



**ACT Bushfire Council Meeting  
Minutes**

Wednesday 5 June 2019

4pm – 7pm

ESA Headquarters  
Black Mountain Meeting Room

<b>Attendees:</b>		
<b>Chair:</b>	Sarah Ryan, ACT Bushfire Council	
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Lynda Scanes	
<b>Council Members</b> Natarsha Carney Tony Bartlett Marion Leiba Margaret Moreton Jeremy Watson Kylie Coe	<b>Officials</b> Georgina Whelan, Acting Commissioner, Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Daniel Iglesias, Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service, Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (PCS, EPSDD) Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS), ESA	<b>Invited Guests</b> Fiona Amundson, Manager Community Engagement Kaylee Rutland, Manager, Emergency Media & Broadcasting Services
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mark Brown, Steve Angus, David Snell, Bhiemie Williamson and Cathy Parsons	

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1	Acknowledgement of country	Presenter:	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 performance checklist	Presenter:	Chair
	The Chair welcomed all meeting and apologies were noted.		
3	Declarations of interest	Presenter:	Chair
	No declarations of conflict of interest were received.		
4	Acceptance of minutes from the 1 May 2019 meeting	Presenter:	Chair
	Council requested and supplied a few additional words at agenda 7.1 and the draft minutes from 1 May 2019 were then accepted as a true and accurate account of the meeting.		
5	Review action list – attached to minutes	Presenter:	Chair

	The Council reviewed the outstanding action items and noted they were either complete, not yet due or covered in the meeting agenda.		
<b>6</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	<p>Correspondence for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Incoming - EM Professor Ian Falconer AO on behalf of Conservation Council regarding Molonglo Valley land release objection. The Chair highlighted she is waiting for ESA to provide input before Council sends a response.</li> </ul> <p>Council discussed their role in new developments and land release within the ACT.</p>		
	<b>Action:</b> ESA to provide input before Council sends a response.		
<b>7</b>	<b>Report on activities attended on behalf of Council since the last meeting</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	The Chair advised the last SBMPv4 Planning Committee Meeting was cancelled as the document was still in its community consultation phase. The CO ACTRFS advised he would provide an update on progress at agenda item 11.		
<b>8</b>	<b>Update on action taken against Morgan Review</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>EPSDD</b>
	Morgan Review Recommendations A paper was tabled to address a pending action EPSDD. – ESA Initiatives to improve Bushfire Related Operational Management in the ACT. The paper reported on the recommendations and actions taken against the Moran Review into the Potter’s Hill Fire. The Branch Manager PCS and CO ACTRFS provided an update of progress to each of the recommendations.		
<b>9</b>	<b>Items from the ACTBFC 2019 Business Plan</b>	<b>Presenters:</b>	<b>ESA and EPSDD</b>
	<p><b>Presentations</b> – Objective 9 – A community that is prepared for bushfires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Education/Engagement activities over the bushfire season presentation by the ESA Manager Community Engagement <p>The presentation provided an overview of Community Education and Engagement activities over the 2018-19 Bushfire Season. The CBR Be Ready Campaign kicked off the season with ESA (ACTRFS and ACTSES) personnel door knocking 5000 properties in identified high bushfire risk areas of the ACT. The CBR Be Ready campaign allows ESA to engage face to face with the Canberra community to advise residents of their bushfire risk level and what they should be doing to prepare, including completing and practicing their Bushfire Survival Plan.</p> <p>During the Pierces Creek Fire, over 1400 Tuggeranong residents were provided with information via door knocking. Volunteers provided the community with information at a pop up stand at the Tuggeranong Hyperdome.</p> <p>The ESA Open Day showcases the emergency services provided to the Canberra community, and assists residents understand risk and how to be prepared for emergencies. Last year saw approximately 7500 members of the community attend the event. The Royal Canberra Show was supported by all ESA Services and ACTRFS volunteers assisted community members to complete bushfire survival plans. Brigades also attended Embassy presentations, career days, school visits and fetes. Future community education and engagement planning will be informed by the SBMP consultation, community engagement during incidents and a pilot training package.</p> </li> <li>• ESA Media and Public Information preparation for 2018-19 Bushfire Season Presentation by the ESA Director, Emergency Media &amp; Broadcasting Services</li> </ul>		

	<p>The presentation provided an overview of what ESA is responsible for, emergency warnings and alerts, media relations to encourage media outlets to share ESA warnings, ESA social media channels (Facebook and Twitter), linking to Whole of ACT Government Communications, AFAC Warnings Advisory Group and linking in with NSW RFS.</p> <p>ESA media issued 88 alerts during the 2018-19 Bushfire Season. The presentation provided a breakdown of types of alerts, media alerts examples. Media outlets mentioned bushfire education, warnings and updates more than 400 times during the bushfire season. Social media statistics were provided, Whole of Government messaging via the 'Our Canberra Newsletter and three posts on the ACT Government social media. Planning has commenced for ACT to link to the NSW RFS 'Fires Near Me' app. A review of the effectiveness of bushfire alerts and warnings and more education around bushfire warnings.</p> <p>Council thanked the team for the very informative presentations.</p>
	<p><b>Action 190605-09.01:</b> Secretariat to email the website links for Council to view videos of the NSW RFS Bushfire Campaign, the ACT seasonal launch of the CBR Be Ready Campaign 'It's been 15 years', the 'Complacency can kill' campaign, and ESA Open Day.</p>
	<p>Objective 8 – Adaptive management to provide continuous improvement in bushfire management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPSDD ecological monitoring and fuel load research and analysis</li> </ul> <p>Two reports on ecological monitoring of bushfire management activities on EPSDD lands were taken as read.</p> <p>The <b>fuel load research and analysis</b> report by the Fire, Forests and Roads branch of PCS highlighted:</p> <p>The program of bushfire fuel load research and analysis is supported by research partnerships established through the BNHCRC, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Rural Fire Service and VIC Country Fire Authority. The five elements of active research and analysis were explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ fire severity assessments of prescribed burns and wildfires</li> <li>○ fuel mapping</li> <li>○ fuel moisture content mapping</li> <li>○ dead fuel moisture content forecasting</li> <li>○ grass curing assessments</li> </ul> <p>Maps were provided to demonstrate new capability that has been developed in the past five years.</p> <p>The <b>ecological monitoring</b> report by Conservation Research branch of PCS highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ annual prescribed burn monitoring program including ongoing ecological input to planning and implementation of fuel management on EPSDD managed lands</li> <li>○ monitoring activities and ecological advice to address ecological values in fire management</li> <li>○ monitoring results detailing ecological outcomes of fuel management activities</li> </ul> <p>Planning is underway to identify the ecological monitoring priorities for SBMPv4 and the 2019-29 Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP).</p>
	<p>Objective 12 – The community and government recover from the effects of bushfires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An update of the review of the ACT Recovery Plan</li> </ul> <p>The report and draft ACT Recovery Emergency Sub-Plan 2019 was taken as read. The Council was advised that the draft ACT Recovery Emergency Sub-Plan 2019 was prepared by the Security and Emergency Branch in accordance with section 148 of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i>.</p> <p>The Plan details the arrangements needed to facilitate successful relief and recovery from the impacts of emergencies in the ACT and aims to assist agencies involved in recovery to prepare for, coordinate and undertake activities aimed at successfully recovering from the impacts of an emergency. The Plan reflects the current thinking nationally with regards to how to recover from the impacts of an emergency upon the community. The Plan outlines the ACT Principles for Emergency Recovery and establishes the ACT Recovery Committee. The draft Plan is due to be presented to SEMSOG at their meeting of 12 June 2019.</p>

	Council asked about what role it plays in the Draft ACT Recovery Plan and 'who owns the ACT Recovery Plan'. The CO ACTRFS advised he would seek further clarification and provide information out of session.		
	<b>Action: 190605 – 9.02</b> Secretariat to carry over the Plantation Forest Management in the ACT section to July <b>Action: 190605 – 9.03</b> The Chief Officer to seek further clarification about ownership of the ACT Recovery Plan		
<b>10</b>	<b>Update Draft Regional Fire Management Plan</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>EPSDD</b>
	Significant work has gone into drafting the RFMP and it is nearing completion. PCS has continued to meet with a number of key stakeholders with the focus on the coordination of comments received during the SBMPv4 Public Consultation process. A Council member inquired about his request for a supporting narrative to the maps. The Executive Branch Manager, PCS advised he would provide an update out of session.		
	<b>Action: 190605-10</b> The Executive Branch Manager PCS to provide the documentation that supports the RFMP maps		
<b>11</b>	<b>Strategic Bushfire Management Plan</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>CO ACTRFS</b>
	<p>The CO ACTRFS provided an update to the draft SBMP that is still out for the statutory public consultation process. This period will officially close on 25 June 2019.</p> <p>Council stated their concern that some of their feedback on the Plan had not been included in the draft that was on the ESA public website. The CO ACTRFS advised that further revisions have continued on the Plan since it was released. The A/g Project Manager, SBMP Version 4 is currently on leave but returns to work on Tuesday 11 June 2019 when the draft SBMPv4 will be emailed to Council for further review. If Council members have any concerns, the Acting Commissioner stated she would hold an extraordinary meeting with Council to discuss their input into the latest version of the Plan. Due to the tight timeframe to the Cabinet process, a meeting could be scheduled later next week if Council thinks it is necessary. The writing team would be in attendance to provide explanation of why some of Council feedback did not go into the draft Plan, or was reworded etc.</p> <p>The CO ACTRFS advised that Richie Allan, a well-known local Indigenous artist has been commissioned to do a painting for the cover of SBMPv4.</p>		
	<b>Action:</b> Email the most up to date draft SBMPv4 to Bushfire Council by 11 June 2019		
<b>11a</b>	<b>Paper tabled: Effectiveness of ACT firefighting personnel and resources</b> The CO ACTRFS presented a recent analysis of the distance and area the three largest bushfires of last season would have been expected to spread if not extinguished when they were. PCS carried out the modelling using the Phoenix RapidFire model, and the analysis was requested in response to Council asking for more evaluation of the effectiveness of actions in the SBMP. The maps demonstrated that early detection and suppression efforts at each fire, in combination with SIG technology, aviation support, trained and resourced personnel and good access prevented substantial fire spread.  Council thanked the CO ACTRFS and EPSDD Staff for their input to the report and presentation.		
<b>12</b>	<b>Officials' Reports</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Officials</b>
	Officials' reports for noting: <b>EPSDD PCS Report</b> The report was taken as read. The following topics were highlighted in the report:		

- Prescribed Burning program – May provided opportunity to undertake a large proportion of the 41 prescribed burns listed in the 2018- 2019 Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP), to date 30 have been delivered or assessed as not required.
- A large complex and extremely difficult prescribed burn in the Brandy Flat was successfully delivered. PCS conducted an After Action Review on the Brandy Flat burn, given its high ecological importance, and key learnings will be continue to be used in the future. Several cultural burns are ready to go with all planning and approvals in place, these may be implemented at any time the weather allows. PCS staff have commenced post burn severity mapping on large rural burns to determine the level of burn and area achieved.
- PCS continue to work very closely with and provide resources and assistance to NSWNPWS in planning and delivering several of their larger burns in the forests adjoining the ACT on the north-western border.
- Regional Fire Management Plans (RFMP) – work continues with the RFMP – PCS has continued to meet with a number of key stakeholders with focus now on the coordination of comments received. A presentation on the final RFMP to BFC is scheduled for the 7 August 2019 meeting.
- Residual Risk – The NSWNPWS in consultation with ACTPCS, is implementing the same residual risk assessment to determine priority areas for fuel control across NSWNPWS managed areas. The mapping and planning for fire management activities in the areas surrounding the ACT will now be managed on a 10 year plan as opposed to the current 3 year plan.
- The PCS Tanker P14 replacement will be ready for the 2019-20 fire season.
- Dr Adam Leavesley will be representing Australia at the 4th Global Wildfire Information System meeting to be held in Rome in October this year. In addition Adam has been asked to assist with the development of the programme and agenda for the meeting.
- AFAC nominated Neil Cooper to undertake an external review of Fire and Emergency Management New Zealand (FENZ) following the February 2019 significant wildfire near Nelson. The review will examine FENZ’s performance and operating procedures as the basis for continual improvement.
- PCS hosted the Director General Northern Forestry Centre Canada and Executive Director Canadian Interagency Fire Centre) in early May. Opportunities to have some joint meetings with the CSIRO and the Fenner School enabled some good discussion on research needs and directions and ways in which the countries can further work together.
- PCS are currently well advanced in the development of the 2018/19 BOP - identified jobs are currently with the Conservation and Research area for initial comments. The draft is scheduled to be presented to the BFC meeting at the August meeting. The document will be different to other BOPs in that its development falls in the gap between RFMPs and the new SBMP.

### **Commissioner’s Report**

The Acting Commissioner provided a summary of her service history with the Australian Defence Force, Her appointment will continue as the head of ESA until the recruitment process for a permanent replacement is completed.

The Commissioner’s report, the May 2019 ESA Snapshot and the ESA Strategic Plan were taken as read.

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- 2019-20 ACT Budget investment to the ESA that includes:
  - Modernised change areas for ACT Rural Fire Service Hall Brigade
  - Upgraded workspaces for the Hume Helibase
  - Contract of a third helicopter during the bushfire season
  - Two new recruitment colleges for an additional 36 ACT Fire 7 Rescue firefighters
  - Two new combined ACT Ambulance Service and ACT Fire & Rescue stations for the City and Molonglo Valley
  - Aerial platform for the ACT Fire & Rescue fleet
  - Upgrade to the ACT State Emergency Service Majura Unit facility
  - A member from each of the ESA Services received the ACT Community Protection Medal at a Ceremony at the Arboretum on Tuesday 28 May 2019.

- Whole of Agency high level planning has commenced for the 2019-20 Pre-season Preparedness activities. This will ensure the ESA is well placed for the upcoming bushfire and storm season and is continuing to build collaborative relationships between ACTSES and ACTRFS. There will be some changes in the way ESA operates its volunteer management,, using a more contemporary approach in managing volunteers who are the backbone of ESA and becoming increasingly important as a capability in the logistics area and community fire units.. Forward work plans will clearly articulate priorities and how they will be achieved and demonstrated.

**Chief Officer ACTRFS Report**

The report was taken as read.

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- The draft SBMP is now out for the statutory public consultation which closes 25 June 2019.
- The ESA 5 year strategic plan includes a number of ACTRFS deliverables for 2019.
- The RFS team participated in a field trip that included a visit to Mt Tennant fire tower followed by a planning afternoon.
- On 11 May the RFS held a breakfast BBQ for the whole service and photos, approximately 150 members and 30 vehicles were in attendance.
- The Community Protection Team attended the International Fire Behaviour and Fuels Conference 30 May to 3 June 2019 in Sydney.
- BOP audits and Farm FireWise are continuing.
- The Emergency Services Agency Open Day is scheduled for 3 November 2019
- ACT Fire and Rescue Winter Safety campaign commenced on 31 May 2019
- 21 new members have been trained and welcomed into the Service since the beginning of the year
- 22 members participated in the first Bush Firefighter (B/F) June course
- ACTRFS Long Service Awards presentation night is scheduled for 5 July 2019

Council was provided with a very detailed 2018-19 Report from the ACTRFS Operations Team.

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- Overview of the predictions for a dangerous fire season
- Weather
- The close working relationship between ACTRFS and ACTSES and the multiple incidents where cross-assistance was provided
- The refresh of the four fire towers
- Aviation
- Pre identified Incident Management Team’s consisting of members from ESA and PCS
- RAFT deployment
- Statistics regarding interstate and international deployments
- Local incidents including the Corin Dam Fire, Pierces Creek Fire, Mount Gingera and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
- New radios, fleet and PPC
- Prescribed burns

Council congratulated the Manager ACTRFS Operations and Team for the informative 2018-19 report.

<b>13</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	<p>There were no agenda items for general business.</p> <p>The Chair advised there were no EOI’s received from BFC members to attend the upcoming AFAC Conference and she will be attending.</p>		

<b>14</b>	<b>Review and adoption of action items from this meeting</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	Action items were reviewed and agreed to and put in the action table.		
<b>15</b>	<b>Next meeting 3 July 2019</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	Margaret Moreton advised she will be an apology for the July meeting.		
<b>13</b>	<b>In camera meeting if required</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	Not required.		
<b>14</b>	<b>Council's performance checklist report</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Council</b>
	A Council members completed the checklist. No issues to report.		

**ACTION ITEMS – ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL**

Action Items (OPEN)			at 5 June 2019	
Ref	ACTION	DUE	ACTION OFFICER	STATUS UPDATE
190206-09-9.2	CO ACTRFS to arrange a more user friendly process for Council to access papers	3 July 2019	CO ACTRFS	<b>Pending</b>
190605-06	ESA to provide input before Council sends a response to the Conservation Council re: Molonglo Valley land release objection	ASAP	ED Risk & Planning	
190605-09.01	Email the website links for Council to view videos of the NSWRFs Bushfire Campaign, the ACT seasonal launch of the CBR Be Ready Campaign 'It's been 15 years', the 'Complacency can kill' campaign, and ESA Open Day.	11 June 2019	Secretariat	
190605 – 9.02	Secretariat to carry over the Plantation Forest Management in the ACT section to July	11 June 2019	Secretariat	
190605 – 9.03	The Chief Officer to seek further clarification about ownership of the ACT Recovery Plan	11 June 2019	CO ACTRFS	
190605 – 10	Provide the documentation that supports the RFMP maps	11 June 2019	Executive Branch Manager PCS	
190605 – 11	Email the most up to date draft SBMPv4 to Bushfire Council	11 June 2019	CO ACTRFS	



Ref Number	Actions Items (CLOSED)	5 June 2019
2018	Find a replacement for the vacant Bushfire Council Member	CLOSED
1808-04	EPSDD to provide an update on action taken against Morgan Review table.	CLOSED
1811-08	Secretariat to distribute closure reports to ACT BFC out of session. ACT BFC to provide endorsement within one week of receiving the SBMPv3 closure reports.	CLOSED
181205-08	Amended 190206 - Provide Council with the formal report on all the Interstate deployments once it has been finalised.	CLOSED
190501-07-7.1	Provide statistics on fire attendance, fire data and phoenix modelling.	CLOSED
190501-08-1.1	CO ACTRFS to discuss the use of the concept and phrase 'residual risk' in the SBMPv4 with the ED PCS EPSDD out of session.	CLOSED
190501-09-9.1	A report from ACTRFS re the EPSDD BOP audit to be added to the ACT BFC Business Plan for August or September 2019 A copy of the quarterly BOP report to be circulated by the Secretariat out of session.	CLOSED CLOSED