



ACT Bushfire Council Meeting

3rdth Sep 2014
16:00 to 18:40
Black Mountain 1 & 2
Meeting Rooms
ACTESA Headquarters

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| Chair: | Kevin Jeffery (KJ) Cathy Parsons (part Chaired TAMS discussion) | Secretariat: Leandra Parker Minute Taker: Richard Woods (RW) |
| Attendees: | Michael Lonergan (ML), Member Cathy Parsons (CP), Member Marion Leiba (ML), Member Andrew Joyce (AJ), Member Tony Bartlett (TB), Member | Andrew Stark(AS), CO ACTRFS Scott Farquhar (SF), A/g Mgr Fire Forest and Roads, PCS Guests: Daniel Iglesias, Director, TAMS |

Minutes

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| Agenda item: | 1.0 – Apologies | Presenter: | Chair |
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Nicola Lewis (leave of absence), Discussion was held on the length of Ms Lewis’s leave of absence from Council meetings. Concern was also raised on prolonged period of leave that perhaps the position could be filled by another person.

Christine Goonrey, Commissioner Lane, Chief Officer ACTF&R

Action:

- Council to consider temporary filling of Ms Lewis’s position on Council.

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| Agenda | 2.0 – Disclosure of “Conflict of Interests” of Council Members | Presenter: | Chair |
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No Conflict of Interests reported by Council Members.

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| Agenda item: | 3.0 – Acceptance of minutes of 6 August 2014 | Presenter: | Chair |
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Discussion: The minutes from the previous meeting held on 5 August 2014 were tabled.

The Council queried the whereabouts of the May 2014 minutes. CORFS advised that they had been misplaced.

Mr Bartlett raised the issue that the agenda item on Management of TAMS Fire Management Unit was not an appropriate record of discussion. There needed to be a précis of the key points from the agenda papers that had been prepared with some indication of member’s comments and the decision to write to TAMS DG. It was agreed that this item would be rewritten and the minutes recirculated.

Action:

- Council members to forward their retained notes from May meeting and forward to CORFS to recreated draft minutes.
- CORFS to rewrite members comments relating to TAMS Fire Management Unit in August minutes and recirculate.

Agenda item: **4.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings** **Presenter:** **Chair**

Discussion: Refer to implementation of action items report (Attachment A).

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

Discussion: **Incoming Correspondence:**

Letter received from Director General TAMS to Council relating to management of TAMS FMU.

Letter received from Director General TAMS to Commissioner relating to the Draft 2014-15 TAM BOP. (copies distributed to Council 26 August 14 for Council to comment).

Outgoing Correspondence:

Nil

Agenda item: **6.0 – TAMS Fire Management Section, Staff Capacity Issues** **Presenter:** **Daniel Iglesias**

Discussion: Daniel started by acknowledging Neil Cooper's strong conviction and drive with leading the TAMS Forestry and Fire Management Team, Daniel reassured council, that the team leading the Forestry and Fire Management area in Neil's absence are the right people in the right positions to provide coverage for the upcoming Bushfire season. He explained that TAMS had a total of 47 people in the FMU and agreed to provide Council with an organisation chart of this structure.

The team has currently started the Bushfire Operations Plan, rolling out the 2014/15 BOP, planning has commenced towards the Capital works for this year, work on Mount Franklin Road has commenced as well as Seasonal who commenced 1st September 2014.

Ms Parsons expressed Council's concerns regarding the absence of Dylan Kendall over the upcoming bushfire season. Daniel reassured Council of the skills and experience held by the member who'll be acting in Dylan's position.

Mr Bartlett spoke about his concerns about council not having receiving a detailed briefing on the upcoming 2014/15 BOP, Daniel suggested TAMS could provide Council with a detailed briefing next week, council agreed. Tony also expressed his concerns regarding the two month delay in the 2014/15 BOP presentation by TAMS to Council compared to the previous two years and the fact that this meant Council members had to prepare both the BOP report to the Commission and the annual report to the Minister in the one month. Andrew Stark advised that the delay was due to TM1 software updates. Tony raised the 76% achievement of planned training activities in 2013/14 and asked why approvals were being withheld for attendance at interstate training and fire meetings. Daniel replied that he could not say why TAMS staff did not go to all the planned fire conferences.

In line with the Government's agreed responses to the recommendations from the Auditor General's Report, Tony asked TAMS of the status of the reports on the annual Review of the Regional Fire Management Plans and expenditure of funds against the 2013-14 BOP. Daniel indicated that he would arrange for these reports to be provided to Council.

Michael Lonergan raised the issue of TAMS commitment to maintaining the Fire Management Unit given its attempt to disband it in 2011. Daniel indicated that TAMS intended to maintain the FMU in its current form.

Tony Bartlett asked about the status of morale in the TAMS Fire Management team, and

whether TAMS management had briefed the fire team on what was happening in relation to Neil Cooper's prolonged absence. Daniel said that there were no indicators of poor morale and that he was constrained by privacy issues in explaining this matter to staff.

Action:

- D Iglesias to provide council with TAMS FMU organisation chart.
- TAMS to provide Council members with a detailed briefing on the 2014-15 BOP in the second week of August.
- TAMS to provide Council with a report on the review of the Regional Fire Management Plans and the expenditure of funds against the 2013-14 BOP.

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| Agenda item: | 7.0 – ESA Commissioner's Report to BFC | Presenter: | Andrew Stark |
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Discussion:

Andrew Stark Tabled Commissioners Report.

Council discussed:

- The request for advice on RFMPs noting that Council needed an update from TAMS on this before providing advice.
- BOP: Request for comment by 17 September noting that this could only be prepared after TAMS gave BFC the detailed briefing.
- Annual Report to Minister and what information Council needed from ESA, noting the requests for information on:
 - Annual report on progress of delivery (not development) of SDMP;
 - The status of the review of the SBMP Implementation Working Group;
 - The status of the Treasury Review to ESA;
 - The Rationale for prolonged delays in filling vacant positions within RFS;
 - The information on qualifications and experience for RFS/TAMS officers nominated for Level 3 IMT positions.

Ms Parsons request CO RFS to provide Council with information he had received from the BoM briefing relating to the forecast for the next 3 months.

Actions:

- Commissioner's Report to be attached to September minutes and distributed.
- CORFS to provide Council with copy of BoM briefing relating to the forecast for next 3 months.

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| Agenda item: | 8.0 – RFS Chief Officers Report to BFC | Presenter: | Andrew Stark |
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Discussion:

RFS Ops August 2014

As tabled.

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| Agenda item: | 9.0 – TAMS Land Managers Report to BFC | Presenter: | Scott Farquhar |
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Discussion:

1. The draft 2014-15 TAMS BOP has been provided to the Commissioner of the ESA for review. Staff are working on activities detailed in the draft BOP.
2. Discussion was held on the TAMS BOP and it was agreed that a subcommittee of Ms Parsons, Mr Bartlett and Ms Leiba would meet with TAMS staff to be briefed on the rationale and details of the BOP in the coming week.
3. The focus for the FMU has been preparing for the 2014-15 bushfire season.
 - The first group of seasonal fire crew has been engaged and is currently

undergoing training (commenced 1 September 2014). These recruits will be available before the commencement of the 2014-15 bushfire season.

- The second group of seasonal fire crew will commence on 3 November 2014. They will be available as the season reaches its peak.
 - Seasonal plant contracts are in place.
 - Bushfire mowing contracts are in place.
 - Two bushfire preparedness workshops have been commenced or completed, with a third planned for late September. Attendance by all TAMS firefighters is compulsory.
 - Firefighter fitness assessments have commenced and are ongoing - successful completion is compulsory for all TAMS firefighters.
 - Vehicle and equipment checks are well advanced and scheduled for completion prior to the commencement of the bushfire season.
 - Rostering for officers, IMT / Duty Coordinators and crews is well advanced.
 - The TAMS – ESA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is expected to be signed off in the next week.
 - Parks and the Rural Fire Service met on 27 August 2014 as part of pre-season preparedness and planning. A very productive meeting and discussed a range of issues from communication to weather products and format.
 - Two nominations for Parks Brigade officers to supplement the current numbers were endorsed by the CO RFS.
4. TAMS has completed 4 burns from the draft BOP over the last month including 3 last weekend (Pine Island, Belconnen Way, Majura Pines) as well as a number of additional debris / pile burns.
 5. Roadside veg mulchers have completed nearly 100 kms of roadside veg works on Brindabella Rd, Corin Dam Rd and Boboyan Rds.
 6. Similar works to continue on PCS Fire Trails within Namadgi NNP and prep works for upcoming rural HRB's.
 7. Two FMU staff are currently at AFAC – one will present a paper and the other a poster.
 8. Two TAMS staff are currently on deployment in British Columbia, Canada and have been responsible for planning and implementing back burning operations. Season ending weather events have resulted in their deployment lengths being reduced with one returning on 7/9/14 and the other on 13/9/14. The experience and skills that they will bring back to the ACT will be invaluable.
 9. Work continues jointly between PCS and ESA on the implementation of the Auditor General's report.
 10. The deployments and hazard reduction burning have generated some media interest.
 11. Completed a revamp of our HR Burn public notification
 12. A recruitment process has been undertaken to fill a project officer role to manage the FMU capital works program (including Mt Franklin and the planning and approval of a number of capital works activities), Blue Range Fire Plan and co-ordinate TAMS input into Recommendation 14 of the Auditor-General's Report into Bushfire Preparedness ie The Emergency Services Agency, the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should strengthen across-Government delivery of major projects in the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and Regional Fire Management Plans.

Action:

- TAMS A/g Mgr Fire Forest and Roads, PCS to arrange for Sub Committee - Ms Parsons, Mr Bartlett and Ms Leiba to be briefed on the rationale and details of BOP
- TAMS to provide copies of ESA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to Council.

Agenda item:

10.0 – BOP Audit

Presenter: Andrew Stark

Discussion:

RFS Chief Officer tabled the 13/14 BOP Audit Report and outlined key finding from this report.

Council asked the RFS Chief Officer to outline the process to conduct the audit. Andrew described the combination of field and desktop audits and discussions with key TAMS staff that informed the outcome of the audits of all the BOPs.

RFS CO outlined not only the quantum of the work achieved but also the high quality of a number of activities including the road upgrades and maintenance conducted by TAMS and its contractors.

Council noted that the audit recorded some gaps in the area of training and Andrew identified that some of the actions had been completed but not recorded in the transition to the TM1 database.

Council acknowledged the thoroughness of RFS audit process and endorsed the audit report.

Agenda item: 11.0 – *Business Plan Update*

Presenter: Chair

Discussion:

Chair tabled the Business Plan DRAFT and members discussed the options for progressing this plan

Council discussed time spent on the BOP and Annual Report, and noted that 288hrs spent on the first cull, 188hrs on the second cull and 476 spent on the third cull, and asked CORFS if they would be remunerated.

Ms Parsons suggested a draft letter be prepared for the Minister on BFC's achievements in the past year. A report is to be prepared indicating BFC value for money, highlighting out of session work.

CORFS suggested and supported an analysis of the 188hrs to identify which of the 188hrs should be compensated.

Ms Parsons asked CORFS if additional remuneration would impact on the BFC budget. CORFS informed there was no separate line for the Council operating budget as RFS met all costs incurred by Council.

Ms Parsons further asked if a summary of costs could be provided to Council from last financial year as this would support Council's letter to the Minister.

Discussion was held whether the Terms of Reference needed to be reviewed in relation to reimbursement.

CORFS suggested a way forward for each Council member to prioritise the hours and forward to Chair, with another cut be undertaken then place the structure around for payments to be processed. There may need to be an adjustment in the Terms of Reference indicating additional activities.

Council agreed for Chair to write to the Minister with the Business Plan pointing out the resources that members commit both at meetings and in unpaid time outside of that.

The following changes were proposed to the BP schedule:

- Ms Parsons asked if the Blue Range brief could be discussed at the October meeting, with the field trip in November and for outcomes to be discussed in December meeting. It was suggested the SBMP be pushed back to November, research program to December with Blue Range coming forward to October.
- CORFS Briefing status of planning around Blue Range in October meeting.
- The pre-season report to the Minister was discussed by BFC Members.
- Andrew Joyce offered to take the lead on coordinating and collating the chapters completed by BFC members
- Andrew Joyce asked for BFC members to forward/copy request for information from ACTRFS and Parks to assist him
- Members broadly identified to complete chapters that they had undertaken last year
- Chair identified that he would write to Minister re timing of report and seek an extension.

CORFS invited Council to attend a presentation to be held at ANU on 16 September. An overview of the program was provided.

Actions:

- Chair to write to Minister with the Business Plan pointing out the resources that members commit both at meetings and in unpaid time outside of that.
- Members to provide work analysis to Chair on additional out of session activities.
- Council to review and provide comment to Chair on the BFC Terms of Reference relating to remuneration and to include as an agenda item for February 2015 meeting.
- Chair to write to Minister re timing of report and seek an extension on Blue Range
- Andrew Joyce to coordinate and collate the chapters completed by BFC members.
- BFC members to forward/copy request to Andrew Joyce relating to ACTRFS and Parks for Business Plans
- CORFS to arrange for Blue Range to be discussed at October meeting.
- CORFS to confirm scheduling of field trip for end of November.
- CORFS to push back SBMP to November, with Research Program to December
- CORFS to include outcomes of all three in December meeting.

12.0 – PAC Bushfire Preparedness**Presenter: Tony Bartlett****Discussion:**

Discussion regarding the PAC and possible submission by BFC and the merits of BFC explaining the monitoring and reporting it undertakes each year in relation to implementation of the Auditor General's report, Bushfire Operations Plans and Preparedness.

CORFS was asked to seek advice from the Minister on whether or not BFC could contribute to the PAC inquiry.

Mr Bartlett expressed his concern that this inquiry had not been drawn to BFC's attention despite the Terms of Reference being published in April.

It was agreed that if Council were to make a submission it would be an oral one.

Action:

- CORFS to seek advice on whether BFC could contribute to the PAC Inquiry.

**Next meeting to be held 1 October 2014 @ 1600hrs
Black Mountain meeting rooms 1 & 2 - ESA Headquarters**