NT Jurisdictional Issues
Review of Season 2017 and 2018 Outlook

For the;
North Australian Fire Managers Forum – Townsville, QLD
26th June 2018
Review of 2017 – Predicted Vs Occurred

Above normal fire potential

Normal fire potential
Review of 2017 – Fire Weather

• 39 Fire Weather Warnings were issued during 2017 across the NT
  – 15 FWWs issued in August
  – 2 FWWs issued for southern NT (first time since April 2013)

• 23 Fire Bans were declared during 2017
  – 8 consecutive 24 Hour Fire Ban periods declared between 23-30 August
  – 4 in the Savannas FMZ compared to 23 in the Vernon Arafura FMZ

• On set of the Top End wet season in November with the NT having its 7th wettest November on record reducing ongoing fire threat
Review of 2017 – Rainfall Anomalies

- Above average rainfall during the 2016 wet season promoted good grass growth, with resulting high fuel loads across the Top End

- Retention of above average soil moistures through to April 2017 hampered on-ground mitigation programs

- Onset of strong winds during May 2017 had an impact on the ability to undertake aerial planned burning in some areas

- November rain in 2017 eased bushfire risk
Review of 2017 – Identified Issues

- Prolonged periods of Severe and Extreme fire danger
- Public information dissemination
- Public expectation – Fire Service Vs Land Management
- BFNT integration within the NT emergency management framework including the JESCC
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Demographic threat environment has changed, peri urban development = reduced community knowledge of bushfire threat

Marrakai Wildfire 5 September 2017
Review of 2017 – What went well

- No loss of life or serious injury
- Professional development – staff performing in new roles
- 3 out 5 Regional Bushfire Management Plans developed and approved
Review of 2017 – What went well

- New Government, Minister, CEO & Executive Director
- Tested the new legislation
- Aboriginal Carbon Unit established
- 6 x deployments of Alice Springs Volunteers to Top End
• Above average in coastal areas as a result of tropical cyclone events
• Average to below average through the VRD – no rain since Feb.
• High soil moisture retention in Top End impacting on ground mitigation programs
2018 Three Month Seasonal Outlook – Fuel loads and curing

- NT between 90-95% cured overall
- Fuel loads 2-3 t/ha overall in the south
- Fuel 4-6 t/ha overall in the north
- Gamba prevalent areas between 6-12 t/ha
• Normal bushfire potential considered for all of NT with the exception of Victoria Bonaparte

• Rainfall varied in quantity, extent, and timing, resulting in areas experiencing inconsistent rainfall

• Victoria River District recording below yearly average rainfall total
2018 Seasonal Outlook – Identified Risks

• Volunteer program – recruitment and retention
• Staffing
  • New operational team members
  • New ongoing positions
  • Development and capability
• Unknown capacity for bushfire management within remote communities
• Ongoing transition of the new Bushfires Management Act
• Future rain events (central Australia)
• 50% changeover in Top End brigade management teams
BFNT Top 5 Priorities 2018

1. Public information
2. Training and capability development
3. Volunteer recruitment and retention
4. Implementation of Bushfire Emergency Management System (BEMS)
5. Fire fighting fleet management

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