



**ACT**  
Government



**Wednesday 1 June 2016**  
**16:00 to 19:00**  
**Black Mountain Meeting**  
**Rooms**  
**ACT ESA Headquarters**

**Chair:** Kevin Jeffery

**Secretariat:** Lynda Scanes

**Attendees:** Christine Goonrey  
Sarah Ryan  
Tony Bartlett  
Steve Angus  
Marion Leiba  
Natarsha Carney  
Mick George  
Sandra Lauer

Mark Brown, Chief Officer, ACT Fire & Rescue  
Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service, ESA  
Neil Cooper, Parks and Conservation, TAMS

**Invited Guests** Dean Freeman, Indigenous Ranger/Fire Officer, Territory and Municipal Services Directorate  
Greg Potts, Manager Community Protection, ACT Rural Fire Service, ESA  
Nathan Barnden, Senior Rural Liaison Officer ACT Rural Fire Service, ESA

## Minutes

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

**Presenter: Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cathy Parsons, Daniel Iglesias, Michael Lonergan, Andrew Joyce and Dominic Lane.

**Agenda item: 2.0 – Presentation on Indigenous Fire Management Program**

**Presenter: Dean Freeman**

### Discussion:

The Chair introduced and welcomed Dean Freeman from the Territories and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) to present an update on the Indigenous Fire Management Program.

Mr Freeman provided an overview on The ACT Indigenous Fire Management Framework that was prepared in conjunction with Elders and other community members. This year was the first year of operation and has

received positive media coverage nationally. The purpose of the program is to identify and implement cultural procedures for fire management in the ACT and bring back cultural burning regimes and training to heal and clean Country. In the 2015/16 Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP), cultural burns were conducted at Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Jerrabomberra Grasslands, Gungaherra Grasslands, Crace Grasslands and Gibraltar Rocks Peak. Gibraltar Rocks is a highly significant spiritual site and a smoking ceremony that involved burning native plants to produce smoke was performed to cleanse bad energy and ward off bad spirits. The cultural burns were ignited using natural vegetation; the fire is not solid and using this form of ignition allows the fire to have less intensity and in grassland burns the line is broken allowing small animals to have an escape route. Future planned burns will be at Peppermint Hill, Namadji Rocks art sites, Wallaby Rocks, Pierces Creek Grass Trees and Gubur Dhaura. Fire plans have been developed for each rock art site in the ACT.

Several staff attended a Bio-Diversity Dreaming Conference in Bathurst and registered to attend the Indigenous Fire Conference in Cairns.

**Summary:** A paper is being published as part of National Fire Policy, Aboriginal guidelines and site protection. Mr Freeman thanked Council members for the support for the Aboriginal Fire Management Framework and Guidelines.

The Chair and Council members thanked and congratulated Mr Freeman for the presentation and the substantial achievements to date for the Indigenous Fire Management Program.

**Agenda item: 3.0 – Presentation on Farm FireWise**

**Presenters: Nathan Barnden and Greg Potts**

The Chair introduced and welcomed Greg Potts and Nathan Barnden from the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) to present an update on the Farm FireWise (FFW) Program.

Mr Barnden provided an overview of the program, since the 2003 ACT bushfires the ACTRFS have been re-evaluating and building on the service provided to the Canberra community. One “shortfall” identified was in the support provided to the rural community. FFW is one of several initiatives delivered by the ACTRFS as part of meeting the requirements of the *Emergencies Act 2004* and Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMPV3).

The FFW program was developed and introduced in 2007 to support and assist the rural community in their bushfire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery actions and capabilities. The FFW program enables the ACTRFS to assist leaseholders develop a bushfire action plan and identify mitigation and response measures for their properties. The program also satisfies the requirements of their leasehold agreements with the Government for a bushfire operational plan for all allotments of ACT leasehold land. Property owners are responsible for hazard reduction measures on their property. The FFW program encourages a collective approach to provide educational and planning support to minimise the risk of a fire starting and spreading on rural leased land and/or entering or leaving that property. It assists rural landholders meet their legislative requirements and provides a clearer understanding of risk assessment and risk treatment. The face to face

meetings foster a healthy, trusted effective working relationship between the rural community and the ACTRFS.

Papers tabled: The original verbose version of the FFW Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) and the new concise version of the FFW BOP and Map. The purpose of the simplified plan is to have a two page document that is easier to understand and complete.

**Summary:**

Linked FFW to Land Management Agreement's, auditing is not done, what is the value measured by this process?, make more dynamic/electronic system – noting keeping face to face engagement with the rural community, project to work out possible uses for the data and identify solutions, given no auditing process encourage benefits measurement of program and identify possible improvements – trust / education. Encourage the rural community to have collective discussions in planning for bushfire prevention. BFC to refer to FFW in the preparedness report.

The Chair and Council members thanked and Mr Potts and Mr Barnden for the presentation.

**Agenda item: 4.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members**      **Presenter: Chair**

Nil.

**Agenda item: 5.0 – Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting**      **Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:**

The minutes from the previous meeting on 3 May 2016, were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Tony Bartlett and Seconded: Natarsha Carney

**Agenda item: 6.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings**      **Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:**

Please refer to Attachment A for further details.

**Action:**      Nil

**Agenda item: 7.0 – Correspondence**      **Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:**

Correspondence for noting: Nil.

**Action:** Nil

**Agenda item:** *8.0 – Update on the Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference*

**Presenter:** Sandra Lauer

**Discussion:**

5th International Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference in Melbourne from 11 – 15 April 2016. All the presentations from the Conference can be found at <http://melbourne.firebehaviorandfuelsconference.com>

Sandra Lauer provided a very informative overview summarising the keynote addresses and panel discussions at the Conference. Sandra also spoke about the workshops and field trips.

Sandra Whight from the Tasmanian Fire Service presented the Trials, Tribulations and Triumph: Lessons Learnt from Tenure-blind Fuel Reduction in Tasmania. The recommendation from the Tasmanian Fires 2013 Inquiry was a fuel reduction program to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires in Tasmania, by improving fuel reduction burning throughout the state. The new approach recommended a fuel reduction program that treats land based on risk, rather than who is responsible for its management. The program has adopted a ‘tenure blind’ approach and work in cooperation with individual land owners whose properties have been identified as posing a potential bushfire threat to local communities.

They used feeds to do detailed extensive computer modelling; the two models that produced this data were the Bushfire Risk Assessment Model and Phoenix Modelling. The results were then used to inform each of the fire protection plans prepared by Fire Management Area Committees throughout Tasmania. The Committees are based on the expertise and knowledge of local community members. It is a four year project and some of the issues are managing expectations from community and government. The red hot tip’s program is used to improve landholders’ knowledge and skills to enable them to safely and effectively conduct planned burning on their properties and the prepare, act, survive program to encourage them to do bushfire preparedness plan. The goal of the program is to be cooperative across tenure with fire management, the modelling doesn’t account for the local behavioural knowledge. Community engagement strategies is face to face meetings with community groups and have key people who are well respected in the community deliver the program.

Council members thanked Sandra Lauer for the report.

**Action:** Sandra Lauer to circulate report out of session

**Agenda item:** *9.0 – Commissioner’s Report*

**Presenter:** Chair

**Discussion:**

The Chair tabled the Commissioner’s Report that provided an overview of current activities as summarised below:

- Bushfire Council Members – Re-appointment

The Minister has approved the re-appointment of Kevin Jeffery (Chair), Cathy Parsons (Deputy Chair), Christine Goonrey, Michael Lonergan (resigned), Tony Bartlett and Andrew Joyce to the ACT Bushfire Council for a period of one year, expiring on 30 September 2017.

- Emergencies Amendment Bill 2016 – update

The Bill was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 5 May 2016, with debate anticipated during the June 2016 sitting period (7-9 June).

- Ministers Meeting with the Volunteers

The Minister was unable to attend the meeting with volunteers on 4 May 2016. The Commissioner filled the role of Chair. The Commissioner provided a presentation to the volunteer groups on the changes that will be brought about by the *Emergencies Amendment Bill 2016*.

Each volunteer group provided an update at the meeting of their recent activity.

- Strategic Reform Agenda Progress

In January 2016, four ‘staff information papers’ were launched to generate feedback on the intentions of the ESA to continue under the SRA to progress reform.

The four areas consulted upon were: Communications Centre (ComCen) Reform, the ESA’s Station Upgrade and Relocation Program (SURP), ACT Ambulance Service (ACTAS) Service Delivery, and changes to the way in which ACTF&R are managed.

The ESA has also conducted a number of forums as part of this process. This has provided staff, volunteers, unions, and other interested stakeholders, with the opportunity to provide ideas, comments and feedback, which is being used to inform decisions on future reforms.

The ESA is currently undertaking an analysis of the stakeholder feedback, including that received from unions and staff.

- AFAC and Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Conference

The 2016 AFAC and Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Conference will be held in Brisbane at the Convention Centre from 31 August to 1 September 2016. The main theme: Mitigation, Response and Recovery.

- Women in Emergency Services (WIES) Strategy – ACT Fire & Rescue Recruit College

The ACT Fire and Rescue Recruit College is progressing well with a higher percentage of female applicants. The campaign to attract more female applicants was successful, with an increase in the rate of female applicants by 500%. The final steps in the selection process are currently being undertaken.

- 2016 Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Conference

Seven ESA representatives attended the 2016 Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Conference hosted by NSW Rural Fire Service (NSWRFS) in Albury 19 to 21 May 2016. The Conference was hosted by the NSW Rural Fire Service.

**Action:** Nil

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>10.0 – Land Manager’s Report (Parks and Conservation TAMS)</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Neil Cooper</b>
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**Discussion:**

Mr Cooper provided an overview of current activities within the Parks and Conservation as summarised below:

- The 2015/16 BOP is on target for completion by the end of the financial year

Papers tabled:

- The 2015/16 BOP activity update and implementation dashboard chart

Note: There is 248 jobs listed as not complete; however, this is pending the paperwork being signed off

- Fire statistics for the past season
- Post burn assessments for all major burns

- Acknowledgement of Staff and Volunteers who provided assistance

Summary: The Council commended the Parks and Conservation Service for its substantial achievements and professional approach to the conduct of the prescribed burning program this autumn

- Four new Mercedes G Wagons have been approved to replace the Ford Rangers before the next fire season
- The Fire Risk Tool (PBRAT) is now in operational use across Australia
- Three members attending the upcoming Women and Firefighting Australasia (WAFA) Conference 2016 at the Brisbane Entertainment and Convention Centre from 30 August to 1 September 2016

Papers tabled:

- Bushfire Operations Plan 2016/17 – updated draft timeline/gant chart
- Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) BOP
- Photo imagery before and after the tritter and windrowing
- Fire Weather and Prescribed Burning Stats 1516

The chart showed fire readiness levels by month, the average Fire Danger Index, rainfall, the relative deep soil moisture, the Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) a numerical value reflecting the dryness of the top layer of soils, deep forest litter, logs and living vegetation) and prescribed burning stats

- Draft Fire Severity Analysis of ACT Parks and Conservation Service Autumn Burn Program using Normalised Burn Ratio derived from the LandSat Operational Land Imager

- Brandy Flat Rehabilitation
- Preparing a rehabilitation plan
- Prepared an article on the Indigenous Burning to go into the *Fire Australia Journal*

**Action:** Adam Leavesley and Tony Scherl to attend to talk about cost benefits of fuel reduction

**Agenda item: 11.0 – A/g Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report**

**Presenter: Joe Murphy**

Discussion:

The A/g Chief Officer provided an overview of current activities within the ACTRFS as summarised below:

RFS Operations

- The trial PPE arrived and was distributed to brigades. The trial is intended to last three weeks and constructive feedback has already been received. The feedback will be used to finalise the garments prior to a Whole of Service roll out.
- This month has seen an increase in car fires attended by the RFS

- RFS units assisted with fire protection at the recent National Capital Rally. A number of lessons were learned and will be used to inform involvement in future events
- RFS Operation staff attended an inter-agency aviation working group meeting with partner agencies in NSW to discuss a range of issues, including Very Large Air Tanker and Large Air Tanker use, night aerial operations and remotely piloted aircraft (drone) operations

**Membership**

- Total volunteer membership is 523
- 100 female members
- 423 male members
- 8 new members joined brigades in May 2016, of which 3 are female
- 15 online joining enquiries for May 2016

**Training**

- Bush firefighter (entry level) course delivered. Twenty four (24) new members have completed training. Assessment postponed due to inclement weather with a new date to be confirmed
- Crew Leader program begins on 25 June 2016. The program is fully subscribed with all 16 participants meeting the course pre requisites
- Village firefighter course is booked for Aug/Sept 2016
- Development of a recognition process is underway to assess long serving members at the crew leader level who have never completed formal qualifications and/or those who hold old versions of Crew Leader i.e. those pre 2000 AFC modules and those holding PUA units that were superseded in the upgrading of the package in 2013
- Public Events/Community Awareness
- Three staff and two RFS Volunteer representatives attended the 2016 Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Conference in Albury 19 to 21 May 2016

**Community Protection**

- 16 audits of TaMS HR burns have been completed
- 8 applications received for Rural Grants with one further proposal flagged, awaiting paperwork
- 1 FFW assessment commenced
- 6 FFW assessments ongoing

Action: Provide the 2015/16 CBR Report (either out of session or next meeting) to BFC members.

**Agenda item: 12.0 – General Business**

**Presenter: Chair**

**Discussion:**

- Consider a date for a field trip

The Council recommended a future field trip to Blue Range in the near future and another field trip in Spring to include the Boboyan Road.

**Outcome:**

- Council to continue the strategic approach and have invited guests present items as listed in the BFC

Business Plan – at Attachment B

- Mr Cooper suggested Adam Leavesley and Tony Scherl from TAMS should attend the July meeting to talk about cost benefits of fuel reduction as listed in the BFC Business Plan – at Attachment B
- Send members to conferences
- The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC are refreshing their agenda, this topic to be placed on the August BFC agenda

**Action:** Nil

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The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC are refreshing their agenda, this topic to be placed on the August BFC agenda

**Agenda item: 13.0 – Next Meeting**

**Presenter: Chair**

The agenda for the next Council meeting to include:

- Presentation of volunteer brigades in relation to recruitment, retention, succession planning, mentoring, training and competencies (RFS Staff)
- Presentation about cost benefits of fuel reduction as listed
- Approaches to prescribed burns to minimise escapes (SBMP 8) – Mr Cooper, TAMS

Next Meeting Wednesday 6 July 2016 – Tony Bartlett noted his absence for the July meeting

**Closing:** The meeting closed at 19:10pm.





# ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION ITEMS

1 JUNE 2016

## ~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.

## Active Items for current meeting

	Action Item / Issue <sup>1</sup>		Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
1	Consultation information on changes to building requirements to be provided to Council		2 March 2016, agenda item 6	EPD			ongoing
2	Addressing concerns relating to the SBMP – refinement of the BPA		6 April 2016, agenda item 11	Chair		Council will review the letter and send to the Commissioner	
3	Circulate the 2015/16 CBR Report to BFC members		3 May 2016, agenda item 11	Secretariat			To be circulated out of session or at the July meeting
4	The Bushfire Prone Area map will continue to be reviewed and refined to reflect changes in land use and tenure, as improved vegetation mapping becomes available and to address local and site specific issues as required. Changes will be approved by the Commissioner and reported back to BFC.		1 June 2016, agenda item 6	ESA			The project for Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) includes validation of the vegetation mapping on the ACT urban interface with rural and natural reserve. The outcome to be delivered when correct information is available.
5	Send report on Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference to BFC		1 June 2016, agenda item 8	Sandra Lauer			

	Action Item / Issue <sup>1</sup>				Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
	out of session								
6	Set a presentation about cost benefits of fuel reduction				1 June 2016, agenda item 10	Secretariat and Neil Cooper	6 July 2016	Presentation scheduled for 6 July meeting	

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 from current previous meeting/s

1	Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program					3 May 2016, agenda item 5	
2	Update on the Fire Behaviour and Fuels					3 May 2016, agenda item 8	

	Conference					
3	Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program				3 May 2016, agenda item 5	
4						
5						

**Attachment B**

*The 2016 BFC Business Plan*

Tentative meeting agenda topics.

Feb-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross Border Arrangements (RFS) (SBMP 2&amp;3)</li> <li>• Update on Review into Community Fire Units (F&amp;R) (SBMP 9)</li> </ul>	Completed
Mar-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Bushfire Prone Areas (EPD + ESA) (SBMP 10&amp;11)</li> <li>• Update on community awareness and warning activities (SBMP 9)</li> </ul>	Completed
Apr-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of new technology for weather forecasting and fire behaviour (ESA + BOM) (SBMP 3&amp;8)</li> <li>• New approaches to identifying priorities for reducing fuel hazards and monitoring and evaluating risk reduction (SBMP 8)</li> <li>• Overview of lessons learnt – inquiries, reviews and reports (SBMP 8)</li> </ul>	Completed July agenda Completed

May-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome of strategic review of fuel hazards and road network in Lower Cotter (SBMP 6&amp;7)</li> <li>• Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program</li> </ul>	Completed Completed
Jun-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016/17 Bushfire Operational Plans – Review of all Plans by Council for ESA Commissioner (SBMP 5 &amp; 6) + out of session workshop if required</li> <li>• Farm FireWise Program update</li> </ul>	Delayed Completed
Jul-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate different approaches to achieve low intensity and different seasonality in fire regimes (SBMP 8)</li> <li>• Overview of volunteer brigades in relation to recruitment, retention, succession planning, mentoring, training and competencies. (SBMP 2&amp;3)</li> </ul>	July agenda July agenda
Aug-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of achievements of the TAMS Bushfire Operational Plan in 2014/15 (SBMP 1 &amp; 6)</li> <li>• Aviation Arrangements and Developments (SBMP 3)</li> <li>• New approaches for risk reduction</li> </ul>	
Sep-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal Outlook for 2016/17</li> <li>• Production of Annual Preparedness Statement for the Minister</li> <li>• Annual pre-season briefing on Preparedness by Rural Fire Service</li> </ul>	
Oct-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning Program for 2017</li> </ul>	
Nov-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contingency meeting to allow for slippage</li> </ul>	
Dec-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016 in Review - Planning for 2017</li> <li>• Verbal Report to Commissioner on scope and effectiveness of SBMP as required by <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i></li> </ul>	