

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Implementation of Recommendations Arising from Prior Reports into Escaped Planned Burns

Internal Audit Report



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Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Detailed Findings.....	8
Appendix A – Responsibility Statement	16

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Management and / or the Risk & Audit Committee may, from time to time, request additional internal audits to be conducted to assist in the consideration of specific issues or risks which emerge during the year. The Executive Director, Business, Executive and Ministerial Services requested that internal audit undertake a project to evaluate evidence to support the implementation of recommendations arising from past examinations, investigations and audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003.

The scope of this internal audit was to:

- Consider DELWP's processes and controls in respect to the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from past examinations, investigations and audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003
- Consider documentation¹ provided by the DELWP Fire Performance Unit to support the status of all actions identified² by DELWP as complete
- Consider DELWP's processes and controls in place to monitor use of the Business Improvement Recommendations Database (BIRD), specifically access controls (e.g. new starters, leavers), maintenance (periodic confirmation that access levels are appropriate) and related audit trails (to review appropriate access / use of records).

This report supersedes the previous internal audit report titled "Implementation of Recommendations Arising from Prior Reports into Escaped Planned Burns" dated March 2016 as DELWP management requested a further extension of the fieldwork cut-off date. This extension allowed consideration of further documentation to support the implementation status of actions identified by DELWP as complete arising from relevant past examinations, investigations and audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003.

For the avoidance of doubt, this project did not validate the completeness of escaped planned burns data provided by DELWP and reports issued (and related actions) arising from past examinations, investigations and audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003.

1.2 Background

The Lancefield-Cobaw Croziers Track planned burn was ignited by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on 30 September 2015. The planned burn breached containment lines on 3 October 2015 resulting in the Lancefield-Cobaw fire, which was initially brought under control by DELWP and Country Fire Authority (CFA) firefighters on 4 October 2015. On 6 October 2015, further breaches of containment lines occurred.

Before it was contained on 13 October 2015, the fire had burnt over 3,000 hectares, destroyed a number of properties and other assets and caused significant disruption to the Lancefield, Cobaw, Benloch and surrounding communities.

Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw fire

On 8 October 2015, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested an independent investigation into the fire and for findings to be provided to DELWP.

The investigation was led by an external, independent expert and examined all aspects of the planned burn and what happened once it began.

¹ This internal audit did not involve site visits, physical inspection or technical / operational validation of activities undertaken by DELWP to action recommendations.

² Relates to actions identified for escaped planned burns for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2015.

On 19 November 2015 the Independent Investigation Team issued their report which incorporated 22 recommendations which focused on the following five themes:

- Community engagement
- Structure
- Systems and processes
- Risk management
- Branding

On the same day, DELWP issued its response to the Independent Investigation Team report accepting all 22 recommendations and identifying 24 actions³ to implement the recommendations including the following:

- Conduct a state-wide audit into the implementation of recommendations arising from past examinations, investigations or audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003.

1.3 Fire Management Manual

The DELWP Fire Management Manual sets out DELWP standards, directions, instructions and guidelines in respect to fire management⁴.

Planned burns that breach containment lines are classified by DELWP in Guideline 10.1.11 of the Fire Management Manual into categories as set out in the table below:

Category	Triggers / Descriptions
1a	Minor breakaway or spot overs in the immediate vicinity of burn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suspicious circumstances; and • Quickly controlled (i.e. within approx. 30 minutes) with on-site resources.
1b	As above, but involves adjacent private or occupied land, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire activity on private land is inconsequential; and • No significant damage or threat to any assets.
2	Burn extends into pre-planned contingency area (i.e. within “fall back” control lines and burning is acceptable management option): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn does not extend outside contingency area except as in Category 1 escape above; and • Control of burn does not require resources additional to those previously identified for contingency; and • No suspicious circumstances.
3	Any of the following criteria are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakaway or spotover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Burn extends outside contingency area (“fall back” control line) ○ Control requires resources in addition to those on-site ○ Control cannot be affected immediately (i.e. within approx. 30 minutes) ○ Suspicious circumstances
4	Any of the following criteria met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to public safety • Significant private or public assets including public infrastructure threatened or damaged • Section 30 of the Country Fire Authority Act exercised (powers to enter property and take actions to extinguish [fire])

Source: DELWP Fire Management Manual – Guideline 10.1.11: Classification and Investigation of Escapes from Planned Burns (March 2012)

³ “Investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw fire: what will change” (DELWP, November 2015)

⁴ The Chief Fire Officer has represented that the Fire Management Manual has been reviewed and updated a number of times since 2003. The requirements set out in Section 1.3 of this report refer to the current requirements. While the specific requirements set out above may not have applied for the 13 year period, DELWP confirmed that the same principles have applied (i.e. escaped planned burns should be investigated and management actions implemented in order to address any identified issues).

Section 6.4 of the Fire Management Manual states that all suspected escapes from planned burns must be investigated in accordance with Guideline 10.1.11 which is set out below:

Category	Investigation Requirements
1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burn Officer In Command (OIC) to ensure any performance improvement implications are covered in appropriate debriefs.
1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burn OIC to ensure any performance improvement implications are covered in appropriate debriefs.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burn OIC to ensure any performance improvement implications are covered in appropriate debriefs⁵.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Manager Fire [or equivalent officer] arranges for Planned Burn Analysis to be conducted by officer not connected with burn, in conjunction with Burn OIC. Planned Burn Analysis Report [to be prepared]. Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation (if suspicious)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Manager Fire [or equivalent officer] arranges for comprehensive Planned Burn Analysis to be conducted by Team not connected with burn Planned Burn Analysis Report [to be prepared] Analysis to include Cause and Origin Report by Fire Investigator ("Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation") Program Manager Fire [or equivalent officer] to forward any preliminary information, and Terms of Reference for Analysis to Chief Fire Officer within 48 hours Analysis Team to provide preliminary findings to Program Manager Fire [or equivalent officer] in 7 days Program Manager Fire [or equivalent officer] to pass on significant findings to Chief Fire Officer Final Report to Program Manager Fire [or equivalent officer] and Chief Fire Officer in 21 days.

Source: DELWP Fire Management Manual – Guideline 10.1.11: Classification and Investigation of Escapes from Planned Burns (March 2012)

Refer Finding 2.1 for opportunities to strengthen the DELWP Fire Management Manual and related compliance and documentation.

Recommendations and related management actions generally arise as a result of Planned Burn Analysis (category 3 and 4) and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations (category 3 where suspicious and category 4).

DELWP management has advised that it is the responsibility of the districts / regions to conduct the Planned Burn Analysis and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Management Manual set out above.

A Planned Burn Analysis and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation may be conducted by internal or external parties.

Recommendations / actions may be developed separately by management to address the findings identified in the Planned Burn Analysis Report and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Reports (refer Finding 2.3). In some instances recommendations and related management actions may arise as a result of escaped planned burn debriefs. (Refer Finding 2.3).

Category 3 and 4 escaped planned burns may also be subject to other internal or external examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs which result in recommendations and related management actions. (Refer Finding 2.3).

⁵ Whilst not a requirement of Guideline 10.1.11, DELWP has provided some documentation which demonstrates that for categories 3 and 4 recommendations / management actions may also be identified via escaped planned burn debriefs.

1.4 Business Improvement Recommendations Database

The Business Improvement Recommendations Database (BIRD) is used by the Office of the Chief Fire Officer to, amongst other things, track the implementation of recommendations / management actions in respect to escape planned burns which have a state-wide impact. BIRD is not used by individual districts / regions responsible for the implementation of recommendations / management actions in respect to escaped planned burns⁶. (Refer Finding 2.3)

Currently DELWP does not have sufficient controls in place to monitor use of the Business Improvement Recommendations Database, specifically access controls (e.g. new starters, leavers), maintenance (periodic confirmation that access levels are appropriate) and related audit trails (to review appropriate access / use of records). DELWP Officers within the Office of the Chief Fire Officer have represented that BIRD is being decommissioned and will be replaced by an alternative system or database to support the tracking and recording of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of planned burns across the state. (Refer Finding 2.3).

1.5 Escaped Planned Burns and related examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs

1.5.1 Escaped Planned Burns

DELWP identified and recorded the following escaped planned burns for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2015:

Description	Escaped planned burns
Category 1 and 2 escaped planned burns	47
Category 3 escaped planned burns	30
Category 4 escaped planned burns	28
Total escaped planned burns	105

Source: DELWP FireWeb⁷ extract

1.5.2 Examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs

For the 47 category 1 and 2 escaped planned burns noted in the table above, management have not identified any documentation to support completion of escaped burn debriefs in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Management Manual. (Refer Finding 2.1).

For the 58 category 3 and 4 escaped burns noted above, management have identified 31 internal or external examinations, investigations and audits (including Planned Burn Analysis, Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations and debriefs) relating to 23 escaped burns.

1.5.3 Recommendations and related management actions

For the 31 internal or external examinations, investigations, audit reports and debriefs identified, management have identified 189 recommendations / management actions.

⁶ DELWP Officers within the Office of the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) represented that BIRD was created for use by the CFO's office only and, whilst other DELWP Officers have access to the system, it was not intended for use by individual districts / regions.

⁷ DELWP system for recording details of planned burns including escaped planned burns. FireWeb is not used to record and track actions arising from past examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs in respect to escaped planned burns.

The table below sets out DELWP reported status of the 189 recommendations / management actions provided to internal audit.

Management reported status	Description	Number of recommendations / management actions
Complete	Management has represented that the recommendation / management action for improvement has been implemented and documentation is available to support implementation.	101
Recommendation no longer relevant	Management has represented that the recommendation / management action is no longer relevant. (Refer Finding 2.2).	9
In Progress	Management has represented that the recommendation / management action is in progress but has not yet been fully implemented. (Refer Finding 2.2).	56
Not started	Management has represented that action has not yet been taken in relation to the recommendation / management action. (Refer Finding 2.2).	23
TOTAL		189

1.6 Documentation to the support the status of actions identified by DELWP as complete

Internal audit considered documentation provided by the DELWP Fire Performance Unit and individual districts / regions to support the status of all actions identified by DELWP as “complete” (i.e. 101 recommendations / management actions). The outcome is summarised below.

Description	Number of recommendations / management actions
Documentation provided by DELWP supports the “complete” status of the recommendation / management action reported by management.	52
Recommendation / management action previously reported as complete by third party as part of a follow up review ⁸ .	17
Management have represented that the recommendation / management action has been addressed via communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness. (Refer Finding 2.2). The documentation provided by DELWP supports the completion of general communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness.	12
Recommendation / management action is non-specific (e.g. awareness, staffing) therefore not possible to confirm whether action has been completed. Management have represented that the recommendation / management action has been addressed via general communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness. (Refer Finding 2.2). The documentation provided by DELWP supports the completion of general communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness.	6
Documentation provided by DELWP does not support the “complete” status of the recommendation / management action reported by management. (Refer Finding 2.2).	14
TOTAL	101

⁸ DELWP has identified these items as complete based on a recommendation to mark them as complete by a third party. These items have not been subject to internal audit.

1.7 Ageing of open recommendations / management actions

The table below shows the age of open recommendations / management actions based on the date of the escaped planned burn recorded by DELWP.

Ageing of "In Progress" and "Not Started" recommendations / management actions					
Recommendations / management actions	Less than 1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	Over 10 years	Total
In progress	-	53	3	-	56
Not started	-	3	19	1	23
Total	-	56	22	1	79

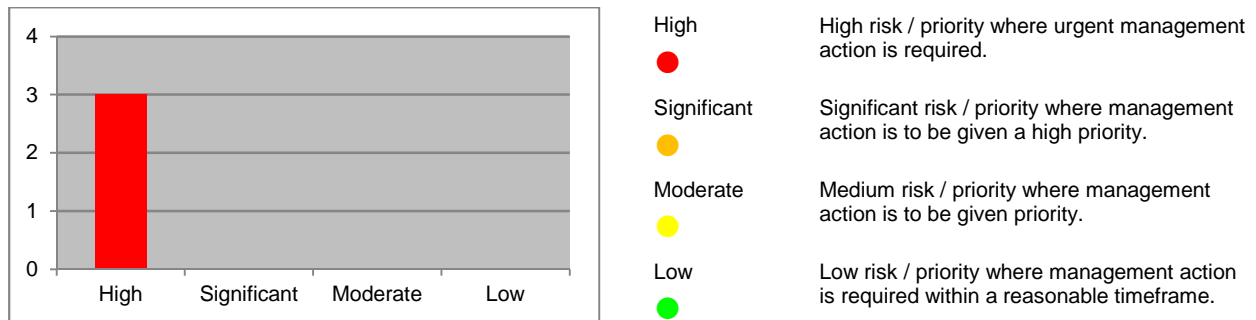
Source: DELWP FireWeb extract

DELWP has determined 56 recommendations / management actions are "In progress" and 23 recommendations / management actions have "Not started". (Refer Finding 2.2).

1.8 Summary of Findings

Based on the approved scope of work, a number of findings were identified for DELWP to consider. The findings have been given a risk / priority rating as defined below and are summarised in the following graph:

Our findings are summarised below:



Ref	Findings	Risk / Priority Rating
2.1	The DELWP Fire Management Manual requires strengthening and compliance with requirements in respect to investigation and documentation of suspected escaped planned burns requires improvement	High
2.2	Processes and documentation to support the implementation of recommendations / management actions in relation to escaped planned burns requires strengthening	High
2.3	Lack of consistent process and state-wide system for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from past examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns	High

Details of the findings are included in Section 2 have been discussed with management and actions proposed to address them.

1.9 *Other matter for consideration*

Given the high risk / priority rating assigned to findings in this report, management should ensure overall accountability for the implementation of management actions is assigned to a senior DELWP officer. The timely implementation of the management actions should be included as a performance objective within the relevant senior DELWP officer's performance plan.

Agreed Management Actions

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
1.	<p>Overall accountability for the implementation of management actions will be assigned to the Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions.</p> <p>The timely implementation of the management actions will be included as a performance objective within the Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions performance plan.</p>	Secretary, Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning	Effective immediately

2. Detailed Findings

2.1 *The DELWP Fire Management Manual requires strengthening and compliance with requirements in respect to investigation and documentation of suspected escaped planned burns requires improvement*

Finding

The DELWP Fire Management Manual sets out DELWP standards, directions, instructions and guidelines in respect to fire management.

Section 6.4 of the Fire Management Manual states that all suspected escapes from planned burns must be investigated in accordance with Guideline 10.1.11 which is summarised as follows:

Category	Investigation Requirements
1 and 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief⁹ Planned Burn Analysis Report Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Report (if suspicious)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief¹⁰ Planned Burn Analysis Report Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Report

Refer Section 1.3 of this report for further details.

The following matters have been identified in respect to the DELWP Fire Management Manual and compliance with the relevant requirements.

i. The DELWP Fire Management Manual and related Guideline does not clearly set out the documentation requirements in respect to escaped planned burn debriefs and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Reports¹⁰

Guideline 10.1.11 includes a “Planned Burn Analysis Proforma” which sets out the format and requirements for Planned Burn Analysis Reports.

However the Fire Management Manual and related Guideline 10.1.11 does not set out a proforma / template or the minimum documentation requirements in respect to escaped planned burn debriefs and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Reports.

ii. Documentation not available to support completion of internal or external examinations, investigations and audits (including Planned Burn Analysis, Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations and debriefs) in accordance with DELWP requirements

For the 105 escaped planned burns identified by DELWP, the following instances of non-compliance with section 6.4 of the Fire Management Manual and related Guideline 10.1.11 have been identified:

- For 47 out of 47 category 1 and 2 escaped planned burns documentation was not available to support completion of escaped planned burn debriefs in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Management Manual.
- For 54 out of 58 category 3 and 4 escaped planned burns all required documentation was not available to support completion of escaped planned burn internal or external examinations, investigations and audits (including Planned Burn Analysis, Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations and debriefs) in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Management Manual, specifically:
 - For 18 category 3 and 4 escaped planned burns no documentation was available
 - For 36 category 3 and 4 escaped planned burns not all relevant documentation was available.

⁹ Whilst not a requirement of Guideline 10.1.11, DELWP has provided some documentation which demonstrates that for categories 3 and 4 recommendations / management actions may also be identified via escaped planned burn debriefs.

¹⁰ This internal audit only considered selected elements of the Fire Management Manual relevant to the scope.

iii. Internal or external examinations, investigations and / or audits not finalised

For the 105 escaped planned burns identified by DELWP, management have identified 31 internal or external examinations, investigations and audits (including Planned Burn Analysis, Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations and debriefs) relating to 23 escaped burns.

For 5 out of the 31 internal or external examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs identified, the reports were not finalised and remained in draft. The 5 reports related to fires that occurred between November 2004 and May 2013.

iv. Insufficient documentation to determine whether Planned Burn Analysis was undertaken by an officer / team not connected with the burn

Guideline 10.1.11 requires the analysis for category 3 and 4 escaped planned burns, to be conducted by officer / team not connected with burn.

For the 58 category 3 and 4 escaped planned burns identified and recorded by DELWP there was insufficient documentation to determine whether Planned Burn Analysis was undertaken by an officer / team not connected with the burn.

Risk and Priority Rating: High

A failure to strengthen the Fire Management Manual requirements and non-compliance with requirements of DELWP Fire Management Manual in respect to investigation of suspected escaped planned burns may have a major safety and loss of assets impact as a result of sub-optimal planned burn processes.

Without management action to ensure escaped planned burn examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs are performed in a timely and complete basis in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Management Manual it is likely the root cause of escaped planned burns will not be clearly identified and improvements implemented promptly.

Suggestions for Improvement

Management should:

1. Set out within the Fire Management Manual and / or related Guideline 10.1.11 a proforma / template and minimum documentation requirements in respect to escaped planned burn debriefs and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Reports.
2. Consider whether remediation of exceptions identified under part ii. and iii. above is required.
 - (a) For those exceptions that are determined to require remediation a program of follow up actions should be documented and monitored for timely completion
 - (b) For those exceptions where it is determined that remediation is not required rationale for this decision should be appropriately documented and approved.
3. Set out within the Fire Management Manual and / or related Guideline 10.1.11 minimum documentation requirements in respect to documentation to be retained to demonstrate that each Planned Burn Analysis is undertaken by an officer / team not connected with the burn.
4. Reinforce (formally in writing) and undertake appropriate training with relevant DELWP Officers the requirements of the DELWP Fire Management Manual specifically Section 6.4 and related Guideline 10.1.11.
5. Establish a formal process to monitor timely and complete compliance with the requirements of Section 6.4 of the DELWP Fire Management Manual and related Guideline 10.1.11.

Agreed Management Actions

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
1.	DELWP will set out within the relevant revised document(s) equivalent to the Fire Management Manual and / or related Guideline 10.1.11 a proforma / template and minimum documentation requirements in respect to escaped planned burn debriefs and Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigation Reports.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016
2.	DELWP will consider whether remediation of exceptions identified under part ii. and iii. above is required. (a) For those exceptions that are determined to require remediation a program of follow up actions will be documented and monitored for timely completion (b) For those exceptions where it is determined that remediation is not required rationale for this decision will be appropriately documented and approved.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016
3.	DELWP will set out within the relevant revised document(s) equivalent to the Fire Management Manual and / or related Guideline 10.1.11 minimum documentation requirements in respect to documentation to be retained to demonstrate that each Planned Burn Analysis is undertaken by an officer / team not connected with the burn.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016
4.	DELWP will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reinforce (formally in writing) with relevant DELWP Officers the requirements of the relevant revised document(s) equivalent to the Fire Management Manual specifically Section 6.4 and related Guideline 10.1.11. undertake appropriate training with relevant DELWP Officers in relation to the requirements of the relevant revised document(s) equivalent to the Fire Management Manual specifically Section 6.4 and related Guideline 10.1.11. 	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016 30 November 2016
5.	DELWP will establish a formal process to monitor timely and complete compliance with the requirements of Section 6.4 of the DELWP Fire Management Manual and related Guideline 10.1.11.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016

2.2 Processes and documentation to support the implementation of recommendations / management actions in relation to escaped planned burns requires strengthening

Finding

During the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2015 DELWP identified and recorded 105 escaped planned burns.

In relation to 105 escaped planned burns recorded, DELWP has identified 31 internal or external examinations, investigations and audits (including Planned Burn Analysis, Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations and debriefs) relating to 23 escaped planned burns.

For the 31 internal or external examinations, investigations, audit reports and debriefs identified, DELWP has identified 189 recommendations / management actions. Refer finding Section 1.5 of this report for further details.

The following issues have been identified in respect to the status of the recommendations/ management actions:

- i. For 14 recommendations / management actions documentation provided by DELWP does not support the “complete” status of the recommendation / management action reported by management.
- ii. For 18 recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “complete” based on general communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness none have been formally documented as reviewed and approved by the Chief Fire Officer in order to confirm that no further action is required.
- iii. For the 9 recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “No longer relevant” none have been formally documented as reviewed and approved by the Chief Fire Officer in order to confirm that no further action is required.
- iv. For the 56 recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “In progress” DELWP has not recorded revised implementation dates and responsible officers and established a process to track timely implementation of these recommendations / management actions¹¹. (Also refer Finding 2.3)
- v. For 23 recommendations / management actions DELWP has not yet taken any action to implement the recommendation / management action⁶.

Risk and Priority Rating: High

A failure to respond to internal and external examinations, investigations and audits (including Planned Burn Analysis, Wildfire Cause and Origin Investigations and debriefs) on a timely basis may have a major safety and loss of assets impact as a result of sub-optimal planned burn processes.

Without management action to strengthen processes and documentation to support the implementation of recommendations / management actions it is likely process improvement opportunities in relation to managing planned burns will not be implemented in a timely and complete basis.

Suggestions for Improvement

Management should:

1. Consider whether remediation of exceptions identified under part i. above is required.
 - (a) For those exceptions that are determined to require remediation a program of follow up actions should be documented and monitored for timely completion
 - (b) For those exceptions where it is determined that remediation is not required rationale for this decision should be appropriately documented and approved.

¹¹ Section 1.7 of this report sets out the ageing of open recommendations / management actions.

2. Provide specific details of recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “complete” based on general communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness (including the rationale) to the Chief Fire Officer for review and formal documented approval in order to confirm that no further action is required.
3. Provide details of the recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “No longer relevant” (including the rationale) to the Chief Fire Officer for review and formal documented approval in order to confirm that no further action is required.
4. Determine revised implementation dates and responsible officers for the recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “In progress” and establish a process to monitor the timely implementation of all recommendations / management actions.
5. Review the recommendations / management actions where DELWP has not yet taken any action to determine whether the recommendation / management action is still relevant and, if so, the required management action, implementation date and responsible officer. Where recommendations are determined by DELWP to be no longer relevant the rationale should be documented and provided to the Chief Fire Officer for formal documented review and approval.

Agreed Management Actions

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
1.	<p>DELWP will consider whether remediation of exceptions identified under part i. above is required.</p> <p>(a) For those exceptions that are determined to require remediation a program of follow up actions will be documented and monitored for timely completion</p> <p>(b) For those exceptions where it is determined that remediation is not required rationale for this decision will be appropriately documented and approved.</p>	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 September 2016
2.	DELWP will provide specific details of recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “complete” based on general communication of updates to the Fire Management Manual and / or on-going training and awareness (including the rationale) to the Chief Fire Officer for review and formal documented approval in order to confirm that no further action is required.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 September 2016
3.	DELWP will provide details of the recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “No longer relevant” (including the rationale) to the Chief Fire Officer for review and formal documented approval in order to confirm that no further action is required.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 September 2016
4.	DELWP will determine revised implementation dates and responsible officers for the recommendations / management actions determined by DELWP as “In progress” and establish a process to monitor the timely implementation of all recommendations / management actions.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 September 2016

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
5.	DELWP will review the recommendations / management actions where DELWP has not yet taken any action to determine whether the recommendation / management action is still relevant and, if so, the required management action, implementation date and responsible officer. Where recommendations are determined by DELWP to be no longer relevant the rationale will be documented and provided to the Chief Fire Officer for formal documented review and approval.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 September 2016

2.3 *Lack of consistent process and state-wide system for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from past examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns*

Finding

The relevant district / region to which an escaped planned burn relates is responsible for completing relevant investigations into escaped planned burns in accordance with DELWP Guideline 10.1.11.

The relevant district / region is also responsible for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns. In some instances where the management action requires a state-wide response the Office of the Chief Fire Officer is responsible for recording and tracking of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns.

A consistent process for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns has not been established, amongst other things:

- DELWP does not consistently document management actions, implementation dates and responsible officers in response to recommendations identified in relevant reports and debriefs
- DELWP has not established a single state-wide system to support the recording and tracking of completion of management actions.

DELWP Officers within the Office of the Chief Fire Officer have represented that it intends to utilise DELWP's audit module in Cycle¹² to support the recording and tracking of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns. (Also refer Section 1.4 of this report).

Risk and Priority Rating: High

Lack of consistent process for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from past examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns may have a major safety and loss of assets impact as a result of sub-optimal planned burn processes.

Without management action to strengthen processes to identify, record and track actions arising from past examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns it is likely recommendations / management actions will not be implemented in a timely and complete basis.

Suggestions for Improvement

Management should:

- 1 Establish and formally document a consistent process for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns. The process should include, amongst other things, documentation of management actions, implementation dates, responsible officers for each recommendation identified in relevant reports and a final sign-off when each recommendation has been implemented.
- 2 Establish a single state-wide system to support the recording and tracking of management actions. Such a system should be supported by processes and controls to monitor use, specifically access controls (e.g. new starters, leavers), maintenance (periodic confirmation that access levels are appropriate) and related audit trails (to review appropriate access / use of records).

¹² Cycle is the DELWP installed software used for the recording and tracking of management actions arising from third party audit reports.

Agreed Management Actions

Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date
1.	DELWP will establish and formally document a consistent process for the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from examinations, investigations, audits and debriefs of escaped planned burns. The process will include, amongst other things, documentation of management actions, implementation dates, responsible officers for each recommendation identified in relevant reports and a final sign-off when each recommendation has been implemented.	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016
2.	DELWP will establish a single state-wide system to support the recording and tracking of management actions. Such a system will be supported by processes and controls to monitor use, specifically access controls (e.g. new starters, leavers), maintenance (periodic confirmation that access levels are appropriate) and related audit trails (to review appropriate access / use of records).	Deputy Secretary, Forest, Fire and Regions	30 June 2016

Appendix A – Responsibility Statement

This report is solely for the information of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Subject to the provisions of Contract 320306 (dated 1 January 2014), its contents may not be published in any way (including on an internet website) without the prior written approval of PricewaterhouseCoopers. PricewaterhouseCoopers does not accept any responsibility to any other party to whom this report may be shown or into whose hands it may come.

The matters raised in this report are only those that came to our attention during the course of performing our procedures and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of risks, weaknesses that exist or improvements that might be made. This project is advisory in nature and does not constitute an audit, review or an engagement to perform agreed upon procedures in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

We cannot, in practice, examine every activity and procedure, nor can we be a substitute for management's responsibility to maintain adequate controls over all levels of operation and their responsibility to prevent and detect irregularities, including fraud. Accordingly, management should not rely on our report to document / identify all risks and / or weaknesses that may exist.



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