



**ACT**  
Government



Wednesday 1 February 2017

16:00 to 19:00

ESA Black Mountain Meeting Room  
ACT ESA Headquarters

<b>Chair:</b>	Kevin Jeffery	<b>Secretariat:</b>	Victor Khaw
<b>Attendees:</b>	Cathy Parsons		Sandra Lauer
	Steve Angus		Tony Bartlett
	Marion Leiba		Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service from 5pm
	Mick George		Mark Brown, Chief Officer ACT Fire & Rescue
	Andrew Joyce		Neil Cooper, Manager, Fire, Forest and Roads, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD)
	Sarah Ryan		
	Natarsha Carney		
<b>Invited Guests</b>	Dr Jason Sharples		
	Mr Rick McRae, Risk Analyst, Risk and Spatial Services		

## Minutes

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Daniel Iglesias, Lynda Scanes and Christine Goonrey

Fiona Amundson, the Community Engagement Officer was introduced to the council and provided a brief bio on her background. She is commencing the Canberra Bushfire Ready campaign and Canberra Show preparations. She aims to draw from all services within ESA and bring their efforts together. All services will have a presence at the Canberra Show this year. The Canberra Bushfire Ready campaign will be starting in the next few weeks, targeting bushfire prone areas.

**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 – Presentation on research about Extreme weather events in terms of bushfire danger and bushfire behaviour (climate** **Rick McRae Dr Jason Sharples**

**Discussion:** A paper was circulated outlining the results of a formal trial for predicting blow-up fire events. The presentation explained dynamic fire propagation extreme bushfire development, compared with quasi-steady propagation. It correlated rate of spread with temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, fuel load and drought conditions.

An example of Vortices-driven Lateral Spread (VLS) was shown in a video of an experiment where there was no single rate of spread and it violated the quasi-steady propagation. This different fire behaviour incorporates a fire-spread model and couples an atmospheric model. These conditions occurred in the 2003 Canberra fires.

VLS is important because it is a mode of dynamic fire behaviour, fire-spread is rapid and in a direction contrary to traditional expectation, can exhibit abrupt onset with only slight changes in environmental conditions and can badly invalidate the zero mean slope assumption.

Environmental thresholds for VLS occurrence and implications of VLS outlined the importance for consideration of particular environmental conditions.

Different fire behaviour models were presented to outline the effects of variations in slope. Current fire prediction models only account for slope of up to 20 degrees. For steeper slopes, up-slope entrainment cannot match down slope entrainment, as a low pressure is created above and accelerates the velocity of the fire.

Mass spotting and spot fire coalescence are factors that illustrate that geometry of a fire will affect its spread.

Data suggests that extreme bushfire events are becoming more frequent. The number of days conducive to deep plume development and instability has increased.

A lot has been learnt since the 2003 bushfires, which were the catalyst for a new paradigm in fire science. Research is ongoing and is starting to make its way into training and operations. Making the most of the research poses some challenges and will require investment on a number of levels.

The ACTRFS Chief Officer initiated discussion around when research is considered to be the truth and applied to operations.

It was noted that as a council it is important to understand the research and what is changing, how it impacts on roles and what priorities are.

The council thanked Rick and Jason for their presentation and found it of a very high quality and informative.

#### **Portable Automatic Weather Station**

A portable automatic weather station was set up by EPSDD staff and a short presentation was provided that outlined its costs and capability. Data can be collected in more relevant positions for burns, particularly in the north-west of the ACT, where there are very limited weather stations. Information will be fed to the BOM. It contains solar radiation assessment, soil moisture assessment, etc.

**Agenda item: 4.0 – Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting**

**Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:** The minutes from the previous meeting on 7 December 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Moved: Natarsha Carney and Seconded: Andrew Joyce

**Agenda item: 5.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meeting**

**Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:** Actions arising from previous minutes were noted and marked as complete. Please refer to Attachment A for further details.

**Action:**

- Nil

**Agenda item: 6.0 – Correspondence for noting**

**Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:** Council noted receipt of the letter from Mick Gentleman MLA, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services invitation to participate in the ongoing consultation process to inform future reform decisions ESA.

Council noted receipt of the letter from Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Police and Emergency Services in response to the ACT BFC Report on Bushfire Preparedness 2016-17

Council commented that funds should be able to carry over from one year to another, but it's almost impossible due to the budgeting structure. At the moment there is flexibility in budget expenditure towards the end of the year. Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) valued the support on the issue, the important thing is that the recommendation was put in and it can be referred back to in future. It is important for PCS to provide updates on mitigation activities so that recommendations can be made to the Minister.

Council accepted response around rolling money over and will review in future

**Action:**

- Nil

**Agenda item: 7.0 – Update on roundtable meeting (18 January 2017) in relation to future reform decisions of ESA**

**Presenter: Sarah Ryan**

**Discussion:** Sarah Ryan attended the ESA Roundtable meeting on 18 January 2017. The morning session was focused on ComCen and the afternoon covered culture and service delivery in ACTAS.

It was discussed that it would be best but difficult to attend as many as possible.

The ACTRFS and ACTF&R Chief Officers explained that the four roundtable days were broken down into eight half day sessions. They are run so that staff, volunteers and stakeholders could attend

any of the sessions they are available for and are free to raise whatever they see fit. The sessions are well facilitated for people to express their views.

Sarah Ryan's feedback from the morning of the first day was that there were fears around losing jobs, lack of understanding of Strategic Reform Agenda (SRA) and concerns of hidden agendas. People are unsure of the objectives of the SRA and there are questions around the communications within ESA, possibly to do with middle management. Council members noted that is often the difficulty with change management and a question from people was why are we doing this.

Council noted that there is a lot of collaboration operationally, but it is perceived that this does not occur at higher levels within the ESA. ESA has a strong and well developed culture, which has been built through adversity.

The language of services when referring to another service was as if they were another organisation, not a part of ESA. The facilitator didn't fully understand the organisation and the comments around services maintaining their identity.

Council felt there is no clarity of the SRA and whether there is an end point. No clear objectives understood. Council's comments were supported by PCS on what was said, there was confusion due to two agendas, one being SRA and one being the election commitment to conduct roundtable meetings on fire resourcing. Unfortunately for PCS they felt excluded from the conversation as it focused largely on SRA.

The ACTF&R Chief Officer indicated that roundtable came out of the parliamentary agreement but it had been decided to include issues affecting the other operational services within ESA, including ACTAS. While the first two roundtable sessions didn't discuss fire resourcing, it is likely that it will be discussed during the remaining sessions. Participants had the option of steering the conversation to items that they felt strongly about.

The SRA is transitioning to the Strategic Reform Program (SRP), which has six clear projects to be managed through Prince 2; Station Upgrade and Relocation Program, Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, Women in Emergency Services, ACTAS Blueprint for Change, Website hosting update, and ComCen Reforms.

Information on the SRP is to be circulated to Council, the Chair will write to the Commissioner with concerns about SBMP being included in the SRA. One of Neil's concerns is that if SBMP is part of SRP, the land manager who manages 85% of the territory, one of the key stakeholders is not being involved in the SRP.

All Chief Officers are working hard to get service members to a roundtable meeting. Council suggested that the roundtable meetings need to split out general SRA and engagement and the firefighting resourcing component.

Council thanked Sarah Ryan for attending and there is intent for members to attend to as many as possible.

- **Actions:** Information to be provided to Council on the SRP
  - Kevin to coordinate letter to the Commissioner on the Roundtables and suggested changes, and having the
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**Agenda item: 8.0 – Commissioner’s Report to BFC**

**Presenter:**

**Commissioner**

**Discussion:** Paper circulated addressing recent Total fire bans and ESA Roundtable Consultation Meetings.

Tony Bartlett commented that while listening to the radio he heard the Commissioner report from Sutton and wanted to question why he was out there when it was a bad fire day in the ACT.

Before Christmas it was mentioned that during total fire ban days the overhead road electronic signs would carry a fire message. Natarsha questioned whether that was utilized during the recent total fire ban days. The CO RFS noted that it wasn’t attempted but would be during the next total fire ban.

**Action:**

- The Chair will write to the Commissioner inquiring about his role in Canberra’s surrounding region during high fire danger days.

**Agenda item: 9.0 – Land Manager’s Report to BFC**

**Presenter:**

**Neil Cooper**

**Discussion:** Handouts were circulated to Council. PCS are slightly behind on the burning program outlined in the Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP). Neil noted that he needs to discuss the requirement of land managers to get a permit to burn with the ACTRFS CO.

Fire Weather Discussion – soil moisture at levels of 2003, January was the hottest on record.

Maps circulated for alternative burns from future BOPs due to ecological issues.

**Action:** Nil.

**Agenda item: 10.0 – Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report to BFC**

**Presenter:**

**Joe Murphy**

**Discussion:** Handouts were circulated to Council.

The Land Development Agency BOP is expected by ACTRFS. Council members questioned whether it will go to surrounding land managers and council.

Council sought further information on the Senior Operations Group and Senior Managers Group. ACTRFS CO explained that it is renaming the captains group, utilised for information sharing and gathering, and to refocusing on what captains are interested in i.e. the operational aspects of brigades. The administrative side, which is run by the president, will now be run separately. The Senior Operations Group was ratified on 1 January 2017.

The Chair encourages clarity of the groups, and if a review of the charter is required than it is likely

to occur.

**Action:**

- Once the SBMP PID is completed, Council requested to view it.

**Agenda item: 11.0 – General Business**

**Presenter:**

**Chair**

**Discussion:** The Lower Cotter Catchment Management Plan is out for public consultation (<https://yoursay.act.gov.au/lower-cotter-catchment-draft-reserve-management-plan>); Sarah Ryan will attend a session.

A report on the progression of the symposium was provided. There has been good cooperation from Government and good progress on who is speaking.

Council members requested the website for accessing data gathered by the weather station.

**Action:**

- Lower Cotter Catchment Management Plan to be included in the next meeting agenda.

**Agenda item: 12.0 – Next Meeting Wednesday 1 March 2017**

**Presenter:**

**Chair**

**Discussion:** The meeting concluded 7:03pm.

**Action:**

- Nil.



# ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING 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 ACT Bushfire Council.

## Active Items for current meeting

Action Item / Issue <sup>1</sup>			Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
Agenda 8 – The Chair will 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
Agenda item 7 – Provide Bushfire Council with information on the			1 February 2017	Secretariat	1 March 2017		The Director of SRP will provide Council with an overview and answer any

Action Item / Issue <sup>1</sup>			Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
Strategic Reform Programme							questions
Agenda item 7 – Chair to coordinate letter to the Commissioner on the Roundtables and suggested changes, and having the SBMP included in the SRP.			1 February 2017	Chair	1 March 2017		Pending
Agenda item 10 – The Council would like to review the Project Implementation Document for the SBMP once it has been completed and signed off			1 February 2017	CO ACTRFS	1 March 2017		Pending sign off of PID.
Agenda item 11 – Lower Cotter Catchment Management Plan to be discussed at the next meeting			1 February 2017	Secretariat	1 March 2017		Action Completed

Summary of recommendation or issue

Assessment of progress represented by appropriate coloured ‘traffic lights’

Actions shaded in grey reflect completed Actions.

**Progress status legend**

Red: Significant delays

Amber: Some delays

Green: On track

### Completed Items

Agenda 8 – Arrange for Dr Jason Sharples and Mr Rick McRae to provide a presentation on research about Extreme weather events in terms of bushfire fire danger and bushfire behaviour (climate change/temperature inversion)			7 December 2017	Secretariat	1 February 2017		Action complete
Agenda item 11 – ACT Bushfire Council Members will write to the CO ACTRFS with advice in relation to the location of signs (need to place in high risk areas)			7 December 2016	Secretariat	Pending advise from ACTRFS Community Protection Team		Action complete
Inform BFC members the name of the successful candidate of the Community Education position and the commencement date when the process is final.			7 December 2016	CO ACTRFS	Email sent on 20 December 2016		Action complete