



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: February 20, 2015 **File No.** NAC 2015

Dear Community

The last update I provided on the developing Community Protection Plan I talked about a number of proposals and treatments that had been identified to help mitigate the risk of bush fire, and to increase the community resilience.

The last couple of months have certainly been a busy period for me. I am sure I know every street back to front, every rural road, whether from getting lost or geographically challenged as we like to call it, through to who owns what lots/land in and around the community hall. I have discovered where the biggest bull ant nest is located (by mistake) and which patch of bush has the largest snakes!!

More importantly I have made a few significant steps forward with a number of the proposals. Before I talk about these I would just like to revisit some of the issues that were raised during consultation early on. The community as whole had identified that only having one access / egress option into the village was a concern, that there was no linking road around the community (The Promontory Way and The Esplanade were both dead end roads), and that this restricted movement in the event of fire. The lack of information on hazard reduction or hazard reduction activities and the community not having a last resort option in the event of bush fire impact and residents getting trapped, was raised a number of times. The issue of overhanging branches to resident's homes and poorly maintained holiday homes and vacant blocks in the Cove as well as the lack of reticulated water along with poor communications were also raised.

So here we go, what is happening.

Community Hall: Neighbourhood Safer Place

Negotiations with land owners adjacent to the Community Hall have secured their approval to install an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) to the Community Hall. This process will involve an Environmental Approval and the adjoining land surveyed. The APZ will provide a fuel reduced managed area that can reduce the radiant heat flux to less than 10kW/m². Surveyors have completed marking out the Asset Protection Zone for the hall.

It is also proposed to enhance the community hall. The windows will be fitted with steel mesh screening to the North, South and Eastern exposures while steel shutters will be fitted to the western side of the building. Gutter guard will be installed and the sub floor area enclosed. A 50000 L water tank proposed to be installed as a dedicated water supply with 2 fire hose reels fitted to the hall and have a 65m storz fitting attached for fire fighting purposes. A diesel generator will be fitted to act as the dedicated power supply. A heat shield will be installed to provide protection to the existing gas bottle/s.

The objective of the above works is to enhance the buildings resilience to bush fire impact and make available to the community a Neighbourhood Safer Place, A Place of Last Resort. See attached fact sheet.

Fire Trails:

The North Arm Cove brigade Captain generously donated his time to escort me around the outlying tracks and show me where historically which tracks have been used for fire suppression. I have engaged the State Mitigation Support Service to implement vegetation management along a number of these trails. Once this is complete funding will be sought and applied for to repair severely degraded sections of these trails.

Hazard Reduction:

Field excursions have been conducted by the NSW RFS Environment Officer to undertake environmental assessment studies in areas that have been identified as requiring fuel reduction. Where threatened species have been identified, specific treatments will be applied to protect or exclude this species/area. The existing road networks that surround these areas will be used for control lines and environmental approval will be provided to undertake vegetation management along these roads.

Telstra Hub;

Negotiations with Telstra facility management and adjoining land managers for the installation of an APZ to the facility in Uralla Street has occurred and agreement obtained. This work is pending.

Road side vegetation management:

While still in negotiation stages I have met with council to have vegetation management undertaken along the Ridgeway. This will provide a fuel managed strip of vegetation adjoining the Ridgeway and will provide a strategic separation for mitigation of bush fire. It is proposed that this strip be 20 m wide

Promontory Way & The Esplanade:

Negotiations are in progress to join The Promontory Way & The Esplanade. It is identified that there is a very real risk of entrapment to residents in the event of bush fire impacting the community. Residents will be able to move freely back and forth and also provide direct access to the Community Hall if a Place of Last Resort is needed for shelter. Furthermore, this will also increase response times for emergency services around the community.

It is envisioned that the above mentioned strategies will increase the preparedness of the community to Bush Fire. No one treatment alone can be seen as an easy fix, and ultimately I cannot emphasise enough that having a well prepared bush fire survival plan is essential. Furthermore, taking the time prior to the Bush Fire Danger period to prepare your property will also help protect you and your home from the potential impact from bush fire.

I would like to make a mention of just how much work has been undertaken in and around the community by residents. Driving around the streets on my last visit it was astonishing to see just how well the majority of homes and land parcels had hazards removed. It is really rewarding to see this happen. It is widely recognised that a well informed and engaged community has a greater preparedness and resilience to bush fire.


It is my intention to visit the Cove again in the coming weeks to walk around the streets and talk with residents about the Community Protection Plan. I am hoping to make this a weekend visit so I can be available to talk to residents that may be away of a week day due to work or other commitments.

I would like to thank the hall committee which have given their support to the proposed works at the hall. The addition of A Neighbourhood Safer Place in the Cove will be of significant benefit. I do need to emphasise though that, A Neighbourhood Safer Place is a *Place of Last Resort if all other options in your bush fire survival plan cannot be implemented.* *Please visit the NSW RFS website- Neighbourhood Safer Places*

I cannot thank Great Lakes council enough for the support they have given me. Without the input and general support from council a number of these projects would not have come, nor would come to fruition. While there is still a way to go bringing the Community Protection Plan together, I believe that together we can significantly increase the community of North Arm Cove preparedness, while building resilience and ultimately enable residents to make informed decisions for their Bush Fire Survival Plan.

As usual I would love to hear from any member of the community that may have concerns or are looking for advice or would like me to pay a visit to their home. My office contact details are 02 66 910400 or my email is Ian.Cook@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Kind regards



Ian Cook | Community Protection Planning Officer | Customer Service Centre (North)

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Suite 1 / 129 West High Street, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

P: 02 66 91 0400 **F:** 02 66 91 0499 **M:** 0000 000 000 **E:** Ian.Cook@rfs.nsw.gov.au

24 Hour Media Enquires 02 9898 1855

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au | www.facebook.com/nswrfs | www.twitter.com/nswrfs



Places of Last Resort

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES (NSP)

- are a *Place of Last Resort* for people during a bush fire.

They are a last resort if all other options in your Bush Fire Survival Plan cannot be implemented.

Download a Bush Fire Survival Plan at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au



The Place of Last Resort

- If it is unsafe to leave the area or stay and defend your property, and the path is clear, you should move to your pre-identified NSP, or other safer location, prior to the impact of a bush fire.
- Be aware that when you are travelling to your NSP there may be heavy smoke and poor visibility. It is important that you are familiar with the area.
- Gather at the NSP location and remain there until the bush fire threat has passed.
- The conditions at the NSP may be uncomfortable and you may be affected by smoke and embers.
- Water, toilets and food may not be available at the NSP and emergency service personnel may not be present.
- People with special needs, such as the elderly and disabled, should always leave before the threat of fire.
- NSPs are not intended for pets and livestock.
- Your safest option will always be to leave early.



Well before there is any fire in your area:

- Be aware of NSP locations for your local area. See www.rfs.nsw.gov.au.
- Note any NSP's that are close to your property in your Bush Fire Survival Plan.
- Always remember these areas have been identified as a **PLACE OF LAST RESORT**.
- If there is no NSP available you should identify other safer locations in your Bush Fire Survival Plan.
- Other safer locations include a nearby well prepared home, a shopping centre, an oval etc. that is away from the bush.
- Be aware of the safest and any alternate access routes to your NSP.

Neighbourhood Safer Places do not guarantee your safety.

Leaving areas where a bush fire can start is always the safest option.



