



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 2 December 2020 4pm-7pm

WebEx and EPSDD Stromlo Depot

Members Present

Sarah Ryan – Chair
Natarsha Jakubaszek – Deputy Chair
Tony Bartlett – Member
Cathy Parsons – Member
David Snell – Member
Jeremy Watson – Member
Nick Lhuede – Member
Steve Angus – Member
Bhiamie Williamson – Member

Invited Guest(s):

Dr Sophie Lewis, Commissioner for Sustainability, and the Environment
Ailish Milner, Assistant Director Strategic Planning Bushfire, RFS
Tony Scherl, RFMP Coordinator, EPSDD

Apologies:

David Foot, Executive Branch Manager Risk & Planning
Glenn Brewer – A/g Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue
Georgeina Whelan – ESA Commissioner
Kylie Coe - Member

Officials Present

Ray Johnson – ESA Deputy Commissioner
Rohan Scott – A/g Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS)
Daniel Iglesias, Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

Secretariat:

Kerri Clarke – Executive Officer, Commissioner’s Office (until 31 Dec 2020)
Tara Bucknall – Executive Officer, Commissioner’s Office (from 1 Jan 2021)

Minutes

Item	Presenter
1. Acknowledgement of country	Chair

The Chair acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land that the meeting was on, the Ngunnawal people. She expressed acknowledgement and respect towards their continuing culture and the contributions they make to the life of this city and this region. She also acknowledged and welcomed all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending the meeting.

2. Welcome (Introductions, apologies, and nomination of member to monitor the performance checklist) **Chair**

Commissioner Whelan, Executive Branch Manager, David Foot and Chief Officer, ACTF&R and Kylie Coe were apologies for this meeting.

3. Declarations of interest **Chair**

Nil.

4. Acceptance of minutes and actions from previous meeting**Chair**

The previous minutes from the November meeting were reviewed by Council. On agreement of Council this is recorded as not completed. See Agenda Item 7, 3 February 2021.

5. Correspondence for noting**Chair**

Nil

6. Report on activities attended on behalf of Council since the last meeting**Chair**

The Chair advised Council of her attendance at the November SBMP Governance Meeting.

Council members advised of their attendance at the Orroral Valley Fireground for the annual Council field trip. The Chair thanked staff that arranged and participated in the field trip.

The Chair and Deputy Chair met with the Minister's Office on 18 November 2020 to discuss Bushfire Council issues.

The Chair advised Council of her involvement in the upcoming Chief Officer RFS recruitment process as an advisory panel member.

7. Presentation from Sophie Lewis, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability, and the Environment**Sophie Lewis**

Dr Sophie Lewis provided Council members with a background on the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability, and the Environment.

Council members noted the impact and purpose of the State of the Environment Report and Dr Lewis discussed the summary of the report in depth.

Dr Sophie Lewis also provided an update on climate change in Australia based on the recent BOM/CSIRO report 'State of the Climate 2020'.

In relation to the chapter on fire management, Council noted that the Actions and Findings were written before the 2020 Orroral bushfire and asked whether the impacts of the 2003 and 2020 bushfires, as evidence of a shortening of expected intervals between major bushfires under a changing climate, will be used to develop an adaptive management approach for maintaining the important ecosystems in Namadgi National Park?

Council recorded Dr Lewis responding by indicating that she has the ability to review Actions through annual reporting and she could do a formal investigation under the legislation.

Council also asked how they might include cultural indicators in the recommendations.

Sophie advised that the development of the indicators has been very slow due to budget constraints and her team is hoping to develop these in the next year.

The Chair thanked Dr Lewis for her presentation.

8. Quarterly BOP report**Daniel Iglesias**

Daniel spoke to the documents that were provided to Council. He advised that Covid has had an impact on training schedules and that the first pass of slashing will be completed prior to Christmas 2020.

9. Development of 2021 Business Plan – Discussion of Strategic Issues**Chair**

Action Item 0212-01	Action Officer/ Due
The Chair to make a formal request to the Commissioner for a current status update on the overview of arrangements in place to complete the recommendations from all reviews and inquires. Due for February meeting.	Chair

Action Item 0212-02	Action Officer/ Due
Council has requested a report on the NSW Inquiries recommendations, noting that AFAC has completed some work on this previously.	EPSDD/ PCS

Council discussed options for their business plan for 2021 and noted that Council members' terms on ACT Bushfire Council are due to expire in September 2021.

Council proposed the following for inclusion in the 2021 Council Business Plan:

February

- The Minister has indicated that he would like to attend this meeting.
- The draft Regional Fire Management plan.
- Overview of arrangements in place for all reviews and inquiries.
- Review of NSW Inquiries recommendations.

March

- SBMP Governance Committee consolidated SBMP report.
- End of season report from ACTRFS.

April

- Council review of SBMP objectives.
- National focus of AFAC Rural Land Managers Group

May

- Urban Interface Protection
- Presentation from SLA
- Land Planning - Forward planning for protection of new suburbs in Canberra
- Land Planning - ESA's strategic thinking on development on new CFAs and how they are allocated into bushfire prone areas.

July

- National issues, presentations from AFAC and BHNCRC

August

- Review of the fire management zones.
- Comprehensive Risk Review

October

- Options for adaptation to climate change

Action Item 0212-03	Action Officer/ Due
An agenda item for February meeting – review of membership status of members	Chair

10. Presentation from RFS Strategic Planner/ PCS on evaluating urban areas at greatest risk from grass fires this coming summer- RFS/ PCS

The Chair welcomed Ailish Milner to her first Council meeting, Ailish is the Assistant Director Strategic Planning Bushfire for the ACT Rural Fire Service.

Both Ailish and Tony Scherl from EPSDD were invited to Council to provide the results of an analysis that Council requested on evaluating urban areas at greatest risk from grass fires this coming summer.

The preliminary analysis was presented to Council, with a focus on the lands managed by EPSDD. Council was advised that ESA and PCS are currently working on drafting a more comprehensive map including the risks and mitigation actions being undertaken on non-EPSDD land.

Council noted some areas of concern relating to adjacent BOPs that are not necessarily coordinated and were advised on the extra mitigation works that can be undertaken in the areas of concern.

Council was advised on the focus on increased community engagement about preventing bush and grassfire ignition, noting that the main sources of grassfire ignitions are mechanical.

Action Item 0212-04	Action Officer/ Due
Council requested a verbal report on grassland risk and mitigation follow up at the February meeting.	CO RFS

11. Standing Item – Reports from Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Governance Committee CM'Tee Chair

The Chair advised that the last meeting was routine and noted that the new independent chair is Dr Sophie Lewis.

12. Officials' reports for noting: Officials

12.1 EPSDD Report EPSDD

This report was taken as read.

12.2 Commissioner's Report Commissioner

The Deputy Commissioner spoke to this agenda item advising Council that the Commonwealth have accepted the action items arising from the Royal Commission Inquiry and will work on progressing these actions.

Council noted that although National Cabinet have discussed progression of the recommendations that apply to relevant States and Territories, most local Governments have withheld announcing a particular position as the recommendations have not yet gone through their relevant Cabinet processes.

Council noted that ESA is working through the CO RFS recruitment process, with a view to finalising this as soon as possible

Council noted that an independent chair for the SBMP Governance Committee has been selected, Dr Sophie Lewis will undertake this position in the New Year with a start date to be finalised.

13. Finalisation of the Annual Preparedness Report**Chair**

Council members undertook this agenda item 'in-camera'

14. Any other business**Chair**

Action Item 0212-05	Action Officer/ Due
Action item 0212-05 moved to November 2020 meeting on agreement of Council. Reference Agenda Item 7, ACT Bushfire Council 3 February 2021	

15. Review and adoption of action items from this meeting – complete**Chair**

16. Council's performance checklist**Chair**

Not applicable.

17. Close**Chair**

The meeting concluded 6:55pm

Next meeting: 4pm, 3 February 2021

Action Items			At 2 December 2020	
Ref	ACTION	DUE	ACTION OFFICER	STATUS UPDATE
0212-05	<p>Council requested an update on the preparation of the Statement of Resources and Capabilities for SBMP4, as required by Section 76 of the Emergencies Act, noting that previously Council had been advised that this would be presented to Council in October 2020.</p> <p>Action item 0212-05 moved to November 2020 meeting on agreement of Council.</p> <p>Reference Agenda Item 7, ACT Bushfire Council 3 February 2021</p>			
0212-04	Council requested a verbal report on grassland risk and mitigation follow up at the February meeting.	February Meeting	CO RFS	0212 – Action Opened
0212-03	An agenda item for February meeting – review of membership status of members	February Meeting	Chair	0212 – Action Opened
0212-02	Council have requested a report on the NSW Inquiries recommendations. Noting that AFAC have completed some work in this previously.	Next Year	EPSDD/ PCS	0212 – Action Opened
0212-01	The Chair to make a formal request to the Commissioner for a current status update on the overview of arrangements in place to complete the recommendations from all reviews and inquiries. Due for February meeting	February Meeting	Chair	0212 – Action Opened
0411-09	The Chair and CO RFS will further discuss how to develop an approach to evaluating achievement of SBMP objectives.	Next Meeting	Chair/ CO RFS	0411- Action Opened 0212- Still open. Date to be determined in early 2021.
0411-08	Council requested review and discussion on Operational Review and Royal Commission in February	Next Meeting	Commissioner	0411 – Action Opened 0212 – ongoing
0411-06	RFMP presentation due in February Council meeting due to time constraints	Next Meeting	Justin Foley	0411 – Action Opened 0212 - Ongoing

0411-04	When producing the business plan for the December meeting, BFC members to include a schedule of in-camera meetings	PRIOR TO Next Meeting	ALL	0411 – Action Opened 0212 – Ongoing
0411-01	The Council requested a copy of the Annual Report from Conservation Team on Research Monitoring.	Next Meeting	Ian Walker	0411 – Action Opened 0212 – The Chair passed this on to Daniel Iglesias. Ongoing.
0209-08	The Chair to officially write to the Commissioner to explore the option of having an applicant from the previous round of Council appointments possibly fill the position recently vacated by Margaret Moreton	Next Meeting	The Chair	0209- Action Opened 0411 – ongoing 0212 – ongoing
0209-04	Justin Foley invited Council member Steve Angus to discuss recovery with him in an out of session meeting to address some of Steve’s concerns. Justin noted that recovery is his jurisdiction. Council member Nick Lhuede and Deputy Commissioner to be included in this process.	Next Meeting	Justin Foley	0209- Action Opened 0411 – Has not yet finalised, timing to be arranged. 0212 – ongoing
0209-03	In relation to the Operational Review, Council will consolidate their comments and discuss them with the Commissioner and mention them in the preparedness report	Next Meeting	The Chair	0209- Action Opened 0411 – Ongoing 0212 - Ongoing
0209-02	Justin Foley to provide Council with an overview of what goes into drafting a BOP when available.	Next Meeting	Justin Foley/ CO RFS	0209 – Action Opened 0411 – Ongoing 0212 – The Chair asked for a 10-minute overview for this item next time PCS provide a presentation on a BOP. This will occur after Jan 2021
20200406-13	The CO ACTRFS to seek further advice in relation to making BFC reports into the level of bushfire preparedness (each bushfire season) that are provided to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services be publicly available on the ESA website; including any restrictions on reports from recent years.	Ongoing	Commissioner and CO ACTRFS	Commissioner advised this is ongoing– Tony Bartlett to provide details to publish. 0508- SR to discuss with MO 0209 – Ongoing 0411 – Ongoing 0212 – Awaiting response from MO

Action Items (CLOSED)

Ref	As at 2 December 2020
0411-07	The RFS Strategic Planner and PCS collaborate to assess grassland areas to the north and west of Canberra suburbs on a tenure blind basis to identify those areas that present the highest risk to urban areas and critical infrastructure from bushfires and indicate what actions are proposed to reduce these risks. The findings should be presented to Bushfire Council at the December meeting.
0411-05	For next meeting Council will include an agenda item to work on the ACT Bushfire Council Plan
0411-03	When producing the business plan for the December meeting, BFC members to draft a set of strategic issues for review.
0411-02	There will be an amendment to the BFC Business Plan to move the Quarterly BOP Report to December rather than the November meeting. This will allow for the tight time frames PCS experience in the approval process and data entry requirements for the BOP.
0710 -05 (In Camera)	Chair to prepare a discussion paper and draft Business Plan for circulation to Council members prior to the next meeting.
0710 -04 (In Camera)	All members to provided updates and edits of their respective chapter to David Snell by Wednesday 14 October
0710 -03 (In Camera)	The Chair will draft a letter of response for Council's consideration, noting the Council is working as intended under legislation, and to clarify the Commissioner's position in relation to the status of the advice Council provides in the exercise of its function
0710 -02 (In Camera)	Chair to progress a guideline for the attendance of appropriate officials.
0710 -01 (In Camera)	Cathy Parsons to contact Ian Walker to follow up on land management issues
0209-07	The Chair to provide additional agenda items for October meeting, noting space for assembly report, Denman Prospect, a follow up on S3959 and a possible presentation
0209-06	The CO RFS to provide a date for the BOM Report out of session
0209-05	The CO RFS to provide a date to Council out of session for the Annual Planning Forum once the date has been decided.
0209-01	Council member Tony Bartlett to provide preferred amendments to the secretariat for August meeting minutes before final approval from Council can be sought.
0508-10	CO ACTRFS to explore option on the possible field trip to Orroral Valley fire in October, in line with Covid restrictions. Itinerary and transport to be drafted if going ahead.
0508-08	CO ACT RFS to pass on to the TCCS team the request for data to be included in the reporting of objectives. For inclusion into the Council report to the Minister.
0508-04	Actions from resolution papers to be added to August 2020 minutes once response is received from EPSDD Council to meet out of session to discuss resolution proposal, if necessary
20191002-2	Documents from June to December 2018 to be put on an online platform 20200603-04 Action: Arrange ACT Government login for all Bushfire Council Members to access meeting papers and presentations on ESA G Drive
2020304-13	ESA to provide formal advice on public comment conflict of interest for Council members.

20200603-12.3	Greg Potts to arrange a meeting report on Farm Fire Wise (FFW) in the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ) with data and an explanation of the constraints to meeting the target of 100%.
20200603-8	Provide Council with a copy of the draft After Action Review Report and add to the July Agenda
0508-01	The Chair will formally write to the Minister declaring the conflict of interest
0508-02	Council requested an additional agenda item for the September meeting to discuss guidelines around public comment conflict of interest for Council members.
0508-03	Ian Walker to prompt response from EPSDD in a timely manner before the commencement of caretaker period, and provide advice back to the Council
0508-05	EPSDD/ PCS will advise Council on a date for the BOP out of session working group meeting.
0508-06	CO ACTF&R to provide statistics and details on the success of the Juvenile fire awareness and intervention program
0508-07	SBMP Obj 1 (1.3) not provided at meeting. This will be carried over to the next meeting in September. A presentation will be provided to secretariat
0508-09	EPSDD to provide presentation to secretariat by September meeting for Obj 9 (9.2)
20200603-12.2	Send Council the relevant transcripts of the Royal Commission hearings when they are available and add to the July Agenda.
20200406-08 (3)	Neil Cooper to arrange a Phoenix model analysis of the likely impacts on Denman Prospect from a bushfire burning through the forest blocks located to its west, following discussions with Tony Bartlett and Nick Lhuede on the specific modelling requirements.
20200406-08 (1)	The BFC Chair to write to EPSDD Planning to request an update on where the Cabinet Submission is up to in relation to AS 3959:2018 being incorporated into the ACT Territory Plan and to request that a briefing be provided to Council on the agreements with developers on the fire protection measures to be applied at the final western boundaries of the suburbs of Denman Prospect and Whitlam, including the expected locations of edge roads and asset protection zones and the details of the proposed thinning of the red stringybark forest.
0107-02 (2020)	Council requested an adaptive management (Objective 9), noting that information for this objective was not adequately provided to Council.
0107-01 (2020)	Chair to review and discuss options with Margaret out of session and work on a conflict of interest plan on how to manage the conflict moving forward. To be discussed further at next meeting. ITEM CLOSED 05082020
20200603-9	Facilitate meetings pre and post Council Meetings with key stakeholders to provide Council access with the information they have requested in line with their business plan. The Commissioner, CO ACTRFS and Chair to discuss the outcome out of session.
20200406-07	The BFC Chair to draft a response to the Minister for Police and Emergency Service (MPES) seeking clarification to his response to the recommendations in Council's 2018-19 Bushfire Season Preparedness Report.
20191204-9	ESA to advise Council if they provided comment on the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan, and if so, provide a copy of those comments to Council.
200304-10	EPSDD PCS to provide the Secretariat with an electronic version of the BOP Quarterly Report to be circulated to Council members out of session.
20200406-08 (2)	Secretariat to add to the June BFC Business Plan a presentation by Greg Potts and Scott Seymour on the status of the Bushfire Management Standards (including an ACT & NSW comparison) and the review of Fire Management Zones. Greg Potts undertook to provide his paper/presentation prior to the meeting.

20200406-08 (4)	Secretariat to send the ACT Bushfire Management Standards to Council Members.
20200406-08 (5)	After each BFC meeting, a short meeting between the CO ACTRFS the Council members whose focus objectives are in the Business Plan two months ahead will be held to discuss and agree on the nature of the information that BFC would like presented at that meeting.
20200406- 12	Secretariat to update the BFC Business Plan to reflect requests for information arising from the May meeting and to add Nick Lhuede as a Council member who will focus on objectives 3, 7, 8 11 of the SBMP version 4.
20200406-14 (1)	Secretariat to ensure the WebEx meeting invite and details is sent out to all Council Member and Officials.
20200406-14 (2)	The Chair, David Snell and Tony Bartlett to review the section in the BFC Terms of Reference that requires that after a new SBMP is made the Commissioner must conduct an assessment of the adequacy of the resources to deliver the Plan and must give that assessment to the BFC and the Minister; and then provide a recommendation from BFC to the Commissioner and the CO ACTRFS.