

**Debrief Meeting for “BILLO” ROAD FIRE HELD ON 30TH January 2007
in the Riverina Highlands Building, 76 Capper Street TUMUT
commencing at 3.05 pm**

PRESENT: Clr Graham Smith (Chairperson), Brian Royal (IC), Clr Ron Blyton (Tumbarumba), John Jervois (Group Captain, Tumbarumba), Clr Michael Kingwill (Gundagai), Bruce McGregor (Group Captain, Gundagai), Mayor Vanzella (Tumut), Paul Mullins, Chris Adams (TSC), Rodney Purcell (Group Captain, Tumut), Steven Horsley, Mick Pettitt, Andrew Grant (NPWS), Bob Germantse, Charlie Taylor (SF NSW), Matthew Tishler (NSW Police), Col Holmes, Kerry Willis (NSW FB), Alan Walker, Brian Murphy (ACT RFS), Graham Wade (DL&W), Jim Wrenford, (RLB) Gus McEachern (Wilmontt), Phil Sterling (Hume Forests), representatives (NSW Ambulance) Ken Hall, Keith McKay, Shane Fitzsimmons, Tracie McGrath, Lindsay Lashbrook, Steven Jory, Tony Clee, (RFS) Marie Casey, minute secretary

APOLOGIES: Colin Honeyman (RTA) and Graham Johnson (Country Energy),

OVERVIEW: Brian Royal, Incident Controller (IC) gave an overview of the Billo Road Fire on behalf of himself and Ian Stewart.

- There were 6 fires running at the time of the S44 declaration Dec 10 to Dec 21 2006. Four of them minor and handled by RFS.
- The Common Trail fire at Tumut ignited at 2100 hours on the Saturday night is suspected to have been deliberately lit. The fire was contained to 82 hectares and took 24 hrs to black out.
- NPWS and RFS suspect the Yarralla Street (Tumut) fire was another fire that was deliberately lit that burnt 5 hectares.
- 3 vehicles were deliberately set on fire, causing concern.

It is suspected the Billo fire was started as a result of a burnt out car. The fire destroyed one of the largest areas of pine plantation since 1983 where a fire that started in Victoria south of Bombala burnt 8600 planted hectares. The Billo fire was not as large as the ACT plantation loss in 2003 but still significant in the fact that it burnt quickly and was contained quickly.

In the lead up to December 10 there were 29 lightning strikes in the fire management area that were contained in a very short time. This highlights the fire fighting capabilities of local agencies, particularly when given warning of lightning events

- Between the 10th and 21st of December there were many large fires running around the nation; Tasmania, Victoria and North West NSW all experienced erratic fire behaviour due to weather conditions and very dry fuels. To contain the Billo fire after 5 days and declare it safe within 10 days was a credit to all involved.
- The main strategy for the Billo fire was to use the main network of roads as control lines that greatly assisted in controlling the fire.
- The value of the plantation asset and the surrounding private property resulted in a very large amount of resources utilised allowing a strategy to stay in as close as possible without endangering fire fighters.

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- Aircraft use was excellent. Large numbers of aircraft worked closely with ground support, water tankers and earth moving machinery during the incident.
- There was good integration at the Incident Command Centre with staff from all agencies having experience with the 2003 fires around Tumut. There is a need to encourage future integrated training and familiarisation with staff at all levels and all agencies, including the ACT. Support from RFS Head office was effective and well managed.

FIRST RESPONSE

Tony Clee read out a statement with details of the fire:

- Sunday 10th December 2006 commenced with a mop up of a small fire in the Ournie Valley, Tumbarumba and a request from the CFA for a portable dam to be delivered to a fire south of the Murray River. At 0857 hours a 000 call was received by the RFS Duty Officer advising of a reported bush fire on Billo Road near the picnic area.
- At 0900 SFNSW duty officer was contacted and offered assistance if required
- At 0950 SFNSW requested contract aircraft from the RFS air desk, bulk water tankers were deployed to the Tumut Airport and arrangements made to open the air base retardant depot.
- At 0953 Tumorrana RFB responded and other brigades were responded during that morning.

DECLARATION / REVOCATION:

Details and Section 44 declaration were discussed with Bob Germantse. A meeting of the emergency BFMC emergencies operations group was called which made a recommendation through Ken Hall (RFS Regional Ops Officer) to the Commissioner to declare a Section 44. This was accepted by the Commissioner.

APPOINTMENT OF IC

At 1530 the S44 was declared and Brian Royal appointed the Incident Controller

The declaration was lifted on 21st December at 0900 hours.

- Bob Germantse commented that the initial level of response was appropriate with normal operational procedures followed.
- The IC commented that there had been no lightning strikes recorded in the area for 5 days previous to the 10th of December. If there had, surveillance would have been upgraded.
- Ken Hall commented that under the S52 Plan, Forestry and NPWS man fire towers and has agreed times when they are operated. There was a general discussion on whether the agreed 10:00 am start was early enough given the conditions. Steven Horsley agreed with Bob Germantse that a recent spate of burnt out cars is a new element not previously considered as a source of ignition and hard to guard against.
- Ken Hall: From the Committee point of view do we need to look at the S52 plan each year and amend it where necessary.

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- Rodney Purcell commented that the smoke column was very visible at the Billo fire early in the morning and was obvious a major fire was developing. He asked what SF thoughts were on responding brigades earlier. SF commented that they are happy to welcome any earlier response arrangements and visa versa if required.
- Clr Kingwill said he called on the Adjungbilly brigade RFS radio enquiring as to where the fire was. He was told it was at the Billo picnic area but wasn't told to respond and there appeared to be no urgency.

ORGANISATIONS/AGENCIES INVOLVED:

- Agencies involved with the Billo Road Fire: SF NSW, NPWS, DPI Agriculture and Forestry, ACT RFS, NSW RFS, NSW FB, Local Emergency Management Committee, Police, Ambulance, Transgrid Private Pine owners both Hume and Wilmontt. RTA, Tumut Health, SES, DOCS, Tumut Shire Council, un-affiliated volunteers and the local hospitality industry, Salvation Army supplied food and Agro camp supplied accommodation

FIREGROUND ACCESS FOR FIREFIGHTERS:

Problems identified:

- Access network quite reasonable as extensive work had been done on some tracks.
- Compartment roads are accessible and are opened as needed in operational matters.
- Strategic access network is reasonable but there were difficulties in getting to the fire due to the blackberries.
- Rodney Purcell & Keith Harrison (RFS Group Captains) commented on blackberries causing problems. If a dozer wasn't working in close proximity to the fire tankers there was difficulty in getting to the fire. Other problems identified were branches hanging over trails and blackberries on the edge of the trails caused problems getting to spot fires.
- Clr Kingwill commented on the lack of maps. The only map he received was after about 3 days and that being a second hand Forestry map.
- Charlie Taylor (SF) advised maps were produced but were on an insufficient scale and style to what was needed. Producing and distribution of maps was a problem.
- Bob Germantse (SF) explained that the SF maps have a field purpose but Div Comms said that they are not that useful. There is a need to work out what particular maps are required from the IMT so everyone knows what it is and who should receive maps.
- Ken Hall (RFS) commented that Strike Teams who come in from other areas come in blind and have no idea of State Forests or National Parks. People who go to the fire ground to deliver food or for other reasons need to have access to maps or have good signage to follow. There is a need to look at appropriate signage, Topographic maps and overview maps to know where the fire was. If everyone is working off the same map, and signage is in place, everyone has a clearer picture of what's on the fire ground. These are two things that need to be organised.

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- There was an issue of crews not coming through the staging area and therefore couldn't pick up a map, particularly coming in from Yass.
- Bob Germantse commented there was any avenue for LIC Maps as Topo maps are not up to date.
- Tony Clee commented that the maps used by RFS are a scale of 1:25,000 and are in all tankers.
- It was noted that no plantations are shown on the 1:25,000 maps and RFS have to rely on GIS data.
- Paul Mullins (Tumut Shire Council) said that mapping was a significant issue and the TSC GIS officer who worked in the operation centre submitted a report to the TSC saying that primarily there was an issue with Emergency Operations Centre. The report recommended a small working party with the relevant agencies be formed to work through the issues identified with the fire.
- It was recommended by Clr Smith (Tumbarumba Shire Council) to take this to next Bush Fire Management Committee meeting.

PUBLIC ACCESS:

It was noted that the Council responded quickly on this issue:

- Stan Wall commented that there is power in the Bush Fire Act to close roads and is the most appropriate Act to use where there is danger to the public. There is a clause under the Act that the RFS can seek a road to be closed;
 - 1) In the initial emergency where they may use an appliance to cause a road to be closed or;
 - 2) Seek support from Council, RTA and Police to work out the best traffic management issue for road closure.
- The Chairperson commented to Stan Wall that there were people located in the fire area on private property and at the Bondo camp that did not want to be evacuated.
- Stan stated he was not aware of this as he was not there for the first couple of days. Asked whether they couldn't be evacuated or didn't want to be evacuated. It was explained they wanted to do their own property protection.
- From the IC point of view, there were not many incidents where Firefighters had trouble with traffic flow or members of the public complaining because they couldn't get access. Not one accident involving the public with a firefighting appliance was recorded.
- There was flexibility with road closures and not blanket closures depending on circumstances. It was a hard situation for council workers to make decisions on who is authorised to go through the road closures, private landholders, contractors etc.

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8. STRATEGIES:

- There were major debates at senior level as to whether blocks should be sacrificed to manage a burn back or use the major road system and wait for the right winds. It was a 50/50 either way and fortunately some of the decisions paid off. The IC consulted with the Forestry DivComs on the ground to what they thought they could do with the resources available.
- Charlie Taylor (SF) commented some opportunistic strategies were put in place. Back burns put in when winds allowed, south of Bondo, and off Mason Road. These strategies were developed via a telephone conversation and put in place immediately.
- Group Officer Rodney Purcell commented that on the Monday when the fire made a run to the north east, they were trying to hold the fire line with a single dozer and given the forecast weather conditions that eventuated, they struggled. Towards the end of the day the Argalong area had 50 meter runs and had a strategy been put in place on Monday we would've had a better chance to hold the fire. Should SFNSW look at having strategy breaks in the plantations that can be used as a fall backs as it did in the private land? Every time we lost the fire we constructed another single dozer width off a trail and were compounding the problem. He realised that SF were trying to keep it in close to protect the asset.
- The IC commented that a lot work had been done on day four around the Argalong area, 40 or 50 meter wide breaks had been put in that worked in the last couple of days. The first two days were scratchy, but the asset owner had made a decision that the top corner had been lost and the best place to hold the fire was in the dry grass paddock area. He agreed it was a good opportunity to contain the fire. In total 23 dozers and 10 graders were used.
- Clr Kingwill: On the Monday on the North East corner it was spotting out 5 klms at a time so it didn't matter how wide the breaks were, nothing could be done. Clr Smith questioned about the flow of information backward and forwards between the IMT and the people fighting the fires.
- Shane Fitzsimmons (RFS): One of pleasing things about the management of this fire was the sensible approach to what the strategic fall back lines would be in terms of not holding the fire in the smaller compartments. One of things pressing on to the IMT is not to just focus on the suppression but think about the big issue when developing strategies.
- Communication from the Div Com level went straight to the level of the person making the decisions and not through someone else. In this case the communication was excellent.
- IMT has all agencies involvement.

9. EOC

- Tony Clee: When it became obvious there would be a S44 it was prudent to call in the EOC sooner rather than later.
- Graham Smith: A meeting organised by the local RFS in August which included local government and land managers was the basis for the planning of overall strategies for an incident such as the 'Billo' fire.
- Stan Wall: The planning and structure of the EOC is in place all the time and had its own debrief with various matters raised. There was some

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misunderstanding in the early stages of our role but this was quickly sorted. Appreciated involvement with the IC.

- Liaison officers for any agency coming into the EOC must be trained and have command capabilities to give orders, spend dollars, and provide information.
- Accommodation task – EOC doing the whole lot which avoids double bookings.
- Meals: SF, NPWS and RFS need to get together to discuss what is the expectation of feeding fire fighters
- IC explained the problem is that there is an expected standard of catering which can't be supplied if the fire is 200kl from the nearest town. Local area may not be able to supply the requirements.
- Issues with salaried staff and agencies and award conditions variations Difficult issue and always will be
- Paul Mullins (Tumut Shire Council). Community should have an opportunity to have input into the debrief process as they are major players and suggested that they be invited to make submissions to hear their point of view and their comments.
- Paul Mullins – Media. General feeling that there was insufficient information given to the community via the community radio in the first 24 to 48 hours. Local briefings should be scheduled so they know when they can get updated information.
- Paul Mullins - Ordering System. TSC handled the financial side of the operation that is currently in the order of one million dollars in claims to the RFS. Consideration should be given to the verification of the orders system. These are signed by the IC but there is no mechanism in the verification system. Invoices are coming to Council and they have no way of knowing if they were genuine or not. All agencies should have a general understanding of what is acceptable
- IC questioned what action was taken to get them verified. He said there were occasions when he refused to sign as there was no reference to TSC and wouldn't sign any that didn't go through RFS or SFNSW. He relied upon communication, his own knowledge and general understanding.
- Ken Hall. Finance is always a difficult area. Council has an involvement in the logistical section whether through the EOC or the FCC and is an important part. Foam, accommodation and mechanics at the staging area can be accommodated through State Operations so we can use a State cheque and not a local Council cheque. We need a person who is going to manage this: the request; receipt of goods and payment for goods. At Council and State level there needs to be someone trained in this area.
- Paul Mullins - EOC organised the supply of a bulk fuel tanker which was organised through a supplier from Wagga; the order was “supply a bulk fuel Tanker”. The tanker refuelled a number of times for staging area; no one signed off when he was there or when he left, so we had no way of verifying how many times he refilled. TSC received an invoice for \$40,000.
- Chris Adams (TSC): Council had processed 1 million dollars in claims and are carrying a lot of money for the State Government and would appreciate a quick reimbursement,

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- Bob Germantse (SFNSW): commented on the Community feedback; the issue of the evacuation process and getting feedback is relevant. He suggested that the feedback go through the EOC and not the BFMC
- Shane Fizzesimmons (RFS) - The investment in Community Liaison with major fires is growing season by season. Once there is a debrief to clarify what's happened during the fire they will hold a Community Meeting and someone will give an overview, how it started, where it came from and what was done. The EOC is there as the Community Liaison and they will carry the feedback into the Community to give a bigger picture later on and answer their concerns.
- Stan Wall asked if there were any great dramas with catering and accommodation and if so, could he be informed? DOCS are the functional area control for this. He commented that he felt Agro-Care did a good job with accommodation. If there are any concerns with catering please minute them so it can be presented at a later forum between DOCS and the Salvation Army
- Ken Hall: Issues with the building used for the EOC, FCC and the IMT up stairs and downstairs. Same thing in 2003, there was an issue with no area suitable for planning, operations and logistics and will take this further
- Clr Smith commented that the facilities for the EOC were good. The co-operation and liaison between the three areas was great. The debrief held each morning and afternoon did break the ice.

10. IMT

- The available of the MIC 24 hrs a day and their response was certainly fantastic. SF, NPWS and RFS brought in people from out of area,
- Ken Hall: In the S52 Plan the BFMC should identify and list the people with the skills to be IC, Planning officers, Operations Officers, Logistic Officers and Div Commanders and look at their available each year. Div Comms is a crucial area of any IMT and the people that are identified need to be comfortable with that role. Problems we are finding with multi agencies at Div Com level are that there is no cross agency training. Recommendation that we do refresher training annually.

11. COORDINATION ON THE FIREGROUND

- IC: It was noted that there are issues with agency radios not having the ability to talk to each other. Disappointing that RFS and SF could not talk to each other across sectors and divisions. Air attacks could not talk to people on the ground.
- Rodney Purcell echoed these sentiments. SF uses their radio system everyday and when there is a fire they come on line automatically, RFS is basically an operations radio. UHF worked well on the fire line, talking vehicle to vehicle. At a Div Com level Comms back to operations could be improved
- Ken Hall suggest that a working party be formed to review the Coms Plan and come up with an arrangement that goes across State Forests, RFS, Parks and other agencies

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- Ambulance Service: Need to have a field communication plan; talk directly to the field crews. RFS radios in ambulance for communication was good. SF & NPWS Comms in some ambulances would be good
- Technical options available state wide to managing communication between agencies. Don't want everyone on the one channel, need a strategic Comms plan and a tactical field Comms plan. People need to know about the ability to interact and who's on what channel.
- NSW FB: no internal problems, areas with trouble spots in initial stages and mobile phone coverage dropping out

12. UTILISATION OF RESOURCES

- RFS - 520 out of area crew members, 74 tankers, 11 helicopters and 6 fixed wing aircraft
- NSW SF - 25 tankers; 300 personnel, 70 small tanker units, 23 dozers, water carts and an excavator
- NSW FB – 1 strike team, 3 tankers
- ACT 11 tankers on and off
- Private Plantation – 1 tanker, 2 small units and 6 people
- RFS Strike Teams – 15 and 60 tankers
- NSW Ambulance - 30 personnel, 3 vehicles
- TSC did not have a list. Water suppliers
- NPWS - 4 slip-ons and 13 personnel. Steven commented that they had other fires elsewhere.

IC commented that there was no problem getting resources. RFS ability to get big dozers was good.

13. CATERING AND ACCOMMODATION

- Chris Adams - Needs to be a statement on this issue. The main problem with the agency responsible was that they were approaching it at the wrong level; they were seeing their job as giving people a sausage sandwich and not planning it.
- C/r Kingwill said he felt it was the lack of distribution on the fire ground was the problem
- Shane Fitzsimmons: The provision of catering is predominately a local issue and there is pressure to keep it local. Until such time as the magnitude of the provision is beyond the locals to handle there is a need to engage local distribution. We are meeting with the State area functional coordinator (DOCS) in relation to meeting the primary providers of catering for emergencies across NSW. There is a view of getting commercial contracts in place at a State level for the provision of meal packs in high volumes when needed.
- Shane Fitzsimmons also pointed out that he dislikes demarcation on the fire line between staff and volunteers. What's good for one is good for another. We need to keep our fire fighters happy by effective tasking, feeding them and accommodation
- NSW FB: Standards are set in their Award and states a level of accommodation and meals. Industrial agreement with our Firefighters is that all meals are to be in individual packets. We try to maintain our own

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crews. No accommodation here so stayed at Wagga. Experienced double booking in Tumut and had crews everywhere.

- Shane Fitzsimmons: I sympathise with the catering targets but we have standards set to meet safe food handling. There is no demarcation with the quality and standards given to a salary organisation, verses a volunteer organisation.
- Staging area food outlet –Too many people to be able to provide food to crews on the ground and it became a logistical issue. Food is required at a certain time and if cannot be supplied it needs to be resourced from somewhere else.
- The problem was the coordination and management of the resources.
- People not coming in though the staging area were not provided with food and no food was delivered to the fire line. Some people arrived that did not have food. It was recognised that this was not acceptable and people should not have to travel unnecessarily to get food.
- EOC can only respond to what information comes from the IMT. Crews stood down and info not forwarded, therefore food was wasted.

14. MEDIA AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Initially on the Monday and Tuesday there was a problem with the broadcast of the fire as it was not picked up quick enough, however the local ABC then broadcast on the hour and every half hour after, as did the local radio station.
- After the co-ag inquiry into the 2001 / 2002 / 2003 fires it was recommended that all States and Territories sign up with broadcasting agreements with the ABC & broader media across NSW
- Local media management with dedicated support was provided along with a 1800 number specific for the local area and a website for people to get the information as required
- People most at threat were well communicated with.
- IC phoned ACT RFS 3 times a day. Phone hook up with a number of emergency managers in the ACT and their media carried a lot of the information. Media people appointed and were kept up to date. May have been a lack of media on first day as concentrated more on the fire.

15. MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- IC commented that there needs to be more interagency training as people move on and lose track of what is required within various levels of IMT.
- Ken Hall explained ICON software and the IAPs and its mapping module are a new level of fire fighting. Need to look at keeping the training going at a local level.
- Keith Harrison (Group Captain) commented that generally it worked well. A few out of area paid staff lacked local knowledge. Differences between SF / NPWS and Volunteers crews are their shift time changeover. Paid staff can only work for a certain amount of time and then knock off. Volunteers changed around the same time but end up with gaps. We need to stagger change over times.

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Incidents and Damage

1. 2 rollovers, 7 injuries: smoke inhalation through not wearing a smoke mask, burnt hand, lacerations, strains and a injured back from getting out of the tanker
2. 4 vehicle accidents- 2 involved in fire over run, Comms Bus accident, fatigue related, single occupant and fatigue related single occupant rollover returning home after the fire
3. Lacerations and eye wash attended to by the Ambulance service
4. Over run of a bull dozer – open cab
5. Laceration to lower leg.
6. Knee Ligament
7. Foam in an eye
8. Hand burn when Volunteer fell on hot coals

Asset value: no stock losses, sheds or buildings, quite a bit of fencing; loss of value with the standing pine trees - gross figures \$52 million with no salvage costs included but will be reduced with the salvage effort happening at the moment.

17 CAUSE OF FIRE AND INVESTIGATIONS

- Strike Force Toronto established to look at all the fires along with the local police is involved in an ongoing investigation.
- IC explained that the source of ignition was a stolen car dumped a hundred meters from a picnic area. It was set alight late pm Saturday or early am Sunday. Second vehicle was dragged across the path to impede access to the burning vehicle.
- Common Trail fire is historically known for a dumping area for household rubbish and a known trouble spot for deliberately lite fires and is under investigation also.

18. PREPARDNESS

- Tony Clee: August meeting pre-empted most of this fire and we all learnt from that meeting. Meeting went well and had good representation from the Councils and all agencies. Pre-season preparedness was addressed in S52 plan.
- Ken Hall: Pre-season check list is about initial response, communication issues; how are we going to talk to each other on the fire ground, what vehicles are available, list of the persons to make decisions and have the authority to make the decisions and their availability. Look at the issues and make sure we don't make the same mistakes again.
- Need to recognise staging area controllers and air base controllers. All 3 shires should support having a dedicated Fire Control Centre.
- Tony Clee commented that funding is available through grants for this type of thing e.g. Emergency Management Grants.

19 RELATIONSHIP TO BUSH FIRE RISK PLAN

- Risk Plan comes back to the first areas talked about. Look at the trails in the forest that could've been used and should be on the map; should they be broken up to make strategic breaks to hold fires.

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- Question was asked when replanting is done, are there any fire planning strategies being looked at for the future. With the breaks and the different terrains this would be an ideal opportunity to look at this.
- Comes back to access to the fire trails. Need to improve signage as daunting to people who are not involved with pine plantations.
- Gus McEachern’s experience from working with Victorian forestry is they built and maintained a network of strategic fire breaks and were diligent with maintaining the breaks; slashing and spraying.
- The issue is identifying where they exists, where they should be and is it practical to do so. It’s more about having the strategic network identified and accessibility for routine fire suppression. In the extreme event it’s not always going to hold. Traditional fire suppression tactics overnight have not been working this season.

20. OTHER ISSUES

- ACT RFS– most of the issues have been covered. Need to be working together a lot more and look at the resources available across the area. ACT RFS are available earlier in a support role. Aircraft training opportunities in the ACT can be utilised across the area. Phone hook ups are crucial in keeping the ACT informed with smoke sighting so keep the liaison going.
- NSWFB is part of the BFMC committee and was not notified until Tuesday that there was a fire. Their understanding of the S52 Plan is that once a S44 is declared all executive staff on the BFMC is notified. Col Holmes requested that they be contacted on the day as they are here to help with property protection.
- Tony Clee advised that he advised a NSWFB staff member on the Sunday of the fire.
- Shane Fizzesimmons advised at a State level the NSWFB Executive is advised immediately of any decision to declare S44 and automatically should go through fire brigades chain of command. There should be no reason why the Superintendent would be notified several days after the event.
- NSW Ambulance:
 1. Advised of the importance to get early activation if there is an incident to allow them to be in a stand by mode to meet the needs on the fire ground. They are geared to meet an emergency in a town but not on the fire ground.
 2. Through experience they are starting to act in a health assessment role on standby. In a previous experience at Wagga, everyone on the fire ground went through a health assessment when they came off a shift. Started to identify people becoming dehydrated.
 3. If there is good communication between the safety officer, Div Comms and the field ambulance crews by radio or personal contact, a response on the fireground it is dealt with quickly. Didn’t feel they had good coms between the safety officers and the fire ground and field ambulance crews, felt isolated and not part of the team. Make it more formalised; who actually deals with the Ambulance field crew and how they are responded. Need for a Local Communication plan where our field crews talk directly to people who are guiding them in and know where people are.

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- Shane Fitzsimmons explained that these issues have been raised by the Senior Ambulance Officers. The preferred arrangement is that the most senior ambulance liaison officer is located in the FCC during a major incident. The ambulance has a support role to the front line fire fighter and a critical role in effected communities. The field staging of any ambulance support is preferred at a staging area or a fixed divisional commander post where incidents happen.

21 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Chairperson commented that the debrief have produced reams of suggestions, recommendations and amendment to the S52 Plan to speed up the system and make it better for next time.

- Shane Fitzsimmons commented it's been great to have the opportunity to listen to the issues that emerged during this campaign. It was disappointing that some critical elements did happen well, like the feeding of crews. It's great that we can reflect on these and focus on them to get them right. As a team you did exceptionally well under very difficult circumstances; geography, climatology etc. and it was a huge save in the circumstances. The observation was that the team worked exceptionally well together. There was a need to talk about liaison, teams, people talking and working together and getting on with the job and that was reflected here. The team was steered very well by a most competent Incident Controller. He passed on appreciation from the Commissioner to the IC personally on a job well done.
- IC accepted the accolades and thanked his team for their efforts.
- SF thanked everyone involved, few accidents and incidents. Appreciated the efforts and help put in by everyone.
- IC will complete an Incident Control Report complete with recommendations he noted as constructive from this meeting.
- Tony Clee thanked the volunteers and all agencies for their time, dedication and commitment to the Billo Fire.

Closed 5.50 p,m