



# Municipal Fire Management Planning

## ALIGNING MUNICIPAL FIRE PLANNING WITH ORGANISATIONAL CORPORATE PLANNING

### Background

The Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP) is a practical tool for councils and their partners to plan their pursuit of fire risk management treatments that contribute to the overall safety of the community.

This Fire Service Guideline deals specifically with some of the business planning implications for organisations, specifically municipalities.

### Aligning MFMPs and Organisational Planning

Like municipalities, many agencies also have regional or corporate plans. By aligning MFMP actions to regional or corporate agency plans, it ensures that resources are allocated and each agency is committing to delivering the agreed actions.

### CREATING THE ALIGNMENT

Planning activities can be aligned within each agency and organisation's business and planning processes through:

- The implementation of common planning models and methodologies
- Allocation of resources and accountabilities
- Participation in common decision making through the committee process, timed to facilitate incorporation of decisions into business plans for each year.
- Collaborative delivery of fire management activities
- Cooperative engagement

### Aligning MFMPs and Municipal Planning

All municipalities are required by the *Local Government Act* 1989 to ensure they adequately plan for the future of the municipality including the development, implementation and monitoring of strategic plans and budgets. For many municipalities this leads to the production of a corporate and an annual plan.

The corporate plan contains actions to achieve a council's long-term vision and address council priorities. The annual plan is a resource allocation plan. It identifies all of council's services and the key initiatives to be delivered over a financial year.

### ALIGNING THE MFMP WITH MUNICIPAL OBJECTIVES

The importance of the plan aligning with the municipality's objectives was highlighted in the Municipal Fire Prevention Planning Guidelines 2003. The Guidelines identified that "because municipalities also have other objectives, it is important that the MFMP sits comfortably and is integrated with the Council's overall direction".



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Every Municipality should be encouraged to integrate the fire plan with its corporate objectives so that the municipal corporate plan has a statement about ensuring the safety of people who live work and visit there. The MFMP should become an integrated document which the municipality can implement with confidence and enthusiasm.

## **ALIGNING THE MFMP WITH MUNICIPAL RESOURCE PLANNING AND BUDGETARY DECISIONS**

The MFMP and the council annual plan are often developed independently. As a result funding is often not connected to the development of MFMPs or to the delivery of treatments identified in the plan. Where funding is not obtained strategies can go unfunded and unimplemented.

If the preparation and maintenance of the MFMP is to occur, and particularly if the municipal treatments identified in the plan are to be implemented, the MFMP must be linked to the municipality's annual plan. By linking municipal fire management planning with the municipality and its partners' annual plans, there is more likely to be adequate resource and budgetary allocation to achieve municipal fire management planning obligations.

Municipalities should carry out an analysis of their own expenditure, staffing, and skill requirements in relation to preparing and maintaining the fire management plan as well as those required to ensure the delivery of the treatments identified in the plan that are the responsibility of the municipality.

Each municipality tends to have a different business planning process, making it difficult to prescribe a particular method of ensuring fire management planning is accounted for in the municipality's corporate and annual business plan. Those responsible for fire management planning, including the MFPO, should:

- Ensure they clearly understand the planning process in the municipality and how to participate in it.
- Forge relationships with the person or department responsible for corporate planning.
- Align the timetabling of the development/review of the MFMP with the development of the corporate plan so they are complementary.
- Identify the key deliverables of the MFMP and ensure they are transparent within the corporate and annual plan.
- Ensure outputs in the MFMP are clear, measurable and reported.

## **References**

Country Fire Authority (2003) *Municipal Fire Prevention Planning Guidelines*, Country Fire Authority, Victoria.