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| act rural fire service | ACT Bushfire Council Meeting | 3rd July 2013 |
| 16:15 to 19.10 |
| Black Mountain 1 & 2 Meeting Rooms  ACTESA Headquarters |

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| Chair: | | Kevin Jeffery (KJ) | | | | Secretariat: | | | Brioni Young (BY) |
| Attendees: | | Tony Bartlett (TB), Member  Sarah Sharp (SS), Member  Natalie Hile (NH), Member  Christine Goonrey (CG), Member  Cathy Parsons (CP), Member  Marion Leiba (MLe), Member | | | | Dominic Lane (DL) ESA Commissioner  Michael Joyce (MJ) DCO ACTRFS  Paul Swain (PS) CO ACTF&R  Richard Woods (RW) ACTRFS  Greg Potts (GP) ACTRFS  Neil Cooper (NC) Mgr Fire Forest and Roads, PCS | | | |
| Meeting commencement: | | | 16.15 | **Meeting concluded:** | | | | 19.10 | |

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| Minutes |
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| Agenda item: | ***1.0 – Apologies*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Andrew Stark, Michael Lonergan, | | | |

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| Agenda | ***2.0 – Acceptance of minutes of 5th Jun 13 meeting*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
|  | The minutes from the previous meeting held on 5th June 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.  Accepted by Cathy Parsons and seconded by Christine Goonrey. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***3.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Discussion: | Refer to implementation of action items report (attached to end of minutes). | | |
| Agenda item: | ***4.0 – Correspondences*** | Presenter: | **CO RFS** |
| Discussion: | Discussed under the action items.  KJ also received correspondence re the Molonglo study and responded on behalf of Council. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***5.0 – 2013-14 Draft BOP presentation*** | Presenter: | **Dylan Kendall (TAMS)** |
| Discussion:  Action: | DK presented the draft 2013-14 BOP .  He outlined how the BOP is developed (by compiling a list of activities; estimating the resources required and available to implement each activity; allocate the priority of each activity)  He gave an overview of the report and explained how the BFC members can assist by  a; advising whether priorities for existing activities are correct and  b: identifying missing activities.  He pointed out that the Auditor General’s report recommended more monitoring, recording and auditing which will take up a lot of resources and thus funding from operations.  It was noted that the BFC members are comfortable with the process being used by TAMS to complete the BOP and will provide comment at a later stage after the main priorities have been identified.  A meeting to discuss the final BOP arrangements to be arranged for Thursday 11th July. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***6.0 – BOP Report (TAMS)*** | Presenter: | **Neil Cooper** |
| Discussion: | **Overview**  The BOP covers the full range of operations undertaken by the Fire Unit within TAMS.  The ACT has experienced several years in succession of wetter than average conditions which had resulted in full ground moisture heading into the 2012/13 financial year. These high soil moisture conditions had also resulted in heavy vegetation growth over the last two seasons with an escalation of annual grasses. Predictions were for a fire season on 2012/13 of above average potential across large areas of southern Australia.  The Fire Management Unit prepared the 2012/13 BOP with this in mind and continually assessed the prevailing weather conditions throughout the 2012/13 year, considering the implications as we shuffled fuel management operations between grazing, slashing, physical removal and burning. One of our main aims has always been to focus on the fuel management of the western urban interface.  The large physical removal project along the Molonglo River that was aimed at implementing the asset protection zones for the future suburb of Coombs was completed before time and under budget. This involved the use of large machinery and crew time as vegetation was removed, the land was reshaped and as much of the area as possible was made ready to be slashed – all in keeping with the ecological constraints that existed.  The Mt Franklin Road upgrade is now completed from Bulls Head to Mt Ginnini. In addition the Cotter Hut Road has been completed from Orrorol Tracking Station to the Cotter Hut.  The overall delivery of the BOP was achieved with **96% of tasks identified being competed or not required.** This is again an outstanding result highlighted by the largest burning program in over 40 years as well as the largest single burn (Smokers Burn) in over 40 years.  **Seasonal program (100% completion)**  Each year the TAMS Fire Unit engages a number of seasonal fire fighters and additional seasonal plant. This year the BOP identified 8 separate tasks around the engagement and training of seasonal employees and equipment - all of which were completed.  **Fuel Management activities (99% completed or not required)**  Slashing - An extensive slashing/mowing program was again planned for the 2012/13 BOP involving 212 separate activities covering over 8,000 ha and included areas slashed by City Places. All sites were completed and met the required standards.  **TAMS Prescribed Burning** – The prescribed burning program for 2012/13 covered 42 burns across 12,450 ha (significantly up from 5316 ha in 2011-12). Several of the areas unable to be burnt last year were carried over into the 2012/13 BOP. All Burns required were completed  **RFS Prescribed burns** – A total of 12 separate burns covering 159 ha were set aside for the volunteers. Our records indicate that 6 (50%) of these burns covering 32 ha were completed.  **Physical Removal** - The 2012/13 BOP identified 15 separate projects covering approximately 140 hectares of physical removal activities. We completed 13 of these activities with Brindabella Road (Roads ACT) and a pine compartment in Pierces Creek being the only outstanding items..  **Grazing** – Grazing was a very important method of reducing fuel this season given the focus on the extensive grass growth. The fire management unit looked at methods of ensuring that this grazing was strategic and focused on the areas of greatest benefit. Strategic grazing covered over 7000 ha across 79 different sites in the 2012/13 period. Grazing was completed (met the standard) at 73 locations and it was deemed as not required at 6 locations. We achieved the 100% result through restrictive fencing, implementation of a consultant report on grazing values of TAMS sites, active scheduling of stock movements and combing slashing where required.  **Chemical** – Some areas that have been physically cleared require a follow-up chemical application to control regrowth. There were 5 activities in the 2012/13 BOP that covered 60 ha and a work was completed.  **Access Management (89% completed or not required)**  Access management includes routine maintenance and upgrade of existing fire trails, as well as assessments and construction of proposed new fire trials. For 2012/13, over 744 km of fire trails in 78 separate locations were programmed. Many of these roads, or roads leading to these locations, were damaged in the two storm events in 2012 and we continued to place emphasis on storm repair over and above the planned access roads.  **Maintenance** –The BOP identified 41 activities of maintenance across 440 km. A total of 35 of these jobs were completed. Due to the wet weather towards the end of the year and the focus on storm damage repair, 6 of the tasks will be carried over into the 2013/14 BOP.  **Upgrade** – A number of fire trails need to be upgraded under a PCS strategic plan that looks at tanker and float access. Over 15 separate activities across 39 km of existing fire trails were identified as requiring an upgrade to either tanker roads or float roads. A total of 13 of these jobs were completed with the remaining 2 outstanding tasks being less than 500m in total length - again due to wet weather these were not completed and will be carried over into the 2013/14 BOP.  **Construction** – There were no new construction activities identified in the 2012/13 BOP.  **Vegetation Control** – Some of the main access roads throughout TAMS managed land required a certain amount of work on the roadside vegetation to ensure access was maintained – in 2012/13, 22 jobs were identified. We managed to undertake and complete 13 of these tasks. The remaining 9 require a large machine to be contracted in from Victoria and they have been deliberately rolled over to the 2013/14 BOP year to ensure a large enough program is in place to attract the machine and deliver cost savings.  **Infrastructure (100% commenced or not required)**  This activity is predominantly focused around grazing (water tanks, fences etc) however it also includes some helipad construction and radio system updates. A total of 19 items were identified in the BOP of which 17 have been completed. The installation of signs on Careys Fire Trail has not been completed (signs arrived but not yet erected) and it was too wet to line a dam with clay. Both these tasks will be carried over into the next BOP year  **Equipment (100% completed)**  Equipment purchases and PPE appropriation were ongoing with 7 separate activities identified this year. All of these were completed.    **Training (88% commenced or not required)**  TAMS placed a big emphasis on training in the 2012/13 BOP and identified over 986 person days allocated to training across 43 separate courses. This training section included attainment of new skills, competency maintenance, succession building, pre-season preparedness and external meetings and conferences. A total of 38 courses were completed and 2 courses currently in the process of being delivered. Of the three courses not delivered, 2 related to interstate meetings and the third was an RFS course not delivered.  **Audit and Monitoring (100% completed)**  There were 12 separate activities including audits of the key system, grazing, burns, and slashing. All activities were completed  **Planning and Research (85% commenced or not required)**  This section included a total of 47 items over a broad range of activities from preparation of the BOP through to concept plans and dealing with Development Applications. It allocated more than 530 staff days. We completed 40 activities while 7 are ongoing and relate predominantly to the development of concept plans.  **Education (100% completed)**  There were three activities under this section including working with the RFS on talking to rural lease holders and putting the BOP on the TAMS web site. All three have been completed.  **Standby and Response (100% completed)**  There were 54 days of stand up this reporting year.   * 39 days of Level 2 * 11 days of Level 3 * 2 days of Level 4 * 2 days of Level 5   With 5 days of total fire ban.  **Unforeseen (100% completed)**  There were 3 requests from Victoria for assistance. Over 3 deployments, 23 TAMS staff were sent for a total of 240 staff days.   1. Fuel Management activities   An additional 12 activities covering 191 ha were implemented during the year. Of these, three (25 ha) were physical removal, 1 was a small slashing task with the remaining 8 tasks being additional burns predominantly in Kowen forest covering over 164 ha.   1. Access   Over 60 km were added to the programme across 10 separate sites, predominantly to gain access to storm damage sites. One of these is currently still being implemented however will be complete within the next week.   1. Infrastructure   No additional infrastructure tasks were undertaken.   1. Equipment   Replacement land management keys were ordered.   1. Training   Seven extra training opportunities were undertaken. Medium Rigid licence upgrades and GIS training were the focus of these activities.   1. Auditing and Monitoring   One additional activity involving an audit and report on fuel management along the urban-rural interface was conducted in January.   1. Planning and Research   Seven extra Planning and Research activities were undertaken. All but one related to the National Burning project or new BNHCRC.   1. Education   Two additional education activities were undertaken. The National Bushfire Management Policy Statement and Fire in the Landscape publication.  BFC noted that this report was commendable. It was well written and concise.  NC specifically asked all members present if the format for BOP reporting needed to be changed. He stated that he is more than happy to alter the reporting and the way the BOP reporting is formatted to meet any requirements from the BFC or ESA. The current format is as per previous changes requested by the ESA and BFC. The response from the group was a resounding support for the current format as it made a quite complex spread sheet and report quite easy to read. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***7.0 – Update from Auditor General*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Discussion: | Not discussed as no updates. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***8.0 – BFC TOR Discussion*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Discussion: | The draft TOR was read thoroughly and minor changes were made as necessary.  The main issue was to include under 2.4 that the Director General will consult with the Council before appointing the RFS Chief Officer and RFS Deputy Chief Officer.  KJ moved to endorse the TOR with a note to review it within 12 months.  NC noted that there will need to be performance indicator/checklist to ensure that Action items are being done.  The Commissioner will provide a briefing to the minister to seek endorsement. | | |
| Agenda item: | ***9.0 – SBMP V3 Update*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
| Discussion: | SBMPv3 draft project management plan was tabled, reviewed thoroughly and comments made. This version is more of a ‘special plan’ which includes maps.  As there is a statutory timeframe given to complete this project it is important to sort out the words before the maps. | | |
| Discussion: | **OTHER:**  The ACTRFS Deputy Chief Officer Michael Joyce announced his retirement as of Friday 12th July. He was thanked by members for his contribution to the BFC over the years. | | |
|  | ***13.0 – Next Meeting*** | Presenter: | **Chair** |
|  | **The meeting was closed at 1910. The next meeting is scheduled for 7th August 2013** | | |

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

**~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. A briefing be sought to the Council from the LDA primarily to discuss the strategy they are applying to the Western Edge of Coombs and the broader area from the Sewerage Treatment Works south to the Stromlo office. | 1/5/13 | Kevin Jeffery | **August 2013** | July Update: KJ is still drafting the letter. | **Ongoing** |
| .   1. Following the LDA briefing, a field trip of the Coombs area to be organised | 1/5/13 | Members | **Aug 2013** |  | **Ongoing** |
| 1. A copy of the research report that Adam Leavesley did locally on the affects of grazing on pasture and how it dropped the fire fuel levels to be presented | 1/5/13 | Neil Cooper | **July 2013** |  | **Complete** |
| 1. A statement to be formatted by members to summarize the Council’s recognition of the level of hazard reduction burning this year in line with the need to see resourcing for this continue.   NC to provide photographs/narrative showing the results of the HR’s. | 1/5/13 | Members  Neil Cooper | **Aug 2013**  **Aug 2013** | July update: KJ is working on this and will email to members when done, |  |
| 1. A Financial year Business plan will be prepared by Council as part of the budget. | 6/4/13 | Members | **July 2013** | July Update; Discussed in today’s meeting | **Ongoing** |
| 1. Discuss the Communication strategies with Council members | 6/4/13 | Darren Cutrupi / TAMS Media | **Sept 2013** | July update: Try to organise this for Augusts meeting | Ongoing |
| 1. The Commissioner has been provided the ‘resolutions’ from today’s meeting for further action. A **TOR** on the Councils role is to be prepared. | 6/3/13 | Commissioner,  Secretariat  3 Council members.  3 ESA/RFS staff. | **Aug 2013** | July update: Feedback has been received from TAMS and from ACTF&R. A meeting still needs to be organised to add comments. Draft has been provided to Auditor General as the TOR was the most important recommendation that came out of their report. See item 8 on todays agenda. | Ongoing |
| 1. Council will look to consider the NSWRFS proto type Category 6 Grasslands truck for future purchase. | 6/3/13 | Members | **Possibly be here for August meeting** | The vehicle is presently touring NSW and when it comes to Canberra AS will arrange for Council to inspect | Monitoring |
| 1. Email the Minister if necessary to ensure that we can put the 10 year report on the website | 5/6/13 | Kevin Jeffery | **Aug 2013** | July Update: the Commissioner advised that the Minister was still considering this request and Council will be advised as soon as his decision is made. | Ongoing |
| 1. Provide feedback on the ACT Evacuation Policy to Andrew Stark | 5/6/13 | Members | **July 2013** |  | Complete |
| 1. The list of evacuation centres in relation to the draft Evacuation policy to be sent to members | 5/6/13 | Andrew Stark | **July 2013** | July Update: GP provided copies to members.  TB questioned how rural areas are treated with no evacuation centres.  GP advised that rural areas are covered under the elevated fire danger plan. All facilities should also have their own Bush Fire danger plan.  Also, the Messaging system would advise people where to evacuate/ relocate to. Noting that the safest place for all rural dwellers is the greater urban areas.  Evacuation areas are not necessarily assembling points.  The draft policy needs to include rural evacuation procedures – in particular Uriarra villiage. | Complete |
| 1. Provide feedback on the SBMP draft project plan to Andrew Stark. | 5/6/13 | Members | **21/06/13** | July Update: CG questioned whether the Chair of the BFC should also be the chair of the Advisory group.  Commissioner will take this discussion offline. | Complete |
| 1. Provide feedback on the draft TOR to Virginia Hayward | 5/6/13 | Members | **28/06/13** | July Update: Discussed as part of today’s agenda. | Complete |
| 1. Draft TOR with preamble to be send to Faye Steward | 5/6/13 | Kevin Jeffery | **July 2013** |  | Complete |
| 1. Arrange a meeting on 11th July to discuss the BOP | 9/7/13 | Brioni Young |  |  | Complete |