

## Community Recovery Bushfire Reference Group

<b>Date</b>	2 February 2021	<b>Time</b>	5pm
<b>Venue</b>	Zoom	<b>Chair</b>	Paul De Szell
		<b>Note-taker</b>	Gemma Cluff
<b>Attendance</b>	Mayor David West, Paul De Szell, Chris Jones, Peter Hatton, Janine Friedrich, Jennifer Tisdell, Gemma Cluff, Alastair Breingan, Mark Johnson, Eleanor Harris, Lindsay Segal, Kim McDonald, Greg Hale, Sharon Chamberlain, Mike Parsons & Trypheyne McShane		
<b>Apologies</b>	Deputy Mayor Claire Pontin & Daintry Gerrard.		

### Meeting items

Item	
1	<p><b>Acknowledgment of Country</b></p> <p>We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, the Gathang-speaking people and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside in the MidCoast Council area. We extend our respect to elders past and present, and to all future cultural-knowledge holders.</p>
2	<p><b>Outstanding Actions</b></p> <p><b>SWS signs and distribution to MidCoast Council</b></p> <p><i>Janine</i> – Very little to report in this matter. It was discussed that council could get 100 signs to persons to display on gates, have not formulated how to distribute, was thinking we could distribute to RFS</p> <p><i>Greg</i> – RFS could engage will engage with community, the public can source sign as well, it's about who's responsibility would it be. Killabakh have distributed signs and started mapping where the signs are displayed and where the static water supply is. It took two weekends visiting residents and mapping. 98% of community participated. As the local crews would more than likely know where the static water supply is it is more for visiting crews.</p> <p><i>Paul</i> – How do we get into other areas what you have done (to Greg)?</p> <p><i>Greg</i> – Most brigades have the same view, its up to proactiveness of community. Not knowing where the water is slows down ability to fight fire. Raising through group officers and getting information out there, through fire com, group captain and so forth. Every truck has a GPS where you can pin things onto a map, and you can pin your water supplies. It's up to RFS to engage with communities and discuss</p>

	<p>what it is the SWS program? What is involved in the SWS program? Killabakh had a meeting, which was advertised through letter box drop and those that didn't attend could still contribute.</p> <p><i>Paul</i> - What is our next step? Task community members with contacting their local RFS and starting the conversation about SWS.</p> <p><i>AI</i> – Upper Lansdowne was slightly different to Killabakh, producing mud map, knocked up website which uses google maps, which allows land holders to self-pin, getting a broader reach, getting more people involved.</p> <p><i>Peter</i> - A multi-pronged approach needs to be taken, which can be raised through fire com, what regional areas are doing.</p> <p>Sharon – Thinks it should stay with firecom to, liaise with them, not council.</p> <p><i>Paul</i> – Our LGA needs a consistent approach against all fire grounds. LEMO needs to know what's going on and what we have in place. Doesn't matter what approach it is, it's about supporting each other and moving forward.</p> <p><i>Paul</i> – who is your local fire captain? And can they support our community in static water supply.</p> <p><i>Peter</i> – with a GIS and emergency background, it would be helpful for all trucks to have the information and have it captured the same way and any other info you want captures.</p> <p><i>Greg</i> – Killabakh captured issues such as: does a CAT7 fit through a gate etc. It was a complicated issue. From Killabakh's point of view they personally wanted to know where the property was, where the driveways are, where the water is, which meant driving around on property and mapping. An excel spreadsheet with markers and useful information was created out of this.</p>
3	<p><b>Community Recovery Update - Janine</b></p> <p><b>Introduce Jennifer Tisdell – New Recovery Officer with MCC</b></p> <p><i>Janine</i> - Jenny Tisdell started with us on 14 December 2020 as a part time recovery officer. Jenny was previously employed by MCC as a Community Strengthening Officer and has a mountain of knowledge and has started with us to help finalise our Local Recovery Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Rural Rate Relief for bushfire impacted properties</b></p> <p><i>Janine</i> - Service NSW have opened a new round of rate relief for bushfire impacted rural properties with a burn scar of greater than 75% and loss of infrastructure. If the property met the criteria, they would have their 2020/2021 Q1 and Q2 rates paid for by service NSW. The deadline was originally 18/12/2020 but with up to 2000 properties in our LGA we applied for an extension to give people more time to apply.</p> <p>Service NSW gave confirmation that we were approved for an extension till 18/02/2021. MCC have organised a mailout to all properties that fit the criteria in the hope to capture more rate payers than the first round.</p>

## Eleanor Harris from Red Cross to talk about Community Resilience Teams

**Eleanor - Thanks for having me.** Recovery worker with Red Cross. This year Cross are looking at a concept called Community Resilience Teams (CRT's). CRT's have been designed from SES, RFS and Red Cross. The community sets up a network, communicating back to community and back up the line to SES, RFS. Is about identifying how we can be better prepared for next time, how we can communicate better, how can we use community halls or similar during and after events to benefit the communities.

What is the information you want to know about? What do you want to work on? Red Cross will act as link, provide information and led by community. CRT's grew out of disaster recovery work in the tweed area in Northern Rivers after widespread flooding.

*Janine* – has invited Eleanor to attend various meetings with communities that are already investigating such strategies.

*Peter* – Is it in relation to halls are they unauthorised evacuation centre or is it adhoc – pointing people back to evacuation centres.

*Eleanor* – leave early, if under threat, this is about halls as **recovery hubs**, donations, provided food, a way to do this so it is more structured. Point back to plans in place and how to be more prepared next time. Needs a strong connection into council.

*AI* – one of the problems we had was a lack of info between RFS and community or any recovery institute and community.

*Eleanor* – CRT's would start having those conversations and giving information back

*Trypheyne* – brilliant idea where community halls exist – but what about communities that don't have one?

*Mike* – Harrington's so outdated, no one knows who the current person in charge is as hierarchy has changed. Harrington was very lucky. Have an evacuation plan and act on it. One road in and one road out. Plan for the worst. It's about saving lives and not just from the fires, from stress and heart attack.

*Sharon* – Councils have too much red tape, it needs to be community putting the plans in place and making them happen.

*Chris* – Every single community is different. Some communities are not even close to a preparedness stage, just recovering now, resilience is only being spoken about now. The challenge is to get this action now. There is a recognition, movement is happening, Jenny Tisdell is now looking at local recovery plans, documents being massaged into place now, comms is listed, we need solutions.

*Mayor West* – There is a large distrust in police, it wasn't that police did a bad job, it was that they were bought in from other area's during the emergency and no instruction was given, they didn't know what to do, someone needs to be accountable in a life and death situation. Media should be portraying Police in a positive as well as the RFS/SES.

*Trypheyne* – going back to Eleanor – it's about emergency stuff – finding ways of having better communication – neighbours make a profound difference. There was a central point of call for an emergency.

*Sharon* – people didn't know where to get supplies.

*Paul* – look at the spreadsheet, they are all wicked categories – communication big one, there are no simple fixes, needs a broad approach.

*Trypheyne* – all knew 'fires near me' app was so behind, Possum brush community used the 'scanner' app,

*Paul* – 100% certain that there will be a push to close 'scanner' app as it created panic

*Mike* – always have utopia, have something more uniformed and structured, simple plan, with simple meeting point, and simple instructions, need a tsunami alarm

*Paul* – people have become too reliant on technology

*Mayor West* – to many people call in with minimal emergency, why don't SES come to meeting, someone at a statutory level, addressing at a local level and explain their guidelines in an emergency. Can Peter Hatton LEMO explain what would happen in an emergency?

*Peter* – In an emergency like flooding, the community gets a large amount of rain, monitoring begins, LEOCON will make call to activate EOC, which will activate SES, marine rescue, police - go to one centre and LEOCON will advise who is the responsible agent for this emergency.

*AI* – during real emergencies the plans weren't worth the paper they were written on, told repeatedly, this will not change, don't stress about it. Personally, doesn't think we can make a lot of change in this process.

*Sharon* – why are we waiting, we are not getting to our communities on our ground. How can we be better on the ground with our groups? Police were iron fisted, what can we do to have a more resilient community?

*Paul* – To Eleanor – there is a lot of debate with agencies in our space about what phase we are in, we are still in recovery stage, we are panic prepared.

*Eleanor* – A lot of communities are still in recovery stage; however, communities with close contact fires are ready to move forward. Give them small tasks to accomplish. Having links back up the line. Not getting caught up in all the systems we can't change, working at community level, where they are at.

*Paul* – Harrington, Old bar/ Wallabi have moved forward but communities that lost people and homes aren't ready

*Chris* – moving back to what did/what didn't work points- should we pursue issues and what can we help, what can we do in the space and agree on.

## Discussion of issues raised by reference group members

### Refer to recent

#### Issues – What did work

#### Issues – What didn't work

*Paul* - Bridge replacements, will only be done as identified in the bridge replacement program. Not sure where it's at, multiple bridges involved, some are wooden

Minor flooding – no emergency management centre kicked off – wasn't deemed a large enough emergency to kick off.

*Sharon* - Flying fox – locational – is it deemed that people would install their own flying fox or one for town.

*Chris* – specific situations to areas, in suggestion for future action, local solutions specific – each community has an effective way of getting supplies in. What will 'you' do if you can't get supplies in?

*Paul* - Old Bar back road – there is a road but its not safe to send public on, issue with one road in and out.

Trypheyne – Joes Cutting at Possum Brush could be used as an alternative.

*Paul* – We need to debunk the panic with one road in and one road out, every coastal location has the same issue. In our lifetime, we will never see a new road to each place. With one road in/one road out, you get out early, if you stay, know your plans and how to activate them.

*Greg* – people need a bushfire plan – evacuate when asked to evacuate or stay and defend (possibility by yourself as trucks might not be available). Both decisions are critical. Know your area. Comes back to combat agencies, not prepared for entire valley being on fire at one time. People need to be responsible for themselves in an emergency and not be caught on the hop.

*Janine* – People need to know their plan, when to evacuate, communication and awareness.

*Sharon* – Due to COVID knowledge is not there, education not there, large numbers of new people in the area.

*Paul* - This comes down to communities, if you meet someone new, be more communitive, tell them what to expect. A lot was learnt over night, people were/are in denial.

Paul, Chris, Janine, Jenny and Gemma will go and see what Council can put into place off this spreadsheet and distribute before next meeting.

*AI* – where do we make suggestion

*Janine* – [recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:recovery@midcoast.nsw.gov.au)

6	<b>Continuation of meeting - frequency, location, time</b>  Tuesday 5pm – suits reference group
7	<b>General Business</b>  <i>Lindsay</i> – Trying to get grants and money to make hall more resilient  <i>Paul</i> – to follow up on halls upgrades  <i>Jenny</i> – to Lindsay, Recovery team are hosting grants writing workshops over the next month  Sharon - MidCoast Outreach – wants to address homelessness in our LGA due to 12-month rent relief expiring, too hot in Minderoo pods and rental properties selling. Finding personally in her organisation are homelessness – asking community members to check with persons displaced and see how they are. Take 5 for your mate.  <i>Janine</i> – Could also point them to Disaster Welfare Service, Samaritans and Compass

### Next meeting

Date	02/03/2021	Time	5pm
Venue	Yalawanyi Ganya and Zoom		

### Record of actions

Date of meeting	Action	Responsible officer	Status
23 June 2020			
	Group members provide summary of themselves	All	Completed
25 August 2020			
	Group members to provide a list of actions/issues	All	Completed
15 September 2020			
	Details of Reference Group members be included in the next Bushfire newsletter	Janine	Progressing
3 November 2020			
	“Are you Bushfire ready?” document still to be received by Harrington, Brimbin and Caparra residents	Paul/Janine	Completed
	RFS supplied Static water supply signs – can they be made available to the Council to distribute to MidCoast residents?	Janine	Progressing

	Sharing of upcoming bushfire recovery events spreadsheet.	Janine	Completed Nov 2020
1 December 2020			
	Reference group members to check with their communities to see if they have received there 'Be ready' brochures	All	Completed
	Reference group members to check with their residents if they would like an SWS sign, where can communities store them for collection/distribution	All	Progressing
	Reference group members to submit which issues they wish to discuss about what did/didn't work to be discussed at next meeting, focusing on a solution to turn around what didn't work	All	Completed
	Janine to add Possum Brush details of what did/ didn't work onto spread sheet and re-send out	Janine	Completed
	Information about Bobin's Community grant being sent out to reference group members about the grant	Janine	Completed
2 February 2021			
	Reference Group members to speak to their local RFs about process to get and track SWS signs	Reference Group	Progressing
	Email spreadsheet of events/grants writing and rates relief to reference group	Gemma	Completed
	Invite SES to meetings – someone at a statutory Level/ local level to discuss guidelines	Recovery team	Completed
	Bridge upgrades update	Paul	
	Update spreadsheet as Caparra can take fully laden truck over bridge	Janine	Completed
	Set up meeting to discuss what council can put in place and email to reference group before next meeting	Recovery team	Completed
	Halls upgrades update	Paul	