

# **ACT Bushfire Council**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September  
4.00pm**

**Conference Room  
Air Support Operations Centre  
4 Point Cook Avenue Fairbairn**

### **1. Opening and Introduction by Chairman**

The Chair opened the meeting at 4:10pm

### **2. Attendance**

Kevin Jeffery	(KJ) Chair
Tony Bartlett	(TB) Deputy Chair
Tony Fearnside	(TF) Member
Michael Lonergan	(ML) Member
Simon Katz	(SK) Member
Cathy Parsons	(CP) Member
Steven Wise	(SW) Member
Tim McGuffog	(TM) ex Officio (Deputy Chief Officer ACTRFS)
Brian Parry	(BP) ex Officio (Deputy Commissioner Fire & Rescue)
Neil Cooper	(NC) Guest (TAMS)
Dylan Kendall	(DK) Guest (TAMS)
Kaylee McInnes	(KM) Secretariat

### **Apologies**

Peter Kanowski	(PK) Member
Ken Batt	(KB) Member
Christine Goonrey	(CG) Member
Marion Leiba	(ML) Member
Gregor Manson	(GM) ex Officio (Commissioner ESA)

### **3. Minutes from Previous Meetings**

The minutes were moved for acceptance by SK and Second by ML, accepted by all.

#### 4. Business Arising

##### 4.1 Review Actions from August Meeting

ML raised the issue of making the minutes public. "The Council must publish the minutes of its proceedings within 7 days after the minutes are accepted by members of the council". The minutes have not been made public since 2007.

**ACTION: ML suggested the BFC hire an external professional minute taker to do the minutes at each meeting. Motion moved by ML and accepted by all**

**STATUS:** Will be held over until the RFS makes offers for new positions, outlined in the business plan.

**ACTION: The standing committee on legal affairs**

**STATUS:** Will be held over until after the election. ONGOING

**ACTION: Norm Mueller's Presentation**

**STATUS:** Tim has not been able to contact NM, ONGOING.

**ACTION: TM to circulate the TOR for the Project Plan to the new members for their information and understanding.**

**STATUS:** COMPLETE

**ACTION: KJ to contact Bob Smith and submit some suggested changes to him.**

**STATUS:** COMPLETE

**ACTION: KJ to make sure the report is sent to members 1 week before the next meeting to allow members enough time to read it and respond at the meeting. The Bushfire Preparedness Report is due to the Minister by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008**

**STATUS:** ONGOING

##### 4.2 Update on RFS Business Plan

- **TM:** Explained that all details have been finalised and the plan is available on the ESA internet.
- **BP:** Elaborated on the subject and explained that all positions have been advertised and applications close as of October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Two direct appointments have been offered; Virginia Dixon and Arthur Sayer. Interviews for open positions will hopefully commence two weeks after the closing date and offers will be made shortly after that.
- **KJ:** Asked whether a BFC member will be needed to sit in on a panel. BP said that he was grateful for the offer and will inform the BFC if this will be the case.

##### 4.3 ROAG Meeting 23/8/08 Update

An update on the ROAG meeting was provided by TM:

- Stephen Wilkes gave a very detailed presentation on the use of pagers in the RFS. He explained that money could be saved by combining groups of pagers. He explained how the communication plan could be more efficient and gained the support of ROAG to keep pursuing this idea.

- John Jenkins gave an Appliance Update. Copies of this presentation will be made available to BFC members. He explained that things are well on the way.
- There was a brief discussion on the Business Plan and staffing arrangements.
- ML discussed captains being more assertive in terms of running brigades and asserting more confidence. He also brought up the subject of setting up fire scenario exercises to confirm that most brigades think the same and are “on the same page”.
- GM outlined the Station Relocation strategy. Essentially all our RFS stations are adequately located. The two exceptions will be Gungahlin and Tidbinbilla. The new location of these two stations has not yet been decided. Money will be available this year to commence the upgrade of RFS stations.

## 5. Listing of new Agenda Items

### 5.1 TAMS Bushfire Operational Plan Presentation.

- TAMS are required to seek the BFC endorsement on the Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP). The presentation outlined the activities that they wish to undertake over the next 12 months to address fire management requirements identified across the territory. The plan is now at the stage where they would like to have it endorsed and signed off by the Commissioner. Draft copies of the BOP were made available at the meeting.
- DK provided a presentation supported by a PowerPoint presentation on the BOP. DK presented an overview of the 2007 BOP implementation and achievements and the proposed plan for 2008.
- A lengthy discussion was held on the problems associated with the fuel hazard assessment system, as it overestimates the extent of the risk of fuel hazard areas. Other discussions followed on subjects such as prescribed burning, track and trail maintenance and Namadgi National Park Issues.
- TB expressed a concern of BFC’s uneasiness of not knowing what else is going across the rest of the Territory in term of bush-fire operational plans.
- TM to summarise, Council will endorse the current BOP, however there are issues that need further discussion and consideration. TB volunteered to produce a written response to TAMS expressing their views of the BOP.

**ACTION: TB will produce a written response on Council’s views on issues outside of the BOP.**

### 5.2 Overview of Project VESTA

- The underling principles are that MacArthur can underestimate by 20-50% in high intensity fires. MacArthur only measures fuel load on the ground, whilst VESTA measures a number of levels of fuel; surface fuel layer, near surface layer, the elevated fuel layer, as well as an estimate of bark fuel.
- VESTA measures fuel quite quickly; and incorporates into a rate of spread model.

- VESTA has not yet been fully adopted, and is being trialled by some of the members of the Forest Fire Management Group to see if its something we should be working towards.
- BFC would be interested to hear of further developments in the future research of the system.
- TB Would like a see a copy of the booklet published on the system.

**ACTION: Tim to provide a copy of the VESTA booklet.**

### **5.3 Workshop BFC Pre-Season Preparedness Report to the Minister.**

- The report is still in draft. It has not yet been signed off. Time will be allocated in the next week or so. We are still working on the tanker document, IMT numbers, and the preparedness levels. They will go to KJ as they are finalised.
- TB would like to see a draft report at least a week before the Council meeting for discussion.
- A discussion of this will take place at the next meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> October.

**ACTION: A draft of the report will need to be made available by the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008.**

## **6. Correspondence**

None to report.

## **7. General Business**

None to report

## **8. Reports**

### **8.2 ACTRFS**

- NSW State Forests have reviewed their fitness assessments to consider the roles that they require staff to undertake.
- The pre-season workshop will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.
- All Tower contracts have been signed off.

**ACTION: Nicky Cobb to re-send invites to Pre-season as some Council members did not receive invites.**

### **8.3 Fire Brigade**

- 2 CAFS Operators courses have been finalised.
- Recruits are going well and 14 additional are expected to be on board by the end of September.
- Currently in the middle of the promotion process for officers.

### **8.1 Deputy Commissioner's Report from Brian Parry**

- ESAT has been engaged to conduct half day AIIMS courses to develop Management Support officers for Incident Management Teams. An e-mail has been sent out to ESA administrative staff. This will take place in early October.
- A 2 day AIIMS course will also be organised in the not too distant future.

### **8.4 Council Members**

- TF commended Molonglo for the running of their field day. Everything was run smoothly and was well organised.
- Thanks were also expressed on behalf of the 12 volunteers who travelled to Tweed Heads; the group benefited greatly from the experience.
- TB attended a Bush Fire CRC conference. He was very impressed with the quality of presentations and displays of vehicles and equipment. He indicated to Council that South Australian CFS has developed a pod type 9000 litre Super tanker that could be applicable in the ACT.

## **9. Confirmation of Next Meeting**

- The Chair closed the meeting at 7:09pm
- The next council meeting will be held at the ESA Headquarters Curtin on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008.