



SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS PAPER

**(Mayoral Minute Item 16 & Item 17)
GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday 13 September 2023
at 6:30PM**



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16 BUSHFIRE RISK

Hornsby is renowned for its natural beauty. This beauty provides much enjoyment, and we are proud to be known as the “Bushland Shire”. As part of living in the Bushland Shire we are aware that this means we must live with fire. Greater Sydney, and Hornsby Shire in particular are some of the most bushfire prone areas in Australia. Nearly 20,000 properties are within areas mapped as Bush Fire Prone which represent 34% of the Shire.

To address bush fire risk in the Shire, the Rural Fire Service along with Council, other land managers and firefighting agencies have been working collaboratively over the past two years to develop a District Bush Fire Risk Management Plan. This Plan outlines how all authorities will manage bush fire risks within the Shire using treatment strategies such as hazard reduction burning, mechanical clearing, targeted community engagement programs and ignition prevention activities. These treatment strategies are then implemented by the member agencies who are part of the Bush Fire Management Committee, on which I represent Hornsby Shire Council.

A key element of the District Plan is to prevent fires igniting, taking hold, escalating, and becoming uncontrolled fires which threaten life and property. Areas where there have historically been issues arising from human caused ignition or heightened risk of fire ignition are identified in the District Plan as Ignition Management Zone (IMZs). Within these zones deliberate or careless ignitions and illegal fires are a focus for NSW Police, firefighting authorities and local land managers who implement localised strategies to prevent and reduce such fire ignitions. To achieve this focus within IMZ's strategies are implemented to primarily reduce fuels loads (and subsequent fuel escalation) within.

- Locations that are subject to higher levels of human caused ignitions (including arson).
- Areas likely to be more prone to lightning ignitions (e.g., ridgetops) and also by enhancing the effectiveness of rapid suppression operations in these areas.
- Landscape features that generate extreme fire behaviour such as windward or lee slopes or a series of ridgelines.
- Areas that allow for the early establishment of a mosaic fuel pattern in the years following a significant bushfire event.
- Areas which can enable frequent and thorough burning while seeking to avoid and mitigate environmental impact.

This District Plan, which will guide all government agencies responsibilities and outline management strategies was publicly exhibited between 15 May and 30 June this year. Involved in both the Plan's development and public exhibition was the NSW Crown Lands. The Plan included a total of 10 Ignition Management Zones across a number of locations with responsibility for these variously assigned to the NSW Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Crown Lands.

Following the public exhibition period an extraordinary meeting of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Bush Fire Management Committee was held to endorse the Plan and the various treatment strategies before the Plan was referred to the State Bush Fire Co-ordination Committee for finalisation. Importantly this

meeting and its timing was chosen to seek endorsement of the Plan prior to the start of the 2023/24 Bushfire Season.

In the lead up to the extraordinary meeting Crown Lands indicated that they no longer supported the inclusion of Ignition Management Zones on their land and would not endorse the Plan if these treatments were to remain in the Plan. This impacts four of the 10 Ignition Management Zones in the Plan that incorporate some component of Crown Land in a broader area covered by an Ignition Management Zone. The areas in question are the Waddell Ridge Ignition Management Zone (Arcadia), Marramarra Ridge Ignition Management Zone (Fiddletown), Sommerville Road Ignition Management Zone (Hornsby Heights), and Forest Glen Trail Ignition Management Zone (Forest Glen).

Given we are nearly in the Bush Fire Season, the Bush Fire Risk Management Committee reluctantly endorsed the Plan to ensure we had a Plan ahead of the Fire Season. Notwithstanding I am concerned that we now have four Ignition Management Zones with areas where fuel loads won't be reduced despite the identified risk in these areas and to our community.

I therefore seek Council's support in writing to the Premier, Minister for Lands and Property, Local Members of Parliament, Deputy Secretary for Crown Lands and Public Spaces, expressing deep concern regarding the potential exposure of the Hornsby community to heightened risk and vulnerability associated with Crown Lands' reluctance to manage ignition management zones effectively in the Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai Bushfire District.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council write to the Premier, Minister for Lands and Property, Local Members of Parliament, and the Deputy Secretary for Crown Lands and Public Spaces, expressing deep concern regarding the potential exposure of the Hornsby community to heightened risk and vulnerability associated with Crown Lands' reluctance to manage ignition management zones effectively in the Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai Bushfire District.

The Honourable Cr PHILIP RUDDOCK

Mayor

Attachments:

There are no attachments for this report.

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17 THE PASSING OF RON LESLIE

It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Ron Leslie, a prominent figure within our Shire. Ron, born in 1940, was a longstanding resident of our community, who had a profound connection to the local area.

This connection led him to serve our community as a Councillor of Hornsby Shire from 1994 to 1995. During his time in Council, Ron was a strong advocate for low-density residential housing in C Ward and held a vision of enhancing the village atmosphere in the Beecroft and Pennant Hills shopping precincts.

Beyond his Council duties, Ron went on to become the President of the Pennant Hills Business Group and was an active member of the Clan Leslie Society of Australia & New Zealand.

Ron was also deeply passionate about the environment, with a particular focus on bushland preservation, especially at Observatory Park. In 1989, alongside John Noble, he initiated a bush regeneration group at this park, dedicating over 30 years to improving the condition of the bushland through the Bushcare program.

Among his friends, Ron is remembered as a true gentleman - determined yet approachable and exceptionally personable. His legacy is one to be admired, and we are deeply grateful for the significant contributions he made to our community.

On behalf of Council, I extend our deepest sympathies to Ron's family and friends during this difficult time, I understand Ron's funeral will be held tomorrow.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council offer its sincere condolences to family and friends of Mr Ron Leslie whose contribution to the community was significant.

The Honourable Cr PHILIP RUDDOCK

Mayor

Attachments:

There are no attachments for this report.

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