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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**Government Response to the
Standing Committee on Public Accounts
Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 5 of 2013:
Bushfire Preparedness**

**Presented by
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Introduction

On 26 July 2013 the ACT Auditor-General's Office released its performance audit into bushfire preparedness, ten years after the devastating 2003 Canberra Bushfires.

The objective of the performance audit was to provide an independent opinion to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the effectiveness of the ACT Government's approach to bushfire preparedness.

The Report made 24 recommendations, of which the Government accepted all either wholly or in part.

The audit report found that while the strategic bushfire management plan and supporting plans provided a sound basis for bushfire management in the ACT and were an improvement on what was in place prior to the 2003 bushfires, there were shortcomings in number of areas which impaired the effectiveness of the ACT's preparedness.

The Legislative Assembly referred the report to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for examination. The Government provided a response and hearings were held by the Standing Committee in late 2014.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts released their report on the 2013 Auditor General's Audit into Bushfire Preparedness on 17 November 2015, two and a half years after the tabling of the Audit-General's report.

The Standing Committee's report contains an additional 38 recommendations and the Government is required to provide a response within three months.

Considerable work has been undertaken to implement the Auditor-General's recommendations and improve bushfire preparedness in the ACT since the release of the Auditor-General's report in 2013.

In September 2014, version 3 of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) was tabled in the Assembly, which incorporated many of the Auditor-General's recommendations, and outlined a comprehensive plan to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from bushfire emergencies in the Territory.

Some of the strategic improvements which assist to implement the Auditor General's 2013 report recommendations includes:

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- a) revised Emergency Services Agency (ESA) and Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) Strategic and Accountability Indicators (Auditor-General's recommendation 1);
- b) provision of the new Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) in 2014 with a statement of resources (Auditor-General's recommendation 2);
- c) an Emergencies Amendment Act in 2014 providing improvements to the fire management section of the Act (Auditor-General's recommendation 3);
- d) improved monitoring and reporting on the SBMP (Auditor-General's Recommendations 4 & 5) including a Bushfire Risk Management section in the 2014-15 JACS Annual Report;
- e) updated regional and operational bushfire management plans by TAMS with ongoing monitoring (Auditor-General's Recommendations 6, 7 and 8);
- f) a review into the *Emergencies Act 2004* tabled in the Assembly in October 2015 and available via the ESA website which further reviewed the role of the ACT Bushfire Council and Bushfire Management on National Land (Auditor-General's Recommendations 9 and 10);
- g) the continuing development of an ICT system in TAMS to better report on bushfire mitigation activities (Auditor-General's recommendation 11, 12 and 13).
- h) amendment to the Territory's planning regulations in 2015 to streamline routine bushfire mitigation works (Auditor-General's Recommendation 14);
- i) improvements to the RFS Farm Firewise program and Land Management Agreements (LMAs)(Auditor-General's recommendation 15 and 16);
- j) the commencement of a review into Community Fire Units this financial year by ACT Fire & Rescue (Auditor-General Recommendation 17);
- k) finalisation of the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework in 2015 outlining the ACT's bushfire response capability which is was a high priority of the audit (Auditor-General Recommendation 19);
- l) the development of Emergency Personnel and Incident Management targets through the Capability Framework and improved training materials to support the delivery of training (Auditor-General Recommendation 19);

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- m) improvements to ESA's systems and procedures (Auditor-General Recommendation 20-24);
- n) development of a dynamic coverage tool for trialing throughout the 2015-16 season which assists in making vehicle deployment decisions throughout the Territory.

The outstanding recommendations relate to the Auditor-General Recommendations 11, 12 and 13 surrounding TAMS reporting. TAMS is continuing to build their internal reporting systems to report on mitigation activities, expenditure and provide the opportunity for better reporting to the Government and the public on their cumulative risk mitigation activities over time.

Many of the Standing Committee's 38 recommendations request further information on activities undertaken to implement the Auditor-General's recommendations.

Some of the recommendations attempt to improve reporting to the Assembly, however, the recommendations introduce an additional layer of administrative burden given the proposed additional reporting is already provided through the Government's annual reporting and hearing processes.

A response to each of the Standing Committees 38 Recommendations is provided below.

RECOMMENDATION 1	
<p>2.13 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report on progress made by both TAMS and JACS in relation to strategic and accountability indicators, and detail the process used to finalise the indicators to the ACT Legislative Assembly before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>ESA and TAMS revised their Strategic and Accountability Indicators in relation to the Auditor-General's recommendation 1.</p> <p>The appropriate government processes were undertaken to amend the indicators which are outlined in the Government's budget papers each year and reported against. A number of ESA's strategic indicators relate to emergencies in general, and some are specific to bushfires. Notes are provided with the indicators in relation to their amendment.</p> <p>ESA's Strategic Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of leaseholders within the Bushfire Abatement Zone with a Farm Fire-wise Plan. • Percentage and number of bushfires kept below five hectares within the ACT. <p>ESA's Accountability Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop audit of ACT Government Directorate Bushfire Operational Plans activity progress reports. • Field assessment of Access Management Upgrades and Hazard

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	<p>Reduction burns conducted in accordance with Bushfire Operational Plans of ACT Government Directorates.</p> <p>TAMS have improved their indicators from a single “completion of the Bushfire Management Plan” to covering five elements of the Bushfire Operational Plan being grazing, slashing, burning, access management and physical removal.</p> <p>The revised indicators by ESA and TAMS are supported by a comprehensive new section on Bushfire Risk Management in the Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate Annual Report which provides an overview of the implementation of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and delivers on recommendation 5 of the Auditor General’s report.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 2	
<p>2.39 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government issue an annual statement of resources for each Strategic Bushfire Management Plan produced prior to the start of each bushfire season.</p>	<p>Not Agreed</p> <p>A statement of resources was included in section 6 of the five year Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP)(version 3) tabled in the Assembly in September 2014.</p> <p>Section 76 of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> states after the Minister makes the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, the Commissioner must conduct an assessment, based upon the plan, of available resources and capabilities for bushfire prevention and preparedness. The Emergency Services Commissioner must provide the assessment to the ACT Bushfire Council and the ACT Minister for Police and Emergency Services.</p> <p>ESA finalised a Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework in June 2015 that delivers on Recommendation 19 of the ACT Auditor General’s 2013 <i>Performance Audit Report into Bushfire Preparedness</i> which recommended establishing a target level of service so as to plan for and resource our emergency services agencies. A copy of the Framework is attached to this response.</p> <p>The Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework will be periodically updated, however, publishing an annual list of resources does not address the capability requirements and issues as outlined in the ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework.</p> <p>ESA’s Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework makes the assessment of resources and capability in relation to response capability, which relates to objectives 2, 3 & 4 of the SBMP being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective firefighting operations by skilled and motivated personnel;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the necessary equipment and resources to respond to and extinguish bushfires; and• extinguish bushfires when they occur. <p>As at 30 June 2015, the ACT has 22 heavy tankers, ten compressed air foam tankers, 15 medium tankers, 14 light units, 15 pumpers, two contracted helicopters for the bushfire season, heavy plant and support vehicles. ESA has over 350 paid firefighters, over 500 rural fire service volunteers and 160 trained firefighters in TAMS.</p> <p>In support of crews and vehicles, there are – fire towers, fire weather analysts, media liaison officers, remote area firefighters, mapping specialists, communication specialists and a wider logistical and support capability that supports our emergency men and women in the field.</p> <p>Our capability is also supported by a whole of government response to major disasters through our ACT Emergency Coordination Centre, which coordinates our hospitals, schools, evacuation centres, road closures, utilities and liaises with our national institutions, including Defence.</p> <p>In extreme situations, the ACT will seek the support of interstate resources utilising our mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with other States and Territories.</p> <p>Since 2003, the ACT Government has invested significantly in our emergency services capability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New fleet acquisitions and station upgrades for the ACT Fire & Rescue (ACTF&R) and the Rural Fire Service (RFS);• Additional personnel in ACT Fire and Rescue;• Improved communications and personal protective equipment;• A new ESA headquarters with improved incident management facilities;• A new training centre and heli-base at Hume;• Contracted helicopters during the bushfire season. <p>In relation to considering our future response capability requirements, the ACT will need to continuously consider factors such as changing demographics, climate modelling, contemporary research/findings and long-term fuel dynamics to make reasonable decisions about our continuing capability requirements.</p> <p>In addition to capability, the Government provides detail on its bushfire mitigation activities through the annual TAMS bushfire operational plan which are publicly available through the TAMS website. In its 2015-16 Budget, the Government announced an additional \$9.2 million over four years to reduce the ACT's vulnerability to bushfire.</p> <p>Greater transparency around the implementation of the ACT SBMP is being achieved through the introduction of the Bushfire Risk Management</p>
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	<p>section of the JACS Annual Report.</p> <p>The ESA and Bushfire Risk Management sections of the JACS Annual Report are the appropriate reporting tools to inform the Legislative Assembly and the general public on bushfire matters, including resources.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 3	
<p>2.46 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide to the ACT Legislative Assembly the advice that it relied upon when determining not to release the list of privately owned assets before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>Agreed in part.</p> <p>The <i>Emergencies Amendment Act 2014</i> gave effect to recommendation three of the Auditor-General's report by amending section 74(2)(f) of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> to remove the requirement for the SBMP to 'publish' a list of privately owned assets of public interest vulnerable to bushfire and instead requires the ESA to 'maintain' a list.</p> <p>The explanatory statement for the <i>Emergencies Amendment Act 2014</i> noted ESA did not publish a list of privately owned assets prone to bushfire given the publication of such data could compromise commercial and security sensitivities. The ESA balanced the competing interests and determined not to publish the list of assets.</p> <p>ESA has consistently maintained a list of assets by way of the spatial maps it has on hand to respond to emergencies. ESA uses this information in emergencies to determine the threat of bushfire to both life and property. The information is also used to determine risk mitigation by TAMS.</p> <p>The way ESA informs the community of assets vulnerable to bushfire is by publishing maps of bushfire prone areas in the Territory. ESA is currently working with the Environmental and Planning Directorate to refine bushfire prone area boundaries.</p> <p>ESA expects that those responsible for assets in bushfire prone areas will undertake their own measures to prepare and protect their properties from bushfire.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 4	
<p>2.49 The Committee recommends the Government provides to the ACT Legislative Assembly the size and scope of the privately owned assets requiring protection by the last sitting day of March 2016.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>ESA maintains a list of assets, predominately through spatial mapping databases that can be used operationally and tactically to identify and protect critical infrastructure and assets.</p> <p>Assets may include residential housing, electricity substations, water facilities, gas plant, rural leases, pine forests and Commonwealth Government facilities.</p> <p>Assets that are vulnerable to bushfire will generally be in Bushfire Prone</p>

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	<p>Areas. Members of the Assembly and the general public can view bushfire prone areas on the ACTMAPi website.</p> <p>The size and scope of assets vulnerable to bushfire needs to be contextualised. Vulnerability of assets can be reduced through a range of mitigation activities including building codes, asset protection systems and zones, fuel reduction and urban planning.</p> <p>Schedule 1 of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan outlines the types of public and private assets which are at risk from bushfires. This includes property, critical and social infrastructure, businesses and industry, water catchments, biodiversity and threatened species and cultural heritage.</p>
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RECOMMENDATION 5	
2.55 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release the review undertaken in relation to the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Implementation Working Group to the public.	<p>Agreed in principle. No review exists.</p> <p>The review of the governance arrangements to oversee the implementation of the SBMP was undertaken when developing the SBMP Version 3.</p> <p>The SBMP was tabled in the Legislative Assembly as a Disallowable Instrument on 23 September 2014. Chapter 5 of the SBMP <i>Implementation, compliance and accountability of bushfire management in the Australian Capital Territory</i> outlines the governance arrangements in place for the SBMP. Furthermore, the Committee is referred to the Bushfire Risk Management Section of the 2014-15 JACS Annual Report which states on page 324:</p> <p><i>The SBMP outlines the governance and accountability arrangements for the plan and outlines the establishment of an Implementation Working Group (IWG), which includes senior representation from all ACT Government agencies with responsibilities against the Plan.</i></p> <p><i>The SBMP IWG met on 24 November 2014, 3 February 2015, 4 May 2015, 4 August 2015 and 15 November 2015, and will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to collaborate on and coordinate activities that implement the Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Section 72(7) of the Emergencies Act 2004 requires the ESA Commissioner, in consultation with the ACT Bushfire Council, to monitor the scope and effectiveness of the Plan.</i></p> <p>The JACS annual report provides a summary regarding the implementation of a number of key action items progressed throughout 2014–15 by ACT Government Directorates.</p> <p>The terms of reference of the SBMP IWG are reviewed by the IWG from time to time and are available if required.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 6	
2.61 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure Annual Progress Reports on the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan are made available to the	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The ESA and Bushfire Risk Management sections of the JACS Annual Report is the appropriate vehicle to inform the Legislative Assembly and the general public on progress to implement the SBMP. The Bushfire Risk Management section was revised in 2014/15 to incorporate a whole of government approach to reporting and contains contributions from all relevant Directorates.</p>

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<p>public and the Bushfire Council every year.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 7</p>	
<p>2.67 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government confirm in the ACT Legislative Assembly before the last sitting day in March 2016, that since 2013 Regional Fire Management Plans have been annually reviewed and updated in relation to fire management zones. If this has not occurred, the Government should provide specific details in relation to which plans have not been updated, and why.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Chapter 4 of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan outlines that Fire Management Zones assist in prioritising fuel management and access activities to reduce bushfire risk.</p> <p>In the SBMP, Fire Management Zones are identified as a subset of Bushfire Prone Areas where measurable fuel management treatments are applied. The location and alignment of these zones reflect the risk of bushfires starting and spreading, and impacting on life, property and other assets. The zones established include Asset Protection Zones, Strategic Firefighting Advantage Zones, Land Management Zones and Rural Land Management Zones.</p> <p>The widths and locations of the Zones are indicative and the actual widths and location will be determined in consideration of the ACT Fire Management Standards and operational requirements, through the development of Regional Fire Management Plans and Bushfire Operational Plans (including Farm Firewise). Chapter 11 of the SBMP details considerations used in determining the location and extent of Asset Protection Zones adjacent to new and established urban areas. Fire Management Zoning maps will be reviewed as required to reflect significant changes, which may include unplanned bushfires or changes to the location or extent of assets. The Commissioner is responsible for approval of these maps.</p> <p>Furthermore, Regional Fire Management Plans (RFMP) detail the five-year work program (2014-19) for fuel reduction, access and infrastructure in the ACT. The SBMP outlines:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Annual and 5 Year targets of the area (hectares) to be treated by fuel management (prescribed burning, slashing, grazing and physical removal) as well as the distance (km) of access works (maintenance, upgrade and construction) are determined under these plans for government managed lands.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Commissioner is responsible for approval of RFMPs. They will be reviewed as required to reflect changes which may include unplanned bushfires, which may provide strategic advantages or changes to the location or extent of assets – for example, the development of new estates.</i></p> <p>Representatives of the ACT Bushfire Council were provided a Briefing on 27 October 2014 on the five year Regional Fire Management Plan maps</p>

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	<p>which provide a visual representation of the proposed revisions and updates. The Council representatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. noted the approach taken by TAMS to update the plans, which included a public consultation process; 2. requested further clarification on the burns being removed or substituted; and 3. provided specific comments that would improve the annotation of the maps. <p>At their meeting on 12 November 2014, the ACT Bushfire Council resolved to endorse the RFMPs supporting the process in 2014 to update the Plans.</p> <p>RFMP's will be updated when there is any further revision of the zones.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 8	
<p>2.86 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the ACT Legislative Assembly with the framework developed for bushfire operational plans, particularly those for lands in the bushfire abatement zone. Details on the process used to develop the framework, and information relating to how often the framework will be reviewed should also be provided before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle.</p> <p>This recommendation is answered by the Bushfire Risk Management section of the 2014-15 JACS Annual Report which states on page 330:</p> <p><i>Section 77 of the Emergencies Act 2004 requires an owner of land, or manager of unleased Territory land or land occupied by the Territory to, as far as practicable, ensure the land is managed in accordance with the SBMP and comply with any bushfire management requirement.</i></p> <p><i>Section 78 of the Act requires a manager of an area of unleased Territory land or land occupied by the Territory to prepare a Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP) in accordance with the SBMP.</i></p> <p><i>The SBMP also specifically outlines the requirement for ACT Government directorates and other prescribed entities to develop a BOP for Bushfire Prone Areas on an annual basis (Schedule 2 of the SBMP).</i></p> <p><i>BOPs need to outline prevention and preparedness activities along with the performance indicators and reporting applicable for these activities. A BOP also details the specific timing, type and location of fuel-reduction, access and infrastructure activities that are proposed over the life of the Plan.</i></p> <p><i>The SBMP also provides a series of bushfire management standards, which must be met in relation to vegetation management. The standards are available from the SBMP webpage on the ESA website.</i></p>
RECOMMENDATION 9	
<p>2.92 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>This recommendation is answered by the Bushfire Risk Management</p>

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<p>provide the ACT Legislative Assembly with the governance arrangements developed for bushfire operational plan monitoring before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>section of the 2014-15 JACS Annual Report which states on page 337:</p> <p><i>Auditing of Bushfire Operational Plans</i></p> <p><i>The Emergencies Act 2004 requires BOPs to be audited quarterly by the ESA with a full end-of-year audit being carried out and reported back to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.</i></p> <p><i>The audit process is an opportunity to monitor progress, identify opportunities for improvement and priorities for future BOPs. The audits have verified that the directorates are carrying out their approved BOP activities. Field audits of hazard reduction burning activities and upgrades to the strategic access network have been carried out which show activities are being conducted in accordance with the standards of the SBMP.</i></p> <p>In addition, ESA has annually reported Accountability Indicators to monitor Bushfire Operational Plans which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop audit of ACT Government Directorate BOPS activity progress reports; and • Field assessment of Access Management Upgrades and Hazard Reduction burns conducted in accordance with Bushfire Operational Plans of ACT Government Directorates.
<p>RECOMMENDATION 10</p>	
<p>2.98 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make public the policy designed to guide managers of National Land.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Other than the Australian Defence Force, managers of national land (eg NCA, CSIRO & ANU) develop their bushfire management plans in accordance with the SBMP and provide to the ESA for consideration.</p> <p>This issue of the policy framework for national land was explored as part of the 2015 review into <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> which was tabled in the Assembly in October 2015. The review has suggested the harmonisation of requirements on both ACT and national land managers which the Government will consider.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 11</p>	
<p>2.105 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the ACT Legislative Assembly with a copy of the Terms of Reference and the review conducted into the ACT</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>This issue was discussed as part of the 2015 review into <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> which was tabled in the Assembly in October 2015.</p> <p>Amendments to the Terms of Reference will be finalised once the Government has considered the review of the <i>Emergencies Act</i> in 2016.</p> <p>When finalised, a copy of the updated Terms of Reference will be made</p>

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<p>Bushfire Council as a consequence of the Auditor-General's report No 5 of 2013 before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>available through the Bushfire Council webpage at www.esa.act.gov.au/bushfirecouncil</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 12</p>	
<p>2.141 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the ACT Legislative Assembly, before the last sitting day in March 2016, with an update on the development of the new database intended to report, record and cost tasks through the Oracle system, and copies of the quarterly reports produced by the database, with the website address that the public can use to access the reports.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The BOP database is the repository for the 2015-16 BOP. The projects within the plan are developed in, and monitored via, both physical and financial progress updates in the database. The database is progressing through the next stage of development which involves changes to staff workflows and system processes and enhancements to user and reporting functionality. Further enhancements are expected in the areas of cost attribution and spatial capabilities in the future. The first report has been produced (second quarter 2015) and provided to the RFS for comment. Work is underway to get this uploaded on to the TAMS website. All reports future reports will be uploaded and publicly available through the TAMS website www.tams.act.gov.au</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 13</p>	
<p>2.151 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government update the ACT Legislative Assembly, before the last sitting day in March 2016, with progress made in relation to Auditor-General's Recommendation 14 and specifically outline: a. What changes were made to the major projects section of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, b. The consultation process used to develop legislative</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The following provides an update in relation to the Governments previous response to Auditor General's Recommendation 14.</p> <p>The five year Strategic Bushfire Management Plan was released in late 2014 has 12 objectives and 71 actions. Five year Regional Fire Management Plans are developed by TAMS which implement the SBMP and provide the strategic platform on which the annual TAMS Bushfire Operational Plans are based. The 2015-16 budget allocates approximately \$9 million annually to TAMS for bushfire mitigation and maintenance works (funding for TAMS BOPS is reported in the Bushfire Risk Management Section on page 334 of the JACS Annual Report) . Major capital works are subject to separate budget appropriations for capital expenditure.</p> <p>Amendments to the Planning and Development Regulation came into effect in November 2015. The purpose of the amendments was to enable certain developments, including bushfire preparedness works, to be exempt from the requirement to obtain development approval, if any</p>

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<p>changes made to the Planning and Development Act 2007, and</p> <p>c. provide agendas for the annual forward planning sessions for capital works meetings held.</p>	<p>required environmental authorisation (EA) and/or environmental protection agreement (EPA) was held.</p> <p>The Planning and Development Regulation lists and defines a range of public works developments carried out by or on behalf of the Territory that are potentially exempt from the requirement to obtain development approval.</p> <p>Previously, a requirement to obtain an EA and/or EPA under the Environment Protection Act 1997 disqualified many public works from getting an exemption from development approval under the Planning and Development Act. .</p> <p>This included development such as the installation and maintenance of public amenities, tree removal, fire fuel reduction, and construction or maintenance of a fire trail.</p> <p>These relatively minor public works, critical for the maintenance of Territory assets, were required not only to get an EA and/or EPA, but also go through a development application process. This resulted in unnecessary regulatory burden, cost and delay. The additional DA process did not achieve any further value beyond the EA and/or EPA process.</p> <p>Importantly, EAs may include conditions, can be suspended or cancelled and involve public consultation. It is also an offence to undertake an activity that would otherwise require an EA. It is also an offence to contravene a condition of an Environmental Authorisation.</p> <p>The amendment has removed the need for development approval for these sorts of developments if the required EA and/or EPA is held.</p> <p>In summary, the proposed amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduces unnecessary regulatory burden on public works (including bushfire preparedness developments);• makes the development assessment process for bushfire preparedness development more efficient; and• maintains an appropriate level of protection for the environment. <p>Officers from the Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) and TAMS have been working closely and collaboratively to address recommendations from the Auditor-General's report. TAMS have also advised they are working on a comprehensive Code of Practice to cover all works in Nature Reserves (that is, not just bushfire preparedness works). In conjunction with the Bops, the Code could be used to support an application for an Environmental Significance Opinion, potentially giving TAMS clearance to undertake a range of activities without need for DA</p>
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	<p>approval. This would be a highly efficient and quick regulatory process, without compromising the key competing interests of human safety and environmental protection.</p> <p>The availability of this exemption was not clear before this regulation was made.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 14</p>	
<p>2.177 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide to the ACT Legislative Assembly, before the last sitting day in March 2016:</p> <p>a. An update on the number of rural leaseholders who's fire management plans are less than 2 years old, and the current total number of rural leaseholders.</p> <p>b. Clarification about the nature of bushfire management plan required by rural landholders in fire abatement zones, and specific detail about the place of Farm FireWise plans, bushfire operation plans and land management agreements.</p> <p>c. A copy of the advice provided to rural leaseholders in relation to their bushfire management responsibilities.</p> <p>d. A copy of the current form document being provided to rural leaseholders to use for commencement of a</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The <i>Emergencies Amendment Act 2014</i> removed the requirement that rural leaseholders submit bushfire operational plans for approval every two years, replacing it with a requirement that the plans be submitted every five years. This amendment aligned and harmonised the requirements for bushfire operational plans with LMAs which are required every five years. The Act also removed an exemption for certain rural leaseholders from having to develop a bushfire operational plan where their LMA is consistent with the SBMP. All rural leaseholders who are subject to section 78 (1) (b) will now have to prepare a bushfire operational plan and provide it to the Commissioner for approval. This change ensures that owners of land that are subject to a higher level of risk of bushfire must prepare a BOP, and have that plan approved by the Commissioner, as the relevant expert on managing bushfire risk in the Territory. The RFS supports rural leaseholders to prepare Bushfire Operational Plans through the Farm Firewise Program.</p> <p>Statistics outlining the number of current Farm FireWise Plans (FFPs) was outlined in the Bushfire Risk Management chapter of the JACS Annual Report on page 325 and the section is copied for information.</p> <p>Farm Firewise Program</p> <p>The ACTRFS manages the ACT <i>Farm FireWise</i> program which supports the rural community undertake their bushfire planning. The <i>Farm FireWise</i> program supports land owners undertaking a risk assessment of their properties to determine the risk treatments or activities required to reduce the impacts of bushfire.</p> <p>As long as FFPs are approved by the ESA Commissioner every five years, they satisfy the requirements of BOPs required under the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> and any bushfire planning required by a LMA.</p> <p>There are currently 191 rural leases in the ACT, with 73 of these leases in the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ). The <i>Farm FireWise</i> Program has supported the completion of 118 plans, of which 50 are in the BAZ. An additional nine non-rural <i>Farm FireWise</i> plans have been completed for properties, including the CSIRO research farm. The <i>Farm FireWise</i></p>

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<p>rural lease.</p>	<p>Program will continue to focus on supporting properties within the BAZ to develop the plans in 2015–16.</p> <p>Information on the Farm Firewise Program is available through the RFS website via www.esa.act.gov.au</p> <p>Land Management Agreements for Rural Landholders</p> <p>An LMA provides a basis for a co-operative land management regime between lessees of rural land in the Australian Capital Territory and ACT Government agencies responsible for managing non-urban land on behalf of the Territory.</p> <p>An LMA is required under section 283 of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i> for all leases in the ACT that contain a rural purpose. A lease cannot be granted without a LMA first being approved by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.</p> <p>The management of non-urban land is also subject to other relevant legislation. An Agreement can be varied or reviewed from time to time during the term of the lease. An LMA is subject to compliance and enforcement action as outlined in sections 339 and 361 and schedule 2 of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i>.</p> <p>As at January 2016, the Director-General of EPD is finalising a revised LMA Form and Guideline following consultation with rural landholders. The draft revised LMA Approved Form and Guideline proposes that a LMA cannot be approved without a Farm Firewise Plan (FFP) in place therefore each landholder must acknowledge on their LMA Plan and Map that a FFP has already been approved by the ESA. Once the consultation and amendments to the forms and guidelines are finalised, these will be available through the Legislation Register under the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i>. The proposed amendment will require all leaseholders to have a FFP, regardless of whether they are in the BAZ as per the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> or not.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 15</p>	
<p>2.195 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the ACT Legislative Assembly with a copy of the completed Farm FireWise review and advise the Assembly on progress of</p>	<p>Agreed in part.</p> <p>The explanatory statement for the <i>Emergencies Amendment Act 2014</i> outlined the amendments removing the requirement that rural leaseholders submit bushfire operational plans for approval every two years, replacing it with a requirement that the plans be submitted every five years.</p> <p>The amendment aligned and harmonised the requirements for BOPs with LMAs which are required every five years. The amendments also removed</p>

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<p>implementation for any recommendations within the review before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>an exemption for certain rural leaseholders from having to develop a BOP where their LMAIs consistent with the SBMP.</p> <p>All rural leaseholders who are subject to section 78 (1) (b) will now have to prepare a bushfire operational plan and provide it to the Commissioner for approval.</p> <p>This change ensures that owners of land subject to a higher risk of bushfire must prepare a bushfire operational plan, and have that plan approved by the Commissioner, as the relevant expert on managing bushfire risk in the Territory.</p> <p>The RFS supports rural leaseholders to prepare BOPs through the Farm Firewise Program. The RFS updated their internal processes and consulted with the Rural Leaseholders Association on the revised processes. This included the implementation of a map based plan with an attached BOP that clearly outlines agreed outcomes for property preparation in response to seasonal conditions and the fire danger ratings.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 16</p>	
<p>2.205 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the updated standards and protocols for the Community Fire Units to the ACT Legislative Assembly before the last sitting day in March 2016.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Standards and Protocols for Community Fire Units are already publicly available through the ESA website at http://esa.act.gov.au/actfr/community-fire-units/documents/</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 17</p>	
<p>2.226 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that the memorandum of understanding between TAMS and ESA in relation to bushfire preparedness and response is updated annually.</p>	<p>Agreed in principle.</p> <p>When TAMS and ESA hold negotiations around the annual Bushfire Operational Plan, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is considered in relation to any required amendments. The MOU will only be updated in the event there is a requirement.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 18</p>	
<p>2.233 The Committee</p>	<p>Agreed in principle.</p>

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<p>recommends that the ACT Government provide the ACT Legislative Assembly, before the last sitting day in March 2016, with a copy of the framework used by the Rural Fire Service, ACT Fire and Rescue and TAMS to report their strategic bushfire capability in terms of volunteer and staff numbers.</p>	<p>A copy of the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework is attached which explains the weight of attack required for different bushfire scenarios. Crew capacity for each vehicle, along with the weight of attack drives the staffing and volunteer targets. Training plans are then developed based upon the gaps in skill sets and delivered.</p> <p>Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS)</p> <p>Section M2.3 of the ACT Public Sector – Technical and Other Professional Enterprise Agreement 2013 – 2017 states TAMS will maintain a fire readiness roster based on a minimum of 140 occupied and “<i>fire designated positions</i>”. All nominated employees must be available to meet the roster requirements. TAMS firefighter capability is outlined in their Firefighter Role Requirements document developed by TAMS and outlines the requirement for roles such as crew leader, crew member, tanker driver, logistics officer, remote area fire team crew members, plant managers, chainsaw operator, air observers and incident management roles.</p> <p>Many Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) staff are required to undertake firefighting roles as part of their employment and are trained to national standards. PCS provides 140 firefighters to the RFS and they form the 'Parks Brigade'. All PCS firefighters must maintain their skills and competencies through ongoing training, prescribed burn activities, and annual assessments and workshops.</p> <p>PCS staff crew six heavy tankers, two medium tankers, one Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) unit, and seven light units between the ACT and Googong Foreshores. PCS fire vehicles are easily identified by the prefix "Parks" clearly displayed on each vehicle. PCS also provides the ESA with specialist firefighting staff including senior incident management personnel, incident controllers, remote area fire teams, aerial observers, GIS specialists, bushfire behaviour analysts and burnt area recovery specialists.</p> <p>Crews are on standby and available for response throughout the bushfire season with the <u>bushfire danger rating</u> determining the number of staff and resources available for immediate response on any given day.</p> <p>ACT Rural Fire Service</p> <p>RFS has 14 paid staff at ESA Headquarters and manages over 500 firefighting volunteers in eight volunteer brigades. The volunteer brigades have 13 heavy tankers, one bulk water tanker, 12 medium tankers, seven light tankers, five CAFS tankers along with a number of command units and support trailers. In order for the RFS to crew the available vehicles</p>
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	<p>with volunteers, RFS has undertaken a needs analysis that shows optimum levels of volunteering.</p> <p>The RFS requires access to sufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel to crew fire fighting appliances in the event of a number of simultaneous fires as outlined in the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework. As an example, in order to crew all volunteer fire fighting appliances with minimum safe crew numbers for an initial 12 hour shift, the RFS requires 160 trained and qualified volunteers at varying competencies and levels. The required number of members to manage a 24 hour shift is 320. As the RFS relies on volunteer members, allowances in staffing must be made for members availability due to work commitments, illness and competing priorities. On this basis, the RFS has identified the requirement for additional members over the minimum required crew numbers as a contingency to ensure capability. At present the numbers of crew members is 524 volunteers as at 7 January 2016 which is within the target range.</p> <p>Along with aggregate numbers of volunteers, volunteers need to be trained in a variety of roles including advanced firefighting, crew leader and specialist roles. RFS reports quarterly on qualified roles through a quarterly report to Brigades and undertakes a forward planning training needs analysis to develop training programs.</p> <p>ACT Fire and Rescue</p> <p>ACTF&R has a total of 334 full time career firefighters, five administrative support staff and approximately 1,000 CFU volunteers. The career firefighters and administrative support staff operate from nine fire stations, ESA headquarters, ESA training and the Technical Operational Support Section at Fyshwick, whilst the CFU volunteers are members of 50 strategically located CFU units spread around the urban/rural interface. ACTF&R has 14 pumpers, three heavy tankers, two light units, two heavy CAFS and two medium CAFS appliances along with three command vehicles and a command pod. This is supplemented by the technical operational support section capability that can deploy specialist resources and equipment.</p> <p>Two of the nine fire stations cross crew a pumper and heavy tanker/light unit combination while a further two cross crew a pumper and heavy/medium CAFS combination on a 24/7 basis. During times of elevated fire danger in line with ACTF&R policy and procedures, the tankers, light units and CAFS appliances will be crewed by dedicated staff in addition to the minimum roster of firefighters. ACTF&R also provides enhanced staffing in the ESA communications centre during times of</p>
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	<p>increased fire danger in the way of a dedicated RFS operator.</p> <p>All ACTF&R firefighting staff are trained in their specific legislated firefighting responsibilities in line with the national qualification framework. Firefighters hold public safety training package qualifications appropriate to the rank they hold in line with these legislated roles. Of the 334 career staff 92 have training to operate as level 1 incident controller, 18 to operate as part of a level two IMT and nine in level 3 IMT roles. CFU volunteers undergo training in line with the roles and functions they are required to perform in asset protection on the interface.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 19	
2.247 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider updating the information records systems used to maintain information regarding training, skill sets and experience of personnel, including volunteers, in one system that can be accessed by ESA and TAMS if required.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The ACT Government will be finalising the procurement for a learning management system in early 2016 which would be available to both ESA and TAMS. Initial Implementation in Shared Services is expected throughout 2016. The new system would be web based and accessible to all stakeholders.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 20	
2.248 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government foster professional development through access to appropriate training and interstate visits.	<p>Agreed.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 21	
2.249 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reviews the provision and delivery of training to volunteers in the Rural Fire Service with a view to a more devolved model	<p>Agreed in part.</p> <p>Entry level training and fire ground leader courses are provided centrally through the RFS utilising Brigade instructors. This ensures consistent high quality training is delivered service wide. Brigade level training consists of skills maintenance through drills and desktop exercises such as navigation exercises, hose rolling, radio communications, equipment checking, vehicle driving and area familiarisation. A small number of intermediate level nationally accredited training courses are delivered at the Brigade</p>

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<p>including more training at the Brigade level.</p>	<p>level to ensure the Brigades are directly involved in training their own members. For example, the Advanced Firefighter package which includes six units of competency such as operating pumps, navigation, working autonomously, maintaining incident safety, fire behaviour and fire weather is delivered within each Brigade. Each Brigades training officer is responsible for updating members training records, organising regular brigade training nights, a point of contact for the RFS Training Coordinator to facilitate member nominations for centrally coordinated training courses. Each Brigade has at least one qualified trainer and assessor and there are a total of approximately 30 volunteers who hold formal qualifications in training and assessment in the RFS.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 22</p>	
<p>2.250 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that a minimum of five trained and experienced level 3 controllers be available in the ACT at all times and that all have appropriate and current accreditation.</p>	<p>Agreed in part.</p> <p>The ACT maintains this capability, however, the words 'at all times' does not reflect the higher risk posed by the annual bushfire season. As at December 2015 the ACT has 15 level 3 IC's. ESA continues to conduct training exercises suitable for Incident Controllers at the level 3 to maintain currency. A three day incident management exercise (IMX) for bushfire was held in October 2015 and a cross border IMX was held in July 2015. In relation to our level 3 Incident Controllers, ESA personnel have retained their currency by participating in Level 3 IMT's in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland in recent times.</p> <p>Incident Management is not just about Level 3 Incident Controllers but involves many persons playing vital roles in a Team. Incident Management Team Capability Standards were developed as part of the Strategic Bushfire Capabilty Framework. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the ACT Emergency Services Agency is able to establish and maintain a full Level 3 IMT for the first rotation, which is nominally five days and nights, of any campaign response. • That the ACT Emergency Services agency is able to fill all key functional leadership roles in a Level 3 IMT (as defined by AIIMS version 4) for the first IMT rotation. To achieve this capability, the ACT Emergency Services Agency sets a target of identifying and endorsing at least four personnel for each IMT leadership role for each shift to be filled, i.e. a minimum of four endorsed personnel for incident controller, and eight endorsed personnel for deputy incident controller, safety officer, and functional section and unit leaders. • That any personnel endorsed for more than one incident management role, have a preferred or primary role flagged. • That all personnel endorsed for incident management roles will have satisfied the requirements of ESA, in relation to training, experience and competency. <p>The IMT Capability Standards is supported by an RFS training needs</p>

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	<p>analysis. An RFS training plan has been prepared for 2016 which addresses training gaps. ESA has participated in a national project to develop suitable IMT training materials for small jurisdictions such as the ACT. Courses will be scheduled based on requirements.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 23	
<p>2.259 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the applicability of the fitness test by which the fitness of RFS staff and volunteers is assessed.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The ACT is the only RFS to maintain an annual fitness test. The fitness test is explained in the RFS Service Standard 4.3 work capacity test which is available on the RFS website. The test ranks individuals into three categories - light, moderate and arduous. Only those meeting moderate fitness levels and above are allowed to crew vehicles for firefighting. This assists RFS meet Workplace Health and Safety standards for volunteers. The RFS, Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and Deakin University are undertaking a research project to test the relevance of the current fitness testing regime which will lead to a revised scientific based fitness for duty test.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 24	
<p>2.267 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the first sitting day in September every year a detailed summary of the preparation for the approaching fire season including an explicit list of resources and equipment available for the season based on checks of equipment prior to the commencement of the fire season.</p>	<p>Not Agreed.</p> <p>The ACT Rural Fire Service's state of readiness is maintained all year round and any maintenance issues are dealt with on an ongoing basis in order to maintain capability.</p> <p>A detailed summary of the checks undertaken is unlikely to provide increased accountability to the Assembly, given capability issues need to be thought through well in advance of the commencement of the season. Reporting on substantial resources and equipment available for bushfire response are unlikely to change following the ACT Budget and the provision of the JACS annual report.</p> <p>An annual preseason check is undertaken by the RFS and by each Brigade in relation to bushfire readiness in the lead up to the Bushfire Season. The preseason checklist includes all vehicles being serviced, checks are undertaken on the serviceability of towers, the RFS helipad and facilities, equipment and RAFT. Issues are addressed as identified.</p> <p>There is no set date that all checks or maintenance works has to have been completed given some tasks do not commence until well within the bushfire season e.g. checks on aviation assets are undertaken when the contracts commence.</p> <p>There are some significant enhancements to capability that occur from time to time. For example, a significant number of new Remote Area Fighter Team members were trained in 2014 and were maintained</p>

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	<p>throughout 2015. This was reported in the JACS annual report.</p> <p>An example of additional capability in 2016 was the preparations undertaken to allow the large air tanker program to access facilities in the ACT. The planning and preparedness arrangements for this program were undertaken in advance of the season commencing. The capability framework outlines that the ACT is keeping a watching brief on the need for contracted aviation assets for the season.</p> <p>The Government is agreeable to periodically consider capability through the ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework, provide reporting as part of the annual reporting process and consider funding for bushfire capability through the budget process. An additional statement will increase red tape.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 25	
4.13 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly how it will ensure better coordination of entities with responsibility for bushfire management in the ACT.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>This is reported in the Bushfire Risk Management Section of the JACS Annual Report. The SBMP IWG (as outlined in the SBMP) is the appropriate coordination group across government to implement the SBMP. Above this group sits higher level forums at the Director-General's and officials level, such as the Security and Emergency Management Senior Officials Group (SEMSOG) which is a statutory committee established by section 143 of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i>.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 26	
4.14 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government confirm their commitment to the retention of the Fire Management Unit in TAMS.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>TAMS acknowledges that the Territory Wide Risk Assessment identifies fire as one of the highest risks to the ACT. As the principle land manager, TAMS has an important role to play in managing this risk. TAMS is cognisant of the recent fire investigation reports (South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria) that have identified the maintenance of a specific targeted fire unit as an imperative to managing fuel management program. TAMS have no plans to downgrade or dispose of the Fire Unit.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 27	
4.15 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that all operational positions are filled at Rural Fire Service Headquarters.	<p>Agreed in principle.</p> <p>Whilst not agreeing with the underlying opinions expressed in the report which led to the development of this recommendation, the recommendation is agreed in principle. As at January 2016 the RFS has 14 full time equivalent (FTE) staff within the RFS Headquarters Unit. These positions fulfil a number of roles including operations, training, farm firewise program, strategic policy, brigade support, audit and investigations, volunteer management, community education, executive</p>

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	<p>support to Bushfire Council etc.</p> <p>The RFS positions are supported by a range of other operational specialists in ESA including the Mapping and Spatial Unit, Emergency Management, Fleet & Logistics, Risk Analysis and Media. In addition, TAMS and ACT Fire and Rescue also have a range of operational specialists who support fire suppression and fulfil a wide range of positions in Incident Management Teams. Effective bushfire response is predicated on effective coordination of a range of personnel that work together collaboratively from across ESA and Directorates under the concept of unified command.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 28	
<p>4.19 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government adopt and define a 'model of service' or 'standard of fire cover' for bushfire risks in the ACT in place of the current 'strategic bushfire capability'.</p>	<p>Not Agreed.</p> <p>A copy of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework is attached.</p> <p>This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework delivers on the Recommendation 19 of the Auditor-General's report.</p> <p>This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework relies upon the historical level of bushfire events along with a consideration of future risks arising from a hotter and dryer climate as outlined in the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.</p> <p>The Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework provides a <i>Bushfire Risk Assessment</i> which assists in classifying the size and complexity of fires so as to determine reasonable capability targets.</p> <p>The Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework is used to assess the level of resources on-hand and/or required in the ACT to respond to set level of bushfire risk.</p> <p>The high probability of bushfires within the ACT region requires a reasonable level of bushfire response resources are in place for every bushfire season. Determining the reasonable level of resources is assisted by the framework.</p> <p>When the required bushfire response resources exceed those available, the ACT's interstate mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with other jurisdictions will be utilised to increase our capability. This includes aviation resources which can be significantly boosted utilising the NSW/ACT 'call list' with access to over 100 aircraft of various types.</p> <p>This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework concludes by outlining the ongoing activities that need to be undertaken to maintain capability and areas of capability which are currently being strengthened or subject to</p>

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	<p>ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Along with this Framework, a significant number of projects are currently being implemented as actions of the ACT SBMP which assist in the management and deployment of our response capability in the ACT into the future.</p> <p>The framework outlines that one of the critical issues for the ACT is ensuring access to sufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel to crew fire fighting appliances in the event of a number of simultaneous fires. This is further addressed under recommendation 18.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 29	
4.20 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government predict a range of realistic bushfire scenarios; calculate the resources needed to protect the ACT in line with a model of service; and ensure that these resources are in place by the 2016 bushfire season.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework already achieves this and is attached.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 30	
4.23 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government clarify legislative provisions relating to bushfire preparedness which have been identified by the Auditor-General as unclear, inconsistent, or making insufficient provision for bushfire preparedness.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>An Emergencies Amendment Act in 2014 and a Review into the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> was undertaken in 2015 which considered the Auditor General's recommendations.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 31	
4.25 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that all required approvals are in place to ensure the effective	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>All activities identified in the TAMS BOP are planned well in advance. Any activity that requires external resources is planned and the necessary approvals are already in place to deliver an activity. The BOP is audited and this requirement is picked up in the quarterly audits and regular</p>

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use of external resources sourced to carry out fuel reduction activities.	reports to Bushfire Council.
RECOMMENDATION 32	
4.26 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that strategic access is maintained to bushfire prone areas.	Agreed. TAMS manages 4,500 kilometres of trails in the ACT. The TAMS BOP identifies all required access arrangements regarding land managed by TAMS which includes land in bushfire prone areas.
RECOMMENDATION 33	
4.28 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate the provision of an Automated External Defibrillator on all ACT Rural Fire Service tankers.	Agreed. The RFS is exploring the feasibility of this initiative.
RECOMMENDATION 34	
4.29 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that aerial application of fire retardant is incorporated in its response plans through both rotary and fixed wing application, including the use of large fixed wing tankers.	Agreed This is already in place and retardant was used in the Mt Clear fire in December 2015.
RECOMMENDATION 35	
4.30 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that arrangements are in place to provide a suitable number of heavy bulldozers should they be required.	Agreed. Bulldozers are one just one type of heavy plant required to support operations. There are options under the TAMS Fire Management Unit contract for heavy plant to increase the number of plant along with accessing the TAMS Roads contacts and NSW RFS Heavy Plant register. Types of plant accessed included excavators, graders, forestry equipment and dozers.

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RECOMMENDATION 36	
4.31 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure that an adequate number of heavy tankers be available for duty in the ACT.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The number of heavy tankers available in the ACT is outlined in the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework attached to this Government Response and a summary of response vehicles is provided under Recommendation 2 above. The stand up arrangements for response vehicles is outlined in the <i>Concept of Operations for Bush and Grass Fires</i> available on the Legislation Register and the weight of attack for categories of fire is governed by ESA business rules summarised in the Bushfire Capability Assessment section of the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 37	
4.34 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government guard against complacency given the extended period since a major bushfire incident has occurred in the ACT.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The ACT has robust governance arrangements in place to avoid complacency including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation - <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> • Ministerial advisory body - ACT Bushfire Council • Official oversight – SEMSOG • Bushfire Mitigation – TAMS annual mitigation program (BOP) • High level of response planning – Elevated Bushfire Danger Plan • Coordination across Government – SBMP IWG • Situational Awareness - Pre-Season briefings • ACT Government and Commonwealth funding including \$9.2m provided in 2015-16 to meet the standards and strategies specified in V3 of the SBMP • Annual Reporting – Bushfire Risk Management Section of the JACS Annual Report and Strategic and Accountability Indicators • Estimates and Annual Report Hearings • Community support – a good level of volunteering by the ACT community.
RECOMMENDATION 38	
4.35 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with all other jurisdictions to establish a National Bushfire Museum in the ACT.	<p>Agreed in principle.</p> <p>The ACT will explore opportunities to consider this initiative.</p>



ACT
Government



ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework

ACT Emergency Services Agency

As at 30 June 2015

ACT Emergency Services Agency

Contact: (02) 6205 1316



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1 COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

Bushfires are an inevitable part of the Australian landscape and will continue to impact the Australian Capital Territory, the country's bush capital.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework delivers on Recommendation 19 of the ACT Auditor General's 2013 *Performance Audit Report into Bushfire Preparedness* to establish a target level of service so as to plan for and resource our emergency services agencies.



This framework is also a deliverable of the overarching ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan¹ and identifies the level of resources we have available to respond to bush and grass fires in the ACT, ensuring our resources match the risk, and indicates our level of capability.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework shows the ACT is well placed to respond to a high level of demand on our bushfire response resources. In extreme situations, the ACT will require the support of interstate resources utilising our mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with other States and Territories.

The safety of our frontline firefighters, many of whom are volunteers, comes first, and no matter how many response crews, vehicles and helicopters we have available, there will be days of extreme and catastrophic weather conditions, that will potentially test us beyond our capability.

International and national research and reviews have found, on extreme and catastrophic bushfire days, the community cannot expect or rely upon a firefighting crew being available to protect their property.

In ensuring Canberra is ready for bushfires, we need Canberrans to share the responsibility of being *bushfire ready* by preparing their homes, developing a bushfire survival plan, knowing where to get information and having their emergency kit on hand.

With the expectation of hotter and drier weather in future years, along with vegetation growth in remote areas returning to high levels after the 2003 bushfires, we need to ensure we remain vigilant in being *bushfire ready* - **Canberra Bushfire Ready**.

Dominic Lane AFSM
Commissioner
ACT Emergency Services Agency

¹ ACT Government (2014) [ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#) (Version 3)

2 ACT STRATEGIC BUSHFIRE CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

The ACT Auditor-General's [Performance Audit into Bushfire Preparedness in 2013](#) stated that the ACT needed to establish a target level of service so as to plan for and resource our emergency services agencies². This includes the location, number and type of appliances, the desirable level of volunteering and the need for specific roles, skills experience and competencies.

The Auditor-General's recommendation is outlined below:

Recommendation 19 (Chapter 6) – 'Strategic bushfire capability' (High Priority)

The Emergency Services Agency and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should develop and routinely review a strategic bushfire capability for the ACT. The contribution of ACT Fire and Rescue (including the Community Fire Units) and the ACT Rural Fire Service (including Parks Brigade) should be explicitly stated.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework delivers on the Recommendation 19 of the Auditor-General's report.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework relies upon the historical level of bushfire events ([Section 3 - History of Bushfires in the ACT](#)) along with a consideration of future risks arising from a hotter and dryer climate as outlined in the [ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#).

[Section 4 Bushfire Risk Assessment](#) assists in classifying the size and complexity of fires so as to determine reasonable capability targets in [Section 5 Capability Requirements, Targets and Measures](#).

The Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework is used to assess the level of resources on-hand and/or required in the ACT to respond to set level of bushfire risk ([Sections 6 Bushfire Scenarios, 7 ACT Fire Fighting Resources & 8 Bushfire Capability Assessment](#)).



² ACT Auditor-General (2013) [Performance Audit Report into Bushfire Preparedness](#)

The high probability of bushfires within the ACT region requires a reasonable level of bushfire response resources are in place for every bushfire season. Determining the reasonable level of resources is assisted by this response framework.

When the bushfire response resources required exceed those available, our interstate mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with other jurisdictions will be utilised to increase our capability.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework concludes by outlining the ongoing activities that need to be undertaken to maintain capability (*Section 9 - Ongoing Resource Capability Activities*) and areas of capability which are currently being strengthened or subject to ongoing monitoring (*Section 10 - Gap Analysis of Capability As at May 2015*).

Along with this Framework, a significant number of concurrent projects are currently being implemented as actions of the [ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#) which assist in the management and deployment of our response capability in the ACT into the future.

Section 76 of the *Emergencies Act 2004* states after the Minister makes the [ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#), the Commissioner must conduct an assessment, based upon the plan, of available resources and capabilities for bushfire prevention and preparedness. The Emergency Services Commissioner must provide the assessment to the ACT Bushfire Council and the ACT Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework makes the assessment of resources and capability in relation to response capability, which relates to objectives 2, 3 & 4 of the [Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#) being:

- *Effective firefighting operations by skilled and motivated personnel;*
- *The necessary equipment and resources to respond to and extinguish bushfires; and*
- *Extinguish bushfires when they occur.*

In relation to considering our future response capability requirements, the ACT will need to continuously consider factors such as changing demographics, climate modelling, contemporary research/findings and long-term fuel dynamics to make reasonable decisions about our continuing capability requirements.

3 HISTORY OF BUSHFIRES IN THE ACT³

Records of fire events before the establishment of the ACT in 1911 are few, but dramatically improved in the years that followed, identifying that large bushfires burnt across the ACT in 1919-20, 1925-26 and 1938-39. Legislation governing bushfire management and the use of fire (the *Bushfire Act 1936*) was introduced, which also constituted the ACT Bushfire Council.

The 1938-39 fires occurred during a very dry summer, which included record breaking January temperatures. These fires covered an estimated 60,000 hectares of forest and grazing land, including 1,100 hectares of pine plantation.

From the 1940's a greater emphasis on planned burning (also known as fuel reduction burning, prescribed burning or controlled burning) was introduced in the ACT as a means of reducing the potential for severe bushfires.

Between 1939 and 2003, the ACT experienced several severe bushfire events which burnt over thousands of hectares and/or came close to the urban areas of Canberra.

In 1951-52, severe bushfires came close to the urban areas of Canberra under the influence of strong westerly winds. Two people died and there was extensive damage to grazing properties across the 13,000 hectares burnt. The Stromlo pine plantation and observatory grounds were also burnt.

In 1978-79 a high fire danger in grasslands developed in late summer when extremely hot dry weather followed a period of substantial rain resulting in prolific grass growth. Several fires started in the ACT and nearby regions, one in particular began on the 13th February 1979, ignited from high tension power lines near Hall, and burnt into NSW towards the village of Sutton towards Lake George.

Numerous bushfire also occurred during the severe drought of 1982-83, including Ash Wednesday fires in South Australia and Victoria. In the ACT a fire started on the 8th January 1983 in the Gudgenby area and spread rapidly, burning for 22 days in rugged terrain before being contained. In total that one fire burnt 33,000 hectares.

In 1984-85, a relatively wet winter and spring was followed by an extremely dry summer and as a result several large fires occurred in forest and grassland reserves in and around Canberra, three of which burnt into NSW. These fires resulted in the death of one person and the burning of 28,000 hectares, of which approximately 10,000 hectares were in the ACT.

Whilst the fires of December 2001 were comparatively small in size they were notable in that they were the most serious fires to occur in the suburban areas of the Canberra for some years. On 24th December,

³ [RFS Website and ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#)

fires lit by an arsonist on the Uriarra and Coppins Crossing Roads burnt rapidly through grassland and pine plantation, crossing the Tuggeranong Parkway. They threatened the suburbs of Duffy, Holder, Weston, Yarralumla and Curtin and burnt to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin destroying 510 hectares of pine plantation. The National Zoo and Aquarium was under direct threat and suffered minor damage.

In 2002, most of Australia experienced one of the most severe droughts on record. On 7th and 8th of January 2003 there were numerous lightning strikes over the Australia Alps, which ignited at least 89 fires in Victoria, 74 in NSW and three in the ACT. Those fires not controlled, burnt for over 60 days and eventually covered 1.96 million hectares. Four of these fires directly affected the ACT, starting in the ranges to the west of Canberra on the 8th January 2003 and gradually increased in size over the following 9 days. Due to severe weather conditions experienced on the 18th the fires spread rapidly out of control across Namadgi National Park, Pierces Creek and Stromlo pine plantations and leased grazing lands towards Canberra. Fire then entered into the suburbs of Weston Creek between 2pm and 6pm in the afternoon resulting in the deaths of four ACT residents and the burning of 164,000 hectares (or nearly 70%) of land in the Territory. Over 500 houses and most of the Mt Stromlo Observatory were destroyed, fire damage to a further 315 houses, and major damage to various infrastructure and facilities. Ninety percent of Namadgi National Park was burnt (much of it severely) and severe fire damage occurred to the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, the Stromlo Pine plantation and pine plantation west of the Murrumbidgee River. The fires also effected the ACT water catchment, and as a result Canberra's water supply.

Since 2003, the ACT has seen relatively few large bushfires. This in part is due to the large amount of the Territory that was burnt in 2003. With the re-growth of the forests, and the forecast of hotter and dryer summers ahead as a result of climate change, the ACT community cannot be complacent in relation to the risk of extreme bushfires in the future.





4 BUSHFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The ACT is a bushfire prone environment. Unplanned bushfire will occur, including large and uncontrollable bushfires.

The [ACT Territory Wide Risk Assessment](#)⁴ identifies Bushfire, Storm and Extreme Heat as posing the highest level of risk to the ACT.

As outlined in the previous section, most of the total area burnt in the ACT since 1939 has been the result of a relatively small number of very large fires in 1939, 1952, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1991, 2001 and 2003.

Over the past 10 years more than 95% of the bushfires reported each year in the ACT were less than one hectare in size.

The type and nature of fires in the future will depend on a range of factors such as climate, weather, fuel loads and sources of ignition.

Fires can be classified based upon their size as well as their level of complexity.



⁴ ACT Government (2012) [Territory Wide Risk Assessment Report](#) (Available from the Publication Section of the Emergency Service Agency Website www.esa.act.gov.au)

4.1. BUSHFIRE SIZE

The following outlines definitions of bushfire which will then be used to assess our capability by determining the weight of attack or level of resources needed to respond to the type of emergency, and comparing the resources available to respond.

SMALL FIRES OF 1-50 HA

Bushfire will start small in the ACT (unless they enter the ACT from surrounding NSW).

At this stage, the potential to contain and extinguish these fires is greatest.

Small fires will have the following characteristics:

- Ignitions which remain close to their point of origin; and
- If suppressed they will cause little damage and may only threaten assets close to the point of origin.

MEDIUM TO LARGE FIRES OF 50-5000 HA

When the containment of small fires is not achieved the bushfires will have the following characteristics:

- Fire with spread and movement characteristics dominated by prevailing weather conditions and local topographical and fuel relationships;
- These fire will move around their local landscape elements e.g. from ridge to gully to ridge and may cross landscape elements (water catchments and sub catchments);
- Are likely to spread from landscape elements outside the ACT (eg Brindabella Range in NSW);
- They have the potential to cause significant impact to assets within the area at a sub catchment level.

VERY LARGE FIRES OF >5000 HA

When the containment of medium or large bushfires is not achieved the bushfire will have the following characteristics:

- These large fires will cross a number of landscape elements and may effect a significant area of the Territory;
- High probability of a general North and West to East and South direction of travel;

- These large fires may enter the ACT from the west, escalate within the ACT and exit the ACT to the east with significant impact;
- These large fires are driven by a range of elements – prevailing weather and environmental conditions, fuel availability topography and plume development;
- These large fires may have a significant impact on catchment, environmental, social and economic values.



4.2. LEVEL OF BUSHFIRE COMPLEXITY

In addition to size, the classification of bushfires can also be categorised by levels 1, 2 & 3 using the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) Doctrine. Levels 1, 2 & 3 are contextualised for an ACT bushfire incident in a *[Commissioners Guideline - Concept of Operations for Bush and Grass Fires in the ACT](#)*⁵ which is summarised below. The following information assumes the reader understands the emergency management arrangements in the ACT outlined in the *[ACT Emergency Plan](#)*⁶.



LEVEL 1

A bush or grass fire under the control of the responsible fire fighting service, whether or not assistance is provided by other services, and is of a size and level of intensity whereby the Incident Controller supported by Unity of Command arrangements along with all IMT functions are managed from the incident location. The provision of information, advice and warnings to the community will be via the ESA Public Information Coordinator. Coordination will occur via individual Service Duty Officer arrangements.

LEVEL 2

A bush or grass fire, which by necessity due to its complexity requires the support of an appointed Incident Management Team. Complexity may be influenced by size, weather conditions, proximity to residential and/or critical infrastructure or other factors as determined by the on-scene Incident Controller or the Chief Officers. An Incident Control Centre (ICC) is to be established and key IMT functions as determined by the Incident Controller will be undertaken.

An Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) may be established to support the ICC. The provision of information, advice and warnings to the community will be via the ESA Public Information Coordinator, or if required a Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) may be established to undertake these functions. Emergency Coordination and Public Information functions while having separate structures to the IMT, will report to the IC.

⁵ ACT Government (2012) [Emergencies \(Concept of operations for bush and grass fires in the Australian Capital Territory\) Commissioner's Guidelines 2012](#) www.legislation.act.gov.au

⁶ ACT Government (2014) [ACT Emergency Plan](#) www.legislation.act.gov.au

The Incident Controller and Operations Officer are located at the ICC and Divisional Commander(s) supported by Unity of Command and is established at the incident location.

Or

Where there are multiple bush or grass fires burning which create competing demands for resources and information, attract significant public interest and require overall coordination. The Incident Controller and Operations Officer are located at the ICC and a Divisional Commander supported by Unified Command arrangements is established at each incident location. A Chief Officer in consultation with the other Chief Officer may determine that a specific bush or grass fire incident may be managed as Level 1 incident outside the Level 2 Command and Control arrangements.

LEVEL 3

Where the complexity of bush fire incidents or potential incidents requires Command and Control across the Territory, additional significant resources may be required and sought from other jurisdictions. An ICC and IMT will be established to co-ordinate resource deployments and information to individual fire-ground locations as well as undertaking key IMT functions.

An Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) will be established to support the ICC. The Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) will be established to undertake the provision of information, advice and warnings to the community. Emergency coordination and Public Information functions while having separate structures to the IMT, will report to the Incident Controller, or Emergency Controller (EC) in the event one is appointed (see below).

The Incident Controller and Operations Officer are located at the ICC and a Divisional Commander supported by Unity of Command and is established at each incident location.

Or

The appointment of an Emergency Controller (EC) has been made or is imminent under the provisions of Section 150A or Section 160 of the Emergencies Act, 2004. In the event an EC is appointed, however, an IC will remain in place to manage the response to the incident, reporting to the EC. The Emergencies Act 2004, and the ACT Emergency Plan detail the arrangement for appointment, and the roles and functions of the Emergency Controller, including their relationship to incident control, coordination and public information functions. All bush or grass fire or fires that occur at Level 3, will fall under the control of the IMT.

5 CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS, TARGETS AND MEASURES

The objects of the *Emergencies Act 2004* includes protecting and preserving life, property and the environment. This response capability report aims to provide key bushfire response performance targets and measures and the opportunity to benchmark performance over time which then provides the ability to consider the ACT's capability on an ongoing basis.



Capability measures can also guide the development of ESA's ICT systems to:

- support operational decision making for the deployment of resources; and
- support strategic decision making in relation to the need for resources.

The following set of capability targets have been developed with a view to them being benchmarked, analysed and refined over time. They include targets and measures in key areas including:

- Deployment of resources
- Containment of bushfires
- Control of bushfires
- Asset protection
- Incident Management Team capability standards

By establishing these targets and measures, the ESA's systems will be able to be configured to capture key data, so as to monitor and analyse the ACT's ability to respond to bushfires with our assets.

5.1. TARGET 1 - DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES

- Fire suppression resources will be deployed to bushfires in the Bushfire Abatement Zone within 30 minutes from the time of detection for 95% of fires of days of High Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) or above; and
- Fire suppression resources will be deployed to bushfires in rural areas outside the Bushfire Abatement Zone within 45 minutes from the time of detection for 95% of fires of days of High Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) or above.

5.2. TARGET 2 - CONTAINMENT

- 95% of bushfires will be contained by the first shift deployed to the bushfire (within 12 hours).

5.3. TARGET 3 - CONTROL

- 100% of bushfires will be controlled in the ACT to less than five (5) ha.

5.4. TARGET 4 - ASSET PROTECTION

- 95% of bushfires in the Territory will be controlled with no loss of property.

5.5. TARGET 5 – IMT CAPABILITY STANDARDS

- That the ACT Emergency Services Agency is able to establish and maintain a full Level 3 IMT for the first rotation, which is nominally five days and nights, of any campaign response.
- That the ACT Emergency Services agency is able to fill all key functional leadership roles in a Level 3 IMT (as defined by AIIMS version 4) for the first IMT rotation.

To achieve this capability, the ACT Emergency Services Agency sets a target of identifying and endorsing at least four (4) personnel for each IMT leadership role for each shift to be filled, i.e. a minimum of 4 endorsed personnel for incident controller, and 8 endorsed personnel for deputy incident controller, safety officer, and functional section and unit leaders.

- That any personnel endorsed for more than one incident management role, have a preferred or primary role flagged.
- That all personnel endorsed for incident management roles will have satisfied the requirements of ESA, in relation to training, experience and competency.

6 BUSHFIRE SCENARIOS

The following bushfire scenarios have been developed based upon a level of fire events so as to inform the current and future capability of the ACT Rural Fire Service, ACT Fire & Rescue, Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) and other ACT Government resources. It should be noted that initial responses to every bushfire requires an added level of resourcing for to mop up and recovery.

SCENARIO 1 – HIGH DEMAND

This scenario consists of a number of fires occurring at the same time:

- Four Level One Fires, each requiring a single shift (controlled within 12 hours)
- One Level Two incident of Two Divisions, requiring three shifts (controlled within 36 hours)

This scenario reflects broadly the size of the Christmas 2001 bushfires, with the Stromlo fire reflecting the level three incident, and the level one incidents being the number of fires that were also burning concurrently. These fires occurred in a Fire Danger Index rating of 25-49.

SCENARIO 2 – REMOTE DEMAND

This scenario consists of a number of remote area fires occurring at the same time requiring specialist Remote Area Fire Team (RAFT) personnel and aerial fire fighting capability:

- Three Level One remote area fires
- One Level Two remote area fire with multiple sectors

Forest Fire Danger Index Ratings at the time of the above incidents must be below 24 FDI for the fire services to consider deploying RAFT personnel.

SCENARIO 3 – EXTREME DEMAND

The scenario consists of the following concurrently occurring incidents:

- Four Level One Fires, each requiring a single shift (nominally 12 hours)
- Four Level Two Fires requiring two shifts for each fire (nominally 24 hours)
- One Level Two incident of two Divisions, requiring three Shifts (nominally 36 hours)

This scenario reflects somewhat the size of the January 2003 Bushfire – Stockyard, Ginini and McIntyres Hut fires could each be a single Division, with Bendora having two Divisions. These fires occurred in a Fire Danger Index rating of 75+. The ACT will need to rely upon additional cross border capability to combat this scenario under the MOU and MAA with interstate fire services.

6.1. USE OF THE BUSHFIRE SCENARIOS

The above scenarios assist in making an assessment of capability in Section 8 - **Bushfire Capability Assessment**.





7 ACT FIRE FIGHTING RESOURCES

The current fire fighting resources in the ACT are outlined below.

7.1. PERSONNEL

Firefighter capability as at **30 June 2015**:

- ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS) - Career firefighters and support – 13
- ACT Fire & Rescue (F&R) - Career firefighters – 344
- Territories and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) - Parks Brigade – 160
- ACT Rural Fire Service - Volunteers – 530
- ACT Fire & Rescue - Community Fire Unit Volunteers – 1,008
- ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) - Mapping and Planning Services (MAPS) Volunteers – 52

Notes:

- The firefighters above would not all be available at the same time.
- The TAMS Park Brigade is one of the nine Brigades of the ACT Rural Fire Service.

Additional capability is provided by the other emergency services (ACT SES and ACT Ambulance Service), ESA support areas (Fleet, logistics and workshop) as well as ACT Government agencies in relation to support and coordination.



The ESA, TAMS and Environment and Planning Directorate (EPD) have committed officers to:

- Develop and implement bushfire planning documents, including the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, Regional Fire Management Plans, Bushfire Operational Plans, mapping and data management;
- Support landholders to develop fire management plans through the RFS Farm Firewise program;
- Provide advice for new urban development and land use planning;
- Develop the central roads geo-database to provide for consolidated information across governments;
- Attend local and national meeting forums for liaison with other jurisdictions;
- Participate in the National Arson Reduction Strategy;
- Work collaboratively with AFAC, within specialist user groups and forums;
- Participate in the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC) and other research projects.

Firefighter training is delivered through dedicated training officers (career and volunteer) developing, coordinating and delivering training within the ACT RFS, ACT F&R, and TAMS. These officers are supported by the ESA through the ESA Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Officers designated to develop and implement programs for the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

ESA Education and Awareness programs implemented through:

- Education officers within the ESA and the Fire Services.
- Specific programs e.g. RFS Open Day, CFU Saturday, Fetes and Exhibitions.
- Targeted education and awareness programs to “at risk” individuals.
- Local community-level engagement through ACT RFS and ACT F&R volunteer and career firefighters.
- Community groups supporting local and targeted education and awareness programs in Bushfire Prone Areas.
- ACT Government Media Officers through the Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) at ESA Headquarters.

Officers allocated to coordinate exercises and maintain incident management facilities. TAMS and EPD coordinate and implement the activities identified in Bushfire Operations Plans.

Fire service's inspectors undertake auditing and assessment to ensure compliance with '*ACT Bushfire Management Standards*'.

ESA, TAMS and EPD have established and participate in an interstate Burnt Area Assessment Team (BAAT) for rapid assessment of possible ecological impacts immediately post a fire event.

ESA has a Chaplain, Employee Assistance Program, Critical Incident Stress Management and Peer Support Programs to support firefighters and ESA staff.

7.2. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

The ESA maintains a range of vehicles for firefighting which includes ACT RFS and ACT F&R Command Units, Heavy and Medium Tankers, Light Units CAFS Tankers, Urban Pumpers as well as ancillary support trailers and equipment. A breakdown of these vehicles is as follows (as at 30 June 2015):

- Heavy Tankers - 22
- Heavy Compressed Air Foam Tankers – 2
- Medium Compressed Air Foam Tankers - 8
- Medium Tankers - 15
- Light Units – 14
- Bulk Water Trucks - 1
- Pumpers - 15
- Command Vehicles – 42
- CFU Trailers – 55
- 'Platforms on Demand' – 13
- Support vehicles/trailers – 34

The ACTRFS contract a medium helicopter and a light helicopter for an 84 day period (with extensions as necessary) during the bushfire season. These aircraft are available for fire suppression and fire detection. Additional aircraft are available through the NSW & ACT State Air Desk, managed by NSW Rural Fire Service.

TAMS provide access to contracted Heavy Plant specifically for fire related activities (one Grader & two Bulldozers on standby).

Four Fire Towers which are staffed during elevated fire danger conditions.

Mobile data terminals in firefighting appliances to allow real time information on vehicle location and resources.

Emergency '000' Communications Centre that includes computer aided dispatch and communications equipment.

Incident Management Facilities, the Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) and the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) provide whole of government coordination facilities and infrastructure at ACT ESA Headquarters Fairbairn with backup sites at Hume and Curtin.



7.3. OTHER RESOURCES AND PLANS

Public information and warnings are delivered through:

- ESA Website, Social Media, along with traditional broadcast media.
- Emergency Telephone Warning System - [Emergency Alert](#).
- MOU arrangements with local media.

The **Community Communication and Information Plan** establishes arrangements and policy framework for public information during emergencies.

The **ESA Strategic Asset Management Plan** outlines the strategic replacement program for vehicles and equipment.

The **ACT Elevated Fire Danger Plan** sets out the policy and procedures of the ESA, the Fire services and ACT government agencies for preparing when elevated fire danger conditions.

The **Emergency Coordination Centre Operations Plan** establishes policy and procedures of the ECC operations, including commitments of liaison officers and support staff for all ACT government Directorates, as well as external agencies, as appropriate.

The **ACT Recovery Plan** is in place. This Plan includes 4 separate parts covering community, economic, infrastructure and environmental recovery. Resources to deliver recovery arrangements are dependent on the scale and extent of the emergency.

TAMS & ESA contribute financially to the BNHCRC and Arson Prevention Materials and the ESA/AFP Arson Prevention MOU & Strategy is in place.



8 BUSHFIRE CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

The resources available in the ACT are able to meet high demand scenarios, however, under extreme demand conditions outlined in Section 6, the ACT will either rely upon support from interstate or evacuate residents to recovery centres to protect life.

The number of ACT response vehicles is summarised below.

Table 1 - ACT Fire Field Resources

Field Resources							
ACT Fire Specific Assets for ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS) and ACT Fire & Rescue (F&R)							
	PUMPER	HEAVY TANKER	MEDIUM TANKER	LIGHT UNIT	CAFS TANKER	RAFT TEAM	COMMAND/ GROUP VEHICLES
ACT	15	22	15	14	10	5	42

The table below outlines response resources required to initially respond to a fire under certain fire danger ratings. This is known as the weight of attack. Definitions of the National Fire Danger Index (FDI) Ratings are available through the Bureau of Meteorology or [ESA website](#). The BOM website states,

Wind, temperature, humidity and rainfall are weather elements that affect the behaviour of bushfires. In Australia there is a system of assessing these in conjunction with the state of the available fuels to determine a measure of "fire danger" or the difficulty of putting out any fires which may occur. Fire agencies in each jurisdiction determine Fire Danger Ratings and in some cases declare (Total) Fire Bans.

Table 2 - Initial weight of attack as set by the ACT ESA business rules

Response – Initial Weight of Attack	
ACT ESA Business Rules	
FDR	WEIGHT OF ATTACK
FDI 0-11 Low - Moderate	1 Heavy Tanker, 1 Pumper*, 1 Light Unit
FDI 12-24 High	2 Heavy Tankers, 1 Pumper*, 1 Light Unit
FDI 25-49 Very High	2 Heavy Tankers, 1 Pumper*, 2 Light Unit
FDI 50-74 Severe	3 Heavy Tankers, 1 Pumper*, 2 Light Unit
FDI 75+ Extreme and Catastrophic	3 Heavy Tankers, 1 Pumper*, 3 Light Unit
* If appropriate for incident	

Table 3 below is used as a guide to outline the *Initial Weight of Attack* capacity of the ACT to respond to a number of simultaneous fires utilising ACT resources only. The table shows the number of bushfires that can be managed within the existing prescribed ACT initial weight of attack resources at each level of fire danger. The table indicates that the ACT has resources to be able to respond to a high demand scenario as outlined in Section 6.

Table 3 - Maximum number of simultaneous fire suppression efforts that are accessible by road and in remote areas

ACT Capability							
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS FIRE SUPPRESSION EFFORTS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE BY FIREFIGHTING VEHICLE				MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS FIRE SUPPRESSION EFFORTS IN REMOTE AREAS (NO ROAD ACCESS)			
FDR (Actual)	Initial Response	Ongoing Response		FDR (Actual)	1 x Winch Capable Helicopter	2 x Winch Capable Helicopters	3 x Winch Capable Helicopters
	<4hrs	4-12hrs	>12hrs				
FDI 0-11	32	16	8	FDI 0-11	2	4	5
FDI 12-24	16	8	4	FDI 12-24	1	4	5
FDI 25-49	16	8	2	FDI 25-49	WATER BOMBING ONLY*		
FDI 50-74	11	5	1	FDI 50-74			
FDI 75+	11	5	1	FDI 75+			

Table 4 below shows the supplementary resources we can expect from other jurisdictions within certain timeframes. Based upon the supplementary resources below, combined capability of ACT and Interstate resources is then able to be forecast in Table 5.

Table 4 - Supplementary Interstate Resources

Supplementary Interstate Resources			
SUPPLEMENTARY CAPABILITY FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS			
Agency (Actual)	Initial Response	Ongoing Response	
	<4hrs	4-12hrs	>12hrs
Interstate Resources	4 Taskforce = 12 heavy tankers and 8 light/medium units	10 Taskforce = 30 heavy tankers and 20 light/medium units	20 Taskforces = 60 heavy tankers and 40 light/medium units

In addition to the above bushfire vehicles, aviation resources could be significantly boosted utilising the NSW/ACT 'call list' with access to over 100 additional aircraft of various types. Table 5 shows the combined capability of ACT and interstate resources.

Table 5 – Combined ACT and Interstate Capability

Combined ACT and Interstate Capability			
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS FIRE SUPPRESSION EFFORTS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE BY ROAD (ACT + Supplementary)			
FDR (Actual)	Initial Response	Ongoing Response	
	<4hrs	4-12hrs	>12hrs
FDI 0-11	42	31	23
FDI 12-24	21	15	11
FDI 25-49	21	15	7
FDI 50-74	14	10	5
FDI 75+	14	10	5



The critical issue for the ACT is ensuring:

- the ACT has access to sufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel to crew fire fighting appliances in the event of a number of simultaneous fires.
- the community understands what bushfire response services can reasonably achieve on very high, extreme and catastrophic fire days; and
- remediation of the current gaps in the ACT's capability as outlined in Section 10 - Gap Analysis of Capability As at May 2015.



9 ONGOING RESOURCE CAPABILITY ACTIVITIES

The following outlines the types of activities undertaken in the ACT that support our ongoing response capability.

9.1. BUSHFIRE DETECTION CAPABILITY

Fire Detection Towers - The ACT Rural Fire Service will maintain visual coverage for 90% of the Territory by staffing fire towers. The towers will be operated on days of High Fire Danger or when otherwise required.

Patrols - The ACT Rural Fire Service and TAMS staff undertake vehicle Patrols within predetermined geographic zones.

Lightning Detection - The ACT Rural Fire Service utilise a lightning detection system that will provide the location of air to ground lightning strikes.

Aerial Detection - On the detection of lightning followed by low rainfall, or otherwise when required, the Rural Fire Service will undertake aerial observation covering the Territory and other areas as may be requested by NSW, either by fixed or rotary wing aircraft. Observations will commence at the first possible opportunity following lightning events.

Public Information - The Fire Services are notified of all “000” or other calls from the public regarding fires within 2 minutes of receipt of call.



9.2. FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITY

The ACT Fire Services will establish and maintain the capability to provide the numbers of personnel:

- for specialist positions and Sector Command to meet the Extreme Demand Scenario;
- within the Service to respond to the High Demand Scenario and Remote Fire Scenario and;

To meet the extreme demand scenario the ACT Fire Services will have in place:

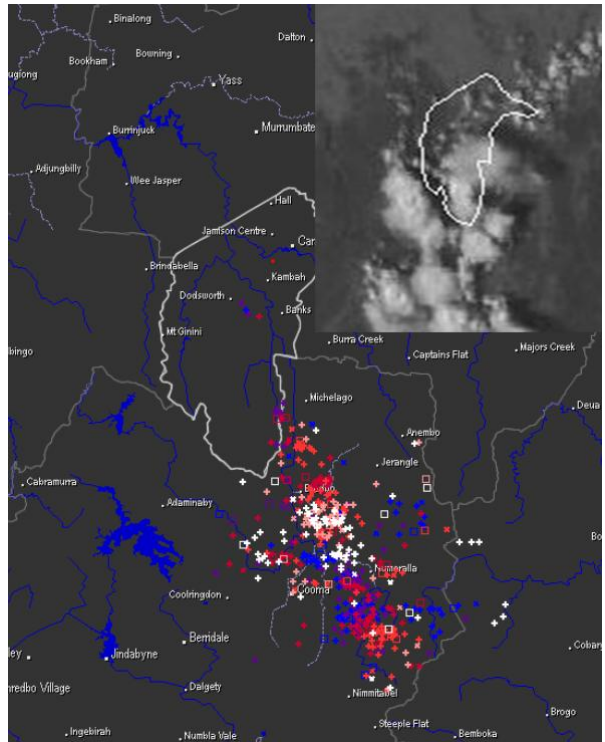
- strategies for mutual aid;
- the capability to source, deploy and command at the sector level and above;
- arrangements to seek additional resources from interstate.



9.3. WEATHER ANALYSIS CAPABILITY

The ACT ESA maintains a capability internally and through close cooperation with NSW and agreements with other jurisdictions to:

- monitor fire weather forecasts and conditions, including the potential for lightning ignitions, and anticipate their effects on potential or actual fire behaviour, either generally or through specialist Fire Behaviour Analysts.
- anticipate likely impacts from smoke emissions.



9.4. REMOTE AREA FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITY

To meet the remote area capability requirements the ACT Rural Fire Service will:

- maintain sufficient RAFT qualified resources to respond to and contain 6 bushfires of less than 2 hectares in size in locations where vehicle based suppression techniques are not possible.
- maintain sufficient RAFT qualified resources to respond a Remote Area Fire-fighting Strike Team interstate within 6 hours of notification where the predicted condition and current activity within the Territory allow.



9.5. COMPRESSED AIR FOAM SYSTEMS (CAFS) CAPABILITY

CAFS units will be located across the Territory to enable rapid response to incidents within the built up area. The ACT Fire services will be resourced to provide a CAFS Strike team to NSW if requested within 12 hours of notification where the predicted condition and current activity within the Territory allow.



9.6. APPLIANCES HEAVY TANKER CAPABILITY

The ACT Fire services will maintain capability to ensure the number Heavy and Light appliances available within the Service during the bushfire season are sufficient to deploy the number of on ground fire fighters (Crew and Crew Leaders) described in the Large Fire Scenario.



9.7. AERIAL FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITY

The ACT Rural Fire Service will facilitate the provision of aerial fire fighting platforms in the ACT to support a Large Fire Scenario during the fire season.



9.8. PLANT CAPABILITY FOR FIRE FIGHTING

TAMS will provide the capability to deploy immediately Fast Attack Bulldozers (D3-D4 equivalent) to bushfires and grassfires in the Territory during the bushfire season

TAMS will have the capability to deploy immediately to grassfires during the bushfire season with a fast attack grader.

TAMS will have the capability to deploy heavy plant (D6 equivalent or greater) for fire line construction in heavily forested terrain.



ESA has access through an MOU to the NSW Rural Fire Service Heavy Plant *Call When Needed List* to provide additional capability when required. This is supplemented by a list of private heavy plant providers held by TAMS.

9.9. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM CAPABILITY

ESA will facilitate the provision of an IMT to manage all scenarios in the ACT, including extreme scenarios.



9.10. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FACILITY CAPABILITY

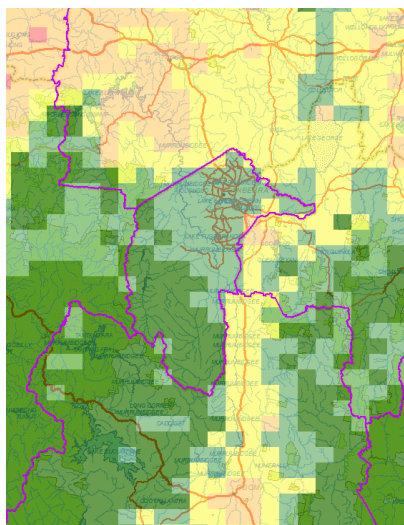
ESA provides Incident Management facilities such as the Emergency Coordination Centre and Public Information Coordination Centre.



9.11. RISK MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY

ESA will ensure the continuing monitoring of fuel loads by reviewing observations and recordings of vegetation growth in the ACT and region.

Image: Grass curing assessment for the ACT region (NSW RFS, 16 December 2014)



9.12. PUBLIC MESSAGING CAPABILITY

ESA will promote the need for the community to be prepared for bushfire through traditional media, social media platforms and digital applications.



ESA will proactively use the emergency alert telephone warning system as a communication tool to inform and warn the community who are in the immediate vicinity of bushfire danger.



9.13. GOVERNANCE

The ESA will monitor the updating of governance tools that assist in coordinating prevention, preparedness and response activities including:

- ACT Emergency Plan
- Elevated Fire Danger Hazard Sub Plan
- Concept of Operations for Bush and Grass Fires in the ACT
- Strategic Bushfire Management Plan
- Regional Fire Management Plans
- Bushfire Operational Plans

9.14. SPATIAL MAPPING

The ESA will ensure spatial mapping services are available to support all emergencies.



9.15. COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY

Communications amongst emergency services personnel is critical. The ESA will ensure internal communications capability by providing and maintaining:

- A mission critical radio network for emergency services personnel in the ACT and broadly across NSW;
- Accurate incident location data, messaging and crew information via mobile data terminals;
- Incident management, collection and information dissemination via Computer Aided Dispatch;
- A Communication Centre that provides people and technology working as an emergency communications hub servicing the responding crews;
- A Common Alerting Protocol used to inform the community of high risk events in real time via public messaging channels.



9.16. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS CAPABILITY

ICON is the NSW RFS Incident Management system adopted by the ESA to manage Bushfires in the ACT. The program provides a platform that consolidates a number of previously paper based functions into a single web based product. The system is used by all NSW Fire Agencies to manage bushfire allowing for a seamless transition of information between the ACT and NSW during cross border incidents.

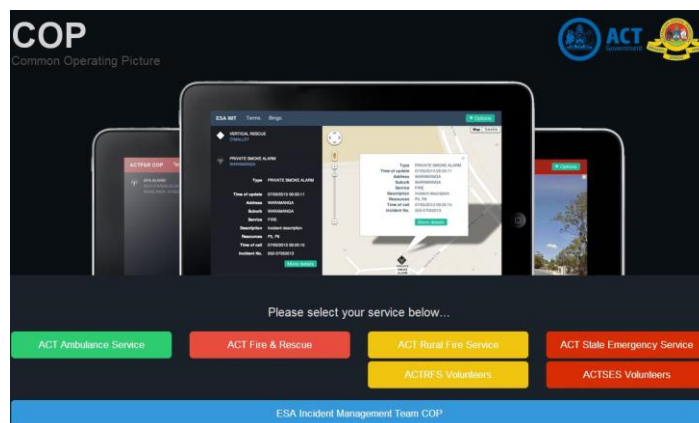
ESA Spatial Services has undertaken the development of a web-based application called the ESA Common Operating Picture (COP). Its primary purpose is to display current emergency incidents, resource locations and environmental conditions on an interactive Google map of the ACT region. This system is imperative to supporting enhance situational awareness to incident managers during emergencies.

The COP supports eight user classes:

1. Ambulance Service (AS)
2. Fire and Rescue Service (FarS)
3. Rural Fire Service (RFS)
4. Rural Fire Service Volunteers
5. State Emergency Service (SES)
6. State Emergency Services Volunteers
7. Incident Management Team
8. General public



The system is used by emergency response operations staff to support incident management and resource deployment. Members of the general public also have access to the COP data via high-level (or summarised) incident details through the ESA Website or web services feeds consumed by third party products such as fires near me.



10 GAP ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITY AS AT MAY 2015

A number of areas of bushfire response capability have been identified as requiring strengthening. These include:

- Developing our incident management team capability;
- Developing tools to assist in the pre- deployment our bushfire response assets;
- Keeping a watching brief on our need for aviation resources; and
- Upgrading our Territory Radio Network (TRN).

Whilst a reasonable level of response resources can be determined to meet anticipated need, any additional capability must be planned and implemented long before any requirement for them to be on the ground, as lead in times may be lengthy given factors such as personnel training, safety assessments, governance and other strategic considerations.

The areas identified in the gap analysis as requiring strengthening are explored more fully below.



10.1. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT) CAPABILITY

The roles analysed as critical to incident management capability are the eight functional roles identified in Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System 4th Edition (AIIMS4) for a Level 3 incident, being:

- Incident Control;
- Safety;
- Planning;
- Intelligence;
- Public Information;
- Operations;
- Investigation;
- Logistics; and
- Finance.

Following recommendations by the Auditor General's Audit into Bushfire Preparedness in 2013 and concerns raised by the ACT Bushfire Council, the ACT Emergency Services Agency commissioned a review of IMT Capability in late 2013. The review highlighted a number of roles where the numbers of qualified staff needed to be increased. This included the areas of planning, intelligence, investigation and finance. ESA is currently implementing strategies to strengthen IMT capability through training and development opportunities which will provide depth to the numbers of personnel being able to perform in IMT roles at all incident levels.



10.2. TOOLS TO ASSIST IN DEPLOYING ASSETS AND RESOURCES FOR BUSHFIRE

Bushfire response capability not only relates to the amount of resources available, but their effective deployment across the Territory.

Given that any situation will be dynamic, it is important that deployment decisions can be made in real time and be responsive to the changing operational environment.

ESA is continuing to scope systems and tools that could be developed to support real-time decision-making in relation to deployment of assets and resources.

Deployment of resources and assets is supported by the following factors:

- the number of fire fighting units on hand, including aviation resources;
- travel distances and times;
- accessibility to the fire;
- geographical risk profiles;
- the fire danger index; and
- historical risk and event data.

The above factors are already captured by the ESA's Common Operating Picture (COP), Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Risk Plans and the on-line Fire Weather Viewer.

By better analysing currently available data that the ESA has at hand and by developing business rules around that data, a risk model can potentially be developed and refined for decision-makers to assist them in deploying resources and assets or determining the level of assets and resources required to:

- pre-deploy to meet various risk scenarios;
- respond to actual events in real time;
- perform back fill/move up procedures to overcome resource gaps during incidents;
- quantify requests for seeking interstate assistance;
- better advise the community in relation response capability in times of emergency.

The development of a deployment tool for Bushfire incidents will require significant work in developing the rules to guide a risk model for bushfire coverage. Work will continue in 2015 to develop these support tools.



10.3. AVIATION SUPPORT FOR BUSHFIRES IN THE ACT

Several studies and enquires into fires have shown that early suppression of bushfires in remote terrain is essential to preventing the natural development of large, potentially destructive fires.

The ACT has significant areas of remote bushland where rapid response to bushfire by vehicle is not possible due to lack of access, topography and/or the distance involved.

An example of the limitations of the current aviation capability was experienced in 2013/14 bushfire season, whereby on the 8 January 2013, multiple lightning strikes occurred late in the day in the Brindabella Ranges and Namadgi National Park. The fires were successfully extinguished, however, limitations were experienced in the response due to competing demands on the existing aircraft under the 'share arrangements' with NSW Rural Fire Service.

The impact of a changing climate on the overall landscape of the ACT and the potential threat posed by an increasing number of days of elevated fire danger, has heightened the need for early intervention to suppress bushfire ignitions.

The ACTRFS has responded by recruiting an additional number of Remote Area Firefighters (RAFT), 34 in total, with an additional 12 trained by April 2015. This increased capability of 46 RAFT is well placed to provide on ground suppression, however, they may be restricted in their capability to respond due to the limited aircraft availability and subsequent crewing capability of the existing aircraft arrangements.

Whilst interstate resources can be requested to support our locally stationed aviation resources, the ACT may need to consider the contracting of a second winch capable medium helicopter, through the National Aerial Fire Fighting Centre (NAFC). A second helicopter would enhance the ACT Rural Fire Service's ability to rapidly respond to and suppress fires burning in the remote areas of the ACT, whilst simultaneously providing an additional firebombing capability to assist in the protection of the urban/bush interface. A watching brief will be kept on this area of capability going forward.



10.4. UPGRADE OF THE TERRITORY RADIO NETWORK

The TRN is a Government critical system involved in the ESA's emergency call taking, dispatch, response and communications. The system represents a significant part of the ESA's response capability.

The TRN was first introduced to the ACT in 2004 with key infrastructure components housed at a number of strategically located sites across the Territory to provide close to 100% geographic coverage.

Operator consoles in the ESA's Communications Centre, radio handsets and vehicle mounted radio sets communicate via the TRN infrastructure.

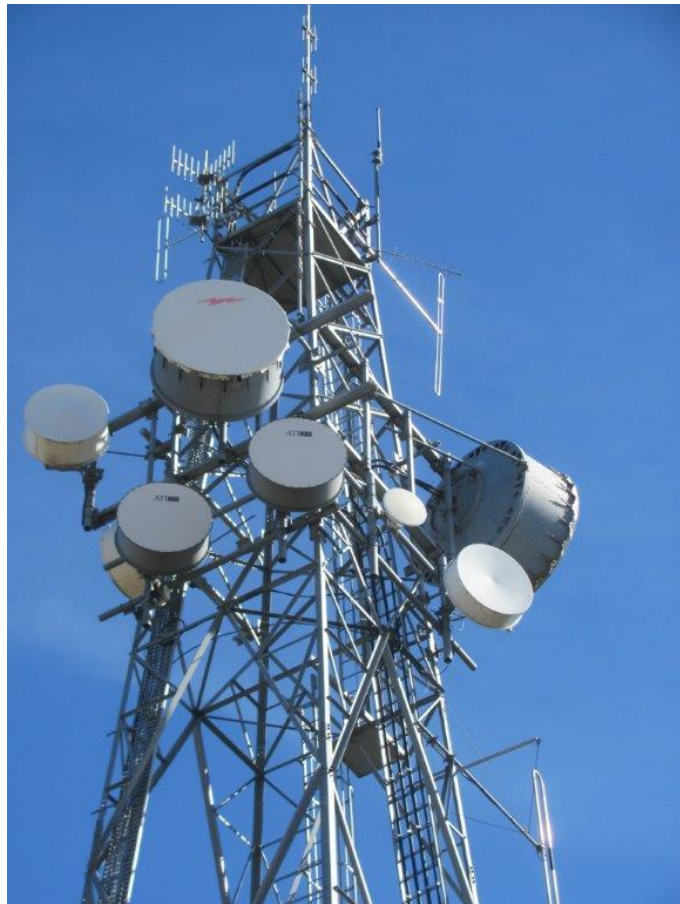
The ACT's emergency radio communications network will undergo a major upgrade over the next three years with \$14.728 million allocated in the 2015/16 ACT Budget. This funding aims to ensure the Territory's emergency services are able to remain at the forefront of responding to the needs of the Canberra community.

The project will involve upgrading the TRN repeater tower infrastructure as well as the radio and terminal equipment.

The TRN not only supports the emergency activities of the ESA but supports other ACT Government agencies including ACTION, TAMS, ACT Policing, ACT Health, and Roads ACT.

It also provides the ESA with interoperability with other emergency services during cross border incidents.

This initiative follows the funding of other key emergency services infrastructure in the 2014-15 Budget including the replacement of the TRN Microwave Ring and the upgrade of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system used in by staff in the ESA Communications Centre at Fairbairn.



11 CONCLUSION

The 5 year [ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#) is a legislative requirement to plan and implement prevention measures that address the risks and challenges posed by bushfire in the ACT.

The development of this Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework was a recommendation of the ACT Auditor General's [Performance Audit into Bushfire Preparedness in 2013](#)⁷ which suggested that the ACT should describe our target level of service to ensure we have adequate response capability and resources on hand.

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework fits under the umbrella of the 5 year [ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#) (Version 3) published in October 2014 and assists in making an assessment of resources required to implement objectives 2, 3 and 4 of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan as required by Section 76 of the [Emergencies Act 2004](#).

This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework sets measurable targets in relation to the level of service needed to be provided to the community and shows that the ACT has a level of bushfire capability to respond to bushfires classified as high demand and remote demand.

Beyond a certain level of bushfire size and complexity, the ACT will rely upon supplementary capability from interstate resources which can significantly increase our ACT capability.

The capability framework conceptually brings together data, research, risk assessments, needs analysis, planning, resources, deployment decisions and governance in order to ensure a strategic operational approach to the management of bushfires.

The path to ensure our bushfire response capability is achieved will be through the implementation of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and includes:

- Undertaking ongoing research and risk assessments to quantify the level of bushfire risk in the ACT based upon fuels, climate and community dynamics;
- Identifying the ACT community's need for fire fighting and emergency management capability based upon risk analysis and need;
- The development and implementation of policies and strategies which supports the effective use of resources and minimises the community's level of risk as outlined in the [Strategic Bushfire Management Plan](#);

⁷ ACT Auditor-General (2013) [Performance Audit Report into Bushfire Preparedness](#)

- The effective deployment of emergency service resources by utilising historical data, current risk assessments and developing decision making support tools;
- The collection and monitoring of key data that informs future capability requirements and strategic decision making;
- Through ongoing strategic governance within ESA that oversees and implements the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan and brings all of our bushfire activities together. This will be achieved primarily through the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) *Implementation Working Group* and continually monitoring the scope and effectiveness of the SBMP by the Commissioner in consultation with the ACT Bushfire Council.



12 APPENDIX A - STRATEGIC AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS RELATING TO BUSHFIRES

There are a number of Strategic Indicators published in the ACT Budget Papers for **Safe Community — Emergency Services**. A number of the strategic indicators relate to emergencies in general, and some are specific to bushfires. Those specific to bushfires are copied below.

Excerpts from Strategic Indicator 3: Emergency Related Community Safety, JACS Budget Statement (Table 4)

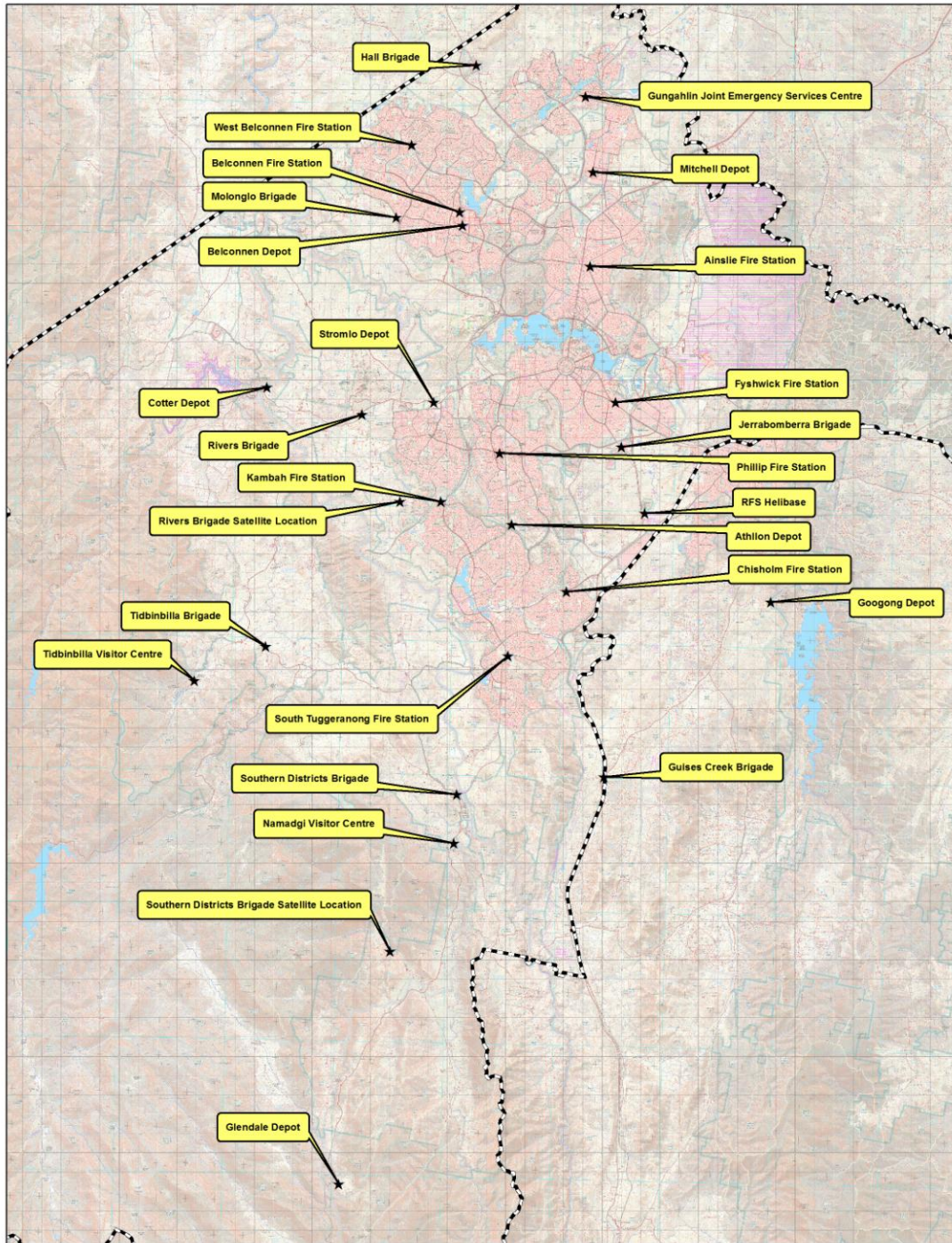
Success	Strategic Indicator	2014-15 Targets	2014-15 Estimated Outcome	2015-16 Targets
Increased community resilience for emergencies	Percentage of leaseholders within the Bushfire Abatement Zone with a Farm Fire-wise Plan	70%	70%	80%
Reduced impact on the environment from bushfires	Percentage and number of bushfires kept below five hectares within the ACT	95%	98%	100%




ESA currently has the following Accountability Indicators which are reported on each year as Budget **Output 4.1: Emergency Services** and those relevant to bushfire are copied below.

Excerpts from Accountability Indicators Output 4.1, JACS Budget Statement (Table 6)

Accountability Indicator	2013-14 Targets	2013-14 Estimated Outcome	2014-15 Targets
b. Desktop audit of ACT Government Directorate Bushfire Operational Plans activity progress reports	100%	100%	100%
c. Field assessment of Access Management Upgrades and Hazard Reduction burns conducted in accordance with Bushfire Operational Plans of ACT Government Directorates	100%	100%	100%

13 APPENDIX B - MAP SHOWING PLACEMENT OF RESOURCES IN THE ACT



 	Emergency Services Agency CFU Locations 2015	PRODUCTION INFORMATION		WARNING INFORMATION	
		Legend ★ RFS or F&R Station ACT Border	Map Projection: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55 Print Date / Time: 26/05/2015 09:51 Produced by: Spatial Services Section	 Scale: 170,000	Data Supplied by various stateholders under ANZLIC Guidelines. The information contained herein has been provided in good faith. Effort has been made to ensure its accuracy and completeness. The Stateholders take no responsibility for errors or omission nor any loss or damage that may result from the use of this information. *Australian New Zealand Land Information Council.

File Path: T:\PROJECTS\JM_JOBS_2015\JOB15010 ESA Asset Locations\ESA Asset Locations 2015.mxd

**Auditor General's Performance Audit into Bushfire Preparedness 2013
Update against Recommendations as at January 2016**

No.	Recommendation	Government Response	Status Update	Progress Status
1	<p>The Justice and Community Safety Directorate should continue to review its strategic and accountability indicators and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should commence a review of its strategic and accountability indicators. The directorates should consult to develop complementary measures which better assess their bushfire management activities.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The JACS Directorate and the ESA have reviewed and made changes to the Strategic and Accountability Indicators for the 2013-14 reporting year to better capture and measure data that reflects the ESA's bushfire prevention and management activities. The ESA will work with TAMS to further refine the indicators as necessary in order to improve the measurement and assessment of the complementary bushfire management activities.</p> <p>The ESA and TAMS Directorate both have accountability indicators that report on the delivery of the TAMS BOP. In reviewing the indicators the agencies will endeavour to enhance the correlation between the indicators to improve the reporting of BOP activities. Both the ESA and TAMS have well established protocols for communication on bushfire management matters, which will facilitate the development of complementary measures.</p> <p>TAMS intend to undertake a review of its strategic and accountability indicators related to fire management before the end of the 2013-14 financial year. Any changes to the current indicators will involve high level input from the ESA to ensure that joint fire management related objectives are complementary.</p>	<p>ESA and TAMS revised their Strategic and Accountability Indicators in relation to the Auditor-General's recommendation. ESA's strategic indicators relate to emergencies in general, and some are specific to bushfires.</p> <p>ESA's Strategic Indicators Percentage of leaseholders within the Bushfire Abatement Zone with a Farm Fire-wise Plan. Percentage and number of bushfires kept below five hectares within the ACT.</p> <p>ESA's Accountability Indicators Desktop audit of ACT Government Directorate BOPs activity progress reports. Field assessment of Access Management Upgrades and Hazard Reduction burns conducted in accordance with BOPs of ACT Government Directorates.</p> <p>TAMS have improved their indicators from a single "completion of the Bushfire Management Plan" to covering five elements of the BOP being grazing, slashing, burning, access management and physical removal.</p> <p>The revised indicators are supported by a comprehensive new section on Bushfire Risk Management in the JACS Annual Report which provides an overview of the implementation of the SBMP and delivers on recommendation 5 of the Auditor General's report.</p>	Completed
2	<p>The Emergency Services Agency should comply with the Emergencies Act 2004 requirements for the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) by including in this Plan an explicit statement of all resources needed to meet the objectives of the Plan.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Government will release and make explicit a statement of resources needed to meet the objectives of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) version 2 by the last Assembly sitting day in November 2013. The provision of financial resources or otherwise to support this statement of resources will be considered by the Government in the 2014-15 budget cycle.</p> <p>This statement of resources will also be included in the development of the SBMP version 3, which commenced in July 2013 and is planned for completion in October 2014.</p>	<p>A statement of resources was included in the SBMP which was tabled as a disallowable instrument in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 23 September 2014. In addition, there are a number of documents which report on the resources utilised to implement the SBMP. For example, the new Section in the JACS annual report on Bushfire Risk Management outlines the resources used for bushfire mitigation in the Territory. TAMS is continuing to also develop a new ICT system which will provide public reports which progressively show expenditure on the annual BOP. In relation to bushfire response, the ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework makes an assessment of of resources and capability in relation to response capability, which relates to objectives 2, 3 & 4 of the SBMP being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective firefighting operations by skilled and motivated personnel; • The necessary equipment and resources to respond to and extinguish bushfires; and • Extinguish bushfires when they occur. 	Completed
3	<p>The Justice and Community Safety Directorate, in managing future amendments to the Emergencies Act 2004, should propose amendments which require the Emergency Services Agency to maintain information on privately-owned assets of public interest that are vulnerable to bushfire without the need to include this information in the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The details of many of these privately owned assets are 'commercial in confidence'. The ESA will continue to maintain a register of these assets to support decision making. The JACS Directorate will review the requirement under the Emergencies Act 2004 in relation to this information and provide advice to Government for further consideration.</p>	<p>The Emergencies Amendment Act 2014 gave effect to recommendation 3 of the Auditor-General's report by amending section 74(2)(f) of the Emergencies Act 2004 to remove the requirement for the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) to 'publish' a list of privately owned assets of public interest vulnerable to bushfire and instead requires the ESA to 'maintain' a list.</p> <p>The explanatory statement for the Emergencies Amendment Act 2014 noted ESA did not publish a list of privately owned assets prone to bushfire given the publication of such data could compromise commercial and security sensitivities. The ESA balanced the competing interests and determined not to publish the list of assets.</p> <p>ESA has consistently maintained a list of assets by way of the spatial maps it has on hand to respond to emergencies. ESA uses this information in emergencies to determine the threat of bushfire to both life and property. The information is also used to determine risk mitigation by TAMS.</p> <p>The way ESA informs the community of assets vulnerable to bushfire is by publishing maps of bushfire prone areas in the Territory. ESA is currently working with the Environmental and Planning Directorate to refine and validate bushfire prone areas. ESA expects that those responsible for assets in bushfire prone areas will undertake measures to prepare and protect their properties from bushfire.</p>	Completed

**Auditor General's Performance Audit into Bushfire Preparedness 2013
Update against Recommendations as at January 2016**

No.	Recommendation	Government Response	Status Update	Progress Status
4	<p>The Emergency Services Agency should review the operations of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Implementation Working Group to determine if it is the most appropriate mechanism for 'monitoring the scope and effectiveness' of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. If it is retained, ways to improve its effectiveness should be identified and implemented.</p>	<p>Agreed The ESA will conduct a review of the SBMP Implementation Working Group (IWG), including its terms of reference.</p> <p>The Government recognises that there is a need to review the process of monitoring the scope and effectiveness of implementation of the SBMP. The ESA will establish this reporting process, through the ESA Commissioner, to the ACT Bushfire Council.</p> <p>TAMS will continue to provide resources to actively participate in the monitoring of the implementation of the SBMP and will continue to work closely with the ESA to ensure the most effective delivery of the SBMP.</p>	<p>Section 72(7) of the Emergencies Act 2004 (the Act) requires the ESA Commissioner, in consultation with the ACT Bushfire Council, to monitor the scope and effectiveness of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.</p> <p>Part 5 of the SBMP establishes an Implementation Working Group (IWG) to oversee the SBMP implementation, which includes senior representation from all ACT government agencies with responsibilities under the SBMP.</p> <p>The SBMP IWG met in November 2014, and in February, May, August and December 2015. The IWG will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the implementation of the 71 actions arising from the SBMP over the coming years.</p> <p>To support the monitoring process, the ACT Bushfire Council, which is established under the <i>Emergencies Act</i>, now aligns their business plan against key objectives of the SBMP to ensure they support the Commissioner in monitoring the SBMP.</p> <p>The achievements of the SBMP are now annually reported in a new consolidated section of the JACS annual report entitled Bushfire Risk Management.</p>	Completed
5	<p>The Emergency Services Agency should undertake audits to meet the requirements in the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the preparation, sharing and publication of annual progress reports. Annual progress reports should be made available to the ACT Bushfire Council.</p>	<p>Agreed The function of coordinating, auditing, monitoring and reviewing of the SBMP will be incorporated into the IWG review (see response to Recommendation 4). Annual progress reports on the progress of the delivery of the SBMP will be made available by the ESA to the ACT Bushfire Council. The provision of annual progress reports to the ACT Bushfire Council is reflected in the new terms of reference for the Council.</p>	<p>The SBMP Implementation Working Group (IWG) provided a comprehensive annual report to the ACT Bushfire Council at their meeting on 4 August 2015 on progress to implement the SBMP throughout 2014/15.</p> <p>Audits were carried out by ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS) on BOPs throughout the year which showed agencies were complying with their statutory requirements.</p> <p>The Annual Report to Council also provided the basis for a new and consolidated whole of government Bushfire Risk Management section being included in the JACS annual reporting for 2014/15 which reporting on progress to implement the SBMP.</p>	Completed

**Auditor General's Performance Audit into Bushfire Preparedness 2013
Update against Recommendations as at January 2016**

No.	Recommendation	Government Response	Status Update	Progress Status
6	<p>The Emergency Services Agency should annually review fire management zones and the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate should subsequently update the Regional Fire Management Plans (RFMPs).</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA has developed a framework, which outlines the process for undertaking yearly internal reviews of the RFMP.</p> <p>The ESA has overall responsibility for the RFMPs, and will commit to providing resources to undertake the process of review. It is recognised that the values managed by TAMS, including threatened species and recreational facilities, may be significantly affected by the strategies identified in RFMPs. For this reason TAMS will be heavily involved in the review of RFMPs.</p> <p>TAMS will annually review and update the RFMPs based on any new fire management zone information provided by the ESA and include major fuel management activities undertaken by TAMS in the preceding year. This annual review will be documented and provided</p>	<p>Chapter 4 of the SBMP outlines that Fire Management Zones assist in prioritising fuel management and access activities to reduce bushfire risk. In the SBMP, Fire Management Zones are identified as a subset of Bushfire Prone Areas where measurable fuel management treatments are applied. The location and alignment of these zones reflect the risk of bushfires starting and spreading, and impacting on life, property and other assets. The zones established include Asset Protection Zones, Strategic Firefighting Advantage Zones, Land Management Zones and Rural Land Management Zones.</p> <p>The widths and locations of the Zones are indicative and the actual widths and location will be determined in consideration of the ACT Fire Management Standards and operational requirements, through the development of Regional Fire Management Plans and BOPs (including Farm Firewise). Chapter 11 of the SBMP details considerations used in determining the location and extent of Asset Protection Zones adjacent to new and established urban areas. Fire Management Zoning maps are reviewed as required to reflect significant changes, which may include unplanned bushfires or changes to the location or extent of assets. The Commissioner is responsible for approval of these maps. Furthermore, Regional Fire Management Plans (RFMP) detail the five-year work program (2014-19) for fuel reduction, access and infrastructure in the ACT.</p> <p>The SBMP outlines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual and five Year targets of the area (hectares) to be treated by fuel management (prescribed burning, slashing, grazing and physical removal) as well as the distance (km) of access works (maintenance, upgrade and construction) are determined under these plans for government managed lands. 2. The Commissioner is responsible for approval of RFMPs. They will be reviewed as required to reflect changes which may include unplanned bushfires, which may provide strategic advantages or changes to the location or extent of assets – for example, the development of new estates. <p>RFMP's will be updated when there is any further revision of the zones.</p>	Completed and ongoing
7	<p>The Emergency Services Agency should specify preparation and approval requirements for bushfire operational plans, particularly those for lands in the Bushfire Abatement Zone.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA will develop a framework, which lists the ACT Government Directorates, ACT Government Corporations and any other Manager of ACT Land that is required to develop BOPs. This framework will include the timeframes and process for submission to the ESA Commissioner for approval, and monitoring of implementation by the ESA. The actions under this recommendation, which are linked to recommendation 15c of the audit report, will be conducted in consultation with TAMS.</p> <p>Under the Emergencies Act 2004, the ESA has powers in relation to compliance and enforcement activities with rural landholders, including those whose properties are located in the Bushfire Abatement Zone (BAZ). The ESA will ensure that regular inspections and compliance audits will be conducted, and direction given, to rural landholders or land managers when required.</p>	<p>Schedule 2 of the SBMP (Version 3) outlines the list of agencies and entities required to prepare BOPs.</p> <p>Letters were sent to land managers in February 2015 by the ESA Commissioner outlining requirements of BOPs as per requirements in the SBMP. The submission and assessment of annual BOPS by land managers will continue to be required on an annual basis and is the responsibility of ESA to manage.</p> <p>Section 78 of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> was amended in 2014 in relation to the BOP requirements for rural leaseholders. A RFS factsheet was sent to all Rural Leaseholders regarding the amendments.</p>	Completed and ongoing

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8	The Emergency Services Agency should develop a strategy for monitoring the development and implementation of all Government land managers' operational plans.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ACT Rural Fire Service (RFS) currently monitors and records TAMS BOP activities and will continue to do this. The ESA will review and improve governance arrangements for BOP monitoring and recording to assess the development and implementation of BOPs for all Government land managers.</p> <p>The review of governance arrangements will establish the means to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the extent of implementation of the BOPs; • assess the standard of implementation of the BOPs; • ensure the strategies and standards of the SBMP are being achieved; • ensure transparency in the implementation of BOPs; and • report BOP development and implementation of BOPs to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the ACT Bushfire Council. <p>The review of governance and reporting will also consider inclusion of the reporting requirements required of TAMS under Recommendations 11 and 13.</p>	<p>The RFS has established a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to ensure that BOPs are audited in line with accountability indicators and reports can be provided to Government outlining the performance of all ACT Government BOPs.</p> <p>The Accountability Indicators relating to BOP's are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Desktop audit of ACT Government Directorate BOPs activity progress reports. * Field assessment of Access Management Upgrades and Hazard Reduction burns conducted in accordance with BOPs of ACT Government Directorates. <p>The RFS SOP also identifies the process for the ESA Commissioner to identify an ACT Government Directorate that requires a BOP for their approval as per the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i>. The RFS is actively auditing all ACT Government BOPs on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Improved reporting is expected through a new ICT management system for the BOP being developed by TAMS as outlined in Recommendations 11 and 13. Accumulative Reporting will support the Bushfire Council and be made available to the public via the TAMS website.</p>	Completed and ongoing
9	The Emergency Services Agency should continue to work with National Land managers and develop a National Land bushfire management framework to address bushfire risks on National Land.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Although bushfire plans for National Land are already in place, the ESA will continue to engage and cooperate with National Land managers to enhance their plans in line with the objectives of the SBMP. A key component of this engagement will be the development of a policy to guide managers of National Land in developing bushfire risk mitigation strategies.</p> <p>A strategic framework will also ensure there is a consistent approach to bushfire planning for these National Land areas</p>	<p>The SBMP (Version 3) establishes ACT Bushfire Management Standards that detail the measurable outcomes required for matters such as fuel management and fire trail access. The ACT Government expects that all land in the ACT will be managed to the standards of the SBMP, including national land.</p> <p>Other than the Australian Defence Force, managers of national land in the ACT such as the National Capital Authority, CSIRO and Australian National University develop their bushfire management plans in accordance with the SBMP and provide to the ESA for consideration.</p> <p>This current policy framework for national land was explored as part of the 2015 review into <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> which was tabled in the Assembly in October 2015. The review suggested the harmonisation of requirements on both ACT and national land managers which the Government will explore and consider.</p>	Completed and Ongoing

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10	The Emergency Services Agency, in consultation with the ACT Bushfire Council, should conduct a review of the ACT Bushfire Council against its recently developed terms of reference (July 2013) within two years.	The ESA will undertake a review of the ACT Bushfire Council against the terms of reference within two years.	<p>The Review of the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> considered the statutory role of the ACT Bushfire Council and suggested amendment of the Council's terms of reference. The review recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * That the membership of the ACT Bushfire Council be amended so that the Minister must appoint persons representing the interests of rural lessees, the community, and the community's interests in the environment; * That a term limit for Council members be introduced, with members to be appointed for no more than four years at a time, and that members may not be reappointed for more than two consecutive terms (so a total of eight consecutive years); * That the consultation role for the Council be amended so that it no longer exercises a consultation role for the appointment of a Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer of the RFS. The Council will be consulted on the standards required for appointment to senior roles within the RFS; and * That the Council be given the power to publish its reports and other advice to Government. <p>The review also considered the 2006 Ministerial standing reference for the Council and recommended amendment. A revised draft Terms of Reference has been agreed by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and provided to Council for consultation, before being settled by the ESA Commissioner in early 2016. The Terms of Reference will need to be further amended in the event of any statutory amendments following the Governments consideration of the Review of the Emergencies Act 2004. Once finalised, the Terms of Reference will be made available on the Bushfire Council webpage at www.esa.act.gov.au/bushfirecouncil.</p> <p>In late 2014 and 2015 the Council developed a forward looking business plan which detailed the areas for review at each of their upcoming monthly meetings throughout the year. Council aligned the areas of focus to the Objectives of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan with a view to considering the plan over a 2 year period. This assists in the Council's statutory role to support the Commissioner in monitoring the effectiveness of the SBMP.</p>	Completed and ongoing
11	The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, as part of its Bushfire Operations Plan monitoring and reporting, should assess and publicly report on cumulative progress against broader outcomes identified in the Regional Fire Management Plans and the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Over the 2013-14 financial year, the TAMS Directorate will investigate mechanisms that allow a more seamless reporting regime to be implemented that aligns BOP delivery with the objectives established under the RFMPs and the SBMP. Once these mechanisms have been developed, these reports will be made available on the TAMS website.</p> <p>Systems development over the course of 2013-14 will improve the TAMS Directorate's capacity to publicly report against the RFMPs and the SBMP</p>	The Bushfire Operations Plan database is the repository for the 2015-16 Bushfire Operations Plan. The projects within the plan are developed in, and monitored via, both physical and financial progress updates in the database. The database is progressing through the next stage of development which involves changes to staff workflows and system processes and enhancements to user and reporting functionality. Further enhancements are expected in the areas of cost attribution and spatial capabilities in the future. The first report has been produced (second quarter 2015) and provided to the ACT Rural Fire Service for comment. Work is underway to get this uploaded on to the TAMS website. All reports future reports will be uploaded and publicly available through the TAMS website http://www.tams.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/bushfire_management	Progressing
12	TAMS should enhance internal monitoring of its implementation of bushfire management activities and spending under the Bushfire Operations Plan by routinely reconciling figures in this plan with those in the Directorate's corporate financial system.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The TAMS Directorate have already commenced a process to establish a new data base system that will link BOP implementation to the TAMS financial system. The TAMS Directorate plans to develop and trial this new system during the 2013-14 financial year. It is envisaged that TAMS will have a new system operational and running in parallel for the 2014-15 BOP. The aim is to be fully reliant on the new data base for the 2015-16 BOP.</p>	The Bushfire Operations Plan database is the repository for the 2015-16 Bushfire Operations Plan. The projects within the plan are developed in, and monitored via, both physical and financial progress updates in the database. The database is progressing through the next stage of development which involves changes to staff workflows and system processes and enhancements to user and reporting functionality. Further enhancements are expected in the areas of cost attribution and spatial capabilities in the future. The first report has been produced (second quarter 2015) and provided to the ACT Rural Fire Service for comment. Work is underway to get this uploaded on to the TAMS website. All reports future reports will be uploaded and publicly available through the TAMS website http://www.tams.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/bushfire_management	Progressing
13	TAMS should annually (and on a cumulative basis) track and report on funds allocated for, and spent on, its Bushfire Operations Plan, to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The tracking and reporting on the expenditure of funds against the BOP will be a key output of the process outlined under Recommendation 12 with the development of a new data base system that will align activity implementation with the TAMS financial system (refer to Recommendation 12 response). Reports will be generated and provided to the ESA, the ACT Bush Fire Council and both the TAMS Minister and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.</p>	The Bushfire Operations Plan database is the repository for the 2015-16 Bushfire Operations Plan. The projects within the plan are developed in, and monitored via, both physical and financial progress updates in the database. The database is progressing through the next stage of development which involves changes to staff workflows and system processes and enhancements to user and reporting functionality. Further enhancements are expected in the areas of cost attribution and spatial capabilities in the future. The first report has been produced (second quarter 2015) and provided to the ACT Rural Fire Service for comment. Work is underway to get this uploaded on to the TAMS website. All reports future reports will be uploaded and publicly available through the TAMS website http://www.tams.act.gov.au/parks-conservation/bushfire_management	Progressing

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14	<p>The ESA, the Environmental and Sustainable Development Directorate (ESDD) and the TAMS should strengthen across-Government delivery of major projects in the SBMP and RFM Plans by collectively:</p> <p>a. monitoring the effect of the 2011 amendments to Planning and Development Act 2007 and identifying additional changes, if appropriate;</p> <p>b. improving information sharing;</p> <p>c. finalising the pre-appraisal procedure; and</p> <p>d. holding an annual forward planning session for capital works.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA will work closely with TAMS and ESDD to support the effective delivery of major projects under the SBMP. As part of the review of the SBMP, which is currently underway, a review of major projects will be undertaken. The Directorates mentioned in the recommendation will jointly identify any statutory, policy or procedural improvements that may be required, and provide advice to Government as appropriate, of any proposed legislative amendment to the Planning and Development Act 2007. Directorates will continue to improve information sharing, including the recommended "annual forward planning session for capital works". This planning session will be identified as a part of the process for submission of BOPs to the ESA Commissioner for approval under Recommendation 7 of the Report. TAMS will continue to work with the ESA and the ESDD to ensure a timely and financially responsible approach to delivering major works. TAMS will review the effect of the 2011 amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2007 and, if necessary, identify additional changes to streamline the development approval process for essential fire management activities designed to protect the ACT community and environment from bushfires. TAMS will improve information sharing by utilising existing regular ESA/TAMS forums to disseminate information, provide updates on relevant industry innovation, and relevant scientific research. The Directorate will work closely with the ESA and ESDD over the 2013-14 financial year to amend and finalise the pre-appraisal procedure. Capital works projects proposed by the TAMS Fire Unit for the 2014-15 financial year will be discussed with the ESA and ESDD at a formal forward planning meeting during the 2013-14 financial year. The ESDD will continue to collaborate with the TAMS Directorate and the ESA to assist in the timely delivery of works supporting the Territory's preparedness for bushfire.</p>	<p>Officers from ESA, EPD and TAMS have been working closely and collaboratively to address recommendations from the Auditor-General's report.</p> <p>Amendments to the Planning and Development Regulation came into effect in November 2015. The purpose of the amendments were to enable certain developments, including bushfire preparedness works, to be exempt from the requirement to obtain development approval, if any required environmental authorisation (EA) and/or environmental protection agreement (EPA) was held. In summary, the proposed amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduces unnecessary regulatory burden on public works (including bushfire preparedness developments); • makes the development assessment process for bushfire preparedness development more efficient; and • maintains an appropriate level of protection for the environment. <p>TAMS are finalising a comprehensive Code of Practice to cover all works in Nature Reserves. In conjunction with the Bushfire Operation Plans, the Code could be used to support an application for an Environmental Significance Opinion, potentially giving TAMS clearance to undertake a range of activities without need for DA approval. This would be a highly efficient and quick regulatory process, without compromising the key competing interests of human safety and environmental protection.</p>	Completed and ongoing
15	<p>TAMS, in consultation with the ESA, should improve its management of Land Management Agreements, with respect to rural leaseholders' fire management responsibilities, by:</p> <p>a) maintaining an up-to-date record of current Land Management Agreements;</p> <p>b) undertaking timely reviews of Land Management Agreements, at least every five years;</p> <p>c) clarifying responsibility for identifying and monitoring bushfire risk through Land Management Agreements; and</p> <p>d) specifying bushfire management requirements in Land Management Agreements, as required by the Emergencies Act 2004 and the SBMP, and aligning these with any requirements under the Farm FireWise Program (refer to Recommendation 16).</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA will work with EPD and TAMS to ensure that LMAs are clear on the responsibilities, actions required and process to be followed by rural landholders within the ACT.</p> <p>TAMS continuously reviews its processes for the development and management of LMAs. During the 2013-14 financial year, TAMS will update its records of current LMAs and timetable for their review. TAMS and ESA will work closely to ensure there is alignment between the LMAs and FFPs.</p>	<p>An LMA provides a basis for a co-operative land management regime between lessees of rural land in the Australian Capital Territory and ACT Government agencies responsible for managing non-urban land on behalf of the Territory. An LMA is required under section 283 of the Planning and Development Act 2007 for all leases in the ACT that contain a rural purpose. A lease cannot be granted without an LMA first being approved by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna. As at January 2016, the Director-General of the Environment and Planning Directorate is finalising a revised LMA Form and Guideline following consultation with rural landholders. The draft revised LMA Approved Form and Guideline proposes that a LMA cannot be approved without a FFP in place, therefore each landholder must acknowledge on their LMA Plan and Map that a FFP has already been approved by the ESA. Once the consultation and amendments to the forms and guidelines are finalised, these will be available through the Legislation Register under the Planning and Development Act 2007. The proposed amendment will require all leaseholders to have a FFP, regardless of whether they are in the Bushfire Abatement Zone.</p>	Completed and ongoing

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16	<p>The ESA, in consultation with TAMS, should review the Farm FireWise Program, including:</p> <p>a) its purpose;</p> <p>b) to whom it applies;</p> <p>c) the relationship between this Program and Land Management Agreements; and</p> <p>d) planning and implementation processes.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA acknowledges the findings in this recommendation and is undertaking a comprehensive review of the FFW program, including external stakeholder consultation, to ensure that the successes of this program are built upon and that appropriate mitigation activities occur on rural leases across the ACT. The FFW program has been a very successful engagement tool for the farmers in the ACT. Parts of the program have been replicated in other jurisdictions.</p> <p>TAMS will work with the ESA in implementing Recommendation 15 to ensure that the relevant provisions of LMAs are consistent with relevant elements of the FFW program</p>	<p>The FFW program was clarified in consultation with the rural community that the FFP satisfies the requirement of a BOP as required by the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i>. The Emergencies Amendment Act 2014 removed the requirement that rural leaseholders submit BOPs for approval every two years, replacing it with a requirement that the plans be submitted every five years. This amendment aligned and harmonised the requirements for BOPs with LMAs which are required every five years. The Act also removed an exemption for certain rural leaseholders from having to develop a BOP where their LMA is consistent with the SBMP. The RFS manages the ACT FFP which supports the rural community undertake their bushfire planning. The FFP supports land owners undertaking a risk assessment of their properties to determine the risk treatments or activities required to reduce the impacts of bushfire. As long as FFPs are approved by the ESA Commissioner every five years, they satisfy the requirements of BOPs required under the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> and any bushfire planning required by an LMA. Factsheets explaining the role of FFPs have been provided to rural lessees explaining these requirements.</p>	Completed
17	<p>The ESA should improve its management of the Community Fire Unit Program by:</p> <p>a) developing governance and administrative documentation for the planning, management, administration and evaluation of the Program;</p> <p>b) reviewing and consolidating standard operating procedures and operational guidance for participants of the Program; and</p> <p>c) maintaining accurate records of activities, including training undertaken by Program participants and the issuing of stores and equipment to program participants.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>ESA will review and consolidate the current standard operating procedures and operational guidance for participants of the CFU Program. This documentation will be collated into one document. Evaluation of the CFU's is included in the ESA Community Evaluation processes.</p> <p>The ESA will continue to update its records of activities by CFU members and recording the issuing of stores and equipment based on the records captured from the 2012 internal audit of equipment.</p>	<p>The Community Fire Units (CFU) arose out of the 2003 Canberra Bushfires. A Community Fire Unit is a team of local volunteer residents who live close to bush land areas across the ACT and are trained and equipped by ACT Fire & Rescue to safeguard their homes during a bushfire.</p> <p>CFU volunteers utilise basic fire fighting equipment (pumps, hoses and protective clothing) hose down the areas surrounding their properties to prevent a bushfire from spreading from adjoining bushland to their houses and backyards. A typical team on average consists of 8 to 30 members and has a designated area encompassing 50 to 80 homes.</p> <p>The focus is on bushfire education, prevention and preparation, covering areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bush care and bushfire behaviour; • safe housekeeping and gardening practices; • planning and preparation for bushfires; • operating fire-fighting equipment; • mop up operations. <p>The Select Committee on Budget Estimates recommended that the ACT Government conduct a formal evaluation of Community Fire Units and present it to the Legislative Assembly by June 2016. Documentation regarding the Community Fire Units are available at www.esa.act.gov.au/actfr/community-fire-units/documents/</p>	Completed and ongoing
18	<p>The ESA and TAMS should continue to improve working arrangements between the ACT Rural Fire Service Parks Brigade and the ACT Rural Fire Service headquarters, by:</p> <p>a) documenting the responsibilities of the Parks and Conservation Service Branch in its land management role versus Parks Brigade role and conveying this to all brigades; and</p> <p>b) updating or replacing the ESA and TAMS 2007 Memorandum of Understanding to guide working arrangements for bushfire preparedness and suppression.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>ESA and TAMS have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which would reflect the significant improvements in the current working relationship between the two agencies and document the responsibilities of the Parks and Conservation Service Branch in its land management roles. The MOU between the ESA and TAMS will be signed-off by the end of September 2013. The MOU will replace the previous 2007 version and be ready for use before the commencement of the 2013-14 bushfire season.</p> <p>ACT RFS will ensure that the Parks and Conservation Service Branch in its land management role versus Parks Brigade role is conveyed to all RFS Brigades.</p>	<p>The ESA/TAMS MOU is reviewed each year when TAMS and ESA hold negotiations around the annual BOP. The MOU will be updated in the event there is a requirement.</p>	Completed and ongoing

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19	The ESA and TAMS should develop and routinely review a strategic bushfire capability for the ACT. The contribution of ACT Fire & Rescue (including the Community Fire Units) and the ACT Rural Fire Service (including Parks Brigade) should be explicitly stated.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The SBMP, the ACT Territory Wide Risk Assessment and Concept of Operations for Bush and Grassfires provide the guidance by which the requirements for a strategic bushfire capability can be undertaken. The ESA will develop a framework to enable the RFS, AC F&R and TAMS to report on their strategic bushfire capability. This will be delivered under the coordination of the ESA.</p>	<p>Following the completion of the SBMP in late 2014, ESA developed a Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework (<i>the Framework</i>) in the first half of 2015. The Framework considers the historical level of bushfire events along with the potential for future risks arising from a hotter and dryer climate as outlined in the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. The framework provides a Bushfire Risk Assessment which assists in classifying the size and complexity of fires so as to determine reasonable capability response requirements. The Framework is used to assess the level of resources on-hand and/or required in the ACT to respond to set level of bushfire risk. The high probability of bushfires within the ACT region requires a reasonable level of bushfire response resources are in place for every bushfire season. Determining the reasonable level of resources is assisted by the framework. When the required bushfire response resources exceed those available, the ACT's interstate mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with other jurisdictions will be utilised to increase our capability. This includes aviation resources which can be significantly boosted utilising the NSW/ACT 'call list' with access to over 100 aircraft of various types. This Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework concludes by outlining the ongoing activities that need to be undertaken to maintain capability and areas of capability which are currently being strengthened or subject to ongoing monitoring. Along with this Framework, a significant number of projects are currently being implemented as actions of the ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan which assist in the management and deployment of our response capability in the ACT into the future. The Framework will be periodically reviewed in relation to response requirements and operational capability requirements. The Framework will also be supported by the Review into the Community Fire Units being undertaken in 2016. As at 30 June 2015, the ACT has 22 heavy tankers, 10 compressed air tankers, 15 medium tankers, 14 light units, 15 pumpers, 2 contracted helicopters for the bushfire season, heavy plant and support vehicles. ESA has over 350 paid firefighters, over 500 rural fire service volunteers and 160 trained firefighters in TAMS. In support of our crews and vehicles, the ACT has – fire towers, fire weather analysts, media liaison officers, remote area firefighters, mapping specialists, communication specialists and a wider logistical and support capability that supports our emergency men and women in the field. The ACT's capability is also supported by a whole of government response to major disasters through our ACT Emergency Coordination Centre, which coordinates our hospitals, schools, evacuation centres, road closures, utilities and liaises with our national institutions, including Defence.</p>	Completed and ongoing
20	<p>The Emergency Services Agency should:</p> <p>a) review the ACT Rural Fire Service's target for its members holding recognised units of competency, and the timeframe for achieving the target level of competency;</p> <p>b) review its training and development activities in order to meet its model of service, and the Rural Fire Service's contribution towards the ACT's strategic bushfire capability (Recommendation 19), taking into account the level of cross crewing that is feasible;</p> <p>c) continue liaising and collaborating where possible with the Parks Brigade over the Brigade planning and implementation of its training and development activity;</p> <p>d) prepare and maintain medium-term training and development plans for the ACT Rural Fire Service; and</p> <p>e) determine a target for incident management team capability and identify how this will be achieved.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The RFS has developed a training and development capability framework, which defines and documents targets for its members holding recognised units of competency. The RFS has undertaken a needs analysis based on this framework, which underpins its training program. This will be reviewed against the ACT Strategic Bushfire Capability when developed. The ESA will also identify minimum levels of Incident Management Team requirements.</p>	<p>RFS has 14 paid staff at ESA Headquarters and manages over 500 firefighting volunteers in 8 volunteer brigades. The volunteer brigades have 13 heavy tankers, 1 bulk water tanker, 12 medium tankers, 7 light tankers, 5 compressed air foam tankers along with a number of command units and support trailers. In order for the RFS to crew the available vehicles with volunteers, RFS has undertaken a needs analysis that shows optimum levels of volunteering and training requirements.</p> <p>The RFS requires access to sufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel to crew fire fighting appliances in the event of a number of simultaneous fires as outlined in the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework. As an example, in order to crew all volunteer fire fighting appliances with minimum safe crew numbers for an initial 12 hour shift, the RFS requires 160 trained and qualified volunteers at varying competencies and levels. The required number of members to manage a 24 hour shift is 320. As the RFS relies on volunteer members, allowances in staffing must be made for members availability due to work commitments, illness and competing priorities. On this basis, the RFS has identified the requirement for additional members over the minimum required crew numbers as a contingency to ensure capability. At present the numbers of crew members is 524 volunteers as at 7 January 2016 which is within the target range.</p> <p>Along with aggregate numbers of volunteers, volunteers need to be trained in a variety of roles including advanced firefighting, crew leader and specialist roles. RFS reports on qualified roles through a quarterly report to Brigades and undertakes a forward planning training needs analysis to develop training programs to meet areas of need.</p> <p>Incident Management Team Capability Standards were developed as part of the Strategic Bushfire Capability Framework. The IMT Capability Standards are supported by an RFS training needs analysis. An RFS training plan has been prepared for 2016 which addresses training gaps. ESA has participated in a national project to develop suitable IMT training materials for small jurisdictions such as the ACT. Courses will be scheduled based on requirements.</p>	Ongoing

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21	<p>The ESA and TAMS should improve information capture and sharing by:</p> <p>a) recording accurately and efficiently personnel information and capabilities; and</p> <p>b) improving the coordination of the planning and use of bushfire preparedness maps between ACT Government agencies.</p>	<p>Agreed in part</p> <p>Vetrak is a recognised training and volunteer information reporting database that meets the requirement of record keeping for training activities to Registered Training Organisation standards. It is not intended to be a Human Resources (HR) management system. It is recognised that there is some HR information that TAMS needs to keep separate from RFS requirements.</p> <p>The new Mobile Data Terminal system also allows tracking and recording of individual activities and the ESA will develop additional reporting from this information. The ESA proactively coordinates the use of maps between the ESA and TAMS.</p> <p>TAMS will continue to improve its engagement with the ESA to ensure coordination and information sharing with regards to map preparation as it is currently doing with the development of a joint fire trail map</p>	<p>All operational qualifications of ESA members and TAMS Directorate firefighters are maintained on the Vetrak database.</p> <p>Shared drives have been established for GIS data. GIS data is exchanged for the production of operational atlases, pre suppression plans and other products such as FFW maps.</p>	Completed and ongoing
22	<p>The ESA and TAMS should clarify the timing of the requirement for meeting firefighter fitness requirements, as set out in ACT RFS operating procedures and the TAMS Enterprise Agreement, and give priority to meeting that requirement.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA has refined the requirements for meeting firefighter fitness with RFS Volunteers by amending the RFS Standard Operating Procedure on volunteer firefighter fitness. This amendment clearly indicates that fitness tests are undertaken by RFS personnel in an ongoing annual and cyclical process.</p>	<p>The RFS Standard Operating Procedure was updated in 2013 and is available in the SOP section of RFS website.</p> <p>Firefighter fitness is outlined section M4 Fitness Standards in the ACT Government - Technical and Other Professional - Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017.</p>	Completed
23	<p>The ESA (ACT Rural Fire Service headquarters) should implement a system to provide assurance to the Chief Officer of the ACT RFS that personnel and equipment readiness meets requirements.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The RFS has developed a framework that outlines the process for ensuring that an audit of vehicles and equipment is carried out at the Brigade level and results are forwarded to the RFS Chief Officer for consideration</p>	<p>The ACT Rural Fire Service's state of readiness is maintained all year round and any maintenance issues are dealt with on an ongoing basis in order to maintain capability. An annual preseason check is undertaken by the RFS and by each Brigade in relation to bushfire readiness in the lead up to the Bushfire Season. The preseason checklist includes all vehicles being serviced, checks are undertaken on the serviceability of towers, the RFS helipad and facilities, equipment and RAFT. Issues are addressed as identified. There is no set date that all checks or maintenance works has to have been completed given some tasks do not commence until well within the bushfire season e.g. checks on aviation assets are undertaken when the contracts commence.</p>	Completed and ongoing
24	<p>The ESA should develop and test administrative procedures for the communications systems used for the distribution of public warning and emergency alerts.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The ESA has developed a standard operating procedure entitled "Testing of the ESA public alert, update and warning information distribution system". The ESA has developed and implemented a schedule for regular testing of the public alert and warning information distribution system.</p>	<p>Testing is carried out as the Standard Operating Procedure requires. A copy of the Emergencies (Emergency Alert) Commissioner's Guidelines 2012 which outlines the annual testing requirements of Emergency Telephone Warning System (if the system is not used operational in that year) is available on the ACT Legislation Register. The Single Point of Truth (SPOT) application is used operationally for ESA and any issues are fixed at the time.</p>	Completed and ongoing