



ACT Bushfire Council Meeting

Wednesday, 1 October 2014

Black Mountain
1 & 2 Meeting Rooms
ACTESA Headquarters

Chair: Kevin Jeffery

Secretariat: Leandra Parker
Minute Taker: Kaylene Everett
EA to Commissioner

Attendees: Michael Lonergan, Member
Cathy Parsons, Member
Marion Leiba, Member
Andrew Joyce, Member (Departed Meeting 1710hrs)
Tony Bartlett, Member
Christine Goonrey, Member

Dominic Lane, ESA Commissioner
Andrew Stark, CO ACTRFS
Steve Edwards, Ag CO ACTF&R

Guests:
Minister Simon Corbell (5:00 – 5:45pm)

Scott Farquhar, A/g Mgr Fire Forest and Roads, Parks & Conservation Services

Meeting commencement: 1600hrs

Meeting concluded: 1700hrs

Minutes

The Chair welcomed Members and Guests to the meeting.

Agenda item:	1.0 – Apologies	Presenter:	Chair
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Apologies were noted for Nicola Lewis (leave of absence). Still awaiting formal advice on Ms Lewis's length of absence. Mr P Swain, CO ACTF&R, Mr N Lhuede, SBMP Project Manager.

Agenda	2.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members	Presenter:	Chair
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No Conflict of Interests was reported by Council Members.

Agenda item:	3.0 – Acceptance of minutes of 3 September 2014	Presenter:	Chair
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The minutes from the previous meeting held on 3rd September 2014 were not accepted.

Discussion: There was general feedback that minutes should capture the overall discussion of the meeting.

Action: Members to forward 3rd September amendments to Chair for forwarding to secretariat and present at November 2014 meeting for endorsement.

Action: Minutes from the 6 August 2014 meeting to be updated and include in November meeting for endorsement.

Action: Ms Goonrey to advise if she can locate hard copy of 7 May minutes and advise RFS CO.

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

Discussion: Refer to implementation of action items report (Attachment A).

Agenda item: **5.0 – Correspondence** **Presenter:** **Chair**

Discussion: **IN:** Letter to Chair advising of Minister attending October meeting

OUT: Letter to Minister re extension for Annual Preparedness Report

Letter to Natalie Hile re thanks

Letter to Commissioner re 2014-15 BOP advice

- Discussion was held on the timing and workload for BFC members regarding the annual preparedness report and BOP.
- It was noted how these two activities interact and enable the BFC to provide advice to the Minister and the Commissioner, but that it was undesirable to have them both occurring in the same month.
- Members discussed the tabled Business Plan and associated costs and budget.

Commissioner introduced Kaylene Everett to the meeting who undertook minutes for remainder of meeting.

Agenda item: **6.0 – ESA Commissioner’s Report to BFC** **Presenter:** **ESA Commissioner**

Discussion: The Commissioner apologised for his written report not being available due to sickness with staff members. A formalised report will be attached with the minutes for distribution.

2014/15 TAMS BOP

The Commissioner thanked Council for their advice and feedback to the draft 2014/15 TAMS BOP. The BOP has now been approved. The Commissioner also gave thanks to RFS for their support and assistance in the development of the 2014/15 BOP.

The Commissioner informed he has written to Mr Gary Byles, Director General, Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) to note the recommendations attached to the letter made by the ACT Bush Fire Council.

Ms Parsons queried budget bids from previous year in relation to the \$600K received from the Commonwealth to undertake project.

The Commissioner confirmed that the ACT Government has provided more funding to TAMS BOP than previous years. The \$600K is additional to NDRP funding for further hazard reduction than was received last year and has been granted to TAMS for this financial year. A further explanation provided in relation to Commonwealth funding for fire services to Commonwealth buildings with the ACT government picking up the shortfalls through insurance.

Mr Bartlett asked if there was enough funding available to enable all the planned activities to be done on the BOP schedule. Chief Officer RFS confirmed that funding is available for work to be undertaken on the BOP.

Mr Lonergan asked whether capital projects being suspended to fund ACT projects would impact on the BOP. Commissioner reported that no direct feedback had been received with respect to Capital Works funding. He further confirmed that Mt Franklin Road Upgrade completion is in this year’s budget.

Commissioner informed that Treasury is still undertaking a full review on ESA with key decisions yet to be made by Cabinet.

Mr Lonergan Asked whether the Treasury review would impact on mitigation projects similar to the Mt Franklin Road upgrade. The response was that once Mt Franklin road is completed then the new SBMP makes it clear there are other key mitigation projects on public land. SBMP has been articulated to inform the Government why these programs are important and will require continued funding.

Mr Joyce asked when the Treasury Review of ESA was due for completion. The Commissioner informed that the Review is due to be completed by February 2015. Mr Joyce raised concerns if this would impact ESA on budget and staffing capacities during the fire season.

The Commissioner informed that the lack of staffing had been covered off in the Bushfire NDRP proposed funding with additional resources until 30 June 2015. As part of the outcomes from the Auditor General's report and the implementation of the SBMP more action was needed on policy development for bushfires.

Regional Fire Management Plans (RFMP)

The Commissioner advised Council he would be looking for an official response from Council relating to RFMPs.

Chief Officer RFS informed Council that a series of steps needs to be undertaken by them to review and comment on additional Blue Range maps.

The Commissioner asked Chair for Council's endorsement/rejection of plans. With the SBMP now tabled in the Assembly there's an urgency for Council's feedback on Blue Range and would be appreciative of their comments by next meeting.

Mr Bartlett commented that Council could not really provide feedback until they had had an opportunity to have a detailed presentation on the individual maps and the nature of changes to the previous plans.

The Commissioner informed Council of the positive feedback from the "living on the edge" community information sessions but it had raised concerns that Blue Range management needed to be improved.

Ms Goonrey spoke on issue over the next 5 years, on the rolling of prescribed burning in parks and around fire prone in urban areas and if they would be covered by the RFMP. She informed the LandCare group would be looking at this including the environmental issues. She asked if a plan was in place to keep them covered over the next 5 years.

The Commissioner discussed the importance of broad scale burning in areas like the Namadgi NP noting the constraints of broad scale burning in that environment due to weather.

Mr Bartlett informed that Council would need to provide comments on changes on urban edge strategies relating to the RFMPs and possibly the zoning of Bushfire Prone areas.

The Chair confirmed Council will review the proposed plans for Blue Range and will provide feedback to Mr Farquhar and RFS.

CO RFS informed the regional fire management plans had been presented at May meeting of Council.

Mr Bartlett asked how the feedback to Council would be documented to enable it to understand what changes had occurred to address the comments received. The Chief Officer RFS informed the previous status, changes and proposed maps would be noted and would identify the proposed changes from the Community.

The Commissioner advised of recent work undertaken by ACT F&R to consider Bushfire Attack Levels on bushfire prone areas. Higher attack levels may see the need to go back to TAMS to see if they would consider more hazard reduction be undertaken in the pine areas.

CO RFS asked Council if they would be like an additional briefing on the RFMP similar to BOP within the next month to provide Council on more detailed information on RFMPs. Chief Officer RFS to arrange a briefing session prior to next BFC meeting to go through RFMPs in week commencing 27 October 2014.

ACTIONS:

*CO RFS to arrange briefing session on RFMPs in week of 27 October.
Council to prepare written advice to Commissioner on the RFMPs*

Amendments - Emergencies Act

The Commissioner informed amendments to the Emergencies Act have been tabled in the Assembly. A summary was provided of the changes – increased powers for Chief Officers to enter premises, cigarette butts. Changes will also be made to Commissioner powers to ensure effective coordination between all services.

The Commissioner also discussed changes to the SBMP to ensure that the SBMP takes account of Plans of Management. He has worked closely with EPD on proposed legislation to consult with the Conservator and undertake a review to work on areas of conflict. The Conservator is consulted during the development of the SBMP.

Ms Goonrey suggested there may be concerns raised by conservation groups due to this proposed amendment.

The Commissioner invited Council to contact his office if they required clarification on changes to the Emergencies Act.

ACTIONS:

- *Commissioner to formalise his report to BFC and send out with minutes.*
- *Commissioner to provide an explanatory note to Council outlining changes to Section 77 of the Emergencies Act.*
- *Commissioner to provide copy of the final Incident Management Capability in ACT ESA (Crossbow report) to Council.*

Agenda item:	7.0 – RFS Chief Officers Report to BFC	Presenter:	Chief Officer RFS
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Discussion: Held over to next meeting.

Agenda item:	8.0 – TAMS Land Managers Report to BFC	Presenter:	Ag Mngr Fire, Forest and Roads (Parks and Conservation Service)
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Discussion: Held over to next meeting.

Agenda item:	9.0 – Regional Fire Management Plans	Presenter:	Chief Officer RFS
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Discussion: Further to the Commissioner’s report to Bush Fire Council, CORFS will arrange a briefing session for Council week commencing 27 October 2014, to review RFMP’s prior to next BFC meeting (5 Nov 14). Mr Farquhar informed that the RFMP maps are currently out for consultation with parks and conservation groups with feedback due by 12 October 2014.

Action: *CORFS to arrange a briefing on Regional Fire Management Plans for week commencing 27 October 2014.*

Agenda item:	10.0 – Blue Range Plans	Presenter:	Ag Mngr Fire, Forest and Roads (Parks and Conservation)
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Discussion: *Action: CORFS to arrange a briefing on Blue Range Plans for week commencing 27 October 2014.*

Agenda item: *11.0 – Discussion with Minister Corbell* **Presenter:** **Chair**

The Minister entered room 1700hrs.

General discussion took place around the following: Auditor-General's Report, the Strategic Bushfire Management Plans and its development, the number and experience of Level 3 Incident Controllers available during major incidents, the RFS DCO, management of the TAMS Fire Management Unit, delays in implementation of planned preparedness activities under the TAMS BOP, attendance at national meetings by Fire Management Unit staff, information flow and ESA Communications Centre.

**The next meeting is scheduled for 5 November 2014,
Black Mountain Meeting Rooms 1 & 2 ESA Headquarters**