



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL (BFC)

5 FEBRUARY 2009

**ACTRFS HEADQUARTERS
4 POINT COOK AVENUE
FAIRBAIRN ACT**

AGENDA ITEM: 1- 5

DATE: 5th February 2009 1600-1900 Hrs

LOCATION: Fairbairn ASOC

Meeting Opened

1. Welcome by Chairman

Kevin Jeffery opened the meeting at 4:13.

2. Attendees/ Apologies:

Brian Parry (*Deputy Commissioner*)
Tim McGuffog (*Deputy Chief Officer*)
Tony Bartlett (*Council Member*)
Tony Fearnside (*Council Member*)
Michael Lonergan (*Council Member*)
Simon Katz (*Council Member*)
Cathy Parsons (*Council Member*)
Marion Leiba (*Council Member*)
Conrad Barr (*ACT Fire Brigade*)
Kaylee McInnes (*Secretariat*)

Apologies Received: Christine Goonrey (*Council Member*), Ken Batt (*Council Member*), Peter Kanowski (*Council Member*), Gregor Manson (*Commissioner*).

Tony Bartlett departed at 5:51pm

Cathy Parsons departed at. 6:48pm

3. Minutes Of the Previous Meeting:

Minutes of the 27th November 2008 meeting tabled. Changes to the minutes to be updated: None.

Minutes Accepted

Moved: Tony Bartlett **Second:** Michael Lonergan

4. Actions Running Sheet:

Tony Bartlett suggested that the BFC's Pre-season Preparedness Assessment also be published on the public web site as it is also a public document.

Some concerns were raised about the repercussions such a document could cause if the media had access to controversial information. This document is provided as considered advice to the Minister and he should determine if it is appropriate that it be made public.

ACTION: Kevin will draft a letter to the Minister seeking his stance on this item.

ACTION: Archiving completed ACTIONS as they are completed.

ACTION: Remove Item 3. Dated Thursday 28 August 2008.

5. Correspondence In/Out:

1. Advice on change of date for BFC meetings – Out and In

2. Appointments to BFC.

BFC FEBRUARY 2009

3. AFAC CEO – Guidelines for CRC rebid. Lonergan, Bartlett, Batt

4. Discussion Paper for New Plan of Management for Tidbinbilla

5. TAMS Monthly BOP report – sent out with agenda.

SOURCE: Tim McGuffog

BFC FEBRUARY 2009

AGENDA ITEM:	6.1	
DATE:	5 th February 2009	1600-1900 Hrs
LOCATION:	Fairbairn ASOC	
SUBJECT:	BFC Meeting Schedule 2009	

BACKGROUND:

As previously agreed and notified by email, members were asked about shifting meetings to first week of the month as opposed to the last week. This was to help expedite production of the minutes.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Most members agreed that this change would suit. Tony Bartlett has however indicated that this schedule conflicts with other meetings and commitments he has on the first Thursday of the month.

DISCUSSION POINTS :

Change BFC to first Wednesday of month. This is still consistent as it follows ROAG on first Tuesday of the month.

RECOMMENDATION :

To reschedule BFC meetings to the first Wednesday of every Month.

SOURCE: Tim McGuffog

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

BFC will now meet on the first Wednesday of the Month at 4pm.

Motion Moved: By All

ACTION REQUIRED:

Kaylee to send out an amended time table for 2009 meetings.

AGENDA ITEM:	6.2	
DATE:	5 th February 2009	1600-1900 Hrs
LOCATION:	Fairbairn ASOC	
SUBJECT:	BFC Agenda and Minutes	

BACKGROUND:

To provide members with some further insight on agenda items, this proposed format has been developed. Initial feedback from the Chairman indicates that this format is more suited to an action orientated meeting, however he felt that the Council minutes still needs to be reported in a verbatim format and reflect discussion and deliberation.

The RFS proposes to adopt this format for agenda item information and management of the ROAG and subcommittee meetings and standardise the process across all agendas.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The format will be used for the February 2009 meeting as a tentative format until a motion is move by Council to accept the new format.

DISCUSSION POINTS :

1. BFC provides feedback on new agenda format.
2. BFC indicates if they wish to maintain the existing format for capturing and reporting of minutes of the meetings.

RECOMMENDATION :

The recommendation has been made to hold this agenda item over until after the draft minutes of this meeting have been assessed.

SOURCE: Tim McGuffog

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

MAL: Would like to thank the secretariat on her current efforts and input into organising meetings and preparing minutes.

Motion Moved: Marion Leiba

Motion Seconded: Michael Lonergan

ACTION REQUIRED:

Council consider the draft minutes and format at their next meeting and determine if it meets their needs.

AGENDA ITEM:	6.3	
DATE:	5 th February 2009	1600-1900 Hrs
LOCATION:	Fairbairn ASOC	
SUBJECT:	Presentation of BFC Coronial/McLeod Recommendations Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Process	

BACKGROUND:

Bob Smith will be sending a copy of the draft report to the Chairman and the RFS by the end of week 30 January for review and comment. He has completed the report and process to the point where he has some outstanding questions still to be finalised and requires the Rural Fire Service and Bushfire Council to establish the initial Risk Profiles against the recommendations of the McLeod and Coroners reports.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Bob was unable to attend the February 5 meeting to present the latest draft report. Tim McGuffog provided an overview of stage one process on behalf on BS and presented Council with a copy of the report for discussion. BFC needs to set and agree on the risk ratings against the recommendations and RFS needs to establish how this will be incorporated into its business management framework.

DISCUSSION POINTS :

TB: Believes Bob has done a good job so far. There are a couple of high level issues. Firstly he refers to the BFC implementing actions and recommendations; this is not correct, TB would like to highlight that we do not implement anything we advise and provide advice. Secondly, BS identifies prioritisation of Risk Categories to support the Risk Management Framework, which was confusing. There are also minor changes that could be made such as abbreviations and sentence structure.

TM: Like TB I have picked up on similar issues. The risk category referred to by TB created some confusion for me as well. TM recommended that the BFC subcommittee reconvenes to establish the risk ratings for all of the outstanding recommendations and from there identify the priority actions that the RFS needs to address. TM is also impressed with the report.

CP: Also had problems deciphering the risk category classification against the recommendations. There are a number of classifications that need to be clarified. CP would like to query BS on his justification of classification.

KJ: Would like to revise Bob's classification against the recommendation to "have a unified command centre", when in fact we don't, as RFS is located in Fairbairn separated from all other Services in Curtin.

RECOMMENDATION :

- TB: Would like to record that the ACT government is moving people out of the Stromlo Depot. Once ESA is in Fairbairn, we will have no capacity on that side of the city to run an incident control centre.
- ML: Would like to note that he will be replying to an e-mail distributed referring to the Bush Fire CRC, and apologises for not doing so earlier. (ML has changed his e-mail address; please send all e-mails to Michael Lonergan at mickl@harboursat.com.au).
- NC: recommended that Council needs to re- evaluate what recommendations they believe have already been implemented.

SOURCE: Tim McGuffog on behalf of Bob Smith

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

KJ suggests having a detailed discussion with BS to gain clarification on the highlighted issues and to finalise stage one of the project. The committee would then work to establish the initial risk profiles against outstanding recommendations and set priorities for RFS implementation.

Motion Moved: By all.

ACTION REQUIRED:

Set up a meeting with Bob Smith with BFC subcommittee: TF, TB, MIL, KJ.

AGENDA ITEM: 6.4

DATE: 5th February 2009 1600-1900 Hrs

LOCATION: Fairbairn ASOC

SUBJECT: Presentation of TAMS Sub-Regional Planning progress

BACKGROUND:

Underlying the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan V2 (SBMPV2) is the development of the Department of Territory Municipal Services Sub-Regional Bushfire Management Plans. This lies between the SBMP (V2) and TAMS' Bushfire Operational Plans (BOP's) and delivers a 3-5 year planning framework on which their BOP's will be formulated.

CURRENT SITUATION:

TAMS are in the process of developing twelve Sub-Regional Plans for the ACT. The first of the twelve is envisaged for draft by mid February and they would like to provide a presentation of this to the Bushfire Council.

DISCUSSION POINTS :

NC. Would like to highlight to Council, the enormous amount of work that goes on behind scenes of the planning process of the Sub-regional plans. At the moment TAMS have the 10 year strategic bushfire management plan, which overarches the fire management policies, guidelines and specifications. Then we have Bush Fire Operational Plans which looks at a 12 month plan. We often have a lot of difficulties when developing the BOP because we don't have this intermediate outlook and so the BOP currently concentrates principally on fire risk, fire danger and hazard reduction.

In managing the whole landscape for fire mitigation and control, TAMS faces many difficulties as there are many variables that need to be considered in preparing plans and implementing actions to prepare for the occurrence of bushfires. NC pointed out the many environmental considerations that need to be considered in planning and implementing hazard reduction burns.

The ACT has not had a consolidated vegetation map until recently. TAMS have recently developed a vegetation map for the whole ACT region. Using this map TAMS have developed vegetation thresholds, (the period of which a vegetation community needs to seed and regenerate). They've come up with ecological targets for key species in the ACT. TAMS have identified a number of species that are only found in the ACT that could be seriously threatened by ill informed use of machinery or hazard reduction burns.

TAMS have also developed a map of the ACT that shows the probability of an area burning and where will it spread to. The map is based on a computer model indicating likely hood of ignition and fire spread information for the area.

MIL: With your vegetation and species maps and the ecological threshold maps, have you considered the approach where you light fire and evaluate the effect on flora and fauna. Can you vindicate the ecological targets by scientific observations?

Phil Cheney's work with the Brindabella fire plots is quiet valuable, along with the work of many other researchers, however the findings from these trial plots represent only small areas and do not provide prescriptions necessary for managing broader landscape communities. Our understanding is somewhat miss-represented by these small plots and the knowledge and understanding has no moved on. A major undertaking will be to conduct burns outside the prescribed thresholds and evaluate effects within strategic fire management zones. Monitoring is going to be a huge part of this process.

TAMS have also developed an overall fuel accumulation hazard map, which is GIS linked. Another map identifies all water and helipad spots. We have also mapped all trails and classified every 100 metre section with a load rating (light, medium, heavy tanker, dozer float) which is also used to identify road maintenance regimes.

The draft format of the sub-regional plan that was presented to Council identifies all activities planned to be undertaken over a 10 year period.

RECOMMENDATION :

Council would like Dylan Kendall to further discuss the computer generated mapping process. Council commended the work being undertaken by TAMS and thanked NC for his presentation.

SOURCE: Neil Cooper

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

Motion Moved:

Motion Seconded:

ACTION REQUIRED: Arrange for a presentation by Dylan Kendall.

AGENDA ITEM:	6.5	
DATE:	5 th February 2009	1600-1900 Hrs
LOCATION:	Fairbairn ASOC	
SUBJECT:	Use of Heavy Plant to upgrade fire trails on Rural Lease holdings	

BACKGROUND:

An opportunity has arisen for the Rural Fire Service to utilise the Seasonal Heavy Plant to undertake fire trail restoration and upgrade on some ACT Leasehold Properties. The RFS Rural Liaison Officer has in consultation with Officers of TAMS identified some strategically located trails that could be worked on to enhance the overall network and capability.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Rural Liaison Officer Arthur Sayer briefed Council with an update of this proposal and some of the issues associated with both upgrades and future proposals to establish new fire trails and roads on leasehold land in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION :

Council commended this initiative.

SOURCE: Arthur Sayer.

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

Motion Moved:

Motion Seconded:

ACTION REQUIRED: BFC support the programme and are interested in being updated and advised of future developments.

AGENDA ITEM: 6.6

DATE: 5th February 2009 1600-1900 Hrs

LOCATION: Fairbairn ASOC

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ON BUA AND BAZ

BACKGROUND:

A draft revised Built Up Area and Bushfire Abatement Zone was presented at the pre-season briefing held at the Australian Institute of Sport. This implied changes in responsibilities since the BUA is not so fragmented as before.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Since then Council has not been updated on progress

DISCUSSION POINTS :

1. BFC should receive an up-date.
2. The BAZ seems to pass through parts of properties, so that ACTFB is responsible on part and RFS on the rest; will this be rectified?

BP: As Council knows there was a proposal for revised boundaries to the BAZ. Several amendment notices have been produced. Part of the process for the new proposal is that the Commissioner will be required to consult with ACTPLA and the Conservator prior to releasing amended notifications. ACTPLA were able to meet with the ACTFB and advise us of what areas need to be included within the boundary to cover proposed areas that will soon be converted urban area. Documentation has been produced by ACTPLA and now we are waiting on a response from the Conservator.

KJ: Operationally this won't change the way the CAD system operates?

BP. No this won't change the way the CAD system operates as the primary function is to deploy the nearest available vehicle in the area. It is only the issues of the command and control that may change. So I don't envisage any changes.

TF: If the BAZ runs through property, and a percentage of the land is located in rural area and some in urban area who responds to an incident?

BP. I suggest that common sense would be implemented between the RFS and the ACTFB. If 90% of the property is located in RFS managed land then I'm sure the FB and RFS will come to an arrangement.

RECOMMENDATION : Council notes the report

SOURCE: Tony Fearnside

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

Council noted the advice provided by BP and CB.

Motion Moved: Motion Seconded:

ACTION REQUIRED: Council be updated when changes are effected.

AGENDA ITEM:	6.7	
DATE:	5 th February 2009	1600-1900 Hrs
LOCATION:	Fairbairn ASOC	
SUBJECT:	Summary of the AFAC Volunteer and Employee Management Group Meeting	

BACKGROUND:

This is a summation of some of the issues discussed at the recent round of meetings. Information is for the interest of members. Further information is available through the AFAC Knowledge Web site.

CURRENT SITUATION:

A copy of this summation paper was provided at Council

DISCUSSION POINTS :

- BP. Members can have access to the AFAC "Knowledge website". Quiet a few of the minutes from AFAC committees are published on this site.
- BP is interested in adapting a programme in the ACT to acknowledge businesses and employers who contribute and support our Volunteer organisation.
- A promotional campaign to attract males between the ages of 20-30 has been run by an organisation called Green Cross. It has been indentified that we have a shortage of males in this age group; however recruitment of females in this age group is relatively high. A young volunteer from the Jerrabomberra brigade recently went to the Gold Coast and attended seminars to raise the awareness of the younger X, Y generation in volunteering services. He is going to publish his journey on U tube, which will be used to promote the campaign.
- Cultural diversity within the RFS should be explored and encouraged as a possible means of expanding the membership base.
- AFAC as an organisation is concerned about the development of draft National Employment Standards that would require employers to grant "leave without pay" to employees that attend incidents as volunteers. ESA has opposed the approach and will maintain our position.
- There is a great deal of research being done within the Bushfire CRC. BP thinks the research will be beneficial. Enhancing volunteerism is one research topic that looks at the process of recruitment and the retention of Volunteers.
- The AFAC group also presented a report of the Air Toxic Exposure and Management, and within the ACT we have joined in on the study of Cancer in Fire-fighters. The research is continuing and updates will be given.
- The health and fitness is very topical especially within the RFS. The direction ESA is going will be in development of suitable guidelines that reflect activity levels of roles undertaken by RFS members. Arduous fitness levels will be required for RAFT and International deployments when requested; otherwise a moderate level of fitness will be maintained for other activities

RECOMMENDATION :

BFC FEBRUARY 2009

MIL: Suggested more media coverage within the local community to help raise the awareness of our RFS organisation and members.

KJ: believes that fitness for role is what we need to get back to

MIL: Brigade captains should be responsible for knowing what their brigade members are capable of doing. Suggests further education for Volunteers on health and fitness issues and requirements.

BP: Recommended ESA's adoption of the CFA's "Heart Watch" program available on line for volunteers; this resource would be encouraged in brigades.

SOURCE: Brian Parry

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

Motion Moved:

Motion Seconded:

ACTION REQUIRED: BFC members contact RFS if they wish to gain access to the AFAC Knowledge Network site.

AGENDA ITEM:	6.8	
DATE:	5 th February 2009	1600-1900 Hrs
LOCATION:	Fairbairn ASOC	
SUBJECT:	Summary of progress against Actions of the RFS Business Plan	

BACKGROUND:

The RFS adopted its 2008-2011 Business Plan in September 2008. One action against this plan is to provide a report on progress against actions quarterly to the Rural Operations Advisory Group.

CURRENT SITUATION:

A copy of this report will be provided at the meeting for member's information and comment.

DISCUSSION POINTS :

- Based on suggestions made at ROAG the business plan will eventually be updated and amended. Timeframes and formats will be discussed in the future.
- TM thought BFC would like to have a copy of the RFS business plan performance for their consideration.

BP: stated that the RFS has grown to meet the expectations of the organisation and the agency. The Agency is continuing to improve.

KJ: Stated that stakeholder relations are a critical element in moulding the perception of the organisation. KJ suggests that brigades have not yet seen the benefits in the restructured organisation considering the growth in numbers of staff. KJ suggested amending the business plan in a more general way.

BP: Noted that in 12 months the business plan will need to be revised. The Commissioner would like the RFS brigades to be more involved with hazard reduction. TAMS however, have not supported this concept whole heartedly which has hindered progress. Our biggest problem is that we do not have enough activity to maintain the interest of volunteers.

MIL: Would like to know why there aren't any volunteers trained to Group Captain level.

TM: Stated that Captains had resolved not to have a Group Officer structure but that all Brigade Captains and other senior officers will be offered the opportunity to undertake Group Captain training later in the year. This is being programmed as a joint training course with Queanbeyan NSW. We are adopting NSW training so there is a direct comparison between officer training and competence.

RECOMMENDATION :

KJ: Believes that prioritisation of actions and goals need to be made in conjunction with the Brigades to make sure we are achieving the actions that are in the organisations interest.

TF: Recommends speaking to TAMS about addressing small hazard areas across the ACT that are building up and promoting the brigades' services to undertake this work.

SOURCE: Tim McGuffog

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

Motion Moved:

Motion Seconded:

ACTION REQUIRED:

AGENDA ITEM:
BFC FEBRUARY 2009

7

DATE:

5th February 2009

1600-1900 Hrs

LOCATION:

Fairbairn ASOC

SUBJECT:

Other Business

BACKGROUND:

CURRENT SITUATION:

DISCUSSION POINTS :

1. Michael and Marion need to have their initials changed to differentiate themselves in the minutes.
MIL= Michael Loneragan, MAL= Marion Leiba.
2. TF has requested to have a regular report from the Bureau of Meteorology.

RECOMMENDATION :

SOURCE:

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

Motion Moved:

Motion Seconded:

ACTION REQUIRED:

Next Meeting: 4:00PM Wednesday 4 March 2009