



**ACT**  
Government



## ACT Bushfire Council

Meeting 4.00 pm to 7pm  
Wednesday 7 June 2017  
Black Mountain Meeting Room  
ESA Headquarters

<b>Council Members</b>	Kevin Jeffery (Chair)	Marion Leiba	Steve Angus
	Cathy Parsons	Sarah Ryan	Mick George
	Christine Goonrey	Natarsha Carney	
	Andrew Joyce	Tony Bartlett	

<b>Officials</b>	Joe Murphy, Chief Officer, ACT Rural Fire Service, ESA
	Neil Cooper, Manager, Fire, Forests and Roads, Parks and Conservation Service, EPSDD
	Mark Brown, Chief Officer, ACT Fire & Rescue, ESA

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### Minutes

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**Agenda item:** 1.0 – *Welcome and Apologies* **Presenter:** Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.  
Apologies were received from Commissioner Lane, Mark Jones and Sandra Lauer.

**Agenda item:** 2.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members **Presenter:** Chair

Andrew Joyce was a late arrival to the meeting and declared a possible conflict of interest in his new job as Manager of Government relations with Lockheed and Martin.

**Agenda item:** 3.0 – *Acceptance of minutes from previous meeting and update on action items arising from previous meetings* **Presenter:** Chair

**Discussion:**

The **minutes from** the previous meeting on 2 May 2017, were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. With the following amendment

Action Item needed to be created for Agenda Item 3. A sub group to draft a discussion paper for the types of information that can be collected to research the history of bushfires in the act landscape.

Moved: Tony Bartlett Seconded: Natarsha Carney

**Agenda item:** 4.0 – *Correspondence for noting* **Presenter:** Chair

**Discussion:**

Nil.

**Action:**

**Agenda item:** 5.0 – Rural landholder Slip On units

**Presenter:** Joe Murphy

**Discussion:**

Chief Officer Joe Murphy gave the Council the background information on ESA issued land holder slip on units. In 2003 ESA issued 'slip on' fire units to local rural leases. The units were issued with no cost to the landholder and are maintained by the ESA workshops with an annual inspection.

The units when issued had some requirements that the landholders were responsible for, Ongoing training, wearing appropriate PPE, maintain the unit in-between servicing and to be a member of the local RFS Brigade. Over the years these requirements haven't been adhered to, Some properties have changed hands and the slip on units have reached their end of economical use. If a land holder doesn't wish to receive the slip on unit then they will be disposed of at a government auction facility.

Mr Murphy asked Council that they support his proposal to dispose of the slip on units to current landholders at no cost. The SOG and the Land Holders association have already been notified of the proposal and they both have given it their support.

The disposed units won't be replaced with newer ones. Many landholders have slip on units that they have purchased personally. The Farm fire wise program has greatly assisted the landholders in educating them in management of fire on their properties and their obligations towards any fire incident. Private slip on units are integrated into farm fire wise plans.

Kevin Jeffery's understands the reason for the disposal but personally doesn't support the program being scrapped totally; maybe the slip on program could be looked at again in years to come.

**Outcome:**

Council supported the ACTRFS to dispose of the slip on units to landholders at no cost and the units will not be replaced.

**Agenda item:** 6.0 – Topics from the 2017 ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan

**Presenter:** Neil Cooper and Joe Murphy

**Discussion:**

6.1 — BFC to give details about the type of data required for the August presentation on the history of bushfires in the ACT and the history of aviation support for bushfires

Discussion paper on Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Bushfire Mitigation and Control Measures in the ACT was discussed by the members.

Are the current fire mitigation efforts working? What data collection and collation is required, along with fire history records to support investment into mitigation works?

Look at long term goals and the outcomes in risk reduction need to be compared.

The data from aviation needs to be a separate collection set, the aviation effectiveness compared to other fire mitigation strategies are two different outcomes.

Questions need to be clear for any data requests; The paper is a framework for discussion.

What data can Council use to determine areas of focus?

The next step for Council is to determine what data sets are available and what can Council do with the data to analyze the effectiveness of bushfire prevention.

Is funding bushfire prevention a good use of funds or is a balance of response and prevention a better funding option?

Council could use data to form a position or discussion paper.

Environmental impact needs to be part of the data collection.

Data collection needs to involve both private and public land.

National bodies are starting to concentrate more on bushfire prevention then response.

Past data and fire history has been poorly collected; hopefully this process can identify data quality issues and a change be driven by Council.

The suggested approach is for Council to write to the CO ACT RFS requesting detailed information to form data for the report and also to incorporate the report approach and highlight the need for it to be developed into the BFC Annual Report to the Minister.

A concept paper is to be written into the Annual Report to the Minister detailing that Council is aware of prevention strategies currently in place and that data collection in the past hasn't been too rigorous. Council would recommend a more systematic approach to data collection and analyzing of collected data based on the discussion paper.

New Bushfire Council after appointments to take carriage of this paper.

Future Council to investigate if funding could be sourced to engage with a masters or PHD student to assist with the project.

**Action:** Council to write to the CO ACT RFS and relevant stakeholders requesting detailed information to form data for the Annual Preparedness Report to the Minister.

## 6.2 — Research into vegetation mapping using LIDAR and the use of collected data.

Mr Steve Wilkes from Parks Conservation Service gave a presentation to the members of Council on the vegetation mapping and data collection.

LIDAR (light detection and Ranging) is being used to map all the vegetation within the Territory. The LIDAR is attached to a fixed wing aircraft and flown in a predetermined mapping sequence. The data is collected in HD (high definition) 10m x 10m squares

Previous mapping was done 5 yrs ago but was only in 2D where the latest data is now 3D allowing for the collection of very accurate vegetation height data.

The LIDAR data provides the elevation, slope and aspect of the landscape. Tree height and canopy dimensions are possible showing fuel structure including ladder fuels.

Data can assist to help with classifying of fuel types. Data can be segregated to look at a particular area, e.g. just land formation removing vegetation from the data sets.

The LIDAR data is a new tool to help with fire modelling and can be used with fire prediction software (phoenix) to predict fire progression.

ESA Risk and Planning is using the LIDAR data to assess building standard requirements and bushfire impact ratings. Urban fire fuel assessments can be carried out using the LIDAR to make sure there is compliance to the Australian Standard for Fuel Management.

Ground truthing has been carried out to confirm the collected data.

The Council thanked Mr Wilkes for his presentation.

### **6.3 Update on the Strategic Reform Agenda Programme**

Mr Mark Jones was an apology for this meeting. Mr Jones is co-ordinating projects as part of the SRA Programme; if Council has any questions relating to the Programme they are to formally direct questions to Mr Jones in writing.

Council would like the Commissioner provide an update on the Strategic Reform Agenda Programme at the next Council meeting.

**Action** – Commissioner Lane to provide Council with an update on the SRAP at the next meeting.

### **6.4 Update on the AFAC National Burning Project by Neil Cooper**

The project is due to end in June.

The project is a Commonwealth Government funded program (approx \$2 million dollars) to develop a national standard for prescribed burning.

The aim of the project is to bring all aspects of prescribed burning together, principles, procedures, risk management and protocols form part of the program, by having a National standard to work to it allows resources to assist other states and agencies when their burning program is being implemented.

AFAC and FFMG are joint contributors to the project.

Mr Cooper handed out to the group copies of the burning frameworks; copies of the frameworks will be available from the AFAC bookshop.

The frameworks will be followed by all AFAC members agencies, giving a National approach to burning.

The process of developing the frameworks was quite challenging as Australia is very diverse in terrain, climate and vegetation type.

AFAC looking at setting up a virtual Centre of Excellence. The products will be available online with help from National trainers delivering the framework, resulting in a consistent messaging and training. ADAR will be the overseeing board and it is hoped the Centre could be up and running within 12 months.

Mr Cooper offered for Deb Sparks and Greg Esnouf, who were part of the project to attend a Council meeting.

Council supports the National Burning Projects Frameworks and is looking forward to them being out in the agencies.

### **6.5 Update on the National Fire Danger Rating System by Joe Murphy**

Mr Murphy gave Council an update on the National Fire Danger Rating System.

NSWRFS is developing a prototype for the season to compare the proposed new system against the current McAuther Meter.

Rohan Scott (ACTRFS) and Neil Cooper (PCS) attended an Operational input meeting at NSWRFHQ Tuesday 6th June, there will be 2 groups providing input into the project. One operational and one scientific. Both groups will provide valuable data to allow the project to hopefully achieve a National rating system that can be used for all states of Australia.

This Fire season the prototype will be used with validation of data collected by all agencies involved in the project. The better the quality of the data will result in a better rating system. Agencies will be asked to collect real time data at incidents and HRs during the forthcoming season. Flame height, rate of spread, terrain, vegetation types, slope and aspect are some of the data sources needed to be gathered.

NSWRFS have set up a project team to support the project. Rob Rogers is the Chair and there is a professional project manager employed by AFAC overseeing the project.

## Action:

**Agenda item:** 7.0 – Commissioner’s Report to BFC

**Presenter:** Commissioner

## Discussion:

The Commissioners report was handed out to the group.

### Healthy lifestyle

In the 2017-18 ACT Budget, the ACT Government announced a \$100 annual subsidy for ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) volunteers for fitness programs and gym memberships. This will provide a positive impact on the cost of living for firefighting volunteers by reducing their out of pocket expenses for fitness-related activities.

ACTRFS require all active volunteers to undertake annual standardised fitness tests to ascertain their fitness for duty. In line with the 2016 Election commitment, this announcement is a tangible means by which the ACT Government will encourage and support volunteers to maintain the required fitness standard.

### Portaloos

The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) recently established an internal working group, including officers from each of the emergency services, to develop a whole-of-organisation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the provision of toilet facilities at emergency incidents. The internal working group has met and are close to finalising a whole-of-ESA procedure, which essentially strengthens procedures currently in place within each of the emergency services. Once the SOP is finalised it will be shared with all ACTRFS staff and volunteers.

The ESA procedure will give Incident Controllers some guidance when determining the circumstances under which toilet facilities will be provided at an emergency incident. This will include guidance on whether to deploy ACT Fire & Rescue’s Decontamination POD (which contains a toilet and showers) or portable toilets. In making this decision, the Incident Controller may take into account matters such as the location, size, scale, and complexity of the emergency incident, and whether any facilities are already available at or near the Staging Area or Forward Command Point.

### Reconciliation Week – Reconciliation Action Plan Artwork

As part of our Reconciliation Week celebrations JACS officially unveiled artworks painted during the launch of the 2016-2019 JACS Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (the RAP). The artworks will circulate through all business units, beginning with the ESA.

At this event each Business Unit Head presented a written acknowledgment of the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which JACS conducts our activities and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

Displaying a written Acknowledgment of Country at all business units is part of the commitment under the RAP to demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities by embedding cultural protocols as part of the way our organisation functions (Respect Action 2 (A) (vi)).

Displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in all business units is part of the commitment under the RAP to demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities by reflecting language and culture in the workplace (Respect Action 3 (D)).

### Jones Motion

The Shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services put forward a motion that is currently before the assembly. It calls for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in August:

- how the BAZ is controlled in regards to planning and operations and what operational procedures are in place to protect the ACT’s urban and rural areas; and
- what planning or actions the ACT Emergency Services Agency is undertaking for when the built up areas encroach onto the New South Wales border.

### Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)

The Chief Officer - ACTRFS was successful in gaining funding from the Natural Disaster Resilience Program to provide AEDs into all ACTRFS operational vehicles. The aim was to install the AEDs after the 2016-17 bushfire season, and in preparation for the next bushfire season. All of the AEDs have now been installed. The AEDs are user friendly and training in their use is covered in all basic First Aid courses.

Council would like the Commissioner to report back on how the 2017-2018 budget will affect the ESA and ACTRFS.

**Action:**

Commissioner to report to Council how the budget will affect the ESA and ACTRFS

**Agenda item:** *8.0 – Land Manager’s Report to BFC*

**Presenter:** Neil Cooper

**Discussion:**

Forest Fire Management Review completed and currently considering the draft report.

First draft of the ACT Code of Operational Procedures and one of the manuals (Roads) that sit beneath this was handed to senior managers today. Next 6 weeks to provide feedback and then we will be very near finalisation. This will address the planning legislation and restrictions that currently apply. Legislative change is going through as we speak to allow all operations that occur within the Code to be exempt from DA requirements, and to rationalise the environmental approval process.

BOP is going very well — 630 completed out of 767 jobs — see handout. Only 12 jobs have not been started!

Training — ACT Parks have driven the development of a national Fire weather course -we will be bringing that to the ACT in July for all PCS fire fighters to complete.

Together with NSW Parks, ACTPCS ran a Div Comm course which had a number of RFS people involved. Following this the three land management agencies from NSW and ACT brought the IMT course to Canberra and again we had a mix of participants including RFS and NSWDPPI.

The Rally Of Canberra was again successfully run on ACTPCS roads - the feedback from participants was that they were the best roads they have competed on. Echoed by the rally organisers.

Field trip for Dr Annie Lane and other EPSDD people (including several RFS) to look at Trittering — result was signed ESO. Hopefully Code will avoid having to go through this process.

We have now taken ownership of another two G. Wagons with one more to come before summer- total now 4.

Mr Cooper attended a series of meetings in Melbourne - Hazardous Trees, Rural land Managers, FFMG and National Burning Project.

Tony Scherl and Brian Levine were invited as guest speakers to the NSW National Parks Management Workshop where they spoke on the MOU between ACTPCS/NSWNPWS/NSW Forest Corporation and the PBDST Seasonal recruitment has commenced and the information night will be in two weeks time.

Dietician engaged to look at all meals provided during fire season.

**Action:**

**Agenda item:** *9.0 – Chief Officer ACT Rural Fire Service Report to BFC*

**Presenter:** Joe Murphy

**Discussion:**

The RFS Long Service awards were held on 10 May 2017 recognising 29 members with 10, 20 and 30 year service medals along with 3 Chief Officer Awards. The night was also the opportunity to launch “Fire on the Limestone Plains”, the book authored and compiled by Pat Barling.

Mr Murphy attended the National Fire Danger Rating System Project board meeting to discuss the progress of the prototype scheduled to be tested this coming fire season. The project is on schedule, with a number of expert panels being formed to provide advice and input to the prototype. The project is led by NSWRFs.

Mr Murphy attended the VBA Gala dinner with the Minister, Senior Advisor and A/g Commissioner Mark Brown. It was a good night with fine food and company.

As previously advised RFS answered a large number of Questions on Notice following the Annual Report Hearings. The responses are now public and can be found at:

[http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1057864/2-05-17-Min-for-Police-and-Emergency-Services-QoN-responses-combined.pdf](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1057864/2-05-17-Min-for-Police-and-Emergency-Services-QoN-responses-combined.pdf)

There were 22 applications were received for BFC positions with a panel being formed.

Mr Woods returned from leave and is back in his substantive role as Operations Manager, Mr Simakoff-Ellims in Senior Operations Officer role and Mr Davies overseeing the Operational Logistics area.

A number of Brigades assisted the National Capital Authority with a Hazard Reduction burn, at Yarralumla. Conditions on the day were ideal and all reports are that the burn was a great success, our thanks to all the crews who attended. A number of key projects are progressing in the operations area including the building improvements at Molonglo and Guises Creek, communications equipment replacement program, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) review and ongoing tanker replacement arrangements for the Jerrabomberra Heavy Tanker.

The Automated Electronic Devices (AED's) have been installed in all RFS vehicles; hopefully they will never need to be used, but its piece of mind knowing we have them available if required for our members and the community. The Helmet Audit has been largely completed but is now waiting on further replacement parts for finalisation.

Capital Works and Infrastructure (CWI) have announced the annual Test and Tag schedule; this is to commence the week starting 5 June 2017.

Mr Woods is currently reviewing a number of documents including the Duty Officer Manual, SOPS and working with the Group Officers on their manual.

ACTRFS are now looking to address the pre-season schedule and update this major program for the Service each year.

Mr Scott has taken over the role of acting Manager Membership and Training, until the end of June when Brian Murphy is due to return from extended leave with Michael Joyce assisting with SBMP project delivery.

Mr Ribbons is still working off line finishing off the Advanced Firefighter RPL and improving the training material and presentations for the AF-T and AF-P competencies. There are 8 members left to assess at the BF level. Fourteen (14) members have successfully completed the recent Crew Leader course taking our numbers to 40 qualified once they have completed their post course assessments. We continue to work with members to complete the CL RPL process and this is progressing well.

Nine members of the service attended the Level 2 IMT training at Hume over 5 days. Three completed the IC role, 2 Operations, 3 Planning and 1 Logistics. This has advanced the knowledge and training of existing IMT members. The Village Firefighter course will be run over June. 16 members have nominated for the course with most Brigades represented. The course is being held at the Hume training Centre.

ACTRFS currently have 50 prospective new recruits who will be invited to join the next BF course currently scheduled for September 2017.

The ACTRFS will look at conducting 2 BF courses simultaneously to allow for all prospective recruits to be trained.

The Community Bushfire Protection Team are finalising Rural Grant applications from rural landholders to enable the program to be completed by the financial year end with all projects completed.

The team have liaised with Directorates to enable the approval of 2 new Bushfire Operational Plans (BOPs), LDA and CMETDD by ESA Commissioner. The team are continuing to audit BOP Activities with a focus on prescribed burns undertaken within the last quarter.

The team was involved in a tritter field Inspection with PCS and EPSDD. RFS endorses this mechanical treatment to meet Bushfire Management Access Standards and enhance road and fire trail safety. Approximately 8 Farm FireWise plans have been completed in the last quarter.

**Action:**

**Agenda item:** 10.0 – Other Business

**Presenter:** Chair

**Discussion:**

Council Field trip to be deferred to the new incoming Council following appointments.

Final meeting of the current serving Council September. Members would like a dinner meeting. Council has asked if Lynda could investigate restaurants suitable for the final Council meeting.

Conservation Council Bushfire symposium 21 -22 July 2017, details will be supplied or are available on the NPA website.

Annual report will need to be into the Minister by the end of September. The chair asked that a list of chapters be sent out to Council members and members volunteer to write a section of the report.

The Council has asked Kevin to pass on best wishes to Val Jeffery who currently is unwell.

The Chair thanked all members for their attendance at the June Meeting.

**Action:**

Chapters to be sent out to Council members and Sarah will co-ordinate the writing of the report and maybe change the framework.

Secretariat to investigate restaurants suitable for the final Council meeting.

**Agenda item:** 11.0 – Next Meeting

**Presenter:** Chair

Next Meeting Wednesday 5 July 2017

**Closing:** The meeting closed at 18:32pm.







## ACT Bushfire Council Meeting Implementation of Action Items

### Active items for current meeting

Action Item / Issue	Originating Meeting date	Assigned To	Meeting Due Date	Status	Comments
Agenda item 8 – Write to the Commissioner inquiring about his role in Canberra’s surrounding region during high fire danger days.	1 February 2017	Chair	1 March 2017	Pending	Chair to provide a verbal report at the May meeting
Agenda item 6 – IBFC would like to be a invited guests at the Senior Operations Group (Operational Officers) and the Senior Management Group (Administrative Officers) next meetings in July and August	3 May 2017	Secretariat			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretariat provided the information to the Senior Operations Manager</li> <li>• Senior Operations Manager suggested this occur when the new Council is formed</li> </ul>
Outcome from Agenda item 5 – Rural landholder Slip On units	7 June 2017	N/A			Council supported the ACTRFS to dispose of the slip on units to landholders at no cost and the units will not be replaced
Agenda item 6 6.2 – BFC to give details about the type of data required for the August presentation on the history of bushfires in the ACT and the history of aviation support for bushfires. 1) <b>Action:</b> Council to write to the CO ACT RFS and relevant stakeholders requesting detailed information to form data for the Annual Preparedness Report to the Minister. 6.3 – Update on the Strategic Reform Agenda Programme <b>Action</b> – Commissioner Lane to provide Council with an	7 June 2017	6.2 – Council  6.3 – Commissioner	5 July 2017		

Action Item / Issue	Originating Meeting date	Assigned To	Meeting Due Date	Status	Comments
update on the SRAP at the next meeting.					
Agenda item 7 – Commissioner to report to Council how the budget will affect the ESA and ACTRFS	7 June 2017	Commissioner	5 July 2017		
Agenda item 10 – Annual report to the Minister by the end of September. Chapters to be sent out to Council members and Sarah will co-ordinate the writing of the report and maybe change the framework. Agenda item 10 – Secretariat to investigate restaurants suitable for the final Council meeting.	7 June 2017		5 July 2017		

#### Completed Items

Action Item / Issue1	Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed/Revised completion date	Date completed
Agenda 6 - Provide BFC with a copy of the Community Engagement Calendar of events when endorsed and provide another update at the August BFC Meeting	1 April 2017	Secretariat	May 2017	Completed
Agenda 8 - Secretariat to include Trent Penman from AFAC to the May BFC Meeting	1 April 2017	Secretariat	3 May 2017	Completed
Agenda 11 - Secretariat to email BFC the comments they provided in relation to the LCC Draft Plan	1 April 2017	Secretariat	3 May 2017	Completed
Agenda 12 - Secretariat to rearrange the ACT Bushfire Council Business Plan for June.	1 April 2017	Secretariat	3 May 2017	Completed
Agenda 7 – ESA Acting Commissioner written response to BFC in relation to the outcomes of the Annual Report Hearings (QONs) re portable toilets (portaloo's)	1 April 2017	A/g Commissioner	3 May 2017	Completed
Agenda 6 – Update the BFC Business Plan adding in the August section: ACTRFS to provide a presentation on the history of bushfires in the ACT and the history of aviation support for bushfires	3 May 2017	Secretariat	2 August 2017	Completed