



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL (BFC)

6 May 2009

ACTRFS HEADQUARTERS

4 POINT COOK AVENUE

FAIRBAIRN ACT

Wednesday 6th May 2009

AGENDA

- 1. Opening and Introduction by Chairman**
- 2. Attendees/ Apologies**
- 3. Minutes of previous meeting**
- 4. Actions running sheet**
- 5. Correspondence**
 - Incoming
 - Outgoing
- 6. Agenda Items**
 - 6.1 Update on Hotspots project – Virginia Dixon
 - 6.2 Presentation on Strategic Bushfire Management Plan V2 – Nick Lhuede & Virginia Dixon
 - 6.3 Council discussion and finalisation of Bob Smiths Report and advice to the Minister – Kevin Jeffery
 - 6.4 Council discussion on Media Presentation by ESA – Kevin Jeffery
- 7. Other Business**
- 8. Outstanding Items/Issues**
- 9. Confirmation of next meeting**

AGENDA ITEM: 1- 5

DATE: 6th May 2009 1600-1900 Hrs

LOCATION: ASOC Fairbairn

Meeting Opened Time: 4:11

1. Welcome by Chairman

2. Attendees

Kevin Jeffery	(KJ) Chair / Member
Gregor Manson	(GM) Commissioner ESA
Conrad Barr	(CB) Deputy Commissioner Fire & Rescue
Tim McGuffog	(TM) Deputy Chief Officer ACTRFS
Tony Bartlett	(TB) Member
Tony Fearnside	(TF) Member
Michael Lonergan	(ML) Member
Cathy Parsons	(CP) Member
Ken Batt	(KB) Member
Christine Goonrey	(CG) Member
Peter Kanowski	(PK) Member
Marion Leiba	(ML) Member
Simon Katz	(SK) Member
Kaylee McInnes	(KM) Secretariat

Apologies

3. Minutes Of the Previous Meeting:

Minutes of the 8 April 2009 meeting tabled.

Changes to the minutes to be updated: None to mention

Minutes Accepted

Moved: Micheal Lonergan **Seconded:** Cathy Parsons

4. Actions Running Sheet:

Thursday 5 March- 6.3 'Stay or Go Policy'.

"Conrad Barr to investigate opening and advising the public of evacuation centres on days of extreme fire danger".

Conrad Barr provided advice in relation to the ACT Recovery Plan and the ability to request the establishment of an evacuation centre or centres. A recent example was the opening of an evacuation centre following a fire involving an acetylene cylinder in south Canberra.

Thursday 5th March Public Warning Information.

Council recommends that ESA consult with the Bureau of Meteorology to develop a campaign to heighten the public's awareness of Bushfire Danger on specific fire danger days. BFC recommends educating the public about what the fire danger indices mean, and what these mean on any given day during the Bush Fire Season. Council believes there is a strong need to focus more education on the fire danger rating and what this indicates, particularly directed towards the younger generation. Council have suggested that fire danger index numbers be printed above each rating on public warning signs.

ACTION: Commissioner to report back to Council the feasibility of this initiative. Council see benefit in ensuring a co-ordinated approach across all jurisdictions.

5. Correspondence In/Out

1. Reply to Campbell Paper circulated M Lonergan

2. Response re Campbell Paper circulated C Goonrey

3. Correspondence on changes to BFC report between members

AGENDA ITEM: 6.1

DATE: 6th May 2009

LOCATION: ASOC Fairbairn

SUBJECT: Presentation on Hotspots Project

BACKGROUND:

Council was provided with a presentation on this project at the March 2009 meeting. Council was supportive of the approach by the team leaders for the ACT to become involved with the Project.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Acting on Councils endorsement, Virginia Dixon has liaised with the Hotspots team and assisted in the development of an application for funding and indicated the ACT's committed support if the project proceeds. Virginia provided Council with an update on the status of the project

RECOMMENDATION:

Council are interested to hear updates to this project and anticipate the approval of the bid submitted to the East Australian Fire Project

SOURCE: Virginia Dixon

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION:

A bid has been submitted with the East Australian Fire Project for \$20, 000 (primarily in kind) for the ACT ESA. Virginia Dixon is waiting to hear if the bid will be accepted or denied. If accepted the project will be implemented in conjunction with the Farm Fire Wise project.

MOTION MOVED:

MOTION SECONDED:

ACTION REQUIRED:

AGENDA ITEM:

6.2

DATE:

6th May 2009

LOCATION:

ASOC Fairbairn

SUBJECT:

Presentation on Strategic Bushfire Management Plan V2 –

BACKGROUND:

An exposure version of the draft SBMP V2 has been placed on the ESA web site and community consultation has commenced.

Nick Lhuede and Virginia Dixon will advised Council of this process and proposed timeframes for consultation and the final production of SBMP 2

CURRENT SITUATION:

An exposure draft of SBMP was realised in late April 2009. A process of targeted consultation has been implemented with rural land holders. There will be 3 rural based and 2 urban based consultation sessions. The urban meetings will concentrate more on delivery of information and will be conducted by officers from ESA, ACTFB and TAMS.

A formal and final draft of the plan will be developed by August 2009. Following the release of the final draft there will be a 15 day period for public comment. Comments will be reviewed after 30 days, followed by the draft being submitted to cabinet. Once approved it should be formally signed off by government.

RECOMMENDATION :

Nick Lhuede and Virginia Dixon ask that Council members review the current draft and make comments within the next few weeks.

SOURCE Nick Lhuede & Virginia Dixon

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION: Council to respond to Nick Lhuede with any comments on the current draft of SBMP.

MOTION MOVED:

MOTION SECONDED:

ACTION REQUIRED:

Council to provide individual comments back through Kevin Jeffery or the secretariat.

AGENDA ITEM: 6.3

DATE: 6 May 2009

LOCATION: ASOC Fairbairn

SUBJECT: Council discussion and finalisation of the Bob Smith Report and advice to the Minister

BACKGROUND:

Bob Smith provided a final draft version of his report into the recommendations of the McLeod and Doogan Enquiries into the 2003 Canberra Bushfires. Council at its last meeting agreed to undertake some final amendments and to finalise its report to the Minister at the May meeting.

CURRENT SITUATION:

A number of members have undertaken reviews and amendments and the final document was discussed and agreed to by BFC at the May meeting. An approach on how this will be presented to the Minister, advice regarding the document, and forward actions that will need to be undertaken, were discussed at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION :

Gregor Manson recommends Council pre-empting the response from the Minister and prepare an action plan to address questions likely to be raised by the Minister about the report.

SOURCE: Kevin Jeffery

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION: A letter will be written to the Minister along with a copy of the Bob Smith report highlighting the key issues, and providing a list of actions and recommendations the Minister should require ESA to deliver on.

MOTION MOVED:

MOTION SECONDED:

ACTION REQUIRED:

Gregor to address grammatical issues in the final draft report and provide back to Kevin Jeffery.
Tim to e-mail out report with final amendments.

**AGENDA
ITEM:** 6.4

DATE: 6 May 2009

LOCATION: ASOC Fairbairn

SUBJECT: Council discussion on Media Presentation by ESA

BACKGROUND:

In February 2009 the Chairman had some discussion and correspondence between the Chief Officer and the Commissioner regarding the ESA spokesman for media related Rural Fire Service matters.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Commissioner provided a response to the Chairman regarding this issue. The Chairman would like to raise the matter with Council members and seek their opinions and recommendations regarding future media representation of RFS business.

RECOMMENDATION :

Gregor Manson explained the importance of appointing a suitable representative to talk to the media as they represent the whole ACT Emergency Services Agency. GM encourages using one 'Media Front Man' as it creates continuity in the public eye and maintains good working relations and contact with media personnel. If a situation requires a technical explanation or it is appropriate for one of the service personnel to address the media then this is also OK. A single media contact also limits the disruption to the Incident Controller who needs to concentrate on managing and dealing with the incident.

SOURCE: Kevin Jeffery

**RESOLUTION &/OR
DECISION:**

Council would like to ensure that the representative is able to present information as simply as possible and effectively represent the RFS on all occasions. Council supports Gregor's current 'Media Front Man' arrangements, they believe that the public do look for and recognise a familiar face in which they can develop trust.
CG: This approach should focus on more than Incidents, she believes somebody should become an identified face for ESA broader issues such as SBMP2.
CP: Believes it is valuable in having people involved in the incidents addressing the media.
KJ: Considers that sometimes a change in personnel can also create more desired interest from the public.

MOTION MOVED:

MOTION SECONDED:

ACTION REQUIRED:

NIL

AGENDA ITEM: 7

DATE: 6 May 2009

LOCATION: ASOC Fairbairn

SUBJECT: Other Business

7.1 Brian Parry's Replacement

Council have formed a sub- group to comment on the effectiveness of the current ESA structure in the light of Brian Parry's resignation as Deputy Commissioner. BFC indicated risks associated with the current structure, and that in the event of a major bushfire the structure does not currently provide sufficient depth of leadership across the agency. Council believes that tensions between the land managers (TAMS) and RFS are affecting the cohesion between the services. Council have taken the view that everybody needs to work as one integrated team and their view is that a replacement should be someone who can enhance integration of the services within the ESA structure. The services need to operate under their own Chief Officer and coordination undertaken by an operational Deputy Commissioner to ensure integrated incident management.

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION: Gregor Manson (ESA Commissioner) has spoken to the Deputy Chief Officers of each of the 4 services to better understand perceptions and issues with the current structure. Gregor Manson (ESA Commissioner) is interested in hearing feedback on this issue and looks forward to a formal response, expressing the concerns and recommendations of Council.

MOTION MOVED: **MOTION SECONDED:**

ACTION REQUIRED: Council to consult with the Commissioner on issues and ideas regarding any proposed changes to existing structure.

AGENDA ITEM:

8

DATE:

6 May 2009

LOCATION:

ASOC Fairbairn

SUBJECT:

Outstanding Items/ Issues

MIL reported that he had visited the High Fire Project at Snowy Plain on 30 April last with other members of the NSWRFs Monaro team and the scientists involved and he explained briefly the aims of the research, which is widely regarded as valuable.

Council has not received an update from the "High Fire Project" group and has made several requests for such an update. CG perceives that the project is being driven by a specific agenda and that they are not effectively disseminating information. Council is interested, and suggests the project open up more and provide access from external stakeholders.

Members would be interested in a briefing from the project managers before they lend their support to the project.

Meeting Closed: 7:06.

RESOLUTION &/OR DECISION: ACTION: Council seek a briefing from the High Fire project team. TM will endeavour to organise a presentation.

MOTION MOVED:

MOTION SECONDED:

ACTION REQUIRED:

TM. to find out who the project manager is and see if he will provide a briefing presentation to the ACT Bushfire Council.

Time and Date Next Meeting:

3rd June 2009 1600 Hours Fairbairn.