

FPA BOARD MEETING COMMUNIQUE

18 September 2020

Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing Audit report and Covid-19 Pandemic

The monthly WHS&W report was noted. The Board reviewed the incident and investigation reports associated with a lost time incident that required emergency treatment and noted the corrective actions being facilitated by the Chief Forest Practices Officer (CFPO). The DSG COVID-19 Safety Plan continues to be implemented for all offices and vehicles.

Finance

The Board reviewed the monthly financial report and a report on the draft 2019/20 Financial Statements from the Risk and Audit Committee. Members noted that FPP application fee income remained positive, considering the pandemic situation.

Risk Management

The Board received a 20 minute presentation on cybersecurity from two Department of State Growth cybersecurity specialists.

Strategic Planning

Members resolved to set aside time for a strategic planning session with staff and to review some aspects of the current strategic plan that may require more detail or elaboration.

Clearance and Conversion Applications – Threatened Native Vegetation

The Board considered an application for a forest practices plan (FPP) to clear and convert 0.2 ha of a threatened native vegetation community (*Melaleuca ericifolia* swamp forest) and to offset this by establishment of a one-hectare patch of the same community adjacent to a Private Land Reserve. The Board approved the proposal on the basis that the activities authorised by the FPP are likely to have an overall environmental benefit and recommended that the plan be amended to afford further protection to the vegetation community.

The Board re-affirmed its previous decision that the applicant for any proposals for clearing and conversion of more than 40ha per property should be advised to seek approval in accordance with clause 3.3(c) of the Policy for Maintaining a Permanent Native Forest Estate.

Compliance

The Board considered compliance reports and preliminary information on two investigations.

Forest Practices Officer (FPO) appointments and Refresher Course

The Board appointed James Peter Wilson and Nicholas John Hall as forest practices officers.

Members noted that the FPA is conducting one-day FPO Refresher Courses on 13th, 14th and 20th October 2020.

RFA obligations

Members noted a report prepared by FPA biodiversity staff on the achievement of actions relating to threatened species under the Regional Forest Agreement and the priorities for a continuing work program.

Consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions on FPP certification

The CFPO sought guidance from the Board on matters associated with the objectives of the Forest Practices Act that require due care for the environment while considering social, economic and environmental outcomes. Members noted that the CFPO is often asked to provide guidance to third parties including forest practices officers, where the quality of information provided was not complete enough to exercise sound judgement in relation to these matters. The Board confirmed that the CFPO is entitled to provide enquirers with as much guidance as possible, whilst noting the FPA is not responsible to assess the economic justification for proposals. The Board agreed that at the discretion of the CFPO any complex matters may be directed to the Board for decision.

Swift parrot Public Authority Management Agreement (PAMA)

The Board noted a report from the FPA Biodiversity Program Manager that examined the relationship between the threatened fauna adviser (TFA) prescriptions for the management of the swift parrot and the PAMA agreed between DPIPWE and Sustainable Timber Tasmania. The Board noted that initial discussions had been held between FPA and DPIPWE specialist staff on the arrangements agreed in the PAMA. Members noted that the PAMA delivered a strategic approach for nesting habitat for the southern forests but the FPA may still need to manage finer-scale impacts. The Board resolved that the FPA would continue to provide advice based on the current TFA prescriptions pending the outcome of discussions with DPIPWE.

King Island

The Board were advised that FPA compliance and biodiversity staff had recently visited King Island and reviewed land clearing being undertaken on a number of properties. The matters are to be further investigated and may result in referral to the Board.

Document control with forest practices plans (FPPs)

The Board were advised by the CFPO that authorised variations to FPPs (sometimes numerous) can be a source of confusion for operators required to implement FPPs. The CFPO proposed that the 'working' FPP incorporate any variations by including additions and removing redundant prescriptions with the latest map(s). The changes can be managed through a document control system. The CFPO will raise this with the FPO Reference Group and FPAC for further advice.

Next Meeting - scheduled for Friday 16th October 2020