

## **BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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**First draft prepared December 2010**

**To be reviewed annually**

**Prepared by Sutton Public School**

**with assistance from**

**Sutton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade  
and the NSW Rural Fire Service**



## **Part One : Background and Bushfire Risks in the Sutton Area**

### **Background**

Sutton Public School lies within the centre of Sutton village and its direct bushfire exposures are deemed to be of relatively low risk. The school grounds comprise either well-watered green lawn areas that are kept fairly short or artificial surfaces, surrounding the central collection of school buildings. In the immediate vicinity of the buildings bushfire fuel levels are very low, with little vegetation posing a risk. Directly outside of the grounds to the west is Bywong Street with residential properties and a cut grass verge presenting low risk.

To the north Victoria Street with roadside verge provides an asset protection zone. To the east lies an area of dry sclerophyll bushland. This comprises medium density mixed Eucalypt trees, low density understory consisting of various native shrubs and sparse grass and finally a layer of bark, twigs and leaf litter comprising the fine fuels currently at a load of about 5 T / Ha (December, 2010). This exposure has a higher risk level attached to it, however since fires predominantly come from the north-west and fires from the east are more likely to be of lower intensity the risk is not deemed to be very high.

The southern exposure comprises the School's oval which, as maintained with short grass, provides a good bushfire safety protection zone, beyond which lie residential properties on Guise Street and then open improved grassland that is grazed. This provides a low bushfire risk. The school buildings would, however, be exposed to ember attack from bushfires within the vicinity of the village area.

The area immediately surrounding Sutton village mainly comprises open improved / semi-improved grazing grassland on low undulating slopes with a general slope eastwards towards the Yass River valley. Some areas of woodland exist to the north-west of the village. As a result fires are most likely to be fast moving grassfires, providing a fairly intense but relatively brief fire front followed by very low intensity smouldering. The Pony Club ground and public oval, comprising relatively short grass and little bushfire prone vegetation, currently provide a wide strategic fire advantage zone which would result in a marked decrease in fire intensity as it impacted the village. However, the grassfires and fires in areas of woodland on Tallagandra Lane are likely to generate an ember attack on buildings within the village area.

### **Bushfire Risks**

- Bushfires originating in the Sutton, Gunghalin, Hall, Back Creek and Gundaroo areas to the north and west impacting on Sutton
  - likely risk highest
- Spot fires caused by distant fire fronts to the north-west of the village
  - likely risk high
- Bushfires in open farmland to the east and south of Sutton village
  - likely risk lowest
- Pupils, staff and parents travelling in cars, private cars or on foot to / from the school through a fire area, exposed to radiant heat, smoke, ember attack or an overrun situation
  - likely risk high if the bushfire is impacting on the village, lower if fire is more distant
- Health problems caused by smoke inhalation, ember attack and heat stress
  - likely risk high if fire impacting on village, lower if fire is more distant

**Part Two : Roles and responsibilities**

<b>Emergency control organisation (responsible for evacuation and emergency response)</b>		
<b>Chief Warden</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact phone numbers</b>
Clare Pritchard	Principal	Work: 62303215 Mobile: 0416 005629
<b>Deputy Chief Wardens</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact phone numbers</b>
Sally Deacon	Assistant Principal	Work: 62303215 Mobile: 0407418281
<b>Warden</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact phone numbers</b>
David Reed	Assistant Principal	Work: 62303215 Mobile: 0407 444727
<b>First Aid Officer</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact phone numbers</b>
Anne Hull	Administrative Manager	Work: 62 303215 Mobile: 04112 10879
<b>Communications Officer</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact phone numbers</b>
Anne Hull	Administrative Manager	Work: 62303215 Mobile: 04112 10879

**Part Three : Emergency Contacts**

• To report all fires / emergencies	<b>000</b>
• NSW Rural Fire Service Yass Fire Control Centre	<b>6226 3100</b>
• Sutton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade Duty Officer	<b>0418 303232</b>
• Sutton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade Captain	<b>0418 244471</b>
• NSW RFS Yass Group 4 Group Captain Ron Hardy	<b>0418 216380</b>
• NSW Fire Brigade Queanbeyan	<b>6297 2332</b>
• NSW Police Queanbeyan	<b>6298 0555</b>
• NSW Police Bungendore	<b>6238 1244</b>
• State Emergency Service	<b>132 500</b>
• State Emergency Service Yass Control Duty Officer	<b>611 86331</b>
• State Emergency Service Sutton Team James van Daele	<b>0407 804249</b>
• NSW Ambulance Service	<b>13 1233</b>
• Queanbeyan Districts Hospital	<b>6298 9211</b>
• Yass Valley Council	<b>6226 1477</b>
• QCityTransit Group	<b>6299 3722</b>

## **Part Four : Bushfire Information Contacts**

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| • <b>NSW Rural Fire Service - Yass Fire Control Centre</b>   | <b>6226 3100</b>    |
| • <b>Sutton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade - Duty Officer</b>  | <b>0418 303232</b>  |
| • <b>Sutton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade - Captain</b>   | <b>0418 244471</b>  |
| • <b>NSW Rural Fire Service Information Line</b>   | <b>1800 679 737</b> |
| • <b>NSW Rural Fire Service web site</b> <a href="http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/">http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/</a> |                     |
| • <b>Fire Danger Meter on the corner of Victoria and Bywong Streets</b>                                      |                     |
| • <b>Fires Near Me NSW (Smart Phone App)</b>   |                     |
| • <b>Emergency AUS (Smart Phone App)</b>   |                     |

### **Information on bushfires in the area**

Parents may contact the school where there is reported bushfire activity or smoke in the area in order to obtain information on planned school actions (such as whether children can be removed from school).

The Principal may ring the Brigade Captain (Sutton Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade) or Duty Officer at any time, as well as using the above information contacts, for information on local bushfire activity. The Brigade Captain will advise the Principal of the location of local bushfires and of smoke in the area.

During periods of increased fire danger, the school will stay informed by monitoring local media, "Fires Near Me" and "Emergency AUS" smart phone apps to monitor fire activity at anytime during Bushfire Season.

### **Community Contacts**

#### **Sutton YMCA Ooshc**

Program Coordinator –0438 546 295  
Program Manager – Kim Ovari - 6242 4040

#### **Country Bumpkins Pre School**

Director Melissa Walsh 6230 3280

**The Baker at Sutton** – 6230 3980

**The Sutton Store** – 6230 3155

Where a decision is made to temporarily ease school operations, evacuate or shelter in a place a notification must be made to the **Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523**. Following a notification, the Health and Safety Directorate will advise the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) to ensure supporting agencies such as Rural Fire Service and NSW Transport can coordinate local support. The School Safety Website will be updated to keep parents and members of the community informed. The school will also update parents and community members regarding arrangements in the event of an emergency via the Skoolbag App, Facebook and/ or School Website.

## **Part Five : In the event of a bushfire**

**In the event of a local bushfire, the school will discuss the situation with emergency services and be prepared to act should an emergency response be required.**

In the event of a bushfire three options for action are available to the School's staff, **1.** Evacuation procedure **2.** Refuge procedure or **3.** Cancellation of school procedure. The implementation of any one of these three options is dependent on the conditions at the time and any expected changes to those conditions, with pupil, staff and parents safety the paramount deciding factor.

### **1. Evacuation procedure – subject to sufficient time and safe conditions**

If there is sufficient time and conditions are safe to do so then an evacuation of the school may be carried out. The safety of students, staff and parents must be the guiding principle in determining the decision to evacuate. The decision to evacuate should be based on the assessment of actual or potential danger, and if possible on the advice of emergency services. Decisions concerning evacuation and the selection of designated safe assembly areas and access routes should be made according to the circumstances and the time of the emergency.

The school population may be evacuated :

- a). when directed by Emergency Services personnel
- b). when directed by DoE Director of Public Schools Queanbeyan Network
- c). when the school principal ( or delegated officer) judges an evacuation is necessary.

### **Actions**

- Evacuation to commence if sufficient time, prior to expected impact of bushfire, to arrange transport and allow time for a safe evacuation – allow a minimum of at least three hours prior to expected bushfire impact
- If conditions are deemed safe where pupils, staff, parents and transport providers will not be moving through a fire area and exposed to smoke, radiant heat, ember attack or an overrun situation
- If roads are open allowing transport
- Contact emergency services to advise that evacuation will take place
- Bus company to be contacted to provide emergency transport
- Parents of pupils who walk or are brought to school in private vehicles to be contacted
- Pupils whose parents cannot be contacted or who are unable to go home should be kept under supervision at the school following the refuge procedure

**Note 1: A general evacuation will only occur where it is safe to do so.**

**Note 2: Changing conditions.** Sudden changes in wind strength / direction may considerably and very quickly alter bushfire behaviour, increasing intensity, direction of travel and speed of the fire front. Conditions should be constantly monitored during the evacuation, and in worsening conditions the Evacuation Procedure may be discontinued and the Refuge Procedure may be implemented in order to maintain safety of pupils, staff and parents.

## **2. Refuge procedure – if evacuation is not possible**

If conditions prevent evacuation of the pupils and staff due to insufficient time or unsafe conditions then the following procedure should be followed. Pupils are relocated to a central and relatively fire-safe building within the school premises to increase ease of protection. The School Hall is deemed to be a fire-safe building in a central location and that can be readily defended by the NSW Rural Fire Services for this purpose.

### **Actions**

- Emergency services to be contacted to be informed of refuge procedure being actioned
- Each class is to relocate to the School Hall in a timely and orderly manner
- Roll call to ensure all pupils and staff members are accounted for
- School lock down procedure in place (Refer to Emergency Management Plan for Sutton School), with the pupils and staff being kept at school to prevent evacuation in unsafe conditions
- All doors and windows to be closed
- Blankets or towels to place at base of doors
- Air conditioning to be turned off
- Drinking water to be taken to Hall
- Stay clear of windows
- Pupils to be escorted by a member of staff if leaving the refuge to go to the toilets
- Chief Warden (Principle or Deputy in absence) to liaise with Rural Fire Services Incident Controller

### **Mitigating Hazards**

In bushfire conditions staff and pupils may suffer: panic attack, smoke inhalation, dehydration, burns through contact with embers, injury through falls, and injury through contact with vehicles. The risks associated with actual or potential bushfire impact will be addressed through training, provision of information, access to shelter, first aid and drinking water.

### **When the fire has passed**

When the fire has passed, the students and staff should leave the building in an orderly manner by an appropriate exit. Care should be taken to protect all from continuing danger, for example ember attack. Pupils and staff may then evacuate, as per evacuation procedure, providing that it is safe to do so and does not involve travelling into unsafe areas.

## **3. Cancellation of school procedure due to bushfires**

If bushfire conditions are deemed to be of extreme risk with a severe bushfire likely or expected to impact on the village within the next 24hrs then the Principle may cancel attendance at school for the following day.

### **Actions**

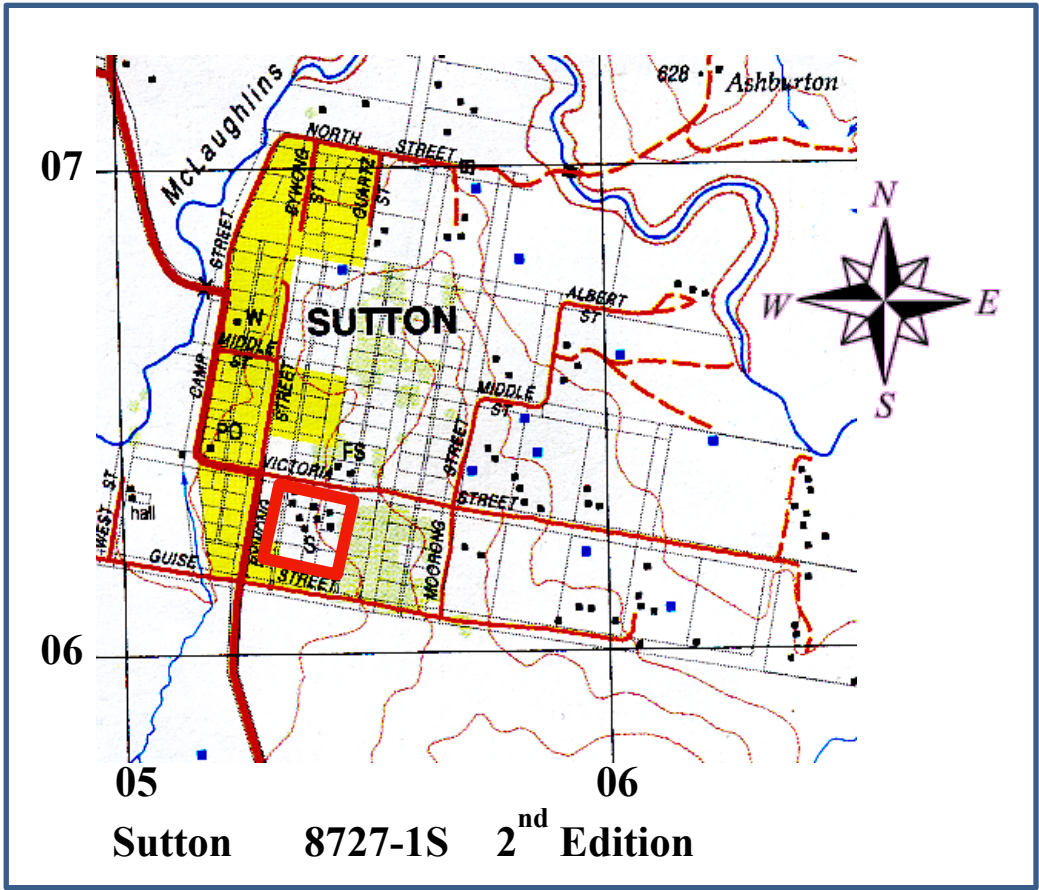
- Principal to put in place School's procedures for closing school
- Parents to be informed the day prior to cancellation of school
- Emergency services to be informed
- QCity Transit Group to be informed



**Maps**

Sutton village with location of Sutton Public School indicated by red box







# Sutton Public School – site plan (Feb. 2011)

