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Sent: Sunday, 5 May 2019 12:30 PM
To: AFAC Review (DPFEM) <AFAC.Review@dpfem.tas.gov.au>
Subject: RE: PS RE: Submission

Hi Felicity – sorry to be a nuisance, but is it possible to add a comment about firefighting? I've been doing some research on deployment of firefighting teams via helicopter, and why they weren't used early on:

Obviously the first thing is to give priority to early extinguishment of fires, even if they aren't immediately threatening humans and human habitation/infrastructure, because wildlife and the environment has value, but also as we have seen, if fires are allowed to get out of hand, they will eventually threaten humans, including the lives of firefighters on the ground (I am told by one person who was in a firefighting team on the ground near Little Pine/Lake Fergus that they came very close to being surrounded by fire at one point, which could easily have resulted in tragedy).

Our firefighting teams need winch training such as NSW does, so they can be deployed quickly and safely into areas with no roads.

I am informed that Rotorlift put together a package to do initial training and then operational currency program, but TFS balked at the costs and instead blew out the fire fighting budget flying in NSW fighters and NZ fighters to do fighting that we should have had the resources already trained for.

Rotorlift are winch experts and a lot of their pilot resources for fire work are winch ticketed. The RATs who work with choppers do it well but they aren't winch ticketed and as a result we don't have enough airframes or firefighters setup for rapid winch deployments.

We need to push for TFS to train winch teams and keep them current (and for the funding to make this possible). Not only will this help with early extinguishment but will save a lot of costs later, and the time of and risk to volunteer firefighters walking in to fight fires, plus the ongoing costs of dealing with the aftermath (which for my group will go on until at least October).

Thank you – Robyn