

APPENDIX E4

EXPLANATION OF TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE 6 OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES WHEN BUSHFIRES ARE BURNING OUT OF CONTROL

WHEN BUSHFIRES BURN OUT OF CONTROL – REMEMBER OUR PRIORITIES

Warn the community– Gather, analyse and disseminate information on current and predicted fire location, direction and rate of spread, and issue timely warnings to those threatened by fire.

Protect vulnerable people– Protect vulnerable civilians who may be gathered in schools, nursing homes, community shelters and the like. This necessitates the identification and assessment before the fire season of sites in the community likely to be housing or sheltering vulnerable people, and the assignment of crews to focus on the protection of these sites and their occupants if fires threaten.

Protect key community assets– protect key vulnerable community assets that have been identified as such by the community. These may include flagship industries or businesses upon which the community relies for its very existence, as well as shopping centres, schools, hospitals, power facilities, churches, historic buildings, the local pub and the like. Protecting these will improve community resilience by enabling communities to recover more quickly from bushfires. It necessitates the identification of assets that particular community's value, mitigation of their vulnerability, and the assignment of crews to protect them when fires threaten.

Stop the spread of fire in built-up areas – Stop the spread of fire in built-up areas through building-to-building ignitions. Options to enable to be done rapidly should be explored so that resources are not tied up for extended periods at individual homes or buildings. The protection of homes in built-up areas should result in fewer losses than seeking to protect the same number of homes scattered over the landscape, and therefore should be a higher priority for firefighters.

Protect other community assets– Applying TFSs triage policy, defend „homes defensible by firefighters, particularly in areas of moderate to high housing density, where firefighting resources can move relatively quickly between homes and other assets under threat. Firefighters should not defend homes that cannot be defended safely, or homes that can be defended safely by civilians who are present.

Fight the fire– This should be the lowest operational priority for fires burning under severe to catastrophic conditions. On severe to catastrophic days, fires extinguished in the bush are likely to re-ignite, and any efforts to extinguish them are likely to be fruitless. People and highly valued assets should be protected consistent with priorities 2 – 5 above. Only when conditions have moderated should attention turn to containing and extinguishing the fire.