

Inspection Report – Confest Site, Moulamein Road - 20 December 2012-12-20

Present – Marie Sutton, John Trist , Conargo Shire Council, Chris Barron, Rural Fire Service,
James Allwood, Mitch Hibbens, Aaron, NSW Public Health

The site was visited at approximately 10.30am by the above representatives. At the time of the inspection, works had commenced on the set up for the event however it was in the preliminary stages only. The following Public Health and Fire Safety/Emergency Management were noted and recommendations for action made:

Public Health Matters

1. Water supply arrangements

The water supply for the event is treated using UV Filtration. The water is treated and then stored in holding tanks adjacent to the woolshed and then piped by means of poly pipe to various locations around the site

UV treatment of the water can be a satisfactory treatment method however the system must be maintained to ensure maximum capability

Water held in storage tanks and pipes may not be effectively treated and would require further treatment to ensure safety and quality of water being delivered around the site.

2. Waste arrangements

Skips are to be utilised around the site for disposal of solid waste around the site. Patrons are encouraged to take their own rubbish home with them and not dispose of on site.

There were no skips placed onsite at the exit point from the event . Regardless of the policy of the event for waste disposal, skips must be available at the point of exit for disposal of waste to ensure roadsides and public places are not littered with waste from persons who have attended the event.

3. Workers Kitchen

The workers kitchen has been established as a temporary building on-site for preparation of food for the workers on site. The following matters need to be attended to upgrade the kitchen as an adequate food preparation area

- Store all crockery and utensils in cupboards /containers to prevent contamination by dust, vermin etc
- Provide hot water to the sink
- Install splashbacks to meal prep areas

- Provide paper towel and soap dispenser for handwashing
- Provide Floor coverings/vinyl or tile to the kitchen

Recommendations

1. Check life of globes of UV treatment system and replace as per manufacturers recommendation, and replace as necessary. Replace filters on a regular basis.
2. Water in the holding tanks should be chlorinated, in accordance with the advice contained in the NSW Public Health , Private Water Supply Guidelines . Copy supplied
3. Ensure adequate rubbish skips are placed onsite, at the exit point from the site, as well as throughout the site to ensure proper management of waste.
4. Carry out upgrade works to workers kitchen as detailed above

Fire Control Preparedness and Emergency Arrangements Confest Site- December 2012

1. Fire Fighting Appliances

Chris Barron Fire Control Officer from the Mid Murray Rural Fire Service (RFS) and John Trist from Conargo Shire conducted an assessment of the fire fighting capability and preparedness prior to the December Confest event. Both people have had significant experience in fire control and fire management in their respective roles.

Three fire trucks identified on site were not in a serviceable condition however we believe they are to be attended to by a mechanic on the 22nd December 2012.

These two trucks were the snub nose Ex Army International 4x4 that was positioned near the shearing shed and a flat bonnet International that was situated North West of the shearing shed near the river. Both these trucks need to be serviceable to contribute to fire fighting capability during the event.

The RFS have recommended that a minimum of three(3) operational fire fighting vehicles are to be in attendance.

The filling point on the river would almost certainly require a quick fill pump positioned on the river as the lift is too great for the EX CFA truck to lift the water from the river to the high ground.

2. Emergency Assembly Area

The designated area approximately 600 metres North West of the Shearing shed is not ideal for assembling a large number of people in the event of an evacuation, due to unavailability of cover from radiant heat and exposure. Even though the area has been slashed, given the high temperatures and windy conditions that we have experienced over the last 3 months, the country would still burn.

It is suggested that the shearing shed itself and the area surrounding the shed would be a better option. This would require the removal of any equipment stored in the shed to be relocated and the area immediately around the shed, and also the relocation of vehicles that are currently parked around the shed .

The floor space of the shearing shed and the holding pens are all suitable areas where people could take temporary refuge from an approaching fire.

3. Timbered Country on low ground on River Bend

This is potentially the most dangerous area on the property and it will be difficult to keep people out of this area when they are seeking shade.

The amount of fuel on the ground is significant and includes old sleeper backs and fallen timber. This presents a very dangerous situation due to the high fuel loads and ground cover and presents difficulties in accounting for people while ensuring the orderly movement of large numbers of people should they need to evacuate in a hurry.

The possibility of large limbs falling from trees during a wind storm or during a hot day when the sap in the gum trees expands is a problem in itself and is even a problem in caravan parks in Redgum country.

4. Reaction Time of Outside Brigades and available Manpower

It is anticipated that a typical response time for outside assistance would be in the order of 60 minutes before a brigade could be of use on the fire-ground in the event of a fire at the site.

The adjoining properties, and indeed most properties in the area along the Billabong Creek system and the Edward River have very few staff. Some stations have a staff of one or two employees and often the property owner is the sole occupant. During the Christmas New Year period this situation is exacerbated when families travel away from the district on holidays.

5. Total Fire Ban Days (TFB)

The weather forecast suggests there may be days over the period of the event when a TFB is declared. During this period there must be no fires around camp sites and this should be strictly monitored.

It is accepted that many people who attend the Confest are city folk who may have little or no concept as to how fast a fire can spread and little knowledge of how to deal with it. They will have to be supervised and directed during a fire event. This is the responsibility of the organisers of the event .

In the first instance the management of any outbreak of fire will be the responsibility of the fire crew nominated by the event organisers, until such time as the Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers arrive.

Recommendations

1. That a minimum of three (3) fire trucks are serviceable during the event to respond to a fire.
2. The Emergency assembly Area be relocated and established at the shearing shed and the area immediately surrounding the shed.
3. That camping out of the timbered areas be strongly encouraged and every effort made to account for people who are in that area.

4. That outside resources for a fire emergency, are requested in a timely manner to prevent the spread of fire. It is far better to turn units away than allow a fire to escape to adjoining properties.
5. That a quick fill pump be positioned on the river to enable fire fighting units to be filled and returned to the fire ground.
6. Clear procedures be in place to ensure that emergency vehicles have access at all times to the site.
7. Enforce that fires are contained only in the designated fire areas and that patrons do not have fires, candles etc in any other areas

8. During a Total Fire ban ensure everyone onsite is aware of the restrictions in force and that they are strictly abided by.
9. That an Emergency Management plan is to be submitted for the site