

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

NSW Police Meetings

Over the past month I have attended the Port Stephens Local Area Command Community Safety Committee meeting and the Central Hunter Local Area Command Crime Prevention Partnership meetings.

Outcomes from the meetings produced a range of continuing commitments from all parties. The Port Stephens LAC has advised that their investigations are continuing with the recent break and enters that have occurred in Dungog. They have also informed me that Police presence will continue concentrating on speeding, School Zones and RBT. They have also committed to cracking down on Anti – Social behaviour and graffiti offences.

The Central Hunter LAC (Maitland) will also be concentrating on similar offences; however, there has been a spate of rock throwing incidents at trains and a collaborative approach is being undertaken between the NSW Police and the RailCorp Transit Police to address this issue and anti – social behaviour on trains.

Given this information, I would urge all Community members to be vigilant and mindful of all the above operations.

There has also been some concern regarding whose jurisdiction areas such as Martins Creek, Hilldale and Wallarobba are aligned with. These precincts fall into the Port Stephens Local Area command, however, I would urge all members of the Community to report any emergencies to 000 and all other incidents to the Police Assistance Line on 131 444. People can also report any crime or pass information anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Bush Fire Danger Period

The NSW Rural Fire Service has advised that the declared Bush Fire Danger Period will commence on the 1 October 2009. Research indicates that a well-prepared home is often the best place to shelter from a fire-front. Most people who die in bush fires die as a result of unplanned last-minute relocations or evacuations. Generally there is no need to relocate or evacuate provided the proper precautions have been taken.

Bush fires can be chaotic, noisy and frightening experiences. You and your family should carefully weigh up the decision to stay and defend your property against fire, or leave early and relocate to safety. It is vital for each family to make this decision based on their own personal circumstances. Whatever you decide plan for it early.

The Rural Fire Service web site www.rfs.nsw.gov.au has a Guide to the Bush Fire Wise Action Plan that details the things you need to consider and questions you need to ask yourself about you and your family, so you can decide whether you will stay and defend your property, or leave early. For example who will be at home when a bush fire occurs? Does your family group include elderly relatives, young children, and people with disabilities or illnesses which would place them at risk? Can these family members be relocated, if not, who will care for them? If you are relocating, will you be travelling by car? Staying to defend your property is physically demanding and it is necessary to check for and extinguish spot fires for up to 10 hours after a fire front has passed. Are you physically prepared? Do you own and have access to the equipment and resources necessary to extinguish fires around your property? Is your house adequately prepared? Or is it in a location that makes it difficult to defend?

Once you have completed your Bush Fire Wise Action Plan, practice it regularly and keep it in a safe place that is easily accessible for quick reference. You must evacuate if directed to do so by the Police. Police undertake evacuations with the advice of fire authorities.

I would urge you to discuss your circumstances with your Local RFS Brigade or for Further Information please contact the Lower Hunter Zone RFS headquarters on 49 80 7300 during business hours.

26 August 2009