

Hi Juliet,

Thanks for your 8 questions on behalf of the Progress Association. Firstly, I hope you have something left in the resilience tank after all you have endured. Keep together and prevailing. I'm sure bonds and resolve have grown stronger. Now to your questions:-

(1&2) Obviously, the first thing to consider with respect to trees after both bushfire and now heavy rains is the exposure to both human, environmental risk. I'm not an arborist and as such will be taking advice from qualified people with respect to both the human and environmental exposure to risk. I would ensure that these operations take into account the concerns you express in terms of the impact on the local environment. Also to explore the possibility of pruning back rather than removal. This would be essential in terms of soil stability etc.

3) I think you raise a valid point. This is not something that can be assessed on a block by block basis though. I do think it's fair that there be a reassessment of BAL across the both townships given the reduced nature of vegetation. We could advocate to the state government for such an amended assessment.

4) I think this is problematic when considering a bush fire. Ultimately, the BAL rating is a building standard rating. It is to maximise human safety. It is not a guarantee of safety. I think it would be more beneficial to adopt the recommendation above, namely, a BAL reassessment for both townships.

5) I believe this is a matter for the Community and Council to work together on and then with State government if there are to be any alterations regarding NC. Essentially, this is about a community driven response and working together.

6) I'm unaware of any proposed changes to your waste collection. Council has not been briefed on these matters, so until I have any other information, I will be for maintaining the current schedules. I would also ensure there is appropriate consultation if there were to be any changes.

7) The hard waste collection is something on my radar. It comes down to a budgetary consideration and analysing priorities. Cleaning up properties in fire prone areas. Without further information, I believe the onus for property clean up in bush fire season rests with the property owner. Again, open to further enlightenment, but that is my first reaction to this. Council is sometimes involved through employment of a contractor, to clean up properties at the property owners expense by either request or enforcement.

8) I will commit to rate capping as determined by the state government. It is not real to assume it will always be 2.5% or less. I have to say though, that the current one size fits all councils is a flawed model. So whilst I support rate capping, I'm interested in a conversation about a more sustainable model especially for small and medium size rural councils. I'm not sure if the government or the sector has an appetite for this conversation.

In finishing I want to say that I was one councillor supportive of the rate relief package at a special meeting of council in January post the bushfires. Fortunately there were a majority of councillors with the empathy to pass this measure, although not unanimously supported.

For the relief package: Crs. Buchanan, Woodcroft, Hart, Russell and Crook  
Against: Crs. Smith and Delahunty

Actions speak louder than words! Vote carefully.

Regards,

Brian Crook