

MEETING NOTES

7 FEBRUARY 2008, 1.00 PM – 2.15 PM

ADELAIDE HILLS COUNCIL

Present

Hon Jennifer Rankine MP, Minister for State/Local Government Relations (Chair)
Hon Gail Gago, MLC, Minister for Environment and Conservation
Hon Carmel Zollo MLC, Minister for Emergency Services
Mayor Joy Baluch, President, Local Government Association (by telephone)
Mayor Ivan Brooks, City of Mitcham
Mayor Kym McHugh, Alexandrina Council
Ms Wendy Campana, Executive Director, Local Government Association of South Australia
Mr Peter Peppin, Chief Executive Officer, Adelaide Hills Council, representing, Mr Jeff Tate (Metropolitan Chief Executive Officers Committee)
Mr Geoff Knight, Chief Executive, Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA
Mr John Hanlon, Executive Director, Office for State/Local Government Relations

Apologies

Hon Patrick Conlon MP, Minister for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure
Hon Paul Holloway MLC, Minister for Urban Planning and Development
Hon Karlene Maywald MP, Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Regional Development
Ms Bronwyn Halliday, Executive Director, Planning SA
Mr Jeff Tate, Chief Executive Officer, Onkaparinga Council (Metropolitan Chief Executive Officers Committee)
Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis, City of Marion
Mr John Coombe, Chief Executive Officer, Alexandrina Council (Local Government Managers Australia)
Mr Andy Dennard, Branch Secretary, Australian Services Union
Mr Gary Henderson, Branch Organiser, Australian Workers' Union

Observers

Observers of the meeting represented the LGA, various State agencies and councils.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Minister for State/Local Government Relations welcomed members to this special meeting of the Minister's State/Local Government Forum.

Mayor Bill Cooksley welcomed the Forum to the Adelaide Hills Council.

2. WANGARY BUSHFIRE CORONIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Minister Rankine thanked members for attending this special meeting of the Minister's State/Local Government Forum, organised to discuss the Wangary Bushfire Coronial Recommendations. Minister Rankine requested that this meeting be held to provide members with a briefing by the Minister for Emergency Services on the work undertaken to progress the recommendations of the Coronial Report.

Minister Zollo then addressed the Forum, summarising the inquiries that have taken place since the bushfires on the Eyre Peninsula in 2005. The SA Country Fire Service conducted its own internal review, Project Phoenix, and a Government sponsored Independent Review, conducted by Dr Bob Smith.

The Ministerial Review of Bushfire Management in South Australia (the Review), chaired by Vincent Monterola, took place in the first half of 2007, following Project Phoenix and the Independent Review by Dr Smith. The Local Government sector participated in this Review, and was represented on the Review's reference group.

The Review analysed Local Government's role in bushfire prevention and management. It recommended a stronger regional emphasis in bushfire management planning, and a stronger role for Local Government and the community.

The Ministerial Review of Bushfire Management in South Australia was followed by a Coronial Inquest that listed 34 recommendations for future actions aimed at preventing future loss of life. Four of these recommendations (1,4,7, and 34) directly refer to Local Government, and a further four (12,13, 15 and 16) have significant implications for Local Government.

Mr David Place, Commissioner of Fire and Emergencies, gave a presentation to the Forum on these recommendations and the State Government's reporting process. The Wangary Working Party, chaired by Mr Place, has been established to progress a report on options and recommendations for action to address each of the Coroner's recommendations. The working party comprises 28 members, including Local Government representation. Mr Place discussed the issues raised by each of the recommendations and possible impact on Local Government.

Discussion amongst Forum members centred on the future role of councils in bushfire prevention and planning, in particular, the potential role of local government in community education and engagement, and various issues such as radio provision and sirens.

Mr Euan Ferguson, Chief Officer, Country Fire Services, spoke to Forum members identifying the three issues that he considers most pertinent to Local Government. These are communication devices, the role of local fire prevention officers in bushfire prevention and management, and issues regarding native vegetation.

Ms Wendy Campana noted the work of an LGA group that is currently seeking councils' feedback on the recommendations of both the Ministerial Review of Bushfire Management in South Australia and the Coronial Inquest.

The Forum noted the LGA were to establish a short-term task group, and have that group report back to the Wangary Working Party. The Wangary Working Party representatives – John Hanlon and Wendy Campana – would provide a report on the outcomes of its work to the next meeting of the Minister's State/Local Government Forum.

The Forum adopted the following recommendations.

That the Minister's State/Local Government Forum:

- 1. Thanks Minister Zollo and Mr David Place for their briefing to members;**
- 2. Notes that the Wangary Working Party representatives will provide a report on outcomes at the next Forum meeting.**

3. NEXT MEETING AND CLOSE

The next Forum meeting is expected to be scheduled in March/April 2008.

Minister Rankine closed the special Forum meeting, thanking Mayor Joy Baluch for attending the meeting via telephone, members for attending and contributing to discussions, and the Adelaide Hills Council for its hospitality.