Local Government Association Tasmania

Our Ref: TB| LO'L

12 Oct 2026

Attention: State Bushfire Safety Policy Review Team

Chief Fire Officer
Tasmania Fire Service
Via email: cfsadmin@fire.tas.gov.au

Dear Review Team

Consultation of the State Bushfire Safety Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the State Bushfire Safety Policy consultation. The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) prepared this submission on behalf of Tasmanian local government, in collaboration with our members, all 29 councils.

LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is the representative body and advocate for local government in Tasmania. Where a council has made a direct submission to this process, any omission of specific comments made by that council in this submission should not be viewed as lack of support by LGAT for that specific issue.

Please contact Tim Boyle if you have any questions or would like further information, at tim.boyle@lgat.tas.gov.au or 0437136798.

Yours sincerely,

Dion Lester
Chief Executive Officer

LGAT Submission: State Bushfire Safety Policy

Introduction

We understand that the Tasmania Fire Service intends to undertake further consultation on the draft policy and welcomes the opportunity to provide additional input as the review progresses.

We were notified of this consultation late in the consultation period and appreciate the extension of the submission deadline. Given the limited timeframe available to consult with councils, the comments provided in this submission are necessarily high-level and focus on key strategic considerations for local government.

General comments

Since the policy was developed in 2014, Tasmania's emergency management landscape has evolved considerably. While the policy remains a useful foundation for bushfire safety, it lacks sufficient detail in several areas, including the practical application of shared responsibility. If the policy is intended to be principles-based, it should more clearly articulate its relationship with other Tasmania Fire Service policies, plans and guidance, as well as its place within the broader Tasmanian emergency management framework.

We consider that the policy should be updated to align with contemporary emergency management arrangements, clarify its purpose and intended audience, and provide stronger strategic direction for bushfire safety across Tasmania. The revised policy should also better recognise and articulate the critical role of local government in supporting community resilience and preparedness, as well as response and recovery outcomes before, during and after bushfire events.

Specific Comments

Policy Purpose and Strategic Positioning

The policy's purpose and intended audience remain unclear. While it sets out broad principles for bushfire safety, it offers limited guidance on who it is intended to influence and how it should inform decision-making across government, communities and land managers. The review offers an opportunity to clarify the policy's purpose, its relationship with contemporary emergency management frameworks, and its contribution to improving bushfire safety outcomes. If retained as a standalone document, the policy should provide clear strategic direction and complement, rather than duplicate, other bushfire, emergency management and resilience frameworks.

Climate change, resilience and planning

The revised policy should better reflect the factors driving bushfire risk today and tomorrow. This includes recognising climate change's influence on fire weather conditions and the importance of adaptive risk management over time. We also consider that greater recognition should be given to the role of land use planning in reducing long-term bushfire risk, particularly through decisions relating to settlement growth, development in bushfire-prone areas and infrastructure planning.

The policy should further acknowledge that bushfire risk affects communities differently and support inclusive approaches that consider the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups during preparedness, response and recovery.

Local Government's Role

We support the principle of shared responsibility for bushfire safety but note that the current policy provides limited recognition of how responsibility is coordinated in practice. Local government plays an important role throughout the emergency management cycle. This includes land use planning, community education, preparedness activities, emergency support functions and recovery. Councils are also often a key point of contact for communities before, during and after bushfire events. The revised policy should clearly articulate local government's role within a broader partnership approach and support effective collaboration between councils, emergency services, State agencies and community organisations. Consideration should also be given to the capability and capacity required across all stakeholders to effectively deliver bushfire risk reduction and resilience outcomes.

Emergency Management Alignment

The policy should be updated to reflect Tasmania's current emergency management arrangements and demonstrate how it aligns with existing frameworks, including the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) model, the Tasmanian Emergency Management Arrangements (TEMA) and broader disaster risk reduction approaches. We also consider that the policy should place greater emphasis on recovery as a core component of community resilience, recognising the long-term social, economic and environmental challenges bushfire events can create for affected communities

To improve its practical value, the policy should provide a clearer framework for implementation, governance and accountability. This should include how objectives will be translated into action, how agencies and stakeholders will coordinate their efforts, and how progress will be monitored over time. We support a flexible, place-based approach that recognises differing bushfire risks, settlement patterns and community characteristics across Tasmania, while maintaining a consistent statewide strategic direction. The policy should also clearly link to regional and municipal emergency management planning arrangements

Bushfire Warnings and Public Information

References to bushfire warnings, public information and community safety arrangements should be updated to reflect current practice. This includes contemporary public information systems (e.g. TasAlert), emergency warning arrangements and communication channels used during emergency events (e.g. Public Information Unit). The policy should emphasise the importance of providing clear, timely and accessible information to communities. It should also recognise the role of evacuation and community support facilities, review outdated terminology where required, and acknowledge the contribution of councils and community organisations in supporting affected communities during and after bushfire events.