

From: Les Edmestone [REDACTED]
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Subject: Rural Fire Brigades

Attachments: Rural Fire Brigades.doc



Rural Fire
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Les Edmestone
Chief Executive Officer

Etheridge Shire Council
PO Box 12
GEORGETOWN QLD 4871

Ph: (07) 4062 1233
Fax: (07) 4062 1285
Web: www.etheridge.qld.gov.au

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- **Is the current model of Rural Fire Brigades suitable?**

1. The addition of a sub category within Rural Fire Brigades that recognizes and deals with the unique and challenging issues facing REMOTE AREA BRIGADES.

- **Is the existing funding model, including recourse allocation appropriate?**

1. Funding model.

Currently it is expected of local brigades to fund raise within the community to meet the gaps in purchase of/or fully fund the purchase of new or replacement equipment. In rural areas this is difficult at the best of times; however, in remote areas with low population bases this requirement has led to individual members having to delve into their own pockets to fund both running and equipment costs.

2. Resource allocation.

Within remote areas, resources can sit idle for extended periods of time however when activated they can be stretched to the limit and beyond, the current system of justifying remote area resources needs to be addressed. In other words, if we could hold certain resources, e.g. Foam, in larger quantities in storage then it would be available when needed. Unfortunately, due to the tyranny of distance and other factors, IF a large scale fire threatens a remote area then the Brigades will call on each other to assist with resources, if these are not readily available then they need to be "freighted" in, obviously by the time that happens it is usually too late.

- **What effect is urban encroachment within brigade areas having on Rural Fire Brigades?**

1. This would not appear to be applicable to Remote Areas like the Etheridge Shire where urban encroachment is not a factor in the near foreseeable future.

- **How can the increasing demands on Rural Fire Brigades be managed effectively?**

1. Refer back to above comments, obviously an increase in membership/volunteers would be needed, but again, small and limited population vastly spread out makes this very difficult. Better and reliable vehicles with equipment suitable to remote area fire fighting techniques.

- **Are the accountability mechanisms currently in place appropriate?**

1. Yes as long as they address remote area problems appropriately.

- **What should be the role of Fire Wardens within the Rural Fire services model?**

1. Representative, without prejudice

- **Are there any other relevant matters the committee needs to address?**

1. Other than the need to consider addressing storage of afore-mentioned fire fighting equipment relevant to remote areas which incorporate not only townships but remote area cattle stations and in some cases remote area Tourist destinations.

2. The need to address funding to avoid the need for members to cover costs of replacing/repairing fire fighting equipment and paying for vehicle fuel privately or by donation by local residents and Businesses who are already donating to most other things in Shires/Towns due to the extremely limited amount of population and businesses in remote areas.
3. The Fire Brigades in these remote areas are required to attend, quite often, in conjunction with other emergency services, and the distances needed to be travelled inevitably lead to the costs escalating. The need to replace fire fighting equipment and repairs/maintenance to vehicles is constant as the vehicles and equipment age.