



MEMORANDUM

To North Arm Cove Community

From: Ian Cook, Community Protection Planning Officer, Customer Service Centre (North)

Subject: **North Arm Cove Community Protection Plan**

Date: November 2014 **File No.** NAC 2014

Dear Community

On Thursday 20th November I met with representatives from Great Lakes Council along with the Manager, NSW Rural Fire Service Customer Service Centre (North) at North Arm Cove Community Hall. I imagine that the majority of the community knew we were there as we managed to activate the alarm, many thanks to Doug for his quick response.

The representatives were presented with a range of proposals and options designed to mitigate the risk of bush fire impact and increase the North Arm Coves community's protection and resilience. All of the proposals were developed with consideration given to a number of factors and in line with Bush Fire Risk Management Planning guidelines.

The options included increased Asset Protection Zones (APZ's) for community assets (The Community Hall & Telstra Communication facility), increased Strategic Fire Advantage Zones (SFAZ), to compliment the APZ's with fuel reduced areas, a number of strategically placed Fire Trails to assist the local brigade in ongoing mitigation of hazard reduction and fire suppression and last but not least, identification of areas within the community that require fuel levels to be reduced through Hazard Reduction activities.

Council representatives were extremely supportive of the proposals and expressed support to further investigate and progress a number of the options.

What does this mean you may well ask: What is an APZ and how would an SFAZ compliment an APZ?, and what is the actual purpose of a Fire Trail?

An APZ (Asset Protection Zone) is a fuel reduced area surrounding a built asset or structure. This can include any residential building or major building such as the community hall, machinery sheds, industrial, commercial or heritage buildings. Simply an APZ provides a buffer zone between a bush fire hazard and an asset. It provides an area of reduced bush fire fuel that can offer a relative safe area for emergency services or the home owner to protect the home. An APZ that is correctly installed and regularly maintained will reduce the risk of direct flame contact, damage to the asset from intense radiant heat and ember attack on to the asset.

A SFAZ (Strategic Fire Advantage Zone) is simply an identified strategic area of fire protection advantage which will reduce the speed and intensity of bush fires, and reduce the potential for spot fire development. The objective is to have the ability to contain wildfires within existing management boundaries. Typically the aim of the SFAZ is to maintain overall fuel levels at less than high. This is achieved by applying mosaic fuel reduction activities across the SFAZ.

Hazard Reduction is often seen by the community as applying fire into the landscape to burn perceived fire risks. However, hazard reduction is designed to reduce fuels and create patterns of mosaic fuel reduced areas. It is worth mentioning here that before any hazard reduction activity, research into fire thresholds for the identified vegetation species is under taken, along with a comprehensive research

into any threatened species that may be present within the community. Fire thresholds are the upper and lower limits or range of fire intervals recommended to support ecological sustainable fire management for a given vegetation community.

Fire trails are seen as an important tool in increasing the preparedness of the community for bush fire. They are strategically located to allow ease of access for emergency services for the protection of assets, mitigation of bush fire or for treatment of specific areas to conduct hazard reduction activities.

It cannot be emphasised enough that the only effective method to treat risk is a combination of all of the above combined with improving the communities understanding of the level of risk. Engagement with the community will help raise the public's level of awareness of their responsibilities and help agencies develop a common purpose.

So, what is being done you are probably asking!

To begin with a NSW Rural Fire Service environmental officer has been engaged to undertake field inspections & provide any applicable environmental approvals for the remedial trail maintenance and proposed hazard reduction activities.

A request has been submitted for the NSW RFS State Mitigation Support Services (SMSS) to undertake the remedial works on a number of trails within the community. This work has already commenced

Support was given to further investigate the possible expansion of the existing Community Hall APZ, and investigations are now being under to get approvals for that work.

Consultation has been commenced with Telstra to commence work on installing a suitable APZ to the Telstra facility in Uralla Street.

It was extremely pleasing to see that a number of homes have undertaken APZ works in the community. I would however like to make note that if any member of the community is proposing works using the 10/50 legislation that they ensure that any works under taken are in accordance with the legislation. I would like to further add that it is the responsibility of the land owner to ensure that any person contracted to undertake the works are suitably qualified and are accredited as well as having suitable insurance.

Please see attached document on the recent changes to the 10/50 legislation.

Again I would like to thank the community for the support and input to date and look forward to progress the Community Protection Plan to the next stage.

Kind regards

Ian



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