

MINUTES



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL (BFC)

9 February 2011

ESA HEADQUARTERS

9 AMBERLEY AVENUE

FAIRBAIRN ACT

Wednesday 9 February 2011

AGENDA

- 1. Opening and Introduction by Chairman**
- 2. Attendees/ Apologies**
- 3. Minutes of previous meeting**
- 4. Actions running sheet**
- 5. Correspondence**
 - Incoming
 - Outgoing

- 6. Replacement BOP- Review**
- 7. Interstate Arrangements**
- 8. Other Business**

- 9. Outstanding Items/Issues**

- 10. Confirmation of next meeting**

AGENDA ITEM: 1 – 10

DATE: 9 February 1600-1900 Hrs

LOCATION: ESA HQ, Fairbairn

Meeting Opened Time: 1610 Close: 1832
Welcome by Chairman

1.
Kevin Jeffery opened the meeting at 1610

2. Attendees/Apologies:

Kevin Jeffery	(KJ) Chair / Member
Tony Bartlett	(TB) Deputy Chair / Member
Simon Katz	(SK) Member
Marion Leiba	(ML) Member
Christine Goonrey	(CG) Member
Cathy Parsons	(CP) Member
Michael Lonergan	(MIL) Member
Andrew Stark	(AS) RFS Chief Officer, Executive Officer to BFC
Michael Joyce	(MJ) RFS Deputy Chief Officer
Neil Cooper	(NC) Ex-officio ACT Parks Conservation and Land Management
Paul Swain	(PS) ACT Fire Brigade
Greg Potts	(GP) RFS Manager Community Bushfire Protection

Apologies: Tony Fearnside

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Minutes of the December meeting were accepted with minor changes to be made.

Changes to the minutes to be updated:

- CG suggested Pg 2 should read -“CSIRO co-operated during consultation process”
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4. Actions Running Sheet:

KJ- question regarding review of Operations arrangements for BAZ? –AS some issues still need to be clarified, basically structures in whole of ACT are ACTFB responsibility but rural units will be responded. A presentation will be made to the BFC on the BAZ instrument which is currently with the Government Solicitor.

CG – Horse Agistment Report progress? AS- being finalised.

NC- will PCL & others who contributed see the report before publishing? AS- yes.

Actions were completed.

4a. Federal Agency BOPS

Andrew Stark has made contact with Defence regarding current Bushfire Operations Plans (BOP). It has been confirmed that there is a BOP in place but Defence have no requirement to submit to it to ACT. Simon Katz queried as to whether RFS have any legislative grounds to audit them and Andrew Stark confirmed that there are none.

Tony Bartlett raised issues around RFS having access to the land and the degree of obligations that it has to fire protection and response in the area. Andrew Stark confirmed that RFS is responsible for the consequences of a fire through Defence land and Council suggested that RFS look over fire trails and accessibility to the land as part of its preparedness for the bush fire season.

Christine Goonrey advised council that CSIRO have been cooperating and involved in consultations regarding grass management.

Council members noted that he felt reassured that there are fire management plans in place with the federal agencies, and agreed that in large, it may be useful for RFS to focus on access to land and increase consultations with federal agencies.

Kevin Jeffery raised the question of whether there are maps of the area west of town to confirm issues of grass management. Andrew Stark confirmed that maps do exist, but they can't be circulated publicly because they confidential information about Lessees on them. Andrew confirmed that grass management has become a priority and council agreed that they will add the subject to the agenda item at a later meeting.

ACTION: Andrew Stark to contact federal agencies with a view to increasing consultation around their BOPs

4b. Mt Franklin process

Christine Goonrey questioned the status of Mt Franklin Road up-grade. Andrew Stark confirmed that the grass fire issue has turned into a priority and while the intention is still there to discuss the plan with ACTPLA, all focus will be on grass fire management until possibly after Christmas. Andrew will discuss the topic with Council after he meets with ACTPLA.

4c. Horse Agistment

Christine Goonrey requested an update as to the Horse Agistment project and Andrew Stark replied that the staff member in charge of overseeing the project has been on leave and will be concentrating on finalising the report when she is back. Andrew will update Council at next meeting.

5. Correspondence

Incoming:

- Joy Burch -Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services re Preparedness Report_ AS Minister is very satisfied with the breadth of issues addressed in the report.
- Joy Burch -Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services re ACT BFC Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Recommendations in the ACT context – appreciation of the time and effort taken by BFC in response.

TB asked re testing Incident Controller effectiveness as mentioned in correspondence- what's happening?

Andrew Stark advised Council that an IMT was stood up in Curtain for the TOBAN last Tuesday will continue to test and improve staff training and systems. We were lucky to have Curtain still available after COMCEN flooded. Hume will be backing up COMCEN site when completed.

TB- we need to record that this is an interim arrangement and it is working.

AS- Minister and ESA are discussing options for COMCEN redundancy.

KJ- can we have a report next meeting on the interim system progress at the next meeting?

Discussion re use of Namadgi Visitor Centre for IMT use during incidents and suitability

NC – can run fires or HRs out of Namadgi and they are working to resolve the technical issues encountered during the Mt Clear HR, it is a BOP item.

KJ- re paragraph 5 of Joy Burch letter reference to vulnerable groups- is RFS working to engage multi cultural groups? AS – yes, but survey results do not show what people will do in the case of a real fire, we need to develop systems to actually engage the community, not just inform them.

TB- what is Minister`s vision for BFC- Chair will draft a letter to the Minister.

AGENDA ITEM: 6 Replacement BOP –Review

NC briefed Council on BOP issues relating to the extreme rain events and the impact on BOP actions including

- 25 of 79 grazing strategies not meeting standard
- Physical removal strategies on schedule
- Burning- ahead of schedule, however over 500 mm of rain in proposed Namadgi HR area
- 68% of slashing program completed on schedule despite bad weather- will start second stage of program soon
- Seasonal plant and 12 seasonal staff engaged
- Have had over 50 Ministerial's to reply to complaining of long grass- rain 1 day in 2 over the season so far.
- Proposing to reschedule BOP Fire trail Actions to enable completion next year?
- Insurance claim for \$1.8 million for PCL road and trail damage

CG question to NC re supervision standards of road works and compliance with environmental standards- NC supervision standard is high and PCL does the best with available resources under the conditions, roads would be rebuilt to standard.

AGENDA ITEM: 7 INTERSTATE ARRANGEMENTS

- MAA has been updated and a teleconference with surrounding NSW RFS Districts had been held on the morning of the TOBAN.
- NSW National Parks has undergone a significant restructure- ACT is now surrounded by 1 NP Region.
- Proposed NSW Agency & ACT annual MAA meeting- AS Ken Hall and Dave Darlington will work towards Agreement next year.
- TB- heartened to see improvements in Interstate Arrangements, especially in light of 2003.

AGENDA ITEM: 8 Other Business

CG- has RFS compromised OAPZ requirements at Molonglo, as she had heard from environmental groups that this was the case? AS- no!

Discussion of proposed BFC meeting calendar and field trip to Namadgi in November.
ML Can IC and IMT positions be circulated-AS yes.
HIGHFIRE Project has received ongoing funding from Tony Snow TB we should send a letter of appreciation.
Discussion re West Australian bushfires, public messaging and evacuation.

AGENDA ITEM: 9 Outstanding Items/Issues NONE

Time and Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday March 1, 2011 at ESAHQ, Fairbairn.

Meeting closed 18:32