



ACT Bushfire Council Meeting

Wednesday, 12 November 2014

Black Mountain
1 & 2 Meeting Rooms
ACTESA Headquarters

Chair: Kevin Jeffery

Secretariat: Tony Hanson

Attendees: Steve Angus, Member
Christine Goonrey, Member
Andrew Joyce, Member
Marion Leiba, Member
Michael Lonergan, Member
Cathy Parsons, Member

Dominic Lane, ESA Commissioner
Steve Edwards, A/g DCO ACTF&R
Nick Lhuede, Group Manager EMRSS
Scott Farquhar, A/g Mgr Fire Forest and Roads,
Parks & Conservation Services

Meeting commencement: 16:10hrs

Meeting concluded: 1900hrs

Minutes

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| Agenda item: | 1.a - Welcome 1.b – Apologies 1.c - Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” 1.d – Confirmation of meeting times | Presenter: | Chair |
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The Chair welcomed Members and Guests to the meeting.

The Council meeting had been rescheduled from 5 November 2014 to achieve quorum.

Apologies were received from:

- Tony Bartlett, Bushfire Council Member who was currently overseas.
- Andrew Stark, CO ACTRFS who was in Melbourne chairing a national meeting.
- Paul Swain, CO ACTF&R who was on leave.

Kevin Jeffery noted he needed to depart by 5:15 pm and asked Cathy Parsons to take on the role of Chair. No Conflict of Interests were reported by Council Members.

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| Agenda item: | 2.0 – Acceptance of previous minutes | Presenter: | Chair |
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Discussion: Michael Lonergan noted he had made minor revisions to the October minutes and it was agreed the secretariat would include in the final version.

Decisions: The minutes of meetings held on 1 October 2014 **were accepted** as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **Moved:** Michael Lonergan - **Seconded:** Cathy Parsons

The minutes of meetings held on 3 September 2014 **were accepted** as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **Moved:** Andrew Joyce - **Seconded:** Cathy Parsons

The meeting agreed that the outstanding minutes for **7 May 2014** would be circulated out of session for acceptance by Council.

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| Agenda item: | 3.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings | Presenter: | Chair |
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Discussion: All outstanding action items were closed, finalised or were on the agenda for this meeting.

In summary

- Council met on 27 October 2014 to review Regional Fire Management Plans and be briefed on Blue Range.
- TAMs organisational charts were distributed to Council members
- A copy of the TAMS/ESA Memorandum of Understanding was distributed to Council.
- A copy of the Incident Management Team Report by Crossbow Consulting had been circulated to Council.
- A copy of the Explanatory Statement for the Emergencies Amendment Bill 2014 was circulated and the Bill was passed by the Assembly on 28 October 2014
- The draft annual preparedness report had been circulated by Andrew Joyce out of session for Council Members consideration.
- A revised business plan was on the agenda for finalisation and discussion that was undertaken and is reflected at item 10 of the minutes.

Council agreed that only new action items would be distributed for the next meeting.

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| Agenda item: | 4.0 – Correspondence | Presenter: | Chair |
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Discussion: Nil

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| Agenda item: | 5.0 – Approval of Annual Preparedness Report | Presenter: | Chair |
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Discussion: Council agreed that further work was required to finalise the report which would be undertaken over the next few days and finalised out of session.

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| Agenda item: | 6.0 – Advice to the Commissioner: | Presenter: | Chair |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RFMPs• Blue Range/Lower Cotter Catchment | | |

Discussion: **Background:** Mr Kevin Jeffery, Mr Tony Bartlett, Ms Cathy Parsons and Ms Christine Goonrey were briefed by TAMS regarding Regional Fire Management Plans and Blue Range at a Council briefing on 27 October 2014. A summary of the briefing on 27 October 2014 and the subsequent discussion at the Council Meeting on the 12 November is provided below.

Regional Fire Management Plans

The Council representatives at the Briefing on 27 October viewed the 10 Regional Fire Management Plan maps which provided a visual representation of the proposed revisions and updates. In general terms, the Bushfire Council representatives on the 27 October 2014:

1. noted the approach taken by TAMS to update the plans, which included a public consultation process;
2. requested further clarification on the burns being removed or substituted; and
3. provided specific comments that would improve the annotation of the maps.

Following the briefing TAMS provided supplementary information to Council Members on the 49 burns being removed or substituted with further justification or reasoning for the amendments or change. TAMS also provided additional annotation on the maps where feasible.

The meeting agreed that Bushfire Council support the views of those Council Members who attended the briefing and Council was in a position to formally advise the ESA Commissioner that Council had noted the process undertaken to develop the RFMP's and formally endorses them.

Action: The Council resolved that formal advice be provided to the ESA Commissioner endorsing the RFMPs on behalf of the Council outlining that Council supported the process in 2014 to updated the Plans. It was agreed that the Council secretariat would draft a letter on behalf of the Council outlining Council's decision.

Blue Range/ Lower Cotter Catchment

TAMS provided a preliminary presentation to BFC representatives on the development of the Blue Range Rehabilitation Plan on 27 October 2014 and the interactive discussion included issues surrounding:

- a) Geographical area and nature of terrain
- b) Prolific regeneration of pines post 2003
- c) Difference in ecological make up of the identified area
- d) The erosion considerations for the catchment area
- e) Consultation with stakeholders on options being undertaken
- f) Need for detailed assessment and planning
- g) Hydrological modelling to be undertaken
- h) Assessment of treatment options in different zones in relation to value and risk
- i) Use of buffer zones and blocks
- j) Future consideration of community participation and economic development including employment opportunities
- k) Treatment options to be evaluated against their effectiveness, impact and cost with a view to a multi faceted strategy being developed
- l) The nature of risk mitigation versus risk removal
- m) The projected timeframes involved
- n) Need to prepare a detailed business case following research and assessment of options for consideration by Government

Council members discussed issues including: the competing values and level of risk; the role of ACTEW; the broad policy considerations and importance of governance; workshops and forums being undertaken. Council noted that a field visit was being arranged for the end of November 2014 for Council Members to get an on-site overview of the Blue Range terrain.

Action: The Council resolved that they were comfortable with the approach and progress made by TAMS in progressing a Blue Range Rehabilitation Plan, recognizing the complexity of managing competing values on the area. Council noted that they would like to be kept informed about developments given the high risk the area potentially poses to the Territory.

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| Agenda item: | 7.0 – ESA Commissioner's Report to BFC | Presenter: | ESA Commissioner |
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Discussion: Commissioner Dominic Lane spoke to ESA's report to Council at **Attachment A**.

Further discussion on certain topics is reflected below.

Auditor General's Report into Bushfire Preparedness

The Commissioner invited Nick Lhuede to provide an overview of land use planning issues for the lower cotter catchment. Nick made some observations regarding the Molonglo river corridor and areas of Karma Nature Reserve. Given the nature of the fire management issues regarding boundaries, zoning and plans of management, Nick undertook to provide a written report to Council for their next meeting.

Canberra Bushfire Ready

Council highlighted their support for the Canberra Bushfire Ready campaign and outlined the importance of evaluating campaign outcomes to ensure that the campaign can be improved upon in future years. The Commissioner outlined a range of monitoring

mechanisms now available with digital media (website and social media hits) which he was happy to share with Council. The Commissioner also discussed our test of emergency alert in May 2014 that supported our testing of our community warnings. The Commissioner undertook to circulate the exercise plan and other information regarding our community warning preparedness in the ACT.

Council members raised issues surrounding the disabled or infirmed preparing their properties. Tony Hanson explained that ESA was working in partnership with our Community Services Directorate in relation to issues surrounding vulnerable residents. Tony Hanson noted the new NDIS program was flexible to support persons with a disability.

The Commissioner undertook for Ms Kaylee Rutland, ESA Manager of Community Education to brief Council at the next meeting.

AIIMS 4

Council members noted the Incident Management Capability Review provides a good gap analysis which will guide ESA in making improvements.

Actions: Council resolved:

- Council Members to review Terms of Reference in early 2015 and provide feedback to Commissioner.
- A new factsheet for rural leaseholders is to be developed and be provided to Council for review.
- Copies of the Exercise Plan for the test of the emergency alert system and other information regarding the preparedness of our Community Warnings be provided to Council for information.
- Kaylee Rutland and Rick McRae be invited to present to Council at the December meeting.
- Renumeration Tribunal Determination to be distributed to Council once handed down.
- Nick Lhuede to provide a written report regarding strategic land use issues regarding the Lower Cotter Catchment to the next meeting.

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| Agenda item: | <i>8.0 – RFS Chief Officers Report to BFC</i> | Presenter: | Chief Officer RFS |
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Discussion: With the Chief Officer in Melbourne attending a national forum, the Commissioner spoke to the RFS report at **Attachment B**.

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| Agenda item: | <i>9.0 – TAMS Land Managers Report to BFC</i> | Presenter: | Ag Mngr Fire, Forest and Roads (Parks and Conservation Service) |
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Discussion: Scott Farquhar spoke to TAMS report to Council at **Attachment C**.

Action: Scott Farquhar undertook to bring copies of the Bushfire Pre-Suppression Resource Atlas to the next meeting for Council’s viewing.

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| Agenda item: | <i>10.0 – Discussion of Areas of Focus for 2015:</i> | Presenter: | |
| | <i>a) Brainstorm on Arrangements for 2015 meetings</i> | | |
| | <i>b) Prioritisation and scheduling of presentations for 2015</i> | | |

Discussion: Council members supported the revised business plan circulated to Council in advance of the meeting.

As background, the Council's Terms of Reference outlines that the Business Plan should include a budget section. The meeting noted that it was important to acknowledge to the Government and Community that there is a cost associated with adequately resourcing the Bushfire Council.

The Chair read out proposed a new section for inclusion in the draft report outlining the Council's budget and resources. Andrew Joyce noted that in addition to the payments to Council Members, the BFC secretariat and in-kind organisational support provided to Council represented additional supporting resources on top of the Budget.

Council Members suggested the following be included in the Areas of Focus for 2015:

- Review of previous years bushfire operational plans by agencies
- Pre Season Briefing by RFS which included the seasonal outlook

Council welcomed the ability to review issues surrounding capability in March 2015 noting that the IMT Review provided a good gap analysis. Capability was also linked to the Commissioners legislative responsibilities and the Auditor General's Report into Bushfire Preparedness recommendations.

Council discussed Indigenous perspectives and potential involvement with BFC and agreed for Tony Hanson (secretariat support) to consider avenues through TAMS or the ACT Elected Body in relation to potential ways forward. This area of focus was scheduled for early 2015.

Action: Council Agreed:

- to the areas of focus for 2015 which align to the implementation of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.
- to finalise the Business Plan out of session subject to the amendments identified at the meeting being included and the Business Plan being provided to the Minister for endorsement.
- Tony Hanson to explore avenues for Indigenous participation on the ACT Bushfire Council for Council's consideration in early 2015.

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| Agenda item: | 11.0 – Other Business | Presenter: | Council members |
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Discussion: Council Members noted they had received a briefing on the Treasury Review of the ESA Communications Centre and had provided their feedback directly to the consultants.

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| Agenda item: | 12.0 – Agenda for Next Meeting | Presenter: | Chair |
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Discussion: **Action:** Council resolved for the next meeting to:

- Have a presentation from Rick McRae, ESA Risk Analyst on his fuel loads report and the fire behaviour analysis arrangements in place for the 2014/15 summer;
- Suspend the agency reports to the next meeting to make way for the presentations.

**The next meeting is scheduled for 3 December 2014,
Black Mountain Meeting Rooms 1 & 2 ESA Headquarters**



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ESA COMMISSIONER'S REPORT TO THE ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL

11 November 2014

Auditor General's Report into Bushfire Preparedness

- Implementation of the ACT Auditor-General's recommendations continues by ESA and TAMS. I have attached a summary on the implementation of recommendations at Attachment A.

Review of Bushfire Council Terms of Reference in 2015

- Recommendation 10 (Chapter 3) of the Auditor-General's report outlined that ESA, in consultation with the Bushfire Council, should conduct a review of the ACT Bushfire Council against its terms of reference developed in July 2013 within two years.
- I would welcome Bushfire Council's feedback in early 2015 on the Terms of Reference with a view to identifying those areas which Council believe may need to be further refined or improved.
- I plan for the review of the Terms of Reference be completed by mid 2015.

Emergencies Act Amendment Bill 2014

- The *Emergencies Amendment Bill 2014* was passed on 28 October and notified on 11 November 2014. I would like to thank Council for your feedback on the proposed amendments which were provided to the Minister.
- A supplementary government amendment was introduced to define 'coordination' in the context of Commissioners powers to direct Chief Officers in relation to an emergency and a supplementary explanatory statement explaining the definition is available at http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/es/db_50494/default.asp. The Supplementary Explanatory Statement provides a good summary of Command, Control and Coordination responsibilities operating in an Emergency.
- Of specific interest to Bushfire Council is the amendments to the Bushfire Prevention section of the *Emergencies Act*. The recent changes clarify that Leaseholders in the Bushfire Abatement Zone are required to prepare a Bushfire Operational Plan every 5

years and have the plan approved by the Commissioner. A factsheet is currently being prepared which will be circulated to Council for information shortly.

AFAC

- I attended the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council AGM on 29/30 October 2014 and a number of Council papers would be of interest to Bushfire Council which I have attached to this report. Please note the papers are provided 'in confidence' and are not for circulation. The papers attached are:
 - National Certification for AIIMS Incident Management
 - Bushfire Predictive Services
 - National Fire Danger Rating System Project
 - National Burning Project
 - Research Utilisation Initiatives – supporting AIIMS Incident Management Team Capability
- Subject to Council Members interest, I am happy to further discuss any of these papers in more depth at this, or subsequent, Council meetings.

Canberra Bushfire Ready

- The development of the SBMP was supported by the 'Living on the Edge' community consultation program. The consultation highlighted the opportunity to better target our bushfire community education campaigns, particularly through face-to-face engagement.
- This Canberra Bushfire Ready campaign at www.esa.act.gov.au/bushfireready has been designed to encourage residents to take action to reduce their bushfire risk by developing a Bushfire Survival Plan and undertaking a range of prevention activities. The campaign also aims to support people who may be at higher risk to bushfire due to their age, health, disability or socio-economic status.
- The campaign will involve advertising, ministerial media events, digital platforms, news coverage and social media posts.
- The campaign will support the Brand Canberra initiative by integrating the 'CBR' logo into the look of the campaign, and adopting the key message of 'readiness'.
- This CBR Bushfire Ready awareness campaign is supported by multiple engagement strategies including:
 - a. A "CBR Bushfire Ready" weekend on 22 and 23 November 2014;

- b. A doorknock initiative targeting at risk homes in bushfire prone areas which will be coordinated with assistance of the ESA volunteer network;
 - c. trial of 'skip bin' initiative in designated high risk suburbs where residents can remove their garden bushfire fuel;
 - d. face-to-face engagement via community events; and
 - e. a new Bushfire Survival Plan App, MyFirePlan.
- I had planned for Ms Kaylee Rutland, Manager of Community Education to brief Council, however, she is in Melbourne on Wednesday 12 November attending a emergency management seminar on community education. Time permitting I plan to show Council members the bushfire ready website at the meeting.

Regional Fire Management Plans

- I note TAMS presented the 10 Regional Fire Management Plans to Mr Kevin Jeffery, Mr Tony Bartlett, Ms Cathy Parsons and Ms Christine Goonrey which provided a visual representation of the proposed revisions and updates.
- In general terms, the Bushfire Council representatives noted the approach taken by TAMS to update the plans, which included a public consultation process. I also note that further clarification was sought on the burns being removed or substituted which has been provided by TAMS and Council members provided specific comments to improve the annotation of the maps.
- I would welcome Council's formal comment on the Plans, noting they support the development of Bushfire Operational Plans required by Section 78 of the Emergencies Act for the next five years.

Capability Review

- The ACT Auditor-General's Performance Audit into Bushfire Preparedness made recommendations surrounding the determination of capability to respond to Bushfire in the ACT.
- Section 76 of the [Emergencies Act](#) requires me to conduct an assessment of resources (contained on pages 32-35 in the [SBMP](#)) and capabilities for bushfire prevention and preparedness following the release of the SBMP which I must provide to the Bushfire Council and Minister.
- Council may wish to note that, subject to Council approval, Capability has been included as an area of focus for your March 2015 meeting, linked to Objectives 2, 3 & 4 in the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.

- ESA is currently scoping requirements for the development of a 'Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework' to assist planning for fire fighting operations and to support programs for capacity enhancement.
- The framework will focus on the necessary pre-determined and risk based deployment of fire fighter capability, development of a Dynamic Coverage Instrument and greater strengthening of interstate and Commonwealth arrangements.
- I plan to provide further advice to Bushfire Council in early to mid 2015 on the progress of this work with a view to providing an assessment of capability in the later part of 2015.

AIIMS 4

- Further to our discussion at our last meeting, I circulated the Incident Management Capability Review undertaken by Crossbow Consulting to Council Members on 11 November 2014.
- The review outlines enhancements that would support improvement in Incident Management Capability in ESA going forward.

Exercises

- A number of exercises have been held recently which assist prepare the RFS, ESA and whole of government for the upcoming bushfire season.
- RFS held an incident management exercise on 29 October to test the improved IMT facilities on the ground floor at ESA HQ. The exercise was successful and identified a number of improvements to ensure the facility is ready for the upcoming bushfire season.
- Major whole of government exercises have been ongoing in preparation for major sporting events in early 2015. These exercises have supported the testing of the Emergency Coordination Centre, senior officials and whole of government public messaging. These exercises assist all scenarios and assist our whole of government preparedness arrangements prior to the summer season.

Fuel Loads Assessment and Fire Behaviour Analysis

- Rick McRae, ESA Risk Analyst has been undertaking assessments of fuel loads surrounding the ACT and has prepared a report which I plan to circulate to the Minister and Council in the coming weeks.
- I propose that Council may wish to invite Rick McRae to your December 2014 meeting to provide a presentation of the fuel assessment report and its potential implications for fire behaviour in the ACT.

Bushfire Council Remuneration

- The ACT Remuneration Tribunal will shortly be handing down a new determination for part time Statutory Office Holders. Further information regarding these changes will be forwarded when they come to hand.



Working in partnership to protect and preserve life, property and the environment in the ACT

Chief Officer's report to Bushfire Council – 12th November 2014

RFS Ops September 2014

Current forecast are still for a warmer and drier period from November and December 2014. ACT has experienced High to Very High Fire Danger Ratings through late October and early November.

A pre season meeting was held on the morning of 13 October with all surrounding NSW RFS Zones and Regional Staff. The current MOU was reviewed and MA updated.

Following this meeting the group was joined by ACT F&R, NSW F&R, NSW NPWS, TAMS, NSW LEMO to note and confirm arrangements for the coming season and highlight any changes made to capability within agencies.

HR burning has been limited during October, and conditions are variable but planned burns are available to be conducted if appropriate weather conditions occur.

Repairs and maintenance has been completed for all Fire Towers.

Public Events/Community Awareness

The 2014 Open Day was held on the 26th October. The event was our most successful yet with approximately 4000 through the gates on the day. CBR and Bush Fire Prone Mapping was foremost at the entrance to the open day and provided for high levels of engagement with members of the public about their bushfire risk.

The VBA Field day was held as part of the Open day with 13 teams competing from RFS brigades including to Parks Teams, and three teams from NSW RFS. The completion was of high standard and awards were shared broadly, but the team from Michelago Brigade dominated and were worthy winners.

Training

Chainsaw, 4WD and Advanced Fire Fighter Training is continuing in the lead up to Christmas

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Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) Land Managers update for November 2014

1. The Commissioner for Emergency Services formally approved the draft 2014-15 TAMS BOP on 1 October 2014. Prior to that, staff had been working on activities detailed in the draft BOP.
2. We now have authorisations for all planned “Slashbuster” activities. This involved liaison and submissions of applications with ACTPLA, the NCA, Commonwealth Dept of Finance and NSW RFS.
3. FMU activities have swung to an operational focus for the 2014-15 bushfire season.
 - Work on the Mt Franklin Road upgrade has commenced.
 - The Slashbuster has commenced on firetrails and burn preparation works within Googong Foreshores.
 - Seasonal plant is ongoing on BOP jobs.
 - Two prescribed burns were completed at Kowen and Jerrabomberra Grasslands (a total of 39ha).
 - FMU staff have been monitoring fuel moisture content at various prescribed burns sites in Namadgi.
 - Chelsea Crossing at Googong was completed (concrete splash crossing). This upgrade allows for tanker access within the southern area of the reserve.
 - A similar crossing in Pierces Creek is due for completion next week



- Bushfire mowing has commenced and the first cut is programmed for completion prior to Christmas.
- Grazing has commenced at 37 sites across the ACT.
- A grazing infrastructure project was completed to improve strategic grazing in Dunlop and Fraser.
- All vegetation chemical control works have commenced.
- FMU staff have been undertaking regular fuel hazard ratings and curing assessments. These assessments have informed the grazing and slashing programs. The info is also

being provided to assist ANU with ongoing research into curing, as well as providing information back to Vic CFA for the satellite assessment of grass curing for ground truthing and calibration.

- FMU staff completed seven physical removal jobs and commenced another one
 - The first standup for the season was on 24 October 2014.
4. The draft Bushfire Pre-suppression Resource Atlas has been provided to ESA for comment.
 5. An FMU staff member attended Fire Behaviour Analyst (FBAN) training in Melbourne. This was followed up by a Phoenix fire modelling workshop at Creswick.
 6. The a/g Manager of FMU attended AFAC Council meeting in Sydney.
 7. A workshop for stakeholders was held for the draft Blue Range Rehabilitation Plan
 8. Initial assessments and scoping works have commenced for Naas River FT and the proposed Kinleyside FT.
 9. Parks entered two 5 x person teams in the recent RFS open day, as well as supplying 4 staff as judges and crewing a Parks and Conservation presentation booth.

Scott Farquhar
A/g Manager
Fire, Forests and Roads
ACT Parks and Conservation Service

4 November 2014