



Success Hill Evacuation Exercise Report

The Town of Bassendean Local Emergency Management Committee (BLEMC) are required under State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) Policy and Procedures to conduct regular exercises that enable the members of the committee to work together more closely and enable a better understanding of the abilities and requirements of each member agency during times of emergency. Exercises are mostly conducted as short tabletop discussions involving likely emergency events that may impact the Town of Bassendean and its community.

The BLEMC has recently conducted a comprehensive risk analysis process led by the risk management team of the Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) under the State Risk Management Project (Local). The hazard to the community presented by bush fire was not part of that assessment as it was seen to be of minor consequence and very low risk. The ToB does not have a Volunteer Fire Brigade as its small number of reserves are adequately covered under the DFES umbrella and any ignition in the past has been adequately and quickly dealt with by DFES reducing the treat to homes and lives.

It had been brought to the attention of the BLEMC by a number of members that a large and uncontrollable bush fire event within the Success Hill Reserve may pose a high risk to the community and in particular homes directly adjacent to areas of Success Hill though to me most at risk of such an event.

It was pointed out to the BLEMC that there is in effect only one road in and out of the residential area adjacent to Success Hill Reserve and in such a rapid onset emergency such as a bushfire in the peak of summer would present a problem for residents evacuating in large numbers from the area. This fact in itself was seen as the key public safety factor.

Bassendean Transport Study Phase 2 Local Integrated Transport Plan

A further trigger for the timing of discussion exercise was the recently updated version (Dec 2019) of the Town of Bassendean's Local Integrated Transport Plan. This plan describes the processes for an integrated study of the movement network internal to and influencing Bassendean and outlines proposed changes to parking, road network, active transport amongst other sub-categories. Of particular note and the decision point for the conduct of the desktop exercise centred around Road Network Proposal 8 (RN8).

	Proposal	Responsibility	Priority
	RN8 Design and consult to further refine various options for modification of the Walter Road East/Lord Street/Seventh Avenue intersection and the Success Road/Lord Street intersection to address access/egress to the Success Hill area	Town of Bassendean/Main Roads WA	Short – Engineering feasibility and modelling required to ascertain impacts of various options, with a view to deciding whether this proposal should be adopted

RN8 adequately defines perceived choke points that may hinder the evacuation of local residents in the Success Hill area should a severe bushfire occur requiring evacuation. In addition, should the emergency occur during times of high traffic volumes, the movement of people and emergency vehicles could be problematic.

The desktop exercise was conducted at the conclusion of the BLEMC meeting held on 5 February 2020. The exercise scenario used in the discussion follows.

Success Hill Bushfire Scenario

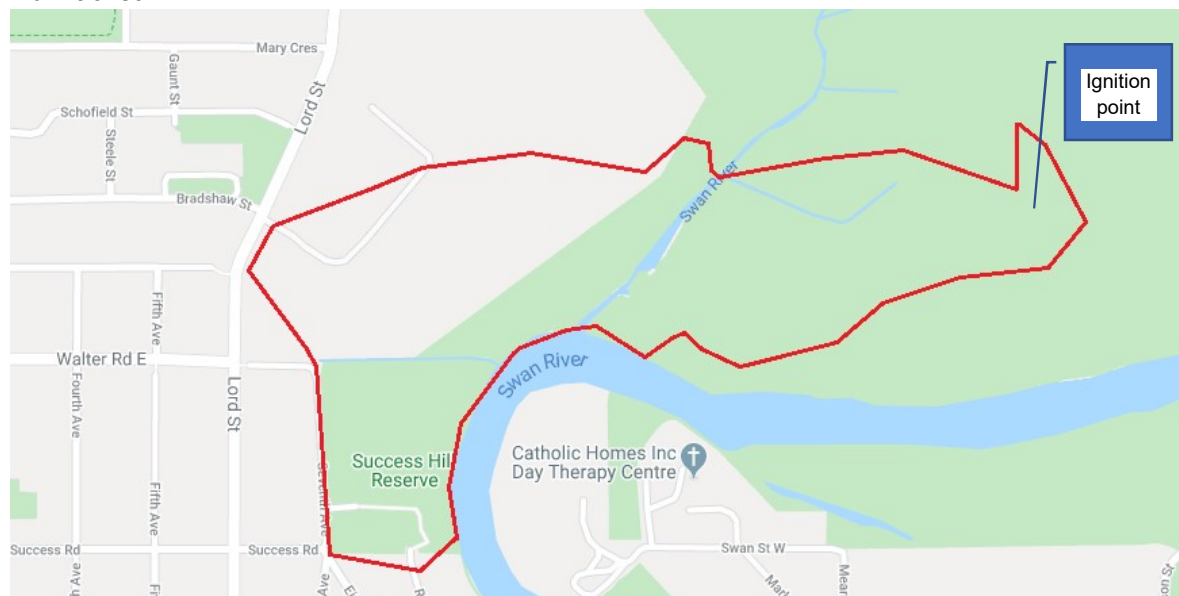
At 1400hrs on 5 February 2020 a fire was reported to the DFES Communications Centre in the area of Lilac Hill. A Bushfire Alert warning is issued to the community.

The fire spreads quickly in a SSW direction jumping the Swan River and taking hold in the Success Hill Reserve. Upon arrival of crews, the fire was spreading rapidly under strong ENE winds towards Lord Street and heavily populated areas. A Bushfire Watch and Act warning is broadcast to the community.

A Level 2 bushfire was declared due to the high rate of spread putting lives, residential property and infrastructure at risk. Aerial and ground resources with the support of earth moving machinery conducted a direct attack on the fire. During the escalation of the fire, over 200 personnel were engaged in firefighting efforts. The fire has not yet been contained and has burnt through approximately 7,200 hectares.

The likely impacted area includes Walter Road East at Seventh Avenue, Seventh Avenue and Eighth Avenue. with a number of people needing to be relocated. Power, water and telecommunications supplies have all been impacted by the fire.

Burnt area





Main Points of discussion

The exercise prompted a number of points for discussion by the members.

- Alerts and community messaging.
- The need to doorknock and vulnerable residents
- The need for an evacuation facility to be opened.
- Walter Road East and Lord Street
- The need for a dedicated Community Evacuation Plan for Success Hill.

Unfortunately, prior to the exercise commencing the DFES representative was called away, however strategic planning documents pertaining to the strategic management of all aspects of fire prevention and combat have been provided.

Specific to the fire prevention plan are treatments mentioned below.

- Urban Bushland Plan reviewed annually.
- Identify priority conservation areas.
- Weed Control.
- Management of vehicle and rubbish dumping.
- Fire Breaks maintained to 3-4m wide and to a height of 3.5m.
- Fire Access tracks maintained.

Alerts and community warnings

Alerts and warnings were discussed at length. WA Police advised that there would be more than adequate warning provided to the affected community to allow persons to either prepare to leave the area or stay and actively defend their property. Police advised that they would not be conducting door-to-door advice to residents. It was also thought and generally agreed that the current road access would provide adequate egress for residents but would need to be controlled at some point by Police.

The ToB would provide community messaging related to DFES community information on their official website.

Road Closures and Traffic Management

In relation to RN8, the opportunity to redesign the cul-de-sac created in Walter Road East opposite the junction with Lord Street could provide an additional egress route for traffic leaving Success Hill. The current layout would require modification to allow vehicle to pass onto Lord Street in an emergency but would otherwise be closed to motor vehicles. Bollards could be utilised without the need for wholesale design. Police advised that resources would need to be provided to control traffic movement.

In relation to the movement of emergency vehicles involved in the response to the fire, these arrangements are documented in the DFES Urban Bushfire Plan for the Success Hill and Pyrton Reserves.

Police advised that the Intersection of Walter Road East and Lord Street would likely be closed to prevent the movement of traffic south on Lord Street. Traffic management would also be in place between Guildford Road and Morley Drive.



Vulnerable Persons

The identification of vulnerable persons in the area is known to some extent by the ToB, however each agency responsible for their ongoing care would ultimately need to be in contact with these persons.

Security of evacuated properties was also raised, and Police reported that regular patrols, staff numbers permitting, would be conducted to ensure the security of property.

Evacuation Centre

The ToB has only one available Town owned, and operated building listed as an evacuation centre that being the Community Centre in Old Perth Road. The discussion centred on the number of residents that would in fact make use of the centre and the perceived need to open the centre as an Evacuation and Welfare Centre.

Advice from the representative of the Department of Communities was that it would be doubtful that an Evacuation and Welfare Centre would in all likelihood not be considered necessary in the circumstances with attendances if any likely to be very low. Should people require assistance it would be provided depending upon the circumstances.

Community Evacuation Plan

The need for such a plan for the Success Hill Reserve was debated and all were in agreement that such a dedicated plan was not required. It was suggested by most agencies that the best form of community advice would be to provide bushfire prone area advice to residents on fire break notices and on the ToB website. People should also be encouraged to visit the Emergency WA Website.

Recommendations

1. That the ToB consider possible treatment options for the Walter Road East Cul-de-Sac in-line with the RN8 proposal (Annex A).
2. That the ToB consider changes to the official website to include current emergency warnings and links to the DFES and Emergency WA websites.
3. That the ToB consider providing specific bushfire prone area information to accompany fire break notices.



ANNEX A: Particulars relating to the RN8 proposal

<p>RN8</p>	<p>Design and consult to further refine various options for modification of the Walter Road East/Lord Street/Seventh Avenue intersection and the Success Road/Lord Street intersection to address access/egress to the Success Hill area</p>	<p>The Town has engaged with the local community and SHAG re improving access to the urban cell north of Success Hill train station, which is limited to one vehicular access point (all movements, unsignalised access at Success Road/Lord Street). Some residents have raised concerns about peak hour delays at this location.</p> <p>Signals at Walter Road East/Lord Street/Seventh Avenue would yield several benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverability of an east-west walking and cycling connection between the Success Hill precinct and Walter Road East • Improved road access to the Success Hill precinct, which is also important for emergency ingress/egress • Controlled traffic turning manoeuvres • Reduced vehicular conflicts at Lord Street/Success Road, which could be converted to left-in/left-out • Gaps in traffic travelling southbound along Lord Street, which may improve peak hour operation at Railway Parade/Lord Street • Low likelihood of additional traffic infiltration through Success Hill because there are no through routes. <p>A local traffic modelling study would be required to resolve the merits of this proposal and should include development of concept plans for consultation.</p>	<p>Town of Bassendean/Main Roads WA</p>	<p>Limited support -modelling required to ascertain impacts and test alternative configurations; concerns relating to redistribution of traffic and compromise of plans for alternative cross-section for Lord Street (RN9). Consideration will be given to modelling the impacts as part of a future works package</p>
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