



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: October, 2015 **File No.** NAC CPP 2015 / 3

Dear Community

As we move toward the beginning of the summer months and into the statutory Bush Fire Danger Period now is a good time to start preparing our home and surrounds in preparation for the fire season. In July of this year we had already seen a number of fires cause concern in the Blue Mountains for fire fighters as well as in a number of other communities across NSW. As I write this Victoria and South Australia are responding to bush fires and in the north of NSW a number of bush fires are creating headaches for fire fighters.

Now is also a good time to sit down with all family members to revisit your Bush Fire Survival Plan and ensure that everybody knows exactly what to do in the event a fire does threaten your home or community.

With predictions for El Nino weather patterns by the Bureau of Meteorology it is expected to see warmer than average spring days along the east coast with evenings also predicted to be above average, while summer could very well mean warmer than average temperatures combined with drier conditions.

On August 27 the draft Community Protection Plan was presented to the Gloucester Great Lakes Bush Fire Management Committee where it was formally approved. This means the recommended works treatments identified throughout the planning process have been adopted and will now form the basis for reducing risk to the community of North Arm Cove. I am in the process to have the plans uploaded onto the NSW RFS website where they will be available to the public to view. I have also attached the maps for the community's convenience with this update.

Over the past few months the NSW Rural Fire Service has been busy with preparing for the upcoming fire season for North Arm Cove. August was a particular productive month as far as planning for hazard reduction works goes. Over 150 letters were sent out to landowners requesting consent to undertake hazard reduction activities.

On August 20 a site meeting was held with staff from the Office of Environment & Heritage (Archaeologists-Planning & Team Leader, Aborigine Places State Heritage Register), the CEO of Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council along with the North Arm Cove brigade captain & members. This meeting was extremely productive and resulted in gaining approval to conduct a low intensity hazard reduction activity on Baromee Hill.

As the community may be aware, Baromee Hill is home to the Goorenggai Aboriginal Place. The site is located on freehold, privately owned land. With any cultural or historical asset extreme care and diligence must be used when planning and undertaking any form of hazard reduction activity.

For the community, this area was identified during the CPP process as having considerable strategic value to mitigate the potential impact of a wild fire on to residential properties located along the southern shore line of North Arm Cove. By maintaining reduced fuel loads on Baromee Hill, along with the 30 or so privately owned blocks on the north western side of the hill we can provide a fuel reduced area to reduce the potential fire run into the community which in turn reduces risk.

The next phase for this activity is to provide the environmental approval and prepare the site for burning.

The NSW Rural Fire Service State Mitigation Support has been busy clearing Tenterfield Road to act as a fire trail in preparation for the upcoming fire season. These guys have done an absolute marvellous job in hard conditions.

This trail was identified as not only having strategic value for fire suppression to protect the community of North Arm Cove but to also offer protection for the Karuah Nature Reserve which is located to the south.

The State Mitigation crew has also been busy clearing and preparing control lines along Inland Way, Inverell Circuit and Maitland Street in preparation for a planned hazard reduction.

The community hall has been nominated to be included into the Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) program for NSW. All the necessary documentation has been submitted to the supervisor of NSP's and we are just waiting on formal recognition. I must reiterate here that even though the community will now have an NSP, it has to be remembered that an NSP is *A Place of Last Resort*. In other words they are a last resort if all other options in your bush fire survival plan cannot be implemented. It is much safer & wiser to leave early.

We are presently working with contractors for quotations for the proposed upgrade to the community hall and installation of the dedicated water supply. Hopefully we will see movement with these projects in the not too distant future.

As usual I would like to thank the community for all the hard work that has been put into cleaning up and preparing properties in the Cove. The place is certainly looking a picture. I must also take this opportunity to provide a special thanks to Doug Kohlhoff and Maureen Kelly who have made it possible to bring these updates to the community through the Cove website and the Cove news. Both of these mediums have made it very easy for me to communicate with the community.

I would also like to formally recognise the assistance that has been provided by Great Lakes Council staff (thanks Andrew, Andrew and Mat) whom have greatly assisted with all the projects in one way or another, along with Superintendent Jim Blackmore, Manager and his team from the NSW RFS DTZ Gloucester Great Lakes office.

Kind regards

Ian



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