



ACT
Government



Wednesday 3 August 2016
16:00 to 19:00
Black Mountain Meeting
Rooms
ACT ESA Headquarters

Chair:	Cathy Parsons	Secretariat:	Lynda Scanes
Attendees:	Sarah Ryan		Mark Brown, A/g Commissioner
	Tony Bartlett		Phil Canham, A/g Chief Officer, ACT Fire & Rescue
	Steve Angus		Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service
	Marion Leiba		Neil Cooper, Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD)
	Natarsha Carney		
	Mick George		
	Sandra Lauer		
	Andrew Joyce		
Invited Guests	David Foot, Director Risk and Planning		
	Nick Lhuede, Senior Manager Risk and Planning		
	Paul Simakoff-Ellims, A/g Deputy Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS)		
	Simon Pond, Operations Officer, Logistics, ACTRFS		
	Rohan Scott, Senior Operations Officer, ACTRFS		
	Tony Scherl, Parks and Conservation Service, EPD		

Minutes

Agenda item: 1.0 – Welcome and Apologies

Presenter: Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Kevin Jeffery, Christine Goonrey and Dominic Lane.

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

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

Mr George noted agenda item 3 Bushfire Prone Area and his work in the development space as a Bushfire Consultant with Ecological Australia and will raise any potential conflicts if they were to emerge. No other Conflicts

of Interest were reported by Council Members.

Agenda item: 3.0 – Presentation on Bushfire Prone Area Map

Presenter: Nick Lhuede

Discussion:

The Chair introduced and welcomed Mr Foot and Mr Lhuede to present an update on the review of the Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) Map.

CO ACTRFS noted previous discussion at the March BFC meeting where the Environment Department rolled BPA into their climate strategy. Part of the discussion was for Council to review the BPA, ESA is seeking Council's views after Mr Lhuede's presentation of the science behind the BPA and how it came about and the outcomes of the project and what the BPA should look like.

Mr Lhuede provided information regarding the background of the BPA's in the ACT and a PowerPoint presentation of the BPA map that is currently being reviewed and refined to reflect changes in land use and tenure. The current BPA identified in the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Version 3 (SBMP V3) (and as part of the consultation roll out ESA identified a mapping process showing the BPA) purpose is; education and awareness for the community living in the BPA and to inform the application of Australian Standards AS3959, construction of buildings in BPA's. BPA's are used to trigger an assessment under the building code; however, currently does not apply in the Built Up Area of the ACT.

The SBMP advises the government it is working towards regulating those processes and imposing construction standards (AS3959) to include part of the built-up area of the ACT. Issues with current BPA; is no exclusion of managed areas, vegetation mapping and small patch size. The revised BPA mapping draws on NSW Rural Fire Service guidelines and identifies bushfire prone vegetation into three categories based on hazard. The data used is from 2016 aerial imagery, LiDAR data, ground truthing for small patch size and desktop mapping. The last round of mapping did not pull out exclusions; managed areas such irrigating grassland areas like Can Turf, the Canberra Airport, golf courses and some of the agricultural areas.

The revised mapping breakdown is category one – Forest and Woodlands vegetation, category two – Grassland/Open Woodland vegetation, category three – 1 – 2.5 hectare, narrow linear strips vegetation. Exclusions are golf courses, sports fields, maintained reserves, airports, vineyards, orchards and non vegetated areas. The buffer distances applied to the hazard for category one is 150 metres, category two is 60 metres and category three is 30 metres. It provides a cleaner BPA line with linear corridors being picked up and consistent with what other jurisdictions are doing; including NSW.

Concern was raised in relation to the application of building standards and boundary of the property if BPA touches a section of the block or the line went through the block and what it would mean for a development application for someone building a new house. It is important the regulation that gives effect to BPA should use that as a trigger to do an assessment on the whole block. If the building footprint touches BPA then you would have to do an assessment or if it is outside that you would not have to do an assessment.

BFC members requested to look at a more detailed set of maps to review the overall footprint; it was agreed to be

available for the BFC Meeting in October. Mr Bartlett advised he will not be attending the October meeting and requested to see the maps out of session.

Council members thanked Mr Lhuede and Mr Foot for the presentation.

Action:

Mr Lhuede to attend the BFC Meeting in October to provide the revised BUA maps.

Mr Lhuede to provide the maps to Mr Bartlett out of session.

Agenda item: 4.0 – Presentation on ACTRFS Operations

**Presenters: Paul Simakoff-Ellims
Simon Pond
Rohan Scott**

Discussion:

The Chair introduced and welcomed Paul Simakoff-Ellims, Simon Pond and Rohan Scott to present an overview of the ACTRFS Operations Section.

The RFS Operations Team is responsible for the leadership and co-ordination of all operational activities of the Service. The key areas of focus are general operations, specialist areas and logistics. Fleet and appliance of the ACTRFS includes 13 light units, 15 medium tankers, 25 heavy tankers, 6 heavy tankers that have compressed air foam system (CAFS), 1 bulk water carrier, 18 command/support vehicles, 6 quick fill/pump trailers, 1 retardant batching trailer, 1 forklift and a tractor for helicopter dolly.

Heavy Plant includes 2 dozers and floats (on contract), 1 Grader (on contract), access to NSW heavy plant. They are stood up on elevated fire danger days and used for fire break construction, fire trail management and removal of dangerous trees.

Remote Area Firefighting (RAF), there are 5 RAF teams, 92 members trained in hover entry, exit and winch with 4 fully equipped trailers. The teams are also deployed to provide interstate assistance and have annual re-certifications in arduous fitness level.

Aviation, there are specialised aviation personnel used for fire suppression and control lines, reconnaissance flights, fire line mapping and fire spotting, aerial incendiary.

Fire Towers, there are 4 fire towers providing coverage across the ACT and surrounds, One Tree to the North, Kowen to the East, Mt Tennant to the South and Mt Coree to the West. The towers are stood up as fire danger increases and after lightning storms. The fire tower contract has gone out to tender.

Facilities, there are 8 Brigade Stations, 7 Parks Depots, Hume Helibase, Hume Training Centre and the ESA Headquarters at Fairbairn. Recent facility upgrades to Jerrabomberra, Rivers, and Guises Creek with a new and

meeting.

Moved: Marian Leiba and Seconded: Andrew Joyce

Agenda item: 7.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings **Presenter: Chair**

Discussion:

Please refer to Attachment A for further details.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: 8.0 – Correspondence **Presenter: Chair**

Discussion:

Nil.

Agenda item: 9.0 – Update on Emergency Services Operational Review Group Meeting (ESORG) **Presenter: Natarsha Carney**

Discussion:

Ms Carney represented BFC at the ESORG meeting and provided an overview of discussion concerning the Built Up Area (BUA) and Rural Area (RA) boundaries with respect to incident control.

Discussion paper: Council were provided with a copy a the letter of 11 July 2016 (prior to the meeting), written by The United Firefighters Union of Australia addressed to Acting Commissioner Mr Brown on the topic of the revision of the BUA and RA Boundaries.

The existing response arrangements outline that the first response to all grass and bushfires in the ACT will be by the nearest available most appropriate resource, irrespective of jurisdiction or Service. Both ACT fire services continue to work together collaboratively and cohesively in responding to fires across both the built up and rural areas of the Territory.

The A/g Commissioner provided background regarding the amendments to the *Emergencies Act 2004*, (passed in the Legislative Assembly) that has bought about the review of the size and shape of the parameters of the (BUA).

The BUA now defines who assumes control and it is reasonable that ACT Fire & Rescue (ACTF&R) assume control in BUA areas and that nature reserves, etc are re- designated as BUA for reasons of practicality and rate of response. For example Mt Taylor or Black Mountain, ACTF&R are generally in most cases in attendance first. It underpins AIMS incident management were incident control shouldn't be transferred too many times. The exact size and shape needs to be determined; however any change to the boundaries of the BUA needs to be aligned to features in the real environment, recognisable to firefighters on the ground (aligned to landmarks they can see) and staff in the ComCen. Command and control arrangements for each Agency will remain the same.

Mr Cooper stated from a land managers point of view; any proposed changes will not affect their response arrangements to fires.

The CO ACTRFS advised he does not accept the contents of the UFU letter. The CO ACTF&R advised his preference would be to not go through the parameters offered by the UFU; they are not supported or agreed to by all members of the ACTF&R. ACTRFS are providing a set of parameters which will be discussed at the next meeting.

The boundaries of the BUA do require to be updated to take into account the development of new suburbs for example the suburbs on the western perimeter of the ACT.

Ms Carney advised the ESORG will meet on the 15 August 2016 to facilitate the progress of the revised maps, prior to the commencement of the ACT bushfire season on 1 October 2016. Council members to provide its position of proposed maps for the BUA and RA boundaries to guide the discussion around the review of the boundaries.

Action:

Bushfire Council to provide its position (in writing) on the BUA prior to the next ESORG meeting on Monday 15 August 2016

Agenda item: 10 – Recent media coverage regarding proposed changes to laws governing ACT government employees	Presenter: Tony Bartlett
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Discussion:

Mr Bartlett raised concern in relation to the recent media coverage regarding proposed changes to laws governing ACT government employees from expressing their views and how this may affect Bushfire Council members.

The CO ACTRFS emphasised it is about the responsible use of social media and a common sense approach to appropriateness of information shared. The article stated the Commissioner for Public Administration said public servants were still welcome to express their views, political or otherwise, as long as it was clear they did so as a private citizen. The use of social media had blurred the lines between official and private conduct, making it necessary to clarify that employees must "uphold the good reputation of the ACTPS at all times that they are identifiable as a public servant".

Mr Joyce advised the obligation was not new; it is the same as the Commonwealth Government Australian Public Service code of conduct. Governments and private companies now require applicants for new positions to provide their social media accounts as part of employment conditions and disclosure statements are required.

Outcome:

It is recommended BFC monitor the proposed changes to law and that Council members make it clear that they are commenting as a private citizen if they choose to make public comments on ACT Government policies, programs and proposals.

Discussion:

Mr Brown tabled the Commissioner’s Report that provided an overview of current activities.

Wet weather delayed completion of the Belconnen ambulance and fire & rescue station located on Bindubi Street in Aranda. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services will officially open the new facility on Friday 2 September 2016. A Public Open Day is scheduled for Saturday 3 September 2016 from 10am to 2pm for members of the community to view the station first hand. BFC members are welcome to attend, the secretariat will arrange for invitations to be sent.

Consultation between the ESA and stakeholders is continuing on the review of the Built Up Area.

Evaluation of the Community Fire Unit program, the Government agreed to conduct a formal evaluation of CFUs and present it to the ACT Legislative Assembly during the August 2016 sitting period. The review conducted by the independent consultant found the CFU program in the ACT to be of great value to the community, effective in reducing risks, raising awareness, and increasing social capital. The final evaluation report recommended some improvement to the program. These include; Community outreach and engagement, recruitment to existing and new CFUs, identifying the locations, age, gender of the volunteers, consider the establishment of new CFUs in north/west suburbs that have the greatest exposure to bushfire risk. Training of CFU volunteers should be structured to make it as easy and as quick as possible for a volunteer to get up and running in the CFU program with regular ongoing training. Enhancing connections with other emergency services, such as the ACT Rural Fire Service (in line with the Strategic Reform Agenda). Record-keeping of CFU activities and personnel status (availability, training) should be enhanced, making use of the information in the CAD system. ACTF&R are currently looking at is the development of an Ap for CFU Team Leaders and Volunteers to record activation and training events using and iphone or iPad Ap. The NSW program is currently using a similar Ap. Since 2004 there has been CFU contacts to be distrusted to ACTRFS volunteers.

Mr Joyce and Mr Angus said ACTRFS Brigades would welcome the enhancement of connections with CFU’s.

Action:

- Secretariat to email an invitation to BFC to attend the New Aranda Ambulance and Fire & Rescue Station Open Day.

Discussion:

Mr Cooper, Manager, Forestry and Fire Management (EPD) provided an overview of current activities in his unit.

During 2015-16 the Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) Directorate continued to implement operations to meet the requirements of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Version 3 (SBMPV3). Under the *Emergencies Act 2004*, land managers must produce a Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP). The final result for the BOP 2015-16 year is 91% complete. The key areas of delivery is fuel management, slashing, prescribed burning, grazing, physical removal, chemical herbicides to treat re-growth, access management, road maintenance, road construction, road upgrades, vegetation control, fire infrastructure development, equipment, training, audit and monitoring, planning and research, education, response and standby. A Gantt Chart for Bushfire Operations Plan 2016-17 was tabled.

BFC members made special mention of the efforts of Land Managers, EPD for achieving so well with the BOP activities and the budget.

Noted:

- BFC members commended Land Managers, EPD for achieving so well with the BOP activities and on budget.

Agenda item: 13.0 – Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report

Presenter: Joe Murphy

Discussion:

The Chief Officer provided an overview of current activities within the ACTRFS.

Fire related incidents have been quiet lately with all the wet weather; however, crews and chainsaw teams have been busy supporting the ACT State Emergency Services during the recent storm activity.

Operations update was provided at Agenda Item four.

Membership, the total volunteer membership is 536, as at 3 August 2016 (Female: 101, Male: 435). The ACTRFS Memberships section is currently working on updating Honours and Award Standard Operating Procedures.

Training, fifteen members from ACTRFS/Parks/ACTSES/ESA Mapping have been nominated for the NSW RFS Incident Management Exercise (IMX) in Nowra 24 to 26 August 2016. The Lake George Zone RFS (Queanbeyan) are holding an IMX on 2 to 3 September 2016 at the NSW RFS Fire Control Centre, Ellerton Drive Queanbeyan from 8:30 to 16:30 each day. The Nowra IMX is over-prescribed; however, Council members are welcome to attend as the Queanbeyan IMX as Observers.

The Crew Leader program (pilot program) was delivered on Saturday 23 July 2016; all participants agreed that this program was excellent and have said that they will be promoting this course to others in their brigades. ACTRFS will be delivering a Village fire fighter program, starting 27 August 2016.

The Assistant Manager, Community Awareness permanent position is scheduled to be advertised next week.

The Open Day is currently being planned for Sunday 23 October 2016 with the VBA Field Day to be incorporated into the event. Will be promoting the event widely within the community.

The Community Bushfire Protection Team implementing the ACT Rural Grant Scheme with 9 projects being funded to provide for better access; dam construction/maintenance; and construction of fences on rural properties around the ACT. The team is also developing a SharePoint system to better track the progress of the audit of all ACT Government Bushfire Operations Plans.

Mt Clear (Booth Range) after action review recommendations response to be circulated to BFC members.

The latest Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) report - there has been unseasonal rainfall in the tropics. There is a very strong negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) in place, until possibly October. This means a greater chance of rain for the ACT. A La Niña is a 50/50 possibility for the coming summer. (There is no chance of an El Niño). The outlook is for most parts of Australia to be wet. Many areas will be cool. The outlook is for an early onset of northern tropical rains.

To view the on-line material <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/?ref=fr>. There is also a new video explaining the IOD — Rick McRae, ACTESA, to be distributed out of session.

Actions:

- Secretariat to distribute the information for those BFC members who would like to attend the IMX in Queanbeyan as an Observer
- Secretariat to distribute the Mt Clear (Booth Range) after action review recommendations response (out of session)
- Secretariat to distribute the new video explaining IOD.

Agenda item: 14.0 – General Business

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

- Mr Joyce is representing Council at the AFAC Conference in Brisbane. He asked members to review the program and let him know if there is a particular session in the program of interest and he will ensure to attend.
- All Council members will complete a section of the seasonal preparedness report for the Minister.

Action:

- Secretariat to circulate last year's season preparedness report (out of session)

Agenda item: 15.0 – Next Meeting

Presenter: Chair

item:

The Council noted that its next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 7 September 2016, and that the feature topic

will be the EPD BOP. The meeting will be held in the Planning Room at ESA HQ where the maps can be viewed.

Cathy Parsons noted her apology for the next meeting.

Closing: The meeting closed at 19:00pm.



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION ITEMS

1 JUNE 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
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	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		Lidar validation	Pending data from Qld being released
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review BPA Maps at October Meeting Provide the BPA maps to Mr Bartlett out of session 		3 August 2016, agenda item 3	Mr Foot and Mr Lhuede	October		
5	BFC to provide its position (in writing) on the BUA prior to the next ESORG meeting on Monday 15 August 2016		3 August 2016, agenda item 9	Chair	Prior to 15 August 2016		Completed
	Email an invitation to BFC to attend the New Aranda Ambulance and Fire & Rescue Station Open Day.		3 August 2016, agenda item 11	Secretariat	5 August 2016	Sent on 5 August 2016	Completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate the information for those BFC members who would like to attend the IMX in Queanbeyan as an Observer 		3 August 2016, agenda item 13	Secretariat		All information sent on 5 August 2016	Completed

	Action Item / Issue ¹			Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate the Mt Clear (Booth Range) after action review recommendations response (out of session) to BFC • Circulate the new video explaining IOD to BFC 							
	Circulate last year's season preparedness report to BFC			3 August 2016, agenda item 14	Secretariat		All information sent on 5 August 2016	Completed

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	Circulate the 2015/16 CBR Report to BFC members		Completed on 6 July 2016
2	Set a presentation about cost benefits of fuel reduction		Completed on 6 July 2016
3	Send report on Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference to BFC out of session		Completed on 6 July 2016
4	The Bushfire Prone Area map will continue to reviewed and refined to reflect changes in land use and tenure, as improved vegetation mapping becomes available and to address local and site specific issues as required. Changes will be approved by the Commissioner and reported back to BFC.		Completed on 3 August 2016
3	Recruitment, retention, succession planning, mentoring, training and competencies follow-up presentation in 6 months		

Attachment B

The 2016 BFC Business Plan

Tentative meeting agenda topics.

Feb-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Border Arrangements (RFS) (SBMP 2&3) • Update on Review into Community Fire Units (F&R) (SBMP 9) 	Completed Completed
Mar-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Bushfire Prone Areas (EPD + ESA) (SBMP 10&11) • Update on community awareness and warning activities (SBMP 9) 	Completed Completed
Apr-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of new technology for weather forecasting and fire behaviour (ESA + BOM) (SBMP 3&8) • New approaches to identifying priorities for reducing fuel hazards and monitoring and evaluating risk reduction (SBMP 8) • Overview of lessons learnt – inquiries, reviews and reports (SBMP 8) 	Completed July agenda Completed
May-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of strategic review of fuel hazards and road network in Lower Cotter (SBMP 6&7) 	Completed Completed
Jun-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm FireWise Program update • Update on Indigenous Fire Management Program 	Completed
Jul-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate different approaches to achieve low intensity and different seasonality in fire regimes (SBMP 8) • Overview of volunteer brigades in relation to recruitment, retention, succession planning, mentoring, training and competencies. (SBMP 2&3) 	Co Completed
Aug-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of achievements of the TAMS Bushfire Operational Plan in 2014-15 (SBMP 1 & 6) • Aviation Arrangements and Developments (SBMP 3) 	Completed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New approaches for risk reduction 	Completed
Sep-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal Outlook for 2016/17 • Production of Annual Preparedness Statement for the Minister • Annual pre-season briefing on Preparedness by Rural Fire Service 	
Oct-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burning Program for 2017 	
Nov-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency meeting to allow for slippage 	
Dec-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016 in Review - Planning for 2017 • Verbal Report to Commissioner on scope and effectiveness of SBMP as required by <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> 	