurance encompasses the identification and management of risks that may hinder the achievement of the outcomes and objectives of the emergency management system.

Audits – Internal audits performed by outsourced providers which typically seek to assess whether inputs, processes and outputs have been delivered in accordance with legislation, established rules, regulations, procedures, or standards. They can be used to inform decisions and remedial actions and provide accountability.

Reviews – Operational audits performed by the Department which typically seek to assess whether inputs, processes and outputs have been delivered in accordance with legislation, established rules, regulations, procedures, or standards. They can be used to inform decisions and remedial actions and provide accountability.



2 Risk

2.1 Background

Bushfire risk cannot be fully eliminated. Decisions about bushfire management therefore need to be transparent and based on risk analysis. Integrated risk analysis requires the Department to be part of a multi-tenure, multi-agency bushfire management approach.

Active risk management will provide confidence that the Department will deliver on its corporate bushfire management objectives, and enables the Secretary to meet the Department’s legislative and risk management obligations.

The section is consistent with the Australian/New Zealand Standard for risk management ISO 31000 and should be read in conjunction with the Department’s Risk Management Guidelines (version 1.0), which outlines the Department’s risk management framework, including guidance on:

- embedding risk management into corporate, business and project planning activities
- capturing and describing risk information
- analysing and evaluating risks
- developing, evaluating and implementing risk treatment plans
- monitoring, reviewing and reporting on risks and risk treatment plans
- finding the necessary tools and resources for support with the Department’s risk management processes
- compliance with the VGRMF, including the process for managing inter-agency and state significant risks.

Figure Three has been extracted from the Risk Management Guidelines (version 1.0) and is a pictorial representation of the relationship between the ISO 31000 principles for managing risk, the Department’s risk management framework and the risk management process as defined by the ISO 31000 Standard.

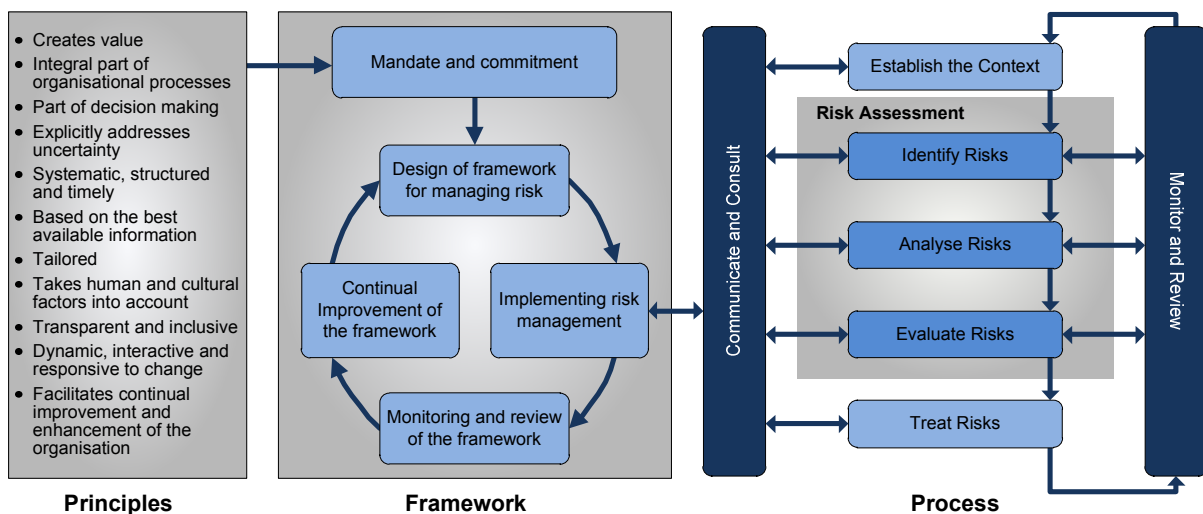


Figure Three: Risk management structure

2.2 Purpose and objectives

Delivery of bushfire management activities using an approach with a focus on risk will:

- consider the impact of bushfires and bushfire management strategies and actions on key objectives;
- enable prevention, preparedness, fuel management, response and recovery activities and actions to be mandated in line with the Department's acceptable levels of risk; and
- develop and embed a risk based culture.

2.3 Risk approach

The Department will adopt a tenure-blind approach to the management of bushfire risk, including the planning of burns (approach based on risk when performing planned burns, regardless of private/public land).

Planning, operational and strategic decision making across each activity related to bushfire management will include consideration and the constant re-evaluation of risks and the application of risk management processes as appropriate. This will allow the Department to prioritise and validate key activities and decision making across the PPFRR activities.

This process is dependent on the design and use of:

- appropriate governance structures to support the approval key risk based decision making (section 2.4)
- defined accountability for effectively implementing risk based processes (section 2.5)
- evidence based decision making derived from the best available data (section 2.6)
- systematic, structured and consistent risk based processes across the state, regional and district levels (section 2.7)
- adequate tools, systems and processes to drive transparent and consistent risk based decisions (section 2.8)
- active engagement with the community and stakeholders to facilitate the process (section 2.9)

2.4 Governance structure

Appropriate governance structures will be implemented to support the approval and peer review process surrounding key risk based decisions, to achieve desired outcomes (refer to section 3 - Governance).

2.5 Accountability

Individuals with accountability for risk management activities within the PPFRR bushfire management activities will be identified. These individuals will be appropriately skilled, have adequate resources to check and improve controls, monitor risks, and the ability to communicate effectively with all stakeholders.

Individuals will accept accountability for their risks and develop comprehensive controls and treatment strategies.

2.6 Evidence based decision making

Risk-based decisions will be appropriately documented/recorded and prioritised based on the analysis and evaluation of the best available, accurate and reliable data and information tailored to the situation. Limitations on information will be noted.

Process and outputs which are risk based will be clear and comprehensible, able to be understood, reviewed and challenged by operational practitioners, and senior managers without fire backgrounds.

2.7 Systematic and structured

Risk management processes will be systematic, structured and consistent across the state, regional and district levels to ensure efficiency, consistency and the reliability of results in achieving overall bushfire management objectives.

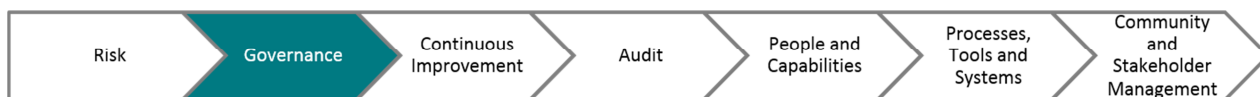
2.8 Tools, systems and processes

Adequate tools, systems and processes will be implemented to drive transparent, meaningful and consistent risk based decisions, actions and outcomes across each stage of the PPFRR bushfire management activities.

Further, they will be sufficient to address uncertainty and responsive to change (refer to section 7 - Processes, tools and systems).

2.9 Engagement

Active communication and consulting with the community and stakeholders, as well as land and fire agencies will take place to identify, analyse and monitor risk and implement solutions throughout the risk management process (refer to section 8 – Community and stakeholder management).



3 Governance

3.1 Background

Successful bushfire risk mitigation and management relies on consistency of purpose as well as clarity of command, control and responsibility for all bushfire management actions; this is facilitated through effective governance at all levels.

The premise is that governance at the Department:

- is broader than just committees; it extends throughout the Department;
- it is not just about regulation and legislation, it is about doing what is right for the community;
- includes elements of internal controls, ethics, various risk functions, policies and procedures, audit; and
- requires transparency of disclosure, effective communication, and proper measurement and accountability.

3.2 Purpose and objectives

Appropriate governance structures and arrangements will allow the Department to facilitate the direction and control of bushfire management in order to:

- support a clear and unified understanding of objectives and strategic directions;
- support strong and effective leadership whilst upholding and exemplifying the Department's values;
- promote state, district and region wide commitment and consistency;
- maintain oversight and accountability; and
- promote stakeholder confidence in the Department's ability to deliver its obligations.

3.4 Governance structure, roles and responsibilities

A documented and defined organisational structure is required to support how roles and responsibilities are assigned, directed, controlled and coordinated at a state, district and regional level across the PPFR bushfire management activities.

This includes the separation and clarification of roles and responsibilities at both operational and strategic levels, and where inter-agency coordination is required.

Further, it needs to be structured so as to provide the following:

- clarity surrounding accountability;
- adequate segregation of duties;
- clarity and efficiency in the chain of command;
- adequate oversight through peer reviews; and
- overall quality control.

3.5 Governance forums

Governance forums, e.g., committees/meetings will be established to provide a mechanism for supporting decision-making in relation to bushfire management, operating consistently to achieve individually defined purposes.

Key to this is the establishment of governance forums which provide formal and defined opportunities to:

- share knowledge and information;
- record risks and issues;
- authorise decisions; and
- escalate matters to other governance forums or delegates.

Details of the forum outlining: purpose, membership, key documents, frequency of meetings and standard agenda items will be documented.

3.6 Leadership, ethics and culture

Management within the Department will demonstrate an active commitment to behaviours including accountability, transparency, integrity and leadership.

Management will establish a unity of purpose and direction, and create conditions in which staff is engaged in achieving the Department's quality objectives; as well as creating a culture of trust and integrity.

3.7 Policies, processes and procedures

Easily accessible, clear and concise up to date guidance documentation is available on the Department's intranet (primary location) and supporting emergency management applications, such as fireweb to enable the achievement of organisational outcomes and objectives in a transparent, consistent, unified manner (refer to section 7 – Processes, tools and systems)

3.8 Risk and Audit committee

The Department's Risk and Audit Committee will oversee the Audit Function (comprised of internal audits performed by outsourced providers and reviews performed by the Audit and Performance Team, Forest, Fire and Regions Group (refer to section 5 - Audit) and provide a means for implementing relevant control systems, incorporating sound risk management plans. The Audit function will examine and report on control structures and risk exposures and on the Department's risk management efforts, reporting directly the Risk and Audit Committee.



4 Continuous improvement

4.1 Background

Identification, monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities that lead to improving the bushfire management program and achieving desired outcomes is a continuous cycle of participation rather than a single event.

The principle of continuous improvement is captured through each of the other six key elements of risk, governance, audit, people and capabilities, and stakeholder and community management outlined in this Framework. However, the overarching mechanism for continuous improvement is through continual learning.

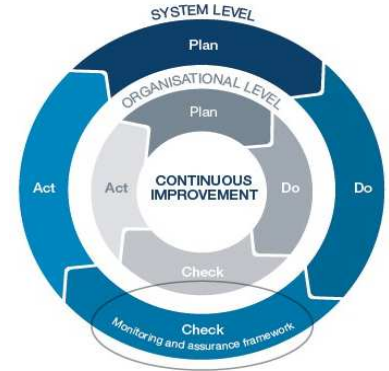


Figure Four: Continuous Improvement Lifecycle (IGEM Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management)

4.2 Purpose and objectives

Continuous improvement across the PPFRR bushfire management activities and two supporting activities: planning and monitoring, evaluation and reporting will facilitate improved effectiveness and outcomes related to the Department’s two key bushfire management objectives as outlined in the Code of Practice:

- to minimise the impact of major bushfires on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industries, the economy and the environment; and
- to maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage, and forest products.

4.3 Lessons management lifecycle

A lesson learnt management lifecycle will be implemented across the PPFRR bushfire management activities, which will be:

- integrated;
- evidence based;
- continuous;
- consistent;
- transparent; and
- holistic.

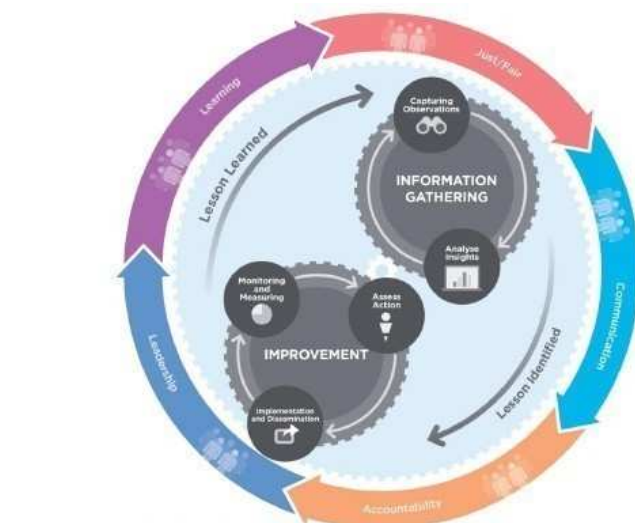


Figure Five: Lessons management lifecycle (EM Learn Framework)

In order to implement an effective lessons management lifecycle, the following cultural characteristics will be supported and encouraged by the Department:

- just/fair - A just/fair culture requires a balance between no-blame and accountability; the Department accepts the fact that people may make mistakes but those that participate in reckless behaviour will be held accountable.
- leadership - Leadership needs to promote, enforce and prioritise lessons management throughout the Department. It will require accountability, ownership, but most importantly, behaviours modelled, discussed and promoted at senior management level.
- accountability - Accountability needs to include the ability for actions to be allocated to individuals and/or teams and for these actions to have enough influence that they are given priority for action/completion.
- communication - Transparent communication will occur throughout the whole bushfire management process. Clear communication will also assist with managing expectations.
- learning focused - Learning focused involves being actively involved in continuous improvement, and ensuring that the lessons management life cycle is successfully utilised and completed within the Department.

4.3.1 Learning and improving activities

The Department will set its goals and measures over key strategic and operational processes within the bushfire management PPFRR activities ('Plan'), and then 'Checks' its processes as required through its Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation 'MER' Framework and relevant operational performance management frameworks.

The Department will then review and 'Act', to modify its systems, processes, resources and capability/skills to ensure continuous improvement.

Performance management frameworks will consist of procedures, work instructions and templates to provide detailed guidance to enable consistent and effective processes at a district and regional level.

4.3.2 Lesson sharing platform

Outputs and learnings identified from activities performed through the relevant monitoring and operational performance frameworks and other forms of assurance activities, e.g., the Bushfire Management Audit Program (refer to section 5 - Audit), debriefs, investigations, etc. should be recorded, addressed and feed back into future planning.

A platform to support lessons management will be implemented. This will support the education of staff, provide a single point for lessons management information, and allow personnel at all levels to contribute to the capture, analysis and implementation of lessons.

4.3.3 Capabilities

Staff with appropriate capabilities will be used to effect the implementation of the relevant monitoring and operational performance frameworks. Regional monitoring and performance plans will identify specific capabilities required for effective implementation and performance and may include:

- data collection and curation
- Geographic Information System 'GIS' and spatial analysis
- analytical and evaluation skills
- knowledge translation.

The regional monitoring and performance plans will identify whether the capability requirements will be met using existing internal skill sets, investing in training to up-skill internal staff or by seeking external support to deliver specific components.

4.3.4 Data management

Effective data management is essential for supporting and delivering the evaluation and reporting requirements of the monitoring and operational performance frameworks. Guidance will therefore exist to support the collection, handling and usage of data.

4.3.5 Governance structure

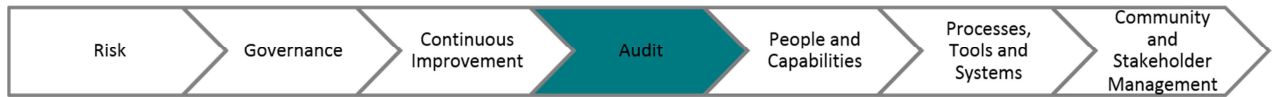
A clear governance structure will be defined to support the monitoring and operational performance frameworks, including accountability and responsibility for quality and learning processes and activities performed to achieve objectives. Roles and responsibilities of all personnel will be identified and communicated.

4.3.6 Training

Training and education will build confidence and engagement in the process. Clear expectations, roles and responsibilities will be developed and staff adequately trained and educated on tools, techniques and concepts of the monitoring and performance framework.

4.3.7 Peer reviews

Evaluation of operational activities and performance outcomes by peers will be completed to enable constructive feedback and the sharing of experience, skills and knowledge.



5 Audit

5.1 Background

Audit helps an organisation achieve its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control, compliance and governance processes.

Audit is one of a number of internal assurance activities that can operate in a coordinated and complementary manner to benefit the Department. It is designed to provide confidence and assurance to Executives and the Secretary that management is meeting its responsibilities and the Department is achieving its two key bushfire management objectives.

Further, audit is a key driver of continuous improvement through the assessment and resulting enhancement of process efficiency and effectiveness.

Audit of the PPFRR bushfire management activities within the Department is split into two discrete components:

1. **Operational quality and assurance reviews ('reviews')** – operational audits conducted by a person/or team within the Forest, Fire and Regions Group, independent to the process being examined. These reviews have both a compliance and performance improvement focus covering key risks and processes within each stage of the bushfire management PPFRR activities.

Operational quality and assurance reviews for the purpose of this Framework are defined as operational audits which typically seek to assess whether inputs, processes and outputs have been delivered in accordance with legislation, established rules, regulations, procedures, or standards. They can be used to inform decisions and remedial actions and provide accountability.

These reviews exclude other assurance activities such as debriefs, after action reviews, real time performance monitoring, planned burn breach analysis, fire investigations etc.

2. **Internal audits conducted by outsourced providers ('audits')** – internal audits coordinated by Corporate Internal Audit and conducted by outsourced providers. Audits are strategically focused in addition to having a compliance and performance improvement orientation based on coverage and outcomes of the operational quality and assurance reviews.

The Bushfire Management Audit Program is therefore comprised of the **Internal Audit Plan**¹ and the **Operational Quality and Assurance Review Plan**, as outlined in Figure Six, which together will provide comfort to the Executives, Secretary and the Risk and Audit Committee, that there is sufficient level of independent oversight to maintain standards, facilitate continuous improvement and the



Figure Six: Bushfire Management Audit Program

¹The Internal Audit Plan will be incorporated into, and form part of the Department's c

management of risks at all levels.

This section should be read in conjunction with the Department's *Risk Management Guidelines, Risk and Control Charter* and the Department's *Internal Audit Charter*.

5.2 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the Bushfire Management Audit Program ('Audit Program') within the Department covering each stage of the five PPFRR bushfire management activities is to provide an independent and objective review and advisory service to:

- provide assurance to the Secretary, Executives and the Risk and Audit Committee that its operational controls designed to manage key risks and achieve its bushfire management objectives are operating in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner; and
- assist management in continuously improving the Department's bushfire management performance outcomes.

5.3 Bushfire Management Audit Program development

The Audit Program will be developed and executed annually, following the audit lifecycle outlined in Figure Seven below to ensure coverage of high risk areas and achieve the right focus.



Figure Seven: Audit Lifecycle

5.3.1 Risk assessment and assurance mapping

Focus and activities of the Audit Program, at both an operational and strategic level will be aligned to the Department's risks to achieving its strategic bushfire management goals and objectives.

Key strategic, operational and compliance risks within the PPFRR bushfire management activities are to be identified and incorporated within the Department's Risk Register annually. Key risks within the Risk Register will be directly linked to strategic goals, and managed in accordance with the Department's risk appetite. All key risks will be considered as part of the planning process.

Risks are identified based on experience and discussions with regional management and executives within the Department, as well as consideration of the Department's Bushfire Management Operational Risk Reports, strategic objectives, organisational structure and recent developments related to bushfire management.

5.3.2 Audit Program project selection and scoping

A risk based methodology will be used to identify and target high risk areas for audit/review coverage by the Audit Program to ensure the right focus is achieved. Development of the Audit Program therefore needs to consider:

Operational Quality and Assurance Review Plan

- coverage of key risks and processes within each stage of the PPFRR bushfire management activities;
- coverage of regions and districts;
- prior reviews and review outcomes;
- regional priorities; and
- budget constraints.

Internal Audit Plan

- adequacy of coverage of the Operational Quality and Assurance Review Plan;
- outcomes of operational quality and assurance reviews;
- key risks and processes across the PPFRR bushfire management activities;
- regional priorities;
- strategic goals, objectives and direction;
- budget constraints; and
- investigation outcomes, recommendations and commitments.

Internal audits/reviews are not necessarily always the only or most appropriate assurance mechanism to monitor key risks or controls. It is anticipated that other providers such as VAGO, IGEM, or other external inquiries will examine aspects of the Department's bushfire management process. Where possible, these activities will be identified as part of risk assessment and assurance mapping processes and will influence development of the Audit Program.

5.3.3 Audit program orientation

The Bushfire Management Audit Program is to include audits and reviews with the following orientation:

- compliance with legislative requirements, current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines;
- the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls;
- performance improvement through examining the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's bushfire management systems and processes;
- strategically focused, addressing key issues that are critical to the success of bushfire management.

5.4 Audit program roles and responsibilities

5.4.1 Independence and objectivity

Independence is essential to the effectiveness of the audit and review functions.

Audit/Auditors² will have no direct authority or responsibility for the development or implementation of bushfire management procedures or systems they review. This independence, best described as 'operational independence', assists in ensuring that an auditor acts in an objective, impartial manner free from any conflict of interest, inherent bias or undue external influence.

Objectivity is a required attitude for the delivery of audit/review. It allows auditors to judge matters on the evidence without the influence of personal considerations. Auditors will not have been previously responsible for a function within the PPFRR bushfire management activities subject to review or have close personal relationships with individuals whose work is under review.

5.4.2 Capability and ethics

Access to sufficient staff and contractors, with the necessary competence, capabilities, skills, and experience in bushfire management, as well as ethical and personal attributes to achieve audit/review outcomes, is required.

5.4.3 Authority and confidentiality

Audits and reviews will be undertaken under the authority of the Risk and Audit Committee and the Secretary.

Subject to compliance with the Department's security policies, auditors are authorised to have full, free and unrestricted access to all functions, premises, assets, personnel, records, and other documentation and information considered necessary to enable the audit and review teams to meet its responsibilities.

5.4.4 Accountability and Oversight

Corporate Internal Audit and the Audit and Performance Team - Forest, Fire and Regions Group will maintain accountability and oversight of all audit and review activity respectively, outcomes and key trends in compliance and/or control weaknesses, for bushfire management.

5.4.5 Relationship with key stakeholders

Auditors will establish and maintain an effective working relationship with key stakeholders by delivering high-quality, timely advice and audit/review reports that are seen to be contributing directly to assisting the Department to meet its bushfire management responsibilities.

The key stakeholders include:

- Risk and Audit Committee;
- Senior management;
- VAGO; and
- Other agencies such as IGEM, EMV, Parks Victoria

² For the purpose of this section, audit/auditors are considered a person or team undertaking an internal audit or quality and assurance review.

5.5 Audit Program execution

5.5.1 Professional standards

Audit activities will be conducted in accordance with the Department's procedural guidelines, which are aligned to the Institute of Internal Auditors *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards - 2013)*, and the Institute of Internal Auditors Definition of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics.

In the conduct of audit/review work, auditors will exercise due professional care in performing their duties and conduct work in a manner consistent with the Department's values.

5.5.2 Audit/review documentation

Audits/reviews will be documented in a way that is sufficient to enable an experienced auditor, with no prior knowledge of the audit/review, to understand the audit/review procedures and conclusions reached in its entirety.

5.5.3 Reducing burden

Audit/review activities should be conducted in the most efficient way possible taking into account the need to not create unnecessary burden for the Department and area being audited/reviewed.

Where possible, required information to support assurance activities should be acquired through existing Department mechanisms and information gathered through any existing monitoring or review process.

5.5.4 On site audit/review

Audits/reviews will be performed on-site, where physical inspection is required, minimizing desktop reviews where possible.

5.6 Audit program outcomes

5.6.1 Transparent, timely and collaborative reporting

A collaborative and transparent approach to developing clear audit/review actions and implementation dates is essential.

A standardised format for audit/review reporting designed to be clear and outcomes focused, incorporating the root cause analysis to present audit findings will be utilised.

Reporting will deliver the following as a minimum:

- priority ratings for individual issues, based on the Department's Risk Matrix
- findings which specifically draw upon the bushfire management related implications of the issue, in order to tailor the corrective action to be taken
- pragmatic recommendations that are co-developed with management to provide clear and practice actions and targets.

All reports will also be discussed with Executive Management prior to finalisation.

5.6.2 Recommendation implementation

Agreed audit and review outcomes will be prioritized and implemented based on analysis, with decisions recorded to provide a future rationale for implementation action taken. Actions decided for implementation need to be incorporated into future business planning.

5.7 Audit program follow-up

5.7.1 Recommendation follow-up

Validation that outcomes from completed audits/reviews have been implemented by management, reducing the overall risk to the area will be performed. It is an effective process in encouraging management to address recommendations in an appropriate and timely manner, and identifies where recommendations have not been appropriately addressed.



6 People and capabilities

6.1 Background

Competent, empowered and engaged people at all levels throughout the Department are essential to enhance its capability to create and deliver efficient and effective bushfire management practices.

The Department therefore needs to:

- determine the necessary competence for personnel performing tasks which impact bushfire management;
- where applicable, provide training or take other actions to achieve the necessary competence;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken;
- ensure that its personnel are engaged and aware of the relevance and importance of their activities and how they contribute to the achievement of the quality objectives;
- maintain appropriate records of education, training, skills and experience.

6.2 Purpose and objectives

Develop and maintain a workforce that:

- demonstrates appropriate knowledge, capability, experience and skills necessary to adequately perform bushfire management related tasks; and
- is engaged and motivated to achieve the key bushfire management objectives.

6.3 Workforce planning

Short and long-term capability requirements based on operational continuity, capability, resource and readiness requirements will be identified. In addition, learning and development strategies and plans will be developed that are aligned to desired outcomes as identified in key planning documents including corporate and business plans, budgets, region unit plans and workforce/people management strategies.

Capability requirements will cover bushfire management related subject matter, skills and knowledge and roles as well as broader capabilities in management and leadership.

Workforce requirements will be proactively addressed through performance management, learning and development plans and succession planning.

6.4 Staff with the right skills, experience and continuity

Recruitment and allocation of individuals to roles where they have the appropriate knowledge and experience commensurate with the nature and complexity of the activity is essential:

- staff with appropriate levels of seniority and experience will be involved in determining resourcing requirements for different planning and operational phases of bushfire management;
- role continuity will be maintained where possible;
- staff will be exposed to relevant bushfire scenarios through training simulations or actual events; where necessary, partner agencies will be consulted to build the number of highly skilled personnel, through training facilitation or staff secondments to achieve the necessary competence.

6.5 Performance goals and evaluation

Behaviours, requirements and outcomes that need to be met to be successful in a role will be clearly defined in job descriptions and communicated to staff to promote understanding of the importance of their individual contribution.

Self-evaluation of individual performance against personal objectives will be employed to empower people to determine constraints in achieving their personal objectives.

Performance outcomes will be periodically assessed using standardised and objective measures with results clearly conveyed to staff; feedback will be provided in a timely manner which is specific, measurable and actionable.

6.6 Workforce engagement

6.6.1 Recognition and rewards

Individual contributions, learning and improvement will be recognised and rewarded through both formal and informal performance feedback and incentive mechanisms.

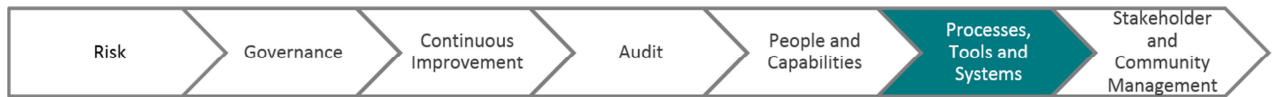
6.6.2 Culture of shared learnings

Teamwork, collaboration and continuous improvement will be promoted through the sharing of knowledge and experience at all levels of the Department using tools such as open discussion at forums, regular team/region meetings and mentoring. This will ensure that operational best practice is applied statewide across regions, districts and other fire and emergency management agencies.

6.6.3 Creating a learning culture

A strong culture of commitment and learning will be established through the following mechanisms:

- investing appropriate resources in learning and development of all staff;
- encouraging both on and off-the-job development activities; and
- providing regular timely informal feedback to staff, as well as formal when required through the Department's performance management system.



7 Processes, tools and systems

7.1 Background

The Department needs to be governed and supported by appropriate processes, tools and systems in order to achieve its two primary objectives of bushfire management on public land in an effective and efficient manner that meets legislative requirements.

7.2 Purpose and objectives

Availability and use of appropriate tools, systems and processes across the PPFR bushfire management activities to facilitate:

- improved, consistent and predictable results;
- integration and alignment of processes that will best achieve the desired results and legislative adherence;
- confidence to key stakeholders as to the consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of bushfire management practices; and
- continuous improvement through measurement and evaluation.

7.3 Systems and tools

Adequate consideration needs to be given to the appropriateness of processes, systems and tools required to effectively plan and manage fire on public land.

Systems and tools will be:

- known and understood organisation wide
- fit for purpose
- referenced in procedural documents
- purpose built
- drive transparent, meaningful and consistent risk based decisions, actions and outcomes
- updated periodically
- easy to use.

7.4 Policy and procedure management

Policies and procedures supporting the systems and tools are to be:

- used to provide clear direction, rules and triggers
- clear in communicating to the user the policy and procedure objective
- easy to understand and follow.

Further, they should be:

- appropriately approved
- owned by a responsible party
- communicated and made available to the staff, in particular newly approved and/or revised documents
- stored on the Department's intranet (primary location) and supporting emergency management applications, such as fireweb
- reviewed annually at a minimum or as need arises
- subject to version control and archived in line with requirements
- monitored and audited periodically, to ensure that they have been implemented effectively, are fit for purpose and are being complied with.

Frameworks or other guidance documents that make reference to relevant procedural documents will state in an appendix or similar, the title and reference of the procedural and overarching policy document.

7.5 Records management

The Department will comply with records management guidelines within Victorian Government agencies and the Department's Records Management Policy. This includes, standards, specifications, guidelines and factsheets on the seven essential recordkeeping activities of create, capture, control, storage, maintenance, security, privacy and disposal and transfer.



8 Community and stakeholder management

8.1 Background

Community and stakeholder engagement is critical to the Department’s successful delivery of bushfire management activities. Bushfire mitigation and management is a shared responsibility between the communities, industries, land and fire agencies and government – where actions and responsibilities will be integrated. An integrated and interoperable approach is therefore the best way to minimise and manage bushfire risks to lives, property and the environment.

8.2 Purpose and objectives

Work collaboratively and cooperatively with the community and stakeholders to:

- bring about best practicable bushfire planning and response outcomes;
- create and maintain positive relationships;
- protect the Department’s reputation; and
- meet and exceed stakeholder expectations and agreed objectives.

8.3 Community and stakeholder identification and prioritisation

Time will be invested to identify, prioritise and plan engagement with the community and stakeholders, where possible that may be affected by bushfires or bushfire management strategies and outcomes, including people who are:

- neighbors of public land;
- groups whose livelihood may be impacted by bushfires and bushfire management decisions;
- groups with environmental, health and recreational interests;
- government; and other agencies.

8.4 Purposeful community and stakeholder engagement

Where possible, engagement with the community and key stakeholders will begin with a clear understanding of desired outcomes to conduct focused and meaningful engagement. While the Department’s engagement will be driven by its strategic priorities and actions, it will be aware of the community and stakeholders’ objectives, expertise and level of influence.

8.5 Transparent and timely engagement

Open and honest communication paths will be maintained with the community and stakeholders during planning, where possible, and other decision making processes to ensure communication is timely, relevant, meaningful and available.

Communication and engagement processes will focus on active and meaningful approaches rather than passive communication methods.

8.6 Respect through demonstrating integrity and objectivity

All community and stakeholder communications and related actions are to demonstrate integrity, objectivity and are to be aligned to the best interests of the Department, the community and stakeholders. Trust will be built through honoring agreements and commitments and valuing and respecting contributions to enable strong collaborative relationships.

8.7 Community and Stakeholder relationship management

The Department will measure its performance by obtaining feedback from relevant community members and stakeholders to understand views on the Department and the success of bushfire management actions. Feedback will be openly shared and used constructively.

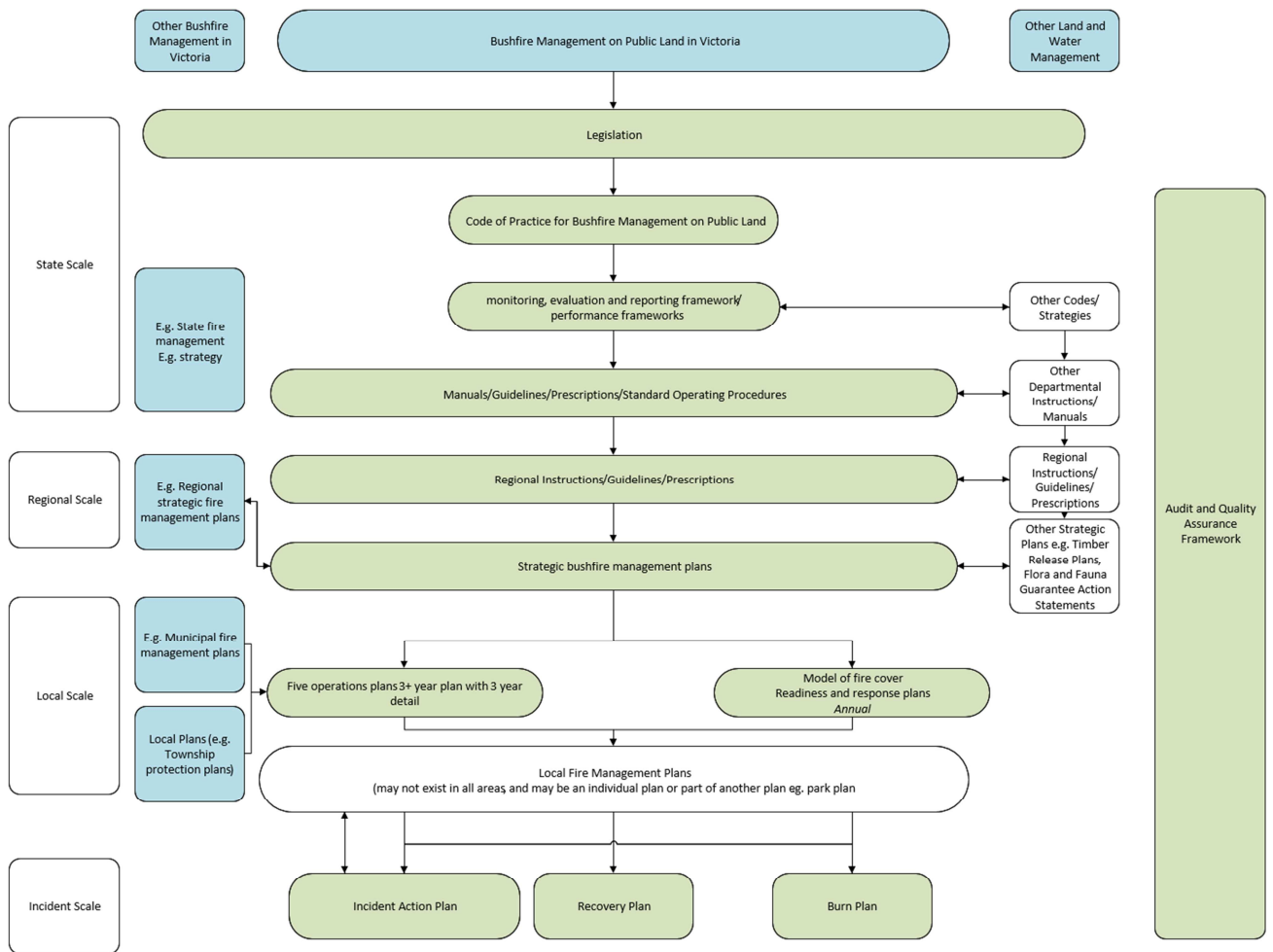
Outcomes will be monitored, communicated and acted upon to create long term value that is based on shared learning, understanding and desire to be mutually beneficial for all parties.

The Community Service Charter will articulate how the Department will deliver upon its commitment to build stronger and more sustainable relationships.

8.8 Stakeholder branding

The Department will raise its visibility with the community and key stakeholders through branding its portfolio dealing with fire management and planned burning on public land to that there is an enduring entity for building stronger and more sustainable relationships with the community and other key stakeholders.

Appendix 1: The Audit and Quality Assurance Framework and its influence on bushfire management activities within the Department



Appendix 2: List of supporting policies, procedures and guidelines

Document information

Document details

Criteria	Details
ECM/File Ref:	
Document title:	Audit and Quality Assurance Framework for Bushfire Management
Document Owner:	Forest, Fire and Regions Group

Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Author
V0.1	17/07/16	Final draft for hand over to DELWP Forest, Fire and Regions Group	Ernst and Young
V0.2	27/07/16	Document details updated and minor formatting	Leora Grey

Document approval

This document requires approval from:

Name	Title	Signature	Date
Lee Miezis	Deputy Secretary Forest, Fire and Regions		