

Client Conversations

Lindsay McIver, President of the Australian Bushfire Management Association

Establish a code of ethics and governance framework first is the advice that Lindsay McIver offers anyone considering starting a For Purpose Association.

The Australian Bushfire Management Association launched on the 12 April 2021. The Board engaged TAS to assist with the startup in the financial, governance and marketing space. They have since hit the ground running and have members from across the country and several international members.

We had the opportunity to catch up with Lindsay to discuss the association start up.



What was the motivation for you and the board to create ABMA?

The motivation for the Australian Bushfire Management Association was a direct result of the Black Summer fire whereby state and territory agencies, particularly on the east coast would not engage with private sector fire management businesses to provide support. In addition, insurance underwriters were imposing prescribed burning exclusions (whilst increasing premiums up to 400%) on all private businesses due to 'too much' fire in the landscape. This rendered those businesses unable to effectively respond to bushfires or undertake bushfire mitigation work.

So, the motivation for ABMA was to:

1. Provide a voice to local, state and federal government departments and agencies;
2. Develop, maintain and self-regulate industry standards; and
3. Provide a platform for insurance.

How and where did you start?

We started by initially collaborating between our businesses across Australia. We then reached out to the National Wildfire Suppression Association in the US to obtain feedback from lessons learnt when they formed some 25 years prior. This led to the formation of the association 18 months after initial conversations.

What were the top three challenges you faced while creating the associations?

1. Reassuring each business of the benefits and building trust for working and collaborating.
2. Finding a core group that had the ability and professionalism to remove their respective commercial hats to consider what was best for the industry.
3. Selling the idea to state and territory agencies.

What are the plans/initiatives for the next 12 months for ABMA?

Our plans for the next 12 months are to continue rolling out the Australian Bushfire Red Card™ training and competency framework throughout the private bushfire management sector; establish Technical Advisory Committees to develop industry standards; and commence international resource sharing with the US for bushfire response.

If you could offer some advice to any person looking to start a for purpose organisations what would it be?

My advice would be to firstly establish a code of ethics and governance framework to provide the integrity and direction of the organisation.



ABMA have made significant head way in the bushfire management space and have collectively changed the course of private sector bushfire management throughout Australia. Since officially forming in April 2021, the ABMA has achieved the following:

- Agreed and published an industry business code of ethics in addition to nine policy statements regarding bushfire management activities.
- Established and continuing to build a tiered national member base.
- Working relationships with state fire agencies in Qld, WA & SA.
- Engaged 'The Association Specialists' to manage day to day governance of the association.
- Appointed an Association insurance broker.
- Presented to Australian Federal Cabinet representatives, Emergency Management Australia, National Recovery and Resilience Agency, National Resource Sharing Centre (AFAC), National Farmers Federation, Queensland Fire & Emergency Services (QFES), WA Department of Fire & Emergency Services (DFES), SA Country Fire Service (CFS) and the NWSA (National Wildfire Suppression Association – USA) annual conference.
- Held its first Annual General Meeting & appointed an elected board of directors.
- Executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NWSA for international collaboration for mutual benefit.
- Identified & formed technical committees to articulate compliance with ABMA policies.
- Developed & rolling out the Australian Bushfire red Card™ (ABRC) a standardised national training framework mapped to NWCG (National Wildfire Coordinating Group – USA) standards.
- Sought formal recognition of the ABMA ABRC framework from QFES and DFES.
- Developed a fire line Heavy Plant Operator VOC (Verification of competency) & training framework to commence roll out in WA Autumn 2022.
- Facilitated an industry insurance discussion group with several external industry groups and businesses to enable a collective approach to industry underwriters.



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To discuss how TAS can support your for-purpose organisation contact Lynne Greenaway
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