

**Mayor and Councillors**  
COUNCIL

29 NOVEMBER 2012

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Information

## **THE TE HORO VOLUNTEER RURAL FIRE FORCE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 This report introduces the Te Horo Voluntary Rural Fire Force Annual Report for Council's information.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION**

- 2 This report does not trigger the Council's Significance Policy

### **BACKGROUND**

- 3 In relation to fire-fighting the Kāpiti Coast District is divided up into Rural, Urban and Department of Conservation (DOC) areas.
- 4 Kāpiti Coast District Council has obligations under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 as the District's Rural Fire Authority (RFA). The RFA has responsibility for the rural areas that are not designated as urban and are outside the area managed by DOC. As the RFA, Council has to carry out functions associated with reduction, readiness, response and recovery related to Rural Fires. These duties are assigned to the Principle Rural Fire Officer.
- 5 Council's Principle Rural Fire Officer ensures the RFA's readiness status is maintained by ensuring that the Te Horo Voluntary Rural Fire Force has the required equipment and follows the training requirements set down by the National Rural Fire Authority.
- 6 The Te Horo Voluntary Rural Fire Force is the critical response arm of the RFA. Through a formal agreement with Council as the RFA, the Fire Force's primary purpose is to respond to and extinguish vegetation fires. Where necessary they also provide initial attack for structure fires (i.e. houses, sheds and other farm buildings), in areas where the RFA has responsibility as the lead agency.
- 7 To carry out these activities the Te Horo Voluntary Rural Fire Force's two medium fire trucks and two crew 4x4 vehicles. These are owned by the Council. One of the medium fire trucks was imported fully built from Australia. The second unit was converted from a 4x4 truck into a fire fighting vehicle with the similar specifications. This successful conversion was funded by Council but managed by the Te Horo Voluntary Rural Fire Force and shows how well the relationship works.

- 8 Council also provides other equipment to the Te Horo Voluntary Rural Fire Force such as personal protective equipment, pumps, hoses, etc. Council claims some of these costs back from the National Rural Fire Authority.
- 9 The Fire Force receives an annual grant from Council of \$12,000 toward operational expenses. Any additional running costs, plant or equipment expenses are covered by community grants and fundraising carried out by the Fire Force itself. The Fire Force owns and maintains its own fire station building and over the years has built up a significant response capability.
- 10 The Fire Force is managed by a small management committee comprising senior rural fire officers and elected community leaders. This Committee develops and oversees the Fire Forces annual and strategic plan, policies, finances, and monitors the performance of approximately 20 volunteer rural fire fighters and their associated equipment.
- 11 The Principal Rural Fire Officer maintains a close relationship with the Fire Force on behalf of the Council and oversees their activities to ensure they are sufficiently supported, are delivering on agreed outcomes, are carrying out their duties safely, effectively, and with a high level of professionalism.

## CONSIDERATIONS

- 12 Like any community organisation that receives public funds the Te Horo Rural Fire Force has submitted an annual report summarising their service delivery and financial position for the Council's attention (see Appendix 1).
- 13 There is some concern in the Te Horo Rural Fire Force regarding the investigation by Councils in the Wellington region of the benefits of an Enlarged Rural Fire District and what that may mean for them in the short and longer term.
- 14 The intent of an Enlarged Rural Fire District is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of rural fire authorities. Most of these efficiency gains are expected to be in administration, management and training with improved support for volunteer rural fire forces. An Enlarged Rural Fire District already exists within the Wairarapa along with five others.
- 15 Any process to change the structure of the Rural Fire Authorities for the cities of Wellington, Porirua, Hutt and Upper Hutt City, plus the Kāpiti Coast District and the Department of Conservation's affected area will include consultation with effected parties including specific meetings with individual volunteer rural fire forces. A business case on which to base these discussions is being developed.

## Financial Considerations

- 16 The Fire Force's finances are well managed and despite funds being tight the organisation is in a good financial position. They would like to acknowledge and thank the Council for their support.
- 17 Council also funds the depreciation and maintenance costs of the Te Horo Rural Fire Force fire trucks, vehicles and equipment amounting to over \$31,000 per annum. The Council notes the request the annual grant of \$12,000 to be CPI

adjusted. CPI adjustments have already been allowed for in the LTP and applies to this year's grant.

18 There are no other financial considerations for the Council to consider.

#### Legal Considerations

19 There are no legal considerations for the Council to consider.

#### Delegation

20 The Council has the delegated authority to consider this matter.

#### Other Considerations

21 There are no other considerations for the Council to consider.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

22 That the Council receives the Te Horo Volunteer Rural Fire Force Annual Report (attached as Appendix 1 to Report Corp-12-722) and acknowledges the professionalism and dedication to their community from the volunteer fire-fighters and Management Committee.

#### **Report prepared by:**

Scott Dray  
**Principal Rural Fire Officer**

#### **Approved for submission by:**

Bernie Goedhart  
**Group Manger**  
**Corporate Services**

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix 1: Te Horo Volunteer Rural Fire Force Annual Report