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Your Ref: Inquiries/Rural Fires 147.10.55 Our Ref: MH:LMF File No: Contact: Mr Mike Hyde

Mr Wayne Wendt MP Public Accounts and Public Works Committee Parliament House Alice & George Streets Brisbane Qld 4000

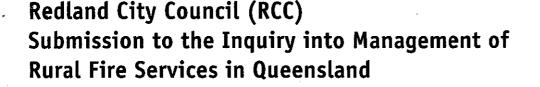
Dear Mr Wendt

Re: Queensland Public Accounts and Public Works Committee Management of Rural Fire Services in Queensland

Please find attached the Redland City Council's submission to the subject Committee enquiring into the Management of Rural Fire Services in Queensland.

Yours faithfully,

Gary Sevenson CEO Redland City Council





BACKGROUND

Within the Redlands City area Redland City Council has Queensland Fire and Rescue Services (QF&RS) Rural Brigades covering the Southern Morning Bay Island (SMBI) of Russell, Macleay, Lamb and Karragarra. These brigades come under the direction of QF&FS Rural Operations based out of Caboolture Area Office.

The rest of Redland City environs are covered by QF&RS Urban brigades (full time) located at Cleveland, Capalaba and Redland Bay Fire Stations and by QF&RS Urban Auxillary Brigades (paid part time) located at Coochiemudlo Island and North Stradbroke Island.

The SMBI's are increasing in urbanisation with a local frequency of wildfires. The population of the Bay Islands is currently about 4,200 and is expected to increase to about 24,000 by 2031. This is resulting in an increasing in houses being built in and vehicular traffic on the island. As mentioned above there is a low incident of wildfires on the island. However, given the isolation of the islands, wildfire does have the potential to have major impacts. Hazard reduction burns on Council controlled land is undertaken by the Redland City Council Fire Management teams with additional resources provided by QF&RS Rural brigades.

The role of the rural fire brigades to assist with hazard reduction management of private land is invaluable as much as Council has in proactive fire management of the Council estate, management of fire hazards on private land is essential.

Fire management hazard reduction practices will also have significant benefit on the protection of the biodiversity within the City, if done appropriately and managed by a well trained and experienced brigades be that rural auxiliary and permanent officers.

ISSUES

The role of the Rural Brigades is changing with an increase in accountability, training provision and administration. This increase in work load is being taken on by a largely volunteer workforce. With the changing nature of the bay island the role of the Rural Brigades does need to be refocused as the incidents will move towards more Road Accident Rescue and Structural Fire fighting. The brigades on the Bay Islands are well resources however being a volunteer workforce are restricted in the level of emergency response that they can undertake. The brigades need to change to the QF&RS Urban Auxiliary model with the islands of Macleay and Russell having a full time Station Officer with paid part time Auxiliary fire fighters. The Queensland Police Service has recently appointed full time Police Officers to Russell and Macleay Islands as the increasing population service needs increase.

The role of community education for residents on the island need to be addressed and current Rural brigade resourcing and time commitments does prevent this from being effective. Education needs to be focused on the full range of emergency issues presented on the island and is best achieved by full time staff commitment.

Having a full time QF&RS commitment on the Bay Islands will lead to more proactive liaison with Council and assessments of risk areas.

Redland City Council (RCC) Submission to the Inquiry into Management of Rural Fire Services in Queensland



Should you require any additional information or have any questions relating to this submission, Council's point of contact is Mike Hyde who can be contacted on (07) 3829 8252.

Gary Stevenson CEO Redland City Council