

5. PETITIONS

No Petitions this round

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Mr Geoff Provest MP Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services

Attachments

1. Copy of letter from Geoff Provest MP Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services
2. Copy of Council's letter to Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Responding to Council's letter to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services regarding the 2011/2012 Rural Fire Fighting Fund budget allocation for Campbelltown City Council.

Officer's Recommendation

That the letter be received and the information be noted.

Council Meeting 8 May 2012 (Borg/Glynn)

That the letter be received and the information be noted.

Council Resolution Minute Number 73

That the letter be received and the information be noted.

ATTACHMENT 1



Mr Geoff Provest MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services

MIN12/000219-02

Mr Paul Tosi
General Manager
Campbelltown City Council
PO Box 57
CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

PP03'12 08:05:57 RCUG

- 2 APR 2012

Dear Mr Tosi

Thank you for your letter to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon Michael Gallacher MLC, regarding the 2011/2012 Rural Fire Fighting Fund budget allocation for Campbelltown City Council. The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Government and the NSW Rural Fire Service share Council's view on the importance of the Brigade Station Improvement and Community Education programs.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has advised me that the Kentlyn Brigade Station upgrade has recently been completed. While this upgrade was funded between 2006 and 2010, I understand that Council sought an additional \$100,000 in 2011/2012 for contingency funding in the event this project exceeded the budget. As the upgrade was completed on budget, these funds were not required.

The NSW Rural Fire Service advises that Council has also applied for \$20,000 as seed funding in 2012/2013 for the Varroville and Minto Heights joint Brigade Station. I am advised that this application will be considered together with other funding priorities.

In relation to Community Education, the NSW Rural Fire Service conducts a range of programs to assist communities in bushfire prevention and preparedness. These include the *Prepare Act Survive* advertising campaign which focuses on increasing the community's understanding of bush fire alerts, fire danger ratings, Bush Fire Survival Plans and the importance of preparation. Due to the increased risk posed by vegetation growth generated by prolonged rains, the campaign has been supplemented by a targeted campaign focusing on grass fires.

The NSW Rural Fire Service advises that Rural Fire Brigades also engage in community education activities at community meetings, open days and other local events.

While the NSW Rural Fire Service will continue to develop programs to involve and inform the community in bush fire prevention and protection, local government initiatives complementing these programs are also important

The Government recognises the long-standing and generous commitment by local councils in supporting the work of our NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers and other emergency services. It also recognises how important it is to ensure that funding arrangements are fair and equitable.

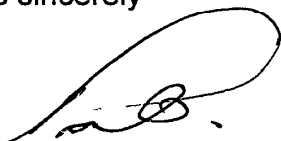
For this reason, the Government is conducting a review of the funding arrangements for emergency services. The review will determine whether there are options which would maintain funding levels for the NSW Rural Fire Service, while at the same time providing greater fairness, transparency and accountability.

As part of the review we will be consulting all stakeholders, including local councils.

I take this opportunity to thank Campbelltown City Council for supporting the work of our volunteers, who give so generously of their time to protect and assist their local communities in bush fires and other emergencies.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the Minister's attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Provest', written in a cursive style.

Geoff Provest MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services

ATTACHMENT 2



9 February 2012

The Hon Michael Gallacher MLC
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Level 33 Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Gallacher

NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund

Council at its meeting of the 13 December 2011 considered the budget approved for the Rural Fire Service (RFS) in Campbelltown from the Rural Fire Fighting Fund for 2011/2012.

Council expresses its concerns regarding the trend to limit the funding support to important areas of RFS management, in particular, the ongoing Station Replacement Program and community education that Council views as vital components of an effective fire service.

Station Upgrades

It is important that the infrastructure that is available to the volunteers to provide their services to the community of Campbelltown, and considerable out of area support, be the best that can be made available. The Strategic Plan developed for the Macarthur Rural Fire District identified a long term strategy for station replacement to support the development of South West Sydney. With nil funding being provided for Campbelltown for the past two years this program will now not be achieved. Council requests your assurances that funding will be restored in future years so the Station Improvement Program can be maintained. It is suggested that this timetable could be achieved by the reduction in administration costs of the Rural Fire Service.

Community Education

Community education is critical to successful bushfire prevention and the preparedness of the community to be able to independently respond when faced with an emergency. Campbelltown has a significant risk because of the extensive urban bushland interface and also an ongoing issue of bushland arson. The ability of the RFS to be able to deliver a comprehensive Community Education Program in Campbelltown is critically impacted by a decision not to fund this crucial role. Accordingly, Council requests your serious consideration to improving the level of funds for community education in Campbelltown in the future.

Council considers that the ongoing increase in the cost of administrating the Service is drawing funds away from these more important areas of infrastructure maintenance and development and community education. The administration of the Service at the state level has not kept pace with modern management and requires a comprehensive review of how it is administered to eliminate the substantial duplication in administration that is occurring.

If you require any further information please contact the Director City Works, Mr John Hely, on 4645 4636.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Tosi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Tosi
General Manager

Copy to:

1. Member for Campbelltown Mr B Doyle
2. Member for Wollondilly Mr J Rowell
3. Member for Macquarie Fields Dr A McDonald
4. Manager Emergency Management