



Operations Consultative Committee Minutes

Date of Meeting: **Friday 27 July 2018**

Time from/to: **0900 – 1630**

Chair: **David Turner – RFSA (Deputy Chair)**

Attendees: **Elizabeth Ferris AFSM – RFSA Les Ayres – RFSA**
Brendon Ede – RFSA Phil Spicer – RFSA
Geoffrey Ryan – RFSA James Brady – RFSA
Andrew McDonald – RFSA Krystaal Hinds – RFSA
AC Jason Heffernan – NSW RFS (Executive Officer)

Invited Speakers: **Chief Superintendent Peter McKechnie – NSW RFS**
Assistant Commissioner Ms Kelly Browne AFSM – NSW RFS
Mr Corey Shackleton – NSW RFS
Assistant Commissioner Steve Yorke AFSM – NSW RFS

Apologies: **Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM – NSW RFS (Chair)**

Location: **NSW RFS HQ Ground Floor Mountain Ash West**

Agenda

No.	Agenda Item	Responsible	Time
1.	Commissioner's Address – Mountain Ash Briefing Room	NSW RFS	0900
<i>Operational Consultative Committee convenes – Mountain Ash West Meeting Room</i>			1030
2.	Welcome and Introduction	Chair	1030
3.	Acceptance of Apologies	Chair	1035
4.	Declaration of Conflict of Interest	Chair	1040
5.	Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting	Chair	1045
6.	Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting	Chair	1050
7.	Operational and Mitigation Services	AC Steve Yorke	1100
8.	National Fire Danger Ratings System and Update on Fire Trails Project	Corey Shackleton	
9.	FRNSW RPAS Capability Presentation	CS Paul Bailey FRNSW	



No.	Agenda Item	Responsible	Time
10.	Operational System Update	CS Peter McKechnie AC Kelly Browne	
11.	Lessons Learnt from Canada / America Overseas Deployment 2018	CS Peter McKechnie	
12.	Requirements for Overseas Deployment Database	CS Peter McKechnie	
13.	General Business	Chair	

Minutes

No.	Agenda Item
1.	Commissioner's Address Committee members noted the Commissioner's Address.
2.	Welcome and Introduction The Deputy Chair welcomed committee members to the meeting.
3.	Acceptance of Apologies Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers was noted as an apology.
4.	Declaration of Conflict of Interest Nil.
5.	Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting The Committee accepted the previous meeting's minutes.
6.	<p>Business arising from previous minutes</p> <p>For future Agenda's to have updated version number.</p> <p>Action item 1: from previous meeting FRNSW to present on their RPAS Capability during this meeting.</p> <p>Action item 3: from previous meeting NSW RFS Operational brief or communication to be provided to the RFSA so it can be effectively distributed is completed.</p> <p>Action item 2: from previous meeting Operational brief on the use of RPAS over firegrounds, or provide advice on MYRFS is still in progress with AC Heffernan</p> <p>Action item 4: AC Browne to circulate communication to Deputy Chair David Turner for distribution to RFSA Members regarding the Firefighter availability and Response Applications. Discussion to take place later in the meeting.</p> <p>Action item 5: Committee suggested rather than having a countdown to the commencement of the bushfire season rather a countdown suggesting that you only have so many days left of burning before you need a permit. - AC Heffernan to follow up that the information was passed on.</p>



RFSA

	<p>Action item 6: Committee members are invited to send any items of interest to the Deputy Chair for consideration as part of the agenda. Item has been addressed and as of future meetings request will be sent to the deputy Chair and then sent to Natalie for agenda.</p> <p>Action item 7: From the previous minutes, there was discussion as to whether the RFS had to present a business paper in the case when they were doing a presentation. It is open to interpretation.</p> <p>There is a Service Standard regarding this and a business paper is required from both RFS and RFSA. Service Standard 1.5.3 (Attach to minutes).</p> <p>Action item 8: Tour of the new HQ Building. The tour was not able to take place as the building still deemed a construction site.</p> <p>Business paper register has one item open this is the lack of standardisation of LAT and Long attitudes. The committee agreed that this item now closed.</p> <p>The other item open in the register is the use of RPAS / drones which is still an ongoing work in progress.</p>
7.	<p>Operational and Mitigation Services</p> <p>AC Steve Yorke briefed the committee and provided an overview of the changes that have occurred within Operational and Mitigation Services. There was a recent review of SMSS and we have started to implement the recommended changes.</p> <p>The six service delivery areas have now been condensed to four areas of operations</p> <p>With the change in structure, Area's Coordinators have been appointed along with Operational Officers and Works Assessment officers and teams. Area Coordinators are: Tim Carroll, Kelwin White, Matthew Kelly and Sandra Hugher.</p> <p>Over coming weeks, targeted recruitment will be undertaken in the Bourke and Illawarra areas with the hope to develop two indigenous crews. Supported by local councils.</p> <p>We are still undertaking our core day-to-day functions, which include hazard reduction preparations, APZs and AIDER programme.</p> <p>Always looking for more AIDER opportunities. The AIDER programme is a one-of service and has had a positive response. It is also a great way to engage with the communities as well.</p> <p>Operationally, we have been involved in the Portable Weather Stations (PAWS). Launch of weather balloons. Full time support role LAT Base in Dubbo, which is a 7-day roster.</p> <p>Close to finalising a contract with Sydney Water NSW to provide mitigation service to their catchment areas. Agreement is in the process of being signed and crews have been working in Bargo area since October.</p> <p>The NPWS CRAFT service will cease and we will take over next fire season.</p> <p>The crews are there to be utilised as government has funded this.</p> <p>Steve has spent the last few days with crews working in the Barrington Tops area working on a project focused in the Devils Ark area, which is protecting the Tasmanian Devil. The teams have been putting in APZs around the pens to help protect the</p>



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	<p>Tasmanian Devil. In preparation to assist local brigades to conduct some hazard reductions.</p> <p>In addition, changes to the way our transport component now functions previously sat with SMSS. This is now separate and known as operational transport. This incorporates the vehicles and warehouse. Now a good separation.</p> <p>Transport is focused on base camps and general logistics around the state. Recently delivered portable toilets to brigade stations which did not have facilities. This will continue into the new year as we receive delivery of them.</p> <p>RAFSO also comes under Steve's portfolio, it continues to grow, and there are over 500 RAFT trained personnel. They have to keep up their qualifications. We also have 34 down the wire technicians for rescue operations.</p> <p>The other developing thing is our rescue capabilities with Mungindi on the NSW/QLD border. They are general land accredited. Tonight a new medium size truck will be handed over to the brigade. It's a purpose built vehicle. There is also a light vehicle and there are few are in the process of being built.</p> <p>Currently 10 brigades have elected to take on rescue capabilities. There was a criteria as to how brigades were selected. It was reliant on brigades taking up the offer and intensive training. There were brigades that did not feel they had the capability to undertake rescue and that is okay.</p> <p>This is a five year programme to get those brigades that have nominated to undertaken the training etc.</p>
8.	<p>National Fire Danger Ratings System and Update on Fire Trails Project</p> <p>Corey Shackleton briefed the committee on the Fire Danger Ratings.</p> <p>This project was established after the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. It mainly looks at the scientific model known as Macarthur. The NSW RFS is looking at the model in a broader sense and trying to build a National Fire Danger Ratings Systems. This involves other states and agencies. We have built a prototype and tested it and getting more accurate data than the Macarthur system. We need to keep testing and trailing the data, as it is not just a system based on NSW, but national.</p> <p>During the next 12 months the project will focus on the Northern Territory, as it is different terrain. It is a three-year project and the Federal government is trying to look at how the states pay for this.</p> <p>There is a social aspect to this project as well, and gaining an understanding of what communities know and feel about the fire danger ratings as we don't want to change it too much. we will look at the context and do people understand it and work the science into it. There is a fair amount that has to occur and this includes changes to legislation etc.</p> <p>Whilst it is very scientific, it needs to be able to be used by people who are in operational roles and can understand it. We have only looked at the science side of it at this stage.</p> <p>The research side of the social side is also a very big part we will have focus groups etc. to look at this stuff as communities have just gotten use to the recent changes.</p> <p>There is a national board that has representatives from each state / territory</p>



We cannot make it NSW based it has to have every states input. Therefore, it needs to be rolled out nationally. There is an opportunity that we use this system for all incidents including floods etc. by using same colour coding. It has been challenging to use for other incidents but the social research will continuing looking at this, so long as it does not delay the initial fire index project.

Starting from next financial year it is a three-year project to get the science side of it completed. It will look at the prototype and build the fire behaviour index and weather and how it will affect communities. It is about bringing it all together: the science and the social impact.

Fire Trails

Different complexity. Legislative changed in 2016. Gave the commissioner powers over fire trail. It means that all fire trails will meet a standard and the Commissioner can issue a notice to landowners etc. to bring the trail to a certain standard. Therefore, we had to make sure we had a standard that included width, U-turn bays, overtaking areas, width etc. and we have all now agreed on a standard.

The process is now we need to work out the strategic fire trails and where they are located in the landscape. We need strategic and tactical ones as well as those that do not fit into those categories. We still need to know where they are.

BFMC will assist by providing us with information and mapping it out. That will come in to a coordinator here at head office and then there will be a process that trails will be upgraded etc.

Under the legislation, it will be signed off by the BFCC and then by the Commissioner.

Commitment is that initially bring up to a standard we will fund through the grants process and once they meet the standard, it will be up to the local landholder to maintain that standard.

Once the work is complete, we will inspect it, certify it, and place signs up before it becomes a registered fire trail and then at any time the Commissioner can issue a notice.

An annual inspection is required once it registered by the landowners. There is 75 000km of fire trails within the state. Under the BFCC it has always been expected that the trails were being inspected annually so this shouldn't be anything new, the legislation has now formalised this process.

There are some cases where there will be private residents who have trails through their land that will be affected. This is done through an agreement with the landowner, formalising the existing arrangement. Residents usually maintain it themselves so we will have a discussion with them and advise them of the funding available to assist them to get it to a standard and enter the agreement.

We do have to have some level of certainty on private land as we are investing potentially thousands of dollars in these trails. We do not want to make it a scary agreement that they will not sign.

There was a discussion regarding the funding and this is available over a period of time. BFMC will identify which ones are crucial and allocate funding as needed. We will have to keep investing. It could be a 10 – 20 year project. The initial advice is that the NSW RFS will bring all trails to a certain standard and then landowners such as Forest Corporation and NPWS will maintain them.



RFSA

	<p>Our first two trails works will commence in early November, which is 900km of trail in the Snowy Mountains region.</p> <p>We have not had agencies work together like this regarding the trails before so it is very new to everyone as we learn each other's processes. It is a long process. If trails go back to a standard that they are now we have the legislation to back us and issue a notice, similar to the hazard complaint process. We can do the works, and there is a penalty involved with obstructing a trail but the Crown cannot issue a penalty notice on itself for the up keeping of a fire trail. The punishment is that if directed by the Commissioner to fix a trail to a standard it will cost the landowner and it could be millions of dollars at once. This is the incentive to keep it maintained. We need to have checks and balances in place. Under this programme, we will have a standard level of fire trails that we should expect and strategic fire trails identified.</p> <p>In addition, whilst fires are unpredictable and we may need to bring in dozers to create a break we now need to look at whether we make this a fire trail as we have invested some money into it already, and bring it up to scratch as there was no fire trail within the vicinity.</p> <p>If we come across a fire trail that needs work, such as bridge then, let's spend the money and install it properly so we don't have to keep going back every six months to fix it. It has to last 20 years plus.</p> <p>We have map books in an A3 size, and currently working with printing companies to ensure that they are robust. Also looking at being able to download in a programme etc.</p> <p>There is the perception out there that members believe that this project is going to happen quicker than what you have indicated. We need to manage that expectation. It is not as simple as turning up with a dozer and doing the works is about the environmental approvals etc. (the back end stuff) being completed.</p>
9.	<p>FRNSW RPAS Capability Presentation</p> <p>AC Heffernan advised that we have been looking at RPAs from an overall state perspective. FRNSW have developed a very good small RPA capacity and are attending to demonstrate their capabilities.</p> <p>CS Paul Bailey and Anthony Wallgate from FRNSW presented to the committee. Copy of presentation slides were handed out to committee members. Paul explained that FRNSW future directions with RPAs is within counter terrorism and natural disaster humanitarian relief. Paul spoke about their involvement in the recent overseas deployments to Greece, Lombok and Tonga.</p> <p>FRNSW RPA capability includes GIS, thermal imaging, mapping, vegetation analysis and 3D imaging. Fire Investigation has two RPAs attached to their unit. They have a chief pilot and chief maintenance officer who deal with the CASA requirements and who oversees 22 pilots.</p> <p>The benefit of having RPAs is information can be streamed live and instantaneous and imports to a device and we can see the data anywhere.</p> <p>Our future objective is we would like to have RPAs available at all incidents that FRNSW attend as new technology changes and it becomes more affordable. Small scale RPAs are a tool that will become utilised in the future.</p>



	<p>To get where we are today we have worked on it for four years from the day we decided to implement but it has been around for approx. eight years in discussions.</p> <p>Other agencies are coming to FRNSW to get assistant in setting up their RPA systems.</p>
10.	<p>Operational System Update</p> <p>Before commencing with CS Peter McKechnie and AC Kelly Browne, AC Heffernan briefed the committee regarding an approach to participate in the vendor evaluation for availability applications. AC Heffernan outlined the confidentiality requirements relating to this level of procurement activity.</p> <p>The committee members expressed some concern at having been involved in the requirement development but then heard no further information .AC Heffernan explained that we had been legally challenged already from a potential vendor so we had to resolve the issue and that has taken sometime to process.</p> <p>We have found that across the state, there are more than 12 systems that are being utilised by brigades and this project has the aim of implementing one system, which we will be able to support technically.</p> <p>CS McKechnie updated the committee that the OCC System, Noggin OCA, that has been developed over the last 2 years for our communications operators is starting to roll out for District use with Cumberland being the first district to trial the system.</p> <p>ICON</p> <p>Over the next two years there will be significant works undertaken to keep ICON up to date and add enhancements. The intent is to keep ICON contemporary and build on its capacity. Regular releases will be made and each will include release notes for users.</p> <p>COLLECTOR</p> <p>A review is underway of what Collector is doing for us both in the field and within operations centres. It has the abilities to take photos, maps and 3D Imaging etc.,</p> <p>AVL</p> <p>CS McKechnie provided a demonstration of AVL via the GRN network.</p> <p>It was outlined there are three phases to this work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A dot on the map to locate appliances in case of emergency2. Start to reduce radio demand with status panels and,3. Implementation of rich data exchange and potentially mobile data terminals. <p>BIRS</p> <p>Went live in September with BIRS after trials in Illawarra and Canobolas. We have had positive feedback, improvements still to be made on reporting of use.</p> <p>We are not getting complaints but rather suggestions for enhancements. Main concern from members is they cannot automatically see the data; however, the data still needs validation from the district office and then it will be visible.</p>



	<p>Availability</p> <p>After the requirements workshop there was an approach to market place. We had an issue with one of the vendors. They challenged us and we had to deal with some legal aspects which put it in on hold.</p> <p>An evaluation team has been established, including a NSW SES representative. Currently in the process of preparing a short list. Once shortlist is confirmed vendors will be invited to come in and demonstrate/present during a two-day event where each vendor will each have one hour to present their product. Dates to be finalised.</p> <p>We would like to invite the committee to join us again for this evaluation process, however we need to be clear on the strict need for absolute confidentiality, this includes not being able to provide updates to brigades, the RFSA or anyone else. There are strict Government Procurement guidelines that prohibit talking about vendors submissions etc. and to do so could risk the whole process.</p> <p>The decision was made that all the committee members be part on the panel, and non-disclosure statements will be sent out prior to meeting.</p> <p>Process will be that committee members will provide written feedback. From a procurement prospective, the evaluation team will make the final decision but we will make you another step in it. The committee will be looking at it from a functionality perspective where others will be looking at the corporate side, ie how robust it is, eg data security, technical security etc.</p>
11.	<p>Lessons Learnt from Canada / America Overseas Deployment 2018</p> <p>CS McKechnie briefed the committee and provided an insight into the recent overseas deployment to USA and Canada.</p> <p>Overall the deployment was successful with only the odd issue. One of our biggest challenges is fatigue management as we need to fit with local requirements. Their standard deployment is 12 – 14 days on the line and two days off followed by 12 – 14 days.</p> <p>CS McKechnie talked through the feedback received via the AFAC survey. It is acknowledged there is still work to do to streamline the application process and further work is being done with both the USA and Canada on the overarching agreements.</p>
12.	<p>Requirements for Overseas Deployment Database</p> <p>CS McKechnie advised that government agencies were working with AFAC. This year when the request for international deployment occurred we were in the process of implementing a national database. Therefore, people had to enter information into the database after having completed a manual EOI form. This new process will eliminate the manual forms next year. The database was utilised whilst overseas. We had 187 Expressions of Interest and 89 people approved.</p> <p>No firefighters were requested this year.</p>
13.	<p>General Business</p> <p>40km Trial</p> <p>There was a discussion regarding the trial of the 40km and the implementation.</p> <p>There has been some feedback across some regions that it may cause an incident particularly on major highways when speeds drop from 110km to 40km suddenly.</p>



General feeling is good. The consensus was that the public will need time to adapt to the changes and in two or three years' time, it will be the norm.

Is there an opportunity for the RFSA to get some feedback from the membership to see how they view it?

At an incident we would need to protect ourselves and this can be achieved by the use of cones or the use of signs as most brigades carry signs advising 'traffic / smoke hazard ahead'. We are currently working with engineering to have some sort of signage and what wording it should say. Additional resources should be obtained if needed.

The question was raised that under the new SOP will our vehicles under lights and sirens be required to travel at 40km when traveling past an incident. This will provide some guidance about how to deal with this.

Meeting dates

15 March, 5 July and 25 October 2019

Could we please clarify dates as the Region North exercise will be taking place on 15th March and RFSA is heavily involved with the exercise?

Action Item: Clarify meeting dates with Merryn Campbell.

Feeding of Volunteers at Incidents.

There was a letter from the RFSA President regarding the feeding of volunteers at incidents. Service Standard 3.1.11 Application of Food Safety Standards outlines that brigades need to be self-sufficient for 12 – 24 hours. In some instances, this is considered too long for volunteers to wait for feeding. This Service Standard is currently in the process of being reviewed CS McKechnie has requested the information so it can be incorporated into the review. Members are requested to seek feedback from brigades.

Action: Deputy Chair to take item to State council.

Central Dispatch

There was a discussion about how the central dispatch operators receive and dispatch calls. Members would like to get nearest cross street provided on initial dispatch, it was highlighted that when known it is provided.

CS McKechnie is happy to follow up any calls out of session.

Commissioner's Address

Action Item: Commissioner's Address to be included with meeting minutes.

NSW Community Engagement Campaign

In the southern areas of the state Victorian based TV is the standard. Corporate Communication to advise if advert is available to these areas.

PVC

At the recent AFAC, conference there was a product called recent PVC Stock.

Action Item: Geoff to scan information through for review.

Meeting closed.