



ACT
Government



Tuesday 3 May 2016
16:00 to 19:00

Black Mountain Meeting
Rooms
ACT ESA Headquarters

Chair:	Kevin Jeffery	Secretariat:	Lynda Scanes
Attendees:	Cathy Parsons (Deputy Chair) Christine Goonrey Sarah Ryan Tony Bartlett Steve Angus Marion Leiba Natarsha Carney Mick George		Dominic Lane, ESA Commissioner Joe Murphy, A/g Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service, ESA Daniel Iglesias, Director, Parks and Conservation, TAMS
Invited Guests	Mark Jones Director, Strategic Reform Agenda Christian Ward and Tony Scherl TAMS		

Minutes

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies were received from Neil Cooper, Michael Lonergan, Sandra Lauer, Andrew Joyce and Mark Brown.

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

Nil.

Agenda item: 3.0 – Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting **Presenter: Chair**

Discussion:

The minutes from the previous meeting on 6 April 2016, were accepted with some amendments.
Moved: Natarsha Carney and Seconded: Marion Leiba

Agenda item: 4.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings **Presenter: Chair**

Discussion:

Please refer to Attachment A for further details.

Agenda item: *5.0 – Presentations on focus areas for BFC outlined in the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan*

Presenters: TAMS

Discussion:

The Chair introduced and welcomed Director of Parks and Conservation Daniel Iglesias, Tony Scherl and Christian Ward from the Territories and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) to present an update on work being done on the Roads in the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC) and fuel management.

- Outcome of strategic review of fuel hazards and road network in the LCC (SBMP 6 & 7)
Paper tabled: LCC Road Matrix
Paper tabled: LCC Map of Regional Fire Management Plan 2014-2019

The LCC is a significant source of high quality water to the ACT community. The presentation highlighted the road and fire trails infrastructure network in the LCC and fuel management activities. Land managers are working together to appropriately mitigate the risk of bushfire with the creation of native forest buffers, linear fuel breaks and long term management of pine wilding regrowth. The presentation highlighted the growth of pine wildings and removal treatments and rehabilitation of the area to minimise elements such as weed invasion, erosion and sedimentation to ensure a high quality water supply.

Summary:

- Council is generally satisfied with the current approach; however, wants to be better informed and updated along the way; Concerns were raised about the need for greater clarity on which tracks were accessible to firefighting vehicles but closed to the public and those that have been rehabilitated and are now considered to be dormant tracks; Concerns were also raised about the size of some of the very large blocks - for example the Upper Pierces Creek area. There needs to be block by block consideration of some of the larger areas by ESA Risk Management team and further dialogue on balancing fire and water objectives; In relation to the removal of the wilding pines, Council raised concerns about the lack of funding to support a re-vegetation program if natural regeneration was insufficient to occupy the site. To ensure future sustainability of these areas, the strategy needs to consider achievement of stable vegetation systems, the fire management implications and water quality.

The Chair thanked the team from TAMS for the update

- Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program carried over to next meeting (Dean Freeman to present at the next BFC meeting)

Action: *Secretariat to list the item (b) on the agenda for the June Bushfire Council Meeting.*

Agenda item: *6.0 – Update on the Strategic Reform Agenda (SRA)*

Presenter: Mark Jones

Discussion:

The Director, Strategic Reform Agenda provided an overview of the status of the SRA. The following points were noted:

- Consultation process has closed
- More than a dozen interactions with volunteers, several submissions
- Low trust in some areas because of a previous lack of feedback caused some cynicism
- Lots of things has emerged which is highly relevant but not necessarily to the current SRA consultation – likely to form separate reports
- Lack of data and evidential support for positions advocated and, notably, some of the narrative presented by ESA staffers not only not supported by data held but actually contradicted
- Drafts over the next few weeks
- Likely that COMCEN and the Station Upgrade and Relocation Program will take priority

Volunteer submissions

There are a wide range of views expressed by various volunteer groups but the list below gives an indication of those most frequently offered:

- COMCEN to adopt a service provider relationship with volunteer units
- Open knowledge and understanding of business rules of mobilising and explanations as to why followed/ not followed
- Mobilising of volunteer units – need for clarity on COMCEN picture of availability
- Database of volunteer knowledge/ skills/ experiences (this has merits beyond the volunteer base)
- Better support arrangements for volunteers e.g. training commitment if trainer unavailable. A support service approach by career staff in RFS and SES
- Property issues / Diversification agenda
- RFS membership levels – need for different counting of active and inactive members
- Volunteer experience levels and the “catch 22” that calling them out less frequently creates in terms of competence
- Possibility to use more volunteers in temporary day jobs at ESA or its services to allow development and understanding
- More burning experience for RFS with Parks – need for notice and better planning
- Volunteers to be stationed within COMCEN during high risk periods
- Outcome of meeting with the CPSU in relation to the staff structure of RFS and SES – permanent positions (on a tiered approach) to be advertised in the near future

The Chair thanked Mark Jones for the update.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: *7.0 – Correspondence*

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

Correspondence for noting: Nil.

Action:

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

Presenter: Sandra Lauer

Discussion:

Sandra Lauer was absent from the meeting and the Chair requested that the item be carried over to the next meeting in June.

Action: Secretariat to list the item on the agenda for the June Bushfire Council Meeting.

Agenda item: 9.0 – Update on the Fire Awareness Workshop for local Traditional Custodians

Presenter: Natarsha Carney

Discussion:

Natarsha Carney provided an overview on the Basic Bushfire Awareness Training including the Fire Awareness Workshop for local Traditional Custodians as summarised below:

- ACT Parks and Conservation conducted the bushfire awareness training workshop for local traditional custodians who will be involved in future burns
- There is growing recognition that cultural burning regimes have a crucial role in fire management
- Rules of engagement discussed and the possibility of allowing children to participate in the cultural burns - either taking part or as observers
- Thursday has a planned cultural burn at Peppermint Hill in Namadgi
- A local Ngunnawal Elder will light the burn using cultural burning practices and observe the burn
- Traditional tools to be used; such as grasses instead of drip torches and experiment the use of emu and goanna oils
- The advertisement of a Permanent Position of Indigenous Ranger/Fire Officer within TAMS is planned for the near future and a guide is being prepared for ecological burns to assist Rangers to identify cultural sites
- The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group to investigate the possible role of indigenous land management in Landcare
- Cultural burns in the Bushfire Operational Plan are tracking ahead of plan
- The Commissioner and BFC are supportive of this program.

Action: Nil

Agenda item 10.0 – Commissioner’s Report

Presenter: Dominic Lane

Discussion:

Summary of the presentation provided on the *Emergencies Amendment Bill 2016* – In-Confidence

The Commissioner provided an overview of the proposed amendments:

Restricting high-risk activities during total fire bans

- Create a new offence prohibiting high-risk activities including welding, grinding, soldering and gas cutting to total fire ban declarations in the ACT. The maximum penalty for the offence is 12 months imprisonment, a \$15,000 fine or both
- Increased penalties for lighting a fire during a total fire ban
Provide a more effective deterrent against people deliberately lighting fires during at total fire bans declaration by increasing the maximum penalty from a \$7500 fine to two years imprisonment, \$30,000 fine or both
- Changes to governance arrangements for the ACT Bushfire Council
Reform the constitution and consultation arrangements for the ACT Bushfire Council. Members restricted from serving more than two consecutive four year terms
Permit BFC to publish advice given to the Minister and the ESA Commissioner
- Giving the Chief Officer (ACTRFS) powers in relation to fire prevention for premises
Extend authority to the Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service to issue improvement, occupancy or closure notices in rural areas of the ACT
- Permission to interfere with fire appliances
Provide members of ACTF&R, ACTRFS or a police officer authority to issue permission to contractors to undertake maintenance on fire appliances, hydrants or alarms
- Ensuring an all hazards approach to emergency planning and response

Align the *Emergencies Act 2004* with the Commissioner's Guidelines for the concept of operations for grass and bush fires in the ACT which directs the first response to all bush and grass fires in the ACT is to be by the nearest available most appropriate resource, irrespective of jurisdiction or service. Provide for consistent immunities for all members of the emergency services, including the ACT Ambulance Service and ACT State Emergency Service, under all ACT legislation

- Clarifying responsibility for community education and awareness
Placing overall responsibility for community education and awareness solely with the ESA Commissioner instead of the current overlap across the various emergency services. ACTAS, ACTF&R, ACTRFS and ACTSES will continue to deliver community education and awareness programs in accordance with the Commissioners' strategic direction
- Legal recognition for the ACT Ambulance Service Clinical Advisory Committee
Provide legal protection to the ACT Ambulance Service Clinical Advisory Committee similar to other health professionals in the ACT and other jurisdictions
- Power of the Chief Officer (ACTAS) to establish, amend, suspend or withdraw an ambulance officer's scope of practice
Clarify powers of the Chief Officer ACT Ambulance Service regarding ambulance officer's scope of practice to allow for assessment of staff returning from extended leave or subject to a clinical review as the result of an adverse treatment outcome
- Clarifying responsibility for operational planning
The ESA Commissioner will be given explicit responsibility for planning and development advice functions. The preparation of advice for the Commissioner will continue to be undertaken by technical specialists within ACTF&R and ACTRFS
- Statutory recognition for Bushfire Management Standards
Add a legislative basis to Bushfire Management Standards approved by the ESA Commissioner
- Adding "Service" to ACT Fire & Rescue in the Act
Add the word "Service" to ACT Fire & Rescue in the ACT. Despite it being an emergency service, it is not legally referred to as an emergency service. The change will also make it consistent with other emergency services within the ESA, the ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Rural Fire Service and the ACT State Emergency Service
- Future review of the Act
Add flexibility to the current strict timeframe to review the *Emergencies Act 2004* and extend the current three month deadline to report back on the review to the ACT Legislative Assembly to as soon as practicable at its completion.

Mr Bartlett asked about the situation in regard to Deputy Chief Officers following the reforms.

The Commissioner advised all Deputy Chief Officer functions in the ESA are performed through public service positions. The deputies have no specific statutory role other than the function of acting as chief officer as described in section 32 of the *Emergencies Act 2004*, although it is to be assumed that as members of the service they would have other roles as directed by the respective Chief Officer.

Video presentation on the *Emergencies Amendment Bill 2016* was played.

Action: Nil

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

- Appointment of the A/g Senior Operations Officer – Rohan Scott. Rohan was previously the Captain of the

Molonglo Rural Fire Brigade from 2006 and has stepped down to take up the position with RFS HQ.

- Delivery of the new Southern 11 and the relocation of a Quickfill trailer from Guises Creek to Jerrabomberra Rural Fire Brigade
- Equipment Group and RAFT group meetings
- Extensive assistance to PCS with the annual Hazard Reduction Program
- Commenced the trial of the new RFS PPE with 40 members awaiting the delivery of the new PPE from the supplier
- Undertook consultation with the Captains and Equipment Officers regarding the design of the New PPE Jacket
- Assisted in the initial development of national standards for aircraft involved in fire suppression
- A number of suspicious fires suppressed on Mt Ainslie, Kaleen and Black Mountain.
- RFS has assisted ACTF&R with a fire burning in the Concrete Recyclers, Pialligo. All RFS Brigades have been involved in the response which began at lunch time on the 28/04/2016. The support has included 5 CAFS, 2 Light Units, 4 Mediums, 16 Tankers, 6 Officers, and 4 Bulk Water Trucks over the duration of the Incident to date.

Public Events/Community Awareness

- 2015/2016 - CBR report

Community Protection

- 16 Audits of TAMS HR burns completed
- Applications for the Rural Grant Scheme have been sent to 16 leaseholders who expressed an interest in applying for a grant
- 62 grass curing assessments since the start of the 2015/16 bushfire season
- Development applications assessed and advice provided on bushfire mitigation requirements

Training

- Asbestos training delivered to 20 people
- The mainstream training packages have been reviews and completed (Bushfire, Advanced Fire fighter, Village Fire fighter, Crew Leader, Divisional Commander)
- Bushfire course to be delivered starting 17 May 2016 – BF course includes Asbestos Awareness
- Crew Leader, Village fire fighter and Advanced Fire fighter courses being planned for June to Sept 2016

Action: Secretariat to circulate the 2015/16 CBR Report (out of session) to BFC members.

Agenda item:	12.0 – Land Manager’s Report (Parks and Conservation TAMS)	Presenter:	Tony Scherl
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Discussion:

Mr Neil Cooper was absent from the meeting; however, Tony Scherl provided an overview of current activities within the Parks and Conservation as summarised below:

- Prescribed Burning Program 2015-16
Paper tabled: Mt Clear After Action Review recommendation response
- 37 burns completed
- Outstanding burns - one small burn is Coombs and two indigenous burns
- Complaints in relation to the smoke haze
- The successful use of portable automated weather stations
- Brandy Flat Burn Information
Paper tabled: Map of the Brandy Flat Burn
- Post prescribed burning season debrief was held last week with a number of issues to address, including a

review of fatigue guidelines, media training, greater district involvement and use of soft control lines for future burns

- Acknowledgement of Staff and Volunteers who provided assistance
- Upcoming Women in Fire Fighting Conference

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

Action: Nil

Agenda item: *13.0 – Other Business*

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

The Council recommends that the Chair consider a future field trip to include the Boboyan Road

Action:

Agenda item: *12.0 – Next Meeting*

Presenter: Chair

The agenda for the next Council meeting includes:

- Update on the Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference – Sandra Lauer and Neil Cooper
- A presentation on the ACT Indigenous Fire Management Program -
- A presentation on the Farm FireWise Program – Nathan Barnden and Greg Potts
- Future Field Trip to include the Boboyan Road

Wednesday, 1 June 2016 – Cathy Parsons noted her absence for the June meeting.

Closing: The meeting closed at 19:10pm.



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION ITEMS

3 MAY 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 ¹		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	Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program		3 May 2016, agenda item 5	Secretariat		To be carried over to next meeting	
4	Update on the Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference		3 May 2016, agenda item 8	Secretariat		To be carried over to next meeting	

	Action Item / Issue ¹				Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
5	Circulate the 2015/16 CBR Report to BFC members				3 May 2016, agenda item 11	Secretariat			
6									

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	Review of Terms of Reference	2 March 2016, agenda item 9	Council Chair	6 April 2016 meeting	Tracked change version to be created and circulated to the Council, members to consider it and discuss it next meeting.	Completed
2	Bushfire Council member participation at 5th International Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference, Melbourne 11 – 15 April 2016	2 March 2016, agenda item 8	ACTRFS	ASAP	Ms Lauer to coordinate registration and flights to the conference through the ESA.	Completed – Ms Lauer flights and conference registration booked
3	Response letter Draft Management plan for the Molonglo River Reserve	3 February 2016, agenda item 11	Council Chair	6 April 2016 meeting	Discussed out of session and letter drafted with input from BFC members	Completed
4						
5						