

2015/16 Fire Danger Season and Pinery Fire Review

Infrastructure Division

Document control

Contents

Background.....	3
Discussion.....	4
Preparation and planning.....	4
Response.....	6
Recovery.....	10
Summary.....	12
Pinery Fire Review t Recommendations.....	13
Appendix 1 t Preliminary Review Recommendations.....	18

Background

The cancellation or suspension of DECD operated bus and become an issue as it applies to the entire fire ban district. Bus services that operate in regional areas exist to facilitate school attendance for children living in those areas. Although parents and caregivers are expected to make

It is recognised that the education director has a major role to play during an emergency and that additional support may be required immediately in the case of an emergency.

Recommendation 5: That each education director have a nominated first and second proxy in the event of illness or operational incapacity.

Response

During the course of the formal review, site leaders were asked for feedback in relation to the recently released Bushfire Response Procedure. In the course of the review, it was noted that the procedure is clear and concise, and that it provides a good framework for sites to follow. However, it was noted that the procedure does not provide for the appointment of a proxy in the event of illness or operational incapacity of the education director. This is a gap in the procedure that needs to be addressed.

Recommendation 6: That the Bushfire Preparation Procedure provide greater clarity around the appointment of a proxy in the event of illness or operational incapacity of the education director.

The Bushfire Response Procedure also requires that, following the enactment of a site emergency management plan or bushfire response plan, sites and services must seek advice from the Security, Bushfire and Emergency Management unit or education director. Sites must then implement their communications plan to ensure parents, caregivers and relevant corporate personnel are advised of the incident and the actions taken. In providing feedback on the procedure, it was noted that the procedure does not provide for the appointment of a proxy in the event of illness or operational incapacity of the education director. This is a gap in the procedure that needs to be addressed. It was noted that the procedure does not provide for the appointment of a proxy in the event of illness or operational incapacity of the education director. This is a gap in the procedure that needs to be addressed. It was noted that the procedure does not provide for the appointment of a proxy in the event of illness or operational incapacity of the education director. This is a gap in the procedure that needs to be addressed.

that would be employed during an active bushfire emergency. In an activation of the ECC, specific roles and responsibilities will be assigned to staff members. A dedicated point of contact for principals and site leaders. The details for this individual will be provided during the

- a) parents and caregivers are not ordinarily directed to collect children during an active bushfire incident
- b) a system is in place for parents and caregivers to confirm emergency collection instructions for their children
- c) parents and caregivers are aware of

In the hours that immediately followed the Pinery bushfire, the prevailing thought process of DECD, under the advisement of Security, Bushfire and Emergency Management unit personnel, was that there was no guaranteed means of communicating the closure of all schools in the area to every parent or caregiver affected. During the

Summary

The preliminary review in December 2015 concluded that DECD policies and procedures regarding bushfire management and response were followed on the day of the Pinery fire. At the time of the bushfire, a new Emergency Management Framework, Bushfire Preparation Procedure and Bushfire Response Procedure were in the process of being approved for implementation. As a consequence, whilst policies and procedures that were current at the time of the bushfire were followed, sites were utilising documents constructed in 2014.

The content of this review and its subsequent recommendations will be used to inform the ongoing evaluation of the DECD Emergency Management Framework and associated procedures for 2016.

The consistent theme of the formal review and subsequent recommendations is the need for accurate information to be disseminated and readily available to all DECD staff. This has proven to be true across the planning, response and recovery stages of an emergency incident. The preliminary review highlighted the need for principals and site leaders to be more aware of the respective roles of sites, education directors and corporate personnel. This has been further highlighted during the course of the formal review. Whilst there has previously been discussion around it is apparent that this training need not extend to specialist courses. Provided the respective elements of the DECD Emergency Management Framework and Bushfire Response Procedure are in place, it would be more than leadership positions are aware of their responsibilities and paths of communication.

Several months after the Pinery fire, attendees at the formal review unanimously acknowledged that this particular bushfire spread with breathtaking speed and ferocity, leaving little or no time for those closest to the fire to adequately respond. This in turn led to uncertainty and confusion for schools and preschools located a greater distance from the

In the immediate aftermath of the event and in the weeks that followed, a number of questions have been raised associated with the management of the incident.

It was accepted, that whilst there are areas for improvement, many of which had been implemented after the preliminary review, the bushfire had exposed some inefficiencies at both a site and corporate office level that would otherwise not have been apparent through scenario based testing or simulation.

Some of the areas for improvement have been or are in the process of being undertaken, including policy improvements, a simplified Emergency Management Plan template and the planned development of a more instructional Emergency Management Procedure. This report contains 22 recommendations to assist in the improved management of bushfires and other major emergencies in the future and include recommendations that have arisen through the natural course of the annual fire danger season review. Whilst undoubtedly a significant

Pinery Fire Review t Recommendations

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Timeline for implementation:

Immediate

DECD Business Unit(s) Responsible:

Security, Bushfire and Emergency Management

Recommendation 2: That a review of the DECD policy in relation to school transport arrangements on days of
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Timeline for implementation:

Review to commence by 1 August 2016. Policy changes to be effected prior to 30 September 2016.

DECD Business Unit(s) Responsible:

Transport Services

Security, Bushfire and Emergency Management

Recommendation 3:

Recommendation 17:

