

MINUTES



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL (BFC)

2 June 2010

ACTRFS HEADQUARTERS

4 POINT COOK AVENUE

FAIRBAIRN ACT

Wednesday 2 June 2010

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 Territory and Municipal Services Draft Bushfire Operations Plan 2010-11

6.2 Report on the High Fire CRC meeting held in Albury on dd/mm/2010

7. Other Business

8. Outstanding Items/Issues

9. Confirmation of next meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 1 – 5

DATE: 2 June 2010 1600-1900Hrs

LOCATION: ASOC Fairbairn

Meeting Opened

Time: 1615

Close: 1900

1. Welcome by Chairman

Kevin Jeffery opened the meeting at 1615

2. Attendees/Apologies:

Kevin Jeffery	(KJ) Chair / Member
Michael Lonergan	(MIL) Member
Marion Leiba	(ML) Member
Christine Goonrey	(CG) Member
Cathy Parsons	(CP) Member
Neil Cooper	(NC) Ex-officio ACT Parks Conservation and Land Management
Andrew Stark	(AS) Ex-officio RFS Chief Officer
Paul Swaine	(PS) Ex-officio Chief Officer ACT Fire Brigade
Michael Joyce	(MJ) Ex-officio RFS Manager, Compliance & Governance

Apologies:

Tony Bartlett	(TB) Deputy Chair / Member
Tony Fearnside	(TF) Member
Simon Katz	(SK) Member
Kenn Batt	(KB) Member
Peter Kanowski	(PK) Member

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Minutes of the 5th May 2010 meeting tabled.

Changes to the minutes to be updated:

6.3 – 1st dot point – amend to read:

- Changes to the Emergencies Act were tabled. There is no structural change.

6.4 – new dot point:

- The Council noted that it was keen to have the ability to report on the dollars spent as well as the number of activities undertaken in the BOP. Neil Cooper advised that financial reporting will be built into the next BOP.

6.5 – under **Total Planning Cost** – amend 1st dot point to read:

- Planning and compliance costs in the ACT are \$7,500 per kilometre, whereas in NSW they are only \$50 per kilometre

8.0 – Time and Date of next Meeting – amend to read:

2 June 2010 at 1600hrs at Fairbairn

Motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting was moved by Christine Goonrey, seconded by Michael Lonergan, and carried by the meeting.

3.1 Bushfire Council Membership

Andrew Stark advised that the paperwork to re-appoint members to Council had been sent to the Minister and he expected it would be ratified by the end of June. He noted that a commitment had been given to Cabinet that the Council will seek additional members to ensure an appropriate balance was maintained.

A letter will be sent to Ken Batt thanking him for his contribution to the Council over the years he spent as a member.

Action:

- **Andrew Stark to prepare and send “thank you” letter to Ken Batt**
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4. Actions Running Sheet:

All actions have been completed.

5. Correspondence

Incoming: Nil

Outgoing: Letter from Kevin Jeffery to the Minister re: BFC 2010 Workplan and invitation to attend

Action:

Kevin Jeffery to finalise letters to the Minister re:

- **the excess planning and compliance costs in the ACT; and**
 - **acknowledgement of the extended budget allocation to TAMS**
-

AGENDA ITEM: 6.1

SUBJECT: Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) 2010-11 Bushfire Operations Plan (BOP)

BACKGROUND:

Under Section 78 of the Emergencies Act 2004, the TAMS BOP must be approved by the Commissioner, Emergency Services Agency. Prior to this, the Bushfire Council is briefed by TAMS officers and provided with a Draft copy for comment.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Neil Cooper advised that the 2010-11 BOP is nearly finalised. He gave a presentation on the 2010-11 BOP, with the main focus on what changes have been included in the Plan for the next Financial Year. The main discussion points were:

- The BOP will be reviewed by the TAMS Executive on 3 June 2010
- The plan has been endorsed by Research, Planning and Development Officers at TAMS
- Base funding for the 2010-11 BOP is the same as for 2009-10. However, Treasury has provided an additional \$960k per year in capital funding and \$1.3m in recurrent expenditure for implementing the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) over the next 10 years
- The number of mitigation activities has increased to around 550.
- For the first time, the BOP will contain financial information on all costs associated with it. This may cause some confusion if comparisons are made with previous figures provided because it will now include a lot more cost data than was previously provided. An example of this are the costs associated with attendance by Parks Conservation and Lands (PCL) staff at training courses and AFAC conferences and forums. The Council noted that it fully supported AFAC activities and agreed it was important for staff to be given the opportunity to attend.
- A major component of funding for BOP activities comes from the forestry insurance payouts resulting from the 2003 fires. This funding will be used up in 2 years.
- A restructure in TAMS may see a push towards administrative functions being devolved to business units. The Council is aware of the propensity for this type of restructure in Government departments, and would be opposed to any restructure in TAMS that could impact on PCLs capacity to undertake its bushfire mitigation activities.
- A major factor in TAMS ability to complete its infrastructure work is the time taken for planning documents to be approved through ACTPLA processes. There are a number of projects that have been carried across several BOPs because of these delays. The Mt Franklin and Cotter Hut Road upgrades, and the water tanks on Mt Rob Roy are examples. The Council is concerned that the planning delays are increasing the bushfire risk that these projects would mitigate, and asked that it be kept informed on discussions that TAMS is having with ACTPLA to simplify and streamline the process.

Action:

- **TAMS to provide the Council with copies of its Draft Bushfire Operational Plan when it has been approved by TAMS executives.**
 - **BFC to be kept informed on planning talks between TAMS and ACTPLA**
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AGENDA ITEM:**6.2****SUBJECT:**Fire in the High Country Conference 18/19 May 2010

Michael Lonergan and Christine Goonrey attended the Conference and provided a report. The objective of the conference was to present results and stimulate discussion on research into fire in Australia's high country. The seminar attracted fire managers and practitioners working in alpine and sub-alpine regions of New South Wales, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland.

The two-day forum presented the latest research findings to operational fire managers with the aim of raising awareness and providing opportunities for researchers and operational fire managers to interact and discuss the major issues.

Key speakers included Shane Fitzsimmons, Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, researchers Dr Jason Sharples, Prof Mark Adams and Bob Conroy, Executive Director Parks Management, NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change.

Presentations were also made on a range of topics including:

- Effects of growth and regrowth on fuel levels since the 2003 fires (Tina Bell)
- Asset protection, fire weather and risk (Justin Leonard)
- High Fire Risk project (Rick McRae)
- Carbon and water dynamics in forested catchments (Tarryn Turnbull)
- Modelling fire spread in rugged terrain: which way the wind? (Jason Sharples)
- Fires, carbon and water (Mark Adams)
- Preliminary results on a trial of the interaction of grazing and fire (Stephen Roxburg)

Both Michael and Christine felt it important to note that the presentation provided by Rick McRae was excellent and well received by the practitioners at the Conference. The findings from Rick's study certainly had an impact on those present, particularly the detail and evidence provided around phenomenon like dynamic channelling, violent pyro-convection, mountain wind waves, Foehn winds, and low level jets.

Both appreciated the opportunity to attend the conference and considered it a worthwhile experience.

AGENDA ITEM: 7

SUBJECT: Other Business

7.1 Elevated Fire Danger Plan

Andrew Stark provided information on the Elevated Fire Danger Plan that will be developed over the next few months.

- The project is being undertaken in response to the interim Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission findings. State and Territory Governments across Australia are required to update and initiate planning to advise agencies under their control on pro-active steps to be taken on days of heightened fire danger rating to ensure safety across the community.
- The ACT is now required to develop this plan in time for the commencement of the 2010/11 bushfire season. This will require extensive consultation across all Government Agencies to identify areas at risk, provide strategies for mitigation of persons within those areas and to ensure contingency plans are in place to ensure the safety of those at risk.
- A team of 4 experts will be engaged on the plan which will commence in June. Team members will include a Development Control Planner, a GIS Project Officer, a Whole of Government Information Co-ordinator and an Elevated Plan Writer.
- The ACTRFS Chief Officer will be the Project Manager
- The plan will identify all key Government facilities considered to be at risk across the ACT and Develop a risk matrix to apply to whole of Government

Andrew will continue to report to Council on the group's progress.

7.2 Field Trip to Victoria

Andrew Stark advised that he is hoping to organise a field trip to Victoria for Council members in late June early July. He noted that Christine Nixon was keen to meet Council members and spend time with them to discuss Victoria's response to the 2009 Victorian fires.

AGENDA ITEM: 8

SUBJECT: Next Meeting

Time and Date of Next Meeting:

7 July 2010 at 1600hrs at Fairbairn