



# ACT Bushfire Council

7 September 2011

1600-1900

ESA Headquarters

**Chair:** Kevin Jeffery

**Note taker:** Amy McLenaghan

**Attendees:** Christine Goonrey, Member  
Simon Katz, Member  
Michael Lonergan, Member  
Tony Fearnside, Member  
Cathy Parsons, Member  
Tony Bartlett, Deputy Chair/Member  
Marion Leiba, Member

Andrew Stark, Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service  
Michael Joyce, Deputy Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service  
Greg Potts, Manager Community Bushfire Protection ACT Rural Fire Service  
Richard Woods, Manager Operations ACT Rural Fire Service  
Neil Cooper, Manager Fire management Unit, PCL  
Ross Burden, Manager Parks and City Services  
Jim Corrigan Director, Parks and City services

**Meeting commencement:** 1615

**Meeting concluded:** 1900

## Minutes

**Agenda item:** 1.0 - Apologies

**Agenda item:** 2.0 – Minutes of previous meeting

**Presenter:** Kevin Jeffery

**Discussion:**

The August Minutes were approved with minor changes

**Agenda item:** 3.0 – Actions running sheet

**Presenter:** Kevin Jeffery

**Discussion:**

[Presentation on how RFS are changing as an agency](#)

Due to the BOP presentation this has been adjourned to another meeting

[Explanation of IMT roles and positions to be presented to Council](#)

MLO requested an update by next meeting as RFS said they were still collating the information and training records. MJ replied he will intend but cannot guarantee to have information by next meeting.

[Horse Agistment working group to report to council](#)

[Andrew Stark to correspond to Dave Darlington re: State of trails north west of ACT](#)

RFS and other agencies have scheduled a meeting for the following week with

[BFC to draft letter to Minister regarding planning and development in Molongolo](#)

Action completed

[Council to form working group for approval of BOP](#)

Action Completed

[BOP presentation to be sent to Council](#)

Action Completed

[Letter to be written to Minister expressing Councils views on the proposed PCL restructure](#)

Action Completed

[August BOM report to be presented to Council](#)

AS updated Council on the predictions for the coming three months stating we are trending towards la Nina with

above average temperatures and significant rain periods.

[Email regarding advice on annual report and topics to be sent to Council](#)

Action Completed

[Collate advice on BOP and send through to Commissioners office](#)

Council noted and supports the following points:

- The comprehensive mapping indicates activities completed in the past year as well as those planned for 2011-12 and expected operations in 2012-13, which provides a very good understanding of the extent and location of operations being conducted over a 3 year period.
- The strategic approach to managing expected grass fuels, the carry over prescribed burns and the completion of repairs to the strategic access network following the heavy rains in late 2010.
- The planned increase in the number of prevention fuel management activities, particularly slashing and prescribed burning.
- The planned prescribed burns at Tuggeranong Hill, Mugga Mugga, Coleman Ridge, Aranda, Bruce Ridge and Mt Ainslie to protect urban assets.
- The planned prescribed burns at Lone Pine, Uriarra and Cotter Catchment.
- The allocation of \$13.5 million to implement the planned BOP activities.
- The carry-over of \$800,000 of funding from 10/11 to implement the 23 prescribed burns that could not be completed due to the wet weather in 2010-11.
- The complexity of many of the planned burns both due to their locations and environmental management requirements.
- The allocation of 19 prescribed burns to the RFS volunteer brigades.
- The significant emphasis on training activities including a detailed breakdown of the type of training to be conducted over the year.
- The planned completion of upgrades to the Mt Franklin Road and Cotter Hut Roads – following the protracted approval process.
- The construction of 3 new helipads to improve access to remote fires in Namadgi NP.
- The significant allocation (\$850,000) to enable the development of an asset protection zone around the new suburb of Coombs in the Molonglo Valley.
- The extended employment of seasonal firefighters (46 weeks) to assist with implementation of planned prevention operations.
- The significant allocation (482 person days) to planning and research to ensure this extremely complex program can be implemented.

[Neil Cooper to provide update on the outcome of proceedings in the Civil Litigation case](#)

NC Advised he hadn't received this information yet

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**Agenda item:** 4.0 – Correspondence

**Presenter:** Kevin Jeffery

**Incoming:**

Nil

**Outgoing:**

Email to Commissioner and ACT Rural Fire Service Chief Officer on recommendations for Bushfire Season 2011

Letter to Commissioner re ACT Bushfire Council Comments on 2011-2012 TAMS BOP

**Action items**

**Nil**

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**Agenda item:** 5.0 – 2011 Ecological Society of Australia medal 2011

**Presenter:** Kevin Jeffery

**Discussion:**

Council moved a note of Congratulations to Malcolm Gill on being the recipient of this year's Ecological Society of Australia Gold medal.

## Action items

Nil

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**Agenda item:** 6.0 Briefing on PCS restructure

**Presenter:** Jim Corrigan  
Ross Burden

### Discussion:

Jim Corrigan briefed Council on the proposed restructure. SK tabled a possible conflict of interest which was noted. JC explained the processes behind the initiation, explaining that treasury had employed consultants to review the efficiency of PCL. They have struggled to come in under budget and are looking at doing more with what they have got. The contractors responded with recommendations that have triggered this restructure.

He tabled the proposed structure format for council to see and advised that they were currently considering staff comments. He advised that the implementation of the revised structure will take place in phases, taking into consideration seasonal issues.

MiL raised concerns regarding the proposed splitting up of the Fire management, Fire Operations and Liaison. He stated he feels they shouldn't be divorced and having two managers could go different ways. He suggested the SBMP could go out the window if community liaison isn't directly involved.

Council discussed the importance of the SBMP and ongoing dialogue between stakeholders. CG explained that it was important that feedback was taken into account, and respect given on this. She explained there needs to be a transparency in the planning of these burns and it is something that she feels is at risk if the Fire management Unit is divided.

CG discussed the strong community consultation around the SBMP, and the efficient processes currently in place for groups to raise concerns and have strong involvement. She discussed the response from the Fire management Unit and the process they follow to discuss in depth issues and events of HR burns, and provide effective and scientifically sound feedback. She raised concerns that there is a level of cohesiveness that could be potentially fractured if the unit is divided.

RB advised Council that the BOP is a planning instrument for the year and is not the tool used for month to month planning. He stated that by having a centralised planning area there would be no crossovers. He stated that the funding and preparedness for the BOP won't change, the resources just need to be spread across parks.

TB suggested that the current structure works well as staff have a single focus and giving them a multiple focus could have a reverse effect.

CG suggested that the bushfire knowledge needs to be retained to prepare and implement the BOP.

TB questioned JC regarding whether the consultants who engaged in the review had bushfire experience stating that formal fire enquiries recommend integrated fire units and suggested that the unit will water down by default.

JC stated that there was a focus on improving in the planning across the area and MiL responded that with modern technology, planners would be able to communicate from different areas and manage conflicts and crossovers without separating.

Council questioned JC about the staff loss of the proposed structure and he responded that there would actually be an increase by one, and probably at an A level. CG enquired about the merit for selection processes and JG replied that they knew their staff well enough to consider filling positions.

Council then thanked JC and RB for the opportunity to get more insight on the restructure.

## Action items

Nil

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**Agenda item:** 7.0 Annual Report to Minister

**Presenter:**

### Discussion:

Council decided that the annual report will be sent to members and discussed via email

## Action items

**KJ to send out last year's preparedness report to Council**

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**Agenda item:** 8.0 – Other Business

**Presenter:**

**Discussion: 8.1**

NC advised Council that he prepares a fire updates and will add Council to the list of recipients when this goes out. He also updated Council on the BOP results for the 2010/2011 Season. He stated that Incident planned to total area had been completed but there were some issues around how to report these. He advised that burns were being completed successfully.

He also updated Council on the vehicle locaters stating that they will be fitting them into all the vehicles. He stated there had been concerns regarding the privacy raised but the safety act should override these.

He informed Council of the pre season dates and ran through some of the topics that will be covered.

**Action items**

**NC to add BFC to recipient list for fire updates**

**NC To send out details of Pre Season sessions to Council**

**Discussion: 8.2**

TF enquired about the Park wood recycling plant fire. AS stated that it burnt for three and a half days and the rural Fire Service supported Fire Brigade in their efforts to extinguish the fire.

**Discussion: 8.3**

AS presented Council with a copy of Val Jeffery's interview in the Canberra Times. He expressed extreme disappointment that a member would do this stating that these comments had never been expressed in the forums provided, and the other Captains and Group Officers stated they do not support the comments made and the way in which they were made.

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## ***Other Information***

**Next Meeting:** 1600 5 October 2011, ESA Headquarters.