

Notice of Meeting

TUMUT AERODROME COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 27 May 2025 at 4:00 PM
Riverina Room, 76 Capper Street Tumut

AGENDA

1. COMMENCING AT:	2
2. PRESENT:	2
3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	2
4. APOLOGIES:	2
5. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:	2
6. AGENDA ITEMS:	3
6.1. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HANGAR FACILITY AT THE TUMUT AERODROME	3
9. GENERAL BUSINESS:	13
10. NEXT MEETING	13

1. COMMENCING AT:

2. PRESENT:

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Snowy Valleys Council proudly acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land and water and pay respects to their Elders past and present.

4. APOLOGIES:

5. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST:

Pursuant to Section 4 of the Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any matters being considered by the Committee.

6. AGENDA ITEMS:

6.1. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HANGAR FACILITY AT THE TUMUT AERODROME

REPORT AUTHOR: DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE & WORKS

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR: DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE & WORKS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the last Tumut Aerodrome Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13 May 2025, it was discussed and agreed by all Committee members that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Committee should be called as soon as possible to discuss the proposed construction of a new hangar facility at the Tumut Aerodrome.

It was proposed at the meeting, that representatives from the Softwoods Working Group and the NSW Rural Fire Service should address the Committee to answer any questions Committee members have on the proposed new hangar facility at Tumut Aerodrome that is being funded as part of a \$13 million Plantation Fire Protection Fund awarded to the Local Government Areas of Albury, Greater Hume, Cootamundra-Gundagai and Snowy Valleys (Wagga Wagga was added through the process) by the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Tara Moriarty.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE COMMITTEE:

1. **Receive the report in relation to the Extraordinary Committee meeting that has been called to discuss the proposed construction of a new hangar facility at the Tumut Aerodrome that is being funded as part of a \$13 million Plantation Fire Protection Fund awarded to the Local Government Areas of Albury, Greater Hume, Cootamundra-Gundagai and Snowy Valleys.**
2. **Representatives from the Softwoods Working Group and the NSW Rural Fire Service address the Committee to answer any questions Committee members have on the proposed new grant funded Hangar facility at Tumut Aerodrome.**

REPORT:

In accordance with Councils Committees Operations Manual an Extraordinary Meeting of the Tumut Aerodrome Committee can be called to discuss an urgent matter of business. At the last Tumut Aerodrome Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13 May 2025, it was discussed and agreed by all Committee members that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Committee should be called as soon as possible to discuss the proposed construction of a new Hangar facility at the Tumut Aerodrome.

The relevant extract from Councils Committees Operations Manual is below:

Extraordinary Meeting

An extraordinary meeting of the committee may be called to discuss urgent business and/or matters outside the scope of an ordinary meeting. An Extraordinary Meeting must be requested by at least two (2) members of the committee. An agenda will be prepared and circulated to all members of the committee at least two (2) days prior to the meeting. No other business will be discussed at this meeting other than that of the urgent business.

Background

The proposed new hangar facility at Tumut Aerodrome is part of a \$13 million Plantation Fire Protection Fund awarded to the Local Government Areas of Albury, Greater Hume, Cootamundra-Gundagai and Snowy Valleys (Wagga Wagga was added through the process) by the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Tara Moriarty.

The Softwoods Working Group has strongly advocated on behalf of its members for enhanced protection for the region given the devastation of 2019-2020 fires.

Snowy Valleys Council is the grant applicant for the Hangar proportion of the \$13 million Plantation Fire Protection Fund which is \$3,850,000 for the construction of the new hangar facility at Tumut Aerodrome. The intent of the project is to establish a hangar facility strategically located near vulnerable softwood plantations, where a heavy helicopter capable of carrying large quantities of water (e.g., a Blackhawk) could be engaged and based during periods of heightened fire risk. This helicopter could be positioned at the Tumut Aerodrome by any stakeholder.

Council Reports and Resolutions since 17 October 2024

Council at its meeting held on 21 November 2024 received a report (Item 11.3) on the proposed hangar facility and the Murray Region Fire Protection Grant. The report contained background information on the proposal, previous resolutions of Council and the Financial Implications for Council in relation to the construction of a new hangar facility at Tumut Aerodrome. At that meeting Council resolved the following:

Cr Hayes left the meeting at 5.45pm and returned at 5.47pm.

11.3. MURRAY REGION FIRE PROTECTION GRANT – TUMUT AERODROME HANGAR

M272/24 RESOLVED:

THAT COUNCIL:

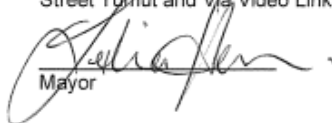
1. Approve the submission of the Tumut Aerodrome Hangar Project under the Murray Region Fire Protection Grant;
2. Seek assurance that the locally based fire-fighting capacity currently available to the region will not be diminished by the addition of the hangar; and
3. Advocate for a longer-term contract for locally based fire-fighting services as offered to other bodies.

Cr Wortes/Cr Packard

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Page 15

Minutes of the Meeting of the Snowy Valleys Council Ordinary Meeting held in the Council Chambers 76 Capper Street Tumut and Via Video Link on Thursday, 21 November 2024


Mayor


Interim General Manager

Attached to this report are the following attachments.

1. Council Report from the 21 November 2024 Council Meeting - Murray Region Fire Protection Grant - Tumut Aerodrome Hangar - Item 11.3
2. Letter from Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development - Invitation to apply for Tumut Aerodrome Aircraft Hangar Project - Plantation Fires Protection Fund and Council Motion - Karen Kneipp - Chair - Plantations Fire Reference Group – Dated 22 November 2024
3. The media release from the NSW Minister for Agriculture-Minister for Regional NSW and Minister for Western NSW - New Fire Protection Projects to Protect Southern NSW Plantation Forests - Tara Moriarty - 22 January 2025

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1. Council Report from the 21 November 2024 Council Meeting - Murray Region Fire Protection Grant - Tumut Aerodrome Hangar - Item 11.3

Attachment 2. Letter from Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development - Invitation to apply for Tumut Aerodrome Aircraft Hangar Project - Plantation Fires Protection Fund and Council Motion - Karen Kneipp - Chair - Plantations Fire Reference Group – Dated 22 November 2024

Attachment 3. The media release from the NSW Minister for Agriculture-Minister for Regional NSW and Minister for Western NSW - New Fire Protection Projects to Protect Southern NSW Plantation Forests - Tara Moriarty - 22 January 2025

Attachment 1 - Council Report-21 November 2024 Council Meeting -Item 11.3-Murray Region Fire Protection Grant-Tumut Aerodrome

MURRAY REGION FIRE PROTECTION GRANT - TUMUT AERODROME HANGAR

1.**REPORT AUTHOR: MANAGER TECHNICAL SERVICES****RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR: INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER****2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Snowy Valleys Council considered at the 17 October, 2024 Ordinary Meeting the application or the Murray Region Fire Protection Grant.

Council has received notice from the Department and Fire Reference Groups advising that the purchase of land was not an eligible project for submission. This was originally a project investigated by the FRG in July but not able to be proceeded with. The FRG have met to discuss potential other projects and are seeking Council endorsement for the progression of the Tumut Aerodrome Hangar project with additional available information presented

3. RECOMMENDATION:**THAT COUNCIL:**

- 1. Approve the submission of the Tumut Aerodrome Hangar Project under the Murray Region Fire Protection Grant**

4. BACKGROUND:

Following presentation of a report, Council considered the Murray Region Fire Protection Grant application at its ordinary 17 October 2024 meeting. Council resolved the following:

M212/24 RESOLVED:**THAT COUNCIL:**

1. Endorse proceeding with application for the Tumut Aerodrome water supply for fire management.

Cr Larter/Cr Wortes

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**M213/24 RESOLVED****THAT COUNCIL:**

2. Not support the Tumut Aerodrome hangar application and seek Softwoods Working Group endorsement of Council's application to facilitate the acquisition of land for the future extension of the runway.

Cr Larter/Cr Packard

For: Cr Ham, Cr Hayes, Cr Hardwick, Cr Inglis, Cr Larter, Cr Packard, Cr Wortes**Against:** Cr Thomson, Cr Sheldon**7 / 2****CARRIED****M214/24 RESOLVED:****THAT COUNCIL:**

3. Endorse proceeding with the Specialist Tractor and Mulcher grant application.

Cr Larter/Cr Sheldon

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**5. REPORT:**

Council has received additional information from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (The Department) regarding the invitation to apply for Tumut Aerodrome Aircraft Hangar Project

under the Plantations Fire Protection Fund. The Department has provided more context around the Fire Reference Group (FRG) and its decision making and 'believes the facility is crucial for both immediate and long-term fire protection in the region'.

Further information provided by the FRG per the attachment to this report with the key points extracted below for Council consideration.

- 1. Strategic Role of the Hangar:** The RFS would at times, based on operational demand be able to base the Bell 412 or similar specialist helicopter in Tumut if a suitable stabling facility were available. The specialist helicopter is equipped with advanced heat-sensing technology, including Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) cameras, which allow for aerial surveillance and fire detection, even in low-visibility or nighttime conditions. The Bell 412 can also transport personnel, deploy winching operations, and conduct water drops up to 1,400L per drop utilising a 'belly tank' arrangement.

The hangar would also be suitable for the soon to be commissioned Black Hawk aircraft (which could be located at Tumut at times based on operational priorities) which provides excellent initial direct attack capability due to its high performance and water drop capacity of 4,000L utilising a 'belly tank' arrangement.

Additionally, a NSW firefighting authority, Forestry Corporation of NSW would be able to utilise the facility to locate their contract aircraft based on operational activity.
- 2. Complementary to Local Services:** The new hangar would not conflict with local service providers. True North has an existing use contract with the National Aerial Fire Fighting Centre (also see <https://www.nafc.org.au/>), which includes allocations for Tumut. These contracts have fixed terms and are reviewed periodically on a commercial arrangement. Hence the new hangar would complement these services for the region.
- 3. Multi-Use Facility:** When not required for the specialist firefighting aircraft, the hangar would be available for other uses.
- 4. Interim Maintenance Funding:** While the RFS may not assume maintenance costs until the new Fire Control Centre is complete, the Softwood Working Group (SWG) is confident it can secure an interim funding source.
- 5. Alignment with the Master Plan:** The precinct's Master Plan includes provisions for a hangar.
- 6. Commitment to Tumut Fire Control Centre:** While the RFS remains committed to a Fire Control Centre in Tumut, prioritisation for this Program delivery has resulted in delayed roll out of some Fire Control Centres. Despite this, the RFS is committed to the completion of the new Fire Control Centre.

6. LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN AND DELIVERY AND OPERATIONAL PLAN:

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework:

Community Strategic Plan Theme

Theme 1 - Our Community

Theme 3 - Our Environment

Theme 4 - Our Infrastructure

Theme 5 - Our Civic Leadership

Community Strategic Plan Strategic Objectives

CSP1 Our communities are connected and inclusive. Supported by services that nurture health, wellbeing and identity

CSP3 Our natural environment is cared for and protected to ensure future generations can experience and enjoy its beauty

CSP4 Our infrastructure includes Council services that plan, manage, maintain and renew our community infrastructure and transport networks

CSP5 Our Civic leadership and organisation government fosters open and transparent partnership with our community

Delivery Program Principal Activities

1.4 Plan, manage and support the response and recovery of communities from natural disasters and economic shocks

3.1 Create climate resilience through our actions and advocacy

3.4 Partner with other agencies to protect our natural spaces and environment

4.2 Manage and plan for affordable infrastructure to meet current and future community needs

5.6 Proactively support and advocate for the needs of the community to other level of government and organisations

7. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS:

Operating costs have been estimated at between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year. Council has received formal notice from the Softwood Industry committing to funding operational costs of the hangar over the next 5 years. This agreement ending, coincides with the forecast completion of the Fire Control Centre (FCC) that is currently in the planning stage by Rural Fire Service. Upon completion of the FCC, it is intended that these costs transfer to the Rural Fire Service.

8. POLICY, LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:

Local Government Act 1993

Rural Fires Act 1997

9. RISK MANAGEMENT / COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Nil additional.

10. OPTIONS:

1. Adopt as per recommendations set out in this report - preferred option.
2. Amend.
3. Decline the recommendations set out in this report

11. COUNCIL SEAL REQUIRED:

No

12. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION:

Nil additional.

13. ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter Received From Fire Reference Group (Under separate cover)
2. Letter industry funding from SWG (Under separate cover)
3. BFMC Letter of Support - Heavy Helicopter Hanger Grant Proposal (Under separate cover)

Attachment 2 - DPI - Plantations FRG letter to SVC re PFPF -Karen Kneipp-Chair-Plantations Fire Reference- 22nd Nov 2024

Department of Primary Industries
and Regional Development



22 November 2024

Snowy Valleys Council
Att: General Manager, Mr. S. Pinnuck
info@svc.nsw.gov.au
cc jham@svc.nsw.gov.au

Re: Invitation to apply for Tumut Aerodrome Aircraft Hangar Project - Plantations Fire Protection Fund and Council motion

Dear Steven,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Plantations Fire Reference Group (FRG). The Fire Reference Group is aware of the motion carried at the Council meeting on the 21st November regarding the invitation to apply for the Tumut Aerodrome Aircraft Hangar project as part of the Plantations Fire Protection Fund (PFPF).

It was noted that the Council supported progressing the project on the condition that assurance was provided to Council that locally based aerial firefighting services currently available are not diminished. As previously advised by the Fire Reference Group, the new hangar would not conflict with local service providers. True North has an existing use contract with the National Aerial Fire Fighting Centre (also see <https://www.nafc.org.au/>), which includes allocations for Tumut. These contracts have fixed terms and are reviewed periodically on a commercial arrangement and is something that is beyond the remit of the Plantations Fire Protection Fund process.

The Fire Reference Group is not associated with the commercial arrangements between aircraft services providers and the NSW Government. Therefore, we cannot provide any further assurances in relation to contracting arrangements for the provision of local firefighting services now or in the future.

It should be noted that the purpose of the hangar is to provide *additional* and enhanced capacity for specialist firefighting aircraft to be available to the region. It is not about substituting one service for another. The project was identified to support the accommodation of firefighting aircraft owned or engaged by firefighting authorities without charges being incurred for its use.

As the closing date for submission of applications is fast approaching with applications due on the 3rd December 2024, it would be appreciated if the Council could advise the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (via forests@dpi.nsw.gov.au) if they do not wish to proceed.

The Fire Reference Group has identified other priority projects that may be able to be considered for the PFPF if the Council do not wish to proceed and the application was withdrawn prior to the closing date for applications. It is uncertain if there will be an opportunity in the PFPF for alternative priority fire protection projects to be funded in the region if the Council chooses to withdraw the application after submission.

Sincerely



Karen Kneipp

Chair, Plantations Fire Reference Group

karen.kneipp@dpird.nsw.gov.au

Attachment 3 - Media Release New fire protection projects to protect southern NSW plantation forests -Tara Moriarty 22 Jan 2025

OFFICIAL

Tara Moriarty

Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Western New South Wales



Media Release

New fire protection projects to help protect southern NSW plantation forests

Wednesday, 22 January 2025

The Minns Government is continuing its efforts to safeguard primary industries from bushfire threats, with a raft of projects announced today to help protect critical plantation timber in southern NSW under the Government's \$13 million Plantation Fire Protection funding package.

Funding has been endorsed for 15 local projects which will form a network of enhanced fire protection initiatives across the Murray region, including Greater Hume, Snowy Valleys, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Albury and Wagga Wagga LGAs.

Ranging from latest technology fire detection cameras to aerodrome-based water supplies for firefighting, the projects have been identified to collectively deliver the maximum fire protection, hazard reduction and response capabilities for plantations and communities in the region.

A panel of government and industry experts have identified the projects by analysing existing arrangements and identifying gaps and opportunities.

While the projects will protect plantation resources, they also provide increased protection for the local residents and businesses of the area.

The projects were identified by representatives from the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), and the Softwoods Working Group, facilitating additional input from plantation owners, local councils, Forestry Corporation and other fire authorities.

Approved projects include:

- \$1,100,000 for the upgrade of Ellerslie Range Fire Trails Program which are strategically important to protect at-risk plantation estates in the *Snowy Valley which includes the Southern Cross Forest complex, Green Hills and Bago State Forests*;
- \$983,339 for the upgrade and maintenance of priority fire trails in Bondo, Bago, Carabost and Jingellic State Forests;
- \$5,720,000 for Tumut Aerodrome, to improve water supply for aerial firefighting and the construction of hangar for fire suppression aircraft;
- \$100,000 for two high volume trailer mounted water pumps for rapid refilling of water transport trucks and fire tankers, to be housed in the Bondo forest depot and Ardrossan forest depot;
- \$329,490 for a network of Remote Automated Weather Stations to provide data to the Bureau of Meteorology to inform fire preparedness and response across the region;
- \$145,625 for firefighting water storages in strategic locations exposed to uncontrolled fires – for both private and public plantation land in the Ellerslie forests area to the west of Adelong, forest areas to the west of Humula, *Carabost State Forest and Murruguldrie State Forests*;
- \$456,000 for two bulk tankers to transport firefighting water, to be housed at Green Hills;

OFFICIAL

- \$387,106 for specialist tractor and mulcher, based in Tumbarumba, to undertake growth suppression and non-burn hazard reduction in key fire corridors;
- \$1,537,800 for an all-terrain firefighting machine with water tank and high flow water pumps that will deliver large volumes of water in difficult plantation situations to be housed in the Tumut area;
- \$828,139 to expand the PSN (Public Safety Network) radio network for plantation workers, across the Murry region;
- \$325,000 for three additional fire detection cameras on Mt Ikes, Table Top and Mt Flakney to complete the network monitoring the Murray Valley timber plantation estate;
- \$220,000 for the Australian Fire Danger Rating System – which provides critical data to assess fire risk across the Murray region;
- \$767,500 to upgrade of cabins in five fire towers to ensure early detection in *Munderoo Fire Tower (Snowy Valleys)*, *Tumorrana Fire Tower (Snowy Valleys)*, *Burngoogie Fire Tower (Wagga Wagga)*, *Kendall Fire Tower (Snowy Valleys)* and *Kangaroo Fire Tower (Cootamundra-Gundagai)*.

Together these projects will be administered as a pilot program, with monitoring and evaluation to be undertaken by DPIRD to help determine the potential to broaden this program across the State.

Minister for Agriculture and Regional NSW, Tara Moriarty said:

“The Murray region was hit particularly hard in the 2019/20 bushfires and we lost a significant stock of our future housing timber – we can’t afford to lose anymore.

“These projects will play a vital role in protecting the remaining critical timber supplies in the Murray region as we move into the 2024-25 bushfire season and beyond.

“These same timber plantations will produce the quality timber our NSW housing sector so desperately needs now and for generations to come, so it’s important to find ways to protect them from bushfires.

“I am confident this program will build resilience into this important regional industry through measures that deliver improved fire prevention, detection and response, making our communities safer in the process.”

The Independent Member for Wagga Wagga, Dr Joe McGirr, said:

“Memories of the disastrous Dunns Road fire five years ago are still fresh in local minds, so these measures to reduce the fire risk in the Snowy Valleys are very welcome.

“The softwoods industry is an economic powerhouse for the local economy so it’s essential that all steps possible are taken to protect livelihoods and businesses that depend on safe and secure plantations.

“The enhancements at the Tumut aerodrome will be an important addition to the region’s firefighting capacity.

“This is the result of positive collaboration between industry, the Rural Fire Service, Snowy Valleys Council and government and I congratulate all involved.”

MEDIA: Michael Salmon | Minister Moriarty | 0417 495 018

Paul Terry | Joe McGirr MP | 0419 618 599

9. GENERAL BUSINESS:

10. NEXT MEETING
