



**ACT Bushfire Council Meeting  
Minutes**

Wednesday 7 August 2019

4pm – 7pm

ESA Headquarters  
Black Mountain Meeting Room

<b>Attendees:</b>		
<b>Chair:</b>	Sarah Ryan, ACT Bushfire Council	
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Lynda Scanes	
<b>Council Members</b>	<b>Officials</b>	<b>Invited Guests</b>
Natarsha Carney Tony Bartlett Marion Leiba Jeremy Watson Kylie Coe David Snell Margaret Moreton Bhiamie Williamson Cathy Parsons Steve Angus	Mark Brown, Acting Commissioner, Emergency Services Agency (ESA) Justin Foley, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (PCS, EPSDD) Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS), ESA Chris Zeithofer, Acting Chief Officer, ACT Fire & Rescue (ACT F&R)	Neil Cooper, Senior Director, Fire Forests and Roads, PCS, EPSDD Tony Scherl, Manager, Fire Planning, PCS, EPSDD Ryan Lawrey, A/g Manager Fire Planning, PCS, EPSDD Chris Condon, Senior Rural Liaison Officer, Bushfire Protection, ACTRFS Peter Langdon, Manager, Forests, PCS
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cathy Parsons, Tony Bartlett, Tony Scherl and Georgeina Whelan	

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1	Acknowledgement of country	Presenter:	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 performance checklist	Presenter:	Chair
	The Chair welcomed all meeting attendees and noted apologies.		
3	Declarations of interest	Presenter:	Chair
	One declaration of conflict of interest were received. Mr Angus advised of a possible conflict of interest as Ingledene was listed for discussion at Agenda 8.1 and he currently has a grazing lease there.		
4	Acceptance of minutes from the 10 July 2019 meeting	Presenter:	Chair
	The draft minutes from 10 July 2019 were then accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting with a minor amendment required.		

5	Review action list – attached to minutes	Presenter:	Chair
	The Council reviewed the outstanding action items and noted they were either complete, not yet due or covered in the meeting agenda.		
	<b>Action:</b> CO ACTRFS to arrange a demonstration for Council of how to use the SharePoint site prior to Council accessing meeting papers from the site.		
6	Correspondence	Presenter:	Chair
	<p>Correspondence for noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council letter of response to the Conservation Council re Molonglo development at the tip of Coombs</li> <li>• Email reply from the Conservation Council to the Bushfire Council</li> <li>• Letter from A/g Commissioner re proposed change to the start date of the 2019-20 Bushfire Season</li> </ul> <p>Under section 119 of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> (the Act) the bushfire season runs from 1 October in one year to 30 March in the following year. Under the same section of the Act the Commissioner may declare different dates for the bushfire season after he consults with the Bushfire Council.</p> <p>The Acting Commissioner advised that the ACT is looking at the dry conditions forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology and at the NSW Rural Fire Service considering bringing the season forward in this region and proposes to do the same, bringing the start of the bushfire season forward from 1 October 2018 to 1 September 2018. In the light of forecast conditions, Council supported the proposal.</p>		
7	Report on activities attended on behalf of Council since the last meeting	Presenter:	Chair
	The Chair advised of her future attendance at the ACT Rotary Emergency Service Community Awards dinner on Saturday 10 August.		
8	Items from the ACTBFC 2019 Business Plan	Presenters:	ESA and EPSDD
	<p>8.1 Presentation on managing the risk within the plantation estate</p> <p>The paper was taken at noted. It addressed the reasons of maintaining softwood plantations in the ACT and how the bushfire risk is managed (part of SBMP v3 Objective 8 – Adaptive management to provide continuous improvement in bushfire management).</p> <p>Australia has approximately 1 million hectares of softwood plantation and all of it is successfully grown in temperate areas subject to increasing bushfire risks, as is nearly all of Australia’s food and fibre primary production. The Territory’s plantation is &lt;1% of the national estate. The Territory’s plantations have largely recovered from the January 2003 bushfires and are now managed under a plantation specific strategic fire management plan for each geographic area. It was noted that the plantation estate is part of EPSDD managed land and fire management actions in plantations are covered by the EPSDD BOP.</p> <p>Maintenance of road networks and wide mineral earth and low fuel firebreaks throughout the Territory’s plantations are an improved feature compared to the level of service that was deemed to be acceptable in the estate before 2003.</p> <p>Financial returns from timber and carbon sales in the plantation are reinvested into improved infrastructure throughout plantation areas. This provides independent recurrent resources to the PCS to improve the control of noxious weeds and pest animals in the peri-urban margins of plantations around Canberra.</p>		

A community meeting is scheduled for late August with the Smiths Road Residents' Association to discuss strategic bushfire management actions during the planning stages of the Ingledene carbon forest project. Council thanked the Manager, Forests, PCS for the presentation.

## 8.2 2018-19 Bushfire Operational Plans – review of achievements, in particular the EPSDD BOP

EPSDD provided an overview of the achievements of the PCS EPSDD BOP. This year they achieved 95.3% of the actions required.

The BOP identified 43 prescribed burns, totalling 6559 hectares (ha). A total of 25 burns were completed across an area of 5082 ha. Of the outstanding 1,477 ha across 16 separate burn sites, one burn of 1,297 ha could not be undertaken due to a lack of suitable weather conditions. The remaining 15 burns not undertaken cover only 180 ha, 92 ha of which were assigned to the ACT Rural Fire Service for implementation and the remaining 88 ha is made up of three cultural, seven ecological and two prescribed burns.

Twelve of the burns not delivered was due to unfavourable weather and fuel moisture contents, placing them outside the burn prescriptions. Burns not completed will be considered for implementation in the 2019-20 program. Grazing, slashing and chemical removal to reduce fuel load were all 100% completed. Of the 23 audit and monitoring activities, 22 were completed. The one remaining task will be rolled into the 2019-20 BOP.

Road maintenance was planned across 97 sites, of which 78 sites totalling 229 km were completed. The remaining 19 jobs across 40 km have commenced. A combination of weather, contractor availability and delayed internal approval processes resulted in this work not being completed in 2018-19 and the work will be rolled over into the 2019-20 BOP.

Road side vegetation control to improve access was planned for 117 km of road across 26 sites. A total of 17 sites covering 58 km were completed. The remaining 9 jobs totalling 59 km were not started due to delays in internal approval processes around Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) and will be rolled over into the 2019-20 BOP.

Planned upgrading of fire trails and water crossings involved 47 km of road construction across five sites. Only one of the five jobs was completed and work is continuing on the remaining four tasks covering 46 km and is expected to be completed in 2019-20. Delays in receiving an ESO and internal approval processes resulted in this work not being completed in 2018-19.

Fourteen fire infrastructure development projects were identified in the 2018-19 BOP of which all were completed.

Fire management and fighting equipment purchased in 2018-19 focused on the supply of Fire Personal Protective Equipment and software maintenance for GIS applications. All 16 jobs identified were completed.

A total of 68 training activities were listed in the 2018-19 BOP involving over 4,500 staff hours with a total of 66 activities completed. The two remaining activities were not completed as some interstate travel did not get internal approval.

The training focus in 2018-19 was on consolidating and filling any historical gaps in competency based training and accrediting past experience with nationally recognised training. The numbers of trained fire

staff remains steady which has allowed for an increase of training in IMT, specialist Aviation Roles and Remote Area Fire Team members.

Planning and research activities totalled 56 activities, 46 were completed, with the remaining 10 activities carried forward for delivery as part of the 2019-20 BOP.

All five education projects were completed. These included publication of the 2018-19 BOP on the EPSDD website, advertising of the prescribed burn program, and promoting positions within the unit to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

During the 2018-19 Bushfire Season, EPSDD recruited 19 seasonal fire fighters and undertook fire standby on 91 days. Contracted heavy machinery consisted of two bulldozers and one grader.

Council commends EPSDD on the generally high rate of achievement against the 2018-19 BOP and gave credit to all involved in obtaining this positive result.

### **8.2 (b) Overview of all other BOP plans submitted to the ESA Commissioner – Senior Rural Liaison Officer ACTRFS**

The presentation provided a summary of all the other ACT Government Directorates and Utilities that are required to have a BOP under the SBMPv3.

The Chief Minister's and the Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) are required to have an annual BOP which they currently have in draft and which will be sent soon to the Commissioner for approval. The CMTEDD BOP covers Stromlo Forest Park, Strathnairn, the National Arboretum and Property Group.

The Community Safety Directorate and Housing have not got a replacement for the staff member who drafts their BOP. The draft BOP is expected when the recruitment is finalised.

The Education and Training Directorate does not require a BOP for schools; however the land surrounding Birrigai does. This is currently in draft and scheduled to be sent to the Commissioner shortly.

The EPSDD Suburban Land Agency holds some rural leases and a few other pieces of unleased territory land that they manage. These require two year BOPs and are current until the end of the 2020 financial year.

The Health Directorate manages fire risk at the Miowera Bush Healing Farm.

The JACSD does not require a BOP at present; however, this is in discussion with ESA.

Utilities such as Icon Water have their own BOPs covering water reservoirs, above ground infrastructure and other of their assets.

ACTEW- Electricity Division and ActewAGL – gas do not have a BOP at this stage, most of their land is covered by the BOPs of ACTEW, EPSDD, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

Transgrid does not have a BOP, however its sub-stations are protected under their own bushfire risk management plans.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) has land under their portfolio, which is within the Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) and within the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ). EPSDD manages this land on their behalf and it is reported within the EPSDD PCS BOP. This includes scheduled roadside slashing, and TCCS blocks within the urban area.

Williamsdale has a FarmFire Wise Plan.

TCCS Birrigai PCS has an MOU re fuel management

	<p>The presentation included the land custodian map to show the BOP coverage across the ACT <a href="http://app.actmapi.act.gov.au/actmapi/index.html?viewer=lc">http://app.actmapi.act.gov.au/actmapi/index.html?viewer=lc</a> and a map of the Stromlo Park Bushfire Management Plan 2019-24 was provided.</p> <p>90% of rural landholder leases within the Bushfire Abatement Zone is now covered by a Farm FireWise Plan.</p> <p>Council thanked Chris Condon for the presentation and noted the increase in the number of BOPs in recent years. Council asked what proportion of the land area that should have a BOP has one current.</p> <p>The audit process was raised. Currently fuel management works undertaken are recorded by ACTRFS. ACTRFS do face to face engagement with all the landholders to discuss risks that require mitigation. FarmFire Wise programs are updated every five years.</p>
	<p><b>Action:</b> ACTRFS to provide the proportion of area that is required to have a BOP has one current.</p>
	<p>8.3 EPSDD Quarterly Report This was incorporated in the end of year statement and reported at agenda 8.2.</p>
	<p>8.4 2019-20 EPSDD Bushfire Operational Plan</p> <p>Council was briefed on the 2019-20 Draft EPSDD Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) so that it could provide advice to the ESA Commissioner prior to his approval of the BOP under section 78 (2) of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i>.</p> <p>The presentation provided an overview and comparison of the detailed BOP activities using a series of maps and spreadsheets. This year the BOP applies to EPSDD; PCS Estate, Government Horse Paddocks, Asbestos Taskforce, Transport Canberra &amp; City Services; City Presentation, Roads ACT, NoWaste and Canberra Cemeteries. How the BOP is delivered was explained in detail.</p> <p>Council members not present at the meeting and who would like further detail at a separate meeting with PCS staff could be accommodated within the next week.</p> <p>Council agreed that subject to further comment from members not present at this meeting, it recommends the 2019-2020 EPSDD to the Commissioner.</p> <p>Council thanked Ryan Lawrey for the informative presentation.</p>
	<p><b>Action:</b> Next year form a BFC sub-committee to meet with PCS one week prior to the BOP being presented at the August BFC meeting.</p>
	<p>8.5 Possible Field Trip discussion</p> <p>The Council field trip is scheduled for Thursday 3 October 2019. The proposed itinerary will likely incorporate a visit to several Brigade Sheds, Mt Tennant fire tower and Brandy Flat. ESA will liaise with EPSDD in relation to the logistics for the day.</p>
	<p>8.6 Commence production of the 2019 ACTBFC Preparedness Report to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services</p> <p>Council members were assigned SBMPv3 objectives to follow earlier in the year and confirmed they will take responsibility for drafting those sections for the next BFC annual preparedness report for the Minister for Police and Emergency Service, due towards the end of the year.</p>

	Members agreed to have each of their sections to first draft by 11 September 2019, ready for the 2 October 2019 BFC meeting where a synthesized draft will be discussed.		
	<b>Action:</b> Members to send their sections for the 2019 ACTBFC Preparedness Report to the Chair and David Snell, by 11 September 2019		
9	<b>Update Draft Regional Fire Management Plan</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	EPSDD
	Updated provided in the EPSDD report at Agenda 11.1.		
10	<b>Strategic Bushfire Management Plan</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	CO ACTRFS and Commissioner
	<p>10.1 Update finalisation project SBMPv3 and SBMPv4</p> <p>The SBMPv3 Evaluation Report is progressing and the draft SBMPv4 is through the Cabinet process and is well placed to meet the September 2019 deadline for presentation in the ACT Legislative Assembly.</p> <p>A draft governance framework is being developed to support the SBMPv4 implementation and ongoing monitoring and reporting.</p>		
11	<b>Officials' Reports</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	Officials
	<p>Officials' reports for noting:</p> <p><b>11.1 EPSDD PCS Report</b> The report was taken as read.</p> <p>The following topics were highlighted in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EPSDD 2018-19 Bushfire Operational Plan</li> <li>• The EPSDD 2019-20 Bushfire Operational Plan</li> <li>• Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP)</li> <li>• Seasonal recruitment</li> <li>• AFAC Conference</li> <li>• MOU between ESA and EPSDD</li> <li>• Vehicle replacement program.</li> </ul> <p><b>11.2 Commissioner's Report</b> The Commissioner's report and the July 2019 ESA Snapshot Plan (Edition 13) were taken as read.</p> <p>The following topics were highlighted in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SBMP version 4 is progressing through the Cabinet process and is well placed to meet the September 2019 deadline for presentation in the ACT Legislative Assembly</li> <li>• The 2019-20 budget announced funding for contracting an additional helicopter over the coming bushfire season and to upgrade the facilities at the ESA Hume Training Centre</li> <li>• At the Commissioners and Chief Officers Strategic Committee meeting in July 2019 members were briefed that representatives from the National Resource Sharing Centre (NRSC) recently travelled to the USA and Canada to review and confirm safety systems of deployed Australian and New Zealand personnel</li> <li>• Planning and preparation for the 2019-2020 bushfire season continues across all areas of ESA. A preparedness project has been established to provide assurance on preparation in the lead up to a very concerning bushfire season for the ACT</li> <li>• The bushfire season preparedness briefing with Australian Government agencies is scheduled for Friday 6 September 2019, 9-11:30am at the ESA Hume Training Centre on David Warren Road.</li> </ul> <p><b>11.3 Chief Officer ACTRFS Report</b></p>		

	<p>The report was taken as read.</p> <p>The following topics were highlighted in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SBMPv4 Project Team held a morning tea on Friday 26 July 2019 at ESAHQ thanking those within ESA for their feedback and support on the development of the Plan</li> <li>• Twelve RFS volunteers and staff are being trained as Peer Support Officers in a 3½ day live-in program. ESA has supported the program to encourage and enhance volunteer and staff personal support resources and to introduce appropriate supportive mechanisms.</li> <li>• Over the reporting period a number of burns have been conducted by ACTRFS members across the Territory</li> <li>• CO ACTRFS attended the National Fire Danger Rating System board meeting on 31 July 2019</li> <li>• Planning for the ESA Open Day on November 3 is well underway</li> <li>• Training is progressing with the Village Firefighter course to commence on 10 August 2019, two members are on the Air Based Operators course in Wagga Wagga on 9, 10 and 11 August 2019</li> <li>• ACTRFS joined with NSW RFS to conduct an Aviation Communication &amp; Evaluation course</li> <li>• ACT Operations team attended the NSW RFS pre-season brief in Queanbeyan where the dry conditions were discussed.</li> </ul>		
12	<b>Any other business</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	Nil.		
13	<b>Review and adoption of action items from this meeting</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	Action items were reviewed and agreed to and put in the action table.		
14	<b>Next meeting 4 September 2019</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	The Chair thanked everyone and the meeting concluded at 7pm.		
15	<b>In camera meeting if required</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Chair</b>
	Required.		
16	<b>Council's performance checklist report</b>	<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Council</b>
	No issues were reported.		

**ACTION ITEMS – ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL**

Action Items (OPEN)			at 7 August 2019	
Ref	ACTION	DUE	ACTION OFFICER	STATUS UPDATE
2018	Find a replacement for the vacant Bushfire Council Member	ASAP	CO ACTRFS	An update provided Action pending
190206-09-9.2	Arrange a more user friendly process for Council to access papers.  Action from 7 August 2019 - Arrange a demonstration for Council of how to use the SharePoint site prior to Council accessing meeting papers from the site.	10 July 19  4 September 19	CO ACTRFS  CO ACTRFS	Pending
20190710	Arrange a presentation from Steven Gianakis and the development assessment team regarding land planning and development application process	7 August 19	Secretariat	Pending
20190710	Arrange a dinner for the ACTBFC 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and Christmas, after the December meeting	7 August 19	CO ACTRFS	Pending
20190807-8.2	ACTRFS to provide a summary to explain what proportion of areas that require a BOP have a current BOP	4 September 19	ACTRFS Manager Community Protection	
201908-8.4	Next year form a BFC sub-committee to meet with PCS one week prior to the BOP being presented at the BFC meeting	Late July 19	Council	
20190807-8.6	Members to send their sections to the Chair and David Snell, for the 2019 ACTBFC Preparedness Report to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services by 11 September 2019	11 September 19	Council	

Ref Number	Actions Items (CLOSED)	7 August 2019
20190710-5.1	Draft a response to the Conservation Council in relation to the Molonglo Valley land release objection	
20190710-5.2	Invite Peter Langdon, Manager Forests, PCS to the August BFC meeting to provide a presentation on managing the risk within the plantation estate plus the rationale for planting back in the area previously burnt by wildfire	
201907-10.2	<p>10.2-01 Follow up an apparently missing action for Objective 4 in SBMPv4 – The training of firefighters</p> <p>10.2-02 Follow up an apparently missing action for Objective 4 in SBMPv4 - to ensure IMT training and exercises are conducted</p> <p>10.2-03 Secretariat to draft letter of endorsement of the SBMPv4 from BFC to Minister for Police and Emergency Services</p>	