



ACT
Government



ACT Bushfire Council

Meeting 4.00 pm to 7pm, Wednesday 7 February 2018

Black Mountain Meeting Room

ESA Headquarters

Council Members	Sarah Ryan (Chair)	Marion Leiba	Jeremy Watson
	Natarsha Carney (Deputy Chair)	Mick George	Kylie Coe
	Steve Angus	Margaret Moreton	Tony Bartlett
	David Snell		
Apologies	Cathy Parsons	Bhiamie Eckford-Williamson	Dominic Lane
	Mark Brown		
Officials	Pat Jones, A/g Chief Officer, ACT Fire and Rescue		
	Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service		
	Daniel Iglesias, Executive Director, Parks and Conservation Service (PCS)		
Invited Guests	Rick McRae, Jason Sharples and Rachel Badlan		
	Carmel Summers, Project Manager, SBMP v4		

Minutes

Agenda item:	1.0 – Welcome and Apologies	Presenter:	Chair
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The Chair opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians of Country and welcomed members to the Council Meeting. Apologies were noted from Dominic Lane, Mark Brown, Cathy Parsons, and Bhiamie Eckford-Williamson

The meeting commenced at 16:03.

Marion Leiba and Tony Bartlett joined the meeting at 16:10. Steve Angus joined at 16:27.

Action: Nil

Agenda item	2.0 – Introduction of Project Manager, SBMP version 4	Presenter:	Chair
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The Chair welcomed Carmel Summers to the meeting as the newly appointed project manager for the *Strategic Bushfire Management Plan version 4*.

Carmel has been with ESA for approximately one year working on the Strategic Reform Agenda. She helped organise roundtable meetings and recognises some members of the council from that experience. Prior to ESA Carmel worked in ICT, science, strategic planning and reporting, and NSW Government.

Action: Nil.

Agenda item	3.0 – Declaration of Interest	Presenter:	Chair
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The Chair introduced the item and drew Council member's attention in relation to the reporting requirements under the *Emergencies Act 2004* and the ACT Bushfire Council Terms of Reference.

The Chair has agreed to return to her role as consultant for the Molonglo River Reserve. The draft Management Plan will come to Bushfire Council for comment. When it is being discussed at the next meeting, Sarah will stand aside and Natarsha will Chair that item.

Action: Nil

Agenda item: *4.0 – Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting and update on action items arising from previous meetings* **Presenter:** Chair

Discussion:

The minutes from the December meeting were accepted as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

Agenda item: *5.0 – Correspondence for noting* **Presenter:** Chair

Discussion:

Correspondence received – Thank you from Igor Kyznetsov for sending ACTRFS patches to him in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.

The Chair attended an interview with Euan Ferguson who was appointed by JACS to conduct a review of bushfire preparedness in the ACT.

The Chair attended two Incident Management Exercises in December and it was very valuable. She encourages other members to attend when the opportunity arises again.

Action: Secretariat to follow up sending letter to Friends of Black Mountain.

Agenda item: *6.0 – Reports for noting* **Presenter:** Commissioner

Discussion:

6.1 ESA Commissioner's Report

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- ESA Report Card – the Council noted the report card and the generally excellent results
- Memorandum of Understanding with NSW Rural Fire Service (NSWRFS)
 - minor changes, acknowledged the National Resource Sharing Centre (point of contact for international deployments – also used nationally when MOUs do not cover certain arrangements), and adaptations to terminology.
 - Discussion was had around remuneration arrangements for interstate deployments.
- Presumptive Cancer Legislation for ACTRFS Volunteers
- Honours and Awards

6.2 Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- Recent events
- Training calendar and March 2018 Bushfire Fighter course
- Deployments to NSW
- Canberra Bushfire Ready Doorknock Campaign
- Rural Leaseholders Grant Scheme
- Electronic Fire Danger Rating signs
- Farm Firewise
 - Taking Farm Firewise further by presenting to brigades and highlighting assets to prioritise for protection. Jerrabomberra have been presented to and Guises Creek are earmarked for the next presentation.
 - Council noted the low membership level of rural landholders in the ACTRFS.
 - Steve noted the willingness of urban residents to do the training and participate and that they make a great contribution to the ACTRFS.
 - Sarah noted the value of Farm Firewise given the makeup of ACTRFS.
 - Some Council members noted that rural landholders are less involved because of red tape and the assessment requirements with being part of RFS. This is occurring across other jurisdictions too.

There was a fire in the Brindabella Ranges on the weekend (3-4 February 2018), RFS responded quickly and ran a mini IMT out of ESA HQ till about 10:30pm.

The NSW risk management plans are in early development stages but they discuss asset protection zones. Their risk management plans are equivalent to ACT's Farm Firewise.

Tony inquired on Bushfire Council's representation on the SBMP Planning Committee. As an advisory body, Council members have not been included in the Implementation Working Group. Council would like to contribute to the review the outcomes of SBMPv3 and if they meet the objectives. They would also like to contribute to the review of the shape, form and structure of SBMPv4. Page 5 of the Council's Terms of Reference refer to the Council's role in providing advice to the Commissioner in line with the *Emergencies Act 2004* in monitoring and assessing SBMP. Sarah will talk to Carmel about what the Council might do as a preliminary review exercise. She will also work with Joe on how Council can get regular reporting on SBMP. Camel noted that the Commissioner is supportive of the Council having representation on the SBMP Planning Committee.

6.3 EPSDD Parks and Conservation Report

The following topics were highlighted in the report:

- 2017/18 EPSDD BOP
- 2018/19 EPSDD BOP
- Training – new training records management program will provide for a greater degree of certainty for staff development
- Subregional Fire Plans
- Hazard burns
- Interstate crews – went well and efforts well received
- NSWRFSS hazard reduction burn Mt Clear

Note: Subregional Regional Fire Management Plans were developed by looking into the future and assessing needs. It has evolved from that to assist with the development and assessment of emergency plans. There is no statutory requirement to develop the SRFMP as there is for the SBMP. The SRFMP are reference material for SBMP but have different objectives.

Council is concerned about the large burns from the recent past BOPs not being completed. Council would like to see a detailed report of the BOP burns in categories. Tony would like periodic updating on the progress of the EPSDD BOP, what preparation has been done for burning, and details of the percentages of hazard reduction activities and other operational activities completed. Tony noted that he would seek the views of other Council members on adding these items to their program.

Council debated the balance between staying high level and strategic and getting into too much operational detail in delivering on its terms of reference. Sarah gave an indication that requesting burn preparation details is a too operational... Tony and Steve supported the need for details. It was agreed that EPSDD would present an overview of the current BOP at the next meeting and that progress against the BOP will be reported to Council quarterly.

It was noted that the Council are not getting reports from the National level, such as AFAC meetings.

Action:

- More information on the skills and experience of the Level 3 Incident Controllers was requested
 - Chair to write to the Director-General JACS once the Euan Ferguson report is completed and request a copy of the report
 - Send the SRFMP link around to Council
 - PCS to provide a BOP briefing to Council, particularly for the new members. An update on progress against the BOP to occur every quarter.
 - Review the forward agenda and incorporate periodic reports on BOP
 - Update the calendar invites for Bushfire Council meetings
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- Agenda item for next meeting – a short discussion about what council members would like to see on the field trip

Agenda item: 7.0 – *Topics from the 2017 ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan* **Presenter:** Rick, Rachel and Jason

Discussion:

7.1 – Incident Command and Control – IMT capability, training and succession planning

To be presented at next month’s meeting. It was intended to be high level and encompass the whole of ACT Government. The Council was instead interested in IMT functions in the ESA Headquarters building and the functions that occur, rather than high level strategic arrangements between heads of government and Ministers.

7.2 – Presentation on Fire Research update – slides circulated electronically.

Jason Sharples presented on new modelling that takes into account dynamic fire behaviour and ember attack, a firefighter entrapment study and improvements to training.

Rachel Badlan presented on deep flaming, Pyro Cumulonimbus (thunderstorm created by fire) and atmospheric stability.

Rick McRae presented on Pyro Cumulonimbus, and Blow-Up Fire Outlook

The presentation will be circulated to the Council.

Council expressed their appreciation to Jason, Rachel and Rick. Council asked about the funding arrangements for research and national recognition.

Jason reported that his research group has the benefit of being based in a mathematics department, which gives them the advantage with modelling. They are potentially the only ones in the world with this access.

The listed agenda item ‘Presentation and analysis of recent past bushfire outcomes in the ACT’ was not presented. The Chair noted that if Council is to contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of SBMP and objectives they would like to know the outcome in terms of bushfire and the harms from bushfire. Council had previously developed a paper on suggested data that could be used to track bushfire outcomes over time.

Natarsha noted that the Council needed to be clear to itself about what it wants so that they can communicate clearly to ACTRFS with their requests. Sarah to circulate a new revision of the paper.

- Action:**
- Circulate the presentations electronically
 - Council to circulate latest draft of Council’s paper amongst themselves for finalisation and provide it to Joe

Agenda item: 8.0 – *Number and Name of Rural Fire Service Brigades* **Presenter:** Chief Officer, ACTRFS

Discussion: The instrument on the legislative register states that there are ten ACT Rural Fire Service brigades, however there are currently nine brigades. The instrument may also name the brigades. There was discussion about Parks Brigade being named as an ACTRFS brigade. In an emergency, under the *Emergencies Act 2004*, they do become a brigade under direction of the CO ACTRFS.

Tony noted a procedural issue that a paper should have been prepared for consultation. He also noted when a controversial issue is raised that involves PCS, there should be a representative in the room.

The CO ACTRFS noted that this was an administrative issue to correct a legislative instrument and that nothing else was changing. The CO was taking the opportunity to provide the names of the brigades as part of updating the instrument. David Snell supported the explanation provided by the CO regarding the terminology of “brigades” and how this relates to the delegation of Chief Officer powers.

The Chair requested that the CO ACTRFS hold off from notifying the instrument so it could be properly understood by Council at next month’s meeting.

Action:

- Paper on the Number and Names of Rural Fire Service Brigades to be prepared by CO RFS in consultation with PCS

Agenda item: <i>9.0 – Other Business</i>	Presenter: Chair
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CO ACTF&R would like to note that rural landholders who have issues with urban firefighters should raise them formally so that due process can occur. This process would offer procedural fairness to the ACT Fire & Rescue personnel who are allegedly not working with rural lessees. This allows for a formal review to take place if there is an issue. This was identified as an issue to be handled outside of Bushfire Council.

Action: Nil.

Agenda item: <i>10.0 – Next Meeting</i>	Presenter: Chair
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The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 March 2018.

Actions: Nil

Agenda item: <i>11.0 – In camera meeting if required</i>	Presenter: Chair
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Agenda item: <i>12.0 – Council performance checklist and meeting conclusion</i>	Presenter: David Snell
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Discussion: There is a breakdown of communications in how the Council requests information and presentations from ACTRFS. There is a need to ensure all Council members understand each point. Council would like to be more explicit about requests. This will lead to better agenda planning.

Closing: The meeting was declared closed at 7.05pm



ACT Bushfire Council Meeting Implementation of Action Items

Active items for current meeting

Action Item / Issue	Originating meeting date	Assigned To	Due Date	Status	Comments
Agenda item 5.2 - Parks to provide presentation or executive summary & recommendations of the Fire Management Unit review	2 August 2017	Daniel Iglesias (1 Nov)	6 Dec 2017	In progress	To be provided in 2018
Agenda item 4 - Write a response letter to the Convener, Friends of Black Mountain	6 December 2017	Chair BFC	7 Feb 2018	Completed	Sent on 15 February 2018
Agenda item 9 – Send a new diary invite for the September BFC Meeting (due to the AFAC Conference)	6 December 2017	Secretariat	7 March 2018	To be redone	
Agenda item 8 - Paper to be prepared by CO RFS in consultation with PCS	7 February 2018	CO ACTRFS	7 March 2018		
Agenda item 7 – Circulate the Council’s papers electronically	7 February 2018	Chair BFC	7 March 2018		
Agenda item 7 – Council to circulate latest draft of Council’s paper amongst themselves for finalisation and provide it to Joe	7 February 2018	Chair BFC	7 March 2018		
Agenda item 6 – List of level 3 Incident Controllers, names and experience of those people	7 February 2018	CO ACTRFS	7 March 2018		
Agenda item 6 – Chair to write to the Director-General JACS once the Euan Ferguson report is completed and request a copy of the report	7 February 2018	Chair	TBA		
Agenda item 6 – Review the structure of SBMP	7 February 2018	Chair	TBA		
Agenda item 6 – Review the content of SBMP	7 February 2018	Chair	TBA		
Agenda item 6 – Send the SRFMP link around to council	7 February 2018	Secretariat	7 March 2018		

Action Item / Issue	Originating meeting date	Assigned To	Due Date	Status	Comments
Agenda item 6 – PCS staff to talk to council about the BOP, particularly for the new members. An update on progress against the BOP to occur every quarter.	7 February 2018	Chair	TBA		
Agenda item 6 – Review the forward agenda and incorporate periodic reports on BOP	7 February 2018	Chair	7 March 2018		
Agenda item 6 – add an agenda item for a short discussion about what council members would like to see on the field trip	7 February 2018	Secretariat	7 March 2018		
Agenda item 5 –Follow up sending letter to Friends of Black Mountain.	7 February 2018	Secretariat	7 March 2018	Completed	Completed

Completed Items

Action Item / Issue	Originating meeting date	Assigned To	Due Date	Status	Comments
Agenda item 5 – Send BFC members a calendar invite for 3 May 2018 to attend a field trip	6 December 2017	Secretariat	7 Feb 2018	Completed	Completed