

Wednesday 1 March 2017

16:00 to 19:00



ACT
Government



ESA Black Mountain Meeting Room
ACT ESA Headquarters

Chair	Kevin Jeffery	Secretariat:	Lynda Scanes
Attendees	Cathy Parsons, Steve Angus, Marion Leiba, Mick George, Sarah Ryan, Natarsha Carney, Andrew Joyce and Sandra Lauer		
Officials	Mark Brown, Acting ESA Commissioner Phil Canham, Acting Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service Neil Cooper, Manager, Fire, Forests and Roads, Parks and Conservation Service, Environment, Planning and Sustainability Development Directorate (EPSDD)		
Invited Guests	Minister Gentleman MLA, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Frances Bevan, Senior Advisor		
Presenter	Mark Jones, Director Strategic Reform Programme		
Support	Brian Levine, Fire Management Officer, Fire, Forests and Roads, Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD Tony Scherl, Fire Management Officer, Fire, Forests and Roads, Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD		

Minutes

Agenda item	1.0 – Welcome and Apologies	Presenter:	Chair
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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Dominic Lane, Daniel Iglesias, Christine Goonrey and Tony Bartlett.

Agenda item:	2.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members	Presenter:	Chair
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No Conflicts of Interest were reported by Council Members.

Agenda item:	3.0 – Introduction of Minister for Police and Emergency Services	Presenter:	Minister
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Discussion:

The Council members welcomed the Minister to the meeting in his role as the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The Minister thanked BFC for the invitation to attend the meeting and asked if there were any issues Council would like to discuss. The Minister acknowledged the significant effort and detail in preparing the credible Annual Preparedness Report 2016 and the work BFC does amongst the community.

The Chair advised the key question BFC had was the Minister's was the not so positive response in relation to recommendation six in the Annual Report. Council's recommendation was to introduce, through the budget process, the ability for Land Manager's from Parks and Conservation Service to have the ability to rollover funds when not used. Such as, when funds allocated for prescribed burns which cannot be completed due to weather constraints; have the ability to be carried over to following years so that the implementation of strategic prescribed burning program (which is essentially a long term process) is not compromised.

Mr Cooper advised the current internal re-profiling of funds currently provides the flexibility required to meet other fire risk activities on an annual basis, such as the purchase of other essential commodities such as weather stations and other items. However; there is a requirement for additional funding or a longer term program of budget allocation to allow the burning program to occur over a series of years. Otherwise the burn program becomes to pile up, there is a need for a multiyear program where funding is variable to suit each year's weather conditions. The (today's) presentation by PCS staff will highlight the difficulty to deliver the burn program.

The Minister acknowledged the difficulty to deliver the burning program; how it is subject to appropriate weather conditions and the complexities can be provided to the Treasurer. The Government is currently reviewing Capital Infrastructure Expenditure and he will forward a multiyear funding proposal for Operational Expenditure with the Treasurer for discussion at the Cabinet level. Mr Joyce highlighted ACT Procurement has a delay on Capital Expenditure and the Minister was interested, as this is viewed by the ACT Community.

BFC asked the Minister for his view regarding the content for the next version of the SBMP and if it should be fully updated a consolidation of the work that has been done, or a more intense and deeper review. The Minister suggested it is time for a full refresh, with the challenge focusing on the stronger weather events, the current SBMP focuses on operational response. The next version needs to focus on climate change and weather conditions with an increase on flexibility for controlled burns and other deliverables that are reliant on weather.

The Acting Commissioner spoke about the presentations from the Bushfire Hazards and CRC, he highlighted the need to focus on climate change in the SBMP Version 4, and it could possibly be very different with requirements for adaptability for planning fuel reduction activities.

The Minister highlighted the strong relationship Council has with the ACT Government. He and his Advisor closed by encouraging ongoing open communication with Volunteers and Council and thanked members for the warm welcome and looks forward to a productive working relationship.

The Chair thanked the Minister and Ms Bevan for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Action:

Nil.

Agenda item: 4.0 – Acceptance of minutes and review of action items and arising from previous meetings **Presenter: Chair**

The minutes from the previous meeting on 1 February 2017, were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Andrew Joyce and Seconded: Mick George

Action items please refer to Attachment A for further details.

Standing Items

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

Discussion:

- Letter to ACT Bushfire Council from Dr Annie Lane, Executive Director Environment ACT (the Conservator) in relation to the Eastern Grey Kangaroo draft controlled native species management plan

Council Members noted they had received a copy of the letter regarding the Eastern Grey Kangaroo draft controlled native species management plan.

The Chair asked members for comments in relation to bushfire related impact/activities and interaction between the Kangaroo Management Plan. BFC response to the Conservator to advise the removal of kangaroos would increase vegetation and there is a requirement to monitor of fuel management issues; noting the good communication between the burning program and kangaroo management program.

The Chair to draft the response letter on behalf of the Council to the Conservator

Action:

The Chair to respond to Dr Annie Lane, Executive Director Environment ACT.

Agenda item: 6.0 – Update on the Strategic Reform Agenda Programme **Presenter: Mark Jones**

Discussion:

The Director, Strategic Reform Agenda Programme (SRP) provided a detailed update of the status of the SRA Programme and advised last year's report to BFC provided an update of the outcomes of the SRA consultation. This update leads to the delivery of the SRA Program and the reason for including the SBMP in the SRP is to include the action items that had not commenced. The complexity of the SBMP as a project has been overcome by reviewing the 71 actions in the SBMP and placing the seven actions that had not commenced into the project. The seven actions are new products under the SRP and a project management approach using Prince 2 has been implemented to ensure enhanced and successful delivery, add rigor, record management, clarity and transparency.

The SRP has six projects, the COMCEN Reform, Blueprint for Change, Station Upgrade and Relocation Program, CAD/TRN, Women in Emergency Services and Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. The six projects are all reporting through the principles of Prince 2 project management methodology. All projects have a different timeframe for delivery and completion. The current status of the programme suite of documentation in production is the Project Initiation Documents (PID's) and all PID's will be signed off by the Commissioner this month and will be public documents. The CO ACTRFS is the Executive of the SBMP Project and reports to the SRA Programme.

BFC asked questions in relation to the COMCEN Reform Project and what was the proposed outcome of the project. The SRP advised the COMCEN Reform project is at the proposal stage and any changes will be to improve operational effectiveness an important program within the SRP to progress towards achieving cohesive operations through of the agency that operates as one organisation. Mr Cooper highlighted that PCS are a key user of the COMCEN with external dependency and should be involved in progress of the project.

The Chair thanked the Director SRP for the update and asked for another update in three months.

Action:

Invite the Director, Strategic Reform Agenda Programme (SRP) to the June BFC Meeting.

Agenda item: 7.0 – Commissioner’s Report to BFC

Presenter: Mark Brown

Discussion:

The Acting Commissioner provided an overview of current activities within ESA.

An update was provided on the two ESA Roundtable Consultation Meetings that have occurred. The next two meetings are scheduled for 9am to 3.30pm Sunday 5 March and Friday 17 March. A report will be produced and published during the month following the conclusion of the last session.

Recent fire activity in the ACT and surrounding NSW will be reported in the CO ACT RFS report.

The exhibition at the Canberra Show this year was the first year all ESA services were represented. The combined community engagement by Volunteers and Staff from ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire & Rescue, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service had a very positive impact and well received by community members.

The Darren Wall charity fun run will be held at Kings Park, Menzies Walk next Wednesday 8 March 2017 from 9:30 am. Funds raised will support Soldier On and BFC members are welcome to participate as it is open to ESA Police, Military and the Directorate.

The 2016 ESA Report Card was circulated to all ESA staff and the summary highlights the significant achievements made over the past year. The Chair thanked Mark Brown for the update.

Action:

- Secretariat to email BFC the 2016 ESA Report Card

Discussion:

Mr Cooper, Manager, Fire, Forest and Roads, ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) provided an update of current activities within PCS. Neil Cooper presented at the Fire and Forestry Course at Creswick and received good feedback.

This year's AFAC conference will be held in Sydney and is a joint NSW and ACT venture, there is expected to be over two thousand delegates attend the conference.

EPSDD have engaged Mr Gary Morgan (a fire management consultant) to undertake an internal review of the operational delivery of the fire programme and the effectiveness of the Fire Management Unit. Mr Morgan will be in ACT for 3 days on week of the 15th March with plans to meet with major stakeholders (ESA, ACT RFS, and BFC). Council agreed to have Mr Morgan attend the 5 April 2017 meeting.

Progressing the ACT Codes of Sustainable Land Management that will address the planning legislation and restrictions that currently apply. Legislative change is in the process to allow all operations that occur within the Code to be exempt from Development Application requirements.

A detailed summary of the BOP activities that have been completed and the activities not started/or waiting on reporting updates. PCS are confident that there are less than 100 BOP activities out of total 767 yet to commence. To improve burning activities, PCS has received an Annual Fire permit from ACT RFS and Fire & Rescue.

PCS crews attended the Carwoola Fire in NSW as part of multiple ACT RFS striketeams, and also the recent Warks Road fire that is currently at patrol status. An internal AAR for ACT RFS crews for Carwoola has held on the 28 February 2017. The Warks Road Fire in the Lower Cotter Catchment and Oaky Hill highlighted how dry the fuels are in areas.

Fire Tower training is complete and PCS are very pleased they control the fire towers. Level 2 IMT training is scheduled in May, and is a joint venture with ACT RFS, NSW RFS NSW NPWS, ForestCorp and NSW DPI.

The Small Business Innovation Partnerships tender process has selected a company to develop an improved roster and resource management systems similar to WorkForce connect used by ESA.

Papers tabled and presented to BFC by Brian Levine and Tony Scherl.

The presentation focussed on the challenges PCS have in implementing this year's fuel management program. The weather stations have collected very informative data and the rainfall data for January and February show a noticeable reduction and PCS staff is not confident conditions will permit the planned burns to be conducted to schedule. Work is taking place to avoid delays when the weather conditions allow hazard reduction burns to proceed. The environment is very, very dry and will require a significant rain event to be able to proceed with the larger planned burns. PCS are increasing the number of portable weather stations for increase data retrieval and use as a decision making tool. Brian Levine and Tony Scherl invited BFC to contact them anytime is they require further information. The SODAR Workshop scheduled for this Friday is open to BFC and an email with the details will be forwarded to members out of session.

The Chair thanked Neil Cooper, Brian Levine and Tony Scherl for the update.

Noted: BFC members were invited to contact Brian Levine and Tony Scherl anytime for further information

Action:

- Mr Cooper to arrange Mr Gary Morgan the Fire Management Consultant to attend the next BFC meeting on 5 April 2017

Agenda item: 9.0 – Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report

Presenter:

Joe Murphy

Discussion:

The Chief Officer provided an overview of current activities within the ACTRFS as summarised below.

Operations – recent hot weather has seen our crews busy with incidents and stand up with five Total Fire Bans (TOBAN's) declared, three days declared were consecutively. The IMT's were activated during the TOBAN's. ACT had a few small fires (mainly grass fires) on the urban edge or inside the urban areas, they were extinguished quickly, two bigger fires started by car fires spreading to grassland.

ACT RFS assisted the NSW RFS during the devastating fire in Carwoola. NSW RFS used the Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT) and Large Air Tanker (LAT) aircraft and Canberra Airport was base for the refilling the aircraft.

Discussions about the fire tower contracts have commenced and the contract for both the helicopters has been extended by 2 weeks. NSW RFS agreed to pay half of the extension costs for Helitak 274. ACT RFS will consult with the Bureau of Meteorology and surrounding fire regions in relation for need to further extend the contracts. The Automated Electronic Device's have arrived and are ready to be fitted to the vehicles. The ACT RFS total volunteer membership is 540 as at 27 February 2017 (Female: 103 and Male: 437).

Training is assisting Brigades to organise burns to finalise recruit assessments and crew leaders in completing the post course hours. Two members completed their Bushfire Fighter assessment at a burn on Tuesday 21 February 2017 with Southern and Jerrabomberra Brigades. CO ACT RFS thanked to Steve Angus for the assistance of Southern Brigade. Nine members from Southern, Jerrabomberra, Guises Creek, Rivers and Parks attended a burn on Tuesday 28 February 2017.

The Interstate Bush Firefighter Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) tool has been approved and signed off by the ESA Registered Training Organisation. Work has begun to identify members who will benefit from using this tool; work has begun with effected members to RPL any gaps they have between their pervious fire service units of competency and the units used by the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACT RFS).

Community Engagement Activities was the Royal Canberra Show and Canberra Bushfire Ready (CBR) rollout.

This year the Royal Canberra Show display consisted of all four services with volunteers from Maps, Community Fire Units, ACT RFS and ACT State Emergency Service. The ACT RFS section of the display had CBR, historical items and the Bedford. The ACTSES/ACTRFS stand won best "Not for Profit Organisation" display at the show.

Community Protection team provided assistance to NSW incidents as ACT Liaison Officers and in various other roles within IMTs within NSW and the ACT. The Rural Grants Scheme project is on schedule and progressing well. The ACT Health Directorate and Land Development Agency Bushfire Operational Plans (BOPs) have been

reviewed by ACT RFS and will now be submitted to the Acting ESA Commissioner for approval.

The Chair thanked Joe Murphy for the update.

Action:

- Nil.

Agenda item: 10.0 – 2017 BFC Business Plan Topics

Presenter:

Chair

Discussion:

Due to time constraints the following topics to be carried over to other meetings

- Update on research into the reduction of risk (what research is happening and what should be done)
Note: Invite Adam Leavesley to the April meeting to present AFAC topics in relation to the above point
- Review the scope and effectiveness of SBMP V3 as required by *Emergencies Act 2004*
- Developing the SBMP version IV, review how it has worked to date and the impact of resourcing liability to accomplish it and the sub-plans

Action:

- Nil.

Agenda item: 11.0 – General Business

Presenter:

Chair

Discussion:

- The possibility of an extension of the Bushfire Season
- The extension of the helicopter contracts and the possibility of the requirement for further extension
- The Minister and his Advisors response to the level of detail in the 2016 BFC Report to the Minister
Note: The Executive Summary provided a good overview, the information in the report was very detailed and assisted the new Minister in his role; however, it was suggested future reports be condensed and concise
Note: CO ACTRFS to inform BFC closer to the date, if the Bushfire Season is extended

Actions:

- Secretariat to invite Adam Leavesley to the April meeting to present AFAC topics/research
- CO ACTRFS to inform BFC closer to the date, if the Bushfire Season is extended

Agenda item: 12.0 – Next Meeting

Presenter:

Chair

The next meeting is scheduled for 4pm to 7pm Wednesday 1 April 2017.

Closing: The meeting closed at 6:50pm.



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION ITEMS

Active Items for current meeting

Action Item / Issue	Originating Meeting date	Assigned To	Meeting Due Date	Status	Comments
Agenda 8 – Write to the Commissioner inquiring about his role in Canberra’s surrounding region during high fire danger days.	1 February 2017	Chair	1 March 2017	Pending	Chair to provide an update at the April meeting
Agenda item 10 – The Council would like to review the Project Implementation Document for the SBMP once it has been completed and signed off	1 February 2017	CO ACT RFS	1 March 2017	Pending	Pending sign off of PID Final PID attached to April papers
Agenda item 11 – Lower Cotter Catchment Management Plan to be discussed at the next meeting	1 February 2017	Secretariat	1 March 2017	Pending	Agenda items April meeting
Agenda item 5 – Write a response to Dr Annie Lane regarding BFC comments on the Eastern Grey Kangaroo draft controlled native species management plan	1 March 2017	Chair	5 April 2017	Completed	Letter of response email to EPSDD
Agenda item 5 – Invite the Director, Strategic Reform Agenda Programme (SRP) to the June BFC Meeting.	1 March 2017	Secretariat	5 June 2017	Completed	Added to the BFC Business Plan
Agenda item 7 – Email the 2016 ESA Report Card to BFC	1 March 2017	Secretariat	1 March 2017	Completed	Emailed on 1 March 2017

Action Item / Issue	Originating Meeting date	Assigned To	Meeting Due Date	Status	Comments
Agenda item 8 – Mr Cooper to arrange Mr Gary Morgan the Fire Management Consultant to attend the next BFC meeting on 5 April 2017	1 March 2017	Mr Cooper	5 April 2017	Completed	
Agenda item 10 – Invite Adam Leavesley to the April meeting to present AFAC topics/research	1 March 2017	Secretariat	5 April 2017	Completed	
Agenda item 10 – Inform BFC closer to the date, if the Bushfire Season is extended	1 March 2017	CO ACTRFS	30 March 2017	N/A	Bushfire Season finished as per normal on 31 March 2017

Completed Items

Action Item / Issue ¹	Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment
Agenda item 7 – Provide Bushfire Council with information on the Strategic Reform Programme	1 February 2017	Secretariat	1 March 2017	Completed action
Agenda item 7 – Chair to coordinate letter to the Commissioner on the Roundtables and suggested changes, and having the SBMP included in the SRP.	1 February 2017	Chair	1 March 2017	Completed action