

Consolidated ESA Roundtable Feedback

Session	Initiated by	Issues and discussion
		ESA Roundtable Terms of Reference
1	PCS Union	Terms of Reference were accepted. It was noted that the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) Land Management Agency is a major stakeholder in the provision of emergency services in the ACT but had not been consulted on the formation of the Terms of Reference. CPSU also stated that they had not been consulted on the development of the Terms of Reference.
		Cooperation between ESA services
Most	SES PCS ACTFR CFU	Frontline staff and volunteers reported significant collaboration and co-operation between the services during emergencies, such as the clean-up after the storm of 13 January 2017. All services work well together at the ground and executive levels, but not in the middle management area. All services work together at the ground level but there seems to be no cohesive plan or message across the four services and support services. For example, overheard conversation with ACTFR managers discussing the ESA ComCen existing for ACTFR.
1	ACTFR ACTAS	Cooperation not acknowledged in media reports – missed opportunities to reflect what happens on the ground. Often only one service acknowledged when all contribute, or a general “emergency services” is acknowledged, whereas each service (plus PCS) would appreciate individual recognition of efforts.
1	SES	Important role of non-operation and support services was noted
1	ACTFR	All services need each other
1	RFS	Emergency services roles highly regarded in community – we can do better at acknowledging individuals and humanising our services
1	ACTAS	Perception that ESA HQ staff have different attitude towards working together than frontline workers, example cited of equipment removed from ACTAS, still in use in ACTACTFR.
Most	ACTAS RFS Support	Lack of visible collaboration and cooperation between management teams. It was noted that relationship-building and collaboration between services does occur at management level, not always visible to others. Need to cross-pollinate more across middle-management to achieve a better understanding of strategy and operations – how we are doing, what we are doing as an agency.
3	RFS	As a single focus task, we have common aims to protect life and property. For tasks with a multiple focus, the services have different informational needs. We have shared goals and understandings of our aims within each service, but this not commonly shared between services.
6	RFS SES	ESA has working groups across services at different levels
6	SES RFS	Having co-location where appropriate helps raise awareness of what the other services do.
5	SES	There are opportunities for more inter-service visits, e.g. bring units into Pialligo when the IMR is in use for SES. This doesn't need executive approval but can be arranged on a unit basis. The same applies to visits or joint exercises and discussion between units, brigades, services and PCS.
		Culture and identity of services
1	ACTFR SES	Concern that all services wish to remain separate and recognised services into the future
1	ACTAS	During ACTAS Blueprint for Change – as well as the parts that needed to be lost, some good cultural parts were lost, especially about public recognition and an award system. We need to celebrate our achievements, both within ESA and the public.
		Lack of understanding of the differences between the services.
1	ACTFR	Feeling that culture of ACTACTFR is being destroyed – ethnocide
1	ACTFR	Some ACT ACTFR members see themselves only as belonging to ACT ACTFR and don't see themselves as part of the ACTPS.
Most	ACTFR	Staff within a service are proud of their uniform and wish to maintain a viable career path within the same service; Opposing view offered that staff benefit from development opportunities in other services. This could be further enhanced through shared training where appropriate.
Most	ACTFR	Potential loss of career opportunities if restructuring is implemented
1	ACTAS	Lack of recognition of ACTAS staff.
3	PCS SES ACTFR	We have shared goals and understandings of our aims within each service, but this not commonly shared between services.

Items listed in this report are the views expressed by participants.

They have not been checked for accuracy, nor do they necessarily represent the views of all stakeholders.

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		Internal communications
Most	ACTAS ACTFR RFS SES	The issue appears to be one of miss-messaging, whether or not intentional, when a personal opinion or casual comment is perceived by others to be representative of the service. There's an "us and them" feeling in the office. We need to eliminate the culture of "Chinese whispers". We need to stop the "dumb" views expressed in the workplace which are not representative but are taken as such.
Most	ACTAS ACTFR RFS SES	Management needs to address and communicate what appears to be illogical. We need to close the loop in communications – e.g. if a person raises an issue, they never get to learn whether it was considered, dealt with or its status. Example raised by SES who conduct an "After Action Review" (AAR) after incidents that involve the IMT or Staging Area – it contains learnings – what we did well, what we could improve. SES get no feedback on whether the points raised in the AAR are dealt with. Volunteers don't usually have the time to follow up themselves.
1,3	ACTFR	Feeling that communication within services was good and it failed at the interface with the ESA
1	ACTFR	Uncertainty about direction of SRA
1,6	ACTFR RFS	Lack of awareness of ESA's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 at frontline level
Most	ACTFR ACTAS	Communication issue at middle management level; Stated that it was not the job of station managers/officers to pass on managerial information.
2	ACTFR ACTAS	Change goes to the heart of what people value. To work we need to build relationships within the executive and work groups. Need to have relationship builders in the operational space.
1	PCS ACTFR SES	Inconsistency between how we do and share things with ESA, leaves gaps to truth. Need to keep: What is best for the ACT community – emotional intelligence; ESA communications at high level and across all agencies (esp. PCS.) Need to change: Mechanisms to improve communications with key stakeholders; resiliency and proactive planning for future incidents
2	ACTFR	Emails might not be the most effective way to communicate with frontline staff. Need to consider timing and form of communications. Needs to be direct and accessed by all staff and volunteers. Face to face communications preferred method by some.
Most	ACTFR RFS	Communications within a service are currently based on chain of command. Volunteer organisations appear to have more frequent communications, e.g. weekly community updates.
Most	ACTFR	In ACTFR, communications OK within the chain of command but appear to become blurred once they pass the Chief Officer. Suggestion that there is a top level agenda to prevent communications getting to those who will fix problems.
2	ACTAS	Communication is a two-way conversation – all staff share responsibility to advise and communicate up and down the command chain.
Sug. Box Email 1	ACTFR RFS SES	While volunteer associations have access to the Minister, paid services only access the Minister through the hierarchy.
Most	RFS	Need for better communications within and between all services (and other non-operational areas within the ESA). Sometimes information flow between services is too complicated if it needs to travel up and down the chains of command. In many instances, e.g., organising joint training and tasks, this might not be necessary. Could be managed at the brigade level but needs proactive facilitation. RFS can facilitate through local commanders.
Most	ACTFR SES CFU RFS	Ongoing consultation is a huge must. In the past, promised feedback has not been forthcoming so people do not know if their suggestions have been considered or acted on. It is important to close the loop on communications, especially if someone has raised an issue or suggestion. The definition of consultation is important as people have different definitions and expectations.
1,3, 6	ACTFR	Some participants not aware of normal communication channels available to them to allow them to provide input to projects such as SURP.
		Management

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4	RFS	Need to cross-pollinate more across middle-management to achieve a better understanding of strategy and operations - how we are doing, what we are doing as an agency
4	RFS	A middle-management forum that meets and shares regularly would assist coordination, management and planning, especially for exercise management.
4	Support	A forum could also play a role in balancing strategic direction vs business as usual in ESA.
4	Support	There used to be forums for non-executive senior managers. Now there is not. Sub-executive managers feel responsible for a lot without the authority to carry it out. The habit of strategic project decision-making is very slow in ESA.
6	ACTFR	Is top down or bottom up the best management model for an agency like the ESA?
Sug. Box	ACTFR	Have COs report directly to Minister
Sug. Box	ACTFR	RFS should understand that they exist to support ACTFR and not as first responder.
Email	RFS	Recognise first line support role of RFS
Sug. Box	ACTFR	ACTACTFR has no confidence in Dominic Lane. Sack him.
Sug. Box	ACTFR	Bring back Paul Swain
		Interaction with ACT PS and other agencies
1	ACTFR	ESA not sufficiently supported and represented throughout JACS. Would like to see a real interest by JACS in what each frontline service delivers and experiences. Report of incident where JACS offered no support for a firefighter accused in the media of misogyny.
1	Support	Suggestion for ESA Liaison Officer to lobby issues for agency internally across all services and with stakeholders.
1	PCS	PCS staff and volunteers contribute significant scope of work in prevention and preparedness. ESA management need to understand that PCS is both a brigade and an agency and that any roundtable is about more than the ComCen.
4	ACTAS	JACS is seen as an impediment to getting things done. Poor HR support as an example. Too many layers diluting what is said from the coal face.
		Union Involvement
1	Union	Wish to see greater levels of engagement and communication between UFU members and volunteers at ground level, with a view to mutual understanding and respect
1, 7	SES Union	Joint Consultative Committee formed in 2016 to facilitate consultation between unions, executive and JACS, however, UFU although invited, has not participated.
1	Union	Some UFU members disappointed by past consultations and hope that these roundtables mean a corner has been turned and true consultation is now underway
1	Union	Expressed a wish for "respect" to be part of all future dialogue
1	Union	Sought clarification as to what exactly would be achieved in terms of ComCen reform by 1 st July
4	Union	How do services advise that resources are reaching a critical point? E.g., UFU has heard anecdotal accounts that staff cannot access their recreation leave because of low staff levels.
4	Union	Need to understand volunteer space. ROGs reports that the number of volunteers has declined by 6% in 1 year and 11% in 2 years. Need to understand what the retention issue is, e.g. other factors such as expectation for unpaid overtime, ongoing Federal Public Service industrial disputes. [ESA participant] Volunteer turnover can be seasonal – when no activity can affect numbers. Numbers also depend on public service turnover. The current volunteer capability is sufficient.
5,7	ACTFR Union	JCC meets regularly but UFU refuses to participate. Even though they don't attend, minutes are sent to the UFU Secretary but members were not aware of this, so UFU does not appear to be communicating with its own members. ESA Commissioner also sends regular updates to all staff. UFU members stated that UFU does not participate as they do not think the JCC is weighted correctly. It was discussed that JCC is a consultation forum and an opportunity to raise ideas, with no pre-determined agenda, not a voting forum, so weighting is irrelevant.
4	Union	Wanted clarity around whether opinions expressed were personal or organisational.
		Volunteer Management and Utilisation

Session	Initiated by	Issues and discussion
Most	SES RFS CFU PCS	Lack of portal and consolidated database for volunteer members of ESA. These changes would benefit both ESA and the volunteers. Issues common with PCS volunteers. Database should list volunteers skills, experience, willingness to contribute in other areas of interest. Database should also contain incident and operational participation, training records and ability to report when training refreshers are due, link to VETRAC. We need to ensure that we don't farm out paid jobs to volunteers. It is important to ensure that paid support roles are valued and not threatened, while being able to obtain volunteer help with unallocated tasks. Database could also help ESA track attrition rates, plan training, report no of active members, etc.
1	ACTFR	Does training of RFS volunteers in village fire-fighting indicate a plan to create a retained service?
Sug. Box	ACTFR	Question about chain of command and management of RFS volunteers on ACTFR appliances; as this has never been proposed, no further discussion was pursued.
Most	SES RFS CFU	SES and RFS volunteers have multiple skill sets and experience and could be better employed to use those skill sets and experience to address short-term needs across ESA. We need to ensure that we don't farm out paid jobs to volunteers. It is important to ensure that paid support roles are valued and not threatened, while being able to obtain volunteer help with unallocated tasks. Volunteers can be used to train other volunteers. But volunteers can't do this unless the HQ support is in place; this includes the IT systems for volunteer personnel management. Volunteers have a range of skill sets that could assist in achieving this.
Most	SES RFS CFU	We don't target volunteers who can't jump on trucks or roofs even though there are other volunteering tasks to be performed, e.g. driving trucks between depots, IT and communications skills. We need to expand the roles available for volunteers so that: - volunteers get to do what they want - they can change roles when life/circumstances change - there is scope for ongoing roles.
4	RFS	Volunteer management is managed on a shoestring and we need to increase staff who do this. The quality of volunteer management could be measured by attrition rates. We could benefit from a central volunteer recruitment function.
4,8	RFS	Volunteer recruitments -We could recruit using models such as the Little Nipper group for the Surf Life Savers or have RFS recruits in schools. Volunteer recruitment could be more inclusive of diverse workforce with outreach to non-operational roles. We should have strategies for active engagement with diverse communities.
5	SES	Need for better and more timely communications from ESA for volunteers, where there are delays in the current systems. Is there a more efficient way of sending out communications to all volunteers from a central service, instead of the delays associated with waiting for a weekly update through the individual service? From a business perspective, we need to investigate how we communicate with and manage our volunteers, while leaving operational control to the individual services. (WorkForce Connect may play an important role in this when commissioned).
7	SES	Volunteers would benefit from training in MDT and (ComCen) to assist with large-scale incidents.
Most	SES RFS CFU	Volunteer retention is important - lack of opportunity to use skills, either in training exercises or incidents is seen as reason that many do not remain as active volunteers - more chance for engagement would be welcome.
Email	FRS	Volunteers have considerable out of pocket expenses, and it's onerous to recover these.
7	ACTFR	Fatigue can be an issue for RFS – normally managed at Brigade level.
Sharing ESA Resources		
Most	All	Work is duplicated through the different arms of the agency. There could be savings by pooling resources, tools, techniques, etc, to determine what is necessary, what is desirable. A forum would provide an arena to identify key issues and to get them resolved, e.g. aggregate expertise throughout ESA instead of each service having its own small resource bucket. Forum could also play a role in balancing strategic direction vs business as usual in ESA.
4	Support	Need to share resources across the services with volunteers, shared, common training, etc - as a way of managing especially volunteers with too few resources.
Welfare		
7	ACTAS	Our biggest resource is our people. We need think tanks to explore ideas on how best to support and deploy them.

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7	ACTFR	Welfare of personnel within ESA is not effective. The clinical approach we currently use, based on EAP with CISM approach, as regards the different services, is outdated. There needs to be a better welfare model across all services that allows workers to draw on the support they need, backed by a competent welfare team in a culture of respect and care.
7	ACTFR	Welfare needs to consider life after service, whether leaving because of physical or psychological damage or retirement. Staff could be leaving with unresolved physical and emotional baggage that could impact their quality of life.
7	ACTFR	Current welfare culture does not appear to be supportive. Some staff are “doing it tough”, afraid to speak up for fear of impacting future job prospects. Stigma of needing help is large and influential. Guidance is required to inform staff of more options to pursue to enable them to move on and return to work. More choice required both for treatment, transitional work and ongoing work. Staff no longer “fit for purpose” in the past have been offered uni courses, retraining, but fell over as they had no psychological support. Felt they had lost their identity and did not belong anywhere any more – ESA’s, JACS’, no-one’s. Belonging is a key positive aspect in getting good welfare outcomes. People need support at each step of their recovery process, need to be able to relate to the people providing support. If support offered closer to the source, it’s better.
7	ACTFR	Need to improve the process for return to work after injury. Need a plan and consistency, so people know there is a job allocated instead of having to find their own. Staff with long service or injuries could find role in admin roles such as rostering, WHS, mentoring, pastoral roles, training, other ACTPS roles. Some of these options may require the creation of new positions within the services. They may wish to consider other work options, e.g., part-time, casual. We need to look at options under fit for work / return to work and the options in-between, for example, an incentive to leave after 30/55 (30 years service/55 years of age). Menial work is to be avoided - e.g. collecting dog shit in the park.
7	ACTFR	If unable to fulfil normal role, people leave or take extended leave, often under ComCare. The ComCare slippery path is seen as punitive and negative. ESA needs to provide remedial assistance before ComCare becomes the only perceived option. In the past, JACS dealt with welfare issues – by the time it gets to JACS it is too late. ComCare handles mental injuries differently from physical injuries (3 months vs 1 month).
7	ACTFR	ESA apparently willing to pay for an expensive compo case, rather than invest in prevention - \$40,000 welfare budget, yet each compo case is around \$200,000-300,000. There is a strong incentive to fund a welfare program.
7	ACTFR	Fire & Rescue have changes coming in this space – focus on supporting people at work and developing tailored support on an individual basis. Trying to look at ways to normalise people seeking support. Need to: think ahead and keep flexibility in approach utilise the ESA Manager Welfare Programs identify triggers early
7	ACTFR	Fire & Rescue HR position is based on Commander status, not necessarily on qualifications, aptitude, competencies.
7	ESA	Chaplaincy is part of the welfare model, this forms part of the add-on services, which include EAP, Soldier On, Beyond Blue, which are all available for ACTFR staff.
7	ACTAS	SupportLink (outside provider used by ACTAS and AFP) is seen as a very good service available 24/7. They conduct in-site visits and area also available to family. They offer tips, e.g., spot meditation. Would be good if available to other services.
7,8	ACTFR ACTAS	Station Officers (SO), Duty Officers (DO) are first points of contact. They don’t have training in welfare and support. EQ is important part of leadership. Leaders need to notice signs of distress. In ACTAS, DOs can stand staff down to enable them to deal with issues, but decision is made by individual DO who may not be aware of the impact of a trauma on others if it hasn’t affected them. (Everyone reacts differently to a situation and everyone has a different cumulative impact level). Training for leaders is essential. There is also an opportunity for peer-to-peer-to-peer support to support a colleague who is unable to seek help for themselves.
7,8	RFS	An individual’s welfare is connected to public welfare in ESA delivering a service. Intervention may be needed in the public interest as well as the person’s interest.

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7,8	ACTFR SES	Welfare needs to be pro-active rather than reactive. Peer support model discussed. Peer to peer support important in incident de-briefing – sometimes, e.g. ACTAS staff on night shift in ComCen, with only two staff on duty, not enough for effective peer to peer debrief. Debriefs impacted by: - adequate staffing levels to facilitate - timely defusing – including on the job - need a cause analysis about why so many reactive symptoms - There's a need to consult and identify all issues that cause frustration / stress.
7,8	ACTFR	Welfare is a priority. This should be first point of action for ESA. If we improve welfare, other items, including SRA become easy to manage.
7	ACTAS	Frustration expressed by ACTAS staff on road. For example, through lack of resources, what if they can't attend a seriously ill child because they are transferring a patient with a stumped toe to hospital. This causes stress – people lose the incentive to come to work each day. This becomes cyclic, more staff absences → less ambulance availability → more frustration.
7	ACTAS	Some of these frustrations could be addressed by a thought process shift – not everyone needs to go to hospital. Choice for transporting to hospital is currently undertaken on a case-by-case basis, with no feedback on effectiveness, hence no appetite for change. It becomes a form of risk evasion. Need a plan, procedures and prompts – checklists are not treating people like idiots, but reinforce best practice.
7	SES	For volunteers – SES: some support is still needed for volunteers, although they are less likely to experience trauma. SES have peer support, EAP, chaplaincy. Peer support is included in training within each unit. Peer support can be as simple as creating opportunities to listen to a colleague. Services could conduct joint training on welfare issues, such as peer to peer support.
7	ACTAS	ACTAS taking steps in welfare space. However, Injury Prevention Officer role underutilised as they are too busy doing other work
7	ACTAS	Mental Health First Aid training noted as being worth while.
8	SES	Change name from "welfare" to "personal support" as "welfare" carries a social stigma.
Strategic Reform Agenda		
Most	ACTFR	ACTFR feel that they have not been consulted effectively.
Most	ACTFR RFS SES	Many diverse opinions on need: Change happens all the time, it is normal in every phase of life; "if it's not broken, why fix it? Recognition that other factors affect change in ESA, e.g. more interference – government, senior management. We need change to improve.C172
Most	ACTFR	Repeatedly stated that the reasons for change are not known, communicated or understood, and therefore opposed. There was a repeated request to put all information on the table. No evidence of efficiencies – no understanding of why. Need to have an organisational conversation between the decision makers and the rest.
Most	RFS SES	Communications - Volunteer organisations (RFS and SES) spoke positively about consultation with them on the SRA. Volunteer members see benefits from SRA and changes made through their submissions. Feel they have been kept informed throughout, with communications dignified and respectful.
1	ACTFR	SRA seen as growing in size but the outputs are not evident; Need to see outcomes and progress, e.g. updates on SURP.
1	ACTFR	Reforms suggested by frontline workers are sometimes supported, sometimes changed, sometimes rejected because there are other considerations – important to explain this. There is a perception that if reform can't be explained, there must be a hidden agenda.
1	ACTFR	It is important to understand the impact of change on individuals.
5	ACTFR	SRA blamed for ESA restructure when DCO positions abolished. Some ACTFR staff see this as removing opportunities for promotion within the service
3	RFS SES	SRA is more than ComCen, e.g. the CAD upgrade, the SURP project – implementing upgrades to facilities based on your feedback. But the ComCen space is not well understood and the information going around is not accurate.
Email	BC	SRA would be better renamed as Strategic Reform program or similar

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Sug. Box	ACTFR	SRA is agenda driven, being made up along the way, lacking meaningful consultation, creating dissention, destroying morale, creating duplication instead of reducing it, costly and unnecessary, reducing community safety. Not wanted by the majority of staff and volunteers.
		SURP
Sug. Box	ACTFR	What is the government's position on part-time stations (retained)? What is the difference between part-time stations and staffing stations, e.g. Molonglo, on a "demand basis"?
Email	ACTFR	In areas where possible it would be great to save on funding by providing investment in joint facilities - including integration of facilities for paid and volunteer staff.
6	SES	When you co-locate, a cultural shifting is required - - need to raise mutual understandings - need to understand workplace priorities and needs
		CAD Upgrade
7	SES	There is an understanding that the CAD upgrade will allow the automatic update of data for SES calls from Access Canberra to the ComCen CAD.
7	ACTAS	With current CAD, ACTAS can assist ACTFR and SES, however with the CAD upgrade and two separate CADs, this might not be possible. It will mean that operators will have to physically move to the other side of the room and that ACTAS operators won't be able to leave their ACTAS workstations (and CAD) to assist. This could be a major issue.
		ComCen
1	RFS	Interstate experience, especially Victoria, on changing to civilian call-takers has been positive. There were initial teething problems and it took time to develop trust.
1	Union	People from different perspectives can see the same issue in a different light, so not all share this view of the Victorian experience.
Most	ACTFR SES RFS	ComCen call-takers follow processes and systems – could be reviewed to be more efficient and effective.
Most	ACTFR	Frontline staff seek strategic input to decisions on the new model.
Most	ACTFR	Individual decision-making vs use of scripts/business rules – prefer fire-fighter support rather than from civilian staff in ComCen.
	SES RFS	It should be possible for SES and RFS to volunteer in ComCen for emergencies.
Email	RFS	Support for 100% civilian, unified ComCen. Plenty of justifications, including national best practices, better stats from other jurisdictions, steady stream of complaints about current call handling. Many ACTFR arguments to retain are contradictory, e.g. job requires long term training, but essential for short-term placement of pregnant firefighters.
2, 3	ACTFR ACTAS	Operational model for ComCen – value of significance operational experience; Need to keep people with technical knowledge – competency, awareness and sympathy of call-takers important to operational staff; Opposing view offered by ACTAS that civilian call-takers better for ComCen as paramedics could over-analyse and diagnose, and slow the response.
3	Union RFS	UFU rep stated he was happy to address any skill shortages in ACTFR staff in ComCen, e.g. touch typing. He stated that ACTFR wouldn't want other services or volunteers in the ComCen as it would reduce their overtime. Volunteer raised the point that overtime is over and above the normal pay, so the use of volunteers is not about taking money off people, but about maintaining operational capability.
2	ACTAS	Consider secondary triage in ComCen to divert cases to locum GP services and use paramedics only for those low acuity services where people are unable to see a GP. Need to keep: Timely responses to Priority 1 emergencies
7	SES Union	Why is the ComCen staffing so important to the Union? Reaction seems to be out of proportion to any proposed changes. UFU Rep response that it is a union issue as it is a WHS issue. They want to ensure that the attending firefighters have the right information to protect their safety.

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5	ACTFR	ComCen operators apparently decide what support the officers on scene need. Sometimes in ComCen the status of an appliance is not set correctly, therefore the nearest crew is not called. Tim Rhodes presentation was cited as being helpful to explain how things really work. More widespread use of this presentation could help to address misunderstandings of how jobs are assigned. Paul Greck ACTFR has prepared a similar presentation.
3	CFU	Important to have volunteer involved in communications chain to prioritise the messages to pass to the commander by relay during emergencies.
3	RFS	ComCen is not simply a ACTFR ComCen – the ACTFR side services three arms of the ESA – SES, RFS and ACTFR. However, there is a perception that ComCen ACTFR operators are not following standard operating procedures or applying business rules for calls that involve RFS. This results in the perception that the ComCen does not work well for RFS.
7	SES	Why do we employ more ACTFR staff at ComCen during storm and flood incidents when the firefighters are needed on the ground and SES could fill the extra load?
7	ComCen ACTFR	Claim that ACTFR ComCen weren't as well trained as ACTAS colleagues Issue with current ComCen. Sometimes ACTFR call takers write overflow ACTAS incidents on post-it notes and walk them across the room instead of entering call details into CAD. Risk of not taking all relevant details. There is no opportunity to provide pre-arrival advice for patients. There is an agreed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for ACTFR to use for entering ACTAS calls into CAD but it's not always followed. There is a responsibility to ensure the best information is being entered. This highlights a discipline, training and skills gap for the ACTFR staff in the ComCen. (ACTFR claim this is an anomaly and that reform shouldn't be based on an anomaly.)
3 Email	ACTFR	It would be smart to maintain a SO in the ComCen but more important to get the business rules right. Civilian call takers would work well in this model.
3	RFS	Management could work better to sort out some of the current issues with ComCen. Irrespective of the models for a reformed ComCen. RFS and ACTFR need to meet to resolve this as a team. Obstacles appear to be training of ComCen operators, personalities, lack of clarity in roles and support needs and lack of relationships between RFS and ACTFR.
Most	ACTFR	Calls in ComCen overflow across all services, including ACTAS. Some calls apply to more than one service, e.g., a motor vehicle accident. Two separate uniforms but a single aim in ComCen – to provide services to the community.
3	ACTAS	ACTAS experience is that civilian call-taker model works – on-road staff quickly build up relationships with the civilian staff. Typing speed is a really important skill for the call-takers. This frees the specialist staff to concentrate on the technical aspects of the job. A Clinician makes all the risk decisions for ACTAS and a similar ACTFR role should work just as well.
3	ACTAS	ACTAS used the best information available when the civilian call taker model was adopted. Important to use evidence-based decision on how to go forward for the ComCen reform.
3	ACTAS	How important is a ComCen for service delivery to the ACT community? If it's the most important cog, as participants agreed, we need to make it the best we can. ACTAS took the initiative, recognising the important of ComCen for their service delivery and put effort into reform. They manage it as a business and provide specialist training for the civilian operators.
3	RFS	We need to keep up with technology and best practice – main pressures going forward are money and technology.
3	RFS	Mobile Command Centre deployed but not apparently exercised - alleged that civilian call takers can't do that.
3	SES	Issues exist with duplicate entry of incident data that has already been captured by Access Canberra for SES calls. The case for data sharing should be investigated. Duplication stops trained people doing their job well.
7	ACTAS	During January '17 storm event, ACTAS staff had to fill in for ACTFR staff to enter calls into CAD. One of the reasons was typing speed for data entry.
Sug. Box	RFS	The RFS CO should direct the ComCen to instruct ComCen operators to comply with Section D, 2016-2917 Field Operations Manual (dispatch of all units on OP1) and SOP 5.3 & SOP 5.4 regarding dispatch of vehicles.

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Email	ACTFR	We need to change ComCen model - suggestion to keep firefighter for dispatch and to monitor incidents; use ACTS model for call taker role; ESA call takers to keep costs down and stand up experience SES and RFS dispatchers during their peak workloads and as required.
7	SES	In ComCen can't communicate with SES crews. There is the technical capability to track a vehicle in SES but this has been resisted.
7	RFS	There are very different issues expressed in the room. Is there a standard? Will everyone get the same response? How can we manage these issues if there's no common standard?
Sug. Box	ACTFR	The benefits that the ESA and the community get from ACTACTFR staff in ComCen are the same as what ACTACTFR receive as an organisation. The skills and experience that ACT fire fighters and supervisors bring to the roles gives the ESA and the community the best outcomes when it comes to call collection and response.
Email	SES	ComCen is a communications centre, not an operations centre. ACTFR members state they joined to fight fires, so why do they want to be radio operators instead? Civilianising the ComCen would be more cost effective as firefighters are paid more than the civilians would be. This would allow 40 trained firefighters to return to fighting fires.
7	ACTFR	Does ACTAS need more 000 lines? Perhaps three is not enough?
		WHS
4	ACTAS	Paramedics and NEPT PTOs have high injury rate due to manual handling (~10% absenteeism in ACTAS). Could be alleviated by use of powered stretchers, emergency lifting cushions (ELCs) and better head clearance in future ambulance vehicles. A powered stretcher trial will commence in 2017. This will require changes in ambulance fit out and design but is necessary for injury prevention and would pay for itself with reduced claims. Other suggestions include: - ELCs (Emergency Lifting Cushions) - Multi-purpose Vehicles (1 North, 1 South) for transportation of larger sized patients. Canberra lags other jurisdictions on use of these items. Financial gains could be made in reduced injury rate, reduced ComCare claims, reduced overtime, and a more diverse workforce available for on-road work.
4	ACTAS	An all-ESA think tank for safety including all workforce retention and transition – also to help people to help themselves.
Sug. Box	RFS	What mechanisms are in place to deal with PTSD for volunteers? Are they covered by workers' compensation or does their employer wear the cost for time off work and treatment if injured? This issue will be referred to HR.
		Community Education
4	CFU Union	94% of houses were lost in 2003 due to ember attack. Potential savings and social benefits with the CFU now in place could be large; Must also consider cost of social dislocation, costs to learning and development for families as a result.
6	RFS SES ACTFR CFU	Community education is a growth area that we don't currently address. Can take advantages of expos, networking to recruit. RFS Community Engagement Officer able to work across ESA. Opportunity to get good news stories about our work, e.g. ACTFR replacing alarms, SES cleaning gutters for Legacy widows, CFU community cleanups.
		Training and Skills Retention
2	SES	Need to establish what capabilities are needed: - across all services - across support services - across active stakeholders
2, 6	ACTFR ACTAS SES	Both ACTFR and ACTAS express difficulty in attending training because of frontline scheduling demands; Can also be difficult to schedule training for volunteers
2	ACTAS	Focus is on high-end services; If help is required that is outside normal practice or area, no great capability (ACTAS)

Session	Initiated by	Issues and discussion
4, 5	CFU RFS	CFU and RFS would like to do joint operational training with ACTFR that is useful, timely and as real as possible to identify operational gaps, e.g. Health exercise for SARS. Hazard reduction burning could be treated as a joint training exercise and opportunity to meet and share information.
2, 6	ACTFR ACTAS SES	There are challenges in arranging cross-training or joint training exercises – availability, shifts and rosters, costs (if overtime is involved) focuses on larger exercises but it presents opportunities to rise to a higher level. Explore other types of training, e.g. desktop, hypotheticals, to develop or update basic skills, decision making and self-development. Sometimes you can achieve the effective joint training using hypothetical exercises that would enable operational staff to attend but still respond to calls if required. Some prefer boot-on-ground training rather than desktop and strategic exercises.
6	ACTFR SES	Standards in emergency services are continually being changed. This makes it a struggle to develop training to deliver compliance against national qualifications. If SES tried to do this with permanent staff it would cost too much. Volunteers can play important role in updating and maintaining training packages to maintain competencies. SES is looking to establish a training unit using volunteers
7	ACTFR ACTAS	We need to be responsible about early information in training, in terms of welfare and trauma. Nothing can inoculate.
Most	SES RFS CFU	Training – i.e. induction, e-learning modules, in-house and on-the-job are not conducted jointly with other services. There is room for rationalisation / improvement in this area that could lead to better cross-pollination between the services
Diversity and Equity		
Most	ACTFR	No solutions in place for a woman in ACTFR who becomes pregnant. Opposing view offered that there are opportunities in all the other services and support groups for pregnant women fire fighters and others who require operational relief. (14/10 roster would need to be looked at.) ComCen seen as ONLY alternative for pregnant women fire fighters.
8	SES	Discussion on WIES. % women in services much lower in ACTFR than others. Campaign by WIES for last recruitment drive in ACTFR seen as successful (25% new recruit college female). Some women withdrew their application. Could we follow up to determine what the blockages are?
8	ACTAS	Discussion on capacity of ESA to be more inclusive for wider diversity and steps already being taken. Do we ask why more workforce is not more diverse? Could we approach different cultural groups? Anecdote of results of recruitment drive for NEPT drivers, where applicants from different cultures, who may have been more suitable, were excluded because of the requirements of our recruitment application, e.g. language and application skills. STAR principle for recruitment may unintentionally discriminate against people from diverse cultures.
8 Email	ACTFR	Suggestions on increasing diversity in ACTFR include schools programs, targetted campaigns, diverse groups. Out-reach programs another way to employ firefighters unfit for fire-fighting duties.
8	ACTFR	There is currently no program to recruit Aboriginal people in ESA. NSW ACTFR have an Indigenous program that we could link to.
Managing Growing Demand		
4	ACTAS	ACTAS workload demand is increasing 5-10% per year – need to update service delivery model to remain sustainable; Community expects immediate response (within 7 minutes). 15% of cases don't require transport to hospital. Two intensive-care trained paramedics are scheduled for each call (often not being needed); We could look at different ways of resourcing including use of a technician as a driver with driving and advanced first aid qualifications to make more qualified paramedics available for other calls.
4	ACTAS	ACTAS specialist capabilities under-developed (e.g. CBRN) – capability being lost due to lack of training.
4	ACTAS	Need to look strategically at ACTAS service. Need to use collective wisdom to examine options.
3	RFS	We will have an escalating risk of extreme weather events due to climate change – we need to keep operational and management agility to plan how we deal with this. Mitigation planning is not currently on the agenda for the ESA. We don't concentrate on planning and preparedness.
Facilities and Equipment		

Session	Initiated by	Issues and discussion
4	ACTFR	When are we going to upgrade the HUME Training facility? Note was made of its high use, not only by ESA but also Correctional Services, PCS, NSW Emergency Services, AFP and ADF. Suggestions for consideration for future upgrades were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more rooms - more outdoor training facilities, including some covered areas for inclement weather - more storage - a training simulation of a suburban environment.
6	ACTFR RFS SES ACTAS	Location of stations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location of new Aranda station for ACTAS and ACTFR is 100% right – because of the location, which allows 360 degree response penetration – really very effective for both services. - Gungahlin location is problematic; collocation with AFP has security issues and space issues - Often not appropriate to collocate services, e.g. SES often need to work in city/urban areas, while RFS work is on the fringe areas and bushland.
6	SES	A second fully operational room is needed for the IMR (SES). For a 1:100 year flood, the Fairburn HQ site would be inaccessible.
Email 5,6	SES RFS CFU ACTFR Support	(Includes email input) Suggestions for savings by uniformity of equipment/provisions across services, with any materials nearing expiry dates to be used for training. Comment: We already have an ESA procurement committee that looks at expenditure over \$1000, leading to information sharing. For example, fire retardant used by ACTFR to be available for RFS and CFU, petrol driven blowers for creating fire breaks, Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) for RFS, safety goggles/visors/goggles, CO monitors to assist with fatigue management, LED torches to replace Dolphin torches for CFU, ladders, PPE review, trail bikes, etc. Could benefit from use of common equipment/materials across services, with materials close to expiry to be used for training. An ESA Equipment Working Group that includes all services could be formed to agree on type of equipment, training, etc.
Email	RFS	Inferior facilities for volunteer stations - e.g. no wifi, have to clean their own washrooms, etc and maintain the buildings and ground, wash their own PPE. Issue with a roof leak at Jarrabomberra Shed - ongoing for 3 years.
		ICT
8	SES	MDT system unreliable. It is frustrating that there is a message limit of 120 characters from the MDT system at Fairbairn to vehicles whereas the use of social media that is readily available could be better.
		Enterprise Agreement
4	RFS	Out of 12 staff in RFS, only 5 are permanent – no certainty or job security and this affects morale. Normal EBA for Administration Staff doesn't cover the on-call nature of their work. There is a poor understanding of the requirements of SES/RFS staff who deal with volunteers. This doesn't fit normal EBA and isn't being recognised.
		Other
1,2,6	ACTFR	Why was Bushfire Abatement Zone abolished, yet it is still used for planning approvals. Need some clarity about its role in future planning.
4	Union	Could ESA look at other funding opportunities and lobby the Minister to request more funds through COAG? Other sources of funding could be in cost recovery for assistance with other jurisdictions.
4	Union	Perception that the ESA employs a narrow definition of productivity and efficiency. Could a broader measure of productivity be applied, e.g., estimate of values of properties saved, lives saved, etc, instead of cost imperatives.
1	Union	We should aim to better sell the value of the ESA's services to gain better funding.
6	CFU	Do we have a strategic plan for escalating events? Not only on the ground, but also within the office?
Email Sug. Box	ACTFR RFS	Do we need an ESA? Why not have all services as separate units reporting directly to the Minister? ACTACTFR should be a separate statutory authority, with 1 operational Superintendent and 3 commanders, thus reducing the FTE from 20 to 12. ACTAS could join ACT Health; each of the other services could report separately to the Minister. Why not have RFS and SES report directly to ACTACTFR?
Email	ACTFR	Any structural and organisational reform should be based around solid data. ROGS data only reports on incident response time, not time spent on other duties such as checking & maintaining equipment, training, familiarisation, community education, etc. Need accurate picture before reform plans.

Session	Initiated by	Issues and discussion
Sug. Box	ACTFR	RFS need to realise that they are support to ACTFR, not first responder
Sug. Box	ACTFR	ACTACTFR has no confidence or trust in Dominic Lane. Sack him.
Sug. Box	ACTFR	Bring back Paul Swain
		Roundtable Meetings
7	Union	UFU Rep stated that he thought the Roundtable process was flawed in not allowing Executives to respond to questions during the meetings. He further requested that once the report is circulated, for ESA Management to make their views known and to comment on what has been proposed.
7	ESA	ESA Commissioner responded that that role of the Roundtables was for communication and for participants to provide the input, suggestions and ideas. In the spirit of consultation, the role of the ESA Executive was to listen. IN 2016, ESA had consulted over the four staff information papers, seeking feedback and welcomed the UIFU's agreement to continue with a Terms of reference for a Working Consultation Committee on the ComCen project.