Quarterly Report for Councils

NSW RFS MID MURRAY ZONE

Report on Rural Fire Activities 1st July 2016 – 30th September 2016

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The first quarter of the financial year has been very quiet operationally across the zone with 19 incidents recorded. Incidents responded to were mainly structural fires or Motor Vehicle Accidents.

All Brigades AGM's have now been completed and brigade field officers appointed for the 2016/17 year. Brigade membership remains static with the exception of a couple of brigades where there has been an increase in interest which is pleasing to see. One area of concern coming into the fire season is in regard to the availability of members who are able make themselves available during week days for brigade operational duty. Unfortunately many of our volunteers are not in a position to commit to long periods of operational duty due to work or family commitments. This will challenge how we manage responses to fire this season which threatens to be a very busy one.

Over the winter period it has been extremely pleasing to see the number of brigades requesting Person Protective Clothing (PPC) for their members. It the past, many remote rural brigades didn't see the need for PPC but their change in thinking can only ensure their ongoing safety on the fire ground. As part of the build-up to the fire season, the zone tanker servicing program has also been ongoing with brigade equipment levels inspected and readied for operational use.

The annual pre season fire preparedness meetings have been completed or scheduled involving NPWS, NSW Forests Corporation, FRNSW and interstate agencies. As this fire season is sure to be a busy one, these meetings are vital in reviewing each agencies fire response capabilities and resource availability. As part of the build up to a busy fire season, the MMZ again held our bi-annual Zone training exercise. This year the exercise was held at Wakool with around 180 volunteer fire fighters participating from across the local area including teams from Victoria. The day was a great success with everyone enjoying various training events in a relaxed and friendly environment.

As part of our pre season checks, the RFS heavy plant register has been reviewed and listed contactors contacted to confirm availability. As in previous years Council heavy plant will be the first engaged if available with private contractors used when needed.

All pre-season Captains meetings have been completed as has the Mid Murray Zone Bush Fire Management Committee meeting in accordance with operational and legislative requirements.

OPERATIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE

Incidents

For the September quarter there were 19 incidents recorded across the Mid Murray Zone.

	Fire related	Motor Vehicle	Other	Total
Conargo	2	0	0	2
Deniliquin	3	0	0	3
Murray	5	3	1	9
Jerilderie	0	2	0	2
Wakool	1	0	2	3
	11	**5**	**3**	**19**

Capital items

New tankers delivered this quarter:

New Cat 1 Village Tanker for Koraleigh brigade
New Cat 6 heavy tanker for Booroorban brigade
New Cat 6 heavy tanker for Jerilderie brigade

New Stations under construction:

New single bay station for Booroorban brigade (Edward River LGA) has been funded and construction will commence in the coming months.

LEARNING and DEVELOPMENT

The recent focus on training has been based around the bi-annual Mid Murray Zone exercise held this year at Wakool. The exercise consisted of five different scenarios; a relay pumping and property protection stand, a chemical awareness workshop at the Wakool GrainCorp facility, an all-round skills challenge, a stand for Motor Vehicle Accidents involving LP gas and bulk fuel transportation and a split technical workshop involving Defibrillator use and basic Thermal Imaging Camera use.

With the retirement of long serving L&D Officer Chris Barron, the Zone training plan has had to be reviewed due to a lack of personnel to deliver training. With the introduction of on line learning via a RFS portal it is hoped that new members in future will be able to complete much of the basic training package on line and undergo practical assessment at their leisure.

As training of volunteers is a priority for the MMZ, future training strategies will be based around a mixture of face to face training, on line training and recognition of prior

learning (RPL). It is hoped to attract a fully qualified L&D staff member to the Zone in the next twelve months to manage the delivery of training.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Well above average rainfall across the Zone in recent months has resulted in prolific growth in all areas. The amount of continuous fuel in grassland areas has been the most for many years and, once fully cured, will present a major hazard to the community. Road side spraying programs have been largely successful which will help mitigate the spread of fires when they occur during the summer months.

As part of pre-incident planning for the fire season, all Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP's) have been inspected, reviewed and reported on. A number of NSP's have been deleted from the register in the past six months as they have proven not to be necessary due to other refuges being located in the immediate area or being a low threat area.

The Bushfire Danger Period (BFDP) commenced on October 1st in line with the Statutory Bushfire period from which time permits are required to burn off for agricultural or other purposes. Whilst conditions remain wet, BFMC members are aware of how quickly conditions can change and are comfortable with retaining the BFDP statutory period to maintain consistency.

Leading into the 2016/17 fire season, the MMZ will implement a community information program involving local media, social media and media releases to highlight to the public the heightened fire risk that will be experienced this fire season.

BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Staff

With the retirement of Chris Barron, efforts to obtain a replacement through the current RFS recruiting program have failed. Offers of employment to eligible candidates within the system resulted in none of the candidates being willing to relocate to the local area. As a result of this, an Expression of Interest (EOI) was circulated to all MMZ volunteers offering six months temporary employment until the position can be filled full time. As a result of the EOI, Mr Terry Campbell of the Koraleigh RFS brigade has been appointed to the temporary position and will commence duties on October 4th.

The appointment of the temporary staff member brings the operational staff back to full strength allowing the afterhour's duty roster to be fully staffed over the fire danger period.

FINANCE

The Zone Liaison Committee meeting was held on the 22nd of September at which the 2015/16 annual report and the 2015/16 M&R expenditure reports were tabled for information and review. Due to issues with Council amalgamations, the final quarter M&R figures were not fully provided resulting in an incomplete final report being tabled. This situation can be corrected when the final figures become available.

The 2016/17 budget allocation was advised to Councils on August 31st under the new format. Capital items allocated included a new Cat 1 Grasslands tanker for Caldwell brigade (Murray River), a new Cat 6 heavy tanker for Denimein brigade (Edward River), a new Cat 12 support twin cab utility for Deniliquin brigade (Edward River) and a new Group Officers vehicle for Jerilderie North Group (Murrumbidgee). Funding for a new brigade station at Booroorban and power connection to Hill Plain station was also allocated.

Councils will have noted that under the new finance system, Councils now receive individual budget allocations as opposed to a zone allocation that was advised in the past. Under the new finance system, bids and estimates are no longer required to be lodged due to the implementation of the set percentage formula in relation to the RFFF for each Council.

SUMMARY

The MMZ has experienced its best seasonal conditions for many years leading up to the Fire Danger Period. Well above average rainfall has produced prolific growth in some areas that has not been seen for many years that, once cured, will become a major concern in grasslands areas. Recent flooding has inundated most forested areas in the MMZ and this will alleviate the fire risk along the rivers in the short term.

Long range weather forecast predictions remains on the positive side of neutral in regard to expected rainfall over the summer months. If this is the case, the fire risk may be reduced if frequent rain events occur. On the other side of the coin, if hot windy conditions prevail we will see many days of extreme and above conditions that will have high potential to carry major fire events.

At the last meeting of the Bushfire Management Committee (BFMC), operational arrangements for the coming fire season were discussed. The Committee considered the current climatic conditions in deciding if the Bush Fire Danger Period should commence as per the statutory period from October 1st. The Committee decided that although the Zone is currently wet and green, climatic conditions can change very quickly and this may accelerate curing rates of fine fuels if warm windy conditions occur during October. The Committee also felt that retaining the start of the BFDP from October 1 retains consistency in the public eye.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) also considered response arrangements and operational procedures for the coming fire season at their last meeting. The main concern of senior volunteers coming into the summer months is the amount of continuous fuel that is prevalent across all areas of the Zone. If hot dry conditions

combined with dry thunderstorms occur, fast running grass fires will be difficult to contain. For this reason the Zones Cat 6 fleet crews will receive additional training on convoy fire fighting strategies prior to the summer as the cat 6's will play a major role alongside heavy plant and aircraft in controlling fast moving grass fires.

Aviation support will be vital this summer if large fast moving grass fires do occur. The new east – west airstrip at Jerilderie will be operational in time for the fire season which will reduce the turnaround time of aircraft in the Jerilderie area when strong westerly winds restrict operations from conventional strips. An aviation training day will be held in the coming weeks at the Deniliquin airport where crews will brush up on the different fire fighting agent loading techniques. This fire season, members from the Volunteer Rescue Association will be trained in aviation support to compliment members of the NSW Fire & Rescue and RFS.

As Councils are aware, recent Council amalgamations have had a major effect on the previous RFS Zoning arrangements. At this time it is still unclear if the new Murrumbidgee Council will be a part of the MMZ or the MIA, however it is anticipated that this will be resolved in the coming weeks. Once boundaries are finalised, new Service and Zoning agreements will need to be negotiated to reflect the new Zone boundary.

On September 28th a representative from RFS Infrastructure Services met with the Zone Manager and Edward River Council representatives for further discussions on the building of a new Fire Control Centre at Deniliquin Airport. Discussions were very positive with agreements reached on timelines for building approvals and a Project Management Team. A follow up planning meeting is scheduled for October 25th to finalise project management strategies to take the project forward.

As mentioned earlier in this report, this fire season threatens to be one that may see our resources stretched to its limits, particularly our volunteers. As our volunteers are the backbone of our organisation, we are requesting that Councils and other employers consider putting in place contingency measure that may allow employees to assist with fire suppression over the summer.

We sincerely hope our volunteers remain safe over what is sure to be a busy fire season.

The NSW Rural Fire Service again thanks all Councils for their continued support and looks forward to maintaining a strong partnership over the coming fire season.

For Council information.

Lindsay Lashbrook
Manager
Mid Murray Zone
NSW Rural Fire Service

4th October 2016

Local & Loved
www.jumptreestudios.com

Jumptree Studios Jerilderie

40 Jerilderie Street, Jerilderie, 2716, New South Wales A.B.N. 4544 232 4082

House Portraits, Photography, Art, Workshops, Design, House Portraits, Photography, Art, Workshops

Dear Murrumbidgee Council representatives,

I am writing to ask for consideration and feedback on your thoughts of a proposition, from me Helene and Jumptree Studios - for the utilisation of the building in the main street of Jerilderie known as The Printery (next door to the Jerilderie Library). Quaint little weatherboard place.

I met with Craig Moffitt recently to discuss The Printery and he has encouraged me to propose and outline the benefits for both, Jumptree Studios and the council, of Jumptree Studios being located at The Printery - if indeed you found my proposal appealing.

The proposal for consideration is as follows:

- what I would use the building for
- what I would be willing to negotiate in rent
- what I would require to make the space functional/practical

First I will explain Jumptree Studios.
When my family and I moved to Jerilderie 4 years ago we were living in our bush shack on our plot of land creekside. To commence my work I rented and renovated my current leased premises as I required a; clean, aesthetically pleasing, naturally lit, dedicated work space to undertake the commissioned artworks that I am engaged to do. Our little Shack had Willy Wagtails doing fly throughs, 3 children, 2 adults, a dog, a few resident lizards, the odd snake and dust galore - hence was not suitable.

Jumptree Studios primary function was/is to be a studio space for me to undertake my work. To do this I require a functional, comfortable, well-lit space, and so, with the rest of the studio, I happily display, sell, promote and advocate for other LOCAL & LOVED creatives. This is done as more of a community service. "A dusting fee" as Rosalie Ham calls it (for selling her novels). In my studio you will find a mix of artworks, local produce and promotional material for all.

As an artist I could simply (and more economically - especially now I have a house to live in) work from home without having to carry anyone's stock or indeed spend time promoting it. Nor do I need street frontage or traffic flow for my illustration work as the bulk of my commissions come via 'word-of-mouth', social media, internet.

However, when I opened the doors to Jumptree Studios in April 2013, the positive response from the community and tourists, to the presence of another 'little bit of action and interest' in the diminishing economic activity of the main street of Jerilderie made me aware of the need to be visible. In this world of 'online existences' it is nice to meet real people, buy real product, and hear real story. So thanks to my atypical artist/hermit-like personality that is prone to a love of my little

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town, community and environs, I am happy to be in a public space, so I may provide another open door for those popping into or perusing the town.

Of my opening hours, as said, (and may I stress this point as many still have not understood) that my primary function is as a working studio for my art. Most artists only open their doors once a year to the public. I open once a week. I open on a Friday and other days where work demands and life allows. So for me to invite the public in weekly as well as happily spend my time stocking, shelving and promoting other local produce is detrimentally altruistic over entrepreneurial.

Of opening hours and aware that The Printery in its current situation is not easily or readily accessed by the public I would like to think having the building open one day a week is better than none. Please note that to date one day per week has been my commitment this year and in the two months prior to xmas I am open up to 6 days due to xmas traffic and my need to be at my board. Christmas is my busiest time with my commissions and Local Hamper orders. Please note also that I expect that my open days will increase in 2017 given the practical space to expand the studios functions.

Now the question of…
What would I use The Printery for?

SPACE: One Room vs Four:
My current location is but one room – pretty as I have made it, space wise I have 'maxed out'. Every bit of wall is covered. The Printery has 4 rooms of a near equal footprint as my current room but the difference being The Printery is appealingly divided and segmented into 4 separate zones.

Due to The printery being segmented into 4 separate spaces I can quite simply segment activities within the studio. Where currently I have been inhibited from having workshops with (for example; paint and children within a 1m proximity of my drawing board) The Printery would afford me the freedom to have defined zones. Believe me I trialled it and having kids, adults and paint and/or food in proximity to my board is not worth running the classes.

So zones are good as they would allow me to expand on activities I could offer, and have been and continue to be asked to provide, in way of classes and produce sampling etc. for the community - both local and passing.

The zones could be:
1 The Produce room for Local & Loved paintings, produce, promotion and sales.
2. The Workshop room for Painting/drawing/photography/charcoal (in other words the messy zone- well away from my drawing board)
3. The Administration room for the functional requirements of all
4. The Drawing room. Which I envisage would be the quaint little room to the north - off the courtyard - which has ample indirect and natural light beneath the east facing window.

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4 separate rooms each safely contained and defined. So if I am called to the counter by the dingle of the doorbell I can safely close my drawing room whilst people mill about the studio space admiring hampers and artworks, peeping in the window at the latest drawing on the board and appreciating the beauty of this little building and it's history (and the beautiful public library next door) which (if given the story) I will happily share.

ORIENTATION: North vs South street frontage:

My current location is north facing. North is beautiful for an artist as one can go blind in the dark. However a north facing display window is troublesome as the sun fades produce, melts candles and is generally detrimental to goods (and can even be too glary on a deep winter sun day). Hence I have been very limited in what I can fill the studio window with to provide a pleasing view to passers-by. One has to step into the studio to understand what is within.

The Printery is south facing with verandah over the north windows (which are small anyhow).
So from a product presence point of view The Printery would be far more practical and presentable and allow space for expansion of such with a view to being a little provedore .of Local Goods.

AESTHETICS AND HERITAGE: Quaint building with story

As mentioned generally people love story especially the tourists. So I would like to share the opportunity for the public to appreciate the beauty and heritage of The Printery.

LOCATION TO TOURISTS: The flow of travellers

The heritage/lake/Powell street precinct is where the majority of tourists and passing traffic rest up and walk about. It would be beneficial to have another open door to offer them.

MORE WALLS: for display

As there are more rooms there are more walls. This provides more space to display and promote local creatives works.

SECURE COURTYARD: Outdoor interest/sculptures

I have been waiting for the opportunity and space to display and promote artworks by the likes of award winning and local sculptor Andrew Whitehead and others. To collaborate with themes from neighbouring towns and cross promote further would be beneficial.

ACCESS TO TOILET AND KITCHEN: Basic amenity

It is desirable to have access to a toilet and a kitchenette and given the approval for a shared facility (with required adjustments) of the former Stubbs Wallace office (which is also councils) this could work.

What I would be willing to pay in rental

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- My current lease agreement is for $77 per week (which includes access to unlimited Wi-fi) I would be satisfied to pay the same or less depending on Wi-fi services available.
- A lease of 12months minimum.
- I have business insurance/public liability etc.

What I would need to make the space functional/practical?
I would need to have the following provisions:

- Access to toilet and kitchen.
- Approval for Picture rail.
- Climate control provided or permission for installation of own.
- Security.
- Use of the yard and courtyard in alignment with Jumptree Studios theme.
- Surety for all that the building and yard would be maintained as a minimum 'as is' and where improved that each would be left as was found or better if agreed.

Benefits to Jumptree Studios (*are mentioned above*) *and to council are*:

- Council building being utilised and maintained (increases longevity)
- Rent for space
- An open door in the heritage precinct
- Complimentary to Library
- Complimentary to the town

So for the sake of filling an empty space, for the sake of providing outlet and sales for other Local and Loved creatives from artists to food artisans, for the sake of being able to share some of the story of town to tourists who wander in, for the sake of my social being welcoming a break from the drawing board, for the sake of providing a sense of life and creative vibe to our little town I am happy to remain as a studio in the main street. And I hope that I can do this within the walls of The Printery.

I have attached images to depict the flavour of what I do. Also please see my social media platforms for further appreciation of what I advocate for at:
www.facebook.com/JumptreeStudios

instagram.com/jumptree_studios

Please consider.

Kind regards,
Hélène Mortlock

Murrumbidgee Council

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All correspondence to be addressed to:
Interim General Manager

Ref: 04.25

17 October 2016

Department of Planning and Environment
Industry Assessments
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Bianca Thornton

Dear Bianca

MODIFICATION TO MP 06_0020 FOUR ARROWS ETHANOL AND DAIRY PROJECT

Applicant: Eagle Energy Pty Ltd
Property: Lots 78, 79 & 80, DP 750896, Kidman Way, Coleambally.

The proposed modification to the above project has been reviewed by Council staff and the review finds that the proposed modification to extent the consent period for three years will have no additional environmental impact.

The project will provide an economic benefit to the region and is considered to be a key project in the diversification of rural based industries in the region.

If you require further information please contact me on 035886 1200.

Yours Sincerely

Susan Appleyard
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES