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ADDENDUM ITEMS FOR ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2019

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Clause 7(1) of Council's Code of Meeting Practice that an **Ordinary Council Meeting** will be held in the Tenterfield Shire Council Chamber, on **Wednesday, 27 February 2019** commencing at **9.30 am**.

Andre Kompler
Acting Chief Executive

AGENDA

7. URGENT, LATE & SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS OF BUSINESS

9. MAYORAL MINUTES

(ITEM MM1/19) JENNINGS / WALLANGARRA ORDINARY COUNCIL
MEETING - CHANGE OF DATE2

(ITEM MM2/19) TENTERFIELD SHIRE BUSHFIRES - FEBRUARY 20193

MAYORAL MINUTE**(ITEM MM1/19) JENNINGS / WALLANGARRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - CHANGE OF DATE**

SUMMARY

Due to the recent fire emergency at Wallangarra and the impact this may be having on the local community, in consultation with the Acting Chief Executive Andre Kompler, a decision was made that the February 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting scheduled to be held at Jennings/Wallangarra be held at the Tenterfield Shire Council Chamber and that investigations be made with regard to holding the March 2019 Ordinary Meeting at Jennings/Wallangarra when community members are more likely to be available to attend.

RECOMMENDATION:

I, Mayor Peter Petty hereby move the following Mayoral Minute at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 27 February 2019:

That Council:

- (1) Endorse the decision of the Mayor and Acting Chief Executive to hold the February 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting at the Tenterfield Shire Council Chamber; and**
- (2) Accept the invitation of the Wallangarra/Jennings Progress Association to hold the March 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting at the Wallangarra School of Arts on 27 March 2019, commencing at 9.30 am (EDST).**

MAYORAL MINUTE**(ITEM MM2/19) TENTERFIELD SHIRE BUSHFIRES - FEBRUARY 2019****SUMMARY**

The purpose of this Mayoral Minute is to update Councillors and the community on the recent fire emergency events in the Tenterfield Shire, Tuesday, 12 February to Saturday, 23 February 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

I, Mayor Peter Petty hereby move the following Mayoral Minute:

That the extraordinary efforts made by staff, the Rural Fire Service, Police, other Agencies and the Community groups, particularly the Salvation Army and volunteers, be noted and appreciation be extended, in an appropriate manner in due course.

REPORT

Bushfires broke out in the Shire on Tuesday 12 February, 2019. The first fire started in Queensland, close to Wallangarra, with the source awaiting the result of an appropriate investigation. The fire spread to the Jennings area with multiple concern for various properties, including a Defence establishment and a serious asbestos risk site. The fire started at approximately 11.30 am.

The fire was initially attended to by local RFS units, Fire & Rescue Tenterfield and Queensland Fire & Emergency. Operational control was assumed by the Queensland Fire & Emergency on site Incident Controller.

Uncertain and changeable winds led to a rapid expansion of the fire and the need to establish adequate control lines to protect the area. While houses were not damaged, sheds, pasture and significant rural infrastructure, forest and recreational areas and assets were extensively damaged.

Almost simultaneously (morning, uncertain time at this stage) a fire broke out impacting the Tabulam and Jubullum areas of Kyogle and Tenterfield. The fire reportedly started from the burn off of domestic waste in a 44 gallon drum incinerator, lit despite a total fire ban of which the householder was either unaware or did not appreciate the risk. Houses in Tenterfield Shire were lost and village infrastructure severely damaged, requiring evacuation, otherwise known as "voluntary relocation", based on warnings received.

Unfortunately a large group of evacuees, moved by the RFS, although safe, remained stranded in Tabulam, in the heat of the day without shelter, food or water, awaiting access to a local community hall. The key and access was not granted for between 4 – 6.5 hours.

The majority of these people were residents of local Native Title settlements / Indigenous Land Council Territory, with Commonwealth responsibility and Tenterfield Shire services. This matter has been raised with State authorities.

Mayoral Minute No. 2 Cont...

Both fires extended rapidly. Local Emergency Plans were consulted, Regional and Local Emergency Management Officers activated and concerns expressed between the Shires involved.

Kyogle Local Emergency Management Officer (LEMO) acted to ensure overnight care of those moved to Tabulam and agreed to maintain services, from Kyogle resources due logic, proximity and resourcing considerations. The State Member became deeply involved together with the Mayors of both Shires.

Obvious increasing seriousness led to Council's Works Manager contacting the RFS Regional Senior Duty Officer to ascertain if Council equipment/assistance would be required.

LEMO/Chief Executive contact was made with key stakeholders and maintained and to ascertain if further "evacuation" centres would be required as well as the support required in the Local Emergency Management Plan.

While it was found that some initial control was being exercised by the local RFS, it was soon discovered that control had been assumed by Armidale Emergency Management Centre, particularly because of the co-existing Tingha Plateau fire. Regional Officers from combat and support Agencies were relocated there.

Our Regional Emergency Management Officer advised his situation and that care was needed to understand differing responsibilities between the RFS and Police, and Family & Community Services (FACS) for community care.

Chain of Command Officers were advised for the Fire Service and the Police. FACS initially seemed less concerned for our area threats and evacuation needs, and more focused on Tingha and surrounds.

The first request for equipment/operator assistance was received on Tuesday night when our Fleet Manager was called out at approximately 6.40 pm to repair a Fire Truck in the fire ground near Talmoi Road. He went equipped with a Fire Kit and a Rock Star Locator to track his location and provide emergency contact. He returned safely.

Water Cart Assistance was requested by the RFS between 7.00 pm and 9.00 pm to provide water for the Fire Service at Talmoi Road turn off and for staff to erect Road Closure signs the other side of Black Swamp, Tenterfield end. Water cart assistance was requested for the next morning.

By mid-afternoon, Wednesday, two (2) water trucks were deployed and grader assistance on standby if needed.

During the day, EPA expressed concern about fire threats to the Boonoo Boonoo Landfill site and the potential for toxic gases. RFS and the public were alerted.

2TenFM were alerted and offered, and gave, continuing assistance in and out of hours to residents potentially impacted by fumes, the fires and road closures.

By mid-day Wednesday the full seriousness of the situation began to be realised.

Potentially the scheduled Local Emergency Management Committee meeting attendance was impacted by pre occupation of the Agencies.

Mayoral Minute No. 2 Cont...

The meeting was held with key representation from Police, Local Land Services, Ambulance, Council, and the Hospital, with other apologies received. Principal focus remained on the fire but future review and planning was not set aside.

With threats to Mt Lindesay/Mt Lindesay Road area, Drake and other areas of the Shire, final agreement from the RFS was given to open the Tenterfield Memorial Hall Evacuation Centre late Wednesday afternoon. It was opened by Council at 6.30 pm, coinciding with the arrival of the first voluntary relocation from Drake. Council had also contacted the Salvation Army (Yolande and Joel Soper) and because of the Army's experience, their assistance was requested. They agreed and gained approval from their management to access Government and organisational assistance. Joel was already providing meals to the firefighters on duty.

Local Land Services representative on the LEMC arranged veterinary assistance for housing pets and animals and attended, as did other community members. Bunnings Warwick made generous donations of games and hardware supplies/pet food for distribution by the Centre and subsequently to those impacted on the land or in fire areas.

Many donations of food and assistance were received. The Centre remained open all night with staff assistance early and senior management/LEMO, and with Yolande, (Salvation Army), registering and providing support to attendees manning the Centre throughout.

The Centre remained open until approximately 6.30 pm on Tuesday 19 February, manned by staff on either 3 hour night shifts or full day shifts until the Sunday and thereafter by contact numbers for potential arrivals to call if the Centre needed opening. The Salvation Army remained throughout, transferring the supply of meal preparation and services to up to 500 "firies", to the very much larger facilities at the Memorial Hall. The Hospital supplied emergency bedding to the Hall and offers of other services.

Those relocating from Drake were ultimately rehoused in motels by FACS in conjunction with assistance from the local Police, often calling during in the day for company and support. A number of others (families) relocating, made enquiries and self-relocated to friends or made their own arrangements.

The Centre was officially "stood down" by the LEOCON (Police) then back in Armidale, at approximately 6.30 pm Tuesday, 19 February, 2019 with the understanding that phone numbers would be displayed for those who might require assistance. The Salvation Army with enhanced catering units and even more volunteers, remained until 26 February, 2019 to provide services to the RFS and their "strike forces".

Throughout the emergency, administration and community staff fielded calls and provided assistance both at the Office and at the Centre, while dedicated outdoor staff provided support resources on demand 24/7 to the RFS in the field. The 14 staff members originally trained in Fire Safety Awareness and operations were supplemented with a further 12 plant operators, trained on the Saturday by our WHS & Risk Management Officer.

Throughout the emergency, all staff in the field on up to 12 hour plus "shifts", carried our Rock Star Locator Units and Fire Kits, so that their location could be always monitored.

Mayoral Minute No. 2 Cont...

Management at the Depot was present day and night, shared by key managers and supervisors, monitoring and assigning support, always available, as were administrative LEMOs and other support staff, by phone.

On Friday, 15 February, 2019 with the Emergency Operations Centre relocation, with the LEOCON relocated again, this time to Glen Innes, with all the Emergency Management and Agency Staff, we were requested to supply a Liaison Officer to Glen Innes, 8am – 8pm, to assist with help and Shire knowledge/contacts/communication.

This requirement is spelt out in our Emergency Management Plan but was a little late in being requested. This was supplied, with immediate effect from the Friday evening through to Monday afternoon, again with several appropriate Office professional and specialist staff contributing their time and weekend.

FACS staff, ex other Country Centres and Head Offices, arrived to assist at the Memorial Hall on Friday, 15 February and remained until Tuesday, with continuing offers of support (food Vouchers, emergency accommodation and other services) the Red Cross Offered mental health support.

There have been consistent tele conferences, virtually daily, attended throughout and hosted by Kyogle Shire and centred on Tabulam. Tenterfield was a major contributor to the commencement of this process. These have been attended by each Council together with Combat Agencies, the State Public Service, including Justice, Emergency Management, Public Works, the EPA, Disaster Welfare Services, Office of Emergency Management, Local Land Services and Dept Primary Industry, together with Land Councils, Federal representatives and the State Member.

A Recovery Meeting initiated by the Office of Emergency Management was held in Tenterfield to discuss recovery processes on Tuesday, 19 February 2019, after a meeting was held with The Hon Thomas George the previous day.

It is anticipated that all costs incurred, including staff and equipment expenses, will be recovered from State and Federal Disaster funding.

Tenterfield has hosted community meetings in Drake and Jennings/Wallangarra and will co-host one in Tabulam. Resources are being made available including water, fodder and support personnel to assist Council/s.

Council appreciates the efforts of all our staff and continues to extend a hand to the community where assistance is possible.