

Rural Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 11 March, 2021

Location: Teams Meeting

Time: 6.00pm

Please note: Council's Code of Meeting Practice permits the electronic recording and broadcast of the proceedings of meetings of the Council which are open to the public. Your attendance at this meeting is taken as consent to the possibility that your image and/or voice may be recorded and broadcast to the public.

Agenda

1. Apologies

2. Confirmation of Minutes

- Rural Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee - 2 December 2020 1

3. Reports

- RF21.1 Rural Fire Service - Future Works 3

4. General Business

Membership

Clr Mitchell Pakes – Chairperson
Clr Mark Kitchener
Clr Patricia White (alternate)
Chief Executive Officer or nominee (Mr Paul Keech)
Mr Mark Williams
Mr Chris Palmer
Ms Jennifer Lawther (Alternate TBA)
Mr Andrew Fielding (Alternate – Mr Bob Johnston)
Mr Vic Walker (Alternate – Ms Jacqui Cox)
Mr Martin Gaffey (Alternate – Mr Ron Rollinson)
Mr Paul Gleeson (Alternate – Mr Geoff Phillips)
Mr John Ashton (Alternate – TBA)
Mr Bill Bean (Alternate – TBA)
Mr Chris Baseler or nominee

Quorum - Five (5)

Objectives:

To advise Council on issues of a strategic and policy nature relating to the operation of the Rural Fire Services having regard to the following:

- That the core communication between brigades and Fire Control Officer on operational issues be raised through the Group Officers utilising the committee structure.
- All issues be raised through Fire Control so that statutory matters can be resolved immediately.
- Policy matters raised can be referred to the Strategy and Assets Committee through the General Manager so that statutory matters can be resolved.
- That the Strategic Planning Committee be developed as the body advising Council on Rural Fire Service policy issues

MINUTES OF THE RURAL FIRE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 2 December 2020
Location: Teams Meeting
Time: 5.30pm

The following members were present:

Clr Mitchell Pakes - Chairperson
Clr Mark Kitchener
Mr Mark Williams
Mr Chris Palmer
Mr Andrew Fielding
Ms Jennifer Lawther
Mr Tom Tait
Mr John Ashton
Mr John Ferguson
Mr Vic Walker
Mr Paul Lyddiard
Mr Paul Keech - Director City Services

Other Attendees
Mr Gary George – Shoalhaven City Council
Ms Lynda Ho – Shoalhaven City Council

Apologies / Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Clr White and Messrs Steve Heggie and Geoff Phillips.

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (John Ashton / Andrew Fielding)

With the addition of Andrew Fielding as in attendance, the Minutes of the Rural Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee held on Thursday 10 September 2020 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Declarations of Interest

Nil

REPORTS

RF20.6 Proposed Dates for Meetings in 2021

HPERM Ref:
D20/476635**Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)**

That the Committee adopt the proposed meeting dates for 2021.

RESOLVED (Mark Williams / Vic Walker)

The Committee adopted the proposed meeting dates for 2021.

CARRIED

RF20.7 Rural Fire Service - Future Works

HPERM Ref:
D20/476644

Cl Pakes advised the Committee that a funding opportunity had become available, outside of the normal funding streams, to help rebuild the economy *in areas significant impacted by the fires*. There had been a tight timeframe for the grant submission and had been insufficient time to consult the Committee. Of the projects listed on the priority list, Conjola Station Extensions and Manyana Station extensions had been the subject of the grant application for \$750K and \$1.5M respectively.

Mr Keech also advised that a report had been drafted on behalf of the RFS seeking \$100K in the draft 2020/2021 budget for seed funding to assist other projects on the future capital works list to achieve "shovel ready" status.

The Tomerong Station extensions have been funded by the brigade itself and were subject to the normal DA process. It was confirmed that the Broughton Vale Station works were on the current capital works listing in the District Liaison Committee agenda papers.

Members were reminded that the purpose of the Committee was to discuss strategic issues with respect to capital works and that issues may be brought to the Committee or raised through the normal chain of command.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Rural Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee notes the update on the status of unfunded capital works projects.

RESOLVED (Chris Palmer / Vic Walker)

The Rural Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee noted the update on the status of unfunded capital works projects.

CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5.44pm.

Clr Mitchell Pakes
CHAIRPERSON

RF21.1 Rural Fire Service - Future Works

HPERM Ref: D21/28621

Department: Technical Services

Approver: Lynda Ho, LEMO Support Officer

Attachments: 1. Revised Priorities - Future Stations & Other Matters [↓](#)
2. Advice - 2020 / 2021 Allocations - NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund - Annual Priorities - Rob Rogers / NSW Rural Fire Service [↓](#)

Reason for Report

To review the status of the un-funded capital works projects.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Rural Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee notes the update on the status of unfunded capital works projects.

Options

Nil.

Background

The following projects will remain in the Shoalhaven Strategic Capital Expenditure Program:

- Tomerong Station extensions;
- Wandandian Station extensions;
- Basin View Station extensions;
- Huskisson Station extensions, and
- Beaumont Station extensions.

Refer to attachment 1.

The above list has been revised as seed funding has been provided to enable the previous top three priority stations to proceed to a “shovel ready” state. Seed funding has been provided from the following two sources;

1. Council resolved on 15 December 2021 (MIN20.929) that;

Allocate \$100,000 in the Draft 2020/2021 budget to allow for advanced design work to be completed and thus maximise the possibility of obtaining sufficient State Government funding to develop these stations – noting that design funding will be part of any funding arrangement.

It is proposed to use this funding to advance the Manyana Station which was recently submitted as part of the BLER grant application for funding.

2. Council received correspondence dated 23 December 2020 from NSW RFS Commissioner Rob Rogers (refer to attachment 2) advising the NSW Rural Fire

Fighting Fund Allocation 2020-21. Infrastructure projects included within the allocation include.

FCC	CABA Storage Facility – New	\$150,000
Brigade	Conjola Station Seed Funding - New	\$50,000
Brigade	Currarong Station – New	\$100,000
Subtotal Infrastructure Projects		\$300,000

Community Engagement

Concept plans for each station extension / refurbishment works are discussed with the relevant brigade.

Rural Fire Service Future Works

	Project	Scope of Works	Estimated Cost	Proposed Year
1	Tomerong	Proposing to increase number of tanker bays to accommodate significant growth of brigade membership and incident responses.	Seed funding estimate (shovel ready): \$100,000.00. Total project estimate (not including seed costs): \$500,000.00 – rough estimate.	Pending budget allocation
2	Wandandian	Centrally located within the District, with direct highway access and within close proximity to approved RFS training grounds in the Yerrilyong State Forest, Wandandian Station provides a perfect location for major incident staging and district training activities. The proposed project would include large multifunction room, additional storage and tanker bay, and formalised parking area.	Seed funding estimate (shovel ready): \$100,000.00. Total project estimate (not including seed costs): \$750,000.00 – rough estimate.	Pending budget allocation
3	Basin View	To extend, renovate and merge the existing station buildings to provide for housing of a partitioned kitchen, office, multifunction area and increased storage.	Approx Design/Survey/Invest/Proj M't Cost = \$50k Approx Const Cost = \$500k (ex major site works)	Pending budget allocation
4	Huskisson	To extend and renovate the existing station building to provide for an increased multifunction area, locker room and increased storage.	Approx Design/Survey/Invest/Proj M't Cost = \$50k Approx Const Cost = \$500k (ex major site works)	Pending budget allocation
5	Beaumont	To extend and renovate the existing station to provide for housing of a larger fire appliance (2013 Category 1 dual-cab build specification); a partitioned kitchen, office, multifunction area and increased storage.	Approx Design/Investigation/Proj M't Cost = \$70k construction \$700k (ex major site works) seed funding required	Pending budget allocation



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr Stephen Dunshea
General Manager
Shoalhaven City Council
PO Box 42
NOWRA NSW 2541

Shoalhaven City Council

received

- 7 JAN 2021

File No. 2371e

23 December 2020

Referred to: N. De Marchi

E/C
M(K.Rourke)
(additional copy rec'd
for Mayor - not reg.)

Dear Mr Dunshea

2020-21 ALLOCATIONS – NSW RURAL FIRE FIGHTING FUND

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Honourable David Elliott MP, has approved allocations for the 2020-21 Rural Fire Fighting Fund, which supports volunteer brigades who protect your local community.

Following amendments to the *Rural Fires Act 1997* during 2017, the statutory contribution by relevant Councils is now determined by reference to the 'rural fire brigade funding target' defined in section 103 of the Act. For 2020-21 the funding target is \$563.189 million, an increase of \$168.652 million or 42.7% from the prior year.

The increase is principally explained by the impact of the introduction of the *Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Firefighters) Act 2018* (known as the 'presumptive legislation') which provides a presumption that where an employed or volunteer firefighter contracts one of twelve prescribed cancers, that cancer is a work related injury where the firefighter has met the minimum qualifying service period detailed in the Act for that type of cancer.

The 2019/20 bush fire season was the most challenging and devastating we have ever faced in NSW. The season was truly unprecedented in terms of the weather conditions, fire activity, the impact on communities and, of course, the loss of life and property.

Across the season, bush and grass fires burnt more than 5.5 million hectares and destroyed nearly 2,500 homes. Most tragically, there were 26 deaths this season, including three NSW RFS volunteers and three US aerial firefighters. Our thoughts will forever be with the families and loved ones of all those who lost their lives.

The NSW Government commissioned an independent NSW Bushfire Inquiry in January 2020, which examined the causes, preparation and response to the devastating 2019-20 bushfires.

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NSW Rural Fire Service
Locked Bag 17
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

Street address

NSW Rural Fire Service
4 Murray Rose Ave
SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK NSW 2127

T (02) 8741 5555

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www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

RF21.1 - Attachment 2

The Inquiry handed down its recommendations in August 2020 and the Government has accepted all 76 recommendations.

The Government has announced a number of funding packages to improve our preparedness and response to bush fires and support our volunteers, these include:

- \$34.4 million for an additional 120 new appliances and 70 refurbished appliances;
- \$10.3 million to modify safety components on NSW RFS appliances;
- \$21.4 million to employ and additional 100 mitigation work crew;
- \$36 million for a new first responder mental health strategy for emergency services;
- \$15 million for additional personal protective clothing for frontline firefighters;
- \$9.5 million to fund initial priority works for the fire trail network;
- \$2.5 million improvements to NSW RFS's Fires Near Me app.

These programs will also create hundreds of manufacturing and other jobs for regional economies, which have been hit hard by drought, fire and now a global pandemic.

In July I announced nine key priorities for the next 12 months. These important projects will ensure our members have the best equipment and technology for their role, and ensure that our people can effectively respond to incidents and get home safely.

➤ PPE - Head Protection and PPE - Respiratory Protection

Safety of our members is paramount and we understand that, when it comes to firefighting, personal protective equipment is not only imperative – it's personal. We have heard from our volunteers that it is time to reconsider head and respiratory PPE provided by the NSW RFS for use during firefighting, and we agree. We will determine and make available the most suitable face masks, goggles, and flash hoods to volunteers.

➤ Member Availability and Response System

Our shared purpose is to protect the community and our environment by minimising the impact of fire and other emergencies. To achieve this, operational response through effective support systems is vital. With over 70,000 members and 2,000 brigades, we know that a common system for members to signal their availability to attend an incident, be called upon to attend an incident, and accept the call to attend would be of great benefit. We will ensure that members have access to a standard availability and response system (where mobile phone coverage exists) that assists with seamless response to emergencies.

➤ Mobile Data Terminals for Firefighting Vehicles

Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) in firefighting vehicles will be implemented to support members in operational response. Members will be able to use a mounted MDT device to display the job they are attending, and they will have access to road and routing information. Information from the member availability and response system will show members allocated to attend, and job information in the system will automatically populate for completion of brigade incident reporting (BIRs).

➤ Integrated Dispatch System

We operate in a multi-agency emergency response environment in NSW, involving coordinated dispatch. There exists multiple dispatch systems across fire and emergency services agencies, and within the NSW RFS we store information across multiple systems to effect dispatch to emergencies. There is a real and pressing opportunity to integrate these systems for more simplified, transparent dispatch and reporting. We will implement a dispatch system that integrates with other fire agency systems and pushes data across to our internal support systems (ICON, MDTs, BIRs).

➤ Design of Fire Appliances

Given the unprecedented circumstances of last fire season, in particular the tragic loss of our members and the number of vehicles badly damaged, we need to ensure the design of our fire appliances is fit-for-purpose for the future. In particular, we need to consider cabin ability to withstand tree strikes, high pressure low volume pumps, tanker protection systems, and the viability and feasibility of lighter material.

➤ One NSW RFS Member Website

Now more than ever, it is apparent that timely access to information and new ways of staying connected are needed. We recognise that our members want access to relevant and up-to-date information to support them to deliver the best service to the community. We will deliver a NSW RFS Member Website that does just that – supports our members.

➤ Electronic Membership Application System

At the heart of our Service is our members – and the first experience many of our volunteers have with us is when they look to join a brigade. We know we need a better solution to support new members to become volunteers with us and existing members to change their membership status (i.e. transfer, dual) - and which helps brigades, districts and the Service manage volunteer applications in a timely and effective manner.

➤ Farm Fire Unit Integration

Farmers are a critical part of the firefighting effort, and an important partner in managing and responding to the threat of fire across our landscape. We will work together to ensure farming communities are well prepared, and will strengthen response communication with farm fire units to prioritise and protect important agricultural assets.

The Office of State Revenue has previously provided each Council with an Annual Assessment Notice that identified the amount of statutory contribution in respect of 2020-21.

As previously advised, the NSW Rural Fire Service moved to a percentage based allocation of the Rural Fire Fighting Fund in 2016-17. This has been used to determine the allocation by Council.

Shown at Appendix A is a schedule of key allocations including fire fighting appliances, infrastructure, equipment and grants that will be provided directly to your Council in the 2020-21 year. Attached at Appendix B, for relevant councils, is a schedule of approved Hazard Reduction works funding. Your attention to completing and claiming reimbursement for the outlined infrastructure and hazard reduction works listed in Appendix A & B during the 2020-21 year is requested.

RFS will seek to make payments to Council for the Maintenance and Repairs grant towards the end of 2020, provided Council has made all Rural Fire Fighting Fund contributions due to the Office of State Revenue at that time.

Council will continue to receive ongoing additional support to Rural Fire Districts including:

- **Training and Volunteer Support**
Costs associated with volunteer relations including the cadets program, work health and safety programs for volunteers, critical incident support, Chaplaincy, learning and development, volunteer training and competency.
- **Fire Mitigation Works**
Bush fire mitigation works including the Mitigation crews that operate across Local Government areas completing mitigation works, fire trail and hazard management works.
- **Insurances**
Volunteer workers compensation insurance and other insurances (excluding red fleet insurance).
- **Radio Communications**
Costs associated with communication assets, the private mobile radio network, the paging network and the Government Radio Network.
- **Emergency Fund**
Costs associated with responding to bush fire emergencies including out of area assistance.
- **Aviation and Other Operational Support**
Provision of the State Air Desk and aviation resources for emergency events, training and support of volunteers in aircraft operations and other operational support services such as Neighbourhood Safer Places, RART team and vulnerable communities support.
- **Engineering and Other Infrastructure**
Design and development of mobile infrastructure including tankers, other vehicles and fire fighting equipment. Insurance of the red fleet of fire fighting appliances. Development of designs and standards for the construction of brigade stations and fire control centres.
- **Communications and Public Awareness**
Management of media and corporate communications including the community advertising campaign, social media monitoring and provision of emergency messaging in emergency events.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Mr Myles Foley, Director, Finance and Procurement on (02) 8741 5523 or at myles.foley@rfs.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Rob Rogers AFSM
Commissioner

cc: Mayor
NSW RFS Area Director
NSW RFS Area Commander
NSW RFS District Manager

Appendix A

NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund Allocation - 2020-21

Council: SHOALHAVEN

Infrastructure Projects

FCC	- CABA Storage Facility CABA Storage Facility - New	\$150,000.00
Brigade	- Conjola Station Seed Funding - New	\$50,000.00
Brigade	- Currarong Station - Continuing	\$100,000.00
Subtotal: Infrastructure Projects		\$300,000.00

Appliances

Shoalhaven Heads	Appliance - Cat 6	\$437,000.00
St Georges Basin	Refurbished Appliance - Cat 1 Vil	\$100,000.00
Tabourie	Refurbished Appliance - Cat 1 Vil	\$100,000.00
Disposed Appliance	Shoalhaven FCC - BF04738	\$0.00
Subtotal: Appliances		\$637,000.00

Equipment

Fire Fighting Equipment		\$125,000.00
Personal Protective Equipment		\$123,290.00
Subtotal: Equipment		\$248,290.00

Hazard Reduction

Hazard Reduction Grant		\$0.00
Subtotal: Hazard Reduction		\$0.00

Maintenance and Repairs Grant

Appliances and Other Vehicles (not White Fleet)

Vehicle Service	\$110,000.00
Vehicle Repair	\$85,000.00
Fuel and Oil	\$85,000.00
Registration	\$7,500.00
Insurance Vehicles (Not Red Fleet)	\$2,500.00
Vehicles Other	\$0.00
Subtotal: Appliances & Other Vehicles	\$290,000.00

Stations and FCC

Maintenance & Repair Stn	\$125,000.00
Maintenance & Repair FCC	\$8,000.00
Pest Control Stn	\$0.00
Pest Control FCC	\$0.00
Cleaning Stn	\$0.00
Cleaning FCC	\$35,000.00
Security Stn	\$0.00
Security FCC	\$0.00
Insurance Stn	\$0.00
Insurance FCC	\$0.00
Subtotal: Stations and FCC	\$168,000.00

Utilities

Electricity Stns	\$27,500.00
Electricity FCC	\$7,500.00
Gas Charges Stn	\$0.00
Gas Charges FCC	\$0.00
Telephone Fixed Line Stn	\$5,000.00
Telephone Fixed Line FCC	\$0.00
Telephone Mobile (non RFS)	\$20,000.00
Telephone Data (non RFS)	\$0.00
Subtotal: Utilities	\$60,000.00

Radio

Insurance Radio	\$0.00
Base Stn Site fees	\$0.00
Maintenance & Repair Radio .+	\$5,000.00

Subtotal: Radio **\$5,000.00**

Miscellaneous

Postage	\$0.00
Printing	\$15,000.00
Fee for Service (contracts)	\$0.00
Other	\$61,500.00
Training - Brigades	\$15,000.00

Subtotal: Miscellaneous **\$91,500.00**

Total: Maintenance and Repairs **\$614,500.00**

Approved RFFF Hazard Reduction - 2020-21

Appendix B

Council: SHOALHAVEN

ID	BRIMS HR#	LGA	Title	Selected Methods	Total Ground Cost
Totals					\$0.00