

Australian Capital Territory

# Emergencies (Concept of Operations for bush and grass fires in the Australian Capital Territory) Commissioner's Guidelines 2017

Notifiable Instrument NI2017–92

made under the

**Emergencies Act 2004, s 11 (Commissioner may make guidelines)**

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## 1. Name of Instrument

This instrument is the *Emergencies (Concept of Operations for bush and grass fires in the Australian Capital Territory) Commissioner's Guidelines 2017*.

## 2. Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after its notification.

## 3. Commissioner's Guidelines

After consulting with the Chief Officer (Fire and Rescue), the Chief Officer (ACT Rural Fire Service) and the Chief Officer (ACT State Emergency Services) I make the guidelines entitled "*The Concept of Operations for bush and grass fires in the Australian Capital Territory*" at Schedule 1, which makes provision for:

- (a) areas of the emergency services to be operated jointly;
- (b) operation of joint areas of the emergency services; and
- (c) planning and conduct of joint operations of the emergency services for bush and grass fire incidents in the Australian Capital Territory.

## 4. Revocation

I revoke NI2012-400 *Emergencies (Concept of Operations for bush and grass fires in the Australian Capital Territory) Commissioner's Guidelines 2012*.

Dominic Lane  
ACT Emergency Services Commissioner

21 February 2017



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## Schedule 1

# COMMISSIONER'S GUIDELINES

relating to

## The Concept of Operations for bush and grass fires in the Australian Capital Territory

### 1 Preamble

This schedule is informed by the dynamic, non discriminatory and unpredictable nature of bushfires; the requirements of the *Emergencies Act 2004*; the service delivery needs of the community; and the capability and capacity of the Fire Services and establishes the “*Concept of Operations for bush and grass fires in the ACT*”.

### 2 Context

The “*Concept of Operations*” is a capstone document that establishes, at the strategic level, the principles for managing bush and grass fires occurring on any fire danger rated day from low through to catastrophic fire danger rated days.

In addition, the “*Concept of Operations*” also recognises the need to ensure that the Territory is sufficiently prepared to manage bush and grass fires under the worst possible conditions. In recognition that the factors (e.g. fuel state, climate variables) that drive these worst possible outcomes varies from year to year, (as well on shorter timeframes) the fire services will jointly advise the Commissioner prior to each fire season on the key risk factors and most likely “worst case” scenario for the coming season.

This analysis should consider medium-long term climate variables (including soil dryness), the potential duration of the incident, the location and types fuel presenting greatest risk and the assets at greatest risk. This analysis will be used to inform an analysis of the ACT's ability to sustain both the capacity and capability to endure the scenario.

It may also be used by land managers and others to target specific prevention and preparedness activities in the lead up to the fire season (e.g. fire trail maintenance, hazard reduction, media and public information). This context is important as it establishes the basis for:

- Determining the levels of resourcing (including number of personnel and level of competency, facilities and accommodation requirements) required across the spectrum of the ESA, the whole of Territory Government and Interstate Agencies to fulfil;
  - Fire fighting roles
  - AIIMS Functions
  - Emergency Coordination Centre Functions
  - Public Information Centre Functions
- Informing and detailing Cross Border Arrangements.
- Assisting with pre-incident functional and operational planning for bush and grass fires.

### **3 Classification of Bush and Grass Fires**

In recognising that bush and grass fires of varying size and level of intensity can occur during a range of climatic conditions across a wide variation in landscape and land-use, it is useful to establish a system of classification that can broadly define in principle the way in which a fire will be managed.

#### **3.1 Level 1**

A bush or grass fire under the control of the responsible fire fighting service, whether or not assistance is provided by other agencies, 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.

#### **3.2 Level 2**

A bush or grass fire, which by necessity due to its complexity requires the support of an appointed IMT. 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 Coordination 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.<sup>1</sup>

The Incident Controller and Operations Officer are located at the ICC and Divisional Commander(s) supported by Unity of Command, and Control 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 co-ordination.

The Incident Controller and Operations Officer are located at the ICC and a Divisional Commander supported by Unity of 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.

### **3.3 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 Coordination 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 Control 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

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<sup>1</sup> Separate sub plans to the ACT Emergency Plan are in place regarding the activation and operations of the PICC and ECC.

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.

## **4 First Response Arrangements**

First response to all bush and grass fires in the ACT will be by the nearest available most appropriate resource, irrespective of jurisdiction or Service.

## **5 Duty to Notify**

If any fire fighting agency that observes the fire is in close proximity to its location then appropriate action should be taken to suppress the fire if it is safe and practicable to do so. Any fire fighting agency that observes a fire on any tenure will inform the ACTESA ComCen. ACTESA ComCen will advise the relevant responsible fire fighting agency of the response being made to that fire.

In addition, if the fire is on land managed by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), either the ACTESA ComCen or ACTRFS Duty Officer will also notify the EPSDD Parks and Conservation Duty Officer.

Notification to other Territory Government Agencies who manage land or assets will be via the ACT Emergency Plan established under *section 147(2)* of the *Emergencies Act 2004*. Notification to Federal Government Agencies will be via the Commonwealth Crisis Coordination Centre as defined within the ACT Emergency Plan established under *section 147(2)* of the *Emergencies Act 2004*.

The ACTRFS and ACTF&R reserve the right to respond to or investigate any fire within their respective jurisdiction to discharge their legislative obligations to protect persons and property in accordance with their respective Standard Operating Procedures.

## **6 Incident Command and Control**

Implementation of joint command and control arrangements requires adoption and understanding by both Services of the AIIMS Incident Control System (ICS). Incident management develops, in a modular fashion, based upon the type and size of an



incident. The organisation builds from the top down with responsibility placed with the Incident Controller.

The internal command structure of each Service will remain intact under their respective OIC. Personnel and equipment provided to manage a bush or grass fire remain under the command of the supplying fire fighting Service unless otherwise specified by that Service's line commander.

Those personnel will operate in accordance with and be bound by the supplying Service's SOPs, policies, standards, work practices and the like, with particular attention to fire ground operations and work health and safety procedures. Personnel and equipment provided to manage a bush fire will be under the control of the Incident Controller for the duration of their deployment, regardless of the whether or not the personnel and IC are from the same or different agencies.

The key functional positions of the Incident Management Team (IMT) are as follows:

- Incident Controller
- Deputy Incident Controller
- Operations
- Divisional Commander
- Planning
- Logistics
- Liaison
- Safety

## **6.1 Incident Control Centres (ICC)**

In accordance with the ACT Emergency Plan the ICC is located at the ACTESA Headquarters in Fairbairn.

## **6.2 Incident Management Teams**

When an IMT is formed for the management of bush and grass fires within the ACT, the key positions within the IMT will be resourced from the list of approved personnel as determined by each agency and detailed in Appendix 2 - *Approved Incident Management Team Members*. Wherever practicable, IMTs should be resourced as a multi agency IMT recognising the need for appropriate competencies, skills knowledge and attitude to fulfil such roles.

From time to time, IMT resources may be drawn from beyond the ACT and such resources will be approved and appointed by the relevant Chief Officer in consultation with the Incident Controller. The Functions and Responsibilities of all IMT positions shall be in accordance with the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) Forth Edition 2013 Revision.

### **6.3 Pre-formed Incident Management Teams**

On days of elevated fire danger or by agreement with both Chief Officers a pre-formed multi agency Incident Management Team shall be established. The principal functions of the pre-formed IMT prior to any incidents of bush and grass fires will be to:

- Monitor the weather conditions and provide regular updates to all key operational personnel
- Monitor, assess the potential for, and report on fire activity in the surrounding region of the ACT
- Monitor resource deployments throughout the day to all incidents
- Provide regular information updates to:
  - The Commissioner
  - The Chief Officers
  - The Public Information Coordinator and the Public Information Coordination Centre (when stood up)
  - The Emergency Coordination Centre (when stood up)
  - The Brigades

If a bush or grass fire occurs within the Territory the functions of the IMT will be in accordance with the classification of the fire or fires.

### **6.4 Unity of Command**

The concept of Unity of Command simply means that all attending services contribute to the process of:

- determining the overall incident objectives
- selection of strategies
- ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities will be accomplished
- ensuring that integrated tactical operations are conducted
- making maximum use of all assigned resources

Unity of Command therefore complements the existing AIIMS framework by providing an underpinning philosophy to support the functions of Operations /

Divisional Command and Sector Command where there is a multi-agency presence with the requirement to execute multiple functions as determined by each Service's statutory, regulatory or operational obligations.

## **6.5 Emergency Controller**

In the event of a significant incident, the Chief Minister may appoint an Emergency Controller. If this occurs, the Incident Controller and associated structures (consistent with the arrangements identified above) will remain in place managing operational response to the incident, and reporting to the Emergency Controller.

## **6.6 Incident Controller**

### **6.6.1 Appointment of the Incident Controller for Level 1 and Level 2 Incidents**

#### ***Fires in the Built Up Area (BUA)***

The first arriving resource, irrespective of Service, will assume Incident Control. If the first arriving resource is ACTF&R then control will remain with that Service. If not, control will be handed over to the ACTF&R Senior Officer as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so unless otherwise agreed by that Officer. The determination of "safe and practicable" rests with the ACTF&R Senior Officer.

#### ***Fires in the Rural Area (outside the Built Up Area)***

The first arriving resource, irrespective of Service, will assume Incident Control. If the first arriving resource is ACTRFS then control will remain with that Service. If not, control will be handed over to the senior ACTRFS officer as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so unless otherwise agreed by that Officer. The determination of "safe and practicable" rests with the ACTRFS Senior Officer.

### **6.6.2 Deputy incident controllers**

In the event that there are concurrent multiple bushfires, a single incident controller will be appointed considering the risk profile. In this circumstance, it may be appropriate that one (or more) Deputy Incident controllers are appointed for the operational command of resources based on functional areas or requirements or Service.

### **6.6.3 Appointment of the Incident Controller for Level 3 Incidents**

In circumstances where a fire is burning in the Territory or is within its vicinity that would be classified as a level 3 fire, both Chief Officers are to meet and determine the structure and composition of an Incident Management Team including the appointment of the Incident Controller and Deputy Incident Controller.

## **6.7 Deputy Incident Controller**

In complex incidents or where multiple bushfires occur concurrently it may be appropriate that one (or more) Deputy Incident Controllers are appointed for the operational command of resources based on functional areas or fire agency structures. Likewise, Deputy Incident Controllers may be appointed to manage operations where it is appropriate the IC maintain a strategic and operational oversight of operations.

## **6.8 Operations**

The Incident Controller for any level 2 or 3 incidents will appoint an Operations Officer as required in accordance with Appendix 2 - *Approved Incident Management Team Members* and other related AIIMS operations functions (Divisional / Sector Commanders, Air Operations Manager, Staging Area Manager).

### 6.8.1 Aviation Management

The *ACT Rural Fire Service* will co-ordinate the provision of capability for Air Operations Unit. Tasks within this unit include:

- Coordination of all air operations activities associated with the incident
- Perform operational planning for air operations, including the Air Operations section of the Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- Advise the Operations Officer on the tasking of aircraft
- Ensure that flight following and SAR arrangements are in place.
- Manage all aviation personnel and roles; e.g. Air Operations Manager, Air Attack Supervisors, Aircraft Officers, Airbase Managers, Air Observers, Airborne Systems Operators, Aviation Radio Operators, Airbase Operators
- Liaise with logistics to determine arrangements for air operations logistics
- Maintain safe working procedures all air operations
- Ensure Flight time limits for pilots and aircraft are followed
- Determine suitable location for Airbases
- Establish and maintain communications arrangements, with the Operations Officer, for all air operations. E.g. Ground to air and aircraft to aircraft communications.
- Maintain proper records of air operations
- Liaison with the Resources Officer regarding the setting up and operations of a resource management system for aircraft.

Aircraft may be requested by any Incident Controller. If an IMT is not in place, the ACTRFS Chief Officer will determine and approve the activation of the aircraft. *If a level 3 IMT has been established a designated Air Operations Manager is to be appointed.*

Priorities for the sequencing of aircraft need to be set where there are conflicts for the use of the same aircraft. Priorities are therefore based upon the following considerations:

- Hazards to life
- Supporting strategies in the approved Incident Action Plan
- Projected time for a mission against the time available
- Flight time limits for pilots and aircraft
- Aircraft configuration

- Other priorities as determined by the Incident Controller (for a single incident) or the Chief Officer ACTRFS.

The ACTRFS manage two contract fire fighting helicopters during the bushfire season. Nationally the ACTRFS has access to a wide range of aviation equipment and personnel on an as needed basis. Aircraft requests within the ACT are coordinated by the ACTRFS Duty Officer or by an aircraft officer attached to the IMT.

The ACT is party to the NSW and ACT Fire Agencies Bushfire Aviation SOP's that establish arrangements for aviation management within the two jurisdictions.

### **6.8.2 Remote Area Fire Fighting**

The *ACT Rural Fire Service* will co-ordinate the provision of Remote Area Fire Teams (RAFT). Tasks will include:

- Coordination of all RAFT activities associated with the incident
- Undertake operational planning for RAFT, including developing the RAFT section of the IAP
- Advise the Operations Officer on the tasking of RAFT
- Manage all RAFT personnel and roles
- Liaise with logistics to determine arrangements for RAFT logistics
- Maintain safe working procedures for all RAFT
- Establish and maintain communications arrangements, with the Operations Officer, for all RAFT operations
- Maintain proper records of RAFT
- Liaise with the Resources Officer regarding the setting up and operations of a resource management system for RAFT.

Any Incident Controller may request the activation of RAFT resources for bushfires anywhere in the ACT. RAFT crews are activated via the ACTRFS Duty Officer.

### **6.8.3 Heavy Plant**

The *ACT Rural Fire Service* will co-ordinate the provision of capability for Heavy Plant unit. Tasks within this unit include:

- Coordination of all Heavy Plant activities associated with the incident
- Perform operational planning for Heavy Plant, including the Heavy Plant section of the IAP
- Advise the Operations Officer on the tasking of Heavy Plant

- Manage all Heavy Plant personnel and roles; e.g. Heavy Plant Chaser, Plant Operations Manager
- Liaise with logistics to determine arrangements for Heavy Plant logistics
- Maintain safe working procedures for all Heavy Plant
- Establish and maintain communications arrangements, with the Operations Officer, for all Heavy Plant operations.
- Maintain proper records of Heavy Plant
- Liaise with the Resources Officer regarding the setting up and operations of a resource management system for Heavy Plant
- Ensure relevant environmental standards are adhered to and advised to the Incident Controller.

## **6.9 Divisional Command**

Under level 2 or 3 incidents, a Divisional Commander may be appointed to a division covering the whole or part of a bush fire. The Divisional Commander reports to the Operations Officer(s) within the IMT. A Divisional Commander sets strategies and tactics for operations within their division to achieve the overall objectives outlined in the IAP or as identified by the IC in the first shift of a developing incident.

In setting these strategies, the Divisional Commander determines the structure, deployment and tasking of resources within the sectors of their division. The need for additional resources or the release of resources no longer required is the responsibility of the Divisional Commander.

The Divisional Commander is responsible for maintaining communications links with the IMT to ensure information flows to and from the IMT to the fire ground. In multi-shift fires, the advice of the Divisional Commander is critical in developing strategies for future shifts and contributing to setting the overall objectives as part of the IMT.

In addition to fire fighting resources, Divisional Commanders may need to establish supporting functions to their role including communications officer(s), scribes, liaison officers etc, in line with unity of command structures at a defined point within their division.

## **6.10 Planning**

The Incident Controller for any level 2 or 3 incidents will appoint a Planning Officer in accordance with Appendix 2 - Approved Incident Management Team Members. In

recognition of the existing IMT capability within the broader ACTESA the following related planning functions and the resources to manage them are listed below:

#### **6.10.1 Mapping Unit**

The *Emergency Management, Risk, Spatial & Digital Services* section of the ACTESA will coordinate the provision of capability for the Mapping Section within the Situation Unit of an IMT. Tasks within this unit include:

- Bushfire mapping and spatial support, with capability for field deployment or based in an IMT
- Mapping support for severe weather events
- Mapping to support incident coordination and public information roles including evacuation, public awareness, social media and media releases
- Bulk and large format map provision for response
- Airborne Systems Operator
- Maintain real-time spatial information for incident management / public information.

#### **6.10.2 Situation Unit**

The *Emergency Management, Risk, Spatial & Digital Services* section of the ACTESA will coordinate the provision of capability for Incident Analysis and Weather Services within the Situation Unit of an IMT (including the engagement and utilisation of resources from the Parks and Conservation Service). Tasks within this unit include:

- Weather and Climatic analysis
- Incident Observer functions
- Bushfire behaviour modelling relating to Bushfire (including CRC Findings, High Fire and other relevant programs) to support incident response and provision of public information and warnings
- Provide for requests by lead agencies for technical specialist services to Situation Units within IMT
- Acquisition and presentation of specialised, incident-critical intelligence to IMTs.

#### **6.10.3 Resources Unit**

The *ACT State Emergency Service* will coordinate the provision of capability for the Resources Unit. The Resources Unit establishes and maintains a Resource Management System for the tracking of resources (i.e. people and vehicles).



The Resource Unit needs to know where resources are deployed and what they are doing. It is necessary to show resources as allocated (working), available (within a short time), en route, demobilised or unserviceable. A summary list of key personnel and resources used at incidents will be maintained.

The Resource Unit works closely with the Staging Area when established to ensure effective communication flow. Through the collection and maintenance of this information, the Resource Unit will have a significant role and the planning for successful changeover and demobilisation. Requests by the Operations Section for additional resources are processed by the Resource Unit. If sufficient resources are unavailable at the incident, the request is processed by the Logistics Section.

Time recording operates within the policy and guidelines of the organisation concerned and involves the use of forms and procedures relevant to that organisation. Personnel carrying out this responsibility must be familiar with these procedures and will work closely with the Supply Unit of the Logistics Section and Resource Unit in the Planning Section to maintain records of personnel as they move to and from the incident.

Information requirements of the Public Information Section relating to incident resources will be fulfilled from records maintained by the Resource Unit.

#### **6.10.4 Communications Planning Unit**

The *ACT State Emergency Service* will, where necessary, develop and monitor the implementation of the Communications Plan under the direction of the Operations Officer as part of the Incident Action Plan. Technical advice will be provided from the Communications Support Unit.

A 4WD Operations Command Vehicle (OCV) is available for deployment and can provide a range of communications functions (phone/fax/computer) in the field. This vehicle can also be used as the Forward Control Point for an Incident Controller, Operations Officer or Divisional Commander, or as the management facility in a staging area. The OCV is managed on behalf of all ESA Services by the ACT State Emergency Service.

#### **6.10.5 Management Support Unit**

The *ACT State Emergency Service* will coordinate the provision of capability for the Management Support Unit (including the engagement and utilisation of resources from the Parks and Conservation Service). The Management Support Unit's tasks include:

- provision of individuals as administrative support to the Incident Controller and others as required

- administrative services such as photocopying, typing, and reception
- document management and record keeping
- provision of personnel to operate communications equipment (such as computer, facsimiles machines, telephones and radios) within the Incident Control Centre (and other facilities as required).

## **6.11 Logistics**

The Incident Controller for any level 2 or 3 incidents will appoint a Logistics Officer and other related AIIMS logistics functions in accordance with Appendix 2 - *Approved Incident Management Team Members*. In recognition of the existing IMT capability within the ACTESA and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JaCSD) the following related logistics functions and the resources to manage them are listed below:

### **6.11.1 Supply Unit**

The *ACTESA Resources Centre* will coordinate the provision of capability for the Supply Unit. This Unit acquires and distributes equipment and materials to support front line operations. The Supply Unit ensures that supplies are appropriately stored and maintained. Where insufficient resources are available at an incident, the Supply Unit will obtain the extra resources (people, vehicle, equipment, etc.) required.

### **6.11.2 Ground Support Unit**

The *ACT State Emergency Service* will coordinate the provision of capability for the Ground Support Unit. The Unit is responsible for providing transport for personnel, equipment, supplies and food, together with fuelling and security of all equipment and vehicles at the incident. The organisation of traffic in, and around, the incident is achieved by the Ground Support Unit developing and implementing a Traffic Plan.

### **6.11.3 Fleet Maintenance Unit**

The *ACTESA Workshop* will coordinate the provision of capability for the Fleet Maintenance Unit. The Unit is responsible for the mechanical maintenance of all plant and equipment within the ACTESA fleet as well as supervising the mechanical maintenance of any plant and equipment from Interstate Agencies who may provide assistance during major bush fire incidents.

### **6.11.4 Communications Support Unit**

The *ACT Radio Networks Management Group* within ESAICT will coordinate the provision of capability for the Communications Support unit. This Unit has responsibility for the acquisition, installation and maintenance of communications equipment for all incidents as well as providing technical advice and equipment

placement for communications (radio, telephones and information technology). It also provides assistance to the Planning Section to produce the Communications Plan.

#### **6.11.5 Finance Unit**

The *ACTESA Logistics and Governance Section* will coordinate the provision of capability for the Finance Unit. This Unit, which may develop a major role during large incidents, is responsible for:

- accounts for purchases of supplies and hire of equipment
- insurance and compensation for personnel, property and vehicles
- collection of cost data, performing cost effective analyses and providing cost estimates for the incident.

##### Accounts for Purchases of Supplies and Hire of Equipment

The processing of accounts should follow the normal operating procedures for the ACTESA. This function must also work closely with the Resource Centre staff to ensure effective records are maintained during the ordering, delivery and invoicing of supplies so that the certification of accounts can proceed without undue delay. Where plant or equipment is hired, there is a requirement to maintain accurate records of its procurement, use and release.

##### Compensation and Insurance for Personnel, Property and Vehicles

Where personnel may suffer injury, their personal property may be lost or damaged, and vehicles or equipment may be damaged or destroyed, the Finance Unit will manage such claims in accordance with the relevant ACT Government policies for compensation.

##### Collection of Cost Data, Performing Cost Effective Analysis and Providing Cost Estimates for the Incident

Expert financial personnel may be required to perform this function. Due to budgetary and economic pressures, it is very likely cost-conscious agencies will be required, in the future, to maintain detailed financial records of incident operating costs.

#### **6.11.6 Facilities Unit**

*Capital Works and Infrastructure* of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate will coordinate the provision of capability for the Facilities Unit. This Unit obtains and manages the necessary facilities and accommodation to support the operations and incident control and maintains them in working order including any buildings that

have been adapted for emergency service functions such as community halls, schools and other buildings which may be utilised for feeding, sanitation and accommodation.

Where these buildings are not readily available, temporary facilities will be necessary. Ovals and recreation grounds may be used for incident staging areas, base camps or for other purposes. The Facilities Unit obtains and manages the permanent or temporary locations where personnel work, sleep, cook, maintain and repair equipment. This includes the maintenance, security and restoration of facilities during and after operations.

## **6.12 Safety Officer**

The Incident Controller for any level 2 or 3 incidents will appoint a Safety Officer.

The Safety Officer shall:

- Be responsible directly to the Incident Controller to generally check the fire ground to ensure appliances, equipment and crews are being utilised in safe circumstances
- Ensure that any safety issues are immediately identified and communicated to the Operations Officer/Division Commander and/or the Incident Controller
- Ensure that all injuries are reported and that accidents of an unusual or critical nature are subject to a follow up investigation and report
- Ensure the safety and well being, including fatigue management, of all personnel associated with the incident. This includes those on the fire ground, those en-route to or from the fire ground, and those in the Incident Management Team.

## **7 Emergency Coordination and Public Information**

### **7.1 Emergency Coordination Centre**

An Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) may be required for level 2 and will be required for level 3 incidents. The ECC provides the means by which ACT Government Directorates and other Agencies are able to provide support to IMT before, during and after emergencies and major incidents.

The ECC is established at the request of the Incident Controller, and management of the operations of the ECC will be by the ECC Coordinator, who reports to the Incident Controller, or Emergency Controller if appointed. A separate Sub Plan to the ACT Emergency Plan (the ECC Operations Plan) is in place regarding the activation and operation of the ECC.

## 7.2 Public Information Coordination Centre

For Level one incidents, the ESA Media and Community Information Unit are responsible for the provision of information to the public through a variety of communication pathways.

A Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) may be required for level 2 and will be required for level 3 incidents. The PICC provides the arrangements for effective communication by ACT Government Directorates with the public and the media, before, during and after major emergencies and incidents.

The PICC is established at the request of the Incident Controller, and management of the operations of the PICC will be by the Public Information Coordinator (PIC), who reports to the Incident Controller, or EC if appointed. A separate Sub Plan to the ACT Emergency Plan (the Community Communications and Information sub plan) is in place regarding the activation and operation of the PICC.

## 8 Pre-Incident Operations Planning

Consistent with the principles established in this *Concept of Operations*, Chief Officers and/or their delegates should consult on the development of specific pre-incident operations plans for bushfires within the built up area, the bushfire abatement zone or in the rural area of the Territory. Pre-incident operations planning for bushfires is a cooperative process involving personnel from ACTF&R, ACTRFS, ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the ACTESA Emergency Management, Risk, Spatial & Digital Services section.

ACTF&R is the lead agency for plans within the city area and the ACTRFS the lead agency for plans in the rural area of the Territory. All pre-incident operations plans (including pre-suppression plans from EPSDD) for bushfires form an addendum to this Guideline.

Specific areas within the ACT that have pre-incident plans include all EPSDD managed lands as well as the following (but not limited to):

- Black Mountain
- Red Hill
- Mt Taylor
- Fraser
- Yarralumla
- Aranda spine

- Oaks Estate
- Mt Mugga
- Tharwa
- Uriarra
- Hall
- Molonglo Valley
- Mt Majura
- Mt Stromlo
- Cooleman Ridge

## **9 Pre Incident Functional Planning (Planning and Logistics)**

As identified within the key roles of Planning and Logistics, there is a requirement for a number of ESA Services / Sections and Directorate Business Units to “*co-ordinate the provision of capability*” for a range of supporting planning and logistics functions.

Each Service / Section / Business Unit therefore is required to establish a “*pre-incident functional plan*” to address the following elements:

- Identify all functions and roles in accordance with the AIIMS 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 2013 revision relevant to the supporting function
- Identify the human resource requirements to provide the capability including:
  - Identification of personnel from within and beyond the ESA
  - Competency requirements to meet the capability
  - Training requirements to meet any gaps in competency
  - Rostering
- Identify the facilities required to maintain the capability
- Identify any accommodation requirements for resources sourced from outside of the Territory.

Pre-incident functional plans are to be updated annually and approved by both Chief Officers prior to the 1st October each year.

## **10 Stand Up Arrangements**

Under prescribed weather conditions or at times as directed by the Chief Officers of either fire service, specific resources will be activated as per the agreed Stand-up Arrangements as identified in *Appendix 1 – Stand-up Arrangements*.

## **11 Fire Towers**

Fire Towers will be activated in accordance with the Stand-up arrangements, and at other times as required with the approval of the ACT RFS Chief Officer (*Appendix 1- Stand-up arrangements*). ACT fire towers may also be activated at the request of surrounding NSW Rural Fire Service Districts due to heightened risk in their areas.

## **12 Cross Border Arrangements**

Fires occur in the areas surrounding the ACT. The ESA has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSWRFS) to endorse the cooperative arrangements between the ACT and NSW in managing bush fires. This document is supported by a Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) between the ACTRFS and the surrounding NSWRFS Teams & Zones to further define these arrangements.

ACTF&R has a MAA with Fire & Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW) and the Aviation Fire Fighting Service (AFFS) to support the ACT in managing fires within the Territory. In addition the ACT also has an MOU with NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service to establish cooperative arrangements for NSW National Parks and Nature Reserves adjacent to the ACT. The ACT also has arrangements for mutual aid established in the Forest Fire Management Group MOU.

When enacting these arrangements approval must be sought from the ESA Commissioner or if appointed, the Emergency Controller. The agreements are to ensure there are swift and effective responses to bush or grass fires that may affect either jurisdiction. Central to these agreements is the commitment to co-locate or establish significant liaison presence in the event of IMT being formed for bush fires in the ACT or in an adjoining NSW RFS district.

## **13 Radio Communication**

The ACT Territory Radio Network (TRN) allows for interoperability across the ACT ESA and with NSW fire fighting authorities. All communications will occur on nominated TRN channels, ‘talk around’ channels or on additional VHF or UHF equipment.

Where the ACTF&R and the ACTRFS resources are jointly responded to a bushfire, irrespective of jurisdiction, the ACTESA ComCen where practicable will patch together both primary operating channels to provide both Services with the opportunity to develop situational awareness as the incident unfolds.

In addition, at the request of the Incident Controller the ESA ComCen may assign an operating channel for Incident Control for that particular incident. An Incident Controller in consultation with ComCen may also request the assigning of additional channels to accommodate Divisional or Sector Command communications requirements. Until such times as a specific channel is nominated by ComCen both Service's will continue to use their primary operational channels.

## 14 Joint Training

A training exercise involving all agencies (including staff and volunteers) involved in bush and grass firefighting in the ACT will be held at least once per year. This exercise may be limited in scope or dispensed with altogether if a fire requiring a multi-agency response occurs in the area during the year that otherwise tests the capacity of the agencies to work together in accordance with the provisions of this plan.

Where possible the fire fighting agencies will utilise hazard reduction burning opportunities to train and exercise its staff and volunteers in coordinated fire fighting techniques and AIIMS. Personnel who have the potential to fill IMT roles will be afforded every opportunity to be trained and mentored in the appropriate regimes to gain the required competency.

## 15 Capability Framework for Bushfires

### 15.1 Level 2 and 3 Incident Controllers

The Chief Officers of the ACTRFS and ACTF&R have agreed that the following Framework will be followed for endorsing Level 2 and 3 Incident Controllers for the management of bushfires in the ACT. This framework is informed directly from the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) "*Endorsement of Level 3 Incident Controllers Position Paper*" dated December 2011.

The Framework will consist of the following elements:

- **Selection** – Both ACTF&R and ACTRFS will actively select those personnel who are to be utilised as level 2 and 3 Incident Controllers. The selection process shall include agreed selection criteria between both Chief Officers, and persons selected must consent to being selected.
- **Assessment of Competence** - Both ACTF&R and ACTRFS will assess the competence of their respective personnel against the relevant unit of competency in the Public Safety Training Package (PSTP) *PUAOPE018A*



*Control a Level 2 Incident* (for Level 2 Incident Controllers) and PUAOPE019A *Control a Level 3 Incident* (for Level 3 Incident Controllers). This assessment may be through measures such as a training course followed by formal assessment, challenge testing, or recognition of current competency/prior learning. The method of assessment shall be developed by each Chief Officer of their respective Service in consultation with the other Chief Officer. The method of assessment against units of competency will require validation in accordance with the governance requirements of a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) such as the ESA.

Additional criteria to be included in the assessment of competence are as follows:

- Demonstrated ability to work in a team environment
  - Experience in leading diverse teams in complex situations
  - Demonstrated high quality decision making under stressful conditions
  - Knowledge of whole of government policies and procedures (Emergency Planning and Sub-planning Framework).
- **Formal endorsement** - Both ACTF&R and ACTRFS will have in place a mutually agreed (and if appropriate a Service specific) formal written instrument of endorsement for all Level 2 and 3 Incident Controllers signed by the Chief Officer of each respective Service. The instrument will conclusively identify whether or not a given individual was an endorsed Level 2 or 3 Incident Controller at a given date. Endorsement will be for a finite term as defined by both Chief Officers.
  - **Skills maintenance** – Both Chief Officers will develop an agreed set of “skills maintenance criteria” for the renewal of endorsement. Any selected person who does not meet the skills maintenance criteria will not have their endorsement renewed.

## **15.2 Other key roles of ICS (Ops/Planning/Logistics Officers)**

The Chief Officers will follow the same key elements of the AFAC “*Endorsement of Level 3 Incident Controllers Position Paper*” for the other key roles in ICS. This means the four step process of selection through to skills maintenance for these roles will be developed for these positions.

## **15.3 All other ICS Functions**

The Chief Officers will appoint to roles those people who have obtained units of competency from the Public Safety Training Package (PSTP) relevant to their IMT role in line with the AFAC “*Framework for ICS*” for roles within an IMT. For roles that do not have nationally developed PUA’s, the Chief Officers will ensure that the

individuals can demonstrate the underpinning skills and the other attributes such as team work and decision making under stress.

#### **15.4 Timeframe for Implementation**

A period of time will need to be given to finalise the detailed development and implementation of the Capability Framework. In recognition of this requirement the date to commence implementation of the Capability Framework is the 1st October 2013. A further period of three years (1st October 2016) will be given to have sufficient resources in place to fill all required IMT positions in accordance with this Guideline.

#### **15.5 Interim Arrangements**

In order to ensure that sufficient personnel have been identified to fulfil the key roles for an IMT, both Chief Officers will complete the first Element of the Framework (selection) in time for the commencement of the 2012/13 fire season, or in other words, 1st October 2012. Those selected against the criteria agreed to by both Chief Officers and consented to such selection will be identified in Appendix 2 - *Approved Incident Management Team Members* for the 2012/13 fire season.

### **16 Pre-Season / Post Season Briefings**

A Pre-season briefing is to be conducted by the 1 September each year. If the 'Bush Fire Season declaration' is brought forward from the standard date of the 1st October, the ESA Commissioner may determine that the pre-season briefing is brought forward.

The pre-season brief will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Tabling of the "*Concept of Operations*"
- Climatic outlook for the forthcoming season
- A reviewed, and if required, updated and signed BUA map
- Tabling of endorsed Incident Controller list(s) for level 2 and 3 incidents
- Tabling of endorsed Incident Management Team role list(s) for level 2 and 3 incidents
- Planned stand up arrangements
- Tabling of Pre-incident plans.

A post-season briefing is to be conducted by the 30th April each year. If the 'Bush Fire Season declaration' is extended from the standard 31st March, the ESA

Commissioner may determine that the post-season briefing is delayed to a more appropriate time.

The post-season brief will include, but not limited to, the following:

- Review of any pre-incident plans that have been activated
- Review of any After Action Reviews held throughout the season
- Review of the “*Concept of Operations for bushfires*”.

## **17 Incident Management System (Software)**

In recognition of the dynamic and unpredictable nature of bushfires and the high probability that the more severe bushfires will enter from or exit into New South Wales, and in recognition that the majority of support from beyond the Territory will be supplied by the NSW fire fighting authorities the ACTESA has endorsed the implementation of the NSW RFS ICON system for the management of information pertaining to all Level 3 bush fires and nominated Level 2 bushfires.

ICON is an online system that is accessed through personal logins and passwords. It has a hierarchy system to allow for the sign off of plans and reports by IC’s. The Modules within ICON that are relevant to the ACT include Incident Action Plans, Situation Reports, Fire Investigation, Public Warning and State/Territory Overviews.

As all bush fires in NSW are recorded in ICON, it will allow ESA staff to view approved documentation relating to incidents surrounding the ACT, and in the event that a bushfire crosses the ACT border to or from NSW, it will facilitate seamless and consistent incident intelligence and reporting. ACTRFS will co-ordinate the resourcing and training of sufficient personnel from all agencies in the ICON system.

## Appendix 1 Stand-up Arrangements

*A TOBAN will be declared for any forecast FFDI > 50 but may be declared for FFDI < 50*

*Grass Fire Ratings may be taken into consideration when setting readiness levels*

Standup level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Indicative FFDI	0-11	12-24	25-49	50-74 or TOBAN	75+
Fire Rating	Low	Low-High	Very High	Severe	Extreme to Catastrophic
<b>ACT Rural Fire Service</b>					
<b>Fire Towers</b>					
<i>For level 1 and 2, towers may be requested in specific areas if recent lightning activity has occurred.</i>					
Times			1100-1700	1000-1800	0900-Sunset
			Tennent	Tennent	Tennent
			Coree	Coree	Coree
			One Tree	One Tree	One Tree
			Kowen	Kowen	Kowen
<b>Aviation</b>					
<i>Stand up each day as per contract unless stood down by RFS Duty Officer.</i>					
Medium	30 minutes	30 minutes	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate
<i>Medium will be deployed first for fires reported within the BAZ.</i>					
Light	30 minutes	30 minutes	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate
<i>Light will be deployed first for fires outside the BAZ.</i>					
Southcare	Not required	Not required	Not required	When available	When available
<b>RFS Volunteer Brigades</b>					
Times			1400 – 1800	1400 - 1800	1400 - 2000
			2 heavy tanker	4 heavy tanker	4 heavy tanker
<b>Parks Brigade</b>					
Times	#	1300-1700	1200-1700	1100-1800	1000-2000
Zones	#	Mobile	Mobile	<i>Determined by the RFS DO or by IMT if activated</i>	As directed by the IMT
North	#	1 Heavy Tanker	1 Heavy Tanker	2 Heavy Tankers	2 Heavy Tankers
		1 Light Tanker	1 Medium Tanker	1 Medium Tanker	1 Medium Tanker
			1 Light Tanker	2 Light Tankers	2 Light Tankers
Central	#	1 Heavy Tanker	2 Heavy Tankers	3 Heavy Tankers	3 Heavy Tankers
		1 Light Tanker	1 Light Tanker	2 Light Tankers	2 Light Tankers
Rural	#	1 CAF Tanker	1 CAF Tanker	1 CAF Tanker	1 CAF Tanker
		1 Light Tanker	2 Light Tankers	3 Light Tankers	3 Light Tankers
<b>Heavy Plant</b>					
Times		1300-1700	1200-1700	1100-1800	1000-2000
2xD4 Dozer		As requested	Float<30 minutes	Float at work site	On float as per IMT
1x Grader		Mobile	Mobile	Location advised to RFSDO	Location as per IMT
<b>ACT Fire and Rescue</b>					
Stand-up level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5

	0-11	12-24	25-49	50-74 or TOBAN	75+
<i>Indicative FFDI</i>	0-11	12-24	25-49	50-74 or TOBAN	75+
<i>Fire Rating</i>	Low	Low-High	Very High	Severe	Extreme to Catastrophic
<i>To be determined by the Operations Superintendent/Duty Superintendent 1600hrs and reviewed 0800 daily.</i>					
<i>Times</i>			1200-1800	1100-1900	1000-2000 (Extreme) 0900-2000 (Catastrophic)
<i>Status</i>	Cross crewed	Cross crewed	2 additional crews (SO&4) stood up with CAFS and WT Appliances	4 additional crews (SO&4) stood up with CAFS and WT Appliances	4 additional crews (SO&4) stood up with CAFS and WT Appliances
<b>ACT State Emergency Service</b>					
Stand-up level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<i>Indicative FFDI</i>	0-11	12-24	25-49	50-74 or TOBAN	75+
<i>Fire Rating</i>	Low	Low-High	Very High	Severe	Extreme to Catastrophic
	As requested	As requested	As requested	As per IMT roster	As per IMT roster
<b>Incident Management Team</b>					
<i>IMT arrangements as per 2010/2011 Commissioners Approved Agreement</i>					
	As per roster	As per roster	As per roster	1000-1800 at ESA as per roster	0800-2200 Pre formed the previous day

# At Levels 1,2 & 3 all EPSDD PCS fire vehicles will be undertaking day to day P&C operations, will be monitoring the TRN radio, and can be made available for response if needed.

## Appendix 2

### Approved Incident Management Team Members

Persons to be considered for appointment as IMT members for level 2 and 3 incidents

Name	Agency	Meets Competency Requirements	Location	Telephone Number	Mobile Number
Incident Controller					
<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>					
Operations Officer					
<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>					
Planning Officer					
<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>					
Logistics Officer					
<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>					
Safety Officer					
<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>					
Aviation					
<i>Intentionally Left Blank</i>					