



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting 3: **Wednesday 4pm to 7pm, 3 June 2020**

WEBEX Invitation

9 Amberley Avenue, FAIRBAIRN ACT 2609

Members

Sarah Ryan – Chair, ACT Bushfire Council
Natarsha Jakubaszek – Deputy Chair, ACT Bushfire Council
Tony Bartlett – Member
Steve Angus – Member
Margaret Moreton – Member
Cathy Parsons – Member
Bhiamie Williamson – Member
Marion Leiba – Member
David Snell – Member
Kylie Coe – Member
Jeremy Watson – Member
Nick Lhuede – Member

Invited Guest(s):

Greg Potts, Assistant Director, ACTRFS Community Bushfire Protection (Presenter)

Apologies: Neil Cooper, Ray Johnson, Rohan Scott and Neil Cooper – Justin Foley apologised that he would be late and arrived at 6pm

Officials

Georgeina Whelan – ESA Commissioner
Ray Johnson, Deputy Commissioner
Greg Potts (Proxy) – A/g Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service
Chris Zeitlhofer – A/g Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue
Justin Foley, A/g Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

Meeting Information

Delegated Authority under the *Emergencies Act 2004*
Call-In Number: 02 6207 7160

Secretariat:

Lynda Scanes

Minutes

Item	Presenter
1. Acknowledgement of country	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 the performance checklist)	Chair
The Chair welcomed all to the WebEx meeting and apologies were noted. The Chair stated Council Members looked forward to meeting the new Deputy Commissioner at the July meeting.	
3. Declarations of interest	Chair
No conflicts of Interest were reported by Council Members.	
4. Acceptance of minutes and actions from previous meeting	Chair
The minutes from 6 May 2020 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Actions were reviewed and updated as per Appendix A.	

5. Correspondence for noting**Chair**

Nil.

6. Report on activities attended on behalf of Council since the last meeting**Chair**

A SBMP Governance Committee Meeting is scheduled 10 June 2020.

7. Presentation on the current status of the Bushfire Management Standards (including an ACT & NSW comparison) and the review of Fire Management Zones**Greg Potts**

The meeting papers provided Council with an understanding of the Bushfire Management Standards and was taken as read. Mr Potts informed Council that ESA is undertaking a review of the Strategic Bushfire Management Zones as part of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. The review focuses on the inner and outer Asset Protection Zones. It is informed by improved mapping of the vegetation communities on the urban interface, inclusion of recent urban development and previous planning and zoning decisions. Community consultation will be undertaken in conjunction with community consultation for the Regional Fire Management Plan. The review and new zones are scheduled to be finalised by November 2020.

A case study paper comparing the ACT Bushfire Management Standards with the NSW RFS requirements, and a presentation on Bushfire Attack Levels were provided for information.

Council queried if there are plans to conduct a regular ongoing review for continual improvement of the Fire Management Zone Mapping. Mr Potts advised the triggers for review may come from the Utilities, for example APZs around utility assets, and that the current review process will define the ongoing review of the zone mapping.

Accessing the ACTMapi layer containing the asset management zones will be dealt with out of session for those members having difficulty in accessing them.

Council thanked Mr Potts for the meeting report and presentation.

8. Recent media articles**Chair**

The Chair introduced the item by requesting the Commissioner to provide a summary in relation to the recent media attention.

In response, the Commissioner explained the media articles were in relation to a leaked document which was part of the After-Action Review (AAR). The Commissioner explained the three phases of the AAR process and advised Council that it would be provided with the final draft report.

Provide Council with a copy of the draft After Action Review Report and add the topic to the July Agenda

9. SBMP Focus ObjectivesPresentation

Objective 3. A community that is prepared for bushfires

The presentation provided an overview of ESA Public Information and Engagement activities for the 2019-2020 Bushfire Season. Statistics were provided on face to face engagement, online and campaign influence, alerts and warnings and the house doorknock campaign. Community engagement activities included six community meetings at Tharwa, Uriarra and Lanyon. Community pop-up stands were conducted at all the major and some of the smaller shopping centres. The presentation provided data of online presence, social media, website traffic, ACTMapi usage and advertising campaigns. The storm response involved community engagement and training, social media post and news alerts.

Ms Rutland advised there is a significant package of work that will be implemented in the next financial year, before the 2020-21 bushfire season. The key projects include: reviewing the bushfire survival plan, developing a new bushfire awareness campaign, upgrading the ESA Media room, updating the Bush and

Grass Fire Messaging Protocol, accrediting more ACT Public Information Officers, developing a new media accreditation package and developing a bushfire warnings app for the ACT similar to NSW Fires Near Me.

This large package of work has been further detailed in a series of Action Description forms which have been provided to the ACTRFS Chief Officer for approval.

Key changes include a review of the ACT bushfire warnings templates, the ESA website upgrade and increased use of social media in community engagement.

The ESA has maintained MOUS with all media partners. The MOUs were all resigned in the 2019-20 financial year.

The ESA has steadily increased the use of digital platforms to engage with the community as well as to complement the face-to-face engagement delivered.

In 2014 ESA undertook a community benchmark survey to better understand social behaviour in relation to emergency preparedness. This research identified a high level of community complacency in preparing for bushfire.

In 2020, following the ACT bushfires, the ESA undertook another community survey and observed an improvement in community attitude towards preparing for bushfire.

The ESA has captured all public information and engagement activity undertaken during the 2020 bushfire season and information was provided at the meeting.

Council thanked Ms Rutland for the informative meeting report and presentation.

Meeting Report

Objective 9. Adaptive management of current and future bushfire risks

Council pointed out that the meeting paper provided did not sufficiently answer the questions it had asked for this objective. Council requested a re-presentation of this objective at a later date as the information was not adequately provided to Council.

The Commissioner advised that ESA is the lead agency for delivery of the SBMP which is a whole of Government plan. She spoke about the complexity and challenges in delivering the actions that require cross directorate buy-in.

The Commissioner requested Council provide advice on how they can support the ESA to get the uptake required from external participants who have responsibility to work collaboratively on actions in the SBMP.

The Commissioner stated she would facilitate meetings pre and post Council Meetings with key stakeholders to provide Council access with the information they have requested in line with their business plan. The Commissioner, CO ACTRFS and Chair agreed to discuss this action out of session.

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10. Standing Item: Update on the Draft Regional Fire Management Plan

EPSDD

Rolled into EPSDD report.

11. Standing Item- Report from the SBMP Governance Committee

Secretariat

SBMP action descriptions are either drafted or in the process of being drafted for the next Governance Committee Meeting scheduled for 10 June 2020.

Draft Action Descriptions have been received from Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. A meeting has occurred with EPSDD Environment and Planning to establish who should be the Action Officer for each Action of the SBMP that

they lead the delivery. Most of the remaining unfinished Action Descriptions belong to ESA.

12. Officials' reports for noting:

Officials

12.1 EPSDD Report

EPSDD

The report was taken as read. A verbal briefing highlighted the 2019-20 Bushfire Operational Plan delivery and the fact that some work has constraints due to the COVID-19 social distancing rules. BOP crews are working on the Orroral opening up of the fire trails and tracks. The road maintenance crews are working on repairing the road damage caused by the fire and storm. The prescribed burning program continues with a burn at Pierces Creek last week. The Regional Fire Management Plan is ongoing with PCS working with Scott Seymour at ESA on the asset protection zones. The RFMP is due to be finalised for November so it can be used to develop the 2021-22 BOP.

The official launch of the AFAC Prescribed Burning in Australia book occurred on 28 May 2020. Adam Leavesley was the leading Editor and Bushfire Council Members will be provided with copies of the book when they arrive.

PCS is sponsoring a 3-day national fire forum commencing on 23 June 2020.

The request for the Denman Prospect fire modelling will be available for the July Bushfire Council Meeting.

12.2 Commissioner's Report

Commissioner

The report was taken as read. A verbal briefing highlighted that Mr Ray Johnson has commenced as the ESA Deputy Commissioner. His former role was Chief Police Officer for the ACT. Mr Johnson will be responsible for assisting the ESA Commissioner in advising the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on the prevention, preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies; leading a review of the Whole of Government's response to the 2019-20 bushfire season; and providing strategic leadership for ESA enabling services including People and Culture, Finance, and Governance and Logistics.

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements the Public hearings will be conducted in two phases during late May and June 2020. The Commissioner reported that she had recently addressed the review and that the role of Bushfire Council had been mentioned.

Secretariat to send Council the relevant transcripts of the Royal Commission hearings when they are available and add to the July Agenda.

12.3 Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service Report

Greg Potts

The report was taken as read. The report highlighted the progress of the 2020-21 Bushfire Season Preparations. The Operations team is currently conducting the annual vehicle servicing, brigade audits and small equipment servicing. The Membership and Training team are modifying course delivery methods due to COVID 19 restrictions. Hopefully they will be eased soon, and members can resume their normal routines. Many courses are being added to the annual training calendar. The Community Protection team are conducting audits and visiting many landholders to review Farm FireWise plans. Community engagement and education is reviewing current material and starting to schedule community engagement activities leading up to the start of the next bushfire season.

Greg Potts to arrange a meeting report on Farm Fire Wise (FFW) in the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ) with data and an explanation of the constraints to meeting the target of 100%.

13. Standing item – ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan

Chair

Council Members who have carriage of SBMP Objectives for discussion at the July and August meetings to assemble their questions for presenters.

14. Any other business

Chair

The Chair suggested that restrictions allowing, she and any members whose internet connections precluded

them meeting successful on Webex would meet onsite at ESA HQ for the July 2020 Bushfire Council Meeting.

15. Review and adoption of action items from this meeting – out of session. **Chair**

16. In camera meeting if required - No **Chair**

17. Council's performance checklist - completed **Chair**

18. Close **Chair**

The meeting concluded at 7.05pm

Next meeting: 4pm, 1 July 2020

DRAFT

Appendix A

ACTION ITEMS – ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL

Action Items (OPEN)			at 3 June 2020	
Ref	ACTION	DUE	ACTION OFFICER	STATUS UPDATE
20191002-2	Documents from June to December 2018 to be put on SharePoint 20200603-04 Action: Arrange ACT Government login for all Bushfire Council Members to access meeting papers and presentations on ESA G Drive	1 July 2020	Commissioner	
200304-13	ESA to provide formal advice on public comment conflict of interest for Council members.	1 July 2020	ESA	In progress
20200406-07	The BFC Chair to draft a response to the Minister for Police and Emergency Service (MPES) seeking clarification to his response to the recommendations in Council's 2018-19 Bushfire Season Preparedness Report. 20200603-05 Action: Secretariat to add an agenda item to the July meeting agenda re the Minister's response	1 July 2020	Chair Secretariat	In progress
20200406-08 (1)	The BFC Chair to write to EPSDD Planning to request an update on where the Cabinet Submission is up to in relation to AS 3959:2018 being incorporated into the ACT Territory Plan and to request that a briefing be provided to Council on the agreements with developers on the fire protection measures to be applied at the final western boundaries of the suburbs of Denman Prospect and Whitlam, including the expected locations of edge roads and asset protection zones and the details of the proposed thinning of the red stringybark forest.	1 July 2020	Chair	

20200406-08 (3)	Neil Cooper to arrange a Phoenix model analysis of the likely impacts on Denman Prospect from a bushfire burning through the forest blocks located to its west, following discussions with Tony Bartlett and Nick Lhuede on the specific modelling requirements.	1 July 2020	Neil Cooper	Presentation to be added to the July Meeting Agenda
20200406-13	The CO ACTRFS to seek further advice in relation to making BFC reports into the level of bushfire preparedness (each bushfire season) that are provided to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services be publicly available on the ESA website; including any restrictions on reports from recent years.	1 July 2020	Commissioner and CO ACTRFS	Provide a Capability Statement with resourcing level to Council annually
20200603-8	Provide Council with a copy of the draft After Action Review Report and add to the July Agenda	1 July 2020	Commissioner	
20200603-9	Facilitate meetings pre and post Council Meetings with key stakeholders to provide Council access with the information they have requested in line with their business plan. The Commissioner, CO ACTRFS and Chair to discuss the outcome out of session.	1 July 2020	Commissioner	
20200603-12.2	Send Council the relevant transcripts of the Royal Commission hearings when they are available and add to the July Agenda.	1 July 2020	Secretariat	
20200603-12.3	Greg Potts to arrange a meeting report on Farm Fire Wise (FFW) in the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ) with data and an explanation of the constraints to meeting the target of 100%.	1 July 2020	Greg Potts	

Action Items (CLOSED)**at 3 June 2020**

Ref	
20191204-9	ESA to advise Council if they provided comment on the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan, and if so, provide a copy of those comments to Council.
200304-10	EPSDD PCS to provide the Secretariat with an electronic version of the BOP Quarterly Report to be circulated to Council members out of session.
20200406-08 (2)	Secretariat to add to the June BFC Business Plan a presentation by Greg Potts and Scott Seymour on the current status of the Bushfire Management Standards (including an ACT & NSW comparison) and the review of Fire Management Zones. Greg Potts undertook to provide his paper/presentation prior to the meeting.
20200406-08 (4)	Secretariat to send the ACT Bushfire Management Standards to Council Members.
20200406-08 (5)	After each BFC meeting, a short meeting between the CO ACTRFS the Council members whose focus objectives are in the Business Plan two months ahead will be held to discuss and agree on the nature of the information that BFC would like presented at that meeting.
20200406- 12	Secretariat to update the BFC Business Plan to reflect requests for information arising from the May meeting and to add Nick Lhuede as a Council member who will focus on objectives 3, 7, 8 11 of the SBMP version 4.
20200406-14 (1)	Secretariat to ensure the WebEx meeting invite and details is sent out to all Council Member and Officials.
20200406-14 (2)	The Chair, David Snell and Tony Bartlett to review the section in the BFC Terms of Reference that requires that after a new SBMP is made the Commissioner must conduct an assessment of the adequacy of the resources to deliver the Plan and must give that assessment to the BFC and the Minister; and then provide a recommendation from BFC to the Commissioner and the CO ACTRFS.