

Memorandum



To:	Interim Administrator, Viv May
From:	General Manager, Lisa Miscamble
Subject:	<i>Wingecarribee Shire Council Bushfire Response and Recovery Review 2021</i>
Date:	25 August 2021

Following the review undertaken by Mr Dave Owens, *Wingecarribee Shire Council Bushfire Response and Recovery Review 2021*, I have engaged Ms Leanne Barnes to assist Council with implementing the recommendations derived from the review.

Ms Barnes will be engaged for a period of three months to work through ensuring a comprehensive plan, with identified outcomes and strategies is developed. Ms Barnes will work in coordination with Council's Project Control Group that will be responsible for working through the recommendations and working with the community with a final draft report and plan to be presented to Council by December 2021.

The work will be undertaken applying the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience (AIDR) five National Principles for Disaster Recovery which cover understanding the context, recognising complexity, using community-led approaches, coordinating all activities, communicating effectively, and recognising and building capacity. The State Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) phases of prevention, preparation, response and recovery will also be integrated in this work.

The initial assessment has indicated that the aspects of the outcome report and plan will cover community resilience with focus on the environment (natural and built), the community and the economy. This work will update on actions to address the recommendations from the review and other work that has been done and the development of a framework strategy and action plan to move towards creating and sustaining community and Council resilience in Wingecarribee. External State and Federal agencies have been very supportive of the work being done and are being consulted about committing resources to achieve the best outcome.

The framework for the report to be considered will cover prevention, preparation, response, recovery, defining and building resilience, and building relationships with the potential to provide a case study for a move to better practice. We know that natural disasters are going to be an ongoing impact on the Wingecarribee community. A key aspect of this work must be allowing the Council and community to consider long term strategic issues and opportunities to build resilience to future impacts from natural hazards. Putting in place a structure that enables the community to engage with, and be aware of, the various planning processes of Local, State and Federal government as well as non-government agencies will also be important.

One positive aspect which has already been identified by the Bushfire Recovery Project Facilitator has been the progress already undertaken which needs to be recognised in this work. Council and the community need to acknowledge not only the gaps but recognise the good things that were done by other agencies, community and Council staff across 2020 and into 2021.

Further work relating to this and supporting staff moving forward is also being incorporated into this work and a broader project also being undertaken.

Memorandum



Update on the NSW State Coroner Inquiry into the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires

The NSW State Coroner is conducting a series of coronial inquests and inquiries relating to the 2019-20 NSW bushfire season.

While there have already been a number of reviews and inquiries into the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires more broadly, this inquiry seeks to look at the effects of individual fires rather than the broad themes covered by previous reviews.

It is acknowledged that this can be traumatic for people to recall or recount their experiences, however, inquiries like this provide an opportunity for governments and agencies to learn from the past and ensure we are better prepared for the future.

Where people choose to participate in the inquiry, or it raises any issues or concerns, we will be encouraging them to reach out to the Recovery Support Service or one of the many organisations that provide health and wellbeing support across the Shire.

The Inquiry commenced with an opening address at the Coroners Court of NSW, Lidcombe on 25 August 2021. Public hearings will be conducted at various regional locations, including Queanbeyan Local Court on 20 September – 1 October 2021.

Anyone needing additional support during this time will be encouraged to contact the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 and ask to be referred to a Bushfire Recovery Clinician. This support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Miscamble', is positioned above the typed name.

Lisa Miscamble
General Manager