



ACT Multi Hazard Advisory Council Minutes

Date: 5 July 2023

Time: 4 pm – 7 pm

Location: ESA HQ, 9 Amberley Avenue Fairbairn, Webex

Attendance	
Chair	Sally Troy – Chair, ACT Multi Hazards Advisory Council
Attendees	Dylan Kendall – Deputy Chair, ACT Multi Hazards Advisory Council Tony Bartlett – Member Len Morris – Member Asha Naznin – Member Nina Allen – Member
Apologies	Commissioner – Georgeina Whelan Stephen Alegria – EBM, EPSDD John Brickhill – Member Marta Yebra – Member
Guests	Rohan Scott – Chief Officer, ACTRFS (online) Bren Burkevics – EGM, EPSDD Jon Peach – EGM, SEMD David Rose – Strategic Planning, ACTSES
Secretariat	Lianna Luton – Executive Officer Judith Bielleman – HorizonOne Recruitment (Minute taking)

1. Welcome and Apologies

On behalf of the Council, the Chair acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the land of the Ngunnawal, the Ngambri and other traditional owners. She paid respects to elders past, present and emerging and acknowledged that their connection to the land continues and is supported by the Council.

2. Declarations of Interest

Nil

3. Acceptance of Minutes from 7 June 2023 meeting.

The draft minutes were accepted as a true record with no amendments.

4. Review of Council Action items

Council action items were reviewed and updated. It was agreed the item concerning the review of council effectiveness would become an annual discussion item and be revisited in May 2024. The requirement for presentations to be included with meeting papers will also be added to the operating protocols and the protocols will be included in an induction pack for new Council appointees.

The Chair updated the Council on her meeting with the Minister's Chief of Staff. Issues raised included the review of council effectiveness, the Woden flood risk issue and the Government's overall objectives for the



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Council. A discussion was also held on the Council's expanded responsibility for multi-hazards, which has resulted in a more strategic focus, and the need for greater connections to policy arms of directorates rather than operational ones. Another meeting is being planned with a Senior Advisor who will be the new contact for the Council.

The Chair also advised of her meeting with Richard Glenn, Director General of the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate. She noted a discussion was held on whether the Council should sit with the Security and Emergency Management Division in JACS rather than ESA, and advised the Council would welcome more policy links to JACS and seek to still maintain a close connection with ESA. The Director-General also confirmed the reports prepared by the Council have been very useful and thanked them for their comments on the Heatwave plan. He expressed an interest in attending an upcoming meeting and the Chair advised Council members that the Minister could potentially be attending a future meeting too.

The Chair noted that in the discussion with the Director-General the issue of air quality in relation to smoke, dust and pollen had been raised as another hazard that could be within the Council's remit. She proposed the Council seek the Minister's confirmation this is an area for the Council to advise upon. She also suggested more information be sought on what work is currently being done on the issue of air quality.

Action: Chair to write to the Minister to confirm if air quality is a matter that falls within the Council's remit. Advice to also be sought on the work being done on air quality at a strategic level.

Person responsible: Chair to draft a letter and circulate to members for comment.

Action: Council's final response to the Heatwave Plan and Elevated Fire Danger Plan to be circulated to members.

Person responsible: Secretariat

5. Correspondence for noting

The Chair outlined correspondence received by the Secretariat:

- Letters from the Chair to the Commissioner, Mr Richard Glenn and the Minister requesting meetings to discuss the Council's operations, advice and priorities.
- Minister Gentleman's response to the Council's report on Community Resilience in the ACT.
- Minister Gentleman's response to the Council's report on Bushfire Management Arrangement in the ACT, with comments from ESA and EPSDD.
- Paper from Dr Bartlett outlining the background for the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.
- Letter from Chris Gell, EPSDD Planning, concerning planning approval for the Woden development, including a copy of the ESA's Development Application Review.
- Letter from Erica Collins, Director of Operations, ESA concerning the Woden development.

The Council discussed the Minister's response to the Council's Community Resilience report and the comments from ESA and EPSDD on the Bushfire report. The Chair suggested Council members review the response to the Bushfire report and provide any comments, concerns or feedback to the report's working group.



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Action: Council members to review the comments from ESA and EPSDD in relation to the Bushfire report and provide any feedback. Working group to convene out of session and prepare a summation of views for Government.

Person responsible: Council members, Working group of the Chair, Dr Bartlett, Mr Kendall and Dr Yebra

Dr Bartlett also noted some personal comments he sent to the Minister had been included in emails and subsequently presented as the Council's view. The Chair noted information sent to the inbox could end up being unintentionally shared and suggested official correspondence be checked with her before release.

6. Discussion on Flood Risk Planning

The Chair welcomed Mr David Rose to the meeting to discuss the concerns raised by the Council on the Woden development and any potential gaps in ACT planning processes around flood risks. It was noted the response provided by ESA in 2019 in relation to the development may also not be accurate.

Mr Rose explained that the arrangements for bushfire risks are enshrined in legislation and confirmed there are no similar requirements that need to be met in relation to flood risk and developments on flood prone land. The SES provide advice on whether flood risks exist but do not have the authority to refuse a development. The assessment for the Woden area was done in 2019 and the current process has more rigidity. Mr Rose also advised the SES has recommended the introduction of stronger definitions and more stringent requirements in their input into EPSDD's Territory planning review process.

The Council noted the flood risk maps on ACTmapi indicate that one of the blocks (Block 12) appears to be almost wholly within the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) and the other block (Block 13) has some area within the 1% AEP.

The Chair noted there does not appear to be any comprehensive modelling of flood risk as part of the ACT development approval process. There also does not appear to be any modelling on the impact developments might have on flood prone areas or any consideration of cumulative risks arising from other developments in the same area. Mr Rose noted the SES is an emergency response agency and does not have the expertise and resources to undertake this type of modelling.

The Council agreed there appeared to be a gap in both the legislation and planning process and that the assessment of risks should be strengthened, with potential for a comparable system to that for bushfires. Dr Bartlett also noted the increased risk of intense storms and flash flooding due to climate change. In relation to the Woden development, the Council suggested an urgent review be undertaken to determine if it is safe and what impact it might have on the area.

Action: Chair to write to the Minister and the Director-General of EPSDD expressing the Council's concern that ESA/SES have no legislative powers in relation to planning approvals. Letter to also raise the issue of ESA/SES as response agencies and not planning agencies. Letter to also request an urgent review and response to the Council on any risks in relation to the Woden development.

Person responsible: Chair

7. Discussion with Jon Peach, EGM SEMD – SEMSOG Workplan



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The Chair welcomed Mr Jon Peach, the Executive Group Manager of the Security and Emergency Management Division in JACS. Mr Peach outlined the broad security issues covered by SEMD and their role in building capability and developing a Whole-of-Government approach to emergency management, rather than relying on individual response agencies to manage increased hazards due to climate change. There are two specific bodies of work being undertaken – the Disaster Resilience Strategy and the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy.

Mr Peach advised the Disaster Resilience Strategy is at an early stage but the aim is to bring together 28 different pieces of work being conducted across Government. He anticipates there will be a process of community engagement from September and raised the potential for a workshop to be held with the Council. He also noted the information already provided by the Council through the Community Resilience report.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy will align with the national disaster framework and is aimed more at risk reduction. Mr Peach advised the program of work is still being developed but should be available shortly. The plan will also include a governance framework to monitor and manage Disaster Risk Reduction investments, and provide a more cohesive approach to accessing Commonwealth funding. He noted that \$7M has been secured for a range of projects and the Council sought a list of what has been approved.

Mr Morris questioned whether the Sendai framework will be used in developing the Disaster Risk Reduction strategy and Mr Peach confirmed it would follow the national DRR framework to align with funding arrangements. He was unaware if the framework would address Sendai's Priority 4 around preparedness and "building back better" in recovery and reconstruction and advised he would take the question on notice. Dr Bartlett also questioned why bushfires risks for built assets do not appear to be being considered in the Territory-wide risk assessment and Mr Peach identified the focus on contemporising high risks and better preparing response agencies.

The Chair thanked Mr Peach for his presentation and she encouraged further consideration on how Council could engage with SEMD in the Disaster Resilience Strategy and the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy projects. An invitation was made for him to attend the next meeting in August to explain the workplan following its release. She reiterated the potential for the Council to provide input and stimulate discussion in the community and Dr Bartlett highlighted the recommendations already provided by the Council on community resilience.

Action: Presentation from Mr Peach to be made available to Council members.

Person responsible: Secretariat

Action: List of DRR projects funded by Commonwealth grants to be shared with the Council.

Person responsible: Secretariat

8. Context for Strategic Bushfire Management Plan version 5 (2025-2029) "SBMP5"

Paper provided by Dr Bartlett in meeting pack instead of presentation.



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9. Discussion on Council Input into the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan version 5 (2025-2029) “SBMP5” – in camera

Following completion of other agenda items, the Council held a discussion in camera on their input into the SBMP5. Council members noted that:

- The minimum required contents for the SBMP is listed within the Emergencies Act 2004 but is not noted within the Protiviti Report, so the Council is concerned to ensure this is foremost in the drafter’s considerations.
- The Protiviti Report alludes to issues with SBMP4 but does not specify them, so that the case for major change from SBMP4 is unclear, aside from having too many actions and not being funded.
- The first SBMP was written in less than 6 months, by an experienced and highly qualified fire expert, so the remaining time available to draft SBMP5 does not preclude creating a high quality product.
- The Council was concerned to ensure that SBMP5 is not reduced in quality and scope in its objectives and actions, compared with SBMP4
- The objectives for SBMP5 could be expanded from SBMP4 to include ecological, cultural objectives for management of bushfire, and the objectives for community bushfire preparedness should evolve to focus on community disaster risk reduction and resilience. Some specific suggestions for objectives were made, including:
 - understanding cultural expectations for use and management of bushfire and working to meet them
 - ensuring more diverse representation in decision-making for bushfire management, so that within [a defined period of time] the socio-cultural diversity of the ACT community is reflected by the decision-makers for bushfire management
- In order to develop truly adaptive bushfire risk management capability in the face of the changing climate and a changing ACT population, it is vital that SBMP5 embeds an evaluative framework. Objectives, a theory of change and associated metrics will be essential features of SBMP5. Metrics for outcomes need to be specified in addition to simply measuring completion of actions.
- The Plan should capture “Business as Usual” work and propose and cost new initiatives.

10. Council member Updates

Council members provided the following updates on activities:

- Ms Allen advised the ‘ACT Rural Landholders Association of Farmers’ was now an official name.
- Dr Troy noted the UNSW seminar “Burning Innovations: The developments and future of bushfire research” being held at the Arboretum on 7 July 2023.
- Dr Bartlett advised he met with Margaret Moreton, the Executive Director for the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience and a former member of the ACT Bushfire Council. Dr Troy will also be meeting with her in future to discuss community disaster resilience and possible attendance at a Council meeting.
- Mr Morris advised he attended a symposium on tourism and disaster management in Japan and identified the need to diversify channels of communication in disasters. He also participated in a community engagement event in Japan to memorialise the experience of people in disasters, and noted the potential to recreate this type of activity at the Mount Stromlo bushfire memorial.
- Mr Kendall advised he had been in Fiji and Tonga assisting their Governments with DRR programs and noted the effectiveness of Tonga’s multi-hazard early warning system. He will also be travelling



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to the Philippines to assess DRR programs on behalf of the UN Development Program and the World Bank.

- Dr Troy advised of her meetings with Richard Glenn and the Minister's Chief of Staff, as previously discussed. She will also be meeting with EPSDD to discuss the possibility for research into a housing bushfire risk vulnerability rating.

11. Any other business and next meeting arrangements

The next meeting will include:

- Discussion on the draft terms of reference for Post-season briefings
- Discussion on the evaluation of SBMPv4
- Presentation on post season progress against the BOP from EPSDD
- Presentation from Eliza Larson from EPSDD on bushfire risk mitigation and environmental approvals
- Jon Peach should also be attending to outline the SEMD workplan.

An end of year dinner has been proposed and a poll link will be sent to Council members to determine the date.

Dr Bartlett sought confirmation on whether there was scope for any Council members to attend the AFAC meeting at the end of August.

Action: Secretariat to check if funding is available for any Council members to attend AFAC.

Person responsible: Secretariat

12. Confirmation of Communique

The draft meeting communique was discussed and agreed:

On 5 July 2023, the ACT Multi-Hazards Advisory Council considered flood risk in the ACT planning system and the role of the ESA/SES in providing advice on proposed developments. They also had a discussion with Jon Peach from Security and Emergency Management in the JACS Directorate on the Government's forward work program on disaster resilience and disaster risk reduction. The Council also discussed the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and priorities for inclusion in version 5.

13. Meeting Close

Next meeting 2 August 2023