



ACT
Government



ACT Bushfire Council

Meeting 4.00 pm to 7pm, Wednesday 6 December 2017
Black Mountain Meeting Room
ESA Headquarters

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| Council Members | Sarah Ryan (Chair) | Marion Leiba | Jeremy Watson |
| | Natarsha Carney (Deputy Chair) | Bhiamie Eckford-Williamson | Kylie Coe |
| | Cathy Parsons | Margaret Moreton | Tony Bartlett |
| Apologies | Steve Angus | Mick George | David Snell |
| Officials | Dominic Lane, Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Commissioner | | |
| | Mark Brown, Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue | | |
| | Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service | | |
| | Daniel Iglesias, Executive Director, Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) | | |
| Invited Guests | Fiona Amundson, Manager ESA Community Engagement | | |

Minutes

Agenda item: 1.0 – *Welcome and Apologies* **Presenter:** Chair

The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians of Country and welcomed members to the Council Meeting. Apologies were noted from Mick George, Steve Angus and David Snell.

Action: Nil

Agenda item 2.0 – *Declaration of Interest* **Presenter:** Chair

The Chair introduced the item and drew Council member's attention in relation to the reporting requirements under the *Emergencies Act 2004* and the ACT Bushfire Council Terms of Reference.

There were no declarations of interest reported by Council Members for this meeting.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: 3.0 – *Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting and update on action items arising from previous meetings* **Presenter:** Chair

Discussion:

The minutes from the November meeting were accepted as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

Agenda item: 4.0 – Correspondence for noting

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

Correspondence sent - The BFC 2017-18 Annual Preparedness Report emailed to the Minister on 23 November 2017

The Chair noted the final report was circulated to Council members on 23 November 2017 prior to sending to the Minister.

Correspondence received - Convener, Friends of Black Mountain in relation to planned EPSDD PCS BOP Hazard Reduction Burns.

The Executive Director EPSDD PCS advised his team have been engaged with the Friends of Black Mountain Group and made note that the EPSDD also received the correspondence and will be providing a separate detailed response. The Council are satisfied with PCS community engagement with the group and the Chair will send a response on behalf of Council. Council agreed for the Chair to write a response letter to the Convener, Friends of Black Mountain

Action: Chair to write a response letter to the Convener, Friends of Black Mountain

Agenda item: 5.0 – Planning for 2018

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

5.1 Bushfire Council responsibilities under the *Emergencies Act 2004* and BFC Terms of Reference

Reference was discussed at agenda item 2.

5.2 Annual bushfire preparedness report – proposed changes for 2018 – for decision

Council discussed other options for preparing next year’s annual bushfire preparedness report and enquired about information ESA provides to the Minister prior to the Bushfire Season. The CO’s ACT F&R and ACTRFS provide a capability report to the Commissioner each year around September. CO ACT F&R advised an extracted version with factual information could be provided to Council to assist with their report.

5.3 Draft BFC Business Plan 2018 – for decision

Council made a number of amendments to Council’s draft 2018 Business Plan and agreed on the following tentative meeting agenda topics.

The Chair put in place a list of Strategic Agenda Items to be discussed over the coming year. The Chair asked that Council provide suggestions on additional items to be covered.

The following table was supported, noting additional topics could be added during 2018 once approved by the Council.

| Draft BFC Business Plan 2018 | | |
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| Month | Topic | Guests |
| December 2017 | Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Plan for 2018 – draft for discussion Review of Bushfire Council responsibilities under the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> Communications and Cross Border Incident Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on cross border response, incident management and communications | RFS PCS |
| February 2018 | Incident Command and Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMT capability, training and succession planning RFS staff presentation – Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise request for presentation and analysis of recent past bushfire outcomes in the ACT Fire Research update Risk and Planning Staff - Specialist Risk Analysis | RFS R&P |
| March 2018 | Strategic Bushfire Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the scope and effectiveness of SBMP V3 as required by <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> Development of SBMP version IV, impact of resourcing liability to accomplish it and the sub-plans RFS staff presentation – SBMP, Policy & Governance | RFS PCS |
| April 2018 | Post-season review discussion and draft report Research projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Fire Danger Rating System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on the 2017-18 season trial of the National Fire Danger Rating System Research Prototype. Timetable for introduction of the system and update on Fire Danger Indices Prescribed burning risk assessment tool Holistic view that encompasses research, readiness, risk reduction, to evaluate fire regimes across Australia Assessment of Community Education/Engagement activities over the Bushfire Season – Staff presentation – Community Engagement | PCS PCS RFS |
| May 2018 | Post-season review – acceptance of draft Fuel Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Fire management Plans, Strategic Fire Asset Zones and their linkage to the SBMP Update on the Farm FireWise Program Preparing for and responding to emergencies and managing risk | PCS RFS |
| May 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 3 May 2018 – Field Trip | RFS |
| June 2018 | Fire Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on fire trails network policy and review of trail mapping products available to emergency services Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program Update on the Bushfire Attack Level Assessment re AS3959 | PCS Risk & Planning |
| July 2018 | Volunteer Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update of volunteer brigades in relation to recruitment, retention, succession planning, mentoring, training and competencies. RFS Staff Presentation – Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence discussion and planning for the production of ACT BFC Annual Preparedness Report for the Minister Police and Emergency Services | RFS |
| August 2018 | Bushfire Operations Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of achievements of the all Bushfire Operational Plans in 2017-18, in particular the EPSDD BOP | EPSDD RFS |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2018-19 Bushfire Operational Plans - Review of all Plans by Council for ESA Commissioner RFS staff presentation – Community Protection | |
| September 2018 | Pre-season Briefing by ACT Rural Fire Service Note: BFC Meeting moved to 12 September 2018, to accommodate the AFAC Conference in Perth on 5 September 2018 Preparation of ACT BFC Preparedness Report to the Minister | RFS |
| October 2018 | Finalisation of BFC Preparedness Report to the Minister | |
| November 2018 | Contingency meeting for consideration of unexpected items and closure of outstanding items | |
| December 2018 | 2018 in review and planning for 2019 | |

Other agenda items for possible discussion throughout the year:

- Operational reports over the Bushfire Season
- Weather and predictive services updates
- Updates on the AFAC National Burning Project (by Neil Cooper)
- Seasonal Outlook for 2018-19
- Burning Program for 2019
- Updates on the ESA Strategic Reform Agenda and its successor
- Updates on SBMP implementation
- AFAC news and articles of interest
- Reports from NSWRFs district Bushfire Management Committees

5.4 Field trip planning – for decision

Council members agreed to hold a field trip on the first Thursday after the May BFC Meeting. Council members suggested a couple of locations and key sites for the field trip (Lower Cotter Catchment, Mount Coree, Mount Franklin Road including the Bulls Head, Mount Franklin Chalet, Piccadilly fire plots and Lower Cotter Catchment pine wildings). A decision will be made the beginning of 2018.

Action: Secretariat to send Council members a calendar invite for Thursday 3 May 2017 to attend a field trip

Action: Secretariat to send BFC a calendar invite for Thursday 3 May 2017 to attend a field trip.

Agenda item: *6.0 – Reports for noting*

Presenter: Commissioner

Discussion:

6.1 ESA Commissioner’s Report

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- ACT Bushfire Council Preparedness Report to the Minister
- Cross-Directorate Meetings on Disaster Preparedness

- Canberra Bushfire Ready Launch on 20 December 2017
- Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs Launch on 20 December 2017
- Presumptive Cancer Legislation for ACTRFS Volunteers
- The ESA Volunteer Charter 2017
- White Ribbon Day breakfast on 27 November 2017

6.2 Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- Employer recognition event
- Two projects funded by National Bushfire Mitigation Funding are now finalized:

The first project, the Rural Leaseholders Grant Scheme has enabled rural landholders to carry out works to support fire response, or works to enable better utilisation of hazard reduction grazing. These works have included construction of dams, access upgrades and fencing to provide strategic grazing options for grass fuel management within the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ).

The second project is installation of electronic fire danger rating signs (EFDRs). These signs have been installed at high traffic volume sites to inform the maximum number of people of the fire danger rating. These new signs will supplement the existing manually updated FDR signs, but have the advantage of being automatically updated from a live feed, and also have the capacity to display an additional text message via the LED display.

Note: Council members paid tribute to ACTRFS Chief Officer and team for the work involved in implementing the new EFDR's.

6.3 EPSDD Parks and Conservation Report

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- The submission of the draft modified 2017-2018 EPSDD Bushfire Operation Plan
- PCS training update
- The trial of an electronic and automated issue and return system for two way radios following the identification of the new two way radio unit
- The temporary appointment of the new PCS Training Officer
- The commencement of work on the next set of Regional Fire Management Plans
- Fire Preparedness day and fire fighter fitness sessions have been completed
- Three ecological hazard burns have been completed

6.4 ESA Community Engagement Achievements Report

Council noted the Commissioner's, Chief Officer ACTRFS, EPSDD PCS and ESA Community Engagement Achievements Reports.

Action:

- Nil

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| Agenda item: <i>7.0 – Topics from the 2017 ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan</i> | Presenter: Manager, ESA Community Engagement |
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Discussion:

The presentation provided an overview of the progress of ESA Community Engagement activities and initiatives that have been implemented to educate and build resilience in the ACT community.

The meeting was briefed on some of the collaborative community engagement activities delivered in 2017 including big events like the Royal Canberra Show, Canberra Bushfire Ready (CBR) Campaign, Storm Safe Campaign and ESA Open Day. Update of the ACT Bushfire Survival Plan, review and refresh brochures and other community education materials, ESA website content refresh, social media plan and review of flexible volunteer roles using National Standards. Community messaging has been enhanced with the installation of 12 new Electronic Fire Danger Rating signs.

The Minister will launch the 2017-18 CBR Campaign on Wednesday 20 December 2017. This year will focus on at risk and aged community with the roll out commencing in January 2018.

The Manager ESA Community Engagement outlined future activities and advised she will continue to monitor, evaluate and review community engagement activities on an ongoing basis and update.

Council thanked the Manager, ESA Community Engagement for the update.

Action: Nil

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| Agenda item: <i>8.0 – ACT Fire and Rescue and ACT Rural Fire Service Presentation</i> | Presenter: Chief Officers, ACT F&R and ACTRFS |
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Discussion:

Presentation on ACT Fire and Rescue and ACT Rural Fire Service – for noting

The presentations provided an overview of the supporting role of ACT F&R and ACTRFS and operational interaction with Parks and Conservation Service, cross border response, incident management and communications.

The ACT F&R presentation outlined the functions of the service and its capability. ACT F&R is small in size and provides the same range of services to the ACT community as the larger urban fire and rescue services across Australia. There are 9 fire stations strategically located across the ACT with 349 members. All members are fully trained in firefighting, rescue (including road accident rescue, vertical rescue, confined space and trench rescue, as well as urban search and rescue) and hazardous materials response and medical response services in support of ACT Ambulance Service. The Service has responsibilities for fire safety of the built environment and fire cause investigation. The presentation included a description of the fleet, the role of the Community Fire Units (CFUs) and the support ACT F&R provides to other ACT Agencies, Interstate and Internationally.

The ACTRFS presentation outlined the functions of the service, its capability including the 9 brigades, volunteers, fleet, aviation arrangements, and operational interaction, cross border response arrangements, incident management, and operational communications. Included was a demo of the Dynamic Coverage Tool and the 2016-

2017 Bushfire Season Review highlighting the amount of total fire bans, ACT fires and assistance provided interstate and an overview of preparations for the 2017-18 Season, Community Engagement activities, new developments and the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: *9.0 – Other Business* **Presenter:** Chair

AFAC Conference – Council participation in 2018 Conferences - The Chair advised the AFAC Conference will be held 5 September 2018 in Perth and would coincide with the September meeting; therefore Council members agreed to change the September meeting from 5 to 12 September 2018.

A Council Member raised the topic of the access road to a proposed housing complex on the Federal Golf Course, being one way in and out. In response the CO ACT F&R advised all development applications (DA's) are lodged to ESA for comment; they are either supported, not supported or further information is requested. In this process ACT F&R looks at building design and compliance with National Standards. In addition, the ESA Commissioner has an overriding ability to stop developments where those developments concentrate vulnerable people in a bushfire prone area.

There was an acknowledgement of the great work done by ACT RFS volunteers during the cross border incident exercise on 12 November 2017. The NSW RFS hosted the exercise in Gunning and there were 6 or 7 ACT RFS trucks in attendance.

Action: Secretariat to send a new date for the September BFC meeting.

Agenda item: *10.0 – Next Meeting* **Presenter:** Chair

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 February 2018.

Actions: Nil

Agenda item: *11.0 – In camera meeting if required* **Presenter:** Chair

Nil

Agenda item: *12.0 – Council performance checklist and meeting conclusion* **Presenter:** David Snell

Discussion:

Mr Watson provided an assessment of Council's performance against the checklist at the end of the meeting and advised the proceedings were faultless.

The Chair thanked the Executive Officer to Council for her support of Council throughout 2017 and acknowledged Parks and Conservation Services staff, ESA Commissioner, Chief Officer for ACT Fire and Rescue, Chief Officer for ACT Rural Fire Service and staff. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 7 February 2018 and the Chair wished everyone best wishes for the festive season.

Closing: The meeting was declared closed at 18:46pm



ACT Bushfire Council Meeting Implementation of Action Items

Active items for current meeting

| Action Item / Issue | Originating meeting date | Assigned To | Due Date | Status | Comments |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|------------------------|
| Agenda item 5.2 - Parks to provide presentation or executive summary & recommendations of the Fire Management Unit review | 2 August 2017 | Daniel Iglesias (1 Nov) | 6 Dec 2017 | | To be provided in 2018 |
| Agenda item 4 - Write a response letter to the Convener, Friends of Black Mountain | 6 December 2017 | Chair BFC | 7 Feb 2018 | | |
| Agenda item 5 – Send BFC members a calendar invite for 3 May 2018 to attend a field trip | 6 December 2017 | Secretariat | 7 Feb 2018 | | |
| Agenda item 9 – Send a new diary invite for the September BFC Meeting (due to the AFAC Conference) | 6 December 2017 | Secretariat | 7 Feb 2018 | | |

Completed Items

| Action Item / Issue | Originating meeting date | Assigned To | Due Date | Status | Comments |
|---|--------------------------|---|------------|--------|-------------------------|
| Agenda item 2 Send out section 139 and 140 of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> and BFC Terms of Reference | 1 November 2017 | Secretariat | 6 Dec 2017 | | Completed |
| Agenda item 10.1 Annual Preparedness Report - ESA to provide the information requested and Council members to provide any further comments by 7 November 2017. | 1 November 2017 | ESA | 7 Nov 2017 | | Completed |
| Agenda item 5 | 4 October 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO ACTRFS • Manager, Fire, Forests and Roads PCS | | | 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 Completed |

| Action Item / Issue | Originating meeting date | Assigned To | Due Date | Status | Comments |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|------------|--------|-----------|
| <p>5.1 The ESA to write to the Director General EPSDD in relation to the two large hazard reduction burns that have been taken out of the EPSDD BOP</p> <p>5.2 Manager Fire, Forests and Roads PCS to provide an update regarding the National Fire Policy Statement/Best Practice Burning Programs at the November meeting</p> <p>5.3 The Indigenous Fire Officer to provide the Chair with a paragraph on the outcomes of the Cultural Fire Management Program for the Annual Preparedness Report to the Minister</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Agenda item 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CO's ACTRFS and ACT F&R to provide an overview of ACTRFS and ACT F&R at the November BFC Meeting. | 4 October 2017 | CO ACTRFS/CO ACT F&R | 6 Dec 2017 | | Completed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report outcomes and achievements of the Community Engagement program for 2017 | 2 August 2017 | Fiona Amundsen | 6 Dec 2017 | | Completed |