

03

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
[ANNUAL REPORT 2003]



The Hon Tony Kelly MP
Minister for Emergency Services
Level 34, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

Pursuant to the provisions of the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act, 1985*, I have pleasure in presenting to you, for submission to the Parliament, the Annual Report of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service for the year ended 30 June, 2003.

Highlights of the year include

- The most protracted fire season on record
- Sixty-one Section 44 declarations involving 81 local government areas
- 151 days of continuous Section 44 operations
- Provision of interstate assistance to Victoria and the ACT
- 461 task forces deployed over the duration of the operations
- 53 multi-agency task forces deployed
- 103 aircraft deployed in single day
- Introduction of new legislation affecting hazard reduction
- Funding increase of \$7.7M over previous year
- 2003/05 Strategic Plan developed and published
- Funding for 235 new and refurbished firefighting vehicles.

Other highlights are contained throughout the Report, which I commend to you.

Yours sincerely

Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM
Commissioner



Caring
souls



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People
just like you

extraordinary spirit

"Volunteers are our greatest asset. Their spirit, courage and determination help not only drive the Service's initiatives but provide the rural community with the protection and safety they so deservedly need."



our volunteers
Bravehearts



United in spirit



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Leading by example

There is no doubt that the review year 2002-2003 was a watershed for the NSW Rural Fire Service, both in terms of operational performance, and the acceptance of new legislative responsibilities and accountabilities.

First and foremost, I pay tribute to the volunteer members of this Service. It is they who provide the foundation upon which the Service stands and who unfailingly, year after year, provide an incalculable level of service to the community of NSW. Without the volunteers the Service would not exist.

To say that their efforts during this memorable firefighting campaign were extraordinary, is putting it too simply.

The drought conditions that prevailed over much of the state gave rise to a number of large and extended firefighting campaigns. Notable amongst them the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, South Coast, Queanbeyan, Northern Tablelands, the North Coast, the Hunter, the Mid-North Coast, the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury. These fires necessitated crews from many parts of the state having to travel long distances, be away from home and work, and suffer no small degree of discomfort and inconvenience.

The fires – eventually 459 in number – resulted in continuous Section 44 emergencies for 151 days from 27 September, 2002 until 24 February, 2003.

Fires also burnt in the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria. Within NSW approximately 1.465 million hectares of land were burnt by fires that had a total perimeter of 10,340 kms and were fought by RFS personnel assisted by colleagues from Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

In recognition of the bushfire threat to NSW, the Service received another record budget allocation of \$M120.731, an increase of \$M7.7 over the previous year. As part of the government's ongoing vehicle replacement commitment \$M27.357 was allocated for the provision of



235 new and refurbished firefighting vehicles. \$M3.302 was allocated for the provision of protective equipment for volunteers.

Following the Christmas 2001 bushfires the issues of development control and hazard reduction attracted considerable community interest. Subsequently, in August, 2002, the Government introduced a package of reforms to give bushland communities even greater protection from the threat of fires.

These dual reforms – to ensure bushfire management is integral to development control processes and streamline the hazard reduction environmental approvals process – will help protect life and property.

The passing of the *Rural Fires and Environmental Assessment Legislation Amendment Act, 2002* brought these changes into effect, and in their passing the authority of the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service to ensure land managers carry out bushfire hazard reduction work was considerably enhanced. In addition, and among several other new requirements, councils are obliged to map bush fire prone lands in their areas.

Whilst these proposed legislative changes were being considered by the Parliament the worst bushfires for many a year hit New South Wales with a ferocity, intensity and unpredictability that posed never before seen levels of threat to the safety of the community and the volunteer firefighters.

Yet again a huge tally of assets and people were placed at considerable and seemingly never-ending risk.

Given the great potential for damage, property losses in New South Wales were low and for this a great debt is owed by all of us to the men and women of the various firefighting agencies who, time and time again, faced not insignificant personal danger to protect life and property. Their courage and commitment is well known but must never be taken for granted. They are the living embodiment of the Service and our colleagues in other jurisdictions.

It is beyond question that, once more, aircraft proved to be an invaluable resource to the firefighters on the ground and they were used to maximum effect in firefighting operations. At the height of fire activity in one day 103 aircraft were deployed. The increasing professionalism of Service personnel in air operations reflects the levels of training and resources that have been directed to the rapidly developing aviation capacity of the Service.

Following the Federal Government's announcement in the Budget Papers that up to \$M5.5 had been allocated to assist states and territories to meet their aerial firefighting needs for the 2003-2004 fire season the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) invited the aircraft industry to respond to a requirement for heavy and medium firebombing aircraft and the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the existing fleet. Those responses have been evaluated and AFAC is negotiating contracts with various aircraft service providers.

The investment of substantial resources into the development and implementation of effective community education programs paid enormous dividends. Members of the public – especially those in the fire-affected areas – are to be congratulated for the manner in which they readily accepted responsibility for preparing their homes against the threat of bushfires. Without their co-operation our property losses would have been considerably higher.

Sadly four firefighters lost their lives during the year – one during a hazard reduction operation and three as a result of natural causes while on operational duty – and our sympathies remain with their families and colleagues as they do with the families of the three civilians who also tragically lost their lives.

The co-ordination of the firefighting effort, in all its aspects, provides clear testimony to the processes and procedures that have been put in place as part of the standardisation of fire management and firefighting practices and operations adopted by Australian fire services.

Direct firefighting resources were, of course, assisted by many other New South Wales and interstate support agencies providing essential logistics and welfare support. It is timely to thank our interstate colleagues for coming to our aid during the campaign fires and to assure them that, should the occasion arise, we will reciprocate.

The State Coroner completed his investigations into a number of the 2001/2002 fires and made two recommendations of statewide significance. The first dealt with Service fire investigators using similar procedures to NSW Police to catalogue, identify and secure items of evidence. This recommendation has been implemented by the Fire Investigation Unit. The second involved the implementation of a computerised running sheet to document important decisions during Section 44 emergencies. The Service is working through the mechanics of implementing the Coroner's recommendation.

In terms of Service management the new Strategic Plan was developed and published giving a new direction for Service policies and processes. At the same time the Service's business planning process enabled sections, regions, zones, districts and teams to utilise a common approach to developing and implementing co-ordinated strategies and performance measures.

As the legislative and operational demands on the Service grow and the staffing levels of the Service, together with community expectations increase exponentially, it has been necessary to review the economics and functionality of the office accommodation occupied by the Service at Rosehill. After a lengthy review process it has been agreed by the Government that there would be substantial cost benefits and efficiencies in service delivery in relocating the Head Office from Rosehill to Homebush. The Service is also taking the opportunity to co-locate the Region East office to the new facility. The relocation is planned to occur in May 2004 and

will result in staff currently housed in five separate buildings being accommodated in a single purpose-built structure.

The Service continued to restructure its local operations by the creation of more than 12 additional zones to provide effective resource allocation and take advantage of a more highly skilled workforce. Those Rural Fire Districts that have yet to establish formal zones have been grouped into teams to maximise staffing availability and to ease workload.

The Honourable Bob Debus MP, the former Minister for Emergency Services, and the Honourable Tony Kelly MP, Minister for Emergency Services both provided unswerving support for the Service.

I place on record my appreciation of the staff of the Minister's office and to the Director and staff of the Office for Emergency Services. I also acknowledge the support and contributions from the NSW Rural Fire Service Association. Without this continuing support and counsel the Service would not be in as strong a position to undertake its community safety commitments.

Many state agencies have assisted the Service during 2002/03, especially throughout the fire season. I particularly wish to acknowledge the support and co-operation extended by the other firefighting authorities – National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Forests, New South Wales Fire Brigades and the Bureau of Meteorology – as well as all other agencies represented on the State Emergency Management Committee.

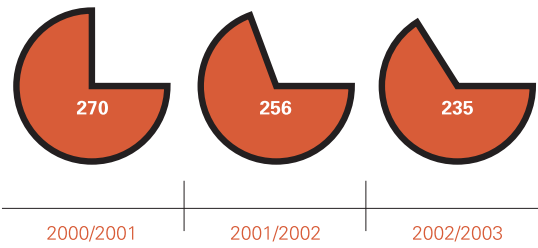
As always the salaried staff of the Service contributed working hours considerably beyond those that might reasonably be expected. Those efforts cannot and will not be understated. It remains this level of commitment that enables the Service to maintain its international and domestic reputation as arguably the largest cohesive volunteer based fire service in the world.

Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM
Commissioner

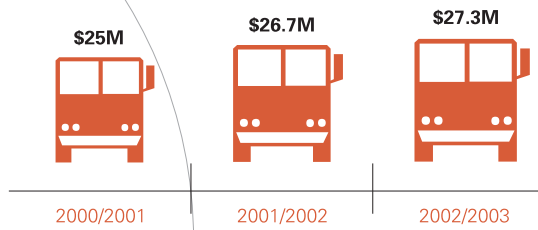
Following
direction

Financial Overview

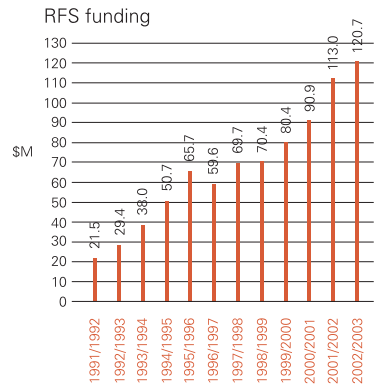
A record budget of \$M120.731 for the NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund enabled the Service to continue the provision of upgraded firefighting equipment and the provision of protective clothing for firefighters. As part of the Government's ongoing vehicle replacement commitment \$M27.357 was allocated for the provision of 235 new and refurbished firefighting vehicles.



Construction and Refurbishment of Firefighting Tankers



Funding for Construction and Refurbishment of Firefighting Tankers



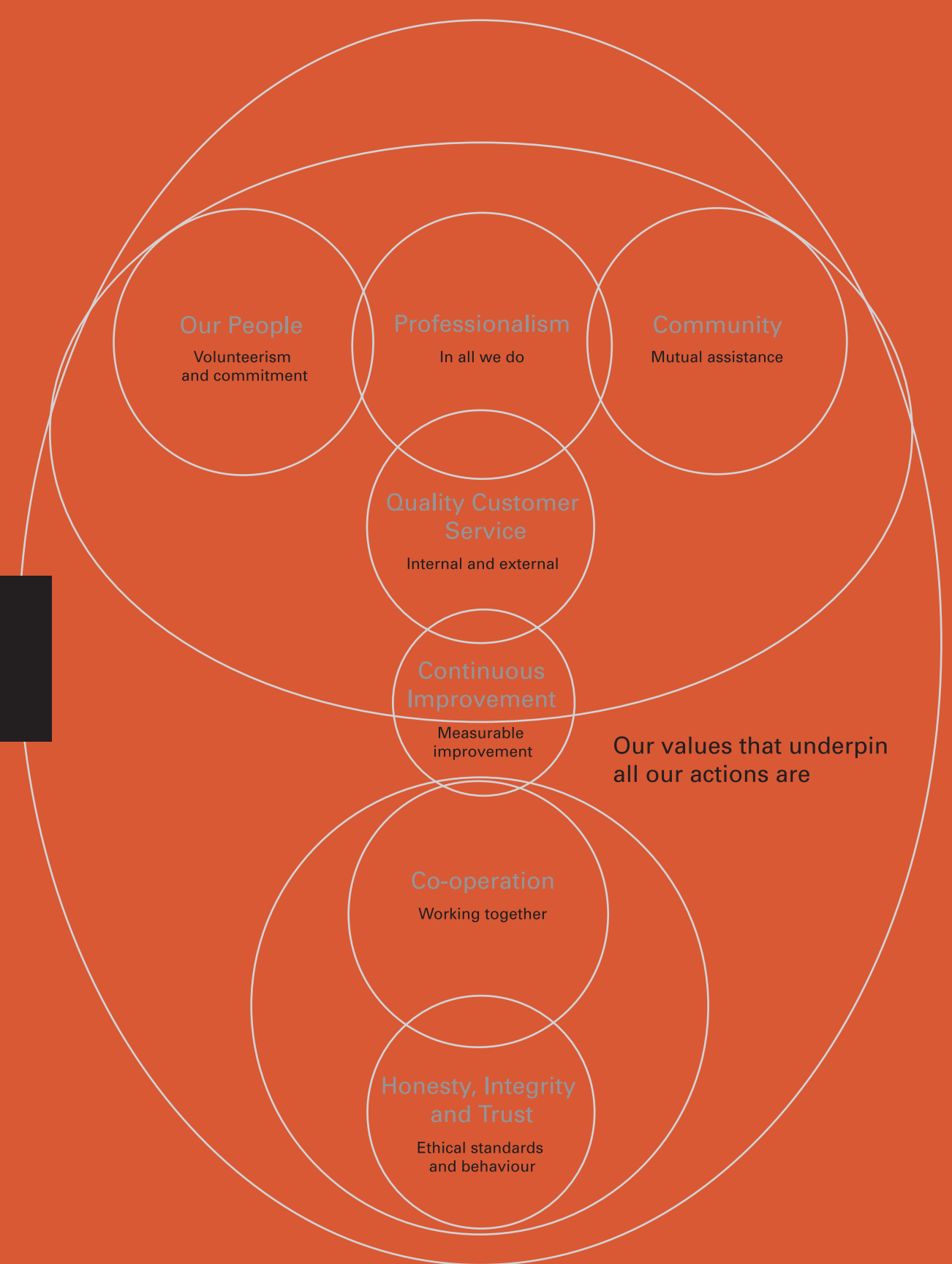
Sharing positive values

Vision Statement

To provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service.

Mission Statement

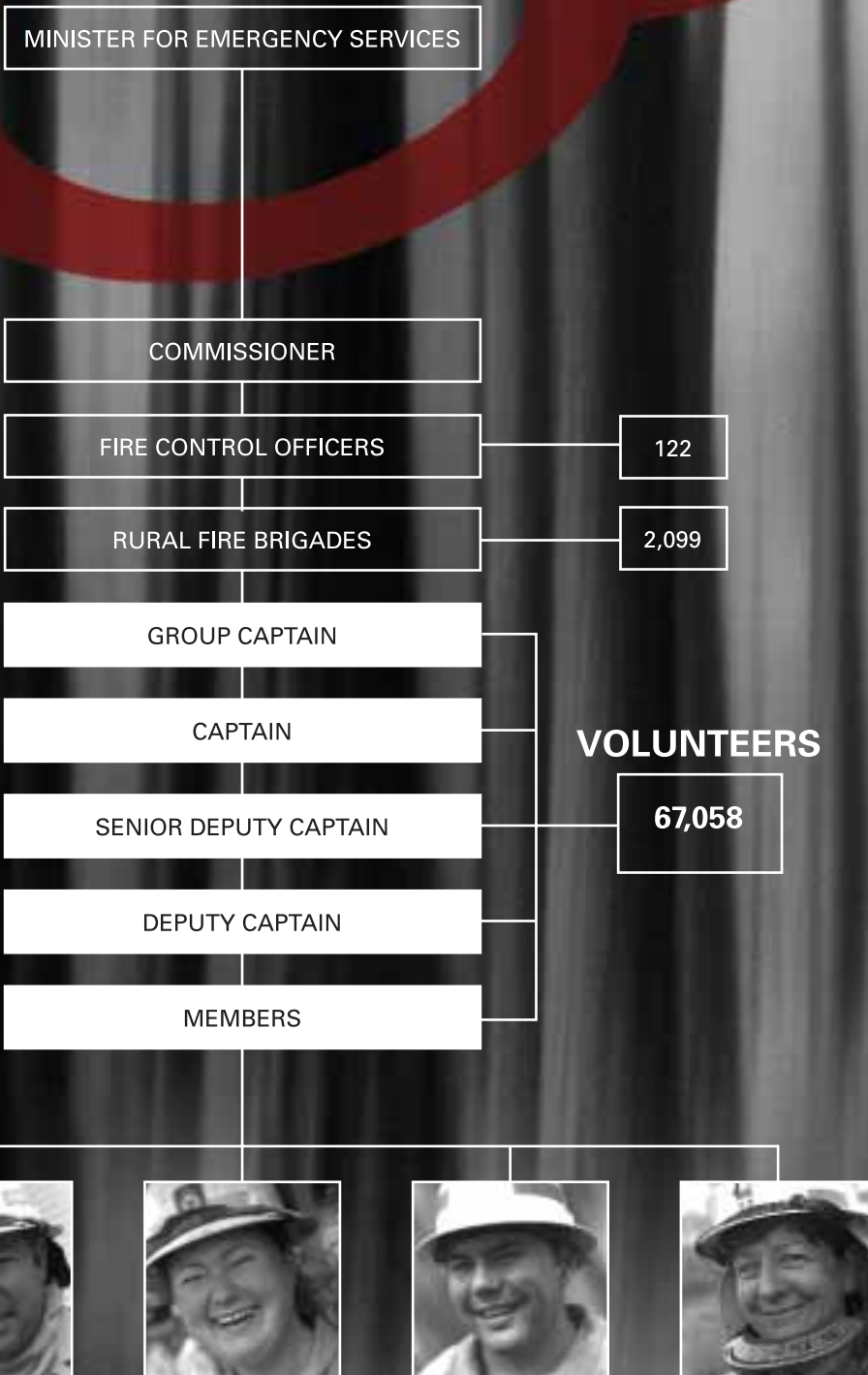
To protect the community and our environment we will minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies by providing the highest standards of training, community education, prevention and operational capability.



Our Volunteers

The living embodiment of the Service

Volunteers and fire management



The fire management and fire protection responsibilities of the NSW RFS arise from the Rural Fires Act, 1997.

Role and Functions

They can be summarised as follows:

- the protection of life and property for all fire related incidents within all rural fire districts in the state;
- the safety and welfare of all volunteers;
- the provision of effective training and resources to rural fire brigades; and
- the provision of emergency assistance to other emergency service organisations.

The Service provides the Secretariat for the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, the peak planning body for bushfire management in NSW. The Commissioner has an overarching co-ordinating role and chairs the Coordinating Committee.

Together making a difference

Customers

The customers of the Service are a large diverse group. They are the general community of NSW who may have reasons to use or receive the Service's resources.



They include, but not exclusively, the volunteers, other agencies, the media, government departments, rural land managers and landholders, local government, schools and all members and sections of the Service.

Organisation Chart

The functional organisation chart is shown on page 30.



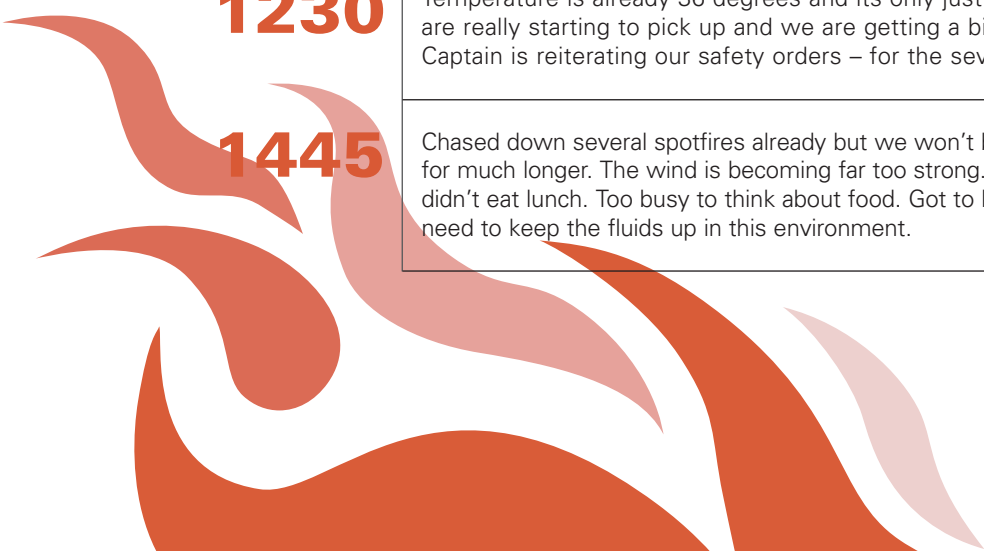
Determined to win

Achievements

The customers of NSWRFSS are a large, diverse group. They are the general community of New South Wales who may have reasons to use or receive the Service's resource.

A day in the life of a volunteer during our longest season

- 0530 Arrive at the Station to prepare for the day ahead. Time to check over the truck that has just returned from night shift on the fireground. Time for a quick clean over to remove the thick layer of dust and ash. Check all the gear to make sure it is holding up under the strain.
- 0600 Briefing. A detailed review of the backburning work overnight. They achieved 12 kilometres of burning off containment lines. The weather forecast is not good for today with Total Fire Bans across the whole state. Winds are going to be strong – gusts of more than 50km/h again for the fifth day in a row. It's going to be tough and we just aren't sure that the lines will hold. Spotfires have been travelling well over two kilometres in these conditions.
- 0630 Back into the field. The crew is tired – it has been such a long campaign. We started on Task Forces in the north of the state in August. Its now January and we are just grateful that we have understanding employers – they have been wonderfully supportive and we reckon they are as important in this firefighting effort as we are.
- 0800 Just finished some breakfast before we head down the trails. Our catering volunteers have put on a good spread. Need some energy food for the day ahead.
- 1030 Been patrolling and mopping up some of the containment lines before the weather worsens. Hopefully if we blacken out the lines deep enough we won't get as many spotovers.
- 1230 Temperature is already 36 degrees and its only just past midday! Winds are really starting to pick up and we are getting a bit nervous. The Captain is reiterating our safety orders – for the seventh time.
- 1445 Chased down several spotfires already but we won't be able to hold these for much longer. The wind is becoming far too strong. Just realised that we didn't eat lunch. Too busy to think about food. Got to keep drinking water – need to keep the fluids up in this environment.



The winds are in now and its getting tenuous. We have been pulled back to safer areas, its too risky to be on the firetrails with fire behaviour this erratic. We expect that the wind will hit 70km/h now. They updated the weather forecast two hours ago and we knew it was going to be another one of those afternoons. They are about to move us into the backs of some homes. We will be into property protection pretty soon I fear. The firefront is moving very quickly now and the containment lines will break as the embers are carried over. The residents are being great, doing what they can to prepare their homes, wearing all the right gear. One nice resident just brought out us a tray of cold drinks – they have no idea how much that boosts the morale to get that type of support.

1630

It's on now. The fire has come racing up the gully and into the back of the homes. Quite a few spotfires into the backs of houses and a few homes that hadn't cleaned the leaves from the gutters have now got some pretty singed edges! When will they learn?

1715

The winds are up to the forecast 70km/h. We have had our backs to the wall for the last two hours – we haven't lost a house yet which is amazing and a real testament to the crews – I am so proud to be one of them. A shed got burnt down, but all things considered that is a small price considering the fire behaviour. I have never seen fire of this intensity.

1840

The winds have eased and the pressure has come off. The night crews are being brought to our truck to do a hot changeover. They have had their briefing and will have their work cut out for them tonight trying to re-establish those containment lines. Fire is quietening down. I don't think most people understand how this "beast" sleeps at night.

1930

Back home and winding down a bit. I have to go back to work tomorrow. Feel like I am letting the crew down a bit by not being able to be there for them. But being a volunteer is about balancing these things out. Next day is Saturday and I will be back on the truck again. The fight is a long way from over. If only it would rain. This drought has to break soon – we need a break soon. But we will keep going back until its done – no matter what Mother Nature throws at us. We won't let her beat us – we are the NSW Rural Fire Service!

2100

Sound Leadership and Management Practices

GOAL

Waste reduction.

Asset management.

Effective motor vehicle fleet management.

Energy reduction.

Relocation of Head Office and Region East office.

Improved service delivery.

WHAT WE DID

- Paper avoidance strategies introduced and recyclable products purchased.
- Developed new database to facilitate access, accuracy and location of all assets.
- Developed and introduced processes to achieve optimum cost benefits from suppliers and provide most suitable vehicles for Service use.
- Electronic fuel management system implemented to enable effective forecasting and budgeting.
- Electricity and energy efficient equipment purchased.
- Carried out all necessary financial analysis, facilities and space planning, and consultations.
- Service Delivery Model (SDM) introduced as basis for business planning and resource allocation in Districts.
- Incorporated preparation of District budgets in SDM.
- Brigade classification system begun.
- Development of 2003/2005 Strategic Plan.
- Systems audit policy and procedures developed.
- Developed guidelines to brigade management planning.
- Developed Brigade Reference Guide.
- Reviewed and applied staff consolidation and zoning models.
- Continued development of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity management system.
- Continued provision of strategic leadership on information management and technology issues.
- Implemented Performance Management Planning and Review System (PMPRS) for Head Office and Regional office staff.
- Enhancement of 53 new staff – 35 for bushfire emergency management and 18 for auditing hazard reduction work – approved.
- 39 Fire Mitigation Officer positions approved.
- Induction program for staff developed.

MEASURE

- Compliance with Government's Waste Reduction and Purchasing policies.
- Full audits of assets identifying type and location.
- Compliance with Government tendering and procurement processes. Changes in vehicle types implemented.
- No of 4WD vehicles reduced by 10%.
- Working database of fuel transaction reports introduced.
- Government's energy reduction targets met.
- Lease agreement signed. Architects and builders appointed. Space planning completed.
- Model used by all Districts.
- New methodology applied.
- Project team formed, project scoped and research begun.
- Distribution of plan completed; placed on Service's website.
- District business planning based on Strategic Plan.
- Development of implementation planning begun.
- Distributed to all District offices and available on Service's website.
- Research and drafting begun.
- Review on time. New positions filled.
- Over 75% Districts either 'teamed' or 'zoned'.
- Business and Impact Analysis completed.
- Information Management Governance Group met on six occasions. Issues go to Corporate Executive Group.
- 73% of affected staff had current PMPRS plans and of these 67% had completed 3rd quarterly review.
- 90% positions filled.
- All positions filled.
- Induction guidebook on Service's website and two induction sessions provided for 40 staff.

NEXT YEAR

- Continuous improvement through identification of new and improved methods of reducing waste.
- Further refinement of asset management system.
- Undertake review of remaining fleet vehicles for suitability and cost effectiveness.
- Further 10% reduction.
- System to be reviewed and enhanced.
- Ongoing monitoring and increased consumption of 'green' power.
- Building occupied in May, 2004.
- Electronic version of SDM developed and integrated with Firezone, Bushfire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS), and Standards of Fire Cover.
- District budgets for 2003/2004 related to planned programs and actions.
- Incorporate system into Standards of Fire Cover program in 2004.
- Review in 2004. Develop and implement complementary corporate performance management system.
- Improve linkages with risk assessment and other plans.
- Implement systems audit across Service.
- Integrate into SDM and facilitate workshops as required.
- Publish Guide in March, 2004.
- Development of zoning model in 'teamed' areas.
- Finalise system and begin testing on selected sites.
- Continuation of leadership and reporting.
- Improve PMPRS and implement in all Districts using e-SDM program.
- Streamlining of processes within Service.
- Four induction programs.
- All new staff to attend induction program.

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Sound Leadership and Management Practices (continued)

GOAL

Effective human resource management (continued).

Provision of safe working environment.

Effective allocation of resources and funding.

Effective project management.

Effective volunteer relations.

Effective delivery of information services.

WHAT WE DID

- Developed corporate training policies for salaried staff.
- Strategic Plan for Women developed.
- OH&S Project team established.
- Established protocols for inter-agency co-operation.
- Identified requirements for training in first aid.
- Reviewed emergency procedures.
- Reviewed and evaluated Service Agreements (SAs).
- Provided project management services as required.
- Appointed Manager, Volunteer Relations.
- Face to face District presentations to volunteers.
- Produced recruitment cards.
- Produced volunteer information brochure.
- Online contact point for membership inquiries.
- BRIMS design and implementation.
- BRIMS multi-agency application begun.
- Implemented standard desktop equipment program.
- Developed Geographical Information Systems (GIS) capability with state wide coverage.
- Assessed and enhanced wide area network (WAN) services.
- Implemented Head Office local area network (LAN) infrastructure replacement and maintenance program.
- Implement remote access capability for staff.
- Developed information management strategic plan.

MEASURE

- Policies adopted following consultation with Union and staff.
- Spokeswomen carried out range of activities as outcomes from Plan.
- Review approved by Corporate Executive Group.
- Exercises held to test protocols.
- Implemented training for all key segment staff.
- New procedures endorsed and training begun.
- Full review consultation with stakeholders.
- Analysis report to local councils and Service management.
- Rollout plan for phase 2 developed and implemented.
- Training and support conducted as required.
- SA system linked to SDM to provide Schedule 3 attachments and generate quarterly and annual reports.
- Completed 17 projects as part of relocation program.
- Completed full scoping documentation and management for OH&S project.
- Manager took up position on 2 September, 2002.
- 15 presentations
- 22,000 distributed.
- 10,000 distributed.
- 1,354 expressions of interest received.
- Phase 1 implemented.
- Drafting begun.
- 81% desktops to Windows 2000 standard.
- Infrastructure development begun October, 2002.
- Established GIS unit and 6 support centres.
- Development of GIS database begun.
- Completed 2, September.
- Services upgraded at seven sites.
- Upgrade completed.
- Citrix review completed October, 2002, upgrade begun June, 2003.
- Endorsed September, 2002.

NEXT YEAR

- Linkages with budget process to be enhanced.
- Spokeswomen's intranet site to be developed.
- Women's Forum in 2004.
- Establishment of OH&S section.
- Review and refine protocols.
- Complete training.
- Implement procedures and complete training.
- Continue to review and monitor SAs.
- Provide ongoing support for Service projects. Investigate new reporting format.
- 25 presentations in 2004.
- Gender/ethnic specific cards.
- Develop generic recruitment strategies handbook.
- Participation in Australian Catholic University project.
- Phase 2 to be implemented June, 2004.
- Complete multi-agency application 30 June, 2004.
- 100% compliance by June, 2004.
- Establish 2 further support centres.
- Redesign WAN to be completed June, 2004.
- Relocate LAN to new Head Office.
- Further Citrix upgrade for all WAN users.
- Review plan.

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Sound Leadership and Management Practices (continued)

General

Through the development of a range of new policies, procedures and databases the Service continued to move inexorably towards a position where a full performance based management and administrative culture is part of our day-to-day workplace philosophy.

The Service-wide adoption of the Service Delivery Model (SDM) integrated with the Firezone database, the Bushfire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) and the Standards of Fire Cover facilitated a significant improvement in service delivery to our customers. At the same time the implementation of a Performance Management Planning and Review System (PMPRS) for Head and Regional office staff ensured that individual performance measures were linked to the SDM and business plans.

Next year, the identification and adoption of revised and more appropriate measurable performance indicators will enable the Service to report upon its performance efficiency and effectiveness both qualitatively and quantitatively.

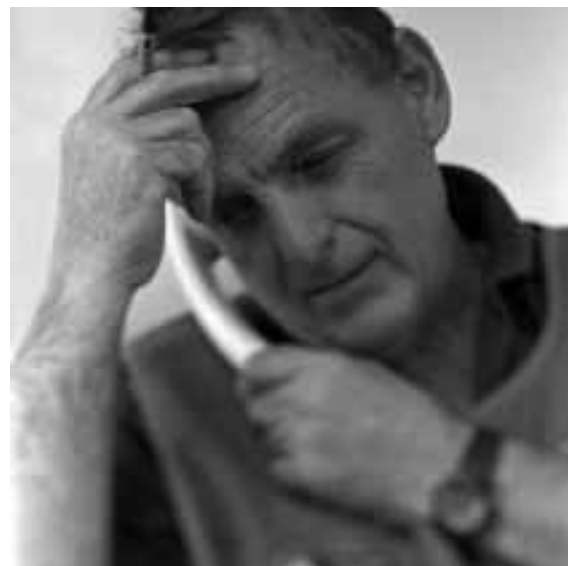
To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of resource and funding allocations, the Service, in consultation with stakeholders, carried out a full review and evaluation of Service Agreements (SAs) – formerly Service Level Agreements. Reports on the outcomes of the review were submitted to all affected local councils and Service management. The program of review will continue.

The Service continued to restructure its local operations by the creation of additional zones to provide effective resource allocation and take advantage of a more highly skilled workforce.

Seventeen project teams were formed to manage various aspects of the co-relocation of the Service's Rosehill Head Office and the Region East office to Homebush. Building works began in the latter half of the year and the project has progressed according to schedule. The relocation is due to occur in May, 2004.

Compliance with various Government policies and programs was achieved in areas of waste reduction, asset management, records management, energy reduction and use of green energy, as well as motor vehicle fleet management.

The advent of one of the worst bushfire seasons in living memory was a portent of reduced emphasis on traditional day-to-day administrative and management functions and a significant commitment of time and resources in support of firefighting operations. An inescapable consequence has been that some commitments made last year have not been fulfilled but have been carried over until next year.



Information Services and Technology

There were a number of significant improvements in service delivery across all aspects of information services.

A customer survey in March, 2003 indicated that 84% of customers responding to the survey were generally satisfied with the level of service provided by the Help Desk.

Within the Applications Development section better quality control resulted from the improvements to policy, documentation and change management processes.

The Geographical Information Systems (GIS) section established six customer support centres to enable closer liaison between the section and local customers. Section staff provide a range of GIS products and services as well as managing local and corporate GIS requirements. The section is also working closely with the Operations and Regional Management directorate to complete an Operational GIS Strategy that will cover the roles and responsibilities of the section during operational periods.

Occupational Health and Safety

The Service embraced the health and safety legislative framework introduced into New South Wales in September, 2001.

Major emphasis was placed upon the review and refinement of the risk management and consultation codes and to support this project a Health and Safety project team was established and began preliminary examination of future Service requirements and the legislative compliance audit. A number of new areas – community related activities, safe work on roads, and youth development

programs – were evaluated using risk assessment applications and working protocols will be developed as work in these areas progresses.

The Service continued its participation on various WorkCover Industry Groups and during the year WorkCover launched two brochures on organisational stress specifically targeted at emergency service workers.

There were twenty-eight recorded workers' compensation claims but there were no prosecutions under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2000*.

Several of the commitments given in last year's Annual Report could not be fulfilled as a consequence of a diversion of resources to support the extended firefighting operations. All worksite inspections will be completed by December, 2004 and the other outstanding initiatives will be absorbed into the business plan for the new Occupational Health and Safety Unit that will be established next year.

Ethnic Affairs

Themes surrounding ethnic affairs and equity issues were included in all publications, training programs and conference presentations by the Staff Services section during the reporting period.

Future ethnic affairs strategies proposed by the Service include:

- progression towards the benchmark of 18% of the workforce being people whose first language is not English;
- increasing the representation of those same staff as a percentage of employees in occupations where they are significantly under-represented; and
- including accountabilities for specific Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) outcomes in the performance agreements of the Senior Executive of the Service.

Action Plan for Women

Following the appointment of the Women's Liaison Officer and five Spokeswomen across the Service a 'Strategic Plan' for Women was developed.

Activities to be undertaken by spokeswomen include:

- networking and consulting with women employees;
- providing information about employment and other issues;
- providing formal and informal training opportunities;
- referring women to appropriate sources of expertise;
- reporting upon their various activities and issues;
- enhancing their own skills to better perform their roles.

Work has also begun on the development of a Spokeswomen's intranet site to be used for the dissemination of information on the outcomes of the Strategic Plan. As an integral part of the program a Women's Forum is proposed for 2004.

Disability Action Plan

The Disability Action Plan has been revised with a greater emphasis placed upon training staff in disability awareness issues and a focus on increasing the representation of people with a disability within the Service.

Joint Select Committee on Bushfires

In December 2002 the Cabinet officially adopted the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Bushfires and all agencies have been working on implementing those recommendations.

While the Service has been attempting to meet the stipulated timeframes the effects of the extremely severe bushfire season have caused some delays. Notwithstanding, of the sixty-six recommendations, thirty-eight were implemented and the remaining twenty-eight are in the process of being implemented.

A key factor in addressing the recommendations was the development of the strategic audit plan, which provides a method of assessing the performance of bush fire management committees.

Code of Conduct

The Service maintained its commitment to the Code of Conduct with all new staff being briefed at induction and provided with a copy of the Code or electronic access to it. There were no amendments to the Code during the year.



Professional Incident Response to Fire and other Emergencies

GOAL

Provide effective fire investigation.

WHAT WE DID

- Recruited and trained investigators.
- Enhanced training resources available to the Service.
- Conducted fire investigations.
- Promoted Service's capabilities in fire investigation.

MEASURE

- 41 new investigators available as a resource.
- Increase in number of fire investigation kits.
- Draft training packages aligned with US and AFAC standards reviewed.
- 345 investigations conducted.
- Eight Service investigators assisted Strike Force Tronto II.
- Crime Stoppers program promoted.
- Six training sessions with NSW Police held around State to enhance understanding and role of Service.
- Service commended by NSW Coroner.

NEXT YEAR

- Introduce performance audits.
- Appoint two permanent regionally based Fire Investigation Co-ordinators.
- Develop training packages in accordance with investigation units of competency in Public Safety Training Package.
- Increase number of investigators.
- Develop parameters for computer based reporting system.

Enhanced aviation management.

- Improved training program.
- Production of aviation manual.
- Enhanced industry involvement.
- Provision of aviation support to firefighting operations.
- Participation in National Aerial Firefighting Strategy.

- Training for Air Base Operators, Aircraft Radio Operators, Air Attack Supervisors.
- Produced, disseminated and on intranet.
- Meetings with aircraft operators and CASA.
- Joint Service/NPWS aviation desk.
- Effective logistics support.
- Utilised three heavy helicopters from National Fleet.

- Service to be self sufficient in aviation training by 2007.
- Involvement in AFAC aviation training development program.
- Manual to be reviewed and redrafted.
- Continue CASA meetings to resolve outstanding issues.
- Provision of State Aviation Desk for fire season.
- Continued participation in National Strategy.

Effective radio communications.

- Developed range of policies and standards.

- Policies and standards adopted by Districts.

- Develop Communications Strategic Plan.
- Complete business planning for Communications Section.
- Deliver communications operator training programs.
- Investigate new technologies.

Effective incident management.

- Refinement of Operational Management Folder.
- Statewide procedures developed for range of issues.

- Changes promulgated to all stakeholders.
- Base camp kits developed.
- Additional S 44 Incident Management kits assembled with enhanced contents.
- Regional exercise conducted at Grafton.
- Procedures adopted by all Districts.

- Ongoing review of Operational Management Folder and State Operations Centre procedures.
- Development and distribution of pocket books.
- Further development and review of policies, standards and procedures during 2004.

Improved inter-service liaison.

- Regional reviews of Memorandum of Understanding, Mutual Aid Agreement and Operational Communications Service Level Agreement between Service and NSW Fire Brigades.
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding and Local Mutual Aid Agreement developed with State Emergency Service (SES) to improve coordination of assistance to or by the SES.

- Revised agreements 90% completed.
- Improvement in relationships at both State and local level.

- Agreements to be completed by October, 2003 and forwarded to Fire Services Joint Standing Committee for endorsement.
- Finalise MoU and Agreement and undertake necessary training.

2

2

Professional Incident Response to Fire and other Emergencies (continued)

General

During one of the busiest operational years on record the Service's response not only to fires, but also to other emergencies, was exemplary. All facets of the Service's capabilities were challenged, tested and applied in a manner that brought great credit to the volunteers, salaried staff, other agencies, and the general community who played a not insignificant role in support of the firefighting operations.

Measures of performance would serve no purpose here; there being no benchmark in modern times against which to measure the Service's response to the fires of 2002/2003.

Nonetheless, the Service achieved new levels of service delivery in areas of fire investigation, aviation management, development of radio communications, improved inter-service liaison, and overall effectiveness in incident management.

Corporate Communications

Unprecedented demands for information were placed upon the Service's Media Unit and the comprehensive and timely response of the unit to those demands was recognised in the form of a Premier's Emergency Services Award. The unit operated under intense scrutiny from local, national and international media as well as from the general public. At all times, and despite fatigue and a seemingly never-ending range of challenging issues, there was a professional and seamless account of unfolding events.

In recognition of the need to provide media with appropriate reporting facilities to keep the public fully informed, while at the same time being aware of the danger of media being on or near the fireground, the Service introduced a program of training for electronic and print journalists and camera crews. Training was provided in bushfire safety and fire behaviour, and crews were able to obtain personal protective clothing of the same standard as volunteer firefighters. Consequently, representatives of the media are required to wear full personal protective clothing before being allowed in the proximity of any fire.

During the year more than 300 media representatives were trained and such was the success of the program that it will be run on a continuing basis to meet the needs of the various media organisations.

Similar training was delivered to approximately 500 NSW Police Officers.

Fire Investigation

With the incidences of arson becoming increasingly frequent the Service has invested substantial resources

in the establishment of a Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) that has become very highly regarded not only by other fire services but also by the NSW Police, and the NSW Coroner who has commended the Unit.

The FIU provides effective fire investigation into structural and bushfires and in the past year carried out 345 separate investigations. Current establishment of 68 fire investigators includes 22 who specialise in structural fire investigations (with four more qualifying next year) and eight who worked closely with the NSW Police Strike Force Tronto II investigating suspicious causes of bushfires. Next year there will be two permanent regionally based Fire Investigation Co-ordinators who will provide a substantial fire investigation capability within the respective regions.

Investigation skills will be developed in accordance with investigation units of competency that form part of the Public Safety training package.

The Service will continue to work with the NSW Police and make every effort to seek out the perpetrators of arson and press for the imposition of the strongest penalties available under NSW legislation.

State Operations

The State Operations Centre is responsible for the co-ordination, dissemination and display of operational intelligence for fire and emergency incidents across New South Wales and provides operational, logistics and resource support to Rural Fire Districts. During the year the Centre was responsible for the overall co-ordination and management of 61 Section 44 Declarations involving 81 local government areas, for an unprecedented 151 continuous days, encompassing approximately 459 fires. This fire activity resulted in approximately 1.5 million hectares of land, of all types, being burnt. The Service deployed 485 Task Forces over this period and at the height of the fires, in one day, 53 multi-agency task forces were organised.

This year, for the first time, organised Incident Management Team and Task Force assistance – approximately 1,100 personnel – was provided to the ACT and Victoria.

The Centre is a focal point for senior personnel from other fire authorities as well as liaison staff from Police, Ambulance, State Emergency Service, Bureau of Meteorology, Department of Defence, Infrastructure (Department of Public Works and Services, Water and Electricity authorities) and welfare providers (Salvation Army and Department of Community Services). The receipt, deployment and overall management of resources from inter-state firefighting and support agencies from Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia was also co-ordinated by the Centre.

Communications

State Paging Networks

The Service continued to develop paging systems across the State. In line with 'whole of government' strategies and to provide optimum service levels to the community, the Service is developing a co-operative approach to these call-out systems by providing the State Emergency Service (SES) with capacity and transmission in various areas.

Local agreements with the SES will be formalised next year.

Radio Communications

The Service's operational districts and zones are serviced by a three-tiered communications system delivering strategic, tactical and sub-tactical communications using a comprehensive hybrid of Government Radio Network (GRN) and UHF for strategic communications, UHF and GRN at a tactical level, and UHF CB and VHF Hi Band at a sub-tactical level for fireground communications between fire appliances and personnel.

This balance of systems also provides a number of liaison channels enabling Service, NSW Fire Brigades, SES and Ambulance personnel to operate on a single common channel where required.

Service Support Centre

Located within State Operations, the Centre provided a 24/7 operation to the Service and the wider community.

Aviation

Fixed-wing and rotary aircraft were deployed in support of ground-based firefighting throughout the long fire season. This support included tactical firebombing, reconnaissance and crew transport.

In excess of 34,950 tactical flying hours of operation were flown by helicopters with 5,426 hours flown by fixed-wing aircraft. There were 9,813 tasking hours of air operations reflecting the number of aircraft tasked on a daily basis.

Environmental Protection

The Service maintained regular and ongoing contact with the Air Quality Section of the Environmental Protection Authority and consequently was able to maintain a close watch on air quality issues throughout the Greater Sydney Basin. This enabled the Service to plan and carry out hazard reductions with minimal adverse impact on air quality.



Cost Effective Risk Management Principles, Policies and Processes

GOAL

Community education programs for specific communities.

Community awareness.

Role of Service and responsibility of community.

Develop risk management 'best practice'.

Efficient supply of tankers.

Continuous improvement to firefighter safety.

Research and development.

Provide safe working environment for all Service members.

WHAT WE DID

- Bush Fire Wise program developed.
- Extension of Fire Safe Towns and Fire Safe Farms programs.
- Ninety-seven per cent of districts submitted community education strategies.
- Extension of schools program resources for K-6 science.
- Cinema advertising.
- Promotion of library services.
- Education stand at Royal Easter Show.
- Implementation of first version of SDM completed.
- Standards of Fire Cover and District Community Education Strategy planning incorporated into SDM.
- Continued improvement of Standards of Fire Cover.
- Assisted local councils in production of bush fire prone land maps.
- New inspection system and quality control program implemented to ensure delivery of tankers to agreed timeframes.
- Conducted 34 audit inspections of replacement program tankers.
- Research into bushfire fighting goggles, personal protective clothing, structural gloves and helmets.
- Reimbursement of refurbished tankers.
- Provide current information/data.
- Extensive research with CSIRO into fire appliance spray protection systems.
- Developed interim application of Safe Food Handling Standards.
- Developed system of Criminal Name Index (CNI) searches for all new Service members.
- Reviewed Service Agreement Assets Module.
- Creation of OH&S committees in Head and Regional offices begun.
- Health and Safety Project team established to identify future requirements and legal compliance.
- Reviewed emergency procedures and first aid resource requirement.

MEASURE

- Launched State-wide.
- Fire Safe Towns to two more districts and Farms to seven more districts.
- Increase of 6%.
- Endorsed by NSW Board of Studies
- Continuation in metropolitan and country centres.
- 81% increase in library inquiries.
- 39% increase in loans of books and videos.
- Awarded second prize in category.
- District business planning based on risk management approach.
- Risk management considerations included in planning and actions.
- Second version developed and deployed.
- Maps 80% completed.
- Reduction in number fault notifications.
- Handed over 168 new tankers.
- Provided inspections and reports for entire 2002/2003 replacement program.
- All current personal protective clothing upgraded to comply with Australian and international standards.
- 80 refurbished tankers processed.
- Updated website.
- Completed second stage testing at Mogo facility. Results warrant final stage testing.
- Service Standard completed and implemented.
- MoU with NSW Police.
- Interim system developed.
- Draft service standard and guidelines developed.
- Review completed on time.
- Committees established in Regions East and North.
- Future requirements identified.
- Preliminary compliance audit completed.
- Procedures endorsed and training in procedures and first aid begun.

NEXT YEAR

- Community education strategic planning incorporated in e-SDM programs.
- Development of library site on Intranet and Internet.
- Closer linkages with e-SDM and prevention/mitigation activities to be developed.
- Districts to implement software program by end of September, 2003.
- Validation of outcomes to commence.
- Ongoing support.
- Quality control program to be fully operational in 2003/2004.
- Continue on-time delivery of tankers.
- Continue audit inspections.
- Further research into pumps, fire blankets, breathing apparatus, personal protective clothing, hoses, nozzles and foams. Ongoing development of standards.
- Upgrade minimum construction standards for refurbished tankers.
- Continue updating website through liaison with web designers and acting on feedback from customers.
- Continue research and testing.
- Develop food handling procedures and training documentation.
- CNI processes to be introduced.
- Training and communications strategies and training documentation to be developed and implemented.
- Ongoing review.
- Establishment of all other committees.
- Provision of OH&S training for committee members.
- Identify resource requirements.
- Full compliance audit.
- All staff to be trained in emergency procedures. First aid training to be completed.

3

3

Cost Effective Risk Management Principles, Policies and Processes (continued)

General

Apart from all facets of operational firefighting, the Service's main focus during the year has been on educating the community on bushfire prevention and the various ways and means by which the community can take responsibility for its own protection.

In this context, the development of the Bush FireWise program and the extensions of the Fire Safe Towns and Fire Safe Farms programs have enabled the Service to promote community safety messages to a wider audience than in the past. In support of these central initiatives, 97% of rural fire districts submitted their own community education strategies. Such is the importance of these local programs that, in future, community education strategic planning will be incorporated into the electronic Service Delivery Models (e-SDM) used by Districts in their business planning processes. It was rewarding and important for the community when the NSW Board of Studies endorsed the extension of schools program resources for K-6 science students and in so doing provided bush fire prevention education to a younger demographic.

The use of cinema advertising in metropolitan and country areas widened the reach of the community awareness messages.

The increasing importance of and necessity to apply the principles of risk management to all aspects of the Service's activities has been recognised by a commitment to develop 'best practice' policies and processes. Consequently all District business planning follows a clearly defined risk management approach and the e-SDM will enable linkages with the Standards of Fire Cover program and all prevention/mitigation activities to be developed.

The provision of firefighting equipment continued to be afforded the highest priority in light of the Service's commitment not to compromise the safety of our volunteer firefighters. The strategy of continuous improvement to firefighter safety resulted in the provision of 248 new and refurbished fire tankers during the year of which 168 were new vehicles.

A new inspection system and quality control program ensured that tankers were delivered on time. The audit inspections and reports for the entire 2002/2003 replacement program were completed and will continue on an annual basis.

Research continued into ways of improving personal protective clothing, and further research is being carried out into pumps, breathing apparatus, hoses, nozzles and foams. This research is ongoing and in accordance with Australian and international standards.

Working with the CSIRO the Service completed the second stage of testing fire appliance spray protection systems and this research will continue next year.

The Service entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NSW Police and developed a system of Criminal Name Index (CNI) searches for new Service members – volunteers and salaried staff.

Risk management principles were also applied to areas of occupational health and safety and a Health and Safety Project Team was established to identify future obligations and legal compliance expectations. A full compliance audit of the Service's OH&S practices will be carried out next year.

New Legislative Arrangements for Hazard Reduction

Following the Christmas 2001 bushfires the issues of development control and hazard reduction attracted considerable community interest. Subsequently, in August, 2002 the Government introduced a package of reforms to give bushland communities even greater protection from the threat of bushfires.

These dual reforms – to ensure bushfire management is integral to development control processes and streamline the hazard reduction environmental approvals process – will help protect life and property.

The passing of the *Rural Fires and Environmental Assessment Legislation Amendment Act, 2002* brought the changes into effect and in their passing the authority of the Service's Commissioner to ensure land managers carry out bushfire hazard reduction works was considerably enhanced. In addition, and among several other new requirements, councils are obliged to map bush fire prone lands in their areas and to use this information to assist with the determination of Development Applications.

The Act also amended the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* and various environmental assessment laws to make it clear that emergency firefighting activities are not subject to various planning and licensing requirements.

The Service also oversees and manages complaints about hazard reduction, providing members of the public with a facility to register concerns about bushfire hazards.

During the year under review the total number of complaints dealt with by Head Office was 2038, and 1,556 were dealt with by Districts. It is likely that the number of complaints will rise substantially following the private lands hazard complaints process being conferred upon local government with effect from 3 July, 2003.

Of the complaints received, 42.4% were about council managed lands, 30% concerned private lands, 26.8% concerned state agency lands, and 0.8% concerned Commonwealth lands.

The new legislation also requires the Commissioner to conduct performance audits of the implementation of bush fire risk management plans with details of the number and results of those audits to be included in the Service's annual report.

In the reporting year five bush fire risk management plan performance audits were conducted under section 62A(1) of the Act. These related to Gosford, Hawkesbury, Shoalhaven, Sutherland and Wingecarribee.

The plans were evaluated on the percentage of implemented strategies compared to the percentage for the full term of the plan and, in terms of performance:

- the percentage implementation of strategies ranged from 32.5% to 44.6% with the average being 37.3%;
- the percentage range of the plans completed ranged from 35% to 60% with the average being 45.7%;
- the gap* ranged from 2.6% to 26.8%, with the average being 8.3% for all plans audited;
- The average number of strategies over the five plans was 142.2 with the spread being 100 to 267.

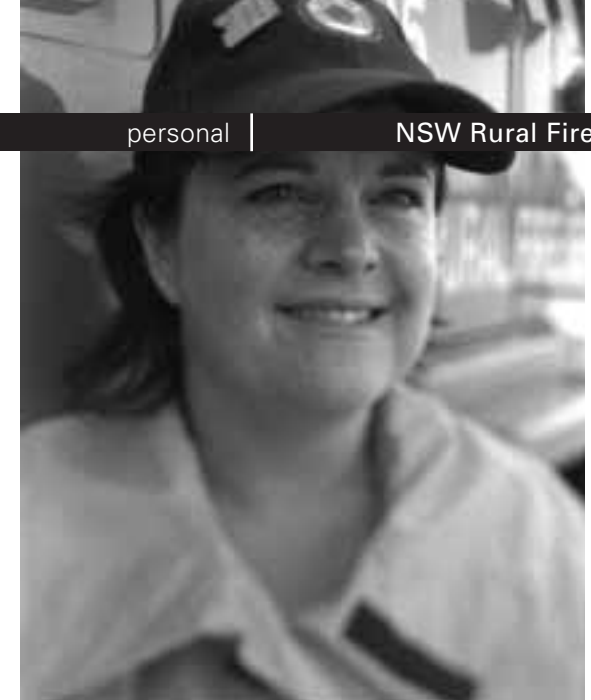
* The gap refers to the difference between the percentage strategies that could be implemented over the full term of a Plan (five years) and the actual percentage implemented at the time of the Audit.

Note: The Hawkesbury Bush Fire Risk Management Plan implementation percentage was over three times greater than the average. This is considered anomalous due to the Hawkesbury Plan having many more strategies, nearly 88% more than average. The capacity of any Bush Fire Management Committee to resource such a large number of strategies is not considered viable and as such the Hawkesbury Plan may need to be reviewed to reconsider the strategies specified.

Development Control

A development control short course was piloted during the year and attended by Head Office, Region and District staff as well as personnel from the NSW Fire Brigades. The course provided training relating to the assessment of development applications in bush fire prone areas particularly with regard to residential development, subdivision and development for special fire protection purposes. Arrangements have been made to conduct training within the next twelve months for all staff involved in development control.

During the year under review councils have referred 5,080 development applications which relate to bushfire prone areas and as such require the Service's input to mitigate the bushfire risk posed to the community. Of those proposed developments the Service has identified 127 as posing significant bushfire risks and these could not be approved in their original form.



Cost Effective Risk Management Principles, Policies and Processes (continued)

The new controls are not designed to prevent developments. They are designed to make fire prevention and safety integral to the State's planning laws producing fire-smart planning and building in the most bushfire prone region in the world. These new controls will introduce a uniform and consistent approach so that all bushland communities can be confident of the same level of planning rigour, removing anomalies and setting clear and consistent standards for all local councils.

Risk Management Annual Reporting

In 2002/2003 the Service moved its annual reporting period for fire mitigation activities from April-March to the financial year. Consequent upon this change there are several Districts that have not been able to provide all necessary requested data.

In 2002 the Service began work on the development of the Bushfire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) to streamline reporting by districts, Bush Fire Management Committees and agencies. BRIMS will be progressively implemented from 1 July, 2003 and, as of 30 June, 2003 modules for permits, bush fire hazard reduction certificates and development applications have been completed.

Operations Plans

Twenty-eight Operations Plans under section 52 of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* were received from Bush Fire Management Committees and were approved by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee. A number of other Operations Plans were under review during the reporting period but were not able to be finalised as a consequence of the redirection of resources to firefighting operations across the State. Notwithstanding, Service staff have been working continually on the production of these plans with significant emphasis being placed on the development of digital data within the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) by the Districts. The Service has initiated a review of the model Operations Plan with a new model to be released in early 2004 after full and appropriate consultations.

Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code

The Code – Gazetted on 27 June and effective 1 July, 2003 – provides a streamlined environmental approval process for bush fire hazard reduction.

The new Code was drafted after extensive consultation with a range of stakeholder organisations, ten regional meetings with local government, and the receipt of comments from seventy councils. Twenty-eight submissions were received following public exhibition of the Code for forty-nine days.

The Service established forty new staff positions in various Districts as part of a state wide fire mitigation unit to conduct environmental assessments of applications and undertake assessments of hazard reduction work. A four-day training course was held in March for ninety staff to become Certificate Issuing Officers, all of whom were required to undertake assessment and certification of competency in order to issue Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificates.

Fire Ecology – Training

A proposed roll-out of a Fire Ecology training program based at the University of Western Sydney has been postponed until 2003-2004 because of the need to divert resources to firefighting operations.

Critical Incident Support Services (CISS)

The year was long and arduous for the CISS team immediately following an equally arduous fire season in 2001/2002. The two consecutive fire seasons, together with an increased operational deployment workload throughout the year at structural fires, motor vehicle accidents, aircraft accidents and the like resulted in an environment of high impact for the team. The Canberra and Queanbeyan bushfires together with the Waterfall train disaster not only placed a heavy demand on the team but the implementation of on-scene support services also tested CISS strategies and protocols. The result was a series of successful operations that included significant post-trauma responses.

As a result of an ongoing Peer Supporter recruitment program that began in 2001 an additional eleven Peer Supporters were appointed to the CISS team joining the five who were recruited last year. Recruitment of further Supporters will continue in 2004.

Five CISS team members represented the Service at the International Conference of the Critical Incident Stress Management Association of Australia held in Melbourne in November, 2002 and where a team member delivered one of the keynote addresses.

November, 2003 will mark ten years of Critical Incident Support to Service personnel.

Comparative data for the current and previous years is as under:

The number of hours does not include training or supervision of CISS personnel.

	No of requests	No of personnel assisted	Hours
2002-2003	314	2507	6819
2001-2002	286	2330	4577

Member Assistance Program (MAP)

The Service continued to recognise the need to support volunteer members affected by situations not directly related to their operational involvement.

Comparative analysis indicates a stable utilisation of the referral service although the high level of operational activity throughout the year restricted any promotional opportunities. The Service received and processed 316 new requests during the year as opposed to 338 in the previous year.

A full review of the Program will be undertaken in 2004.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

This counselling service, available to employees and their families, is provided through a dual mechanism of internal provision and an external contracted agency of qualified psychologists and practitioners specialising in this aspect of support.

There was a significant utilisation of the program compared to the previous year possibly due to increased program awareness by employees and their managers combined with a more comfortable acceptance of the service.

In 2004 there will be a critique of the referral mechanisms to the external provider, a review of promotional materials and an evaluation of educative processes for employees and managers.

There were 189 internal and eight external referrals during the year compared with 133 internal and 14 external referrals in the previous year.

Chaplaincy

The 2002 Chaplains' Conference was attended by 34 Chaplains who, among other Conference activities, received a briefing on the Chaplaincy and Family Support Program, new training and resource manual.

During the year, six new Chaplains were inducted into the Service increasing the strength of the Chaplaincy Service to a Senior Chaplain, Senior Family Support Chaplain, fifty volunteer District Chaplains and seven family support volunteers.

The response to the Family Support Program has indicated a clear need to continue visitation to brigades with information material.

The Chaplaincy Service travelled 86,397 kilometres to carry out its ministrations.

Full details of Chaplaincy activities are included in Appendix 'P'.



A Continuous Learning Culture Recognising the Value of all Service Members

GOAL

Provide training consistent with nationally recognised standards and aligned to Service needs.

General

Overall volunteer training activity increased by 10.5%, after a 4.2% decrease last year. Staff and related training rebounded but remains below previous levels. This is normal trending and reflects, on the one hand, the increase in the number of new volunteers requiring training and, on the other hand, the numbers of trained volunteers who, after a long fire season, traditionally spend more time with their families and less attending training sessions.

WHAT WE DID

- Enhanced training resources available to the Service.

The increase in the number of instructors levelled off but the number of new assessors has increased reflecting the greater emphasis being placed on Assessor development.

Crew Leader training increased as new Crew Leader training materials came into use.

MEASURE

- Increased the number of fire investigation kits.

The Service continues to support and encourage individual ambition, personal development and a wish for professional self-improvement. This commitment is recognised in the new Strategic Plan as part of the human resource and training initiatives.

The relationship with the University of Western Sydney and NSW TAFE for the development of Service leadership and managerial skills continued. Service officers also attended Executive Management Development Programs run by the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC).

NEXT YEAR

- Develop training programs in accordance with competency units in Public Safety Training Package.

4

Providing Competitive Income Earning Services to Meet Customer Needs

GOAL

Market development.

Volunteer involvement in international projects.

General

For the review period business development strategy was focused on new market opportunities in South America specifically in response to strong interest from Brazil and Chile.

Elsewhere, particularly in China and Indonesia, previous strong market activity was adversely affected by the uncertain security positions in relation to terrorism and, to a lesser extent, the impact of the SARS virus. Travel Advisories from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade resulted in two initiatives in Indonesia being cancelled.

WHAT WE DID

- Undertook 11 commercial projects.
- Identified new business opportunities.
- Field demonstrations to visiting delegations.

Brazil, Chile and South Korea have all indicated an interest in forming close working relationships with the Service especially in the areas of aviation, fire mapping, aerial scanning, incident command systems and protective clothing for firefighters.

The Service was approached by a US-based privately funded firefighting organisation to send volunteers to assist in firefighting operations in the US but as a consequence of difficulties experienced by the contracting company in obtaining the necessary visas the project did not proceed.

MEASURE

- Reduction in net income
- Potential markets identified in nine countries.
- Nine demonstrations

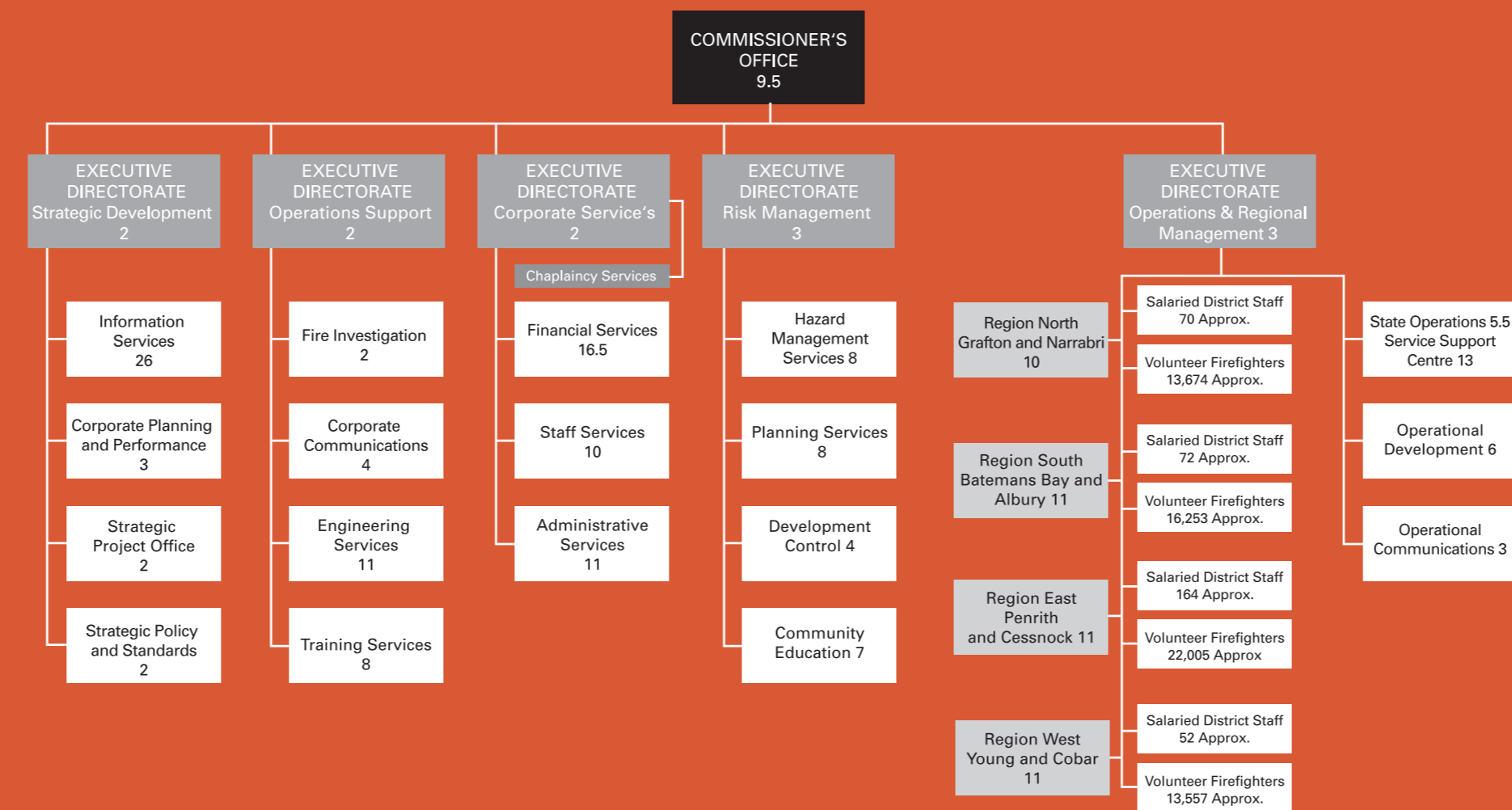
The relationship with the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) was sustained and strengthened with potential opportunities for Service involvement identified in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Panama, Thailand, the Philippines and Brazil.

The international program has contributed in a significant way to the professional development of those Service members who were involved.

NEXT YEAR

- 20% increase in net income
- Sign MoU with Chile and South Korea. International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) projects in five countries.
- Increased levels of volunteer participation.

5



Sharing
the load

Corporate Executive Group

COMMISSIONER PHIL KOPERBERG AO AFSM BEM

Phil joined the Service in 1967 as a volunteer in the Blue Mountains and progressed through the ranks to become Fire Control Officer in 1970, a position he held until 1982. He was appointed Emergency Services Policy Analyst to the then Minister for Police and Emergency Services before being appointed Chairman of the Bush Fire Council of NSW and Executive Officer of the Bush Fires Branch of the Minister's office in 1985.

In 1989 he was appointed Director-General of the Department of Bush Fire Services and in 1993 he was appointed Commissioner of Bush Fire Services. In January, 1994 he was appointed overall Emergency Controller for major bushfires burning in eastern NSW and, in September, 1997, following the proclamation of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*, he was appointed Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Phil is Chair of the NSW Rural Fire Service Advisory Council, Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and the State Rescue Board.

He was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1978, made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1994, awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 1995 and made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2003.

ACTING CHIEF OF STAFF WENDY GEORGE

As Acting Chief of Staff to the Commissioner, Wendy manages the operation of the Office of the Commissioner, providing expert advice and support to the Commissioner and Executive Directors in the management and resolution of critical policy and operation issues impacting on the Service, and advice to the Government.

Prior to joining the Service Wendy was Corporate Affairs Advisor at News Limited, advising the Chairman, CEO and senior executives on a range of issues.

During her employment at News Limited, Wendy was also CEO of the Farmhand Foundation, which raised in excess of \$25M for drought stricken farming families. Foundation members include senior executives of News Limited, CPH – a Packer family company, Telstra, Macquarie Radio and Visy Industries.

Between 1995 and the end of 2000 Wendy worked as a senior media advisor to the Premier of NSW, the Hon Bob Carr MP, and the former Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Bob Debus MP. She worked as a radio and television journalist prior to 1995 in both Sydney and Brisbane.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS AND REGIONAL MANAGEMENT MARK CROSWELLER AFSM

Mark has seventeen years' Service experience at all levels from firefighter to Assistant Commissioner.

Mark has held various positions. He was a member of the Review Sub-Committee of the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee; a State Council and Executive member of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association; a member of the State Executive of that Association; and a member of the NSW Bush Fire Coordinating Committee. Mark has represented the Service on international projects in Malaysia, Indonesia and China.

Prior to joining the Service, Mark was employed in the consulting engineering industry. Mark holds a graduate certificate, graduate diploma and Master of Management Degree.

In 2003 Mark was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SHANE FITZSIMMONS AFSM

Shane has been a member of the Service since 1984 when he joined the Duffy's Forest Brigade where he remained a member for 10 years and held the positions of Captain and Deputy Group Captain. He was an active participant in district training, especially in the areas of CABA, 4VWD and chainsaws.

In 1994 Shane was appointed Regional Planning Officer in Central East Region and eventually progressed to the position of acting Regional Co-ordinator before joining Rosehill staff as State Operations Officer. In 1998 Shane was appointed Assistant Commissioner Operations.

Shane has represented the Service at international meetings in the United States, Singapore and Malaysia.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2002.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RISK MANAGEMENT ROB ROGERS

Rob joined the Service in 1979 as a member of the Belrose Brigade in the Warringah-Pittwater District and where he remained until 1995. During that time he held various positions including those of training officer, Deputy Captain and Captain.

In 1995 Rob was appointed Deputy Fire Control Officer for the Greater Taree District, a position he held until 1998 when he was appointed Fire Control Officer for the Cessnock District. In 2002 Rob was appointed Executive Director for Regional Management but later that year Rob transferred to the newly created Risk Management Directorate that had been formed as a consequence of new legislative responsibilities that had been devolved to the Service.

As Executive Director Risk Management Rob's responsibilities encompass hazard complaints, audit and compliance, planning and environment – including the new hazard reduction certificates along with community education.

Rob has represented the Service in international projects and firefighting operations in the United States, Singapore and Malaysia.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OPERATIONS SUPPORT TONY HOWE

Tony joined the Service in January 1999 as Assistant Commissioner Operations Support. In this role he is responsible for the Service's firefighter support program including engineering services, community education, corporate communications, media, firefighter health and safety, research and development, and training.

Prior to joining the Service Tony was employed as a forester by the NSW Forestry Commission, with extensive experience in forest and land management across NSW in native eucalypt forest, rainforest, exotic pine and eucalypt plantations in Tumut, Grafton and Eden. He was involved in practical fire management for over thirty years and was responsible for the Commission's statewide fire policies and strategies.

He was the Commission's representative on the State Bush Fire Coordinating Committee and the Bush Fire Council and has been an appointee under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act, 1994*.

Tony holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES TREVOR ANDERSON PSM

Trevor entered the NSW Public Service in 1966. In 1979 he was appointed Secretary of the Bush Fire Council which, at that time, was a branch of the Department of Services. He later transferred to the Office of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services as a result of a number of State Government administrative changes. Following the establishment of the Department of Bush Fire Services as a separate department Trevor was appointed Assistant Commissioner Corporate Services and later Executive Director of Corporate Services. He is responsible for the finance, administration and human resources functions of the Service.

In 1995 Trevor was awarded the Public Service Medal for outstanding service.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE PETER HENNESSY

Peter has been employed in the NSW Public Service since 1969. Most of his positions have been associated with financial budgeting and monitoring.

Prior to joining the Service in 1988 as an accountant Peter spent nineteen years in the Department of Health and one year in the Department of Lands.

He is currently Director of Finance with responsibility for the financial and accounting functions of the Service.

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS JOHN WINTER

John joined the Head Office of the Service in October, 1999 as Senior Media Officer. He has been an active volunteer in the Warringah-Pittwater Headquarters Rural Fire Brigade since 1995 having also been Deputy Captain of that Brigade.

John served on the State Executive of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association from 1998-1999 and was Chair of the Warringah-Pittwater Branch. He also served as a councillor on Pittwater Council between 1992-1995 including terms as Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Warringah-Pittwater Joint Bushfire Committee.

Before joining Head Office he ran his own media consultancy for several years. This followed a career in human resources at two levels – public relations

and as head of economic research for one of Australia's leading consultancies.

John was appointed Director of Corporate Communications in 2001 and is responsible for all aspects of the Service's media relations, internal communications, marketing, advertising and promotion.

John holds the Degree of Bachelor of Commerce in Economics and Finance.

DIRECTOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DUNCAN SUTHERLAND

Duncan joined the Service in 1998 as Policy Officer and was given responsibility for the development of a policy framework for international projects. A key focus of the international projects is to open up the Service to a world view of forest fire management and to encourage professional growth for Service members.

Duncan joined the NSW Public Service in 1973 as a teacher of agriculture. He has worked as an Inspector of Schools, curriculum designer and publisher as well as marketing NSW education overseas. He is a member of the State Emergency Service and St John Ambulance and has strong links with the farming community.

In 1999 Duncan was awarded the Malaysian Fire Service Medal for his work in the strengthening of the relationship between the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia and the Service. In 2001 Duncan completed a Graduate Diploma in International Studies specialising in Chinese language and culture.

Duncan holds a Masters Degree in Education Administration and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture.

PRESIDENT NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION DON LUSCOMBE

Don has been a volunteer firefighter in the Service since 1976 when he joined Winnmalee Brigade and currently holds the rank of Group Captain. He played a key role in the formation of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association of which he was elected President in 1998. He has significant firefighting experience.

Don is the Managing Partner of a firm of Chartered Accountants practising in Springwood in the Blue Mountains and is a past Secretary and Treasurer of the Springwood Chamber of Commerce.

Dedicated professionals

Don is a Director and former Chair of a local corporate charity that operates a flower farm, work crews, a workshop, and provides accommodation services for the disabled.

He was awarded the National Medal in 1993.

VICE-PRESIDENT (SALARIED OFFICERS) NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION STEVE YORKE

Steve joined the Service in 1972 while he was employed as a cartographer in the (then) Department of Lands. He has held the positions of Deputy District Training Officer for Warringah-Pittwater and, as a member of brigades in Evans Shire and Warringah-Pittwater during which times he held positions of Captain, Senior Deputy and Deputy Captain.

Steve progressed through the ranks to become Fire Control Officer for Blacktown/Fairfield and Deputy Fire Control Officer, Training and Development, for Warringah-Pittwater.

During the 2000 Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games Steve was the Service's Senior Liaison Officer and, in conjunction with the NSW Police Service, managed and co-ordinated the Olympic Volunteers in Policing activities at the Homebush Olympic site.

Steve received awards from both the Service and Pittwater Council for his outstanding work.

In 2001 Steve was appointed President of the NSW Salaried Officers arm of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association and was elected President of that Association in 2002.



Statement on Standards for the Provision of Services

Service provision is in accordance with the commitments and criteria as detailed in the Strategic Plan copies of which can be obtained free of charge from the Service's website, Head and Regional offices or by telephoning 02 9684 4411.

The process for assessing levels of Service performance is being reviewed to ensure that it complies with the Service's quality management requirements.

Contract and Market Testing

Policies and action plans have been developed to address issues of contract and market testing in areas of equipment supply, training and community education.

The Commissioner and senior staff of the Service undertake a regular program of regional visits during which valuable feedback on service provision is obtained.

Overseas Visits

Details of overseas visits by Service staff are set out in Appendix 'O'.

Guarantee of Service

The Service's customer service Vision Statement remains:

'To consistently deliver to our customers the highest possible levels of service.'



Underpinning the Vision is our Customer Service Commitment, which is to:

Listen

to the needs of our customers and stakeholders

Respond

to needs and concerns by finding and implementing the most cost effective and environmentally acceptable solutions

Inform

the community to the fullest extent possible of bushfire prevention, protection and safety measures available to assist in reducing the threat of and potential losses from fire, and

Deliver

our services in a manner that ensures we provide value for money in the operations and management of a rural fire service.

The Guarantee of Service itemises measurable commitments and constant monitoring of them has enabled the Service to identify and remedy service deficiencies.

Future performance measurement will be by way of benchmarking and the pursuit of best practice as part of the continuous improvement process.

Consumer Response

The Service continued to be well regarded by its customers and stakeholders.

The Guarantee of Service encourages the lodgement of complaints where this is considered justified and provides detailed information as to how this should be done.

Any complaints received are given attention and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Annual Report – External Costs and Availability

The total external costs incurred in the production of this Report were \$35,792. The Report is accessible on the Service's website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and copies can be obtained from the Service's Head Office at Rosehill.

Engagement of Consultants

Eight consultants were retained during the year at a total cost of \$732,303.

Consultancies equal to or more than \$30,000 were as follows:

Personnel and Industrial

Diplomacy Management Consultants (Industrial relations advocacy service)	\$79,062
G C Macgregor Associates (Policy documentation and inter-agency liaison for Bushfire Risk Information Management System)	\$43,713

Information Technology

Mazaroo (Information technology support)	\$33,196
Aspect Consulting (Intranet and general support)	\$53,185
Incheck Systems (Development of Bushfire Risk Information Management System)	\$249,820
Lagen Spatial (GIS) (GIS support for Section 44 emergencies)	\$258,702

Total Consultancies more than \$30,000 \$717,678

Consultancies less than \$30,000:

Personnel and Industrial	\$1,980
Information Technology	\$12,650

Total Consultancies less than \$30,000 \$14,630

Total All Consultancies \$732,308

Comparative figures for all consultancies for the two previous years were 2001/02 \$840,592 and 2000/2001 \$653,437.

Payment Performance

A summary of the Service's payment performance for the year under review and the previous two years is set out in Appendix 'O'.

The Service has increasingly been able to meet targets set for payment performance by greater use of direct bank deposits. There was no interest paid for late payments.

Sale of Property, including Land

The Service does not own any property or land.

Major Assets

	2000/01 \$	2001/02 \$	2002/03 \$
Computer Equipment	364,000	474,000	393,000
General Equipment	1,567,000	7,755,000	5,975,000

Grants to Outside Organisations

	2000/01 \$	2001/02 \$	2002/03 \$
Nature Conservation Council	60,000	65,000	70,000
Volunteer Rescue Units (through the State Rescue Board)	587,000	600,000	848,000
Rural Fire Service Association	65,000	38,164	61,869
Total	712,000	703,164	979,869

Executive Remuneration

In the light of the recognition by the State Government that the public has the clear right to know how much senior public servants are paid and the need for more transparency in the reporting of senior executive salaries, the following information is provided:

Position	SES level	Total Annual Remuneration
Commissioner Mr P C Koperberg	6	\$236,000

Privacy and Personal Information

In response to the requirements of the *Privacy and Personal Information Act, 1998*, the Service has developed a Service Standard that specifies requirements for the handling of personal data collected in the course of non-operational activities. This includes the personal particulars of Service members and recordings of non-operational telephone and radio calls.

The Service Standard provides for a confidentiality undertaking by officers with access to personal information including the Service's database 'Firezone'. Protocols and procedures for access to the 'Firezone' database are also in place.



Ordinary people ...



... extraordinary spirit



Young

Wentworth

Grafton

Penrith

NSW
Rural Fire Service

on the move

Regional Manager

Bruce Holz

Office Details

Suite 5
235-239 High Street
PENRITH NSW 2750
Tel 4722 8444
Fax 4722 9414

Statistics

Districts	36
Zones	6
Brigades	460
Volunteers	20,375
Full time staff	176
Area	54,150 sq kms

Region east

Description

By virtue of its size, geography and demographics Region East provides the Service with its greatest challenge in its mission to protect life, property and the environment. It encompasses the densely populated Sydney Basin, the coastal zones north to Taree and south to Kiama, and stretches inland to Bathurst, Muswellbrook, and Merriwa. Containing major industrial, commercial and residential zones and areas of significant natural beauty, the Region is vital to the NSW economy. These same factors also make it susceptible to a broad range of fire risks.

Total Incidents	2002/03
Bushfire	2866
Grassfire	1071
Building Fire	296
Vehicle Fire	950
Motor Vehicle Accident	1495
False alarms	1082
Other incidents	4043
Total number of incidents	11803

Key Achievements during 2002/03

- Volunteers' Conference at Kurrajong – August 2002.
- Regional and District Training Assistance Groups established.
- Increase of 5% (to 90%) in Districts having qualified training co-ordinators.
- Developed and distributed Regional Learning and Development newsletter.
- Regular attendance at inter-agency liaison meetings across Region.
- 25% of Districts visited by Regional staff during firefighting operations.
- Regional Duty Officer roster developed and implemented.
- 100% Bush Fire Risk Management Plans approved by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.
- 100% community education strategies and resource orders completed on time.
- 100% of fire mitigation funding proposals and claims processed.
- 93% of allocated fire mitigation funds allocated and claimed.

Significant Incidents in 2002/03

Intense firefighting operations both within and outside of the State necessitated the deployment of substantial regional resources of an operational and fire management nature. The Region played a major role in all aspects of the Service's firefighting, fire prevention and fire management activities during the year.

Key Projects for 2003/04

- Annual Regional Volunteer conference.
- Further alignment of District budget bids to business plans.
- Implement improved records management system prior 30 June.
- Continue monitoring of Regional and District Training Assistance Groups.
- Achieve 100% of Region East Districts with qualified training co-ordinators.
- Develop individual learning and development plans with District staff.
- Continue discussions with management on issues raised in debriefs.
- Continue to assist Districts in improving abilities to manage and sustain firefighting operations.
- Ensure Districts meet statutory obligations in respect of '000' calls.
- Ongoing review of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.
- Monitor and audit strategies under e-SDM.
- Four Community Safety Officer forums.
- Regional support for Community Education conferences.



Regional Manager

Ian Thomas

Office Details

Level 4, State Office Block
Victoria Street
GRAFTON NSW 2460
Tel 6643 2512 or
6643 2514
Fax 6643 2515 or
6643 4965

Statistics

Districts	39
Zones	7
Brigades	604
Volunteers	12,606
Full time staff	89
Area	154,000 sq kms

Region north

Description

The Region is located almost entirely within the sub-monsoonal area of New South Wales and with the exception of ENSO (El Nino/Southern Oscillation) events generally experiences moderate bushfire seasons due to high summer rainfall. The topography and major vegetation types are diverse, ranging from cropping and flat grassland, coastal heath to mountainous dry sclerophyll, including areas of rainforest. Significant areas of remote rugged forest areas have been incorporated into National Parks, with other smaller reserves created to protect natural or cultural assets in the Region. The busy Newell, New England and Pacific Highways traverse the Region which also encompasses the heavily populated coastal tourist areas of Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Ballina and the Tweed Coast as well as the large inland cities of Tamworth and Armidale, and the rural centres of Narrabri, Gunnedah, Inverell and Moree.

Total Incidents	2002/03
Bushfire	1273
Grassfire	383
Building Fire	140
Vehicle Fire	190
Motor Vehicle Accident	625
False alarm	155
Other incidents	948
Total number of incidents	3714

Key Achievements during 2002/03

- Business planning completed in all Districts.
- Five staff consolidation teams formed.
- Kempsey and Nambucca Districts zoned.
- Two-day regional field exercise.
- Training Assistance Groups formed in all Districts.
- 131 task forces and 2,733 personnel deployed during fire season.
- All Districts completed Operational and draft Bush Fire Risk Management plans.
- Community Fireguard for Kids delivered to 80% District's schools.
- Training needs analysis for community education strategies completed.
- Extensive training and assessment packages for staff and volunteers.
- Border plan for co-ordination of firefighting operations on NSW/Queensland border.
- Two regional conferences for community education co-ordinators.
- Volunteers and staff trained in Incident Management Team functional areas.

Significant Incidents in 2002/03

The Region experienced extensive fire activity during the fire season with 167 days of operations under Section 44 declarations that began in the Tenterfield District in July. One hundred and thirty-one task forces and 2,733 personnel were deployed to assist in the firefighting operations.

Key Projects for 2003/04

- Linking of business plans to estimates process.
- Agreement with councils for five-year procurement programs.
- Formation of three further teams to complete Regional zoning/teaming process.
- Complete all boundary review with NSW Fire Brigades and conduct joint training exercises.
- Annual field exercises with combined championship event.
- Increase in number of Certificate IV Workplace Assessors.
- Two regional conferences.
- Delivery of education package to all schools.
- Implementation of training program and adoption of training standards recommendations.
- All isolated coastal villages to have agreed fire management plans and established fire protection zones on adjoining managed lands.
- Except for recruits, to have all active firefighters accredited to basic firefighter level.
- Increase numbers of officers with Crew Leader/Safety qualifications.
- Conduct joint training exercises to test effectiveness of cross-border plan.



Regional Manager

Peter Ryan

Office Details

7-9 Kylie Crescent
BATEMANS BAY NSW 2536
Tel 4472 4165 or
4472 4129
Fax 4472 4126 or
4472 4401

Statistics

Districts	38
Zones	5
Brigades	455
Volunteers	19,521
Full time staff	79
Area	164,448 sq kms

Region south

Description

Regarded as a fire prone by world standards, this Region takes in the South Coast, Southern Tablelands and the western areas of the Riverina. It controls most of the NSW/Victoria border, surrounds the ACT and includes areas such as the Bega Valley, the Snowy River and Wagga Wagga. Traditionally, the annual bushfire season begins along the coast in Spring and closes in the Riverina in Autumn. Fire managers are mindful of heavy concentrations of native and plantation forests, fragile coastal heath communities, alpine pastures and sweeping plains of crops and natural rangelands.

Total Incidents	2002/03
Bushfire	920
Grassfire	375
Building Fire	147
Vehicle Fire	171
Motor Vehicle Accident	558
False alarm	141
Other incidents	917
Total number of incidents	3229



Key Achievements during 2002/03

- 80% Districts included within Zoning arrangements.
- 70% District staff working under Service's four functional areas.
- Group Officers' Forum with 56 delegates.
- Establishment of Regional OH&S Committee.
- Joint Regional exercise.
- Women's Forum.

Significant Incidents in 2002/03

- Six declarations under Section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*.

Key Projects – 2003-2004

- Completion of zoning and staff consolidation across Region.
- All zone staff to be allocated to functional work areas.
- Implementation of regional and zone OH&S committees.
- Women's Forum.
- Completion of staff appointments.
- Regional Incident Management Exercise.
- Joint regional exercise to improve staff and volunteer operational skills.

Regional Manager

Paul Smith (Acting)

Office Details

Shop 3, Lovell Place
Lovell Street
YOUNG NSW 2594
Tel 6382 5677 or
6382 5678
Fax 6382 1731

Statistics

Districts	26
Zones	10
Brigades	580
Volunteers	14,556
Full-time staff	67
Area	427,800 sq kms

Region west

Description

The Service provides protection to 98% of Region West which in turn covers almost two-thirds of New South Wales. The tablelands in the east and the vast plains in the west boast numerous towns and varying landscapes. Major rivers are the Lachlan, Murray and Darling. Transport routes include the Newell and Hume Highways as well as the Great Southern Rail line. The most significant risks are grass and bushland fires although the number of transport related incidents is increasing.

Total Incidents	2002/03
Bushfire	583
Grassfire	225
Building Fire	88
Vehicle Fire	101
Motor Vehicle Accident	236
False alarm	68
Other incidents	334
Total number of incidents	1635

Key Achievements during 2002/03

- Formalisation of three zones and eight teams within Region.
- Most staff assigned to functional roles within zones/teams.
- Four administrative positions filled and two appointments pending.
- Eleven officers achieved Certificate IV in Fire Fighting Supervision.
- Ten forums for brigade captains held across Region.
- Appointment of four Fire Mitigation Officers.
- Meeting with General Managers of Region's local government councils.

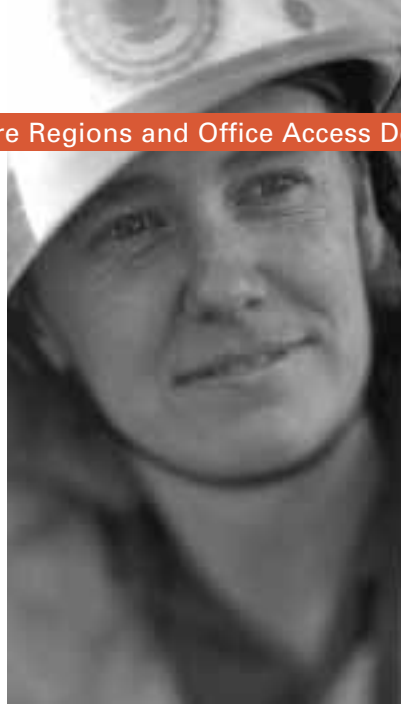
Significant incidents in 2002/03

Section 44 Declaration covering the local government areas of Narramine and Cobonnet.

Key projects for 2003/04

- Develop a greater understanding among the community and Service staff of hazard reduction management.
- Continue updating of Bush Fire Prone Land mapping.
- Finalise appointments to the positions of Regional Manager, Regional Operations Officer and Regional/Community Safety Officer.
- Begin implementation of new Public Safety training system from 1 January, 2004.
- Ensure all regional staff have professional development plans to enhance their selected career paths.
- Assist fire control staff achieve Certificate IV in Fire Fighting Supervision prior to 31 December, 2003.
- Implement pilot Canobolas mapping project within Canobolas Zone between the Service, State Forests and National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Continuation of Group and Captains' forums.
- Complete restructure of regional meeting protocols/procedures into functional teams aligned to the objectives of the Strategic Plan.





Head Office

3/175 James Ruse Drive
ROSEHILL NSW 2142
Tel 02 9684 4411
Fax 02 9638 7956

Region East

Suite 5
235-239 High Street
PENRITH NSW 2750
Tel 02 4722 8444
Fax 02 4722 9414 or
02 4722 8588

Region North

Level 4
State Office Block
Victoria Street
GRAFTON NSW 2460
Tel 02 6643 2512 or
02 6643 2514
Fax 02 6643 2515 or
02 6643 4965

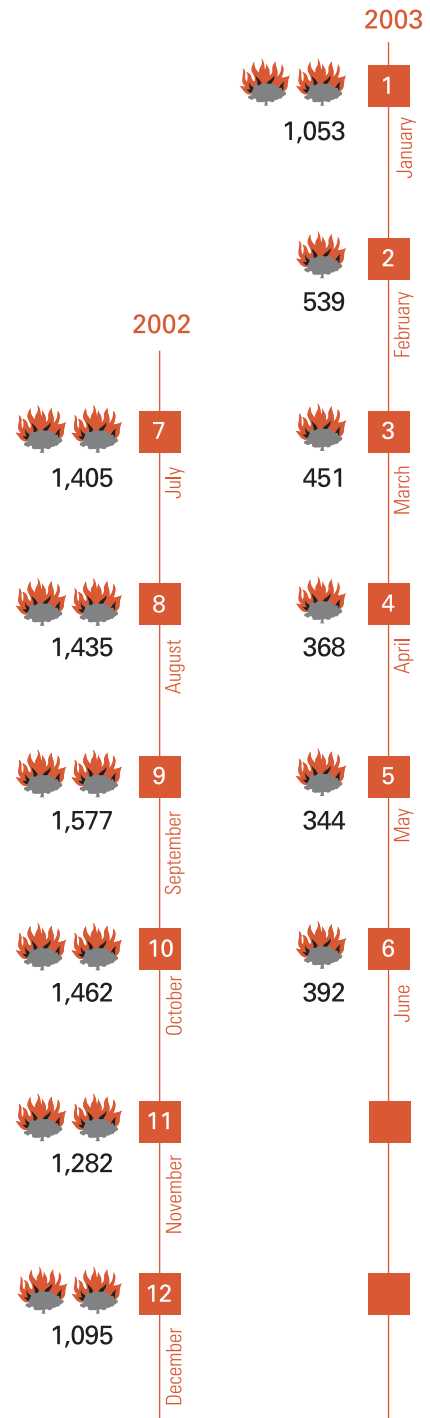
Region South

7-9 Kylie Crescent
BATEMANS BAY NSW 2536
Tel 02 4472 4615 or
02 4472 4129
Fax 02 4472 4126 or
02 4472 4401

Region West

Shop 3, Lovell Place
Lovell Street
YOUNG NSW 2594
Tel 02 6382 5677 or
02 6382 5678
Fax 02 6382 1731

Regions are based on local government boundaries, office hours are from 0845-1700, and regional details are as indicated.



Worst fire months 2002-2003

Volunteers
our most
valuable asset

03

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
[ANNUAL REPORT 2003]



GPO BOX 12
SYDNEY NSW 2001

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT
NEW SOUTH WALES RURAL FIRE SERVICE

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service:

- (a) presents fairly the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's financial position as at 30 June 2003 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date, in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and
- (b) complies with section 45E of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (the Act).

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

The Commissioner

The financial report is the responsibility of the Commissioner of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service. It consists of the statement of financial position, the statement of financial performance, the statement of cash flows, the program statement - expenses and revenues, the summary of compliance with financial directives and the accompanying notes.

The Auditor's Role and the Audit Scope

As required by the Act, I carried out an independent audit to enable me to express an opinion on the financial report. My audit provides *reasonable assurance* to members of the New South Wales Parliament that the financial report is free of *material* misstatement.

My audit accorded with Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards and statutory requirements, and I:

- evaluated the accounting policies and significant accounting estimates used by the Commissioner in preparing the financial report, and
- examined a sample of the evidence that supports the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report.

An audit does *not* guarantee that every amount and disclosure in the financial report is error free. The terms 'reasonable assurance' and 'material' recognise that an audit does not examine all evidence and transactions. However, the audit procedures used should identify errors or omissions significant enough to adversely affect decisions made by users of the financial report or indicate that the Commissioner had failed in his reporting obligations.

My opinion does not provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service,
- that the New South Wales Rural Fire Service has carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically,
- about the effectiveness of its internal controls, or
- on the assumptions used in formulating the budget figures disclosed in the financial report.

Audit Independence

The Audit Office complies with all applicable independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements. The Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General, and
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.

D A Jones FCA
Director of Audit

SYDNEY
20 October 2003



CONTACT NAME David Jones
 TELEPHONE 92850153
 OUR REFERENCE Z346/J5
 YOUR REFERENCE

Mr P C Koperberg AO,AFSM,BEM
 Commissioner
 New South Wales Rural Fire Service
 Unit 3, 175-179 James Ruse Drive
 ROSEHILL NSW 2142

20 October 2003

Dear Mr Koperberg

STATUTORY AUDIT REPORT
For the Year Ended 30 JUNE 2003
NEW SOUTH WALES RURAL FIRE SERVICE

I have audited the accounts of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service required by the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (the Act). This Statutory Audit Report outlines the results of my audit for the year ended 30 June 2003, including details of any significant matters that were found during the audit. The Act requires that I send this report to the Minister and to the Treasurer.

This report is not the Independent Audit Report, which expresses my opinion on the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's annual financial report. The Independent Audit Report, together with the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's annual financial report, is attached.

Audit Result

I expressed an unqualified opinion on the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's annual financial report and I have not identified any significant matters since I wrote to you on 18 October 2002. My audit is continuous and I may therefore identify new significant matters before the Auditor-General next reports to Parliament on the agency's audit. If this occurs, I will write to you immediately.

Auditor-General's Report to Parliament

Comment on the Service's operations will appear in the Auditor-General's Report to Parliament, which should be tabled during December. I will send a draft of this report to you for comment before it is tabled in Parliament.

Scope of the Audit

As advised in the Engagement Letter, my audit procedures are targeted specifically towards forming an opinion on the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's financial report. This includes testing whether your agency has complied with key legislation that may materially impact on the financial report. The results of the audit are reported in this context.

Each year, the Audit Office also selects various 'non-key' legislative requirements, government policies and practices (e.g. Premier's Circulars) and tests whether your agency has complied with them. This year, I examined:

- Requirements of the SES Guidelines.
- Requirements with the Premier's Department document "Guidelines for the engagement and use of Consultants".

The results of my review were satisfactory.

Acknowledgment

I thank the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's staff for their courtesy and assistance.

Yours sincerely

D A Jones
 Director of Audit

cc The Hon A B Kelly MLC, Minister for Emergency Services
 The Hon M R Egan MLC, Treasurer

All communications to be addressed to:

Head Office
NSW Rural Fire Service
Locked Mail Bag 17
Granville NSW 2142

Telephone: (02) 9684 4411

Head Office
NSW Rural Fire Service
Unit 3, 175-179 James Ruse Drive
Rosehill NSW 2142

Facsimile: (02) 9638 6645



20 October 2003

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 30 JUNE 2003

Statement by Commissioner

Pursuant to Section 45F of the Public Finance and Audit Act, 1983, I state that:

- The accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Public Finance and Audit Act, 1983, the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies, the applicable clauses of the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2000 and the Treasurer's Directions;
- The statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position and transactions of the Service for the year ended 30 June 2003; and
- At the date of this statement there are no circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.


P.C. Koperberg AQ, AFSM, BEM
Commissioner

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2003

Notes	Actual 2003 \$'000	Budget 2003 \$'000	Actual 2002 \$'000
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
8(a)	25,534	18,047	19,027
9(a)	14,075	7,248	7,248
9(b)	540	668	668
	40,149	25,963	26,943
Non-Current Assets			
10	6,368	2,229	2,229
	6,368	2,229	2,229
	46,517	28,192	29,172
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
11	22,185	8,916	8,916
12	4,956	3,816	3,316
	27,141	12,732	12,232
Non-Current Liabilities			
12	4,991	4,949	4,429
	4,991	4,949	4,429
	32,132	17,681	16,661
	14,385	10,511	12,511
EQUITY			
13	14,385	10,511	12,511
	14,385	10,511	12,511

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Statement of Financial Performance

for the year ended 30 June 2003

	Notes	Actual 2003 \$'000	Budget 2003 \$'000	Actual 2002 \$'000
Expenses				
Operating expenses				
Employee related	2(a)	39,321	37,458	32,090
Other operating expenses	2(b)	11,880	9,246	7,544
Maintenance		198	-	283
Depreciation and amortisation	2(c)	1,158	1,000	781
Grants and subsidies	2(d)	184,320	69,646	135,142
Borrowing costs	2(e) 8(b)	51	-	31
Other expenses	2(f)	4,061	4,156	3,347
Total Expenses		240,989	121,506	179,218
Less:				
Retained Revenue				
Sale of goods and services	3(a)	352	-	120
Grants and contributions	3(b)	222,241	105,036	157,175
Other revenue	3(c)	2,146	1,387	1,433
Total Retained Revenue		224,739	106,423	158,728
Gain/(loss) on disposal of non-current assets	4	(50)	-	19
Net Cost of Services	17	16,300	15,083	20,471
Government Contributions				
Recurrent appropriation	5	18,023	18,023	17,158
Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities	6	151	-	33
Total Government Contributions		18,174	18,023	17,191
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		1,874	2,940	(3,280)
TOTAL REVENUES, EXPENSES AND VALUATION ADJUSTMENTS RECOGNISED DIRECTLY IN EQUITY				
		-	-	-
TOTAL CHANGES IN EQUITY OTHER THAN THOSE RESULTING FROM TRANSACTIONS WITH OWNERS AS OWNERS				
	13	1,874	2,940	(3,280)

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2003

	Notes	Actual 2003 \$'000	Budget 2003 \$'000	Actual 2002 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Payments				
Employee related		(34,295)	(36,438)	(25,402)
Grants and subsidies		(187,898)	(55,454)	(115,068)
Other		(17,521)	(33,194)	(35,716)
Total Payments		(239,714)	(125,086)	(176,186)
Receipts				
Sale of goods and services		352	-	120
Grants and contributions		105,197	88,979	84,769
GST receipts		14,327	-	9,413
Other		2,195	23,044	16,490
Total Receipts		122,071	112,023	110,792
Cash Flows from Government				
Recurrent appropriation		18,023	18,023	17,158
Capital appropriation		-	75	-
Cash reimbursements from the Crown Entity		111,474	-	52,515
Net Cash Flows from Government		129,497	18,098	69,673
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	17	11,854	5,035	4,279
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment	10	511	500	295
Purchases of plant and equipment	10	(5,858)	(6,515)	(1,355)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(5,347)	(6,015)	(1,060)
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH				
Opening cash and cash equivalents		19,027	19,062	15,808
CLOSING CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	8	25,534	18,082	19,027

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Financial Statements

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Reporting Entity

The NSW Rural Fire Service, as a reporting entity, comprises all the entities under its control.

The reporting entity is consolidated as part of the NSW Total State Sector and as part of the NSW Public Accounts.

(b) Basis of Accounting

The Service's financial statements are a general purpose financial report which has been prepared on an accruals basis and in accordance with:

- applicable Australian Accounting Standards;
- other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB);
- Urgent Issues Group (UIG) Consensus Views;
- the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act* and Regulations; and
- the Financial Reporting Directions published in the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies or issued by the Treasurer under section 9(2)(n) of the Act.

Where there are inconsistencies between the above requirements, the legislative provisions have prevailed.

In the absence of a specific Accounting Standard, other authoritative pronouncements of the AASB or UIG Consensus View, the hierarchy of other pronouncements as outlined in AAS 6 "Accounting Policies" is considered.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

(c) Revenue Recognition

Revenue is recognised when the Service has control of the good or right to receive, it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the Service and the amount of revenue can be measured reliably. Additional comments regarding the accounting policies for the recognition of revenue are discussed below.

- (i) Parliamentary Appropriations and Contributions from Other Bodies

Parliamentary appropriations and contributions from other bodies (including grants and donations) are generally recognised as revenues when the service obtains control over the assets comprising the appropriations/contributions. Control over appropriations and contributions is normally obtained upon the receipt of cash.

An exception to the above is when appropriations are unspent at year-end. In this case, the authority to spend the money lapses and generally the unspent amount must be repaid to the Consolidated Fund in the following financial year. As a result, unspent appropriations are accounted for as liabilities rather than revenue.

- (ii) Sale of Goods and Services

Revenue from the sale of goods and services comprises revenue from the provision of products or services, ie user charges. User charges are recognised as revenue when the Service obtains control of the assets that result from them.

- (d) Employee Benefits and other Provisions

- (i) Salaries and Wages, Annual Leave, Sick Leave and On-Costs

Liabilities for salaries and wages (including non-monetary benefits), annual leave and vesting sick leave are recognised and measured in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date at nominal amounts based on the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Unused non-vesting sick leave does not give rise to a liability as it is not considered probable that sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future.

The outstanding amounts of payroll tax, workers' compensation insurance premiums and fringe benefits tax, which are consequential to employment, are recognised as liabilities and expenses where the employee benefits to which they relate have been recognised.

- (ii) Accrued salaries and wages-reclassification

As a result of the adoption of Accounting Standard AASB 1044 "Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets", accrued salaries and wages and on-costs has been reclassified to "payables" instead of "provisions" in the Statement of Financial Position and the related note disclosures, for the current and comparative period. On the face of the Statement of Financial Position and in the notes, reference is now made to "provisions" in place of "employee entitlements and other provisions". Total employee benefits are reconciled in Note 12 "Provisions".

- (iii) Long Service Leave and Superannuation

The Service recognises liabilities for long service leave and superannuation for all employees, except for those of the Office for Emergency Services. The liability in relation to the Office for Emergency Services is assumed by the Crown Entity, and the Service accounts for the liability as having been extinguished resulting in the amount assumed being shown as part of the non-monetary revenue item described as "Acceptance by the Crown Entity of Employee Benefits and other Liabilities".

Financial Statements (cont.)

The Superannuation liabilities are assumed by the Service as required by Treasury. The Superannuation Schemes relating to the employees of the NSW Rural Fire Service are: the State Super Scheme; the State Authorities Superannuation Scheme; the State Authorities Non-Contributory Superannuation Scheme (Basic Benefits Scheme) – these funds are now closed to new entrants; the First State Super Scheme, the Public Sector Executives Superannuation Scheme and the Local Government Employees Superannuation Scheme. Details of the reserves, assessed liabilities, overfunding and provisions are shown in note 21.

- (e) Borrowing Costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenses in the period in which they are incurred.

- (f) Insurance

The Service's insurance activities are conducted through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund Scheme of self insurance for Government agencies. The expense (premium) is determined by the Fund Manager based on past experience.

- (g) Accounting for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except:

- the amount of GST incurred by the service as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense.
- receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

- (h) Acquisitions of Assets

The cost method of accounting is used for the initial recording of all acquisitions of assets controlled by the Service. Cost is determined as the fair value of the assets given as consideration plus the costs incidental to the acquisition.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and revenues at their fair value at the date of acquisition.

Fair value means the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between a knowledgeable, willing buyer and a knowledgeable, willing seller in an arm's length transaction.

- (i) Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment costing \$5,000 and above individually are capitalised. In addition and in accordance with Service policy some assets costing less than \$5,000 and forming part of a network are capitalised.

- (j) Depreciation of Non-Current Physical Assets

Depreciation is provided for on a straight line basis for all depreciable assets so as to write off the depreciable amount of each asset as it is consumed over its useful life to the entity. Plant and Equipment and Fitout are depreciated at the rate of 20%, computer equipment at 33.3% per annum.

- (k) Maintenance and Repairs

The costs of maintenance are charged as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a component of an asset, in which case the costs are capitalised and depreciated.

- (l) Leased Assets

Operating lease payments are charged to the Statement of Financial Performance in the periods in which they are incurred. There are no finance lease arrangements.

- (m) Rural Fire Fighting Equipment

The ownership of all fire fighting equipment purchased by the Rural Fire Fighting Fund is vested in the relevant local government council. The cost of such equipment is, therefore, expensed by the Service in the year of purchase.

- (n) Funding -NSW Rural Fire Service

Under the Rural Fires Act 1997 the contribution from Local Government is 13.3%, Treasury 13% and the Insurance Industry 73.7%. In addition, \$0.7 million was received as supplementation from Treasury.

		2003 \$(Mil)		2002 \$(Mil)
Local Government	13.3%	16.1	13.3%	15.0
Insurance Industry	73.7%	88.9	73.7%	83.3
Treasury	13.0%	15.7	13.0%	16.4

Contributions are recognised when invoices are raised.

- (o) Receivables

Receivables are recognised and carried at cost, based on the original invoice amount less a provision for any uncollectable debts. An estimate for doubtful debts is made when collection of the full amount is no longer probable. Bad debts are written off as incurred.

- (p) Other Assets

Other assets including prepayments are recognised on a cost basis.

- (q) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the service and other amounts including interest. Interest is accrued over the period it becomes due.

- (r) Budgeted amounts

The budgeted amounts are drawn from the budgets as formulated at the beginning of the financial year and with any adjustments for the effects of additional appropriations, s 21A, s 24 and/or s 26 of the *Public Finance and Audit Act* 1983.

The budgeted amounts in the Statement of Financial Performance and the Statement of Cash Flows are generally based on the amounts disclosed in the NSW Budget Papers (as adjusted above). However, in the Statement of Financial Position, the amounts vary from the Budget Papers, as the opening balances of the budgeted amounts are based on carried forward actual amounts i.e. per the audited financial statements (rather than carried forward estimates).

Financial Statements (cont.)

	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000
2. EXPENSES		
a) Employee related expenses		
Salaries and wages (including recreation leave)	31,563	25,837
Superannuation	4,937	3,780
Long service leave	1,008	927
Workers' compensation insurance	187	32
Payroll tax	1,626	1,514
	<u>39,321</u>	<u>32,090</u>
b) Other operating expense		
Auditor's remuneration – audit of the financial report	67	68
Operating lease rental expense – minimum lease payments	1,135	961
Travel	1,309	937
Telephones	966	619
Fees for service	1,021	362
Printing and stationery	1,042	776
Consumables	470	502
Vehicle operation	1,188	362
All outgoing – buildings	386	189
Other expenses	4,296	2,768
	<u>11,880</u>	<u>7,544</u>
c) Depreciation and amortisation expense		
Depreciation		
Computer equipment	316	267
Other property, plant and equipment	842	514
	<u>1,158</u>	<u>781</u>
d) Grants and subsidies		
Volunteer Rescue Units	848	600
Regional Fire Associations	771	395
Payments for Council costs associated with Rural Fire Fighting activities and equipment	60,323	70,146
Emergency Fund – Natural Disasters	121,803	63,830
Other	575	171
	<u>184,320</u>	<u>135,142</u>
Expenditure on Natural Disasters including the 2002-03 bushfires totalled \$121.803M (\$117.517M in excess of budget). There was no effect on the Net Cost of Services as the surplus expenditure was reimbursed by Treasury from the Natural Disaster Fund.		
e) Borrowing costs		
Interest on short-term borrowings	51	31
	<u>51</u>	<u>31</u>
e) Other expenses		
Workers' compensation insurance	2,000	2,034
Public liability and other insurance	742	544
Aerial support	1,319	769
	<u>4,061</u>	<u>3,347</u>

Financial Statements (cont.)

	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000
3. REVENUES		
a) Sale of goods and services		
Rendering of services	352	120
	<u>352</u>	<u>120</u>
b) Grants and contributions		
New South Wales Fire Brigades	225	225
Insurance Company Contributions	88,979	83,338
Local Government Contributions	16,057	15,039
*Natural Disaster Welfare Relief	116,980	58,573
	<u>222,241</u>	<u>157,175</u>
*Natural Disaster Welfare Relief is restricted to emergencies that are declared under Section 44 of the Rural Fires Act.		
c) Other revenue		
Sale of equipment	165	165
Other	1,981	1,268
	<u>2,146</u>	<u>1,433</u>
In accordance with Section 119(4)(b) of the Rural Fires Act, distribution of proceeds from the sale by Councils of fire fighting equipment between the Service and the Councils is in the same proportion to each body's contribution to the purchase of equipment as shown above. The Service's share of such proceeds totalled \$164,645 (\$165,485 in 2001/02)		
4. GAIN/(LOSS) ON DISPOSAL OF NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Plant and equipment	(50)	19
	<u>(50)</u>	<u>19</u>
5. APPROPRIATIONS		
Recurrent Appropriations		
Total recurrent drawdowns from Treasury (per Summary of Compliance)	18,023	17,158
	<u>18,023</u>	<u>17,158</u>
Comprising:		
Recurrent appropriations (per Statement of Financial Performance)	18,023	17,158
	<u>18,023</u>	<u>17,158</u>
6. ACCEPTANCE BY THE CROWN ENTITY OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND OTHER LIABILITIES		
The following liabilities and/or expenses have been assumed by the Crown Entity		
Long service leave	151	33
	<u>151</u>	<u>33</u>
Also refer to Note 1(d) (iii)		

Financial Statements (cont.)

7. PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES OF THE SERVICE

- (a) **Program 1** Funding and administration of Rural Firefighting Services
Objectives: To promote effective rural firefighting services within the State, including the co-ordination of bush fire fighting and prevention activities.
- (b) **Program 2** Training of Volunteer Bush Fire Fighters
Objectives: To facilitate and promote the training of bush fire fighters.
- (c) **Program 3** Public Education and Information Services
Objectives: To promote community awareness of bush fire issues and generally educate the community in bush fire prevention, protection and safety.
- (d) **Program 4** Planning and Co-ordination of Rescue Services and Emergency Management
Objectives: To ensure the provision of comprehensive, balanced and co-ordinated rescue services and emergency management throughout New South Wales.

8. CURRENT ASSETS – CASH

	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000
a) Cash		
Cash at bank and on hand	25,534	19,027
	25,534	19,027

b) Financing facilities available

The Service has a financing facility available through NSW Treasury Corporation to facilitate cash flow until Statutory Contributions are received. During the year amounts totalling \$12M were borrowed and fully repaid.

9. CURRENT ASSET – RECEIVABLES

a) Grants and contributions	269	224
Less: Provision for doubtful debts	2	20
	267	204
Natural Disaster Fund	11,565	5,770
Other	2,243	1,274
	14,075	7,248
b) Prepaid superannuation contributions (refer note 23)	303	568
Other Prepayments	237	100
	540	668

Financial Statements (cont.)

10. NON-CURRENT ASSETS – PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	Computer Equipment \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Fitouts \$'000	Total \$'000
At fair value	1,571	8,715	641	10,927
Less accumulated depreciation	1,178	2,740	641	4,559
Total Plant and Equipment at Net Book Value	393	5,975	–	6,368

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current and previous financial year are set out below.

2003

Carrying amount at start of year	765	1,464	–	2,229
Additions	267	5,591	–	5,858
Disposals	322	239	–	561
Depreciation expense	317	841	–	1,158
Carrying amount at end of year	393	5,975	–	6,368

11. CURRENT LIABILITIES – PAYABLES

Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs	1,498	624
Other operating expenses	1,316	548
Grants and subsidies	16,384	7,339
Other expenses	716	–
G.S.T	331	–
Unfunded Superannuation	1,940	405
	22,185	8,916

12. CURRENT LIABILITIES/ NON CURRENT LIABILITIES – PROVISIONS

Provisions

Employee benefits and related on-costs

Recreation leave	4,152	3,316
	4,152	3,316
Long service leave	5,187	4,429
	5,187	4,429
Payroll tax	585	–
Other on-costs	23	–
	608	–
Total Provisions	9,947	7,745

Aggregate employee benefits and related on-costs

Provisions – Current	4,956	3,316
Provisions – Non-Current	4,991	4,429
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs (Note 11)	1,498	624
	11,445	8,369

Financial Statements (cont.)

	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000
13. CHANGES IN EQUITY		
Accumulated Funds		
Balance at beginning of the financial year	12,511	15,791
Changes in equity – other than transactions with owners as owners		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	1,874	(3,280)
Balance at end of the financial year	14,385	12,511
There were no transactions with owners as owners		
14 . COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE		
a) Other expenditure commitments		
Aggregate other expenditure for the acquisition of equipment contracted for at balance date and not provided for:		
Not later than one year (including GST)	18,372	18,263
The Service includes as commitments all outstanding amounts identified in councils' estimates for specific projects that are not at this stage completed. Whilst some of these are covered by contractual obligations and/or unfulfilled purchase orders, others relate to circumstances where contractual obligations have not been formalised. The Service did not have open orders at balance date.		
Other Expenditure Commitments include input tax credits of \$367,275 (\$701,901 2001/2002) that are expected to be recoverable from the ATO.		
b) Operating lease commitments		
Future non-cancellable operating lease rentals not provided for and payable		
Not later than one year	1,104	803
Later than one year but not later than five years	7,893	278
Later than 5 years	10,228	–
Total (including GST)	19,225	1,081
Operating lease commitments comprise of motor vehicles, information technology equipment and premises for Regional Offices		
Operating Lease Commitments include input tax credits of \$1,747,676 (\$89,363 in 2001/02) that are expected to be recoverable from the ATO.		

15. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**Contingent liabilities**

At balance date the Service had no contingent liabilities.

Financial Statements (cont.)

16 . BUDGET REVIEW**Net cost of services**

The actual net cost of services exceeded budget by \$1.217M. This variation relates primarily to a charge of \$1.939M to employee related expenses, resulting from an unfunded superannuation liability which was not anticipated.

Assets and liabilities

Current Assets were \$14.186M in excess of budget due to increases in Cash and Receivables. The increase in Cash results from an increase in employer reserves and a significant increase in payables. The increase in employer reserves relates to salary rate increases and increases in entitlements. The increase in receivables relates primarily to Natural Disaster claims. Several agencies were tardy in submitting claims resulting in the agency not being able to receive reimbursement prior to 30 June, 2003.

Current Liabilities were in excess of budget by \$14.409M. This resulted primarily from agencies being tardy in submitting claims for Natural Disaster expenditure, thus resulting in significant accruals at 30 June, 2003. In addition the amount of employee entitlements exceeded budget due to reasons stated above.

Non-Current Assets exceeded budget by \$4.139M solely as a result of the Service purchasing vehicles for district staff. Ownership of these vehicles now vests in the Service, with the result being a significant increase in the value of Plant and Equipment.

Cash Flows

Total payments exceeded budget by \$114.628M primarily due to the additional expenditure associated with the 2002-2003 bushfires.

Cash reimbursements from the Crown Entity totalled \$111.474M and were the result of reimbursements for costs associated with the 2002-2003 bushfires.

17. RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES TO NET COST OF SERVICES.

	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000
Net cost of service	(16,300)	(20,471)
Cash Flows from Government	18,023	17,158
Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities	151	33
Depreciation	1,158	781
(Decrease)/increase in provisions	2,202	5,475
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments and other assets	(6,699)	(3,656)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	13,269	4,978
Net loss/(gain) on sale of plant and equipment	50	(19)
Net cash provided by operating activities	11,854	4,279

18 . NON-CASH FINANCING AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

Long service leave liability assumed by Crown Entity

151	33
151	33

Financial Statements (cont.)

19. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial instruments give rise to positions that are a financial asset of either the Rural Fire Service or its counterparty and a financial liability (or equity instrument) of the other party. For the Rural Fire Service these include cash at bank, receivables and creditors.

In accordance with AAS 33 "Presentation and Disclosure of Financial Instruments" information is disclosed below, in respect of the credit risk and interest rate risk of financial instruments. All such amounts are carried in the accounts at net fair value unless otherwise stated. The specific accounting policy in respect of each class of such financial instruments is stated hereunder.

Classes of instruments recorded at cost comprise:

- cash
- receivables
- creditors and accruals

Cash

Cash comprises cash on hand and bank balances within the Treasury Banking System.

Receivables

All trade debtors are recognised as amounts receivable at balance date. Collectability of trade debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Debts which are known to be uncollectable are written off. A provision for doubtful debts is raised when some doubt as to collection exists. The credit risk is the carrying amount (net of any provision for doubtful debts). No interest is earned on the trade debtors. The carrying amount approximates net fair value. Sales are made on 30 day terms. Under S106 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 a ten percent surcharge is levied if contributions from Insurance Companies and Councils are not received within 60 days of assessment unless the Minister otherwise determines.

Trade creditors and accruals

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods or services received, whether or not invoiced. Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in Treasurer's Direction 219.01. If trade terms are not specified, payment is made no later than the end of the month following the month in which an invoice or a statement is received. Treasurer's Direction 219.01 allows the Minister to award interest for late payment. The Minister did not apply any such interest rate during the year.

20. CONSULTANCIES

Consultancy fees paid for the year totalled \$732,308 (\$1,067,201 in 2001-02).

Financial Statements (cont.)

21. SUPERANNUATION

The assessed liability for the NSW Rural Fire Service at 30 June, 2003 and funds held in reserve accounts at the Superannuation Administration Corporation (trading as Pillar Administration) (including accrued interest) and prepaid superannuation were:

Calculation of the 30 June, 2003 superannuation position uses actuarial assumptions revised from assumptions used in the previous year. This change has created significant movement in the accrued superannuation liability. Thus, the superannuation funding position as at 30 June, 2003 has changed significantly from 30 June, 2002 to the extent that the Service is now in deficit to the extent of \$1,636,774. The situation has been discussed at length with Treasury Officers and will be reviewed as a maintenance issue during the 2003/04 financial year.

	Accrued Liability		Reserve Account		Net Liability / (Pre-paid Contributions)	
	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000	2003 \$'000	2002 \$'000
SASS	1,710	1,553	1,904	1,898	(194)	(345)
SANCCS	961	864	1,070	1,087	(109)	(223)
SSS	9,748	8,167	7,808	7,762	1,940	405
	12,419	10,584	10,782	10,747	1,637	(163)

The liability for the State Superannuation Scheme has been determined by the Fund's Actuary as at 30 June, 2003. The assumptions are as follows:

	2003/04 %	2004/05 %	2005/06 %
Rate of investment return	7.0	7.0	7.0
Rate of salary increase	4.0	4.0	4.0
Rate of increase in CPI	2.5	2.5	2.5

Program Statement - Expense and Revenue

for the year ended 30 June 2003

SERVICE'S EXPENSES & REVENUES	Program 1*		Program 2*		Program 3*		Program 4*		Not Attributable		Total	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Expenses												
Operating expenses												
■ Employee related	36,779	30,045	459	481	578	467	1,505	1,097	-	-	39,321	32,090
■ Other operating expenses	9,555	5,694	678	475	977	1,169	868	489	-	-	12,078	7,827
Depreciation and amortisation	1,158	781	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,158	781
Grants and subsidies	183,472	134,445	-	32	-	-	848	665	-	-	184,320	135,142
Borrowing costs	51	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	31
Other expenses	4,061	3,347	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,061	3,347
Total Expense	235,076	174,343	1,137	988	1,555	1,636	3,221	2,251	-	-	240,989	179,218
Retained Revenues												
Sale of goods and services	352	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	352	120
Grants and contributions	222,241	157,175	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	222,241	157,175
Other revenue	1,175	793	-	-	-	-	971	640	-	-	2,146	1,433
Total Retained Revenue	223,768	158,088	-	-	-	-	971	640	-	-	224,739	158,728
Gain/(loss) on disposal of non-current assets	(50)	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(50)	19
NET COST OF SERVICES	11,358	16,236	1,137	988	1,555	1,636	2,250	1,611	-	-	16,300	20,471
Government contributions**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18,174	17,191	18,174	17,191
NET EXPENDITURE/ (REVENUE) FOR THE YEAR	11,358	16,236	1,137	988	1,555	1,636	2,250	1,611	(18,174)	(17,191)	(1,874)	3,280

* The name and purpose of each program is summarised in Note 7

** Appropriations are made on an agency basis and not to individual programmes. Consequently, government contributions have been included in the "Not Attributable" Column.

Summary of Compliance with Financial Directives

	2003				2002			
	Recurrent APP'N	Expenditure Net Claim on Consolidated Fund	Capital APP'N	Expenditure/ Net Claim on Consolidated Fund	Recurrent APP'N	Expenditure	Capital APP'N	Expenditure
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
ORIGINAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION/EXPENDITURE								
■ Appropriation Act	17,378	17,378	-	-	16,458	16,458	-	-
	17,378	17,378	-	-	16,458	16,458	-	-
OTHER APPROPRIATIONS/EXPENDITURE								
■ Treasurer's Advance	645	645	-	-	700	700	-	-
	645	645	-	-	700	700	-	-
Total Appropriations/Expenditure/ Net Claim on Consolidated Fund (includes transfer payments)	18,023	18,023	-	-	17,158	17,158	-	-
Amount drawn down against appropriation	-	18,023	-	-	-	17,158	-	-
Liability to Consolidated Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The Summary of Compliance is based on the assumption that Consolidated Fund moneys are spent first (except where otherwise identified or prescribed).



Appendix 'A' Fuel Management Report

Region	Hazard Reduction (ha) 2002/03	Trail Work (kms) 2002/03	Lineal Feature (kms) 2002/03
East	15,906	1,169	3,215
South	213,317	4,011	3,625
West	102,604	5,392	2,581
North	126,121	6,280	7,188
Total	457,947	16,851	16,608

For the year under review Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) reported hazard reduction activities covering 457,947 ha with 16,851 kms of trail work carried out along with 16,608 kms of lineal features treated.

The hazard reduction figures shown above have been provided from BFMC reports submitted under Section 51(1A) of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* for the reporting period. Figures for the 2001/02 reporting period are not included for comparison purposes due to the different reporting timeframes negating any meaningful comparison.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and State Forests (SF), in accordance with Section 74 of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* have, independently, reported the following figures. The hazard reduction figure provided by NPWS is 42,827 ha while that provided by SF is 838,346 ha including 783,842 ha of grazing work and 54,504 ha of hazard reduction burning and post log burning.

Based on the reports of the BFMCs, hazard reductions undertaken on land managed by the Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) and local councils' estate were 20,624 ha and 938 ha respectively. Hazard reduction works on Crown lands undertaken through fire mitigation works funding was 679 ha and this has been included in the DLWC figure.

An examination of the reported hazard reduction figures indicates a level of under-reporting to BFMCs. It is anticipated that, with the introduction of the new integrated Bushfire Risk Information Management System, providing a single, consistent means for all land managers to collect and collate bushfire hazard reduction data such anomalies should be removed and the reporting regime for the financial year 2004-2005 will be improved. In the interim, the Commissioner will continue to undertake performance audits under Section 62A(3) of the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* into the performance of the implementation by BFMCs of their respective risk management plans.

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Appendix 'B' Equal Employment Opportunity Statistics 2002/03

Staff Numbers by Level Staff Numbers by Percentage

Level	Total Staff (No.)	Men	Women	Aboriginal People & Torres Strait Islanders	People from Racial, Ethnic, Ethno-Religious Minority Groups	People whose Language First Spoken as a Child was not English	People with a Disability	People with a Disability Requiring Work-related Adjustment
< \$28,710	1		100%					
\$28,710 - \$37,708	27	59%	41%				4%	
\$37,709 - \$42,156	97	21%	79%		2%	2%	4%	
\$42,157 - \$53,345	207	74%	26%	0.5%	1%	1%	4%	
\$53,346 - \$68,985	176	87%	13%	0.6%	2%	2%	5%	
\$68,986 - \$86,231	42	86%	14%				2%	
> \$86,231 (non SES)	20	95%	5%		5%	5%		
> \$86,231 (SES)		0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	570	70%	30%	0.4%	2%	2%	4%	

Level	Total Staff (No.)	Men	Women	Aboriginal People & Torres Strait Islanders	People from Racial, Ethnic, Ethno-Religious Minority Groups	People whose Language First Spoken as a Child was not English	People with a Disability	People with a Disability Requiring Work-related Adjustment
< \$28,710	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
\$28,710 - \$37,708	27	16	11	0	0	0	1	0
\$37,709 - \$42,156	97	20	77	0	2	2	4	0
\$42,157 - \$53,345	207	153	54	1	3	3	8	0
\$53,346 - \$68,985	176	153	23	1	3	3	8	0
\$68,986 - \$86,231	42	36	6	0	0	0	1	0
> \$86,231 (non SES)	20	19	1	0	1	1	0	0
> \$86,231 (SES)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	570	397	173	2	9	9	22	0

Representation And Recruitment Of Aboriginal Employees And Employees With A Physical Disability

2001/02	Total Staff	Aboriginal Employees	PWPD
Total Employees	490	0	1
Recruited in year	378*	0	1

*308 council fire control staff from 143 local government councils were transferred to the NSW Rural Fire Service (ie State government employment) on 1 July, 2001.

2002/03	Total Staff	Aboriginal Employees	PWPD
Total Employees	570	2	1
Recruited in year	80	2	1

Appendix 'C' Freedom Of Information Statistics

1. Number of new requests received	14	11. Processing time for completed requests	
2. Results of requests		Processing Hours	Personal
■ Number granted in full	8	0 – 10	1
■ Number granted in part <i>Applicant used Service library to access large amount of printed matter.</i>	1	11 – 20	2
■ Number refused <i>Information not held by Service.</i>	3	21 – 40	2
■ Number deferred <i>Payment not received with application but paid subsequently whereafter applications granted in full.</i>	2	Over 40	1
		Totals	3
3. Ministerial Certificates issued	Nil		11
4. Formal consultations	Nil	12. Reviews and appeals	
5. Amendment of personal records	Nil	■ Number of internal reviews finalised	Nil
6. Notation of personal records	Nil	■ Number of Ombudsman reviews finalised	Nil
7. Requests granted in part or refused	Nil	■ Number of District Court appeals finalised	Nil
8. Costs and fees of requests processed during period		Comment	
■ Application fees received	\$240	In 2001-2002 there were 10 FOI requests and a comparison reveals little variation or differences of note. Consequently there was minimal impact on the Service's activities.	
9. Discounts allowed		There were no major or contentious issues associated with FOI requests and in cases where material could not be supplied reasons were given to the applicant(s). There were no disputes, nor were there any Ombudsman or District Court referrals.	
Type of discount	Personal	Other	
Public interest	Nil	NSW Farmers Assoc.	
Other fees received from NSW Farmers' Association			
■ Total cost of retrieval and processing <i>(Based on 50% discount of 100 hours processing @ \$30 per hour).</i>	\$1,500		
Advance deposit <i>(received November 2002).</i>	\$375		
Balance <i>(received 28 November 2002).</i>	\$1,125		
10. Calendar days to process applications			
Elapsed Time	Personal	Other	
0 – 21 days	3	10	
22 – 35 days	1		
Over 35 days			
Totals	4	10	

NB: The application in the 22-35 days elapsed time segment was delayed pending advice from the Crown Solicitor and the non-payment of the application fee. The applicant was later provided with the information sought.

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Appendix 'D' Circulars Issued

CIRC #	Date	Subject
14/02	2.7.02	Conversion of National Assessor/Trainer Qualifications to RFS equivalents and a reminder about the 1 July, 2002 deadline for Certificate IV in A&WT
15/02	12.7.02	Farewell for Assistant Commissioner Ross Smith
16/02	1.8.02	Amendments to the Rural Fires Act 1997 – hazard reduction and planning requirements
17/02	29.8.02	NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund 2002-2003 Allocations
18/02	4.9.02	2003/2004 Estimates – NSW RFFF
19/02	6.9.02	Premier's Emergency Services Awards
20/02	20.9.02	Planning for Bushfire Protection – Implementation
21/02	8.10.02	Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping – Verification and Certification Title
22/02	9.10.02	Lagging of Fire Tankers
23/02	9.10.02	Joint Training Policy (NSWFB – NSWRFSS)
24/02	17.10.02	Prescribed Burning Training and SOPs – 2002
25/02	17.10.02	Cracks in Chassis Rails on Cat 1 Tankers
26/02	22.10.02	Volunteer Memorial Annual Commemorative Service
27/02	9.12.02	Effect of non-compliance with the requirement for a Certificate IV in A&WT
28/02	9.12.02	Fire Blanket Storage – Technical Bulletin 2/2002
29/02	9.12.02	Changes to Training Delayed
30/02	9.12.02	Changes to the System of Ordering Training Materials
31/02	18.12.02	Updating of Instructor Database
32/02	18.12.02	Updating of 2003 Training Register Information
33/02	19.12.02	Sample Copies of Queensland RFS Training Materials
34/02	19.12.02	PPE – Supply and Use of Black Wool Jacket
1/03	7.1.03	2002 Circulars
2/03	8.1.03	LPG Cylinders
3/03	6.2.03	Electrical Safety
4/03	6.2.03	Fire Investigation Reporting Guidelines
5/03	6.2.03	Coronial and Investigation Matters concerning the 2001/02 and 2002/03 Fire Seasons
6/03	10.2.03	Standardisation of Computer Equipment and Systems
7/03	15.5.03	Damage to Plastic Parts on Fire Tankers
8/03	23.5.03	2003/2004 Estimates Contributions to the NSW Rural Fire Fighting Fund
9/03	17.6.03	Electrical Safety Training
10/03	17.6.03	Cracks in chassis rails of FTS & FSS Isuzu chassis
11/03	20.6.03	Data Storage on RFS Network
12/03	20.6.03	Desktop Replacement Program

Appendix 'E' Allocations to Councils 2002/2003

Region East	\$	Region South	\$
Baulkham Hills	2,350,017.49	Albury City	212,305.36
Blacktown City	740,153.44	Bega	1,443,381.11
Blue Mountains	3,037,131.42	Berrigan	623,340.04
Camden	681,631.43	Bombala	671,248.61
Campbelltown	963,769.18	Conargo	678,832.75
Cessnock	2,174,795.07	Cooma-Monaro	695,157.56
Dungog	904,514.28	Corowa	618,684.19
Evans	917,370.59	Crookwell	849,786.22
Fairfield	95,274.68	Culcairn	337,742.83
Gloucester	881,723.93	Deniliquin	89,656.88
Gosford	1,987,369.51	Eurobodalla	1,513,093.74
Great Lakes	1,483,634.02	Griffith	863,895.28
Greater Taree	1,392,198.41	Gundagai	666,363.91
Hastings	1,492,856.10	Gunning	763,229.42
Hawkesbury	1,753,199.26	Holbrook	588,372.90
Hornsby	2,225,992.88	Hume	665,773.30
Kiama	713,375.52	Jerilderie	421,794.15
Ku-ring-ai	92,800.73	Leeton	324,336.28
Lake Macquarie	2,216,304.62	Lockhart	427,440.57
Lithgow	1,148,600.30	Mulwaree	964,812.00
Liverpool	802,742.61	Murray	794,298.79
Lord Howe Island	34,485.26	Murrumbidgee	530,955.12
Maitland	707,430.69	Narrandera	863,250.61
Merriwa	722,325.78	Queanbeyan	182,358.51
Muswellbrook	901,158.87	Shoalhaven	2,224,735.99
Oberon	673,064.21	Snowy River	766,282.46
Penrith	1,227,400.80	Tallaganda	1,188,908.89
Port Stephens	1,246,793.61	Tumbarumba	476,803.99
Rylstone	501,973.07	Tumut	650,541.61
Shellharbour	547,518.40	Urana	578,395.89
Singleton	1,383,057.09	Wagga Wagga	1,832,850.52
Sutherland	2,735,116.61	Wakool	639,032.10
Warrindah	2,365,858.49	Yarrowlumla	1,013,698.46
Wingecarribee	1,261,057.01	Yass	1,131,858.00
Wollondilly	1,464,941.22	Region Total	26,293,218.04
Wollongong	1,497,455.32		
Wyong	1,753,743.49		
Region Total	47,078,835.39		

Appendix 'E' Allocations to Councils 2002/2003

continued

Region North	\$	Region West	\$
Armidale/Dumaresq	787,781.92	Bland	1,133,787.31
Ballina	433,612.71	Bogan	304,251.44
Barraba	402,321.09	Bourke	539,248.04
Bellingen	1,154,842.43	Brewarrina	385,787.93
Bingara	564,579.61	Canobolas Zone	2,907,027.70
Byron	810,961.50	Carrathool	710,094.57
Clarence Valley Zone	3,175,476.30	Central Darling	491,396.20
Coffs Harbour City	1,686,961.22	Cobar	710,752.30
Coolah	581,642.33	Coolamon	791,371.50
Coonabarabran	619,240.50	Coonamble	294,879.99
Gilgandra	681,692.88	Cowra	686,509.79
Gunnedah	536,197.77	Dubbo City	1,049,661.66
Guyra	517,607.48	Forbes	970,907.10
Inverell	606,577.19	Hay	510,361.67
Kempsey	940,777.91	Junee	530,437.27
Kyogle	835,608.53	Lachlan	1,237,282.15
Lismore	812,047.42	Lower Western Zone	1,532,934.93
Manilla	200,916.72	Mudgee	1,266,052.16
Moree Plains	992,299.73	Narromine	744,569.76
Murrurundi	379,512.80	Parkes	772,114.26
Nambucca	877,471.65	South West Area Group	1,965,278.99
Narrabri	850,853.36	Temora	973,740.63
Nundle	216,252.90	Walgett	399,704.21
Parry	542,727.23	Warren	308,109.25
Quirindi	371,094.25	Weddin	659,951.76
Richmond Valley	914,247.55	Wellington	687,255.05
Scone	686,828.14	Region Total	22,563,467.62
Severn	791,655.75		
Tamworth	250,743.20		
Tenterfield	414,674.46		
Tweed	890,753.69		
Uralla	354,531.12		
Walcha	547,295.85		
Yallaroi	365,691.76		
Region Total	24,795,478.95		

Appendix 'F' Current Publications

1. Bush Firewise
2. Barbecues & campfires
3. Tree selection for fire-prone areas
4. Trees & fire resistance
5. Regeneration & care of fire-damaged trees
6. LP gas safety
7. Bushfire readiness checklist
8. Home fire safety checklist
9. Bushfire preparedness. Your family, Your pets
10. Industrial & commercial fire prevention in bushfire prone areas
11. After the fire guide
12. Equipment & machinery use in bushfire prone areas
13. Holiday fire safety
14. Personal safety equipment
15. Hazard reduction
16. Preschoolers & Fire Safety
17. What is Community Fireguard?
18. Publications & Educational Resources
19. Fires in pine forests
20. Vehicles: How they can both protect you and cause bushfires
21. First aid during bushfires
22. Why flammable liquid needs careful handling for those who live in bushfire prone areas
23. Additional fire protection for your home
24. The effects of weather on bushfires
25. Controlling bushfires
26. Survival flow chart
27. Before you light that fire
28. Bush Fire Operations, Planning...
29. Bush Fire Risk Management Planning
30. A Guide to the Rural Fires Act 1997
31. What does that mean? Terms used by NSW Rural Fire Service
32. Incident Control Systems
33. Planning for Bushfire Protection

Fireguard for Kids resources

- Fireguard for Kids Kit (Whole)
- Fireguard for Kids Kit (Refill)

For children

- Temporary Tattoos
- Bush Fire Puzzle Book
- Smokey's Activity Book
- Smokey's Home – Story Book
- Sticker – Children's Fire Safety
- Magnet – Animation / Hotline
- Word Puzzle Activity Sheet
- Word Search Activity Sheet
- Bookmark
- Rulers
- Balloons
- Showbags

Books and booklets

- External Water Sprinkler Leaflet
- The Burning Question
- Fifty Years of Fire
- Fire! The Australian Experience
- A State Ablaze
- Brochure – Join your Local RF Brigade
- Fire Prevention Presentation Handbook
- Fire Safe, Book 1 (Primary Teachers)
- Fire Science, Book 1 (Secondary Teachers)

Other Resources

- Sticker – Corporate "Heart of NSW"
- Sticker – Corporate "Peace of Mind"
- Magnet – '000' Emergency
- Poster – Fire Safety (Several Versions)
- Poster – Join your Local RF Brigade
- Static Checklists
- Firewise Magnets

N.B. These resources are under constant review and may be updated or altered from time to time.

All titles are free, many available in class sets.

Appendix 'G' Statement Of Performance Of The Commissioner



The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Rural Affairs,
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Emergency Services, and
Minister Assisting the Minister for Natural Resources (Lands)

STATEMENT OF PERFORMANCE OF THE COMMISSIONER

2002-2003 saw one of the worst fire seasons in living memory hit much of Eastern Australia. In NSW, Commissioner Koperberg led the Rural Fire Service and co-ordinated other fire fighting agencies as they fought some 459 fires. The fires resulted in the declaration of continuous Section 44 emergencies for a record 151 days.

Drought conditions led to extraordinary fire behaviour across the State and a fire season, which extended from early July in Northern NSW until early March in the Southern Region.

The Commissioner, and the volunteers he leads, kept life and property losses to a minimum in the face of a seemingly overwhelming and sustained fire threat.

In the midst of the fire season the Commissioner continued to lead the RFS into a new era, the Department of Rural Fire Service now has responsibilities for a range of new legislative accountabilities.

Commissioner Koperberg now has authority to ensure land managers across NSW carry out vital bushfire hazard reduction work. Under the changes introduced by the Government the Commissioner can now carry out the work at the owners cost. He has also overseen a slashing in red tape for hazard reduction preparation and in a more efficient use of resources to ensure priority hazard reduction is completed.

In other changes the Commissioner has been given responsibility to ensure that families living near bushland are given greater security. The new legislation, enacted in August, allows the Commissioner to rule on Local Government Bush Fire Prone Maps and on large and small development.

The Commissioner has also played a major role in the development of a national aviation strategy to ensure all Australians are better protected through improved co-ordination of aviation resources.

Research into fire behaviour, suppression and mitigation will now be investigated by the National Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) and I must acknowledge the Commissioner's pivotal role in the development of the CRC.

The Commissioner continues his vital role as Chairman of the State Rescue Board which co-ordinates rescue services throughout NSW.

In the face of extraordinary fire behaviour and significant legislative change the Commissioner has continued to exercise strong leadership, for which he is recognised throughout Australia.

Tony Kelly
Minister for Emergency Services

Appendix 'H' Committees

Rural Fire Service Advisory Council

The Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (RFSAC) met on two occasions during the year.

Commissioner P C Koperberg AO AFSM BEM (Chair)
Councillor K Gallen
Councillor R Pantan OAM
Superintendent W Roche
Mr F Gannell
Mr A Jaffray
Mr R Pallin
Mr A Brown

RFSAC has the following functions:

- advising and reporting to the Minister and the Commissioner on any matter relating to the administration of rural fire services under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*;
- advising the Commissioner on public education programs relating to rural fire matters and on the training of rural firefighters;
- advising the Commissioner on the issue of Service Standards; and
- such other functions as may be conferred or imposed upon it by or under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

RFSAC may give advice and make reports whether or not the advice or reports were requested.

Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

The Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) met on three occasions during the year.

Commissioner P C Koperberg AO AFSM BEM (Chair)
Assist. Commissioner G Mullins AFSM (NSW Fire Brigades)
Mr D Ridley
Mr B Conroy
Councillor K Gallen
Councillor R Pantan OAM
Superintendent P Kinhead AFSM
Assistant Commissioner D Adams (NSW Police)
Ms A Reeves OAM
Mr R Pallin
Mr A Brown
Mr P Olney PSM
Mr A Tennie

The BFCC is responsible for planning in relation to fire prevention and coordinated bush firefighting as well as for advising the Commissioner on bushfire prevention, mitigation and coordinated bushfire suppression. The Committee has such other functions as are

conferred or imposed upon it by or under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. In carrying out any function that affects the environment the Committee must have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development described in section 6(2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act, 1991*.

Additionally the Committee must report to the Minister on any matter referred by the Minister and may report on any matter relating to the prevention and suppression of bushfires, whether referred to it or not. Further the Committee may enter into arrangements with the Minister for Land and Water Conservation or any public authority with respect to the reduction of bushfire hazards.

Fire Services Joint Standing Committee

The Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act, 1998 provides legislative support for the work of this Committee.

The Committee's work of co-ordinating the activities of the fire services was supported by the Service's representatives Commissioner P C Koperberg AO AFSM BEM and Superintendent S Midgley AFSM. Mr D Luscombe represented the NSW Rural Fire Service Association.

Corporate Executive Group

The Corporate Executive Group (CEG), the Service's senior policy making committee, met on seven occasions in 2002-2003.

Commissioner P C Koperberg AO AFSM BEM (Chair)
Ms W George
Acting Chief of Staff (Appointed 2 June, 2003)
M Croweller AFSM
Executive Director Strategic Development
S Fitzsimmons AFSM
Executive Director Operations
T Howe
Executive Director Operations Support
R Rogers
Executive Director Risk Management
T Anderson PSM
Executive Director Corporate Services
P Hennessy
Director Financial Services
J Winter
Director Corporate Communications
D Sutherland
Director Business Development
Superintendent S Yorke
(NSW Rural Fire Service Association)
D Luscombe
(NSW Rural Fire Service Association)

Appendix 'H' Committees

continued

Other

The Service is represented on a number of external organisations by various staff members.

Representatives sit on

- Australasian Fire Authorities Council and its strategy groups, working parties and sub-committees
- Fire Protection Association
- Fire Awareness Week Committee (NSW)
- Emergency Services Communications Working Party
- Standards Australia – various committees
- State Rescue Board
- District Emergency Management Committees
- District Rescue Committees
- Environmental Education Officers' Group
- Association of Environmental Education (NSW)
- Museum Education Officers' Group
- GRN Joint Management Board – Department of Commerce
- Border Liaison Committees
- Roadside Environment Committee (NSW)
- NSW Health Disaster Management Committee
- Public Sector Occupational Health and Safety Group
- Emergency Services Industry Reference Group
- Emergency Services Personnel Support Advisory Group

Appendix 'I' Risk Management And Insurance

The NSW Rural Fire Service is a member of the NSW Treasury Managed Fund that provides all the insurance requirements for most public sector agencies in this State. Total deposit premiums paid to the Treasury Managed Fund (with comparisons from the last two financial years) are set out below.

Coverage	2000/01 \$	2001/02 \$	2002/03 \$
Workers Compensation	69,399	206,316	332,442
Motor Vehicle	38,013	64,911	67,694
Public Liability	527,324	747,868	1,009,624
Property	11,000	12,859	6,743
Other	4,370	6,600	7,700
Totals	650,106	1,038,554	1,424,203

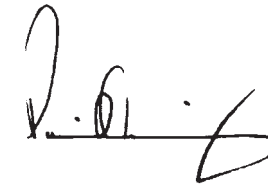
Appendix 'J' Human Resources

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Comparative figures for the past three years (Equivalent full time positions)	161	477	570

Appendix 'K' Review Of Use Of Credit Cards

No irregularities in the use of corporate credit cards have been recorded during the year.

I certify that credit card use in the NSW Rural Fire Service has been in accordance with Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's directions.



Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM
Commissioner

Appendix 'L' Fire Burning Permits

Region	Number of Permits Issued	Number of Fire Escapes	Percentage of Escape (%)
East	3,766	13	0.35
South	1,924	3	0.16
West	869	5	0.58
North	5,483	38	0.69
Total	12,042	59	0.49

The figures in this table are the number of burning permits issued by the Rural Fire Service under the *Rural Fires Act, 1997* while the figures in the following table represent the number of burning permits issued by the NSW Fire Brigades under the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*.

Region	Number of Permits Issued	Number of Fire Escapes	Percentage of Escape (%)
East	4	0	0.00
South	268	0	0.00
West	87	0	0.00
North	167	0	0.00
Total	526	0	0.00

Appendix 'M' Section 66 Notice Report

Region	Inspected		s66 Issued		s70 Issued	
	2001/2002	2002/2003	2001/2002	2002/2003	2001/2002	2002/2003
East	3,243	4,138	732	982	15	69
South	2,398	2,674	-	1,210	19	87
West	841	323	274	211	63	26
North	159	273	80	43	1	3
Total	6,641	7,408	1,086	2,446	98	185

These figures represent the number of inspections, Section 66 notices, and Section 70 works reported under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* by Bush Fire Management Committees. Last year's figures are included for comparison.

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Appendix 'N' Payment Performance

Quarter	Current (i.e. within due date) \$			Less than 30 days overdue \$			Between 30 and 60 days overdue \$			Between 60 and 90 days overdue \$			More than 90 days overdue \$		
	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01
September	134	375	36	-	23	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
December	260	334	898	3	2	111	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
March	267	365	1297	-	1	54	50	2	3	-	31	-	-	4	-
June	1022	461	622	4	87	52	8	-	-	38	-	-	-	-	-

Accounts paid on time within each quarter

Quarter	Total Accounts Target %			Paid on Time Actual %			\$000			Total Amount Paid \$000		
	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01	02/03	01/02	00/01
September	95.0	95.0	95.0	96.7	98.1	97.4	20,392	14,168	17,866	21,088	14,436	18,343
December	95.0	95.0	95.0	95.3	89.5	95.2	46,322	32,240	36,121	48,806	36,042	37,942
March	95.0	95.0	95.0	93.9	94.1	95.4	27,301	23,069	26,397	29,075	24,528	27,670
June	95.0	95.0	95.0	95.2	96.2	97.5	23,491	11,765	17,720	24,675	12,230	18,174

Appendix 'O' Overseas Travel

Assistant Commissioner M Crosweller travelled to the United States in August to attend the International Wildland Fire Conference and was accompanied by Ms H Giovas and Ms V Scanlon.

Assistant Commissioner M Crosweller travelled to Brazil in August to work with Brazilian authorities on the development of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Staff Officer K Harrap travelled to the United States in November/December 2002 to present a paper at an international conference.

Staff Officer K Harrap travelled to the United States and Canada in May/June 2003 to promote the 2003 International Wildland Fire Conference (Sydney), visit the Boise, Idaho National Fire Coordination Centre and discuss further development of a Memorandum of Understanding with a Canadian fire organisation.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland travelled to Indonesia from 12-17 August 2002 to attend the ASEAN Haze meeting.

Assistant Commissioner R Rogers travelled to Malaysia from 17-26 July 2002 to discuss mutual cooperation in providing training and expertise with the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland travelled to China from 23-29 August 2002 in connection with the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding with China's State Forestry Administration.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland and Superintendent B Arthur travelled to Indonesia from 6-12 October 2002 to present a training course to plantation owners in Sumatra.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland travelled to Japan from 4-9 November 2002 to attend a meeting of the International Tropical Timber Organisation to promote the 2003 International Wildland Fire Conference. Travel expenses for this visit were reimbursed by the organising committee of the International Wildland Fire Conference.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland and Staff Officer K Harrap travelled to Portugal from 15-21 November 2002 to attend a Wildland Fire 2003 International Liaison Committee meeting. Travel expenses for this visit were reimbursed by the organising committee of the International Wildland Fire Conference.

Assistant Commissioner R Rogers travelled to Singapore from 9-14 March 2003 to discuss an officer exchange program with the Singapore Civil Defence Force.

The Manager Community Education, Mr R Taylor and the Community Safety Officer, Region North, Mr B Davies travelled to Bhutan from 21 April-5 May 2003 to present a training program on community education.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland travelled to Panama from 12-16 May 2003 to attend a meeting of the International Tropical Timber Organisation to promote the 2003 International Wildland Fire Conference. Travel expenses for this visit were reimbursed by the organising committee of the International Wildland Fire Conference.

The Director of Business Development, Mr D Sutherland travelled to Brazil, Peru and Chile from 13-22 June 2003 to investigate business opportunities.

A

Appendix 'P' Chaplaincy and Family Support Network Activity

Chaplaincy Activity	Totals Carried Forward January 1997 to June 30, 2002	Senior Chaplain & Family Support Chaplain 2002/03	50 Volunteer Fire District Chaplains 2002/03	Totals January 1997 to June 30, 2003
Visits to Rosehill Headquarters	776	146	26	948
Visits to Fire Control Centres	1524	301	491	2316
Visits with Fire Control Officers	1798	262	327	2387
Visits to Rural Fire Brigades	1070	261	321	1652
Regional FCO Conferences	28	3	1	32
State Management Conferences	6	1	0	7
Brigade Captains Meetings	279	29	197	226
Seminars and Conferences	117	4	11	132
Station Openings and Dedications	97	3	17	117
Fire Fleet Blessings and Services	132	13	19	164
Personal and Family Counselling	1599	47	468	2114
Telephone Support and Counselling	940	194	76	1210
Home Visits-Members and Family	1181	136	287	1604
Hospital Visitation-Members	711	37	76	824
Funeral Services Conducted	167	13	27	207
Infant Christenings/ Dedications	87	6	27	120
Service Weddings	90	3	19	112
Rural Fire Service Callouts	813	69	263	1145
Police Service Callouts	59	4	8	71
NSW Fire Brigades Callouts	41	0	5	46
NSW Parks and Wildlife Callouts	45	7	0	52
Salvo Care Line Callouts	67	14	0	81
Respond to Actual Suicides	28	1	2	31
Championship and Field Days	56	4	8	68
Critical Incident Support	59	3	14	76
WorkCover and Other Meetings	56	9	16	81
Total Kilometres Travelled	412,878	60,591	25,806	499,275

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We welcome your feedback

How would you rate the report's content?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Which sections did you find most useful? Please specify

How could the report be improved?

Were there things you would like to see covered in the next report?

Yes No

If yes, please specify

Did you find the report easy to read

Yes No

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I would be happy to offer a more detailed opinion at a later date.

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Locked Bag 17
Granville 2142

or fax to **02 9638 4671**

For further information about this report please contact:

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