



**NSW Rural Fire Service**

## **Canobolas Zone**

**2005/2006 Annual Report**



## **OUR VISION**

The Canobolas Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service will be a leader in support and innovation to our volunteers who will provide the highest standard of excellence in the protection of our community from fires and other emergencies.

Our leadership and management systems will equip our volunteers and brigades to be a leading and respected resource within the NSW Rural Fire Service.

## **OUR MISSION**

To provide a cohesive, enthusiastic Volunteer Rural Fire Service trained and equipped to meet the needs of the community in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

## ***Executive Overview***

Fire Season 2005/06 proved to be very busy for volunteers and staff with a significant number of incidents reported and responded to across the Zone. Significant winter & spring rainfall provided some heavy grassland fuels into the summer which in turn created the a fire risk not seen for a number of years. The tactic of multiple tanker response and support equipment such as plant, aircraft and bulk water delivered early to each outbreak provided for rapid containment of most ignitions.

The Canobolas Zone became a State leader in the rapid deployment of aviation fire fighting resources and this proved to be a significant factor in community safety and volunteer satisfaction.

A program of Brigade Consultation meetings were initiated across the Zone with the two of three rounds of meetings held in this period. A total of twenty meetings were held with 200 members attending.

There has been significant progress towards the tanker fleet renewal with a major injection of newer replacement vehicles that saw fifteen new and refurbished tankers in action with our brigades.

## ***Staff***

Staffing remains at the same level of seven, incorporating The Zone Manager, Administration Officer, two Operations Officers, Learning and Development, two Community Safety Officers and a GIS support officer based at the Orange Zone Office.

## **Programs**

The programs initiated in 2005/2006 included:

### **Tanker Upgrading.**

The 2005/06 year saw the following brigades receive new or refurbished tankers.

| <b>COUNCIL</b> | <b>BRIGADE</b>        | <b>TANKER</b>    |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Cabonne</b> | Clifton Grove-Ophir   | Cat 2-Isuzu FSS  |
|                | Lockwood              | Cat 2-Isuzu FSS  |
|                | Gumble                | Cat 2-Isuzu FSS  |
|                | Mandagery             | Cat 2-Isuzu FSS  |
|                | Garra                 | Cat 2-Isuzu FSS  |
|                | Yeoval                | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Cargo                 | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Nashdale              | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Mullion Creek         | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Orange Molong Rd      | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Cumnock               | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
| <b>Cowra</b>   | Cowra HQ              | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Chaucer               | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
|                | Woodstock             | Cat 1-Isuzu FTS  |
| <b>Orange</b>  | Spring Hill - Huntley | Cat7- Mitsubishi |

In addition the Isuzu tankers located at Clifton Grove-Ophir, Yeoval, Cargo, Lidster, Nashdale and Mullion Creek were relocated to Red Hill, Washpen, Bowan Park, Mogong, Nyrang Creek and Trajere respectively. In all there was 27 tanker movements across the Zone.

Our aim is to ensure that all brigade frontline tankers are diesel powered and offer the latest in crew protection hardware.



## Incidents

A total of 441 Incidents were responded to by Canobolas Zone Brigades during 2005/06

| <b>Council</b> | <b>Fires</b> | <b>MVA's</b> | <b>Others – Good intent<br/>False Alarms &amp; support other agencies</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|---|---------------|
| <b>Blayney</b> | 35           | 8            | 13  | 56            |
| <b>Cabonne</b> | 126          | 22           | 48  | 196           |
| <b>Cowra</b>   | 61           | 14           | 26  | 101           |
| <b>Orange</b>  | 47           | 10           | 31  | 88            |
| <b>Totals</b>  | 269          | 54           | 118   | 441           |

Due to the rapid deployment of multiple resources, including support equipment such as aircraft and heavy plant, all of the above incidents were contained early to a small area with the exception of two incidents at Canowindra and Gooloogong that each burnt some 250ha.



## **Aviation**

One State Government Contract and one Federal Government Contract aircraft are based in Canobolas Zone at Cowra and Orange respectively.

Because of this resource availability and the support provided by Orange City Council a permanent airbase was established at Orange Airport that evolved into a major infrastructure advantage to our brigades and firefighters.

Members of the Orange Rural Fire Brigade undertook training in airbase operations and in so doing, provided a support capability to a great portion of Region West and the western portions of Region East. State Operations also provided support to the Orange Airbase by rostering trained Air Attack and Air Observer specialists on a daily basis for the entire summer period.



The Zone began planning towards strategically located airstrips across the Zone that will enhance the aerial fire fighting effort into the future by providing reserves of water, foam and retardant ready for each summers Bush Fire Danger Period and assist us in managing the quick turnaround of aircraft deployed to localised fire fighting.



### **Brigade Stations.**

An aim of the Rural Fire Service is to provide safe housing for fire fighting resources across the Zone. In many areas Rural Fire Stations already exist and these vary in size and facilities, however, there are many brigades without such facilities and the Zone aims to progressively make available fire Stations for those communities that demonstrate a need.

This year has seen the completion of new Fire Stations on the Mitchell Highway for the Orange Molong Road Brigade and in Barry for the Barry-Hobbys Yards Rural Fire Brigade.



## **Community Safety (Hazard Reductions)**

The hazard reduction component of Rural Fire Service activities is now undertaken expressly by the Canobolas Zone on behalf of the Councils and entails three separate areas

1. Issue of Fire Permits
2. Issue of Hazard Reduction Certificates
3. Management of Hazard Complaints
4. Advice on Compliance to "Planning for Bushfire Protection" in regard to Development Applications.

Since 1 July 2005 and up to 30 June 2006 the Community Safety Staff of Canobolas Zone carried out the following works.

|   | Blayney | Cabonne | Cowra | Orange |
|---|---------|---------|-------|--------|
| Development Applications<br>79BA / 100B | 0       | 13      | 2     | 1      |
| Permits<br>Section 87 &<br>88           | 33      | 355     | 377   | 42     |
| Hazard<br>Reduction<br>Complaints       | 26      | 68      | 0     | 269    |

## **Hazard Reduction**

A major initiative during this reporting period was to implement a significant amount of Hazard Reduction burning in areas of high risk identified through community consultation during the Canobolas Zone Bushfire Management Project.

Some 6,900 Ha of State Forest, National Park, Crown and Private lands have been treated since the end of March 2005, principally in the Goobang, Conimbla and Nangar National Park areas. Additionally in excess of 1,100 kilometres of lineal mechanical works have been treated across all land tenures to provide firebreaks, fire trails or asset protection zones.

## **Maintenance**

Our Councils are responsible for the fire fighting fleet. All heavy and light vehicles were inspected to the RTA requirements and Council engineering staff assisted in compliance.

This year was the second year where the annual roadworthy inspection system was carried out by Council inspectors resulting in a considerable cost saving to the maintenance budget.

## ***Learning and Development***

To assist in the co-ordination, organising and record keeping of training activities, the Zone now has an online database that is linked statewide. The system (Fire Zone Train) will store the records required for certification as a registered training organisation. This will enable transfer of records with the volunteers if they locate to another district.

The following training has been conducted in and out of the Zone's area:

- GPS Workshop
- Aviation Operations
- Air Observer
- Air Attack Supervisor
- Rural Fire Driving
- Bush Firefighter
- Village Firefighter
- Advanced Firefighter
- Crew Leader
- Senior First Aid
- Traffic Control Operator
- Firezone Train 1.5
- Business Management
- Breathing Apparatus Operator
- Incident Management Workshop
- Incident Management Exercise