

MCC Bushfire Recovery Reference Group

Date	2 March 2021	Time	5pm – 7pm
Venue	MCC administration and customer service centre or zoom	Note-taker	Gemma Cluff
Present	Mayor David West, Deputy Mayor Claire Pontin, Paul De Szell, Janine Friedrich, Jenny Tisdell, Chris Jones, Mike Parsons, Mark Johnson, Glen Laylock, Alastair Breingan, Bettina Bettington, Lindsay Segal & Sharon Chamberlain		
Apologies	Kim Macdonald, Trypheyne McShane & Linda MacKenzie		

Meeting items

Item	Key points/actions
1	Acknowledgement of County
2	<p>Outstanding Actions</p> <p>Paul - Halls Upgrade update</p> <p>PAUL - Halls Upgrades are being funded from Federal Money, 50 halls in our LGA and 30 of those are in semirural area. MCC are in the process of bundling contracts to do bulk tenders to complete upgrades to get the best value for money.</p> <p>There has been a slight hiccup with Ian Cook from RFS also looking at making some halls Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP), MCC and RFS are now working together to review joint process.</p> <p>AL – Steve Farrell from RFS attended Upper Lansdowne Hall about 3 weeks ago to see if it could be a NSP. Not many rural halls fit the criteria but the hall is working with RFS in this process.</p> <p>CLAIRE – Are these issues in conjunction with one another or separate?</p> <p>PAUL – Separate.</p> <p>LINDSAY – Concerned about Neighbourhood Safer Places, does it affect insurance? Does it make the hall more vulnerable?</p> <p>PAUL – no, shouldn't have too.</p> <p>SWS signs and mapping – email sent to reference group members to speak to local RFS and community members about the want/need for SWS signs (seek update on <i>Bobin grant program</i>)</p>

PAUL – would have liked Kim from Bobin to have been here to explain the grant program that Bobin and 11 other communities applied for. Is anyone from this group involved?

AL – The grant was set up by Bobin and 11 other communities on this side of Taree. The grant has 3 ideas that come together.

1. Flip over sign on front fence/gate which states whether residents have evacuated or home
2. Tube near front gate which would have a map of property where residents mark static water supply, gas cylinders, sheds and house.
3. A website which is almost finished where residents can pinpoint on map where markers on property are. This information is only available to RFS who can download to suitable navigational software.

MARK – From Rainbow Flats point of view they have been busy rebuilding the station. Has noticed SWS signs emerge in Rainbow Flat. He has had a discussion with the Rainbow Flat Captain whether this should be council or RFS brigades pushing. Now the station is open they can resume collecting data.

PAUL – one size doesn't fit all, SWS signs are not for every community.

MIKE – Harrington/Cooperook communities happy to participate but in an emergency the RFS might not have time in an emergency.

JANINE – will further offline accessing SWS signs with the 2 communities that want the signs to distribute.

PAUL - Not every hall is the same. The program council has, is to upgrade all hall and to cherry pick what could become a Neighbourhood Safer Place. This doesn't necessarily mean it will become a Neighbourhood Safer Place.

MAYOR WEST – Would the SES be informed of these halls prior or during to an emergency

PAUL – Yes. The aim of the Neighbourhood Safer Place is you go in an emergency and then leave, it's a place of last resort. RFS would like residents to leave days before you got this point.

3 **Community Resilience Teams – Red Cross Initiative**

Janine provided an update from first session at Old Bar.

JANINE - The Old Bar community asked to have a resilience team created after community consultation. They want to know how to be more prepared. The Old Bar community asked to have a team to address issues, which has had a lot of support. Communities don't necessarily need to have prior meetings to start organising community resilience teams.

SHARON – willing to help and work with and Red Cross to help form the Community Resilience Teams. Feedback from clients has been great about Council. MidCoast Outreach is happy and open to share information. Who would be the community leader as not everyone is strong like this group, some people have the flight or fight response?

CHRIS – how many in Old Bar team?

	<p>JANINE – about 10. Their first activity is on May 14th Health and Wellbeing Expo at Old Bar. Any community can form a network this outside of this space, they just need to ask.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>SES – discussion of guidelines for disaster response</p> <p>GLENN LAYLOCK – Works with Taree SES and is the Local Commander for the MidCoast Cluster. The MidCoast cluster is the same as Council's LGA. SES has 211 members/volunteers.</p> <p>How does the SES work in disaster response? The SES core roles are during storm, flood and tsunami. During a fire they would provide logistical support, support role and personnel and take directive from the combat agency (RFS). The SES work with other agencies during disasters such as Ambulance, DPI and National Parks.</p> <p>Just yesterday they provided support for the search of a missing 16-year-old male, both land and water searches. Thankfully the boy was found safe and well, the rest of the day was used for training.</p> <p>MIKE – Does this information fit under local DISPLAN? The information and contacts in DISPLAN are out of date.</p> <p>PAUL – The DISPLAN has been replaced with EMPLAN which is currently being updated from its 2017 release. Parts of the EMPLAN are designed for general public and parts are not. The information would be filtered down through the LEOCON where necessary.</p> <p>Evacuation Centres are not publicised as it may not always be safe to attend an evacuation centre.</p> <p>GLENN SES– during the disaster SES were completing door knocks and collecting information. Was the residence staying or going? If going, go early. During the Fires, Blackhead were told to evacuate to the beach but not everyone gets the message, not sure how its promoted.</p> <p>MIKE – Harrington where given an evacuation order to but when residents arrived at the Harrington Bowling Club it was closed.</p> <p>JANINIE – Harrington was a not safe place during the fires.</p> <p>MAYOR WEST- the fire was so vast; we just couldn't keep up.</p> <p>PAUL – when in Bobin, they talked about range of things. You could have all these plans in place but there are situations that those aren't going to work. That's when the best laid plans fall apart and that's what happened in the 2019 bushfires. The RFS copped a hammering at Bobin Community Meeting, everyone learnt lessons, the community want to make changes and responses and implement different practices.</p> <p>MIKE – you need to prepare for perfect storm, be prepared for anything.</p> <p>GLENN SES – a lot of recommendations made after the bushfires and all suggestions accepted. These will take a while to implement.</p> <p>MAYOR WEST – 2019 was the perfect storm.</p>

	<p>PAUL – Combat agency is getting people out and safe. The question is where do you get people too? Human behaviour is they don't leave.</p> <p>SHARON – Tinonee/ Botowa/Hillville are has no Neighbourhood Safer Place, Tinonee oval was the safest place she attended during fires.</p> <p>PAUL – RFS are working on Neighbourhood Safer Places now, some areas are easier than others, however a formal process needs to be followed.</p> <p>LINDSAY – when she evacuated, her go to place was the RFS shed, not hall.</p> <p>PAUL – Neighbourhood Safer Places come under RFS; they make the decision about a Neighbourhood Safer Place. RFS would prefer people to evacuate days before and use Neighbourhood Safer Places as a last resort.</p> <p>AL – In a rural place where people have livestock, they won't go days before, many will stay till it's to late. Each rural area needs somewhere they can go and collect information during a disaster.</p> <p>MAYOR WEST – thanked SES for coming and their work during and after the bushfires.</p>
5	<p>What Did / Didn't work – with a focus on what we can change</p> <p>PAUL – we've created a bigger table with comments from community, with what Council can do and can't do, linking roles to agencies and members. We need to sit down with varies agencies and what roles they can have. Council can't be all things to all people, we are limited as to what we can do.</p> <p>Are there questions about Council actions?</p> <p>MAYOR - Do we leave responses to next meeting?</p> <p>JANINE – Send comments to Community Recovery Team for spreadsheet</p> <p>CHRIS – we have used your words in formulating and summarising; we are open to further changes</p>
6	<p>Spreadsheet to set priorities for next six months</p> <p>JANINE – suggests spreadsheet is what we work on?</p> <p>MAYOR – incorporate item 5 and 6 together.</p> <p>MIKE – When is the reference group likely to be resolving?</p> <p>PAUL – September. With elections and new Council, it will fall on them and if they wish to continue the reference group. Paul would like to continue the group as long as necessary.</p>
7	<p>General Business</p> <p>BLAZE AID</p> <p>PAUL – Macksville Blaze Aid would like to set up camp in Wingham. It has been asked of Wingham showground to have the camp therr and it was a definite no. Council are looking at suitable locations near Wingham that would suit the criteria.</p>

Power, water, toilets, showers, secure area for tools and materials, kitchen, social place for meetings etc.

We have looked at sporting grounds but with most winter sports about to commence they are out. Killabakh Hall was suggested, but the only the space available was between the tennis courts and Fire shed.

Bob Abdu has made it quite clear that Macksville Blaze Aid will only be completing work on rural communities.

Blaze Aid are hosting a community meeting at Wingham Golf Club on Monday 8th March from 6pm-8pm to discuss the possibility of coming to our LGA.

BACKTRACK

JANINE – We are working on getting Back Track into the area, possible start in May. They are like BlazeAid however they need a much smaller camp and less support.

MCC COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

JANINE - MidCoast Council are setting up a Community Directory Disaster Tile where businesses can list their information and details of what they do on our website for future disasters.

SHARON – great idea but not everyone has the internet

Janine – Service providers can print out information from this page and feed out to the people they are supporting

CHRIS – this idea is part of puzzle, an effective tool for people to access

Local contact information and meeting points for evacuation and neighbourhood safer places:

Neighbourhood Safer Places:

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places>

For local context see attached listed.

NSP Guidelines also attached

Evacuation centres – see EMPLAN attached

MidCoast Outreach wishes to discuss 2 new projects for Bushfire impacted persons

Salvation Army – can apply for grant – refer to flyer

Labour on property

JANINE- would everyone like to attend in person for the next meeting on Tuesday 30.03.2021 and a light meal will be provided while we have our meeting.

MAYOR WEST – great to see so much enthusiasm in a large group and thank you for coming.

Next meeting

Date	30 March 2021	Time	5pm – 7pm
Venue	Administration and Customer Service Centre on Biripi Way	Note-taker	Gemma Cluff

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	Completed
	Sharing of upcoming bushfire recovery events spreadsheet.	Janine	Completed
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	Completed
	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	Completed
	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
	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	Completed
2 March 2021			
	To contact community groups wanting SWS signs and organise offline		Janine
	Spreadsheet – what can Council address and action with responsible parties in Council		Community Recovery Team
	To send Issues/comments about spreadsheet to Community Recovery Team to discuss at next meeting		Reference Group
	Compile issues 5 and 6 for next 6 months agenda		Community Recovery Team
	Organise food for next meeting		Community Recovery Team