



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting 2: **Wednesday 4pm to 7pm, 1 April 2020**

WEBEX Invitation

9 Amberley Avenue, FAIRBAIRN ACT 2609

Members

Sarah Ryan – Chair, ACT Bushfire Council
 Natarsha Jakubaszek – Deputy Chair, ACT Bushfire Council
 Tony Bartlett – Member
 Steve Angus – Member
 Margaret Moreton – Member
 Cathy Parsons – Member
 Bhiamie Williamson – Member
 Marion Leiba – Member
 David Snell – Member
 Kylie Coe – Member
 Jeremy Watson - Member

Invited Guest(s):

Peter Cotsell (PCS)
 Neil Cooper/ Tony Scherl (PCS Proxy)
 Rohan Scott (ACTRFS)

Apologies: Justin Foley, Lynda Scanes, Steve Angus and Nick Lhuede

Officials

Georgeina Whelan – ESA Commissioner
 Joe Murphy – Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service
 Mark Brown – Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue
 Justin Foley, Acting Executive Branch Manager,
 Parks and Conservation Service, Environment,
 Planning and Sustainable Development
 Directorate (EPSDD)

Meeting Information

Delegated Authority under the
Emergencies Act 2004
 Call-In Number: 02 6207 7160

Secretariat:

Mylinh Li – Executive Assistance

Minutes	
Item	Presenter
1. Acknowledgement of country	Chair
The Chair acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land that the meeting was on, the Ngunnawal people. She expressed acknowledgement and respect towards their continuing culture and the contributions they make to the life of this city and this region. She also acknowledged and welcomed other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending the meeting.	
2. Welcome (Introductions, apologies and nomination of member to monitor the performance checklist)	Chair
The Chair welcomed all to the WebEx meeting and apologies were noted.	
3. Declarations of interest	Chair
NIL	
4. Acceptance of minutes and actions from previous meeting	Chair
The minutes from 4 March 2020 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Actions were reviewed and updated as per Appendix A.	
The CO RFS noted that Nick Lhuede has been appointed to the Bushfire Council although he was unable to attend this meeting due to COVID commitments at ACT Health. He has worked in forestry, fire management and emergency services for over 25 years. He was closely involved in reviewing fire	

management policy and practices following the 2003 Canberra bushfires and he led the development of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT in 2009 and 2014 and understands Government business and process. Members welcomed him to the Council.

The Chair noted that Council has provided advice to the Commissioner on the skills and capabilities that Council considers important in the selection of the next CO RFS.

Peter Cotsell provided a brief update on the Fire Recovery Plan for Namadgi NP, a program designed around the results of the rapid risk assessment report identifying priorities over the short and the long term. The long-term priorities include monitoring threatened species, water catchment condition, erosion and water quality. PCS is working with the Ngunnawal community to safeguard heritage sites and ensure that areas are safe prior to opening the Park. Road work and maintenance is covered in the EPSDD update later in Council papers.

The Chair asked officials how COVID -19 is impacting on each business unit. Mark Brown advised Fire & Rescue would not be able apply the social distancing rules. Parks had adopted a one person in each vehicle, carrying out communication on radio and disinfecting vehicles after use. RFS had limited access to sheds for response activities only.

Action item 200401-1: Peter Cotsell to send his presentation and meeting paper to the Secretariat for distribution for the next meeting and he be invited to be present at that meeting again.

5. Correspondence for noting	Chair
Nil.	

6. Business Plan	Chair
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Chair highlighted that COVID 19 will likely impact on the delivery of the BOP reports and other items in the Business Plan. Due to inability of staff to make the presentations due at today's meeting, the Business Plan needs to be further revised. Council agreed to move the presentation of the BOP annual report to August, and to rearrange the next three months to fit in the missed presentations.

Action item 200401-2: Chair to refine the Business Plan to adjust for missed presentations and to move the BOP annual report to August.

7. SBMP Focus Objectives	Commissioner
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ESA Presentations to be circulated out of session.

Margaret Moreton raised concerns on the preparedness for next season on the fuel reduction in Northern NSW.

Action item 20401-3- Margaret Moreton to provide Chair with Peter Dunn's details on lessons learnt on recovery in the south coast of NSW for presentation in August.

8. Standing Item: Update Draft Regional Fire Management Plan	EPSDD
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Rolled into EPSDD report.

9. Standing Item- Reports from the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Governance Committee – None	CO ACTRFS
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10. Formal advice on public comment conflict of interest for Council members	ESA
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Action item 20401-4- ESA to progress advice on public comment for Council members

11. Officials' reports for noting:	Officials
11. 1 EPSDD Report	EPSDD

A verbal briefing was provided highlighting that the BOP cannot be completed within the allocated timeframe due to the level of interstate deployments, the Orroral Valley Fire and the recent rainfall. Heavy plant has been focused on opening tracks and trails in Namadgi National Park. The ability to deliver training is impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Where possible PCS will be undertaking indigenous burns. A new fire truck is being branded with Indigenous artwork pending approval from the Brown family. Neil Cooper indicated that there may be budget constraints on the delivery of PCS activities.

The Commissioner supported the reasons for EPSDD not being able to complete BOP works as EPSDD was also involved in the interstate deployments which redirected BOP personnel to many weeks of interstate firefighting. The Commissioner also highlighted the need to increase the workforce of RFS and EPSDD to meet and maintain business as usual when there is also a need to undertake firefighting duties.

11.2 Commissioner's Report

Commissioner

The report was taken as read. A verbal briefing was provided highlighting the impact COVID-19 was having on ESA activities. ESA will continue undertaking recovery work and preparedness for the next season. Some online training is being developed to engage with volunteers. After Action Reviews (AARs) have progressed with many now completed.

11.3 Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service Report

CO ACTRFS

The report was taken as read. It was noted that most effort on the oversight of the SBMP was currently focused internally in developing the Action Descriptions. Joe and Rohan are well into the transition of position of CO RFS.

While COVID-19 restrictions are in place, daily catchups with staff and a weekly catch-up with Captains/Presidents are happening through WebEx.

Rohan Scott updated members on the progress of the Urgent Duty Driving (UDD).

12. Any other business

The Chair reported that she had had a discussion with the Ministers Office about providing a contribution to the ACT Government submission to the Royal Commission and Council was currently developing their contribution out of session.

The Chair noted that Council is looking forward to providing their input to the AAR.

The Chair noted that Council is yet to receive a response from the Minister on the BFC Preparedness Report that was sent to him in October last year.

The Chair thanked the CO RFS for his work and cooperation in working with Council members to improve processes and systems and wished him all the best for future endeavours.

The CO RFS thanked all members for the opportunity and welcomed Rohan Scott to the A/g CO RFS role and his role in supporting Bushfire Council.

The Chair asked all members to report on their experience of how this meeting was conducted on WebEx. All members agreed this was an effective tool for meeting together in the circumstances and highlighted the need to have presentations sent out to members prior to the WebEx meeting.

Action item 200401-5 Chair and Rohan Scott to schedule in phone hook-up next week to discuss future Bushfire Council business.

13. Review and adoption of action items from this meeting

14. In camera meeting if required - No

15. Council's performance checklist - completed

16. Close

Next meeting: 4pm, 6 May 2020

Appendix A

ACTION ITEMS – ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL

Action Items (OPEN)			at 1 April 2020	
Ref	ACTION	DUE	ACTION OFFICER	STATUS UPDATE
2018	Find a replacement for the vacant Bushfire Council Member- Nick Lhuede was appointment as 25 March 2020.	April 2020	CO ACTRFS	Closed
20191002-2	Documents from June to December 2018 to be put on SharePoint	June 19	CO ACTRFS	New process to be tested with affected Council members
20191204-8	Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service to liaise with the Assistant Director, ACTRFS Community Bushfire Protection to review the 2019-20 BOP and follow up the proposed treatment for Block 403 Denman Prospect and provide a response to Council as soon as possible.	December 2019	Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service	
20191204-9	ESA to advise Council if they provided comment on the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan, and if so, provide a copy of those comments to Council.	April 2020		In progress. CORFS and EBM PCS collaborating on this matter.
20191204-10	Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service to provide an update on the trail upgrade and maintenance program at the February 2020 BFC Meeting.	1 April 2020	Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service	Closed
20200304-06	Tony Bartlett to provide Council Members with a copy of his speech.	1 June 2020	Tony Bartlett	In progress
200304-07	Council members to provide ESA with a consolidated report, highlighting the	1 April 2020	Council members	Closed

	key points in relation to the recent fire operations.			
200304-08	Chief Officer ACTRFS and Chair to meet out of session to review the Business Plan and circulate to the Council members.	1 April 2020	CO ACTRFS	Closed
200304-9.2	Secretariat to circulate the Fire Management Zone Review report out of session.	1 April 2020	Secretariat	To distribute
200304-10	EPSDD PCS to provide the Secretariat with an electronic version of the BOP Quarterly Report to be circulated to Council members out of session.	1 April 2020	EPSDD	Tony Scherl to distribute via secretariat
200304-12	Secretariat to include a presentation at the August Council Meeting from Mr Adam Leavesley regarding his work on fire severity and prescribed burns.	1 August 2020	Secretariat	
200304-13	ESA to provide formal advice on public comment conflict of interest for Council members.	1 April 2020	ESA	In progress
200304-15.1	EPSDD to present the Fire Recovery Plan at the April BFC meeting.	2 May 2020	EPSDD	Brief update 1/04/20 presentation to be distributed.
200401-1	Peter Cotsell to send presentation and meeting paper to Secretariat for distribution for next meeting.	6 May 2020	Secretariat	
200401-2	Refined the Business plan BOP annual report to August as Tony Scherl suggest move it a month to be flexible	6 May 2020	Secretariat	
200401-3	Margaret Moreton to provide Chair with Peter Dunn's details on lessons learnt on recovery presentation for August.	6 May 2020	Secretariat	Complete

200401-4	Chair and Rohan Scott schedule in phone hook-up next week.	8 April 2020	Secretariat	Complete
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Action Items (CLOSED)				at 1 April 2020
Ref				
20191002-9	The Chair of the Fire Management Zone Review Panel be asked to provide a written update to Council on progress to date and to attend the November Council meeting to answer any further questions.			
20191204-9	<p>Action: Secretariat to arrange an out of session meeting with Mr Bartlett and Mr Seymour to review the Strategic Bushfire Management Zones</p> <p>Action: Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service to follow-up with the appropriate section within EPSDD and advise Council if the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan was circulated to Government Directorates for comment.</p>			
20191204-11	Action: Secretariat to complete the first draft of the 2020 BFC Business Plan and email to the Chair.			
20191204-12	Action: Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service, to provide a short update on the Draft Regional Fire Management Plan at the February 2020 meeting.			
2018	Action: Find a replacement for the vacant Bushfire Council Member- Nick Lhuede was appointment as 25 March 2020.			