Interim Progress Report

Implementation of recommendations and commitments following the Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire

February 2016
Preface

On 30 September 2015, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) conducted a planned burn at Lancefield-Cobaw Croziers Track in the Macedon Ranges – a standard practice in DELWP’s Bushfire Fuel Management Program.

While planned burning is considered an efficient and effective approach for managing bushfire fuel hazards over large areas, regrettably the burn later breached containment lines and, until contained on 13 October 2015, burned over 3,000 hectares, destroying a number of dwellings, sheds, and many kilometres of fencing, and caused significant disruption for local communities.

At the Victorian Government’s request, the Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire (the Investigation) was carried out by independent expert Murray Carter, Director of Western Australia’s Office of Bushfire Risk Management, and recommended improvements to the systems and processes of DELWP that are crucial to the delivery of planned burning throughout Victoria.

All 22 of the recommendations in the Investigation report were accepted by DELWP, as well as a commitment to making changes to the way it operates across the state, to improve delivery of Victoria’s planned burning program.

At the request of the Victorian Government, and in line with Section 64(1)(ca) of the Emergency Management Act 2013, the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) is providing independent oversight to ensure all recommendations from the Investigation report are implemented and progress is publicly reported.

While the consequences of this event are regrettable, we can define ourselves by what we do next.

This interim progress report is IGEM’s first report on DELWP’s implementation of recommendations and its additional 10 commitments, in response to the Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire.

In relation to Victoria’s Bushfire Fuel Management Program, IGEM is also monitoring the Victorian Government’s implementation of recommendations from the review of performance targets through delivery of Safer Together, in addition to managing the investigation and reporting of any future breaches of containment lines by a planned burn.

Through our implementation monitoring activities, IGEM is helping to ensure that delivery of the State’s Bushfire Fuel Management Program is effective in reducing the risk of bushfire to protect people, communities, jobs and the environment.

Tony Pearce
Inspector-General for Emergency Management
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### Common terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DELWP response</td>
<td><em>Response to the recommendations of the independent investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw fire, November 2015</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Department</td>
<td>Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Investigation</td>
<td><em>Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire, November 2015</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer Together</td>
<td><em>Safer Together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria, November 2015</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFA</td>
<td>Country Fire Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>DELWP</td>
<td>Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning</td>
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<td>EMV</td>
<td>Emergency Management Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGEM</td>
<td>Inspector-General for Emergency Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFRSG</td>
<td>Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report Steering Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERI</td>
<td>Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Officer-in-Charge</td>
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</table>
Executive Summary

The Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire (the Investigation) report was released in October 2015 and comprises 22 recommendations to improve the management of planned burns in Victoria.

This is an interim progress update on the implementation of the 22 recommendations from the Investigation and 10 additional commitments that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has made to improve the delivery of the Bushfire Fuel Management Program as described in the Response to the recommendations of the independent investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw fire.

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) will provide a further update report in June 2016 and quarterly thereafter until all recommendations and commitments have been implemented.

Summary of implementation progress

IGEM has found that, overall, DELWP is making satisfactory progress with the implementation of the 22 recommendations and 10 commitments.

One recommendation and three commitments have been completed with the remainder reported by DELWP as being on track for completion by their due dates.

The following tables provide a summary of the recommendations and commitments grouped in accordance with IGEM’s findings.

IGEM has found that, based on an assessment of DELWP’s reported progress and supporting documentation, the following recommendations and commitments are progressing satisfactorily (see Table i).

Table i

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION / COMMITMENT</th>
<th>DELWP STATUS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1 (3.1.1.5)</td>
<td>The Department must adopt a tenure-blind approach to the management of bushfire risk including the planning of burns</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (3.1.1.6)</td>
<td>In broadening its focus the Department should consider planned burning as just one of many options in managing fuels, landscape risk, multiple tenures, diverse land uses and must incorporate community perspectives</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 (3.1.1.7)</td>
<td>The Department should engage with EMV in seeking and implementing solutions to improving landscape scale bushfire risk management</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 (3.1.2.7)</td>
<td>The Department should undertake a thorough review of the risk management and approvals process</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10 (3.1.3.7)</td>
<td>A review of the organisation’s structures and processes at state, regional and district levels should be undertaken to better integrate operational burn planning and operational implementation and to provide sound governance, risk management and quality control</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11 (3.1.3.8)</td>
<td>Burn OICs with appropriate knowledge and experience commensurate with the nature and complexity of the fuels and planned burn operations should be actively involved from the beginning of the planning process</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12 (3.1.3.9)</td>
<td>To the maximum extent possible given numbers and availability of suitable staff across partner agencies, there should be a single Burn OIC to provide operational continuity across days of ignition and burn management</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R13 (3.1.3.10)</td>
<td>An audit and quality assurance function should be established to maintain standards, facilitate continual improvement and to manage risk at all levels of the organisation</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R16 (3.1.4.8)</td>
<td>Burn OICs must be fully involved in determining appropriate levels of resourcing for different operational phases and shifts</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
R20 (3.5.8) Planning processes should be reviewed to ensure that stakeholders beyond the immediate burn area are clearly identified, prioritised and targeted with appropriate communication  
On track

R21 (3.5.9) Communication and engagement processes should be reviewed with an emphasis placed on developing and applying active and meaningful approaches rather than passive methods only  
On track

C1 Develop and publish a community service charter  
On track

C2 Build a 'brand' for forest firefighters  
On track

C4 Look for opportunities to make firewood that is produced during fire response and fuel management operations available to local communities  
On track

C6 Conduct a statewide audit of compliance with current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines  
On track

C7 Conduct a statewide audit into the implementation of recommendations arising from past examinations, investigations or audits of planned burns  
On track

IGEM notes that Recommendation R4 The Department should undertake a thorough review of the risk management and approvals process is being implemented through the Planned Burning Risk Assessment Project, which is being conducted by an independent consultant and described in section 6.2, Implementing improved systems and processes.

IGEM found this key project to be proceeding satisfactorily, with a number of recommendations and commitments linked to its completion.

IGEM notes that Phase 2 of the project includes an assessment by the consultant of the findings and relevant recommendations from the Investigation against the updated standards, directions, instructions and guidelines prior to their inclusion in the updated Fuel Management Manual.

Once Phase 2 is completed, IGEM will review the assessment and its outcomes and revisit the relevant recommendations and commitments as listed in Table ii.

Similarly, Recommendation R9 and Commitment C8 are contingent on the completion of Recommendation R13 An audit and quality assurance function should be established to maintain standards, facilitate continual improvement and to manage risk at all levels of the organisation and will be revisited in the June 2016 quarterly progress report (see Table ii).

### Table ii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION / COMMITMENT</th>
<th>LINKED TO</th>
<th>DELWP STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| R5  
(3.1.2.8) | The risk assessment processes and its outputs should be clear and comprehensible, able to be understood, reviewed and challenged by operational practitioners, and senior managers without fire backgrounds, as well as technical burn planners | Recommendation R4    | On track     |
| R6  
(3.1.2.9) | Context setting and contingency planning should be specifically included within the reformed risk management processes | Recommendation R4    | On track     |
| R7  
(3.1.2.10) | Clear rules and triggers should be established to ensure that burn plans are reviewed whenever the risk profile changes due to circumstances such as significant changes to boundaries, abnormal seasonal conditions, adjoining development or land use changes | Recommendation R4    | On track     |
| R8  
(3.1.2.11) | A burn scheduled for ignition must have a current and useful risk assessment | Recommendation R4    | On track     |
R9 (3.1.2.12) The approach to audits of hazardous tree assessments and associated works should be extended to other aspects of burn planning, preparation and implementation

Recommendation R13 On track

R14 (3.1.4.6) Planning for resources must include any works necessary for the preparation of burns prior to the main ignition

Recommendation R13 On track

R15 (3.1.4.7) Indicative resourcing of burns must take account of the risk assessment and also provide for operational contingency planning

Recommendation R13 On track

R17 (3.2.7) Greater attention to drought factors and their interactions with forest fuels and forecast weather needs to be made when conducting planned burns

Recommendation R13 On track

R18 (3.2.8) The requirement for obtaining spot forecasts for planned burning should be linked to complexity and risk with appropriate oversight in place

Recommendation R13 On track

C8 Commission regular, independent auditing of the planned burning program

Recommendation R13 On track

IGEM notes DELWP’s reported progress of the following recommendations and commitments but is unable to comment further without additional information or supporting documentation being received. IGEM will seek clarification in the next reporting period and revisit Recommendation R19 and Commitment C3 in the June 2016 quarterly progress report (see Table iii).

Table iii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION / COMMITMENT</th>
<th>DELWP STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R19 (3.4.7)</td>
<td>Greater consideration should be given to using aircraft for burn security surveillance as well as ignition and burning out operations, in addition to aerial observation and the suppression of bushfires</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Engage with staff, CFA and EMV to ensure that the best operational practices that exist in regions and districts are identified and applied statewide</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>

IGEM considers that the following recommendations and commitments are complete (see Table iv).

Table iv

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION / COMMITMENT</th>
<th>DELWP STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R22 (3.5.10)</td>
<td>The Department should consider branding the component of its portfolio dealing with fire management and planned burning on public lands so that there is an enduring entity for building stronger and more sustainable relationships with the community</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Investigate the conduct of the approvals and oversight process for the Lancefield-Cobaw Crozier’s Track planned burn</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Request the IGEM to monitor and report on progress in implementation</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td>Ask the IGEM to manage the prompt investigation and reporting of any future breaches of containment lines by a planned burn, drawing on relevant independent experts as required</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

The Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw fire (the Investigation) report was released in November 2015 and comprises 22 recommendations to improve the management of planned burns in Victoria.

This interim progress report is an update on the implementation of the 22 recommendations from the Investigation and 10 additional commitments that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has made to improve the delivery of the Bushfire Fuel Management Program as described in the Response to the recommendations of the independent investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw fire.

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) will provide an update report in June 2016 and quarterly thereafter until all recommendations and commitments have been implemented.

2. Background

Independent investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw fire

On 30 September 2015, DELWP conducted a planned burn at Lancefield-Cobaw Croziers Track in the Macedon Ranges.

Three days later, the burn breached containment lines and burned for a further 10 days. The fire was contained on 13 October 2015 after burning over 3000 hectares, destroying a number of dwellings, sheds, and many kilometres of fencing.

On 8 October 2015, the Victorian Government announced an independent investigation to be led by Mr Murray Carter, Director of the Office of Bushfire Risk Management in Western Australia.

The Terms of Reference stated that the investigation was to focus on:

- The adequacy of planning and resourcing of the ‘Lancefield-Cobaw Croziers Track’ planned burn (the planned burn)
- The appropriateness of the weather and other conditions for conduct of the planned burn on 30 September 2015
- What caused the planned burn to break containment lines on 3 October 2015 and on 6 October 2015
- Decision making, management and control of the planned burn, including the adequacy of the patrol strategy adopted following its ignition
- The adequacy of communication with the community in the lead up to the planned burn and after it broke containment lines.

Recommendations made as part of the Investigation were to be directed at DELWP.

The Investigation report, released by DELWP on 19 November 2015, contained 22 recommendations for improvements to the delivery of planned burning in Victoria.

DELWP response

DELWP accepted all 22 of the recommendations in the Investigation report.

DELWP’s Response to the recommendations of the independent investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw fire also outlined additional commitments to improve the delivery of the Bushfire Fuel Management Program.

Broadly, these additional commitments include:

- rebuilding community trust
- making it clear who is in charge of the planned burning program
- implementing improved systems and processes
- addressing other issues in the planned burning program
- building on the positives
- independent oversight of the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of recommendations.

The response also stated that IGEM would be requested to conduct independent monitoring and reporting on the implementation of recommendations from the Investigation.

DELWP developed a program of work to implement the 22 recommendations and 10 commitments that were grouped under seven themes:

- Implementation of Safer Together
- Implementing improved systems and processes
- Audit and quality assurance framework
- Organisation structure
**Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report Steering Group**

The Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report Steering Group (LFRSG) was established in November 2015 by the Secretary of DELWP to oversee the implementation of DELWP’s response to the Investigation. The LFRSG is chaired by the Executive Director, Fire and Emergency Management Division, Land, Fire and Environment within DELWP and is comprised of DELWP project managers who are responsible for leading the implementation of recommendations. The LFRSG reports weekly via the Chair to the Senior Executive Team and the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. At the invitation of DELWP, IGEM attends the weekly LFRSG meetings as an observer.

**Inspector-General for Emergency Management**

The IGEM is a legislated appointment established under the Emergency Management Act 2013 (the Act) to:

- provide assurance to government and the community in respect of emergency management arrangements in Victoria
- foster continuous improvement of emergency management in Victoria.

The Act requires IGEM to develop and maintain a monitoring and assurance framework for emergency management, against which the capacity, capability and performance of the emergency management sector is to be assessed.

Implementation monitoring is a key element of the Monitoring and Assurance Framework for Emergency Management.

On 8 December 2015, the Victorian Government requested that IGEM monitor and report on progress in making changes to how DELWP operates and in implementing the response to recommendations from the Investigation. This is in accordance with section 64(1)(ca) of the Act.

IGEM formally accepted this role on 29 December 2015 and committed to providing an interim progress report to the Secretary of DELWP by 5 February 2016 and then quarterly, starting in June 2016, until all of the recommendations and commitments have been implemented. IGEM’s reports will be made publicly available.

On 20 January 2016, the Inspector-General met with community representatives and local emergency management personnel, to discuss his role and intended approach in providing independent oversight to ensure all recommendations from the Investigation are implemented and progress is publicly reported.

** IGEM's Review of Performance Targets for Bushfire Fuel Management on Public Land**


In the report, IGEM made four recommendations relating to the Bushfire Fuel Management Program, including a shift away from a hectare-based fuel reduction target and a move toward a risk-reduction approach where the most at-risk areas are prioritised for fuel reduction.

The government released Safer Together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria (Safer Together) in November 2015 accepting all of IGEM’s recommendations.

Safer Together is a five-year plan for a broader approach to bushfire management that considers the full range of options to manage bushfire risk across public and private land, and across prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

IGEM will monitor the implementation of recommendations from IGEM’s review and produce a separate annual progress report in October 2016 and then each year thereafter until all recommendations have been implemented.

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1. Emergency Management Act 2013, s. 64(1)(a).
3. Methodology

This interim update report provides IGEM’s assessment and findings for progress of implementation of:

- the 22 recommendations from the Investigation
- the 10 additional commitments that DELWP has made to improve the delivery of the Bushfire Fuel Management Program as described in the *Response to the recommendations of the independent investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw fire*.

DELWP has grouped, and reported progress to IGEM against, the recommendations and commitments under the themes described previously.

IGEM has aligned with DELWP’s approach by, as far as possible, reporting progress of the recommendations and commitments by theme, rather than in numerical order.

**Information collection**

DELWP collated and consolidated progress reports for each of the recommendations and commitments for the period ending 18 January 2016.

IGEM reviewed and assessed information from the following sources:

- Weekly summary reports – *Lancefield report recommendations provided by DELWP*
- project plans and other relevant documentation provided by DELWP to support reported progress.

IGEM consulted with DELWP for clarification, or to request additional information, where necessary.

IGEM reviewed and analysed the information provided by DELWP and made findings for each of the 22 recommendations and 10 commitments.

**Reporting**

IGEM committed to providing an interim progress update report to the Secretary, DELWP by 5 February 2016.

IGEM’s next progress report will be provided in June 2016 and quarterly thereafter, until all recommendations and commitments have been completed.

4. Risks and limitations

IGEM acknowledges that operational requirements over the summer and autumn’s planned burning period may have an impact on implementation progress and access to key personnel.
The following tables provide a summary of IGEM’s findings for each of the recommendations (Table 1) and commitments (Table 2), in numerical order.

The sections that follow provide progress updates on each of the individual recommendations and commitments, grouped by theme.

### Table 1: Progress summary of Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>DELWP STATUS</th>
<th>IGEM FINDING</th>
<th>REPORT SECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>The Department must adopt a tenure-blind approach to the management of bushfire risk including the planning burns</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendations R1, R2 and R3 is progressing satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>In broadening its focus the Department should consider planned burning as just one of many options in managing fuels, landscape risk, multiple tenures, diverse land uses and must incorporate community perspectives</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>The Department should engage with EMV in seeking and implementing solutions to improving landscape scale bushfire risk management</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>The Department should undertake a thorough review of the risk management and approvals processes</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendation R4 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>The risk assessment processes and its outputs should be clear and comprehensible, able to be understood, reviewed and challenged by operational practitioners, and senior managers without fire backgrounds, as well as technical burn planners</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Context setting and contingency planning should be specifically included within the reformed risk management processes</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Recommendations R5 to R8 are linked to Recommendation R4 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Clear rules and triggers should be established to ensure that burn plans are reviewed whenever the risk profile changes due to circumstances such as significant changes to boundaries, abnormal seasonal conditions, adjoining development or land use changes</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>A burn scheduled for ignition must have a current and useful risk assessment</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>The approach to audits of hazardous tree assessments and associated works should be extended to other aspects of burn planning, preparation and implementation</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Recommendation R9 is linked to Recommendation R13 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>A review of the organisation’s structures and processes at state, regional and district levels should be undertaken to better integrate operational burn planning and operational implementation and to provide sound governance, risk management and quality control</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R10 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>R11 (3.1.3.8)</td>
<td>Burn OICs with appropriate knowledge and experience commensurate with the nature and complexity of the fuels and planned burn operations should be actively involved from the beginning of the planning process</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendation R11 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R12 (3.1.3.9)</td>
<td>To the maximum extent possible given numbers and availability of suitable staff across partner agencies, there should be a single Burn OIC to provide operational continuity across days of ignition and burn management</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R12 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R13 (3.1.3.10)</td>
<td>An audit and quality assurance function should be established to maintain standards, facilitate continual improvement and to manage risk at all levels of the organisation</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendation R13 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R14 (3.1.4.6)</td>
<td>Planning for resources must include any works necessary for the preparation of burns prior to the main ignition</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Recommendations R14 and R15 are linked to Recommendation R4 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R15 (3.1.4.7)</td>
<td>Indicative resourcing of burns must take account of the risk assessment and also provide for operational contingency planning</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Implementation of actions for Recommendation R16 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R16 (3.1.4.8)</td>
<td>Burn OICs must be fully involved in determining appropriate levels of resourcing for different operational phases and shifts</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Implementation of actions for Recommendation R16 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>R17 (3.2.7)</td>
<td>Greater attention to drought factors and their interactions with forest fuels and forecast weather needs to be made when conducting planned burns</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Recommendations R17 and R18 are linked to Recommendation R4 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R18 (3.2.8)</td>
<td>The requirement for obtaining spot forecasts for planned burning should be linked to complexity and risk with appropriate oversight in place</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Implementation of actions for Recommendation R16 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
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<td>R19 (3.4.7)</td>
<td>Greater consideration should be given to using aircraft for burn security surveillance as well as ignition and burning out operations, in addition to aerial observation and the suppression of bushfires</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM will seek further information on the progress of Recommendation R19 and revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R20 (3.5.8)</td>
<td>Planning processes should be reviewed to ensure that stakeholders beyond the immediate burn area are clearly identified, prioritised and targeted with appropriate communication</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Implementation of actions for Recommendation R20 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R21 (3.5.9)</td>
<td>Communication and engagement processes should be reviewed with an emphasis placed on developing and applying active and meaningful approaches rather than passive methods only</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Implementation of actions for Recommendation R21 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R22 (3.5.10)</td>
<td>The Department should consider branding the component of its portfolio dealing with fire management and planned burning on public lands so that there is an enduring entity for building stronger and more sustainable relationships with the community</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Recommendation R22 is complete.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Progress summary of Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report additional commitments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>COMMITMENT</th>
<th>REPORTED STATUS</th>
<th>IGEM FINDING</th>
<th>REPORT SECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Develop and publish a community service charter</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C1 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Build a 'brand' for forest firefighters</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C2 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Engage with staff, CFA and EMV to ensure that the best operational practices exist in regions and districts are identified and applied statewide</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM will seek further information on the progress of Commitment C3 and revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Look for opportunities to make firewood that is produced during fire response and fuel management operations available to local communities</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C4 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Investigate the conduct of the approvals and oversight process for the Lancefield-Cobaw Crozier’s Track planned burn</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Commitment C5 is complete.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Conduct a statewide audit of compliance with current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C6 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Conduct a statewide audit into the implementation of recommendations arising from past examinations, investigations or audits of planned burns</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C7 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Commission regular, independent auditing of the planned burning program</td>
<td>On track</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Commitment C8 is linked to Recommendation R13 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Request the IGEM to monitor and report on progress in implementation</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Commitment C9 is complete.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td>Ask the IGEM to manage the prompt investigation and reporting of any future breaches of containment lines by a planned burn, drawing on relevant independent experts as required</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>IGEM considers that Commitment C10 is complete.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Progress of Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report recommendations and commitments

The progress updates for the recommendations and commitments in the following sections are grouped in accordance with themes developed by DELWP, rather than numerically.

The themes are described in the following order:
- Implementation of Safer Together
- Implementing improved systems and processes
- Audit and quality assurance framework
- Organisation structure
- Operational improvements
- Community engagement
- Independent oversight

6.1. Implementation of Safer Together

Safer Together is the Victorian Government’s response to IGEM’s Review of Performance Targets for Bushfire Fuel Management on Public Land.

Safer Together recognises the need for a broader approach to bushfire management that considers the full range of options to manage bushfire risk across public and private land, and across prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

Following is a progress update for Recommendations R1, R2 and R3, which will be addressed more fully in IGEM’s annual progress report on Safer Together, scheduled for October 2016.

RECOMMENDATION R1 (3.1.1.5)
The Department must adopt a tenure-blind approach to the management of bushfire risk including the planning of burns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>Immediate plus annual reviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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RECOMMENDATION R2 (3.1.1.6)
In broadening its focus the Department should consider planned burning as just one of many options in managing fuels, landscape risk, multiple tenures, diverse land uses and must incorporate community perspective

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>Immediate plus annual reviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>

RECOMMENDATION R3 (3.1.1.7)
The Department should engage with EMV in seeking and implementing solutions to improving landscape scale bushfire risk management

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<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>Immediate plus annual reviews</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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</table>

Summary of progress

DELWP is developing a plan to transition to a risk-based bushfire management approach. The plan will outline how DELWP will achieve the commitments set out in Safer Together, with a proposal for the plan to be implemented in three stages, by 2020.

The DELWP Transition Plan will align to an overarching transition plan to be delivered by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), and individual agency plans by sector partners, such as the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

The Bushfire Management Planning Committee has responsibility for overseeing delivery of the project.

DELWP and EMV are working collaboratively to develop an implementation plan that will include confirmation of governance structures for delivery of the agency and sector plans and ongoing oversight for implementation.

Planned actions

- The DELWP Transition Plan project team will provide a briefing to the Bushfire Management Steering Committee to confirm project scope and governance in February 2016.
- The DELWP Transition Plan project team will continue and broaden engagement to
6.2. Implementing improved systems and processes

The Investigation found some significant shortcomings in DELWP’s planning, processes and systems, as well as their application to risk assessment. The Investigation also identified that fire weather tools, processes and training in their use do not adequately address the risk assessment needs of planned burning.

DELWP reports that the objectives of the Implementing Improved Systems and Processes project are to ensure that:

- policy, procedures and guidelines give proper consideration to risk management
- approvals and resourcing are commensurate with the level of risk and the best available weather products are used
- best operational practices can be applied statewide
- staff are appropriately trained in the application and use of the procedures, tools and process and use of weather products.

The project is being delivered through the following program of sub-projects:

- Review and update standards, directions, instructions and guidelines
  *(Refer to Recommendations R4 - R8, R11*, R14, R15, R17, R18)*
- Engage an independent risk management expert to review these new processes, prior to incorporating them into an updated Fuel Management Manual.

*IGEM finding*

IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendations R1, R2 and R3 is progressing satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

(Refer to Recommendation R4)
- Risk management training
  *(Refer to Recommendation R4)*
- Weather information made available to staff undertaking a planned burn
  *(Refer to Recommendation R17)*
- Engage with staff, CFA and EMV to ensure that the best operational practices that exist in regions and districts are identified and applied statewide
  *(Refer to Recommendation C3)*
- Review staff training in the interpretation and use of fire weather information
  *(Refer to Recommendation R17)*
- Ensure that the appropriate resources are allocated to a planned burn
  *(Refer to Recommendation R19)*

**RECOMMENDATION R4 (3.1.2.7)**

The Department should undertake a thorough review of the risk management and approvals processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>March 2016 (process)</th>
<th>July 2016 (training)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>

**Summary of progress**

DELWP have been reviewing three current manuals that relate to planned burning (Fire Operations Planning, Fuel Management, and Planned Burning). These have been rolled into one draft manual – the Fuel Management Manual, which is intended to align with ISO standard (ISO 9001-2015).

DELWP has engaged an independent consultant to provide expert advice on the structure of the documentation in the draft Fuel Management Manual and the embedded risk management processes for the planning and conduct of planned burning. This task includes ensuring that improvements and necessary

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3 Refer to Section 6.5 Operational improvements for an update on Recommendation R11.

4 DELWP has noted that this action is currently aligned with the Operational Improvements project but believes it to be more of a procedural matter than operational.
changes are incorporated into the manual and consistent with the relevant ISO standard.

This work is being delivered in three phases:

**Phase 1**
- An assessment of DELWP’s fire management manuals document structure and hierarchy, and specifically the draft Fuel Management Manual to confirm or otherwise, its consistency with the ISO standard (ISO 9001-2015).
- An assessment of the documented risk management processes for the planning and conduct of planned burning against the ISO standard (ISO 31000).
- An analysis identifying gaps in the documented risk management processes for planned burning.

**Phase 2**
- A review of the findings and relevant recommendations from the Lancefield investigation against the draft Fuel Management Manual.

**Phase 3**
- Implementation of the findings and recommendations of Phase 1 and 2 by making approved changes to the documentation.

**Planned actions**
- Phase 1 is planned for completion by 21 January 2016.
- Phase 2 is planned for completion by 2 February 2016.
- Phase 3 is planned for completion by 26 February 2016.
- Training of staff involved in planned burning is to be completed by July 2016.

**IGEM comment**
IGEM was unable to review documents relating to the completion of Phase 1 as it occurred after the cut-off date for receipt of evidence.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendation R4 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

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**RECOMMENDATION R5 (3.1.2.8)**
The risk assessment processes and its outputs should be clear and comprehensible, able to be understood, reviewed and challenged by operational practitioners, and senior managers without fire backgrounds, as well as technical burn planners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>March 2016</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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**RECOMMENDATION R6 (3.1.2.9)**
Context setting and contingency planning should be specifically included within the reformed risk management processes

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<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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**RECOMMENDATION R7 (3.1.2.10)**
Clear rules and triggers should be established to ensure that burn plans are reviewed whenever the risk profile changes due to circumstances such as significant changes to boundaries, abnormal seasonal conditions, adjoining development or land use changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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</table>

**RECOMMENDATION R8 (3.1.2.11)**
A burn schedule for ignition must have a current and useful risk assessment

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<th>Planned completion</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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</table>

**RECOMMENDATION R14 (3.1.4.6)**
Planning for resources must include any works necessary for the preparation of burns prior to the main ignition

<table>
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<th>Planned completion</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>
**RECOMMENDATION R15 (3.1.4.7)**
Indicative resourcing of burns must take account of the risk assessment and also provide for operational contingency planning

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<th>Planned completion</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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</table>

**IGEM comment**
IGEM notes that Phase 2 of the independent consultant’s Planned Burning Risk Assessment project includes a review of the findings and relevant recommendations from the Investigation for comparison against the draft Fuel Management Manual. Once this work is completed, IGEM will assess the independent consultant’s findings in relation to Recommendations R5 to R8, R14 and R15 to determine whether their intent has been met.

IGEM considers that Recommendations R5 to R8, R14 and R15 are linked to Recommendation R4 and is therefore unable to comment on their progress until Recommendation R4 is completed.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that Recommendations R5 to R8, R14 and R15 are linked to Recommendation R4 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

**Summary of progress**
DELWP has advised that, in relation to Recommendations R17 and R18, interim improvements to weather information to be made available to staff undertaking a planned burn will include:

- better use of existing products
- identification of enhanced products
- identification of improvements to systems, processes and procedures
- improvements and better integration of interpretation services into risk assessment processes
- a review of staff training in the interpretation and use of fire weather information and fire weather training programs.

**Planned actions**
- DELWP has undertaken an initial stocktake of weather tools and is consulting with regional staff to gain a better understanding of which products are being used before, during and after burning operations. This information will be consolidated by the end of January 2016.
  - Communication and classification on products to inform training will be issued by the end of February 2016.
  - An assessment of any enhancements required and staff training will follow.

**IGEM comment**
IGEM notes that Recommendations R17 and R18 are also linked to Recommendation R4 and will revisit them following completion of Phase 2 of the independent consultant’s Planned Burning Risk Assessment project.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that Recommendations R17 and R18 are linked to Recommendation R4 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.
COMMITMENT C3
Engage with staff, CFA and EMV to ensure that the best operational practices that exist in regions and districts are identified and applied statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>March 2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>

Summary of progress
DELWP advises that discussions are underway for DELWP to adopt the Emergency Management Learning Framework developed by EMV. This will include a specific pilot on planned burning in 2016.

A review of seasonal debriefs is also underway to identify examples of best operational practices.

Planned actions
- A report on best operational practices that exist in regions and districts is planned for completion by January 2016.

IGEM comment
IGEM notes the reported progress against this commitment but is unable to comment further without additional information or supporting documentation being received.

IGEM will seek further evidence of progress in the next reporting period.

IGEM finding
IGEM will seek further information on the progress of Commitment C3 and revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

6.3. Audit and quality assurance framework
DELWP’s Audit and Quality Assurance Framework project aims to enhance DELWP’s audit and quality assurance for planned burning and deliver robust processes and supporting systems. The project comprises six discrete pieces of work:
- Conduct a statewide audit into the implementation of recommendations arising from past examinations, investigations or audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003.

(Refer to Commitment C7)

- Conduct a statewide audit of compliance with current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines issued by the Chief Fire Officer for the approval and oversight of a planned burn.

(Refer to Commitment C6)

- Investigate the conduct of the approvals and oversight process for the Lancefield-Cobaw Crozier’s Track planned burn, building on and consistent with the independent investigation.

(Refer to Commitment C5)

- DELWP is developing an audit and quality assurance framework for the planned burning program, which will include independent auditing. The framework will be designed to facilitate the maintenance of standards, continuous improvement and the management of risks at all levels of DELWP. The framework will include all stages of a planned burn, including planning, preparation and implementation and will consider the approach to audits of hazardous tree assessments in design of the framework.

(Refer to Recommendations R9 and R13)

- DELWP will adopt a “Lessons Learnt” initiative, and will build on its current scenario based and experiential learning to cover all stages of a planned burn, including planning, preparation and implementation.

- Commission regular, independent auditing of the planned burning program. These reports will be made public.

(Refer to Commitment C8)

RECOMMENDATION R9 (3.1.2.12)
The approach to audits of hazardous tree assessments and associated works should be extended to other aspects of burn planning, preparation and implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>July 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of progress

The new audit and assurance framework will cover all stages of planned burning including considering the approach to audits of hazardous tree assessments.

It will outline quality assurance principles, support the continuous improvement cycle and define the independent audit program. It will include a focus on:

- strategic bushfire management plans
- fire operations plan
- planned burn implementation schedule developed by regions and districts
- work plans developed for the planning and preparation of planned burns
- individual burn plans and supporting documentation compiled for the delivery of the planned burn.

Planned actions

- Assessment of the applicability and suitability of extending the approach to audits of hazardous tree assessments to other aspects of bushfire management by 30 April 2016.
- Development of audit and quality assurance framework completed by July 2016.

IGEM comment

IGEM considers that this recommendation is linked to the implementation of Recommendation R13 and will revisit once Recommendation R13 is complete.

IGEM finding

IGEM considers that Recommendation R9 is linked to Recommendation R13 and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

RECOMMENDATION R13 (3.1.3.10)

An audit and quality assurance function should be established to maintain standards, facilitate continual improvement and to manage risk at all levels of the organisation.

Planned completion: July 2016

Reported status: On track
• Audit and quality assurance framework finalised by 28 June 2016.
• Final audit plan including independent auditing completed by 28 June 2016.

**IGEM comment**

DELWP has advised that a Request for Quotation was completed and scheduled for distribution to the steering group on 29 January 2016. This is outside IGEM’s cut-off date for receipt of evidence and IGEM will review the RFQ during the next reporting period.

IGEM notes that Recommendation R13 is linked to Commitments C5, C6 and C7 and will revisit following completion of these activities.

**IGEM finding**

IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendation R13 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

**COMMITMENT C5**

Investigate the conduct of the approvals and oversight process for the Lancefield-Cobaw Crozier’s Track planned burn, building on and consistent with the independent investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>December 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>Complete</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of progress**

DELWP reported that the investigation into the conduct of the approvals and oversight process for the Lancefield-Cobaw planned burn has been completed.

The Investigation included interviews with DELWP and Parks Victoria personnel directly involved with the Lancefield-Cobaw burn.

The report was released on the DELWP website on 14 January 2016.

The report contains five recommendations, four of which relate to systems, process, and culture and are linked to the Investigation report. Key recommendations include:

• a thorough review and update of DELWP’s Fire Management Manual
• DELWP consider options to improve the culture of decision making and promote peer review
• DELWP consider a review of higher level district and regional responsibilities
• assess individuals’ roles in approvals and oversight of the burn and target increased training to those involved in the burn.

**IGEM comment**

IGEM considers that Commitment C5 is complete.

**COMMITMENT C6**

Conduct a statewide audit of compliance with current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines issued by the Chief Fire Officer for the approval and oversight of a planned burn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>March 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>

**Summary of progress**

DELWP has developed a draft scope of the audit and is currently in the process of seeking feedback from the LFRSG.

The draft scope includes:

• an assessment of a sample of at least two planned burns lit in each fire district in the last 12 months against DELWP’s current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines issued by the Chief Fire Officer for the approval to plan and implement planned burns
• an assessment of whether approvals for each sampled burn were provided in accordance with departmental policies and procedures, including in respect of any relevant delegations
• consideration of whether the implementation of officer oversight for each sampled burn was undertaken in accordance with departmental policies and procedures.

Once scope is finalised, DELWP will proceed with the appointment of an auditor to conduct the audit.

The proposed approach will be based on:

• discussions with selected DELWP management and subject matter experts
• consideration of available documentation provided by the DELWP Fire Performance Unit and relevant regional personnel.
Planned actions
- Compliance audit against current standards, directions, instructions and guidelines issued by the Chief Fire Officer to be completed by March 2016.

IGEM finding
IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C6 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

COMMITMENT C7
Conduct a statewide audit into the implementation of recommendations arising from past examinations, investigations or audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003

Planned completion March 2016
Reported status On track

Summary of progress
DELWP’s internal audit scope has been finalised and a list of all planned burn escapes since January 2003 has been compiled by Regional Services staff.

The internal audit will consider:
- DELWP’s processes and controls in respect to the identification, recording and tracking of actions arising from past examinations, investigations or audits of planned burns that have breached containment lines since 2003
- documentation provided by the DELWP Fire Performance Unit to support the status of all actions identified by the Department as at 11 January 2016
- DELWP’s processes and controls in place to monitor the 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 to, and use of, records).

The audit has commenced, with the identification and collation of documents in response to the escapes underway.

Planned actions
- Audit fieldwork to be completed by 22 January 2016.
- Draft report to be completed by 5 February 2016.
- Final report to be completed by 4 March 2016.

IGEM finding
IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C7 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

COMMITMENT C8
Commission regular, independent auditing of the planned burning program

Planned completion July 2016
Reported status On track

Summary of progress
DELWP advised that this commitment will be implemented as part of the audit and quality assurance framework.

Independent external resources with specialist skills and knowledge will be used to undertake audits and develop aspects of the new audit and quality assurance framework.

The planned burning audit program is being developed to ensure that there is a sufficient level of independent oversight to maintain standards, facilitate continuous improvement, and the management of risks at all levels.

Planned actions
- Work is expected to commence in early 2016 to engage an external provider, review previous audit plans, and develop an agreed audit work program.
- The planned burning audit program is expected to be ready by July 2016.

IGEM comment
IGEM notes that Commitment C8 is linked to Recommendation R13 and is therefore unable to comment on its progress until Recommendation R13 is completed.
6.4. Organisation structure

The Investigation made one recommendation relating to DELWP’s organisational structures.

**RECOMMENDATION R10 (3.1.3.7)**

A review of the organisation’s structures and processes at state, regional and district levels should be undertaken to better integrate operational burn planning and operational implementation and to provide sound governance, risk management and quality control.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
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<td>Reported status</td>
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**Summary of progress**

The Chief Fire Officer is now reporting directly to the Secretary, DELWP. The Chief Fire Officer is accountable for fire prevention and suppression operations (including planned burning) on behalf of the DELWP Secretary.

The role has a stronger focus on risk management and quality assurance of DELWP’s planned burning program.

On 14 December 2015, DELWP announced its proposed organisational changes and began the staff consultation process.

The changes include a new operating model and a proposed structure creating a new Forest, Fire and Regions Group.

The Forest Fire and Regions Group will provide end-to-end management of forests, fire and other emergencies, by bringing together everything from policy to on-ground operational delivery under a single Deputy Secretary.

DELWP states that the benefits of the proposed structures which will address key findings of the Investigation are:

- Strengthened quality control, assurance and approvals processes over the planned burning program, through an enhanced quality management function in the Office of the Chief Fire Officer (including three new regionally-based Audit and Performance Officers).
- Under new arrangements, the role of Operations Director will also become Assistant Chief Fire Officer and will report directly to the Chief Fire Officer during planned burning operations. This creates a single line of responsibility from state to district levels and will provide stronger oversight of the planned burning program.
- Integration of strategic, operational and tactical planning for planned burning fire management under the Operations Director (Assistant Chief Fire Officer). It also brings together responsibility for planned burning at the district level under a District Planned Burning Manager.

**Planned actions**

- Staff consultation on the proposed organisational changes will continue until 22 January 2016.

**IGEM finding**

IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R10 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

6.5. Operational improvements

The following actions are included in the Operational improvements project:

- Work with VicRoads and local government to support better management of roadside vegetation.
- Look for opportunities to make firewood that is produced during fire response and fuel management operations available to local communities (Refer to Commitment C4)
- DELWP will ensure that the appropriate resources are allocated to a planned burn so that it is undertaken successfully and that the security of a planned burn can be monitored and maintained. This includes the allocation and use of aircraft, and reinforcing the importance of post-ignition risk assessment so that resource requirements are continually reviewed throughout the conduct of a planned burn. (Refer to Recommendation R19)
• DELWP is currently investigating the increased use of emerging technologies such as forward looking infra-red and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of planned burn surveillance.  
(Refer to Recommendation R19)

• DELWP will review and strengthen its current accreditation system for the role of Burn Officer-in-Charge, considering the approach that is used for Incident Management Teams in bushfire and emergency response.  
(Refer to Recommendation R11)

• DELWP will work with partner agencies, including CFA, to build the number of highly-skilled personnel that can fill the role of Burn Officer-in-Charge.  
(Refer to Recommendation R11)

IGEM finding
IGEM considers that the implementation of actions for Recommendation R11 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

RECOMMENDATION R12 (3.1.3.9)
To the maximum extent possible given numbers and availability of suitable staff across partner agencies, there should be a single Burn OIC to provide operational continuity across days of ignition and burn management

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned completion</th>
<th>Immediate and ongoing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported status</td>
<td>On track</td>
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</table>

Summary of progress
DELWP will review and strengthen its current accreditation system for the role of Burn-Officer-in-Charge (Burn OIC).

Planned actions
• Review of the current system including national units of competency by 31 January 2016.
• Gap analysis and development of options including, if necessary, alignment of training modules to national units of competency by February 2016.
• Design of strengthened system by June 2016.
• Implementation plan developed by July 2016.

IGEM comment
IGEM notes that the first deliverable reported by DELWP for Recommendation R11 is a review of the current system, due by 31 January 2016, which is beyond the cut-off date for receipt of evidence.

IGEM also notes that R11 relates to the Planned Burning Risk Assessment Project, described in Section 6.2 Implementing improved systems and processes and will assess in relation to completion of Recommendation 4.

RECOMMENDATION R12 (3.1.3.9)
To the maximum extent possible given numbers and availability of suitable staff across partner agencies, there should be a single Burn OIC to provide operational continuity across days of ignition and burn management

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Summary of progress
The Chief Fire Officer issued a direction on 18 November 20155, directing that a single Burn OIC is to be allocated to a burn to provide operational continuity across days of ignition and planned burn management, subject to compliance with safety, wellbeing and fatigue management policies. The Burn Controller will provide additional oversight during all stages of a planned burn.

The direction also states that where it is not possible to appoint a single Burn OIC, then an alternative officer with the appropriate knowledge, experience and situation awareness must be in place to provide continuity. This direction is to ensure that the right skills and expertise are available throughout the conduct of a planned burn that there is effective handover to maintain operational continuity.

DELWP advises that R12 will be addressed in the longer term as part of the Planned Burning

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Risk Assessment Project, described in Section 6.2 Implementing improved systems and processes.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R12 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

### RECOMMENDATION R16 (3.1.4.8)
Burn OICs must be fully involved in determining appropriate levels of resourcing for different operational phases and shifts

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**Summary of progress**

The Chief Fire Officer issued a direction on 18 November 2015\(^6\), stating that the Burn OIC is to be fully involved in determining the appropriate levels of resourcing for all operational phases and shifts of a burn.

The direction notes that there may be circumstances where there are multiple planned burns being undertaken within a district, and resources will be shared across different burn operations based on risk and need. While the Burn OIC must be involved in determining the resourcing for a particular planned burn, the overall resourcing of planned burning within a district is the responsibility of the Burn Controller.

DELWP advises that R16 will be addressed in the longer term as part of the Planned Burning Risk Assessment project, described in Section 6.2 Implementing improved systems and processes, together with the review of the Burn OIC accreditation.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R16 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

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**RECOMMENDATION R19 (3.4.7)**
Greater consideration should be given to using aircraft for burn security surveillance as well as ignition and burning out operations, in addition to aerial observation and the suppression of bushfires

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**Summary of progress**

The Chief Fire Officer issued a direction on 18 November 2015\(^7\), stating that there is to be regular sharing of information on changing risks at all levels of the management structure for the conduct of a planned burn (Burn OIC, Burn Controller, Regional Agency Commander and State Agency Commander).

This is intended to improve the oversight of planned burns to ensure that mitigation actions are taken, resourcing is reviewed, and timely and relevant communication is provided to local communities on changed circumstances.

DELWP is investigating the increased use of emerging technologies such as forward-looking infra-red and remotely piloted aircraft to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of planned burn surveillance.

This will inform work by EMV to establish a sector-wide project for remotely piloted aircraft during the autumn planned burning program and for other land management practices.

**Planned actions**
- DELWP has engaged an international provider to conduct a pilot of remotely piloted aircraft in late February/March 2016.
- DELWP has prepared standards for a panel of providers for remotely piloted aircraft. Providers will be able to register for the panel in February 2016.

**IGEM comment**
IGEM notes that significant progress has been made in the consideration of the utilisation of remotely piloted aircraft.

IGEM will seek confirmation during the next reporting period that conventional aircraft will

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\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid.
be utilised for burn security surveillance and ignition and burning out operations, in addition to aerial observation and the suppression of bushfires.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM will seek further information on the progress of Recommendation R19 and revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

**COMMITMENT C4**
Look for opportunities to make firewood that is produced during fire response and fuel management operations available to local communities

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**Summary of progress**
DELWP reports that firewood generated through the clearing of fence lines is being offered to landholders. Unwanted wood is being disposed of, including approximately 60 tonnes that has been delivered to a commercial firewood cutter whose stockpile was burnt.

**Planned actions**
- DELWP is exploring options across the state with work underway to identify issues and solutions in each district (e.g. ensuring that wood is made available in proximity to communities).

**IGEM comment**
IGEM notes the work being done in exploring options for making firewood available to communities and will expect to see documented processes in place by the due date.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C4 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

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### 6.6. Community engagement

DELWP advises that improving community engagement and rebuilding community trust is a key priority in responding to the findings and recommendations of the Investigation. The objectives are:

- To develop a charter that articulates how DELWP will deliver upon its commitment to building stronger and more sustainable relationships with the community.
  
  *(Refer to Commitment C1)*

- Review engagement practices regarding planned burning that meet legislative obligations, government directions of intent, current guidance, supports regional delivery and better meet the needs of communities and key stakeholders.
  
  *(Refer to Recommendation R21)*

- To define best practice forms of localised, active and meaningful communications and engagement processes, with an emphasis on local relationships so that the community feel engaged and informed.
  
  *(Refer to Recommendation R21)*

- To identify key capabilities required for DELWP staff in customer service.
  
  *(Refer to Recommendation R21)*

- To review and finalise the bushfire management engagement Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework.
  
  *(Refer to Recommendation R20)*

- To develop a ‘brand’ for forest fighters.
  
  *(Refer to Commitment C2)*

**RECOMMENDATION R20 (3.5.8)**
Planning processes should be reviewed to ensure that stakeholders beyond the immediate burn area are clearly identified, prioritised and targeted with appropriate communication

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Summary of progress

On 13 January 2016, DELWP commenced a review of previous evaluation models to develop clear effectiveness measures for engagement with communities. The expected output of this activity is a revised bushfire management engagement MERI framework that will guide the Department and partner agencies to monitor, evaluate and report on the quality and effectiveness of bushfire management on public land and its engagement with communities.

The intended outcomes of the bushfire management engagement MERI are:

- that DELWP understands the community’s experience of engaging with the Department
- that the MERI enables DELWP to identify where good engagement practices are occurring and areas for improvement
- that DELWP can be held accountable by the community to commitments it has made about understanding and incorporating local knowledge and values into decisions
- that DELWP uses the knowledge gained through evaluation to inform development of staff engagement capability.

Planned actions

- Initial set of effectiveness measures to be completed by first week of February 2016.
- Testing and further development of the effectiveness measures in February 2016.

IGEM finding

IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R20 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

RECOMMENDATION R21 (3.5.9)

Communication and engagement processes should be reviewed with an emphasis placed on developing and applying active and meaningful approaches rather than passive methods only

Planned completion July 2016

Reported status On track

Summary of progress

This recommendation is addressed through the following actions:

- review of communication and engagement process
- investigation of use of methods and tools to raise community awareness in the delivery of the planned burning program
- building capability of DELWP staff in community engagement and customer service through formal learning and development.

A working group has undertaken the Review of Community Engagement for Planned Burning. The objective of the review was to understand and, if necessary, improve the way DELWP engages around planned burning to meet legislative obligations, current guidance, and support regional delivery and better meet the needs of communities and stakeholders. DELWP is currently considering the findings and recommendations by the working group.

Development of a range of new engagement tools and guidance as well as refinement of processes for planned burning engagement is underway. These should be ready for use by DELWP regional staff in mid-February.

DELWP has also engaged a social researcher to organise and conduct focus group discussions with four high-risk communities across Victoria. Selection for focus groups to explore the community definition and expectations for ‘active and meaningful’ communication is underway.

DELWP went to market on 22 December 2015 to engage a training provider to design, deliver, and evaluate a Community Service and Interaction Module training program for all DELWP staff.

The Community Service and Interaction Module will establish the context for working with communities in accordance with the DELWP Charter and address relationship management strategies and tactics in increasingly complex situations both internally and externally.

This project will draw heavily from the findings of the community service charter engagement process (Commitment C1).
Planned actions

- First draft of guidance document for working group feedback by 25 January 2016.
- Finalisation guidance document and engagement tools by 12 February 2016.
- Provide regions with guidance and engagement tools by 23 February 2016.
- Focus groups will occur in first two weeks of February 2016
- Appointment of preferred supplier (training provider) in early February 2016.
- Rollout of training for regional-based staff to commence in March 2016, to be delivered over approximately a 12-month period.

IGEM finding

IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Recommendation R21 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

RECOMMENDATION R22 (3.5.10)
The Department should consider branding the component of its portfolio dealing with fire management and planned burning on public land so that there is an enduring entity for building stronger and more sustainable relationships with the community

Planned completion March 2016
Reported status Complete

Summary of progress

The brand ‘Forest Fire Management’ was announced by the DELWP Secretary on 14 December 2015.

IGEM finding

IGEM considers that Recommendation R22 is complete.

COMMITMENT C1
Develop and publish a community service charter

Planned completion March 2016
Reported status On track

IGEM finding

IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C1 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

Summary of progress

In January 2016, a consultant was engaged to facilitate the development of a community service charter that will describe how DELWP will partner with and involve local communities in decision-making about public land and bushfire management.

The consultant met with DELWP to identify stakeholders and conceptualise the end-product of the consultation process.

Consultation will be in three phases. This approach will allow DELWP to meet its March 2016 deadline, as well as have a core document to test with the community during March and April 2016, to ensure the Charter best represents the community’s and stakeholders’ expectations and feedback.

Materials are currently being developed to support community consultation sessions, where a broad range of community members with varied interests and experiences will be invited. Eight facilitated sessions with place-based communities will be supplemented by five staff sessions, as well as a series of one-on-one engagements with stakeholders led by the DELWP Executive.

Planned actions

- Workshop and design delivery in February 2016.

The engagement process will include a range of workshops and forums for staff throughout the state, to capture feedback from District Managers, regions and districts.

Community engagement is focusing on place-based communities, anticipated to be held in Wesburn/Warburton, Mildura, Daylesford, Bendigo, Omeo/Swifts Creek, Beechworth, Anglesea, and Lancefield.

Targeted stakeholder engagement will also be undertaken by Departmental executive.

- Findings and the draft community service charter to be completed in March 2016.

A community charter will be developed based on findings and recommendations resulting from the January and February community engagement.

IGEM finding

IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C1 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.
COMMITMENT C2
Build a ‘brand’ for forest firefighters

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Summary of progress
The new brand ‘Forest Fire Management’ was announced by the DELWP Secretary on 14 December 2015.

Fire District staff were provided with ‘Forest Fire Management’ patches for DELWP badged shirts on 23 December 2015. New overalls (500) will be branded with the new logo along with the 300 unbranded overalls already in stock.

A consultant has been engaged to develop a Forest Fire Management style guideline to provide clear guidance on how and when the brand should be viewed and used. This will inform vehicle branding which is intended to be on the first 31 of the ultra-light tankers being introduced into the field in March 2016. Draft protocols for use of the brand have been developed and a brand activation strategy is planned.

Planned actions
- Critical decisions and actions to be confirmed by 21 January 2016, these include answers to:
  - Which roles fall within the Forest Fire Management team?
  - Will non-DELWP agencies in the field, such as Parks Victoria AND Melbourne Water be part of Forest Fire Management?
  - What is out of scope for Forest Fire Management?
- Staff engagement to be undertaken in February 2016.
- Draft Forest Fire Management guidelines will be available in early February 2016.
- Media engagement to occur in February 2016.
- Development of customer training in March/April 2016.
- Undertake a ‘Brand Activation Strategy’ in March/April 2016.

IGEM finding
IGEM considers that implementation of actions for Commitment C2 is proceeding satisfactorily and will revisit in the June 2016 quarterly progress report.

6.7. Independent oversight
Following the Investigation, DELWP announced there would be independent monitoring and reporting on the implementation of recommendations and the changes DELWP had committed to making.

DELWP committed to:
- Request IGEM to monitor and publicly report on progress in making these changes and in implementing the response to the Investigation recommendations
  (Refer to Commitment C9)
- Ask IGEM to manage the prompt investigation and reporting of any future breaches of containment lines by a planned burn
  (Refer to Commitment C10)
- Commission regular, independent auditing of the planned burning program.
  (Refer to Commitment C8 in Section 6.3: Audit and quality assurance framework)

COMMITMENT C9
Request the IGEM to monitor and report on progress in implementation

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Summary of progress
The Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water and the Minister for Emergency Services wrote to the IGEM on 8 December 2015 requesting they monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendations from the Investigation.
The Inspector-General wrote to both ministers formally accepting this role on 29 December 2015.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that Commitment C9 is complete.

**COMMITMENT C10**
Ask the IGEM to manage the prompt investigation and reporting of any future breaches of containment lines by a planned burn, drawing on relevant independent experts as required

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**Summary of progress**

The Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water and the Minister for Emergency Services wrote to the IGEM on 8 December 2015 requesting they manage the prompt investigation and reporting on any future breaches of containment lines by a planned burn.

The Inspector-General wrote to both ministers formally accepting this role on 29 December 2015.

**IGEM finding**
IGEM considers that Commitment C10 is complete.
7. Concluding remarks

The 2015 Lancefield-Cobaw fire was a significant event that identified a number of opportunities for improvement in the management of planned burns in Victoria.

DELWP accepted all 22 recommendations from the Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire and made an additional 10 commitments, demonstrating an appetite to ensure that existing processes and practices are improved.

IGEM will be seeking further information on some recommendations and commitments, but is generally satisfied with the robust project plans that have been put in place and the progress made to date.

IGEM will expect to see most recommendations and commitments completed prior to the June 2016 quarterly progress report.
Inspector-General for Emergency Management