



ACT
Government



ESA Black Mountain Meeting Room
ACT ESA Headquarters

Chair	Andrew Joyce	Secretariat:	Lynda Scanes
Attendees	Marion Leiba, Steve Angus, Tony Bartlett, Sarah Ryan, Sandra Lauer, Christine Goonrey and Natarsha Carney		
Officials	Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service Tony Scherl, Acting Manager, Fire, Forests and Roads, Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD		
Presenters	Brian Levine, Fire, Forests and Roads, Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD		

Minutes

Agenda item	1.0 – Welcome and Apologies	Presenter:	Chair
-------------	------------------------------------	-------------------	--------------

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from Dominic Lane, Mark Brown, Kevin Jeffery, Cathy Parsons, Dean Freeman, Neil Cooper, Daniel Iglesias, Mick George, Pat Jones and Trent Penman from the Melbourne University

Agenda item:	2.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members	Presenter:	Chair
---------------------	---	-------------------	--------------

Discussion:

No Conflicts of Interest were reported by Council Members.

Agenda item:	3.0 – Acceptance of minutes and review of action items and arising from previous meetings	Presenter:	Chair
---------------------	--	-------------------	--------------

Discussion:

The minutes from the previous meeting 5 April 2017, were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Previous action items are at Attachment A.

The history of bushfire frequency topic that was listed in the BFC Business was discussed at length.

The CO ACTRFS requested further clarification about the type of information Council require and agreed to explore a method to track data of the history of bushfires in the ACT. Council would like to use the data as an indicator to measure what seasons were like, the size and frequency of fires. Council want to gauge if the current fuel management and planning, has reduced the frequency and intensity of bushfires in the ACT. Council agreed to form a subgroup (out of session) to prepare a discussion paper about information types to form a history of fires in the ACT, seasonal, conditions of vegetation and fire types etc.

CO ACT RFS to follow up an action from previous BFC meeting regarding the QON about Portable Toilets.

Action:

- Secretariat to provide updates to outstanding action items
- Council to form a subgroup to prepare a discussion paper about information types to form a history of fires in the ACT

Agenda item: *4.0 – Correspondence*

Presenter: Chair

Nil

Agenda item: *5.0 – Update on research into the reduction of risk by Melbourne* **Presenter:** Chair

Discussion:

To be carried over to another BFC meeting – date to be advised when Trent Penman is available.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: *6.0 – Topics for the 2017 ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan*

Presenter:

Chair

Discussion:

6.1 Mr Levine provided a presentation on the ACT PCS burning program to date and specifically on the recorded fuel moistures in the rural area

The presentation included information about the implementation and outcomes of the current PCS hazard reduction burns, on ground fuel moistures, on-ground fire behavior, fuel reduction objectives and weather conditions. Members were provided with the link to view the upcoming prescribed burns and other information http://www.environment.act.gov.au/ACT-parksconservation/bushfire_management.

PCS are looking at future burning programs smaller more frequent and lower intensity prescribed burns.

PCS advised at this stage they would not be involved in the next version of the SBMP for 2019-24, based on funding and having enough personnel.

Council thanked Mr Levine for the very informative presentation. Council asked if Mr Leavesley and Mr Levine could attend the August meeting when the Review of achievements of the EPDSS Bushfire Operational Plan in 2016-17 is scheduled.

6.2 Mr Murphy provided a brief update on Aviation Arrangements and Developments

New South Wales has postponed all aviation training until the end of the year. The ACT RFS has accepted the extension year remaining on the current NAFC contract. ACT has provided advice on the next round of contract with a focus on upgrading technology by streaming video from the external of the helicopter, a 360° camera on the base and a front forwarding camera on helicopter and a request to upgrade the Squirrel with a larger engine capacity. Future contract would remain 84 days, 5 year contract (that is broken into; 3 year with the opportunity to extend for one plus one extra years).

The night box on helicopters was discussed; however, the use of drones is preferred over flying helicopters at night. Australian Federal Police use drones and PCS use drones for kangaroo management and monitoring wildlife in specific locations. AFAC have provided advice from Civil Aviation Authority regarding the use of drones and exclusion zones.

Council members discussed the report to the MPES and the key focus is to improve the communication from the IMT at ESA HQ to be the people on the ground. Members requested the CO ACT RFS provide a report with comparative data to update Council on aviation capability; to demonstrate how aviation has changed over the years and changes to the involvement of volunteers with more use of aerial support at bushfires. (Report written and CO to provide a complete report in August) Council to send an email by the end of next week to the CO ACT RFS providing a Common Picture detailing what information is required historical fire brief and history of aviation.

Outcome: Council to provide a Common Picture to ACTRFS requesting specific information on the history of bushfires in the ACT and the history of aviation support for bushfires

August Council Meeting: ACT RFS to provide a report with comparative data in relation to aviation capability; and the changes to involvement of volunteers in bushfire fighting with more use of aerial support at bushfires

The Council noted the Indigenous Presentation would be carried over to another BFC meeting.

(Out of session) To assist BFC gather information for their annual report to the Minister they would like to attend both the Senior Operations Group (Operational Officers) and the Senior Management Group (Administrative Officers) in July and August.

Action:

- Secretariat to update the BFC Business Plan adding in the August section: ACTRFS to provide a presentation on the history of bushfires in the ACT and the history of aviation support for bushfires
- Secretariat to arrange for an invitation will be extended from both the Senior Operations Group (Operational Officers) and the Senior Management Group (Administrative Officers) to BFC members to attend their next meetings in July and August

Agenda item: 7.0 – Commissioner’s Report to BFC

Presenter: CO ACT RFS

Discussion:

CO ACT RFS provided a brief summary (on behalf of the Acting Commissioner) of the activities within ESA.

The report covered:

- The Emergency Services Agency Last Post Commemoration at the Australian War Memorial on 27 April 2017
The Service this year recognised the military service of Private Albert Jones, a great uncle of Pat Jones, Acting Chief Officer ACTF&R
- The ACT Community Protection Medal Ceremony was held at the National Arboretum on 6 April 2017
- 2017 Volunteering Awards
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ACT Rural Fire Service
- ACT RFS Awards Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on Wednesday 10 May 2017 where members will be recognised for their length of service to the ACTRFS
- The Awards Ceremony will also see the launch of the book ‘*Fire on the Limestone Plains*’, compiled by Mr Pat Barling, a long serving volunteer in the ACTRFS and current Captain of Jerrabomberra Brigade
- The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) National Memorial Service on 28 April 2017

This year was the third annual service to commemorate the courage and sacrifice of those emergency service personnel who have died in the line of duty. Thirteen AFAC Memorial Medallions were presented to the families of those who have died. A Medallion was presented to the family of Station Officer Simon Fenson who passed away in October last year as a result of terminal cancer that has been directly linked to his service as a firefighter with ACT Fire & Rescue.

Mr Angus raised presumptive workers’ compensation that covers paid fire-fighters and if ACTRFS Volunteers would be covered now they respond to structure fires in the rural areas. CO ACT RFS advised the Commonwealth Legislation does not cover Volunteers.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: 8.0 - Land Manager’s Report

Presenters: Tony Scherl

Discussion:

Tony Scherl, Acting 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.

Brian Levine, Adam Leavesley and Dean Freeman/Neil Cooper are presenting at the AFAC 2017 Conference. Adam Leavesley is presenting assessing post-fire hydrologic risk using fire severity mapping at the Emergency Management Spatial Information Network Australia (EMSINA) Meeting.

Infrastructure – The four portable automatic weather stations have been installed on sites at Mullion (NW outside of the ACT), Kowen Forest, Tidbinbilla and Gudgenby, they will be there for 6 or so months. The data will be sent to the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and is available on the public website. Historical information can be downloaded and PCS are working with ESA to get a common website working.

The Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) is 73% complete. Planning for next year's BOP is underway, pending information regarding budget due June/July. All trittering works that could be completed without an Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) has been completed.

Access management – Padovans crossing, Naas Valley Fire Trail and Clear Range Fire Trail will be upgraded. Rehabilitation work on the Warks Road and Wombat Hazard Reduction Burn are completed. A work plan and engineering designs are being procured for the replacement of the Naas Valley Fire Trail crossing of the Naas River at Caloola Farm. A request for environmental approval is being sought for the remaining vegetation management works on fire trails in Namadgi National Park and Canberra Nature Reserves.

A pilot AIIMS functional training Level 2 IMT training in Coffs Harbour with another scheduled for Canberra on 22-26 May 2017.

The Small Business Innovation Partnerships (SBIP) process is progressing well with Digital Three72 to develop the PCS rostering and resource management system, with a timeline of 6 months.

PCS have purchased two new G-Wagons to add to the fire fleet.

After a dry start to the bushfire season, reasonable rainfall across the ACT, resulting in more opportunities for prescribed burning in the urban and grassland areas than in the rural areas. Wombat was one of the larger completed.

Although the weather conditions have appeared and been suitable at times over the past few weeks, on ground fuel moisture measurements have been consistently high, observed on-ground fire behaviour has been mild, and we are conscious of achieving our fuel reduction objectives for each burn.

PCS will continue prescribed burns until the commencement of the Kangaroo Management Program and the temperatures and day lengths close the prescribed burning window.

Council members discussed the outcomes of the fuel hazard reduction burn near the suburb of Aranda.

Action: Nil

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

Presenter:

CO ACT RFS

Discussion:

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

The Minister for Police and received a number of Questions on Notice specific to the ACT Rural Fire Service from

the Annual Report Hearings. They ranged from training, staffing, roles of volunteers and various others. The responses will be publically available after the Legislative Assembly Sitting.

A new tanker is the latest addition to the ACTRFS fleet and will be handed over the Jerrabomberra Brigade. ESA staff are attending Moore Engineering, Murray Bridge, South Australia on 27-28 April 2017 for the final inspections and sign off the new build of an ACTRFS operational tanker. Fleet will be reviewed prior to the next round of replacement in 2-19. This will allow time to design for future builds to accommodate the needs to the types of incidents that are attended and the changes in technology that we may look at incorporating.

The Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AED's) have started to be rolled out to the service; this process will be completed by early May. The Federal Government provided a NDRP grant to purchase the AED's; they will be a great addition to the safety of our member and the wider ACT community.

A *Work Health and Safety* (WH&S) audit of the ACTRFS in conjunction with JACS WH&S, the audit will look at all aspects of the ACTRFS. We welcome the audit process and the end result will be a safer and more WH&S compliant service for our members.

As reported at the last council meeting the PPC survey was very successful, we are now just waiting on pricing from manufacturers so we can finalise our business case to present to the ESA Executive Leadership Group.

The weather hasn't been too kind for the hazard reduction program. Parks have managed to get in some good burns before the weather turned, a couple of the volunteers Brigades have also conducted small burns local to their brigade areas, this has allowed members to up skill in operational roles and to get some assessments of our BF members completed.

Michael Joyce is continuing to act as the Manager, Membership and Training Section until the end of June when Brian Murphy is due to return from extended leave.

Training has been completed for 15 members in Bushfire Fighter assessments who are now fully qualified to attend wildfires. Crew Leader Course commences on 29 April 2017, and will bring the qualified fire fighters to 26. Several members have yet to complete their post course requirements from the previous CL course and we are concentrating on getting them the required experience. The Parks Learning & Development officer is working part-time at Hume to get Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) completed for those Parks staff who are eligible to complete the RPL to enable certification against the current national units of competency for Crew Leader and Divisional Command units.

The Membership and Training Section has nominated our Volunteer Training Group for the 2017 Volunteer Team Award – the award ceremony is being held at the Arboretum on 8 May 2017. The Volunteer Training Team has undertaken close to 2600 hours of instruction and assessment for 97 other volunteers over the past 12 months. The programs delivered are aligned to the Vocational Education & Training Sector (VET) units of competency; there are 12 different units from the Certificate II to Certificate IV in Public Safety Fire Fighting Operations qualifications. This core group of instructors has worked together seamlessly to deliver and assess programs by themselves with a small amount of support from the ACTRFS office. ACTRFS currently have 35 prospective new recruits who will be invited to join the next BF course.

The ACT Community Protection Medal Ceremony was held at the National Arboretum on 6 April 2017 and Anthony Kidney from ACTRFS received a medal.

The 2017 Long Service Medal Ceremony is scheduled for 10 May at the War Memorial, where 29 members will be receiving Long Service medals, representing a total of 418 years of combined service. The ceremony will also include the launch of Pat Barling's book "Fire on the Limestone Plains". Council members have been sent invitations.

The Canberra Bushfire Ready door knock has concluded in the suburbs of Giralang, Hackett, O'Malley, Aranda, Bruce, Calwell, Isaacs, Kaleen, Latham, Lyneham, Nicholls, and O'Connor. The report is currently being written for approval at the Executive Leadership Group and will be provided to BFC.

Convoy for Cancer was held on 2 April 2017, and 21 ACTRFS trucks were present. The Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Open Day was held on 2 April 2017, and Tidbinbilla Brigade represented ACTRFS.

ACTRFS hosted a thank you lunch for all ESA staff to recognise that the work done in the bushfire season. Manager Community Engagement has begun working with local community and supported housing organisations to provide safety information to at risk groups in the ACT.

The Community Bushfire Protection Team are finalising the ACT Rural Grant applications from rural landholders to enable the program to be completed by the financial year end with all projects completed. Projects funded and completed so far include dams and pumps for enhanced firefighting water supply, provision of additional access for farm fire access, and supply of tanks and firefighting equipment for on property use. One project completed was construction of an all weather access which will enable access for all emergency agencies to an area in the Murrumbidgee River corridor where emergency response by ACTAS and ACT F&R is frequently required.

The team working with Directorates to enable submission of 2 new Bushfire Operational Plans (BOPs) to ESA Commissioner for approval, and the audit of recent Environment Planning and Sustainability Directorate hazard reductions is continuing.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: 10.0 – General Business

Presenter:

Chair

Discussion:

Nil

Agenda item: 11.0 – Next Meeting

Presenter:

Chair

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

Closing: The meeting closed at 6pm.



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 a verbal report at the May meeting
Agenda 7 – ESA Acting Commissioner written response to BFC in relation to the outcomes of the Annual Report Hearings (QONs) re portable toilets (portaloo's)	1 April 2017	A/g Commissioner	3 May 2017	Pending	Note: The information will be available after the 6 – 9 June Legislative Assembly Sitting
Agenda 3 - Council to form a subgroup to prepare a discussion paper about information types to form a history of fires in the ACT	3 May 2017	Council	7 June 2017	Pending	The discussion paper to be sent to the CO ACTRFS when complete
Agenda 6 – Update the BFC Business Plan adding in the August section: ACTRFS to provide a presentation on the history of bushfires in the ACT and the history of aviation support for bushfires	3 May 2017	Secretariat	2 August 2017		Completed on 17 May 2017
Agenda 6 – IBFC would like to be a invited guests at the Senior Operations Group (Operational Officers) and the Senior Management Group (Administrative Officers) next meetings in July and August	3 May 2017	Secretariat			Secretariat provided the information to the Senior Operations Manager

Completed Items

Action Item / Issue ¹	Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	Date completed
Agenda 6 - Provide BFC with a copy of the Community Engagement Calendar of events when endorsed and provide another update at the August BFC Meeting	1 April 2017	Secretariat	May 2017	Completed
Agenda 8 - Secretariat to include Trent Penman from AFAC to the May BFC Meeting	1 April 2017	Secretariat	3 May 2017	Completed
Agenda 11 - Secretariat to email BFC the comments they provided in relation to the LCC Draft Plan	1 April 2017	Secretariat	3 May 2017	Completed
Agenda 12 - Secretariat to rearrange the ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan for June.	1 April 2017	Secretariat	3 May 2017	Completed