



# ACT Bushfire Council Meeting

1 July 2015  
16:00 to 19:30  
Black Mountain Meeting  
Rooms  
ACTESA Headquarters

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<b>Chair:</b>	Kevin Jeffery	<b>Secretariat:</b>	Tony Hanson
<b>Attendees:</b>	Ms Christine Goonrey, Member Mr Michael Lonergan, Member Ms Cathy Parsons, Member Ms Marion Leiba, Member Mr Steve Angus, Member Mr Tony Bartlett, Member	Mr Dominic Lane, Commissioner Mr Phil Canham, A/g Deputy Chief Officer, ACT Fire & Rescue Richard Woods, Deputy Chief Officer, Rural Fire Service Neil Cooper, TAMS Manager Forestry and Fire Management	

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## Minutes

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

The chair welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting.

Apologies were received from:

- Mr Andrew Joyce, Member
- Mr Andrew Stark, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service
- Mr Conrad Barr, A/g Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue

*(Prior to the meeting Council Members were informed that a planned presentation on the ACT Aboriginal Fire Management Framework would be held over to the next meeting due to the availability of the presenters.)*

**Agenda item: 2.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members** **Presenter: Chair**

No Conflicts of Interest were reported by Council Members.

**Agenda item: 3.0 – Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting** **Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:** Tony Bartlett requested if a notation could be made in the minutes acknowledging that, whilst overseas for the last meeting, Tony had provided detailed responses to agenda papers circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair agreed to the notation and noted the items were also on the agenda for this meeting. The minutes from the previous meeting, of 3 June 2015, were accepted as a true record. Moved: Michael Lonergan Seconded: Marion Leiba

**Agenda item: 4.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings** **Presenter: Chair**

The Chair noted that the action items from the previous meeting were on the agenda for this meeting or being held over to the next meeting.

**Agenda item: 5.0 – Correspondences** **Presenter: Chair**

No correspondence was received or sent.

**(a) Strategic Reform Agenda**

The Commissioner provided a 45 minute presentation on the current strategic reform agenda in ESA. The objective of the SRA is to ensure the ESA continues to provide the highest standards of emergency services to the community through cohesive operations, a collaborative management team and a unified executive.

The key priority areas for the period to 2020 include:

- A re-aligned ESA (Structure);
- A new Strategic and Corporate Plan (Strategy);
- Setting the highest standards in Service delivery (Performance);
- Investment in leadership and people management (People); and
- Rigorous decision making (Accountability).

To ensure the ESA achieves the following:

- A risk-based approach to management;
- Optimized planning and performance;
- Harnessing opportunities to work better; and
- Better leveraging of data to support strategic decision-making.

Following the presentation, the Commissioner sought leave to attend both an RFS and SES meeting which he would again be presenting on the Strategic Reform Agenda.

**(b) Review of Emergencies Act 2004**

David Horner, JACS Legal Officer, presented to BFC on the forthcoming review of the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

In 2010 the Act was amended to impose a statutory requirement that the Minister review the Act at five yearly intervals.

A discussion paper was being developed that would be released to facilitate public consultation of the review.

The Act requires that the review is required to be completed within 3 months, and is expected to be completed in late October with the report of the review tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

David outlined that a focus of the discussion paper will be the role and governance arrangements for the BFC.

Questions for consideration were included on a range of topics regarding its operation, including composition requirements, term limits, the consultation role and reporting requirements.

The BFC was specifically invited to provide comment on the review, and members were given a draft extract from the discussion paper concerning the BFC to facilitate its consideration.

**Action Item:** Council to consider the discussion paper at their next meeting.

**(c) National Bushfire Mitigation Program**

Tony Hanson provided an brief overview of the projects to be funded under the NBMP which included:

- Validating the bushfire prone areas identified as part of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan in 2014;
- Providing a small amount of funding to implement minor works on rural leasehold land to improve accessibility and mitigation measures.

- Promoting construction standards (AS3959) for houses in bushfire prone areas

Council welcomed more detailed briefing on the projects at one of their future meetings.

**Action Item:** Areas responsible for implementation of NBMP projects to provide presentations to Council on the current planning and implementation of the projects.

#### **(d) Draft Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework**

Richard Woods, Deputy Chief Officer RFS provided a brief overview of the framework. Council provided written feedback which would be considered in finalising the draft. Richard thanked Council for their comments.

#### **(e) RFS Chief Officer's Report**

Richard Woods provided an overview of current issues within RFS on behalf of the Chief Officer.

#### **RFS Operations June 2015**

- Operations have been quiet in line with the winter period. Some HR has been undertaken, particularly for National Capital Authority.
- Weather conditions associated with the El Nino are being monitored and preparations for the coming season are being expedited with a view to a possible early season.
- The Pre-Season briefing will be held on the 15 September 2015 and Council Members will be invited to attend.

#### **Public Events/Community Awareness**

- The RFS Long Service Awards night was held at the Australian War Memorial in early June.
- On 9 July, a ceremony to acknowledge the 30,000<sup>th</sup> Last Post will sound under the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium. To commemorate this unique event, the ACT Emergency Services Agency will be holding a ceremony at 4pm on 9 July at the Gungahlin JESC.
- Preparations for the Bushfire Museum Exhibition at the Tuggeranong Arts Centre are continuing.

#### **Training**

- Training is continuing with a continued focus on driving and other specialist areas.
- RFS will be participating in a cross border Incident Management Exercise with NSW RFS in late July.

**Agenda item:** 7.0 – Lower Cotter Catchment

**Presenter:** Chair

#### **Discussion:**

Council endorsed a paper to the Commissioner outlining an approach to bushfire prevention that could be considered when developing a plan of management for the Lower Cotter Catchment. Moved: Michael Lonergan Seconded: Cathy Parsons

Council noted the recent Auditor General's Report: *Restoration of the Lower Cotter Catchment* (Report No.3/2015) and noted the Government would be providing a formal response to the Auditor General's recommendations to the Public Accounts Committee in due course.

Council requested ESA to undertake some analysis to identify specific areas where it was concerned about the current fire hazard or the distance from existing roads should fire suppression operations be necessary. Council welcomed TAMS providing future presentations

on the risk treatments and bushfire prevention strategies for the Lower Cotter Catchment.

**Agenda item: 8.0 – Land Managers Report to BFC**

**Presenter: TAMS**

Neil Cooper, Manager, Forestry and Fire Management (TAMS) provided an overview of current activities in his unit as summarised below.

**Discussion:**

1. 2014/15 BOP completion and auditing is underway.
2. The draft 2015/16 BOP has been circulated throughout Government for feedback prior to being considered for approval by the ESA Commissioner.
3. The Government's additional budget allocation for bushfire in 2015/16 has increased GPO funding to \$9.975 million. With capital funding, this raises the BOP funding to \$10.4 million for 2015/16, which is comparable to last year's budget of \$10.233 million. A copy of funding provided against the BOP over the last 8 years was provided to Council members for their Information.
4. Neil provided an overview of staffing matters in the Forestry and Fire Management Unit.
5. Neil raised that development planning approval processes were currently being examined and worked through in relation to future BOP activities.
6. Preparedness days for 150 TAMS fire-fighters has been planned and bought forward due to El Niño. Three separate two day courses would be starting in early August.
7. Fitness days have also been planned and are less than 6 weeks away.
8. Canada has risen to level 5 and predicting bad weather for next few months - numerous fires in Alaska and have requested a FFMG liaison officer to go to Winnipeg. Deployments are imminent.

**Agenda item: 9.0 – TAMS Bushfire Operational Plan**

**Presenter: TAMS**

Neil Cooper provided a short presentation on the BOP for 2015/16.

**Discussion:**

Council resolved that they would hold a workshop on the draft BOP in the last week in July in order to finalise their feedback at their 5 August meeting.

ESA would coordinate the distribution of the maps to Council Members prior to the July meeting for analysis.

**Action Item:** ESA to coordinate a specific BOP workshop by TAMS and to send out the draft BOP to Council Members.

**Agenda item: 10.0 – Next Meeting**

**Presenter: Chair**

The agenda for the next Council meeting includes:

- Feedback to the Commissioner on the TAMS BOP following the workshop on 27 July 2015
- Discussion on the Council's Annual Preparedness Report
- Discussion on the Review of the Emergencies Act
- A presentation on the draft ACT Indigenous Fire Management Framework
- A presentation on the work to validate the BPA in 2015
- A presentation of the planned program to implement minor works on rural leasehold land

**Closing: The meeting closed at 7:30pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 5 August 2015.**