



Troy Grant
Minister for Police
Minister for Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION TO BE HELD INTO BEGA VALLEY BUSH FIRE

The NSW Government today announced that ex-Australian Federal Police (AFP) Commissioner Mick Keelty AO APM will undertake an independent review into the Bega Valley fire.

Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant said the residents of Tathra and surrounding areas have understandably been left devastated by the fire and the damage it left behind.

“Mr Keelty has the credentials and the experience to properly review the operational response to the Bega Valley fire, having led an independent inquiry into the 2011 Perth Hills bush fire and the 2012 Margaret River bush fire.

“His expertise will ensure an independent assessment of the events surrounding this natural disaster,” Mr Grant said.

The first priority is stopping the fire, it is still ongoing. This review will not commence until that happens and the community have returned to their homes.

The investigation will particularly focus on the call taking and dispatch arrangements of both Fire and Rescue NSW and NSW Rural Fire Service across the state.

Any recommendations that are put forward will be considered to ensure regional and rural communities in NSW receive the best emergency service response possible.

Mr Grant said local firefighters and personnel worked tirelessly to contain the Bega Valley fire and save as many properties as they could.

“Thank you to all firefighters who risked their lives to fight the Bega Valley fire,” Mr Grant said.

“While properties have been lost, together our fire services saved 398 homes and no lives were lost, which is thanks to the hard work from both NSW RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW firefighters. Our firefighters have gone above and beyond for their community, as they always do.

“This review is by no means a criticism of our dedicated and hardworking fire services, rather the

appropriate course of action to ensure community confidence in our emergency service agencies.

“While the impacted communities are undoubtedly still in shock, NSW Government agencies are on the ground to assist people struggling with the aftermath of the fire, and who need to access financial support and social services.

“We want to ensure the residents of Tathra and surrounding areas are well supported as they recover and rebuild their tight-knit communities.”

An official Coronial Inquest will also be conducted into the emergency response to the Bega Valley fire.

Information about the recovery and services available to people affected by the fire can be found at: www.emergency.nsw.gov.au.

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