



MEETING MINUTES

- Meeting:** 03/2017 – Northern Rivers Bush Fire Management Committee
- Convened by:**
- | | |
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| Michael Brett | NSW Rural Fire Service |
| Daniel Ainsworth | NSW Rural Fire Service |
| Robbie Graham | NSW Rural Fire Service |
| Peter Fitzsimmons | NSW Rural Fire Service |
| Mark Pittavino | NPWS |
| Matthew Pope | Forestry Corporation NSW |
| Gary White | FRNSW |
| Tracey Doherty | Richmond River Cane Growers |
- Attendees:**
- | | |
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| Flt Lt Jason Van Rysbergen | Department of Defence |
| Sgt Lance Fountain | Department of Defence |
| Sgt Mat Johnson | NSW Police |
| Ian Dixon | Nature Conservation Council |
| Alex Lynch | NSW Farmers Association |
| Scott Turner | Lismore City Council |
| Angela Jones | Richmond Valley Council |
| Chris Hartley | NSW Rural Fire Service |
- Location:** Northern Rivers Fire Control Centre
- Date and time:** Thursday 7 September 2017, 10:10 am
- Apologies:**
- Boyd Townsend - NSW Rural Fire Service
 - Cr Jill Lyons - Richmond Valley Council
 - Sean Sacco - Education & Communities NSW
 - Supt Greg Martin – NSW Police Richmond LAC
 - Grahame Hicks - NSW Dept. Industry – Lands & Forestry
 - Graham Kennett – Kyogle Council
 - Trevor Reedman – Australian Rail
 - Nancy Casson – LCC
 - Supt Greg Lewis – FRNSW
- Minutes by:** Lisa Edmonds

1 Minutes

No.	Agenda item	Responsible
1	Welcome	Chair
2	Apologies – As listed above Moved by: Tracey Doherty / Scott Turner All in Favour CARRIED	Chair
3	Disclosure of Interests Robbie Graham –Tony Lickiss, LCC representative is nephew.	Chair
4	Confirmation of Minutes of 2/17 meeting held 25 May 2017 Nil Amendments Moved by: Tracey Doherty / Mark Pittavino All in Favour CARRIED	Chair
5	Business arising from previous minutes a. General b. Task register The only outstanding item is NP Richmond Range plan presented at the last meeting. Mark doesn't have carriage of that plan. Unless the Area Manager is present, we should postpone until next meeting. All in favour of postponing and will be removed from today's Agenda.	Chair Michael Brett
6	Correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 July 2017 - BFMC Survey Results – Combining Ops Co-ordination Plan and BFRMP. 25 August 2017 – Neighbourhood Safer Place Inspections 2017 6 September 2017 – Agency Report - RRCGA 	Chair
7	Report from Sub-committees a. Bush Fire Risk Management Plan SC The Sub-Committee has not yet met. Introduce and welcome Peter Fitzsimmons who has come from Sydney for a minimum of two years. Peter is moving into Community Engagement and Boyd moving into oversight and Infrastructure. Peter is your contact for HRs and Daniel is involved in the delivery of HRs. Peter will be working at pulling the Sub-Committee together. Peter gave a precis of his work experience.	Michael Brett

8 Other business

<p>a Progress on BFRMP strategies/tasks</p> <p>Have yet to load the BFRMP and identify where it is up to. I will be working on this.</p> <p>Some of the items on the plan, in reality, are unachievable. This will be reviewed. Some strategies we have identified are not achievable. Of all the land sharing communities, Bron Waters was only able to get into 228 (80%). Others didn't want us to be involved with them and we have to accept that as a residual risk.</p> <p>Please liaise with Peter Fitzsimmons to develop a workable BFRMP.</p> <p>FRNSW</p> <p>Report tabled. Much activity in Casino with grass fires. Doing a lot of training to get them into the frame of mind that bushfire season is here.</p> <p>NPWS</p> <p>Apology from counterpart for not being here to talk about the Richmond Range strategy.</p> <p>In terms of HR, three in Bungawalbyn last week which went well. Still patrolling Spotted Gum HR.</p> <p>Wildfires started on private property in Bundjalung NP which concerned us. Thanks to RFS and SF for assistance to get it wrapped up before it took off.</p> <p>National Parks is going through a major restructure. Explained. The result is there will be less National Parks people on the ground. The restructure has had quite an impact on the organisation.</p> <p>NSW Police – Nothing to report</p> <p>Forestry</p> <p>Has been busy so far in the season. 95% of fire fighters working, as of last night, which is pushing fatigue limits.</p> <p>Training for new seasonal casuals beginning next week.</p> <p>Our Native Forest worker has gone to Canada so that has slowed that work.</p> <p>This time last year we spoke about the Guardian system for permits. Any update on that?</p> <p>Permit burns are still our biggest problem. Keen to work on any enforcement we can deal with on neighbours who have let their fires go.</p> <p><i>We have a process of dealing with arson fires. Notification is indicated in ICON. Current fires discussed. They are landholder fires that have escaped or deliberately lit fires.</i></p> <p><i>NSW Police have kicked off Strike Force Toronto again and can be activated for recidivist offenders or arsonists.</i></p> <p><i>We have three investigators in NR. We have investigated three fires in the last two weeks. We haven't got a culprit but know they are deliberately lit. Line scan last night showed evidence of more fire. Try to investigate them</i></p>	<p>Peter Fitzsimmons</p> <p>Michael Brett</p> <p>David White</p> <p>Mark Pittavino</p> <p>Matthew Pope</p> <p>Michael Brett</p> <p>Mat Johnson</p> <p>Daniel Ainsworth</p>
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as we can. The only problem is we find the origin but finding the cause beyond deliberate is difficult. PAL reports are entered as soon as we find evidence of arson or unknown origin. Follow up with warning letters. Once there is a history of warning letters, we can go down the line of prosecution.

We have discussed with Council how we can educate the community. One of the major problems is notification of fires.

Strategy of managing arson and unknown ignition fires discussed between RFS, NSW Police, FRNSW and NP.

Michael Brett

RR Cane Growers

Regarding Wardell fire, a farmer noticed some suspicious activity and will report it.

Report submitted.

Have cracked down on farmers with the result that they call the office all year round for cane fires now. Farmers are also now getting their neighbours involved with their fires.

Had contact with NR Planning and Operations with RMS, Daniel Wills, who does the variable message signs. He will be updating the message boards from Clarence to Tweed with cane fire information on State controlled roads only. Will email his contact details to RFS.

Have issues with putting information on BRIMS. Explained. Will speak to Peter Fitzsimmons after meeting.

Have issues with 45kg gas bottles being found in cane fields from the floods. Cane harvesters have been running over them. To be flagged with Flood Recovery Committee.

Scott Turner advised there may be opportunity for support to recover gas bottles.

Extensive talk with farmers around one-year-old cane burning and what fire danger rating they can burn under.

Tracey Doherty

NCC – NCC can lobby a little bit to control HRs.

Ian Dixon

NSW Farmers – Burning rubbish during summer has gone to State Council now.

Alex Lynch

Dept Defence – Thanks to National Parks. Had an HR burn at Master Quad a few weeks ago. Since 2016, we have now burnt the whole range. We are clear this year although we don't have any aircraft activity planned.

Jason Van Rysburgen

b Report on Operations Coordination Plan [report from each organisation/agency in turn – every meeting]

The Operations Coordination Plan is current. Not due until next year. Other agencies are to ensure they have updated new staff members to get their nomination on the list. Please email Daniel.

Mini IMX on Wednesday 27 September, 1000-1500 hrs. This is combined with FNC and Clarence Valley. New or existing staff to be nominated to fill positions in the IMT. That ties in with our preseason check list.

Daniel Ainsworth

	S52 plan not due until next year.	
c	<p>Monthly HR Reports from BRIMS</p> <p>Completed Bonalbo Common (has been on the books for two years and completed last month)</p> <p>1200 ha fire ready at Hogarth Range. This may be scrapped due to current fire activity.</p> <p>One plan for Modanville, two planned for Evans Head with FRNSW. Another planned with FRNSW at Goonellabah interface. One for Lismore Council behind the airport. Liaising with REX airline for a window between flights.</p>	<p>Michael Brett</p> <p>Daniel Ainsworth</p>
d	<p>Annual Works Plan</p> <p>Proposed work schedule links into the funding. Will need to get report from BRIMS. Grant funding tied in with this.</p>	<p>Michael Brett</p>
e	<p>Fire Trail Register</p> <p>Had hoped to get John Kennedy here to discuss this matter. He has been engaged as Fire Trail Coordinator. Government has changed this so RFS now manage Fire Trails.</p> <p>There is a fire trail register which will be finished and will need to map fire trails all over again. Will be identifying trails that have gaps and links missing. Every trail will need to be inspected. Explained</p> <p>Will work on getting John Kennedy to the next meeting.</p>	<p>Michael Brett</p>
f	<p>Grant Funding</p> <p>Included in (d) above.</p>	
g	<p>Issues Register</p> <p>No issues flagged for RFS</p>	
10	<p>General Business [items raised by members on the day not covered elsewhere in agenda]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Richmond Range National Park Reserve Fire Management Strategy. – To be held over to next meeting 2. Pre-Season Checklist – Discussed above. 3. National Parks Reserve Fire Plans – Not today. 4. Annual audit on Neighbourhood Safer Places. Everyone on the list has a tick. Bonalbo Community Hall doesn't have a NSP sign. Richmond Valley has a sign to be erected at Fairy Hill Hall. It has been approved but not yet actioned. There is no sign present at Whiporie Hall either. 5. Talking about escaping fires – we are currently in BFDP and the weather models are not showing any potential rain until at least October. We will be seeing a dry spell for a considerable period of time until Christmas. 	<p>Allan Goodwin</p> <p>Daniel Ainsworth</p> <p>NPWS</p> <p>Michael Brett</p>

I have spoken to my counterparts in Clarence and FNC and they have indicated they will be suspending permits. Our SMT agreed last night to suspend permits. I am looking to put to this Committee to now suspend permits with a caveat until we receive significant rain that will change that status. We are seeing fires behave as you would expect in summer but we are only in the early days of spring. My belief is we really need to take away some ignition sources and permits are one of those areas. This will upset landholders because they want to burn, but based on the risk and the history we have, we need to do something. We need to suspend for all but essential purposes and diseased stock. This will not affect cane farmers. I will be looking for a motion that we currently suspend permits to burn other than for essential purposes and destruction of dead stock.

MOTION: “that we suspend permits to burn, effective immediately, until adequate rainfall is received across the landscape of the Northern Rivers Zone.

The only exemptions will be for the burning of essential agriculture and diseased stock.”

Moved: Angela Jones / Jason Van Rysburgen All in Favour
CARRIED

Seasonal Outlook – Have been asked to present the seasonal outlook for bushfires in NSW and NR. An extensive map has been issued from the Commissioner and CRC. We are expecting an average season, thanks to the rain in early March and June. A normal season for us has not been experienced for a few years. Would normally involve up to 10 TOBANS and several Very High days. Our volunteers are very aware of it. Other agencies are well into it. We are expecting a nice normal season. The immediate forecast for September is no rain and all we can expect are dry storms and they can create fires from lightning strikes. It will be a long September/October for us.

Daniel Ainsworth

11	Close 1145am	Chair
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Table 1: Action items

Ref.	Item description	Owner	Due date	Status

Table 2: Documents referred to in the meeting

Document title	Author	Version	Date

Table 3: Next meeting

Date	Start time	Finish time	Location
Thursday 23 November 2017	10:00 am	11:30 am	Northern Rivers Fire Control Centre