



# ACT Bushfire Council Minutes

Date: 16 September 2021

Time: 4 pm – 6 pm

Location: Online Webex Meeting

Attendance	
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Ryan – Chair, ACT Bushfire Council
<b>Attendees</b>	Natarsha Jakubaszek – Deputy Chair, ACT Bushfire Council Bhiamie Williamson-Member Tony Bartlett – Member Cathy Parsons – Member David Snell – Member Jeremy Watson – Member Kylie Coe – Member Nick Lhuede – Member Georgeina Whelan – ESA Commissioner Rohan Scott – Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) Matthew Mavity – A/g Chief Officer ACT Fire and Rescue (F&R) Daniel Iglesias - Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)
<b>Apologies</b>	Steve Angus – Member
<b>Guests</b>	Neil Cooper - Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD Simon Butt - Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD Ryan Lawrey - Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD
<b>Secretariat</b>	Tara Bucknall – Executive Officer ESA Deputy Commissioner

Item	Topic	Action or Decision	Area Responsible	Due
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Steve Angus.</p>			
2.	<p><b>Declaration of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair asked for any declaration of interest – Nil.</p>			
3.	<p><b>2020-21 BOP Annual report – presentation from EPSDD</b></p> <p>EPSDD provided a presentation on the outcomes of the 2020-21 BOP. It was noted that the percentage achievement was the highest in the last 10 years. Of note was the achievement of the Pipeline burn which had been a ongoing challenge for completion. Major challenges to the completion last year were the wet weather and contractor availability. Many of the contractors were focused on bushfire recovery and remediation.</p> <p>A/g Chief Officer F&amp;R asked about linking a number of Indigenous F&amp;R members to the Indigenous team in PCS to grow their connection to land and explore opportunities for working with land managers.</p> <p>Council indicated that it was pleasing to see the level of achievement in the BOP for 2020-21 and thanked the presenter, Simon Butt.</p>			
4.	<p><b>Discussion on draft 2021-22 BOP</b></p> <p>EPSDD provided a presentation on the 2021-22 BOP. It was noted by Council that there had been a prior detailed briefing provided to Tony Bartlett and Sarah Ryan and their draft advice had been provided to and used by the Commissioner prior to this meeting.</p> <p>Council discussed the draft BOP and the draft advice. Council endorsed the advice provided by Tony Bartlett and Sarah Ryan to the Commissioner.</p>	<p>Recommended that incoming Council be provided with a specific brief on the PCS BOP and the RFMP in the context of</p>	<p>Secretariat</p>	

	<p>The Council recommended that the incoming Council be briefed on this and the details of the PCS BOP and RFMP, in the context of BOPs across the whole of the Territory on a tenure blind basis.</p>	<p>the BOPs across the whole of the Territory on a tenure blind basis.</p>		
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Consolidated report on progress with SBMP Actions – presentation from ESA</b></p>			
	<p>The Chair spoke to the consolidated report provided to the Council and noted that this had been provided to the Council prior to its endorsement by the SBMP Governance Committee.</p> <p>The Chair invited comments and noted that the quality of SBMP information and governance had improved markedly over the period of this Council’s term. Objective 9 is a key area where the Council believes more work is required, noting that this has been expanded on in the Preparedness report.</p>			
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Pre Season Report – presentation from RFS and EPSDD</b></p>			
	<p>Chief Officer RFS provided a verbal pre-season report, with the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ACT is expecting another wet season with grass fires being the biggest risk</li> <li>- The seasonal outlook indicates a strong possibility of another La Nina event occurring</li> <li>- The pre-season brief to RFS Brigades was done online, adapting to the current COVID-19 environment</li> <li>- Pre-season preparedness has included a focus on training and improving skills. The pre-season preparedness checklist has been completed.</li> <li>- Recent activity has focused on providing support to Whole of Government COVID-19 response, including working with other agencies to confirm COVID-19 Protocols for emergency response during the upcoming season</li> <li>- Leadership programs and women’s network meetings have continued with very positive response from members</li> <li>- A field exercise was conducted with a focus on operating for extended periods in an arduous environment</li> <li>- Cross border and interagency meetings have been completed</li> <li>- In conjunction with PCS some supporting tools have been developed by the fire behaviour analysts to better inform front line fire crews</li> <li>- Preparedness briefings have been given to a number of external agencies across ACT such as utilities companies</li> <li>- The Ministerial briefing to request a delayed start to the fire season (1 November) has been completed.</li> </ul>			

	<p>Council confirmed that they had endorsed out-of-session the delayed start to season (1 November).</p> <p>Council requested clarification of the aviation contract now being held by ACT and not in partnership with NSW. CO RFS outlined that business changes by NSW resulted in their withdrawal from the joint arrangement. ACT negotiated a stand alone contract to meet the same level of support as previously provided to ACT.</p> <p>Council noted that the preparedness cycle that RFS now follows has much improved over Council's four year term.</p> <p>EPSDD provided a short verbal report indicating the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contracts and rosters are confirmed for the upcoming fire season</li> <li>- All equipment is ready</li> <li>- Contractors are in place and undertaking training in a COVID safe environment</li> </ul>			
7.	<b>Acceptance of Minutes</b>			
	Minutes from the August Meeting were accepted.			
8.	<b>Correspondence for noting</b>			
	<p>Letter from ACT Renumeration Tribunal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council has elected not to respond</li> </ul> <p>Letter from EPSDD – RFMP Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council acknowledged the response with a note that the area of concern remains the ecological burns and their value. It was noted that the Council recommended that these be increased in the future.</li> </ul> <p>Letter from Minister Gentleman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair will respond in other business (Agenda Item 13)</li> </ul>			
9.	<b>Report on activities undertaken</b>			
	The Chair attended an SBMP Governance Committee meeting on 16 September. She noted that there had been discussion at the SMBP Governance Committee about preparedness across all components of the emergency response elements within ESA. It was noted that a bad bushfire season will also often result in a bad storms, heat and other events requiring emergency response.			

10.	<b>Reports from SBMP Governance Committee</b>		
	As covered above.		
11.	<b>Officials Reports</b>		
	<p>12.1 EPSDD provided a written report and invited questions from Council members.</p> <p>12.2 ESA Commissioner provided a verbal report with the key items being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESA is heavily involved in providing support to the Whole of Government COVID response.</li> <li>• The focus of the agency, paid staff and volunteers has been on keeping our community safe during the current COVID emergency.</li> <li>• The Commissioner offered her personal thanks for the support and efforts from the Council during her time as Commissioner.</li> </ul> <p>12.3 CO RFS provide a verbal update as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He has been very involved in operations with the ACT Health emergency centre and commented on the applicability and challenges of applying AIIMS across all emergencies including ACT Health.</li> <li>• The pre-season report has been provided (Agenda Item 6)</li> <li>• CO RFS also provided his personal thanks for the Council's work and effort during his time both as Chief Officer and his time with the RFS. He also thanked Neil Cooper for his efforts during his time at EPSDD and with the Bushfire Council.</li> </ul>		
12.	<b>ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan</b>		
	Council confirmed which items from Action items / Business plan it would like provided to the incoming Council.		
13.	<b>Other Business</b>		
	<p>Chair offered a formal statement of thanks for the support provided to the Council over the period of their tenure. She acknowledged the letter of thanks from the Minister, co-signed by the Commissioner, the Chief Fire Officer RFS and the Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service in EPSDD.</p> <p>She then personally thanked:</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Minister for giving them the opportunity to serve the community in this way, and his staff for their support</li> <li>• the Commissioner, Georgeina Whelan, for supporting their operations</li> <li>• the Chief Fire Officer RFS, Rohan Scott, for overseeing the Secretariat and providing constructive and willing assistance to the business of Council</li> <li>• Tara Bucknall, Kerri Clarke and Lynda Scanes for the secretarial support they have provided over the last four year</li> <li>• Daniel Iglesias, Executive Branch Manager, PCS and Neil Cooper and his Bushfire Unit team, for their many expert contributions to the work of Council.</li> </ul> <p>Finally, she thanked her colleagues on Council for their collegiate and constructive contributions over the last four years.</p> <p>Natarsha, on behalf of the Council, offered thanks to Sarah for her efforts as the Chair.</p> <p>Daniel Iglesias from PCS also offered his thanks for the effort of the Council and their unwavering commitment to the protection of the community.</p>			
13.	<b>Review of Action items and adoption of action items from this meeting</b>			
	<p>Action items were reviewed and updated.</p> <p>Action items arising from meeting were confirmed to be handed over to new Council.</p>			
14.	<b>Bushfire Preparedness report finalisation</b>			
	<p>The Chair invited officials to provide any comments on areas of facts in the draft report. All officials were comfortable with the draft report and looked forward to reading the final report. All officials left the meeting.</p> <p>Council members discussed any final changes to the draft report. Two minor edits were agreed and Council approved the report subject to those changes..</p>			
15.	<b>Meeting closed 6.10 pm.</b>			
	<p>Chair closed the final meeting of the current Council.</p>			