

BUSHFIRE

BULLETIN



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Cover photo by Macarthur Chronicle

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COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

As I visit brigades throughout New South Wales I invariably remark on the amazing ability of RFS volunteer firefighters and for that matter staff, to adapt to a rapidly changing environment within our Service.

There are many things with which our members should be credited but significant amongst them is the way in which they have acknowledged the need for change in a contemporary world.

Whilst it is true that the need for change, and of course I refer to things such as zoning, contemporary management, greater emphasis on safety, a move toward technological excellence and accountability are not always immediately obvious, the fact remains that we have to manage the Service in such a way as to ensure the long term viability of our unique volunteer firefighting system.

Whilst I commend our members on their willingness to embrace change, I also expect RFS staff at all levels to ensure proper consultation with our firefighters on change that may affect them. Rural Fire Service firefighters have every right to expect the provision of a rationale for change as we continue to evolve into one of the most significant emergency services in Australia.

This brings me to another point. In recent months there has been some negative publicity for our Service connected with arson convictions. (See a copy of a recent letter to the Editor on page 4 of this edition).

We will continue to strive to ensure that the good name and hard won reputation of the thousands of men and women who comprise our Service is not sullied by the actions of a few. We will not provide fertile ground for those who would engage in behaviour which is socially unacceptable. This is of course the very reason why we are introducing more stringent membership criteria and I am grateful for the support you have shown for the measures we have taken to preserve the good name of our Service.

The season ahead has all the portent for being troublesome. If it is, the RFS will again acquit itself with distinction.

I wish all our volunteers and staff a safe fire season.

Phil Koperberg





FIRE IN CREEK SYSTEM CHALLENGES CREWS

Hot, dry, windy conditions caused a spate of running fires on Thursday 8 January 2004 with one beginning off the F5 Freeway near Wilton in Wollondilly Rural Fire District.

The fire moved in difficult creek system around rural residential areas, burning 666ha in gorges and gullies near properties at Wilton.

"It was a firefighter's worst scenario," Incident Controller Supt David Phillips said.

"The fire was in a creek system around rural residential properties so it is to the absolute credit to the RFS volunteers from local brigades, crews from beyond Wollondilly and other agencies that there were no losses or injuries."

RFS firefighters from Wollondilly, Wingecarribee, Wollongong and Hawkesbury joined with National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Catchment Authority and NSW Fire Brigades crews to contain the fire and protect homes as it flared out of gullies.

DAY 1 THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2004

The fire in grassland near Condell Park Rd Wilton was reported by passing traffic at 1234 hrs and experienced spotting activity under strong winds in the afternoon.

Spots occurred over Douglas Park Rd, between the Tower Colliery and a Catholic monastery and fire dropped into Clements Creek. There were concerns for Douglas Park Dr and initial concerns the fire might move towards Appin. NSW Fire Brigades were stationed there as a precaution. A staging area was established at Appin Park Oval.

Firefighters focused on Douglas Park Dr with 15 tankers supported by aircraft for property protection. Firefighters successfully contained spotfires at the end of Brooks Point Rd.

The aim was to contain the fire to Brooks Point Rd, Wilton Rd, Condell Park Rd and Hume Highway.

About 75 firefighters were deployed on the first day with four helicopters and a fixed wing aircraft providing support.

Crews were also working in the Ashwood Rd area south of Clements Creek.

About 75 firefighters were deployed on the first day with four helicopters and a fixed wing aircraft providing support.

DAY 2 FRIDAY 9 JANUARY

The fire moved very little overnight while patrolled by 60 firefighters. Low temperatures and high humidity assisted firefighters who were patrolling particularly around the Douglas Park Dr area. Fire activity was minimal with some hot spots in gullies flaring briefly.

Fire was active within a perimeter surrounded by Brooks Point Rd, Lachlan Vale Rd, Wilton Rd, Condell Park Rd and the Hume Hwy. Fire had dropped into Cataract Gorge.

Actions for the day included aerial reconnaissance and water bombing north of Wilton, near Ashwood Rd, the Cataract River and vehicle patrols of Douglas Park Dr, Dredge Ave, Ashwood Rd and Broughton Rd. Fire was burning in inaccessible gullies and crews concentrated on the Allens Creek area near the F5 Freeway to prevent fire spreading under the freeway.

Crews strengths increased to about 120 firefighters in 29 tankers from RFS and NPWS and six aircraft began work in the area. The fire had burnt about 500ha.

A Remote Area Firefighting Team (RAFT) from Sydney Catchment Authority began working near the F5 (Hume) at Moolgun Bridge. Firefighters wanted to stop the fire moving under the freeway into gorge country at this point if a northeasterly wind affected the blaze.

Although the fire did not spread very far during the day by 1400 hrs it was causing a lot of black smoke as it burned in heavily fuelled areas of Allens Creek.

This caused Douglas Park Dr to be closed as smoke hampered visibility.

Crews conducted backburns north of Douglas Park Dr and Wilton to ensure residential areas were protected and containment lines were established.

Difficult afternoon winds caused some spotting activity around Broughton Rd and Wilton Rd, Wilton, however crews successfully worked with residents to ensure they were protected. The fire was aggressively attacked behind rural residential properties as it came out of bushland and gullies and firefighters hosed down homes.

By 1700 hrs firefighters and aircraft had achieved some success with the Allens Creek F5 Freeway area where the fire was now only smouldering.

(Continued on Page 04)

Below:
Aerial shot of the Condell Park Fire, Wilton which began on 8 January 2004. Photo by Jim Drinnan.

Bottom of Page:
Helitac 144 'Isabelle' from a different angle - taken during the Wilton Fire Jan 2004.

Photo by Kate Geraghty of Sydney Morning Herald taken from an Robinson R44 piloted by Mark Fitzsimmons of Blue Sky Helicopters.

Front Cover:
A firefighter works on containment lines of the Condell Park Fire near Wilton in January. Photo courtesy of the Macarthur Chronicle.



1 GENERAL NEWS

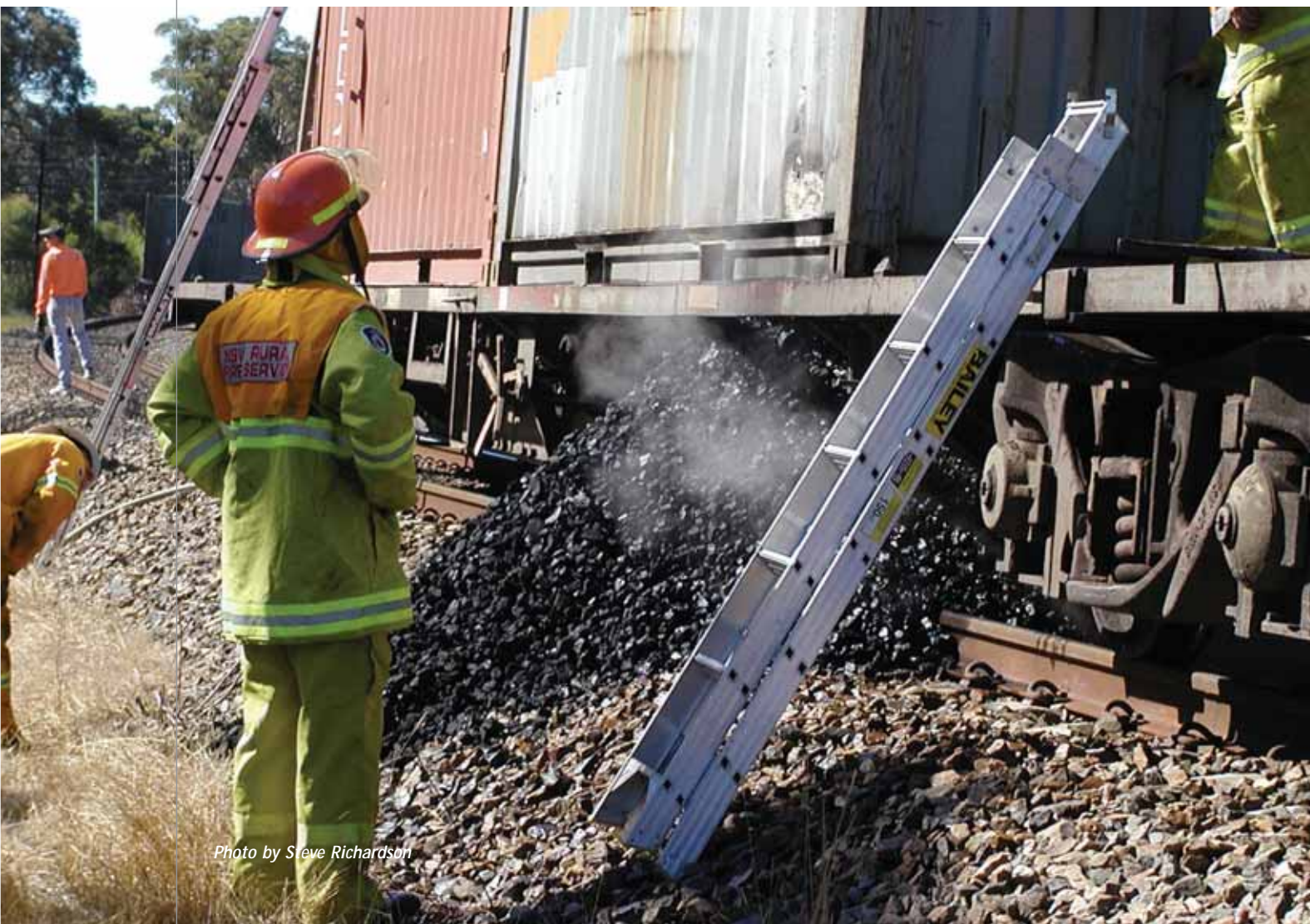


Photo by Steve Richardson



(Continued from Page 03)

DAY 3 SATURDAY 10 JANUARY 2004

The fire's size did not change overnight and crews around Wilton consolidated lines in Allens Creek. Final work on containment lines began. Ninety firefighters worked with six aircraft on blacking out the fire during the day. Containment was achieved by about 1530 hrs.

DAY 4 SUNDAY 11 JANUARY 2004

The fire was patrolled until midnight with no active fire observed. Patrolling by 35 firefighters resumed at 0800 hrs with crews working towards total black-out at Allens Creek supported by a helicopter.

Six or seven smokers picked up by aircraft were attacked by ground crews and helicopter. Minor smoke impact on the F5 between the Picton exit and Douglas Park was monitored closely. Aircraft and crews were stood down at 1600 hrs as containment lines held.

Evening patrol was handed to Wilton Rural Fire Brigade and a 'stop' called on 13 January.

A LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The Editor
The Australian Newspaper
 2 Holt Street, SURRY HILLS NSW 2001

Dear Sir

The Rural Fire Service takes significant issue with the estimate of the number of volunteers allegedly involved in lighting bushfires (Australian, Monday 23 August).

Certainly within our ranks, numbering some 69,000, there have been some who have acted criminally and have been convicted of arson related offences, but to claim that one in five fires are started by our volunteers is grossly misleading and ludicrous.

In the last three years some 20,000 bushfires have been attended by our firefighters. Of these, eight have been attributed to arson offences committed by eight RFS members who have since been convicted and been removed from the Service. This figure clearly demonstrates that only 0.04 percent of incidents could be attributed to RFS membership.

Moreover, the eight convicted persons constitute a mere 0.01 percent of RFS membership, a far cry from the picture suggested by the figures quoted.

The RFS like any large organisation, has within its ranks those who would behave in an anti-social way and we are working actively to swiftly identify and remove those people.

This slur that our members are acting in this way on any significant scale does grave injustice to the integrity and professionalism of Rural Fire Service volunteer firefighters.

Yours sincerely
Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM
 Commissioner

FIRE EXPERTISE HELPS OVERSEAS



The most significant achievement was signing an agreement with China which includes about \$150,000 revenue to be gained by Chinese State Forests officers taking part in two fire and emergency management study tours hosted by the RFS.

CHINA

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in March by the Commissioner Phil Koperberg and Mr Du Yongsheng, the Director-General of State Forestry Administration (SFA) of China. The MOU includes opportunities to train Chinese directors and managers in Australia, introducing fire weather warning systems to China and providing consultancy advice on the design of fire management centres.

MALAYSIA

Development of an officer-training program for Malaysia's Fire and Rescue Dept is set to commence in 2005. The three month program will put up to 20 Malaysian officers through the University of Western Sydney. Interest in the program has also been shown by Brunei and Singapore.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

As part of a NSW Fire Brigades program to rebuild the Solomon Islands Fire Service, RFS secured a contract to supply seven fire tankers.

BHUTAN

Two RFS officers assisted Bhutan in April with a fire safety community education program aimed at farmers, school students and the general community.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) REGION

RFS was recently invited to participate in a program to introduce the Incident Command System (ICS) into ASEAN region for disaster management.

Left: Commissioner Phil Koperberg and Mr Du Yongsheng, the Director-General of State Forestry Administration (SFA) of China sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) fire management expertise is assisting other countries, and gaining revenue for the Service.

Several recent successes in the area of business development are very encouraging and reflect the growing business opportunities that are available in emergency management internationally.

SUTHERLAND RURAL FIRE DISTRICT



A fire was reported in the Botany Bay National Park to the east of Kurnell Oil Refinery at 1615 hrs on Thursday 25 March 2004.

70 Sutherland RFS and NPWS firefighters in 19 appliances worked to bring the fire under control in the early hours of Friday morning.

The fire blackened 95ha.

Top: Sutherland Shire RFS crews battled the largest blaze in their area for the 2003/04 fire season.

Photo by John Veage



Bottom Left and Right: RFS Firefighters battled a bushfire in the Botany Bay National Park near the Kurnell Oil Refinery

RFS and National Parks and Wildfire Service crews worked overnight on a fire near the Kurnell Oil Refinery

Photos by Dean Symons



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NATIONAL PARK FIRE



At about 1345 hrs Thursday 8 January 2004 reports were received that a fire had started at the Ellis Trig on Liberator General San Martin Drive, West Head in the Warringah Pittwater District. With winds reaching 43 km/h, 18.5 percent humidity, 29.4 degree heat and a FDI of 23.3, the fire quickly spread into inaccessible terrain. By the end of the campaign, over 440 personnel had worked to contain the fire that burnt out 1480 ha within a 32.5 kilometre perimeter.

DAY 1 THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2004

Five category 1 tankers and a Group Officer were initially dispatched to the fire and began direct attack. The fire was spreading slowly downhill to the east from the Trig and across slope to the south. Rate of spread was 100 to 200 metres per hour with 7 to 10 metre flame height. By 1600 hrs the northern and western flanks of the fire were contained. Direct attack on the southern front and aerial attack on the eastern flank were about to begin.

At 1605 hrs, units deployed to Akuna Bay reported fire spotting to the east of the original fire and spreading approximately 2 km/h with 12 metre flame height. The fire was spotting continuously up to 100 metres ahead and a direct attack was not possible. Despite aerial support the fire spotted across Liberator General San Martin Drive at 1732 hrs. Erratic conditions drove the fire in an east northeasterly direction past Akuna Bay and West Head Rd towards West Pittwater communities and Scotland Island. Due to the inaccessibility of the terrain, containment was not possible. Additional crews from RFS Districts were deployed along with National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW Fire Brigades.

At 2000 hrs a Section 44 was declared across the entire Warringah and Pittwater Local Government Areas. Warringah Pittwater District FCO Superintendent Craig Geddes was appointed Incident Controller.

The overnight strategy was to directly attack the head of the fire between Liberator General San Martin Drive and Coal and Candle Creek and to start backburning from the Centre Track.

The total length of the proposed backburn for the night was 17 Kilometres.

During the night, the direct attack was abandoned due to erratic fire behaviour and the fallback strategy of backburning from West Head Rd and Waratah Track commenced.

DAY 2 FRIDAY 9 JANUARY 2004

By midnight the fire was approximately 250 ha, backburning was well under way and the main head of the fire was burning slowly with minor spotting up to 100 metres. At approximately 0030 hrs the fire spotted to the northeast of Coal and Candle Creek in remote country and ran rapidly to the east towards the backburn on West Head Rd. At 0147 hrs the fire crossed West Head Rd on a 100 m front and continued to run towards Elvina Bay and McCarrs Creek. Backburning along the Elvina Trail combined with a direct attack, stopped the spread further to the north into the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and by 0800 hrs 18 properties in the path of the fire at McCarrs Creek were successfully protected.

By 0800 hrs backburning of the remaining 17 kms was successfully completed with good depth in

most areas excluding two large sections, one at the western end of the Centre Track and Liberator General San Martin Drive and another in the east between the Centre Track and West Head Rd along Liberator General San Martin Drive.

Around 1200 hrs the fire from the north crossed Liberator General San Martin Drive between the Centre Track and West Head Road. Fire behaviour was erratic and at around 1300 hrs several spotfires occurred between McCarrs Creek Rd and Cottage Point Rd. Aerial and ground attack crews were deployed and these areas to the west were contained.

Due to erratic fire behaviour across the entire fireground, the attempt to contain the fire between the Centre Track and West Head Rd was abandoned and units were pulled back to McCarrs Creek Rd to begin backburning.

The fire between the Centre Track and West Head Rd continued to grow as it spread towards Terrey Hills. Units were withdrawn from the lower end of McCarrs Creek Rd and the firefront crossed at 1530 hrs at over 1 km/h with flame height in excess of 14 metres. Aerial attack continued on the front to slow its progress with very little effect due to the fire intensity. Containment in all other areas continued successfully.

At 1637 hrs the fire headed towards Terrey Hills and McCarrs Creek Rd on a 200 metre front. A 120 ha hazard reduction burn from September 2003 assisted crews with controlling the front. Two main flanks from this part of the fire remained. The first burnt to the southeast and impacted Terrey Hills, Duckhole Trail until it reached the hazard reduced area. The second flank continued to burn slowly to the south towards eastern Terrey Hills. Slow backburning was implemented in the west along

the Terrey Hills, Duckhole Trail and along the Waratah Trail.

Mop up and patrol continued throughout the night along the 25 kilometre perimeter of the fire. The fire was now approximately 1,150 ha in size.

Aerial attack continued on the front to slow its progress with very little effect

DAY 3 SATURDAY 10 JANUARY 2004

Backburning, patrol and mop up continued successfully throughout the night with only minor spotting. The Terrey Hills, Duckhole Trail backburn was completed successfully and Waratah Trail backburning continued. Work began cutting a 400 metre hand tool trail from the end of Waratah Trail to Coal and Candle Creek.

Backburning ceased along the Waratah Trail and an aerial attack commenced at 0930 hrs between the Waratah Trail and Coal and Candle Creek to halt the fire. The handtool trail from the end of Waratah Trail to Coal and Candle Creek was completed at 1300 hrs. At 1300 hrs the aerial strategy was abandoned due to erratic weather and the backburn continued to the west along the Waratah Trail. By 1700 hrs the backburn was progressing down the handtool trail to Coal and Candle Creek. By 2200 hrs the backburn had reached Coal and Candle Creek securing a containment line of the entire perimeter for the first time since the fire started.

FIRE FACTS

AGENCIES INVOLVED

NSW Rural Fire Service
NSW Fire Brigades
National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSW Police
NSW State Emergency Service
Sydney Water
Roads and Traffic Authority
NSW Ambulance Service

RESOURCES UTILISED

443 Personnel
41 Tankers
10 Pumpers
7 Strikers
2 Bulk Water
3 Boats
8 Aircraft

RFS DISTRICTS

Warringah Pittwater
Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai
Baulkham Hills
Hawkesbury
Sutherland
Cumberland Zone
MacArthur Zone

Above:

'440 personnel from the RFS, NSW Fire Brigades and National Parks and Wildlife Service worked to contain the fire in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park'

Photo by Rebel Talbert

Opposite Page:

'Eight aircraft worked with firefighting crews in extreme conditions to contain the fire that burnt out 1480 ha'

Photo by Cameron Wade

Mop up and patrol continued throughout the night. The fire now had a 32.5 kilometre containment perimeter with over 1400 hectares burnt.

DAY 4 SUNDAY 11 JANUARY 2004

Overnight containment strategies were successful. Crews consolidated the position with intensive mop up and patrol whilst the remainder of the unburnt areas inside containment lines burnt out. Aerial incendiaries were deployed near the western end of the Waratah Trail to treat an unburnt section.

Mop up and patrol continued successfully throughout the afternoon with minor spotting. One spotfire crossed the Waratah Trail towards the western end and ignited a 'hanging swamp' that was difficult to extinguish due to smouldering.

By midnight the fire still had a 32.5 kilometre containment perimeter with 1480 hectares burnt.

DAY 5 MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2004

The fire was essentially contained with continued mop up and patrol.

DAY 6 TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2004

The fire was declared contained. Mop up and patrol continued to maintain the containment lines. The final fire had a 32.5 kilometre containment perimeter with 1480 hectares burnt.

The Section 44 for Warringah and Pittwater Local Government Areas was revoked at 1300 hrs.

RFS FIRE INVESTIGATION ENHANCED FOR REGIONS EAST AND WEST

The Service's ability to determine the cause and origin of fires, and help police catch arsonists by providing evidence, has been increased with the appointment of two full time Fire Investigation Coordinators for Region East and Region West.

These positions are a major initiative to enhance the fire investigation ability of the RFS.

Recognising the importance of investigating fires, the NSW Government has provided the RFS with \$1,017,000 since 2002-03 to establish and develop the RFS Fire Investigation Unit (FIU).

With the newly appointed permanent officers, the RFS FIU now has three full time staff and 62 part-time investigators which includes RFS volunteers and staff based around NSW.

The RFS Region West appointee based in Dubbo, Inspector Ken Lucas, brings over 35 years experience in operational fire management to the role. Ken first joined the RFS in 1966 as an active firefighter before taking up the position of Deputy Fire Control Officer in Dubbo in 1993.

The RFS Region East appointee, Inspector Neale Ray, has 28 years experience in both the RFS and Country Fire Authority, Victoria. Neale joined the RFS in 1983 as an active firefighter and took up the position of Deputy Fire Control Officer in Camden in 2001. Inspector Ray was also a member of the NSW Police Service from 1979 to 2001.

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT IN TAREE

The inaugural Manning Valley Fire Awareness Week was conducted recently in Greater Taree Rural Fire District. It was organised and led by members of the newly created Community Education Committee, strongly supported by 'Firewise' facilitators and brigades from the District.

The educational effort during the week was focussed on three major activities –

- > competitions for the local primary children
- > a two page supplement in the local newspaper designed for a mass audience, and
- > a series of open days and displays.

Almost half of the local schools participated, with prizes and certificates awarded in Infants and Primary categories

Primary school students were targeted through a poster competition. Almost half of the local schools participated, with prizes and certificates awarded in Infants and Primary categories. Prize winners were presented with their awards by the Mayor of Greater Taree City and then treated to a visit to Taree Rural Fire Brigade where they were shown some of the equipment used to deal with fire emergencies.

The quality of the posters submitted was of a very high standard and generally showed that teachers had put considerable effort into discussing the issues with their classes. Some posters were hung in the foyer of the District Fire Control Centre. Others were used as backdrops for static displays in local shopping centres. The local newspaper - The

Manning River Times - devoted its kids' page that week to fire awareness, incorporating a locally generated fire "find-a-word" puzzle.

The newspaper also ran a two-page supplement in the week before Fire Awareness Week, consisting of a number of fire related articles. The spread was supported by paid advertising from local business such as pump suppliers. In relatively small communities, such as Taree, local newspapers have a high readership so this type of information dissemination is very successful.

The event gave brigade members the opportunity to talk to people and give detailed information where appropriate. Facilitators also ran programmes in a number of schools throughout the week. The open days at fire stations were generally poorly attended, despite plenty of publicity and RFS member participation. However, the displays in the Taree CBD were very successful, attracting plenty of interest and interaction with the public.

Overall, the first ever Manning Valley Fire Awareness Week was a great success and plans are well underway for the next event.

By Robyn King

Below:
Getting to grips with some of the equipment – kids enjoy a visit to Taree Rural Fire Brigade.



RFS HITS THE ROAD

The work of RFS volunteers is being promoted around the State and Australia with the help of a Wagga Wagga interstate transport company.

A tri-axle semi trailer tautliner bearing the RFS logo and tag line "...for our community" can now be seen regularly travelling between Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Ron Crouch's Transport, Wagga Wagga, generously offered the advertising space on their side of one of their trucks to the RFS for free.

The opportunity to promote the work RFS volunteers do was taken up by the Riverina Zone Manager, Joe Knox.

RFS Corporate Communications assisted with a design and provided funding for the printing.

The truck carries the message around the state reminding the public of the commitment of volunteers to protecting our communities.

As people drive down the highway it will keep the fact that volunteers are the backbone of the RFS in the front of their minds. It will also encourage others to join their local rural fire brigade.

Keep an eye out for it.



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NORTHERN EXERCISE ANOTHER SUCCESS

Continuing the success of previous Region North exercises, Exercise Northern 4 held at Glen Innes on 21 to 23 March, was declared an outstanding success by RFS volunteers and staff.

This year 480 personnel in 65 appliances made up 14 strike teams that participated in exercises ranging from burn planning and fire investigation to storm damage and fuel tanker roll-overs.

Brigades came from as far as Lake Cathie in the south, Boyben in the west and Varroville in the east to operate out of base camp style accommodation in the field.

A full Incident Management Team was established to manage two Divisions and co-ordinate operations and resources.

Patrick Bradley, a Deputy Captain with Dumaresq Brigade was this year allocated to be a Task Force Commander and said the experience he gained from the last two years ensured he would attend in 2004.

"This year I found myself allocated to be a Task Force Commander, not entirely understanding what it would entail. My crew hadn't worked together much before and a couple of crews were on unfamiliar vehicles. I had not met any of them before so I expected the exercises to be a bit rough," said Bradley.

"The stand out scenario this year had to be the MVA and this certainly put me through my paces. Upon arrival we were faced with the driver slumped over the steering wheel suffering head and chest wounds, the front seat passenger screaming hysterically, a young boy hanging out the side window with a head full of glass and a young girl suffering severe shock."

"The crew swung into action. Priorities were identified, first aid was covered and the grass fire ignited by the second car was contained by the time Police, SES and Ambulance arrived."

"My crews went well in all the exercises and I gained some great experience as a Task Force Commander."

"Will I be back next year for another go? You bet!"

Nikki Webber-McIntosh a new member with Woodburn Brigade attended her first regional exercise this year and was excited to put her training into practice.

"The scenarios were great, structural fires, missing persons, fire planning and fire investigation were all relatively new to me. The most memorable exercise was with the SES at the quarry," said Webber-McIntosh.

"Our task force had to carry all our equipment by SES boat across the water to a fire on top of the cliff. With a portable pump, first aid equipment and firefighting crews, we managed to scale the cliff, rescue the injured person and put out the fire. It was a great exercise."

"Overall I learnt not only new practical skills, but also how to work with different crews in tough situations. I made great friends, met heaps of new people and had a great time; Exercise Northern 4 was excellent!"

Bruce Tom, Captain of Glenugie Brigade experienced two semi trailer crashes and a B



Double accident only days before Exercise Region 4. With a notorious stretch of highway running through the brigade area, Tom valued the learning experience gained from the MVA, HAZMAT and tanker rollover scenarios.

"Glenugie Brigade covers a broad area to the east and south of Grafton on the north coast of NSW. The countryside is prone to fire and the thirty kilometres of Pacific Highway is a constant concern to our members," said Tom.

"Not only did we experience a more than life-like experience with the MVA scenario, we also went through the NSW Fire Brigades HAZMAT lecture and display that will prove invaluable."

"The HAZMAT and tanker roll-over activities have brought a new level of awareness and a degree of comfort in knowing that these agencies are out there and ready to support us."

"Combined with the camaraderie and catching up with old friends, the schedule was pretty heavy, but well worth the experience."

Catering for the exercise commenced at lunchtime on Friday and finished with lunch on Sunday. During the exercise, over 3000 meals were prepared and served by 30 volunteers from four areas.

Contributions by Patrick Bradley, Nikki Webber-McIntosh and Bruce Tom.

Photos by Rebel Talbert

Right: 'Firefighters from NSW Fire Brigades Glen Innes Station gave RFS crews an overview of HAZMAT procedures'

Above: 'RFS, SES and Police crews worked together on a two car MVA scenario'



Over Page Top: 'SES flood boat crews assisted RFS firefighters to move equipment across water to a cliff top fire'

Over Page Above: 'Four crews worked to extinguish a structure fire that contained explosive materials'



FIRE FACTS

EXERCISE NORTHERN 4 SCENARIOS

- Burn planning
- Fire Investigation
- NSWFB demonstration/ HAZMAT
- Land search
- Structural firefighting
- MVA
- Fire entrapment
- Shell tanker rollover
- Bushfire protection
- GPS
- Championship lane
- SES Storm damage operations
- SES floodboat transport and pumping
- Vehicle maintenance

2004 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Teams to represent the Region at the 2004 State Championships were chosen during Exercise Northern 4 by competing in a heavy tanker event. During the weekend 45 appliances went through the event and the winners were:

First	Grafton City Brigade	Clarence Valley Zone
Second	Cudgen Brigade	Far North Coast Team
Third	Dundee Brigade	Northern Tablelands Team





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SECTION 44

DUMPED CAR SPARKS FIRE

At 0900 hrs on Monday 5 January 2004 a fire was reported 40 to 50 km along the Mendooran Rd from Dubbo in the Dubbo Rural Fire District. In extreme weather conditions, the fire ran quickly through Goonoo State Forest. The ninth Section 44 for the season consumed 2239 ha inside a 30.9km perimeter and was worked on by 150 personnel from the RFS, State Forests and National Parks and Wildlife Service.

DAY 1 MONDAY 5 JANUARY 2004

Crews located a dumped stolen car, ignited in the northeast corner of Block 72 in the Goonoo State Forest, 33 km northeast of Dubbo and contained the fire at 1230 hrs. At 1330 hrs the fire broke containment lines and made an initial 3km run until 2110 hrs under westerly winds through hazard reduced block 71 and the southwest of block 70. At 2000 hrs the fire made a second run of 2km under light south westerly winds and broke across Ballimore Rd, through the southwest corner of block 68 and into hazard reduced block 69.

At 2130 hrs a Section 44 was declared across the Dubbo City Council area.

The fire made another run of 5 km under southerly winds through block 68 to the north and jumped Freemans Rd into block 58 at 0146 hrs. Two task forces from RFS Region West and additional aircraft were deployed to prevent the fire from jumping the Mendooran Rd.

Crews worked on backburning and containment lines overnight with continuous spotting into highly flammable vegetation causing crews to be re-deployed. The fire had burnt out 270ha of State Forest with a perimeter of 10km.

DAY 2 TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 2004

Extreme fire weather was predicted with 41 degree heat, 31-56 km/h winds and 13 percent relative humidity. The southern and eastern flanks of blocks 70 and 71 remained uncontained as overnight backburning operations were abandoned while the northern run of the fire was contained.



Four more task forces, three water-bombers and an observation helicopter were deployed. NSW Police advised property owners within Goan Creek Rd, Finlays Rd and Jones Creek Rd of imminent threat and at 1305 hrs the fire spotted out of block 71 into block 76. Additional resources were deployed to the 'Jarrah' homestead and to the north of Ballimore village.

A second major jumpover from block 70 into 'Jarrah' made a 5 km run in half an hour, jumping Goan Creek Rd at 1610 hrs. This was stopped on private property using ground crews and aircraft.

At 1800 hrs the existing Section 44 over Dubbo City Council area was extended to cover Wellington Shire.

Aerial reconnaissance confirmed that the potential threat to Ballimore had eased and crews needed to contain the southern and eastern flanks of block 71 overnight to protect Ballimore village.

The fire now had a perimeter of 16km with over 850ha burnt out.

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY 2004

Crews worked overnight to contain the southern flank from Barrys Rd to Goan Creek Rd. At 0326 hrs backburning commenced along the north and eastern boundaries of block 70 using crews from Lithgow and Bathurst. By 0800 hrs these boundaries were contained and a line scan indicated that backburning needed to be deepened. Crews continued to backburn and used parallel lines to existing roads to provide safety during erratic conditions.

Aerial bombers assisted ground crews on the very hot southwest flank of block 76 and ground crews hit spotfires around the 27 km perimeter. The southeast boundary reached out onto cleared ground to the east of block 70.

In the afternoon aerial incendiary work assisted in burning out block 70 and a small area on 'Jarrah'. The weather had eased and the fire was held. At 1800 hrs a cooler south westerly change arrived giving crews the opportunity to deepen containment and fallback lines.

The fire had so far burnt out 1100ha of State Forest and 300ha of private property with a perimeter of 29.4km.



DAY 4 THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2004

The fire was contained except for a small section of private property forest east of block 70.

Easing weather conditions gave crews further opportunity to consolidate existing firelines and secondary control lines. Aerial incendiary work was done in block 70, 'Jarrah' and private property to the east of block 70. The fire had burnt out 1600ha of State Forest and 700ha of private property.

Aircraft stood down and out of area crews from RFS Strike Team West left the area at 1300hrs.

DAY 5 FRIDAY 9 JANUARY 2004

The fire was mopped up and remaining aircraft were released after a final run of the fireline. The burnt out area totalled 2200ha. Out of area crews continued to leave the area.

Remaining local crews continued to work on fallback lines in case of worsening weather.

DAY 6 SATURDAY 10 JANUARY 2004

Two remaining out of area task forces left the area. Local RFS crews monitored the fire and handed over to State Forests at 1400 hrs.

The Section 44 was revoked at 1800 hrs for both Dubbo City Council and Wellington Shire.

The fire burnt out 1539ha of State Forest and 700ha of private property with a total perimeter of 30.9km.

FIRE FACTS

AGENCIES INVOLVED

NSW Rural Fire Service
State Forests of NSW
NSW Police
State Emergency Service
NSW Ambulance Service
National Parks and Wildlife Service
Country Energy
Department of Agriculture

RESOURCES UTILISED

150 Personnel
45 Tankers
10 Plant
9 Aircraft

OPERATIONS

RANKING AND HELMET IDENTIFICATION



A review of the NSW Rural Fire Service ranking and helmet identification standard has been undertaken to establish a consistent approach for all members across the State. The following standards have been approved by the Commissioner.

The ranking system depicted on the centre page will be incorporated into Service Standard 1.2.1 Ranking and Insignia. The helmets depicted on the centre page will be incorporated into Service Standard 5.1.5 Protective Clothing. Details of the reflective markings and graphics are shown on the following page.

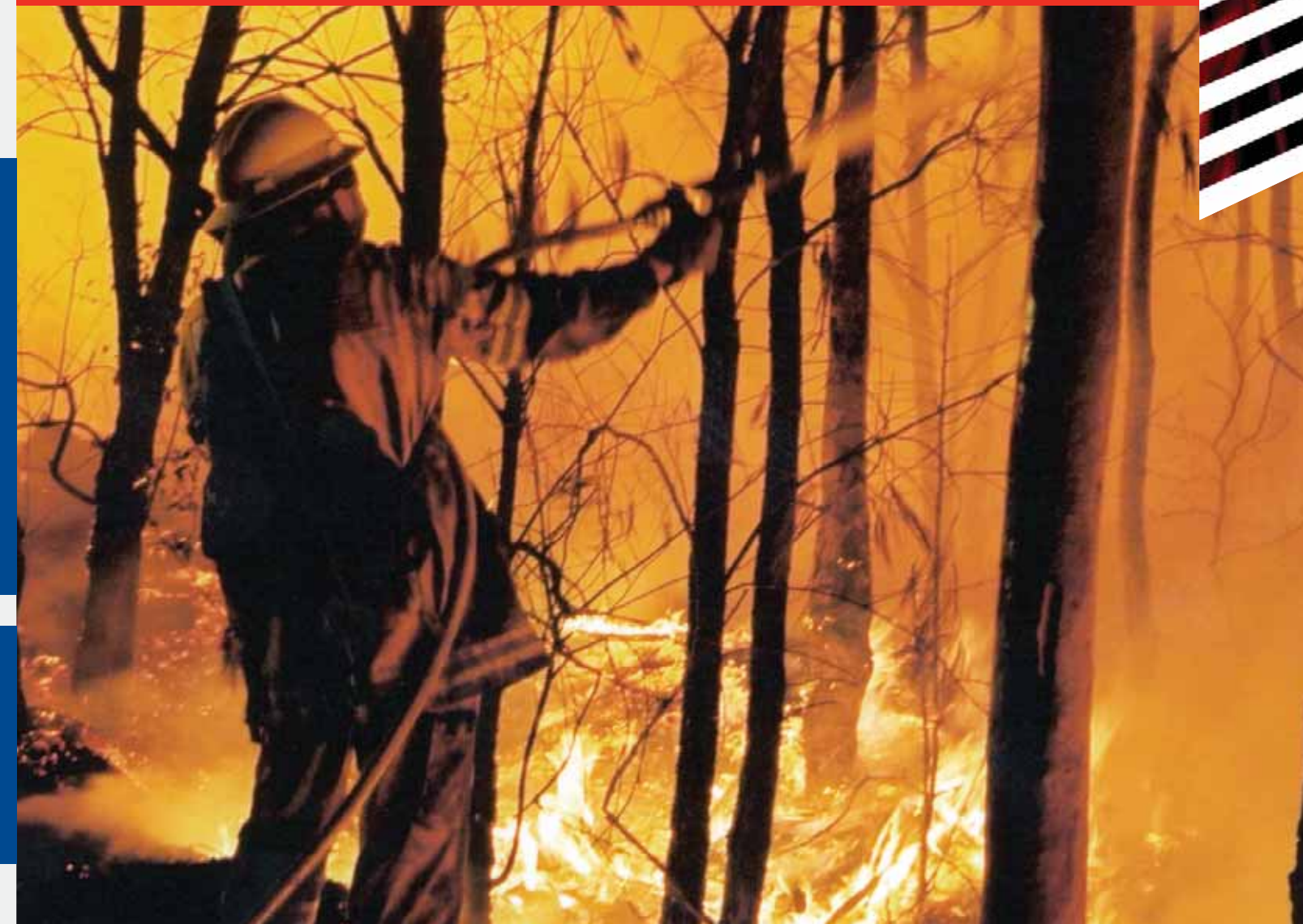
There will be a change to the reflective markings on new helmets issued. Both bushfire and structural firefighting helmets will be supplied with yellow fluorescent and retroreflective tape 15mm wide to the base of the helmets in accordance with AS 1801:1997 and AS 4067:2004 and this tape is not to be removed or obscured. The standard helmet kit is to be affixed above the yellow tape.

Names on helmets are optional but if used, the name shall be placed centrally across the back of the helmet as low to the base as possible. Names shall be the Surname (Last Name) only in Helvetica Narrow Bold 25mm high x maximum 140mm long in reflective lettering 3M 680 CR or equivalent. (Black lettering for White, Orange and Yellow helmets, White lettering for Red, Black, Blue and Purple helmets and Green lettering for Cadets).

Apart from the markings noted above NO other markings shall appear on RFS helmets.

To assist in achieving this standard the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) has offered to facilitate the production of the "Names" at \$5.00 each – see attached form or the RFSA website at www.rfsa.org.au

Chief Superintendent Alan Brinkworth
Manager Operations, Policy and Standards.





NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

RANKING CHART

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

BUSHFIRE HELMETS



Commissioner	Assistant Commissioner	Chief Superintendent	Superintendent	Inspector	Commissioner	Assistant Commissioner	Chief Superintendent	Superintendent	Inspector
Group Captain	Deputy Group Captain	Captain	Senior Deputy Captain	Deputy Captain	Group Captain	Deputy Group Captain	Captain	Senior Deputy Captain	Deputy Captain
Member	Communications Captain	Communications Senior Deputy Captain	Communications Deputy Captain	Communications Member	Member	Communications Captain	Communications Senior Deputy Captain	Communications Deputy Captain	Communications Member
Catering Captain	Catering Senior Deputy Captain	Catering Deputy Captain	Catering Member	Chaplain	Catering Captain	Catering Senior Deputy Captain	Catering Deputy Captain	Catering Member	Chaplain
Cadet Co-ordinator	Cadet Senior Deputy Co-ordinator	Cadet Instructor	Adult Cadet Member		Cadet Co-ordinator	Cadet Senior Deputy Co-ordinator	Cadet Instructor	Adult Cadet Member	Fire Investigation
Cadet Captain (Green)	Cadet Senior Deputy Captain (Green)	Cadet Deputy Captain (Green)	Cadet (Green)		RFS Media Officer	RFS Media Liaison	Trainee	Training Instructor	Surname Back of Helmet

Markings apply to bushfire and structural firefighting helmets



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ARSONISTS

ARSON – A VERY SERIOUS ISSUE

The RFS continues to take a serious and active stance against arson by working closely with NSW Police to provide evidence on cause and origin of fires and investigate suspected arson activities.

RFS fire investigators and the Fire Investigation Unit have made an enormous contribution to the work of the NSW Police 'Taskforce Tronto' which looks into fires that possibly involve arson.

The issue of volunteers suspected of being involved in arson related activities has been a challenge to which the Service has risen to.

While there is no evidence that arson rates among volunteer firefighters are higher than the general population, the Service's culture and policy takes this issue very seriously, as do volunteers generally.

"RFS volunteers are dedicated and highly skilled people who devote thousands of hours to protecting their communities," Commissioner Phil Koperberg said.

"The RFS has more than 65,000 volunteers who are firefighters as well as being involved in educating communities about fire prevention and awareness to reduce incidents of arson.

"The RFS has a strong record of removing people who do not satisfactorily represent the Service to ensure the well-deserved respect RFS volunteers receive from the public is maintained."

To work towards this, the RFS has established a Memorandum of Understanding with the CrimTrac Agency that will enable the Service to conduct criminal history record checks on all persons (volunteer or salaried) wishing to join the Service or transfer to another brigade. This begins on 1 July 2004.

Compulsory checks will take place on all prospective volunteers and a process implemented to vet any person who would be unsuitable for the

trusted community position of an emergency services volunteer.

The new policy will also see the implementation of local panels to interview people before they are allowed to participate in the training activities undertaken by all new volunteers.

"As volunteers with the RFS, Service members occupy a position of trust in the community. They work with the public during times of stress and conduct community activities, often with children and vulnerable people," the Commissioner said.

"Trust plays a large part in their work. This work is often demanding physically and mentally.

"The public, RFS members and their families are entitled to expect that those who serve with the RFS be of good character."

Volunteers with concerns about these issues should contact their Fire Control Officer. The next issue of the Bulletin will detail how the new Membership Application Process is managed.

WHAT CAN ARSONISTS BE CHARGED WITH UNDER THE RURAL FIRES ACT AND THE CRIMES ACT?

CRIMES ACT 1900, NO: 40

Persons can be charged under Section 203E "Offences" of the Act, which states –

A Person:

- > who intentionally causes a fire, and
- > who is reckless as to the spread of the fire to vegetation on any public land or on land belonging to another,
- > is guilty of an offence.

Maximum Penalty: Imprisonment for 14 years.

- > For the purpose of this section, recklessness may also be established by proof of intention.

- > A person is not criminally responsible for an offence against this section if:

- > the person is a firefighter or acting under the direction of a firefighter, and
- > the person caused the fire in the course of bushfire fighting or hazard reduction operations.

- > If on trial of a person for an offence against this section the jury is not satisfied that the accused is guilty of the offence charged but is satisfied on the evidence that the accused is guilty of an offence against Section 100 (1) of the Rural Fires Act 1997, it may find the accused not guilty of the offence charged but guilty of the latter offence, and the accused is liable to punishment accordingly.

RURAL FIRES ACT 1997

Persons can be charged under Division 7, Section 100 of the Act, which state -

A person who, without lawful authority:

- > sets fire or causes fire to be set to the land or property of another person, the Crown or any public authority, or
- > being the owner or occupier of any land, permits a fire to escape from that land under such circumstances as to cause or be likely to cause injury or damage to the person, land or property of another person or the land or property of the Crown or a public authority,
- > is guilty of and offence.

Maximum penalty: 1,000 penalty units or imprisonment for 5 years, or both.

- > A person who, without lawful authority, leaves whether temporarily or otherwise any fire which the person has lit or used in the open air before it is thoroughly extinguished is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

- > Nothing in subsection (2) requires any person to extinguish a fire in the open air that has been lit or used for the purpose of cooking, heating or preparing meals or boiling water or for a similar purpose in accordance with the regulations if, at the time of the person leaving it, the fire continues to be used by some other person.

2003 FIRE INVESTIGATION STATISTICS

TOTAL BUSHFIRES INVESTIGATED = 137

28 Burning Activity	(20.43%)
2 Campfire/BBQ	(1.45%)
83 Deliberate Ignition	(60.58%)
2 Juvenile Activity	(1.45%)
11 Lightning	(8.02%)
2 Machinery/Equipment	(1.45%)
8 Power Lines	(5.83%)
1 Spotover	(0.72%)

TOTAL STRUCTURAL FIRES INVESTIGATED = 58

23 Accidental	(39.65%)
5 Deliberate Ignition	(8.62%)
11 Electrical	(18.9%)
4 Incendiarism	(6.89%)
1 Juvenile Activity	(1.72%)
1 Natural Causes	(1.72%)
13 Undetermined	(22.41%)

All items are embroidered with the RFS logo

Item	Price	Qty	Colour	Size	Total
Polo Shirt - Double stitched Polyester/Cotton with pocket & Australian made	XS-XXL 3XL-7XL (Lemon/Navy/White) XS, 6XL-7XL (Navy only)				\$29.00 \$31.00
T-Shirt - Double stitched 100% Cotton & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-6XL (Navy/White) 6XL (Navy only)				\$18.00 \$20.00
Polar Fleecy Jumper - Half zip front with 2 slant pockets at bottom	XS-3XL (Navy only)				\$42.50
Polar Fleecy Jacket - Full zip front, Elasticated cuff, Draw cord waist	S-XXL (Navy only)				\$52.50
Sloppy Joe - Super fleecy / Low pill with round neck & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-6XL (Navy only) (Navy only)				\$29.00 \$31.00
Dress Jumper - 80/20 Wool/Polyester blend, Shoulder & Elbow Patches, Epaulettes, Pencil pockets & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-5XL (Navy only) (Navy only)				\$85.00 \$87.00
Beanie - Acrylic - One size fits all - Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (Navy only)				\$11.00
Beanie - Fleecy - One size fits all - Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (Navy only)				\$13.50
Cap - Baseball - Brushed cotton, Adjustable velcro, One size fits all, Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (Navy only)				1-24 \$8.50 / 25-99 \$8.00 / 100+ \$7.50
Medium Kit Bag - Heavy duty nylon & zips, Base board, 3 external zipped pockets with shoulder & hand carry straps	L 50cm x H 30cm x W 20cm				\$35.00
Large Kit Bag - Heavy duty nylon & zips, Base board, 5 external zipped pockets including "Wet" & Boot pockets with shoulder & hand carry straps	L 73cm x H 33cm x W 31cm				\$45.00
Garment Sizes	XS S M L XL XXL 3XL 4XL 5XL 6XL 7XL				Postage & Handling per shipping address (Includes badges if part of order)
	85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135				\$6.60
SPECIAL OFFER - Order 10 or more garments (excluding caps and bags) and your brigade name will be embroidered under the RFS logo at no extra cost					Total

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	Name	Brigade	Both	

*Red on Gold badges are Proban backed

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	White on Navy	Red on Gold*	Red on Navy		
1-99 Badges \$3.30 / 100+ Badges \$3.00 Please note there is NO MINIMUM order For larger orders - please print clearly on extra paper					Postage & Handling per shipping address (Not required if included with garment order)
					\$4.00
Total					

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COAL CARGO COMBUSTS

Two wagons of the 48-wagon Pacific National train traveling from Gunning to Newcastle caught fire on Good Friday, igniting grass along the line and requiring crews in breathing apparatus to suppress the resultant coal fire.

Wingecarribee Fire Control received a call from State Rail stating they had a coal train on fire. Plans were made for an emergency stop at Yerrinbool Railway Station. Yerrinbool 1, Alpine 2 and Alpine Pumper were responded.

The cargo was not ordinary coal. It was specifically graded for use in steam trains and was a little more combustible than standard coal.

While the train was travelling a number of embers from the burning wagons started spotfires along the railway. Crews from Bundanoon, Exeter, Moss Vale and Mittagong rural fire brigades as well as Bowral, Moss Vale and Mittagong NSW Fire Brigades attended to the grass fires. Yerrinbool and Alpine brigades dealt with the wagons.

The wagons were disconnected from the train and left in an accessible area. Incident Control System was established with Wingecarribee Group 6 as Incident Controller. A Rail Services inspector was on scene and a strategy for combating this compressed fuel fire was implemented.

Crews donned breathing apparatus due to the smoke and potential flashover hazard. A 38mm attack line was used to start filling the open topped container with water. Fortunately, the wagons were close to a reticulated water supply. A relay was set up between the three trucks on scene.

A hand held laser heat-detecting thermometer, carried on a number of Wingecarribee's trucks, was used to determine the seat of the fire. Already the sheer heat had burned a hole in the floor of the container allowing nearly four tonnes of hot coal to pour out on the ground.

Once the seat of the fire was determined a quick cut saw from Alpine Pumper was used to access the hotspot. Water was then pumped into the seat of the fire.

State Rail used a small loader to spread out the spill coal and the crews cooled the coal with copious amounts of water. The whole operation took over four hours and the volunteers showed a professional and efficient manner in handling this incident.

Photos by Steve Richardson
State Rail and Southern Highlands News

Story by Cameron Wade

Contributions from Southern Highlands News and Supt Ashley Frank.



GOVERNOR PRESENTS MEDALS TO RFS MEMBERS

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales, presented NSW Rural Fire Service members with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) at investiture ceremonies at Government House in May.

The AFSM is a national award, given for exemplary service. The RFS medal recipients were announced on Australia Day.

"These hard working officers are representative of the commitment shown by the 65,000 members of the NSW Rural Fire Service," Commissioner Phil Koperberg said.

"I congratulate them on receiving the AFSM which recognises the dedication they have shown in their position with the RFS and to the people of NSW."

AFSM recipients from the RFS are:

MR JOHN HILL

John Hill was a founding member of the Yaddra Bushfire Brigade (Lachlan Rural Fire District) in 1937. He assumed the position of Brigade Secretary in 1948 and still performs this role today. John has maintained the Yaddra Brigade's minute books including the original book from the founding of the brigade in 1937. John's dedication to his position in the Yaddra Brigade and the RFS has been an outstanding achievement. Investiture ceremony Friday 21 May 2004.

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT IAN THOMAS

Chief Supt Ian Thomas has been instrumental managing significant changes the RFS has undertaken since July 2001 to improve services to volunteers, communities, councils and other stakeholders in bushfire management. Since being appointed as the Regional Manager, Region North, he has brought together a strong team.

His administrative skills are exemplary in that he utilises a team approach that respects the skill and opinions of those he supervises. Chief Supt Thomas' role prior to the change process was one of guidance on the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council changes committee where he represented regional staff issues. This change process has been challenging but Chief Supt Thomas' style of management and leadership has made the process easier for all concerned. Investiture ceremony Friday 21 May 2004.

GROUP OFFICER GARTH EGGLESTON (previously Superintendent)

Group Officer Garth Eggleston commenced with the Service in the early 1960's at Warringah District. He transferred to the Liverpool area and has held a number of positions including that of Group Captain, and was appointed as the Fire Control Officer at Liverpool in 2000. His dedication, commitment and pride in the Service is well known, and he provides the highest levels of dedication and commitment. He has demonstrated advanced leadership skills throughout his career and leads by example at all times. His many

achievements include a significant and leading role during the Sydney Olympics as well as the development and delivery of training throughout the Service at every level. Investiture ceremony Thursday 20 May 2004.

SENIOR GROUP OFFICER JEFF LARSEN

Senior Group Officer Jeff Larsen joined the Berowra Brigade in 1969, as part of an elite team of trained remote area fire fighters. In 1976 he relocated to Bathurst District and was a founding member of the Evans Headquarters Brigade and held several executive positions. He was successful in gaining appointment as an (Hon) Deputy Fire Control Officer for the Evans/Bathurst District from 1985 to 2003. He has a history of continued exemplary service and dedication of 34 years within the Service. He has conducted many training courses and has acted as an Area Task force Commander as well as on many Incident Management Teams. Investiture ceremony Wednesday 19 May 2004.

GROUP CAPTAIN WILLIAM (BILL) BERRYMAN

Group Captain William (Bill) Berryman has maintained a long and consistent involvement with the RFS. As the Senior Group Captain of the Murray Rural Fire District he has displayed outstanding leadership and dedication over many years. His extra involvement throughout the State in training has assisted many volunteers to attain specialist qualifications and he has supported them in becoming trainers themselves. He has held many public positions within his local community. These include positions on school committees, and the Farm Irrigation Co-op Board membership. Investiture ceremony Thursday 20 May 2004.

CAPTAIN RODGER NEWTON SECOMB

Captain Rodger Secomb commenced with the Country Fire Service at Lakes Entrance in Victoria in 1972. He was the Group Communications Officer with the Tambo Group and gained valuable experience that he took with him to the NSW RFS when he transferred to Coffs Harbour. He is presently the Captain of the Coffs Harbour Headquarters Brigade and is a valued member of the team.

He has contributed thousands of unpaid hours to the local fire service and the local community. He has taken on communications responsibilities and continues to work on a voluntary basis at the Fire Control Centre for up to 7 hours per day, 5 days per week with the salaried staff to provide operational and administrative support to volunteers and the community in the District. He assisted in the establishment of an effective communications network and established protocols for local operations. For several years he worked on a voluntary basis with the Fire Control Officer to provide a 24 hour '000' answering service for all fire brigades in the district. He is highly regarded in the District by all RFS staff, volunteers and members of the community. (Note: Captain Secomb will be presented with his medal in September).

MOLTEN METAL SPILL



NSW Rural Fire Service crews worked with NSW Fire Brigades to contain a molten metal spill that ignited at Kurri Hydro Aluminium plant on Monday May 17.

Tonnes of molten metal burst from a pot and dropped five metres into the basement below, igniting a shed and stairwell.

RFS and NSWFB crews donned breathing apparatus to contain the fire though were unable to use water to extinguish the fire due to the danger of explosions.

Fire crews instead used carbon dioxide extinguishers and dry chemical powder to extinguish the flames.

Some molten metal penetrated stormwater drains, though firefighters were able to confine the spill to the plant and it did not impact on the environment.

COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS

How are council amalgamations affecting brigades and rural fire districts?

A significant event in local government history has been the termination of Tumut Shire Council. The Brindabella Valley, and its brigade, has been included in a new Tumut council and RFS district. Brigade members would be aware that the Brindabella brigade was part of the now defunct Yarrowlumla Shire. Brigade assets that are transferred with the handover are three fire fighting vehicles and a very serviceable brigade station. Radio communication into the Brindabella valley will need to be developed as the former radio repeater infrastructure is still part of the RFS areas to the east of Canberra.

There have been several very productive meetings between Brindabella volunteers and the Riverina Highlands staff.

SCONE'S AUSTRALIA DAY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The accompanying photo is of Bill Britt who received Scone's Australia Day Citizen of the Year award for his volunteer work with the Rural Fire Service as a member of the Ellerston Brigade and a group captain in our zone (Crawney). Bill is also involved with the State Emergency Service and does a lot of hours as a volunteer medic at sporting events and as a first aid trainer.

Bill was recently employed as Deputy FCO at Cobar working under the FCO Chris Favelle. It was agreed by all that the award was deserved and that Bill Britt was indeed a worthy recipient. I am certain that Bill will take a wealth of experience with him to Cobar and I am sure that he will do a great job there and the people will find Bill as approachable and likeable as we all did here in Scone.

Kindest Regards

Tony Hernando - Parkville Brigade



*Bill Britt -
Scone's Australia Day Citizen of the Year*



A REFLECTION ON EASTER - HOPE FOR THE WORLD-WEARY

Since last Easter Australia became part of the "Coalition of the willing" and has been engaged in the war with Iraq. One thing that our leaders have said again and again is that our purpose in being there is not to take over Iraq or Iraq's resources. "Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people."

Our stated goals for the Iraqi people — peace, prosperity, independence, and freedom — are also God's goals for all nations and all people. He wants everyone to live in peace and prosperity. His method for making this happen is not to send an army to conquer us, but to send his Son into the world to liberate us. He came to set us free. He came to give us peace. He came to bring us life abundant.

To do this, he sent his son into the world to die on the cross for our sins. But the significance of Easter is that the death of Jesus is more than just a death. It is a death with a powerful, history-changing ending. The story of Jesus does not end with him breathing his last breath on the cross; on the third day he was raised to life and he is alive to this very day. Jesus conquered death so that through him, we can conquer life.

What does Easter mean to you? The resurrection of Jesus Christ? New life? Lots of chocolate? The Feast of the Passover? Or maybe it just means that welcome 4-day weekend. A convergence of three traditions – Pagan, Jewish and Christian, Easter means many things to many people around the world. The egg is the one Easter symbol that is relevant to people around the world, regardless of what the season means to them – a symbol of new life.

To talk too much about death is regarded as being morbid, and seems to be poor etiquette in our society. Yet nothing is more certain than that our lives in this world are going to end.

What does Easter mean to you? The resurrection of Jesus Christ? New life? Lots of chocolate? The Feast of the Passover?

Some people, who would call themselves realists, maintain that after life there is nothing else. Death is the end, a full stop at the close of not only the sentence, but the book, they say.

Others – not all of them Christians – believe that beyond death there is life. For centuries people have sought to know more about the life after death.

Anyone who has looked into an open grave at the funeral of a loved one knows about the sting of death. It is not pleasant. And it's hard to dismiss the sight from our minds. Death, for many people is pure Hell. There is just no answer, no rational, no understanding in the presence of such unchangeable finality.

It is in the darkness of the grave that the good news of Easter shines brightest. It is the good

news that Jesus brings to everyone who chooses to trust Him with their eternal soul.

The great composer Felix Mendelssohn, had a bad habit of being late for appointments. One reason for this is that he liked to sleep late. Consequently, there were times when his students came to his home for a morning lesson and Mendelssohn would still be in bed. On one occasion, a student grew tired of waiting and figured out a way to get the master downstairs in a hurry. He went to the piano and struck an unresolved chord. He knew that if there was anything that could bring that man to attention it was an unresolved chord. The story ends, of course, with Mendelssohn springing out of his bed and rushing down to the piano to resolve the chord for the student.

In and through the Good Friday Event, Jesus Christ, God is resolving our life for us, showing us how much He loves us. God is telling us that we never again have to feel as though we are just hanging in mid-air, going nowhere. God is telling us that we are going somewhere. God is telling us that His plan for the fulfilment of creation includes us.

In and through the Good Friday Event, Jesus Christ, God is resolving our life for us, showing us how much He loves us

For those of us who are Christians we need to look at Easter and tremble inside when we think how and why Jesus died. What we cannot do is to walk away from Him as if nothing had happened – because something has happened that can make all the difference in our lives, the lives of our families, the lives of our RFS families, and in the life of our community.

I hope you had an enjoyable and safe Easter 2004 to all and to those who share the Christian faith may the blessing of Jesus' death and resurrection be yours always.

Captain Ron Anderson AFSM

connected with the community

TX6200

TX610

The TX6200 5 Watt handheld is not only a fully featured 40 channel UHF CB Transceiver, but it also incorporates a Wide Band Receiver capable of storing an extra 20 receive channels between 403 and 520 MHz. These extra channels can be included in the scan sequence of normal CB channels.

The GME Electrophone TX610 sets a new benchmark in compact 40 channel UHF Handheld Transceivers. Not only is the TX610 packed with features, its circuit design incorporates a super sensitive receiver with front end filtering and powerful 1 Watt output power. With twice the RF output compared to most compact handhelds, the TX610 is hard to beat in the performance arena.



GME Electrophone

Unit B, 22-24 College St, Gladesville NSW 1670 Australia
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ST FLORIAN'S DAY AWARDS

At the 2004 annual St Florian's Day ceremony on 4 May, Commissioner Phil Koperberg presented Service Awards to a number of individual and group recipients.

Drawn from each of the four regions and Head Office these recipients were presented with the Awards in recognition of outstanding service.

Our congratulations to all recipients and thanks for a job well done. The recognition is richly deserved.

THE COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION FOR SERVICE WAS AWARDED TO:

Deputy Captain Kelly Browne
Sutherland District

Deputy Captain Kevin Cooper
Campbelltown District

Chief Superintendent Gordon Hill
Region West

Inspector Andrew Pinfold
Sutherland District

Deputy Captain Andrew Rosevear
Blacktown District

Paul Scott
Head Office

Victor Watson
Corowa/Berrigan District.

THE COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION WAS AWARDED TO:

Inspector Grant Anderson
Clarence Valley Zone

Superintendent Ronald Bridge
Tenterfield, Inverell, Severn Area

Superintendent David Cook
Far North Coast, Tweed Area

Deputy Captain Barry Cornell
Eurobodalla District

Superintendent Bryan Daly
Region North

Inspector Guy Duckworth
Hastings District

Ian Eastburn
Gwabegar Rural Fire Brigade

Group Captain Jack French
Corowa/Berrigan District

Inspector Paul Gooley
Shoalhaven District

Superintendent Matthew Inwood
Tenterfield, Inverell, Severn Area

Captain Syd McRoy
Yarrowlumla District

George Sanderson
Narrabri District

Christine White
Kiama/Shellharbour.

RECEIVING THE COMMISSIONER'S UNIT CITATION FOR SERVICE WERE:

Byrock Rural Fire Brigade
Bourke District

Critical Incident Support Services
Rosehill

Sutherland District Field Officers: Anthony Gray, Richard Soar, John Hoff, Matthew Smith, Stephen Franks and Gregory McCarthy
Sutherland District

Corowa Headquarters Support Brigade:
Gary Reeve, Clint Hawking, Kimberly Hawking, Robyne Lyndon, Terrence Buckley, Adam Mountjoy, Ross Walker and Greyd'n Davis.
Corowa/Berrigan

THE COMMISSIONER'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION WAS AWARDED TO:

State Operations
Head Office

Development Control Services
Head Office

Planning and Environment Services
Head Office

Sutherland Brigades:
Heathcote, Waterfall and Maianbar
Sutherland District

Wollongong District Brigades: Stanwell Park, Bulli, Helensburgh, Mount Keira, Otford, Darkes Forest, Dapto, Wollongong Headquarters, Austinmer, Farmborough Heights and Wollongong Group 2.
Wollongong District

LEMON TREE PASSAGE

Lemon Tree Passage is only a very small community of a few thousand people, we will be celebrating our thirty-fifth birthday of the Brigade first forming, with this we have one member who was a part of the first meeting and is still active today.

Ten years after our Brigade was formed a small band of members got together on Queens Birthday starting a bonfire and crackers and inviting the community to attend, today twenty five years later this day is still held but these days it has come to quite an event for all here on the peninsula bringing no less than 8,000 people on this day. We have stalls, firefighting displays entertainment on stage all day fireworks and much more we are very proud in what we have achieved. We have invited several business people to come and enjoy this day and cutting the cake but unfortunately, the Commissioner will not be here for this day but hope others will.

Thanking You,
Vicki Parkinson

OPENING OUR DOORS BUSH FIRE DANGER PERIOD 2004

Imagine the additional impact the RFS would have in the community if every fire station in NSW opened its doors to the public on the same day.

Many brigades and districts hold open days to get information out to the public about what we do and how we do it. Some brigades don't and may be missing a vital link with their communities. Not only can an Open Day raise public awareness in relation to fire safety but also reinforce and promote the role of the RFS and provide the inspiration for new members to join.

This year a trial of a State Wide Open Day will occur. The Service is asking every station in NSW to open its doors to the public on Saturday 9 October.

The Day will be supported by a statewide television campaign on the PRIME network as well as regional and state newspaper advertising. Districts will be encouraged to look for other avenues of promotion including local radio and placement of posters supplied from Rosehill.

A Saturday at the start of the BFDP is the perfect time to raise our profile and get the fire prevention and fire awareness messages out to a wider audience than normal.

It is intended that all educational, recruitment and promotional material (banners etc), will be provided from Rosehill at no cost to Districts.

Even if your brigade opens for only a few hours on the day it will assist in relaying the uniformity amongst volunteers in the Service and ensure the most people get the important safety messages we promote.

So keep this event in mind and start planning how your brigade can play a part in not only promoting our magnificent Service but also informing the community of its responsibilities during the Bush Fire Danger Period.

The Open Day has been generously sponsored by Chubb Australia as part of the strategic partnership that is being developed by our two organisations.

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Fire and security protection for your local community

Were YOU there?

BUSHFIRE BULLETIN

Special Edition



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As a proud member and sponsor of the NSW RFS David Jenkins of Nomad Photography has shot thousands of superb black & white bushfire photographs using Canon and Hasselblad equipment.

David Myers of Digital Masters Australasia has sponsored the scanning of this unique collection and together we have created an online, 'Digital Album' of almost 1,000 recent bushfire images.



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PROJECT V21



ENHANCING VOLUNTEERING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Volunteer Relations Unit will soon be hitting the road with organisational partners the NSW Benevolent Society and St Vincent De Paul, to initiate a research project entitled "V21", Enhancing volunteering for the 21st Century.

Associate Professor Jude Butcher from the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield Campus, is managing the project.

The study will investigate the impact of access, training and support structures at key points of a volunteer's engagement (attraction, initial engagement, transition into the organisation, and ongoing commitment to the task).

The study will also investigate an individual's perceptions of task accessibility, training and ongoing support from the community organisation.

The key outcomes of the research are:

A new and flexible organisational model that enhances an individual's volunteer capacity at key points of his/her engagement;

A validated multidimensional measure of volunteer capacity relevant to different organisations and social contexts;

New and diverse volunteer pathways responsive to changing lifestyle patterns and choices and designed to enhance a person's volunteer capacity;

Enhanced capacity of community organisations across Australia to attract, select support and retain volunteers.

This research outcomes will not only benefit the volunteer's of the Rural Fire Service and the project partner organisations, but has the potential to influence volunteer organisations Australia wide.

For further details or how you can be involved please contact Volunteer Relations on 02 88453743 or volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au

THE NW TEAM

On 17 and 18 January the NW Team ran its first Advanced Firefighter course at Nyngan. The course was attended by 12 volunteers from Bogan, Warren, Coonamble and Walgett Shires.

This being the first course, the participants were very keen to further their knowledge and the course was well received. With the positive feedback received, we are now hoping to run many more of these and other courses to both further their knowledge and lift their skill level so as to make firefighting safer and more efficient.

I would like to thank the volunteers from Nyngan for their help in running the course and the BBQ Saturday night.

I would also like to thank Ian McCrohan from Canobolas Zone who instructed safety and weather, as always, he did an excellent job and the participants were amazed that weather has so much affect on fire.

Warrick Parker acting DFCO Coonamble
Photo by Elan Palmer



SHOALHAVEN BRIGADES WIN AT NOWRA SHOW

Around 100 NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers assisted at the 128th Nowra Show on 6 and 7 February at Nowra Showground.

Hundreds of primary school children from the area had the opportunity to take part in the RFS display that included 'Big Ed', the mobile education and promotions unit and the Shoalhaven Forward Control Unit.

Callala Bay and Erowal Bay Brigades won major prizes in the Grand Parade and Cambewarra Brigade won first prize for the Best Presented 4WD Ute.

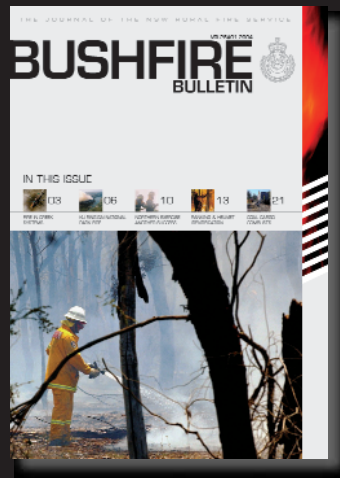
Crews from Currarong, Callala Bay, Shoalhaven Heads, Huskisson, Erowal Bay, Cambewarra, St Georges Basin, Illaroo and Headquarters Brigades took part in the RFS display at the show.

'Nine RFS Brigades from Shoalhaven District took part in the 2004 Nowra Show'
Photos by Sean Chipman





BUSHFIRE BULLETIN ADVERTISING RATES AND SPECIFICATIONS



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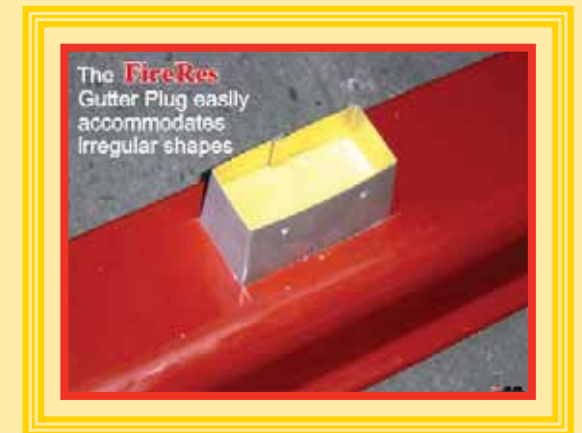


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