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**AUSTRALIAN FIRE DANGER RATING SYSTEM – REVIEW OF THE FIRST
SEASON**

The new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) which came into effect on 1 September 2022 has changed the way the emergency management sector calculates, assesses, makes decisions, and communicates fire risk across all Australian jurisdictions.

The new nationally consistent approach for predicting fire behaviour and communicating public information and warnings of fire danger has been in effect for just over 6 months.

As the end of the WA southern bushfire season high-threat period approaches the National and jurisdictional project teams, are taking the opportunity to review the 2022-23 season to capture feedback, enhancements, appropriate trigger thresholds and application, and evaluate the project rollout.

The **AFDRS First Season Review** and the **AFDRS WA Communications Evaluation** are two separate pieces of work that will be occurring over the next few months.

AFAC, the National Council for Fire and Emergency Services, will be coordinating the AFDRS First Season Review in collaboration with the AFDRS national project team, the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), and jurisdictional stakeholders.

The WA Community Messaging Working Group that supported the AFDRS Project team with all the communication activities – including the campaign and stakeholder engagement and tailored communication – will be conducting the AFDRS WA Communications Evaluation to gather information, insights and evaluation on the communication and engagement aspects of the project.

AFDRS First Season Review

The national review led by AFAC will cover several themes including:

- analysis of community education and communication of the new system
- how the AFDRS Fire Behaviour Index (FBI) is being used for decision making
- the application of new fire science
- program governance and change management



- how the system overall can be improved.

The review is underway and will be completed by mid-2023.

AFDRS WA Communications Evaluation

A market research survey is currently under development that will target stakeholders most impacted by the release of the new system including DFES staff, local government staff, bushfire volunteers, industry, land managers and fire practitioners involved in the WA implementation.

The aim of this survey will be to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used to communicate the change and provide insights into awareness of the new system, its impacts on business and suggestions for continuous improvement.

The survey will be sent to the AFDRS stakeholders in the last week of April and will be available on the Intranet, Volunteer Hub and DFES website. Survey results will be integrated with the AFDRS campaign evaluation to deliver a single consolidated report.

AFDRS Systems Review

Throughout the southern fire season, the Bushfire Technical Services team has worked diligently with regional operational staff and the emergency management sector to gather feedback relating to system performance to allow for continuous improvement relating to the Fire Behaviour model application, fuel data inputs, and fire behaviour calculations. The team has been pivotal in improving the data, accuracy and making adjustments in the system.

Feedback for the systems review is still open via the designated channels set up as part of the project. Regional staff are encouraged to utilise the feedback templates to provide post-season feedback. Data collected will also be used to assist with the review of current regulations and policies.

For further information, please email afdrs@dfes.wa.gov.au.

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