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| act rural fire service | ACT Bushfire Council Meeting | 6 March 2013 |
| 16:00 to 19.00 |
| Black Mountain 1 & 2 Meeting Rooms  ACTESA Headquarters |

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| Chair: | | Kevin Jeffery (KJ) | | | | Secretariat: | | | Brioni Young (BY) |
| Attendees: | | Christine Goonrey, Member  Cathy Parsons (CP), Member  Marion Leiba (MLe), Member  Sarah Sharp (SS), Member  Natalie Hile (NH), Member  Michael Lonergan (ML), Member  Tony Bartlett (TB), Member | | | | Dominic Lane (DL) ESA Commissioner  Andrew Stark (AS) CO ACTRFS  Michael Joyce (MJ) DCO ACTRFS  Conrad Barr (CB) DCO ACTF&R  Neil Cooper (NC), Mgr Fire Forest & Roads, PCS | | | |
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| Meeting commencement: | | | 16.00 | **Meeting concluded:** | | | | 18.50 | |

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| Minutes |
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| Agenda item: | ***1.0 – Apologies*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Paul Swain | | | |

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| Agenda | ***2.0 - Presentation:*** | Presenter | **Simon Butt** |
|  | The Captain of the Gungahlin Brigade did a presentation on the recent Taskforce Delta deployment to the Victorian fires around Bairnsdale/Grampians. He advised the group that they were high intensity fires and that the skills they learnt will be of benefit to the ACTRFS. He detailed the differences between the CFARFS and the ACTRFS and overall found the experience to be extremely beneficial and felt it was good exposure for the crew. Whilst in Victoria the crew had the opportunity to use their Landcruiser based concept vehicle, the details of which are being chased up by RFSHQ staff.  The Council would like to record the importance of facilitating these interstate deployments for ACT personnel and to commend the efforts made to get a mix of volunteers and Parks staff to the deployment. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***3.0 – Acceptance of minutes of 6 Feb 13 meeting*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Discussion: | The minutes from the previous meeting held on 6 Feb13 were accepted as a true and accurate record.  Accepted by Tony Bartlett and seconded by Michael Lonergan. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***4.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Discussion: | AS tabled the Boards & Committees handbook in response to Action item 1. Re: Council budget allocation. If Council feels that they are not getting properly remunerated AS is happy to take it forward to the Minister.  AS was adamant that the RFS is not trying to constrict the Councils budget. He was clear that necessary, out of meeting activities, are fully supported.  Apparently Council has been getting paid at last year’s rate which needs to be investigated. | | |
| Action: | Need to reimburse Council members money owing due to being paid at the old rate. | | |
| Action: | Members to read the “Boards and Committees” handbook in detail and determine what they feel needs to be remunerated so AS can carry it forward | | |
| Agenda item: | ***5.0 – Correspondence*** | Presenter: | **CO RFS** |
| Discussion: | The resignations of Peter Beutel and Simon Katz were noted.  Simon felt that there was a conflict of interest in being both a Council member and an RFS staff member and Peter, amongst other reasons felt he wasn’t achieving enough by being on the Council. | | |
| Action: | KJ will write to the Minister to advise of the resignations of Peter Beutel and Simon Katz and to advise that Cathy Parsons has been nominated as the new Deputy Chair. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***6.0 – Chief Officers Report*** | Presenter: | **CO RFS** |
| Discussion: | **RFS Ops February 2013**  **Bush & Grass Fires ACT**  There were no significant fires within the Territory during February 2013. After the hot weather in January, February saw much cooler weather and with some heavy rain experienced, the bush and grass fire risk has eased considerably.  The ACTRFS responded to 15 bush/grass fire incidents in February.  **Interstate Deployments**   * ACTRFS sent a total of 3 taskforces to the Grampian Mountains in Victoria over a 3 week period in February. Each task force utilised two command vehicles and four light units and operated on a 6 day rotation. A total of 30 firefighters were deployed over the period. * ACTRFS sent a task force of 4 light units and one command vehicle on a 14 day deployment to Bairnsdale in Victoria to assist with the Hayfield fire.   **Storm Operations**  In addition to the response to bush and grass fires, the ACTRFS also assisted the SES during a number of storm events in the ACT during February.  **Public Events/Community Awareness**  During the period the ACTRFS has also participated in a number of public and community events including:   * The Gungahlin Brigade attended the Crace Carnival which has now become a yearly event and attracted several thousand people from the Crace area. The Gungahlin brigade members provided advice and information to the public on bushfire awareness and preparedness; * A large information stand was set-up at the Canberra Show. The house prop attracted plenty of interest from the public with its “good garden/bad garden” feature and suggestions on how to prepare your house; and * The display at the Mt Stromlo observatory to promote and educate the public on bushfire safety was extended for another month due to its popularity.   **Hazard Reduction Burns**  Hazard reduction burns took place in the following locations:   * Umbagong Park, Mt Rodgers, Nicholls North, Nicholls South, O’Malley, McArthur Hill Wanniassa, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and Simpson’s Hill Gilmore.   CG Made a comment on the public information role of the new TAMS Land Care Officer. She is apparently providing information to land care groups about HR burns in their areas which is really important.  **New recruit enquiries**  Since the beginning of January the ACTRFS has received over 240 expressions of interest to join as a volunteer. To ensure that all these people were given the opportunity to learn more about the RFS, an information night was held at the Discovery Centre at the CSIRO on 26 February where representatives from each of the brigades were on hand to answer queries. Over 100 people attended the night and we are now starting to receive application packs back from many of those who attended.  To address the increased number of applications, we are looking at increasing the number of basic fire fighter courses during the winter/spring seasons so that the new recruits will be trained before the 2013-14 bushfire season.  22 new recruits completed their basic training and all were assessed as competent following their participation in a hazard reduction burn on Simpson’s Hill in Gilmore. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***7.0 – CRC/ Research*** | Presenter: | **Members** |
| Discussion: | There has been an announcement to fund a new Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC.  AS tabled a copy of the Minute to the Bushfire Council on the update of the future Bush Fire CRC:  ***BACKGROUND***  *The Gillard Government will make a substantial investment to establish a new Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) from 1 July 2013.*  *This will build on the work of the existing Bushfire CRC and expand research efforts into other natural hazards.*  *The Government will contribute up to $47 million over eight years to ensure that the valuable work done by the Bushfire CRC can continue while developing a complementary natural hazards research program into flood, earthquake, cyclone and tsunami events.*  *The Commonwealth contribution is contingent on the states and territories making similar commitments to this expanded research activity, at a level equivalent to state financial support for the existing Bushfire CRC.*  *State and territory governments have been closely involved in the existing Bushfire CRC and we expect that they will be prepared to make a substantial contribution to this important initiative.*  *Communities across Australia have been severely impacted by bushfires, floods and severe weather events again this summer.  This increased investment in research will improve approaches to mitigation, operational responses and community resilience to natural hazards.*  *The expanded focus of the new CRC appropriately reflects the impact of broader natural hazards on the Australian community.  The new CRC will conduct coordinated and interdisciplinary research, including work with communities, to improve disaster resilience and reduce the human, social, economic and environmental costs from bushfires and other natural hazards.*  *The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC will undertake vital research to support the development of cohesive, evidence-based policies, strategies and tools to build a disaster‑resilient Australia.  The funding will enable the CRC to provide a long-term research base that directly supports our emergency services as they work to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters.*  *The structure of the new CRC will be determined in consultation with key stakeholders and participants, including the Bushfire CRC, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council and state and territory governments.*  *The Gillard Government will also establish a priority public good funding stream within the CRC program to deliver primary research outcomes with wider social and environmental benefits to Australia and the broader community.*  ***ISSUES***  *The establishment of the new CRC is being overseen by The Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM). This group is moving forward on these principles.*   1. *endorse the development of a Disaster Resilience Cooperative Research Centre proposal as the approach to developing a Natural Hazards Research Platform* 2. *endorse the establishment of a time limited Steering Committee to support the development of a Disaster Resilience Cooperative Research Centre bid by June 2013* 3. *note SCPEM support as part of the Disaster Resilience Cooperative Research Centre proposal will improve its competitiveness* 4. *note the intellectual capital, networks and experience developed by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre may assist with the transition to the more extensive natural hazards research platform anticipated by SCPEM and should be emphasised where appropriate by the Steering Committee in developing its Disaster Resilience Cooperative Research Centre bid, and* 5. *request the Steering Committee in developing the proposed bid to ensure it:*  * *takes into account the recommendations of all relevant reviews on natural disasters (including recommendation 65 of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, and recommendation 4(c) from COAG (13 February 2011), and* * *does not result in a dilution of focus on bushfire related research*   *This group is currently chaired by Mr Koperberg, from NSW.*  *NSW, Victoria and the Commonwealth have committed funds to assist the working group on the establishment of a new Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC.*  *The ACT is represented on this group by Commissioner Lane.*  The ESA Commissioner went on to explain that this is a new CRC and not a continuation of the old one. He is very keen to pick up on the current learning’s that came out of the current Bushfire CRC, some of the key people involved and the relationships that have developed with the various academic institutions. Over the last couple of years the governance arrangements of the current CRC have been highly regarded. The next step is to work through the transition processes.  The Commissioner will keep AS briefed on the outcomes of any of these meetings.   |  | | --- | |  | | | |
| Agenda item: | ***8.0 – Other Items*** | Presenter: | **Members** |
| Discussion: | The Council members had a private discussion prior to tonight’s meeting as they have a few concerns that they would like to discuss. The members feel that perhaps their efforts are not as targeted as they should be and they are concerned that not all of the things they do are appreciated. The sale of Parks16 brought the issue to a head. They want mutual respect in understanding the way Council can be used and operate. They are keen to discuss a mechanism on how to move forward as they feel the current position is unproductive.  The Bushfire Council requests the Commissioner to oversee a process to review the relationship between the Chief Officer and the Bushfire Council and the operating procedures related to seeking advice from Bushfire Council, to ensure that the Bushfire Council can adequately perform its legislative function.” The Commissioner will advise the Government accordingly with the sentiments expressed in tonight’s meeting. | | |
| Action: | KJ has provided the Commissioner with the ‘resolutions’ from today’s meeting for further action. | | |
| Discussion: | The issue of the sale of Parks16 Scania was discussed again as Council does not agree with the sale of it. They advised the Commissioner that in 2005 the group had been given an undertaking from the Minister that there would always be at least two super tankers remaining in the fleet. There was also a commitment made by a previous Commissioner in relation to consultation on the development of a strategic replacement plan. The CO was to develop a Strategic plan for replacement of the fleet. This plan can be supplied to Council.  AS tabled the 2003 fleet list along with the current 2013 fleet list detailing vehicles, number of, capacity and water capacity. This shows that the fleet has grown from 51 to 62 with an increase in water capacity from 119,500 litres to 176,150 litres.  TB asked for the reasons behind the decision to sell Parks16. The Commissioner stated that though he understands the ‘Councils’ views it is also very important to have a modern sustainable fleet and this vehicle is 29 years old. He feels that was enough diligence done in relation to the decision to sell the vehicle.  He also added that in terms of future fleet replacement, should there be an appropriate bogie drive type vehicle with high capacity water containment that meets modern safety requirements and that suits the overall needs of the agency etc then he is more than happy to support discussions.  The Commissioner advised that the NSWRFS have recently developed their Category 6 Grasslands truck with a similar concept to what Council discussed. He suggested that Council have a look at the plans. The Commissioners main concern though is Fire fighter safety | | |
| Action: | Council will look to consider the NSWRFS proto type Category 6 Grasslands truck for future purchase | | |
| Discussion: | The Commissioner ended the meeting by discussing the Hazard Reduction program. He praised NC and his team for the huge effort they had put in.  He stated that should Parks need any assistance from the Commissioner then not to hesitate to ask so they can work proactively together. It is important that the Territory is able to demonstrate that we have moved on from 2003 and that we are in the process of doing broad scale hazard reductions. | | |
|  | ***9.0 – Next meeting*** | Presenter: | **Secretariat** |
|  | The meeting was closed at 6.50pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 3 April 2013. | | |

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| RFS LOGO.png act BUSHFIRE COUNCIL  implementation of ACTION ITEMS |
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**~Principles~**

* The register will include all action items that have yet to be implemented or where implementation is in progress. The status of implementation should be reviewed at each Bushfire Council meeting.
* The status update information is the only information that will be regularly updated in the relevant column. The only exception to this is if a revised completion date is suggested, the status must clearly detail rationale for this change.
* Status of implementation will continue to be regularly updated until action item is fully implemented.
* Action items will only be indicated as “Complete” after due consideration by the Bushfire Council.

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| **Action Item / Issue1** | **Originating Meeting date** | **Responsibility** | **Proposed / Revised completion date** | **General Comment** | **Status Update** |
| 1. Discuss the Councils budget allocation in relation to Council members   **6 Mar update**: A letter to be sent to the ESA Commissioner detailing concerns about the $15K Council budget not being enough | 5/9/12 | Kevin Jeffery & Cathy Parsons | **April 2013** | It was discussed that budget for the Council is only $15K and that the costs for 2012/13 had already exceeded this amount and are now impacting on the RFS budget. Council has concerns that substantial reports and travel time for example should be compensated for as per remuneration tribunal determinations handbook. | Further Action required. |
| 2. Provide the two calendars (RFS Community Ed and the ESA Public Education) to members | 2/5/12 | Andrew Stark | **February 2013** | ACTRFS Calendar re-circulated. Media Calendar to be taken off this Action item. | Complete. |
| 3. Chase up whether we have received the Ministers response for both the 10 year report AND the Annual report then circulated to members | 6/2/13 | Kevin Jeffery | **March 2013** |  | Complete. |
| 4. Write a letter to the Minister to request permission to publish the BFC Annual report. | 6/2/13 | Kevin Jeffery | **March 2013** |  | Ongoing. KJ has not heard back from the Minister as yet. |
| 5.Discuss with the Commissioner what material will be placed on the website and advise members | 6/2/13 | Andrew Stark  Michael Joyce | **March 2013** |  | Ongoing |
| 6. Draft BFC meeting calendar for this year and send to members | 6/2/13 | Kevin Jeffery  Michael Joyce | **March 2013** |  | Complete. |
| 7. Email itinerary for the Mt Ginnini Field trip to members. | 6/2/13 | Neil Cooper | **20/2/2013** | POSTPONED DUE TO BAD WEATHER. NEW DATE TO BE IDENTIFIED | Complete. New date Sunday 17th March. |
| 8. Write a letter to the Prime Minister in support of the Bushfire CRC’s continued funding and moving toward an “Institute’. | 6/2/13 | Tony Bartlett | **March 2013** | No need to complete this Action item as the PM made an announcement before letter was sent. TB had a discussion with the CEO of the CRC who is very happy with the outcome. | Not required. |
| 9. Members to read the ***‘Redefinition of Bushfire Prone Area of the ACT’*** *as tabled by the CO ACTF&R* and send any comments to Paul Swain ASAP. | 6/2/13 | Members | **15/2/13** | Paul Swain is currently on leave no feedback has been provided from him as yet. | Ongoing. |
| 10. Seek the Ministers view on Simon Katz still being a member of the BFC now that he is an ACTRFS Staff member | 6/2/13 | Michael Joyce | **March 2013** |  | Not Required. Simon Katz resigned on 28th Feb 13. |
| 11. Rationale on the sale of Parks16 to be provided to Council members | 6/2/13 | Andrew Stark/  Commissioner | **March 2013** |  | Completed. Explained by the ESA Commissioner at meeting | |
| 12. Reimburse Council members money owing due to being paid at the old rate. | 6/3/13 | Brioni Young | **March 2013** |  | Complete | |
| 13.Read the “Boards and Committees” handbook in detail and determine what needs to be remunerated so AS can carry it forward | 6/3/13 | Members | **April 2013** |  |  | |
| 14. Write to the Minister to advise of the resignations of Simon Katz and to advise that Cathy Parsons has been nominated as the new Deputy Chair. | 6/3/13 | Kevin Jeffery | **March 2013** |  | Complete | |
| 15. The Commissioner has been provided the ‘resolutions’ from today’s meeting for further action | 6/3/13 | Commissioner | **April 2013** |  |  | |
| 16. Council will look to consider the NSWRFS proto type Category 6 Grasslands truck for future purchase. | 6/3/13 | Members | **No specific date** |  |  | |