



# ACT Bushfire Council Meeting

9 February 2012  
1600-1900  
ESA Headquarters

**Chair:** Simon Katz / Kevin Jeffery

**Note taker:** Richard Woods

**Attendees:** Christine Goonrey, Member  
Tony Fearnside, Member  
Marion Leiba, Member  
Natalie Hile, Member  
Peter Beutel, Member  
Tony Bartlett, Member

Simon Katz, Member  
Michael Lonergan, Member  
Andrew Stark, Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service  
Paul Swain, Chief Officer ACT Fire & Rescue  
Neil Cooper, Manager Fire management Unit, PCL

**Meeting commencement:** 1615

**Meeting concluded:** 1900

## Minutes

**Agenda item:** 1.0 – Welcome **Presenter:** Simon Katz

SK Welcomed all (KJ delayed)

**Agenda item:** 2.0 – Apologies **Presenter:** Simon Katz

Cathy Parsons, Michael Joyce

**Agenda item:** 3.0 – Minutes of previous meeting **Presenter:** Simon Katz

### Discussion:

The November Minutes were approved. Minor amendments made. December meeting was a field inspection and therefore no minutes were recorded.

**ACTION:** Minutes for future meetings to be provided in hard copy.

**Agenda item:** 4.0 – Actions running sheet **Presenter:** Kevin Jeffery

### Discussion:

**Request for Council to be advised of TAMS restructure when process is finalised-** AS advised that he has not heard additional information at this time. NC advised Cabinet are still considering arrangements/endorsement.

**ACTION:** Ongoing, report to next meeting.

**Request for Council to be updated on Elevated Fire Danger Plan by Greg Potts -** AS Plan has been endorsed and now been provided to ACT Govt agencies to action. Plan to be supplied to Council via Nick Lhuede.

**Presentation on how RFS is changing as an agency, to be added as an agenda item -** Ongoing.

**Explanation on progress of IMT roles and personnel-** Level 3 IMT roles to be considered for supply to BFC. This is within the Concept of Operations document to be tabled at the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Concept of Operations to be provided to the next meeting.

**Horse Agistment working group** - Meetings ongoing with horse owners over the last few months via different forums. 30 % of horse owners do not have floats. These are mainly those with horses agisted in public horse paddocks and because of the variance of ownership viewpoints there is a dynamic problem that needs to be addressed. The RFS is having ongoing dialogue to encourage engagement. For example, Farm Fire Wise client involvement has increased (12) as a result. Of all the horse owners in the Territory, there are only about 40% who experienced the 2003 fires, so it is important that the remainder become well educated on the appropriate plans to enact during days of high fire danger.

**ACTION: ongoing, report to next meeting needed.**

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**Field Trip** - Occurred in December and all felt it was worthwhile, particularly the exposure to the northern borders of the ACT where a significant grass fire risk is evident.

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**Agenda item: 5.0 – External Presentation - House Loss and tree management**      **Presenter: Dr Philip Gibbons**

**Discussion:**

Dr Gibbons is a landscape ecologist and undertook research post Black Saturday to review what contributed to property loss. His presentation covered a self funded project and the findings pertaining to areas investigated in Victoria. (Copy attached). Council members found the presentation very informative and thanked Dr Gibbons for his time spent with Council.

**Agenda item: 6.0 – Correspondence**      **Presenter: Kevin Jeffery**

**Incoming:**

Nil

**Outgoing:**

Members expressed their appreciation for the work done by Lynda Scanes for processing of Council payments from July to December 2011.

**Agenda item: 7.0 Chief Officers Report**      **Presenter: Andrew Stark**

**Discussion:**

AS tabled and distributed to the Council a 6 monthly report of RFS activities and responses.

Of particular note was the number of RFS hazard reduction (HR) burns that had been completed as part of the TAMS Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP) for 2011-12. The most recent of these was an HR burn at the Fyshwick sewerage treatment area on 7 February which was very successful. There had also been a number of other HR burns carried out over the previous weeks, and there had been a good coverage of these events in the local media. It is important that these activities are reported on because it helps to raise the profile of the RFS and its volunteers to the ACT community.

**Agenda item: 8.0 – 2012 Strategic priorities for BFC Meetings**      **Presenter: Kevin Jeffery**

**Discussion:**

TB - reviewed the Bob Smith report based on the 2003 enquiry outcomes and Ministerial reporting requirements and developed a timeline to report on key areas. A framework for the report was tabled and distributed. There was general agreement to consider the 'themes' of the framework and to then research the areas/share work and then report back to Council.

Timing of the 10 year report lodgement will need to be considered in light of the need to have the Minister respond in January (ie by October).

Council considered that the Equipment and Systems review was the first priority for reporting.- Peter Beutel & Michael Lonergan were nominated as the convenors for this project.

**ACTION: Hard copies of Bob Smith Report to be provided to all members.**

**ACTION: Copy of community preparedness survey to be provided to all members.**

**ACTION: Members to inform TB of their areas of interest in order of preference of the topics (and thoughts) within the next week.**

**ACTION: Process to be identified for report formatting etc.**

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**Agenda item:** 9.0- TAMS second quarter report

**Presenter:** Neil Cooper

**Discussion:**

NC tabled second quarter report.

**ACTION:** NC to circulate via email to all members.

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**Agenda item:** 10.0 – Hazard reduction burning in autumn-postponing implications

**Presenter:** Neil Cooper

**Discussion:**

NC advised that they have a number of HRs scheduled however weather conditions to date have prevented some of them being completed. Based on forecasts, there is a real possibility of number of these not being completed. Mt Rogers HR was conducted in spring successfully in a shoulder time for environmental (spring) issues.

**NOTED.**

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**Agenda item:** 11.0- Stockyard/Mt Franklin update

**Presenter:** Neil Cooper

**Discussion:**

NC advised that the works are problematic due to complexity. Stockyard Spur trail 95% complete. Stockyard Spur walking trail nearing completion. Cotter Hut Road has been challenging due to environmental concerns, however the work is being undertaken from next week. Mt Franklin vegetation removal is also being undertaken at this time.

MLO development- NC advised that bushfire mitigation preparation works will be undertaken prior to the development works commencing however this is delayed due to SDP issues.

**NOTED**

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## ***Other Business***

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**Discussions:**

ML requested that Jason Sharples could be approached to present the research relating to bushfire behaviour to the Council.

**ACTION:** KJ to follow up.

**AFSMs:** TB asked the question over the number the ACT can request each year. Submission has gone to the Minister requesting an increase in numbers on par with other States and Territory numbers from the ACT given the current restrictions.

**NOTED.**

**NATIONAL MEDAL;** AS presented SK with his National Medal Clasp (due to his absence from the formal presentation ceremony late 2011).

**COUNCIL CONGRATULATED SIMON KATZ ON HIS MEDAL.**

AS - discussion on a new medal being struck for assisting in major designated emergencies 'National Emergency Medal'.

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday 7 of March 2012.