



NSW Rural Fire Service

Canobolas Zone



2006/2007 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

The 2006-07 year proved a busy one for the Canobolas Zone staff and volunteers with consistent storm activity resulting in a large number of fires from lightning strikes well as Section 44 declared fires south of Molong in November 2006 and in the Curembenya section of the Goobang National Park in February 2007.

Staff and crews also assisted with major incidents at Bathurst, Mudgee, Narrabri, Forbes, and Dubbo and contributed significantly to the fire fighting effort over the summer.

It should be noted, that there the Zone built on its excellent working relationship between volunteers and staff with the NPWS at the recent Goobang fire and there are no political issues emanating from this fire.

Management

Staff

Permanent staffing levels remained steady at seven, incorporating The Zone Manager, Administration Officer, two Operations Officers, Learning and Development Officer, two Community Safety Officers and a GIS support officer based at the Orange Zone Office.

During the year we received support for several short term and temporary staff members. We had a trainee Administration Officer for the majority of the year until her course was completed in April 2007. There was an additional temporary position appointed into Canobolas Zone in the form of an Operations Support Officer. This position was one of several offered across the Region at no additional cost to Program Charges and had a duration of some 12 weeks. The major benefits that flowed from this initiative was an injection of effort into RFS systems such as "Redfleet" data, and the ability for Senior Volunteers to gain an insight into the career opportunities available in the NSW Rural Fire Service. In addition to the direct Canobolas Zone employees, Head Office has based a Community Safety staff member at the Canobolas Office to work in Region West on specific projects including the development of the RFS Cadet program.

Financial

The Canobolas Zone received a total allocation from the Rural Fire Fighting Fund of \$4,967,284 for the 2006/2007 year.

Each Council received the following allocation:

Blayney	\$1,074,275
Cabonne	\$1,687,528
Cowra	\$1,132,979
Orange	\$1,072,507
Total	\$4,967,284

Our Councils are responsible for contributing 13.3% to the total budget. Orange City Council agreed to exceed their allocated budget to fund two additional new tankers while Blayney, Cabonne and Cowra finished the year close to their budget allocations.

The actual Council contribution for the year was \$473,850 and was split between the Councils on the following basis:

Budget Council Cont – May 06	Blayney \$109,864	Cabonne \$160,425	Cowra \$103,500	Orange \$77,625	Total \$451,414
Actual Council Cont – June 07	\$99,914	\$159,062	\$107,152	\$107,723	\$473,850
Surplus to Budget	\$9,950	\$1,363	-\$3,652	-\$30,098	-\$22,436

Brigade Stations

The Rural Fire Service is committed to providing 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.

During 2006/07 new Fire Stations were completed to house tankers for the Walli - Islands Brigade and the Rivers Brigade in the Cowra Council area and also for the Newbridge Brigade in the Blayney Shire.



Walli / Island Brigade Station (Cowra)



The Rivers Brigade Station (Cowra)

Brigade Consultation

The program of Brigade (“Gum Tree”) Consultation meetings was initiated across the Zone in the previous year. This concept is proving very successful and “Gum Tree” meeting brand is being picked up by other districts across the State and has been incorporated into the Region West Business Plan for use across the Region.

The objectives of these meetings are:

- ❖ To improve communication and understanding between our volunteers and staff.
- ❖ To build lasting and long term relationships and alliances with our volunteers.
- ❖ To really engage with our volunteers by listening to their needs or concerns.
- ❖ The promotion of mutually beneficial results.
- ❖ Identify and build upon our common ground within the RFS.

The progress made from this strategy of actively communicating with our volunteers on a regular basis is working to build a strong rapport between our staff and volunteers. The continual message at each meeting from the volunteers is to keep these meeting going as they productive, enjoyable and a great thing.



Gum Tree Meeting at Canowindra May 2007

Operations

Fire Season 2006/07 again proved very busy for volunteers and staff with a significant number of incidents reported and responded to across the Zone. For the second year running 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 largest cause of fire during the period was lightning activity from a number of storm fronts that passed through the area. Generally these storm events caused multiple ignitions across many brigade areas over a period of hours.

In the majority of cases fires were contained early causing little or no damage, however, there were three fires that did require significant resources and time to bring under control. These were Canowindra Tip, The Packams Way fire south of Molong and the Curembenya Fire in the Goobang National Park. The latter two incidents were eventually declared as Section 44 emergency fires.

In addition to our local incidents, Canobolas Zone Brigades also participated in Out Of Area Strike Teams assisting the following areas.

- Bathurst
- Forbes
- Dubbo
- Mudgee

Incidents

Across the Zone our Brigades responded to a total of 528 Incidents during the 2006/07 reporting period. The table below details the type of responses per Council area.

Council	Fires	MVA's	Others Good intent & False Alarms	Totals	Previous Year Incidents
Blayney	60	7	11	78	56
Cabonne	178	32	20	230	196
Cowra	61	14	26	98	101
Orange	96	13	13	122	88
Totals	395	66	70	528	441

It is significant to note that whilst the total incident responses have increased, a more detailed investigation reveals that responses to Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA's) and "Other Incidents" have declined by around one third of the previous year overall.

Maintenance

2006/07 saw the Canobolas Zone embark on a maintenance project to ensure a regular maintenance program was implemented across the Fire Fighting Fleet. Whilst the entire fleet was subject to an annual roadworthy inspection and any repairs effected, the provision of a "service" was constrained due to available funding.

A detailed report on the funding requirements for the tanker fleet was submitted to Region and a positive outcome was received that will ensure the total servicing of the entire fleet for subsequent financial years.

Tanker Upgrading

The 2006/07 year saw \$1,260,468 allocated toward Fire Fighting Tanker resources and support vehicles across the Zone. As a result the following brigades received the 14 replacement vehicles, which were procured as either new or refurbished tankers. In addition three Group Officer / Volunteer vehicles were purchased to assist with coordination activities at larger incidents as well as provision of transport for volunteers to attend training and meeting activities.

COUNCIL	BRIGADE	TANKER
Cabonne	Baldry	Cat 7
	Byng Emu Swamp	Cat 9
	Boomey	Cat 1
Blayney	Talwood	Cat 7
	Mandurama	Cat 7
	Kings Plains	Cat 7
Cowra	Gooloogong	Cat 1
	Porters Mount	Cat 7
	Mount McDonald	Cat 7
	Wyangala	Cat 1
Orange	Springside (new)	Cat 7
	Spring Hill – Huntley (new)	Cat 1
	Clifton Grove -Ophir(new)	Cat 1
	Clifton Grove - Ophir	Cat 9
Zone Resource	Canobolas 16A (new)	Toyota Hilux
	Canobolas 16B (new)	Toyota Hilux
	Canobolas 16C	Landrover

Our aim is to ensure that all brigade frontline tankers are diesel powered and offer the latest in crew protection hardware. As a result of this years program the Standards of Fire Cover vehicles in the Orange fleet and the Blayney fleet are now all diesel.



Tankers presented by the Minister Tony Kelly on 3rd March 2007

Aviation

As in the case of last year the Canobolas Zone are fortunate to have two contracted fixed wing bombing aircraft based within our area. One State Government Contract and one Federal Government Contract aircraft are based in Canobolas Zone at Cowra and Orange respectively. These aircraft, whilst available by State Operations to be tasked to any location across the State, are well placed to provide fast initial attack to fires reported across the Zone.

The contract providers have additional “Call When Needed” aircraft stationed at the above locations which have the same capability and componentry as the contract aircraft available to us as required that add to our strike power when requiring additional aviation resources.

Orange Air Base

Because of this resource availability and the support provided by Orange City Council the permanent airbase established in 2005/06 at Orange Airport has been evolving into an asset that provides a major advantage to our brigades and firefighters.

State Operations continues to provide support to the Orange Airbase by rostering trained Air Attack and Air Observer specialists on a daily basis for the entire summer period.



Air Support Infrastructure

Last year planning commenced towards resourcing 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 in managing the quick turnaround of aircraft deployed to localised fire fighting.

During 2006/07 we have identified locations in Eugowra, Larras Lee and Obley as additional sites to Orange, Cudal and Cowra. To date the Obley site has been finalised with the strip receiving earthworks maintenance, the installation of a 120,000L water tank and the commissioning of a fast fill trailer with foam mixing capability.

The Eugowra site had received strip maintenance and had the installation of an 16,000 bouywall dam for the fire season supplementing the reticulated supply at the site. Larras Lee site parent brigade “Boomey” took delivery of a Fast Fill Trailer unit with foam mixing capability identical to that commissioned in Obley.



As part of the infrastructure upgrade a permanent bore was established at the Orange Airport to provide consistency of supply for our fire fighting operations. With assistance from Cadia Valley Operations and the Rural Fire Fighting Association a bore was officially commissioned by the Minister for Emergency Services on May 3 2007.



Acting Commissioner R Rogers, Minister T Kelly, CVO Manager T McPaul, Blayney Mayor T Wilson, Supt D Hoadley & RFSA President B McKinlay officially celebrate the activation of the Aerial Fire Fighting Bore at Orange Airport

Community Safety

Hazard Reduction

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 2006 and up to 30 June 2007 the Community Safety Staff of Canobolas Zone carried out the following works.

	Blayney	Cabonne	Cowra	Orange
Development Applications 79BA / 100B	6	18	1	1
Permits Section 87 & 88	10	30	26	24
Hazard Reduction Complaints	0	10	4	75

Burning Activities

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 4,894 Ha of State Forest, National Park, Crown and Private lands have been treated since the end of March 2006, principally in the Goobang, Conimbla, Nangar National Park's and Wyangala State Recreation Area.

Additionally in excess of 2270 Ha of works was carried out by Councils within the Canobolas Zone providing Community protection. This is a total of 7,164 hectares compared to our benchmark target of 9,461. Out target was short due to the rain received in May and June 2007.



Greening Lane HR Burn Autumn 2006 Orange

Learning and Development

Another successful year of training within and externally of the Zone, by its staff and volunteers. Several members of office staff completed the required components of Incident Management areas that they fill during major campaign fires.

The Prescribed Burning Supervisor course has been cancelled for the past two seasons so a Regional course has been organised for next season.

State Forests have provided some bush area for the Zone to allow chainsaw courses to recommence.

Six (6) volunteers obtained their Rural Fire Service Training and Assessing qualifications so that they may provide instruction and assessment on future courses within the Zone.

The following training has been attended by the Zone's volunteers or staff:

- Aviation Operations X 2 courses
- Air Attack Supervisor
- Rural Fire Driving X 2 courses
- Bush Firefighter X 4 courses
- Village Firefighter X 4 courses
- Advanced Firefighter
- Crew Leader
- Senior First Aid X 3 courses
- Traffic Control Operator X 3 courses
- Business Management
- Breathing Apparatus Operator
- Incident Management Workshop
- Incident Management Exercise
- Rural Fire Instructor X 2 courses
- Combined Agency Exercises (NSWFB, NSW Police) X 2 courses
- Bush Fire Awareness
- Chainsaw Operations
- Compartment Fire Behaviour
- Hot Fire Pad Instruction
- Group Leader
- Permit Officer Workshop



BF Training & Assessment Molong 2006

The Zone is working towards meeting Service Standard 6.1.2 which provides details on the required qualifications for all levels of the organisation, volunteer or staff.

The training committee met on three (3) occasions over the past 12 months and will continue to do so. The number of personnel that attend courses has been declining so courses that can be taken out to the remote areas, where there is an interest, will be.

As funding becomes available training resources will be purchased to assist with teaching the latest techniques with the latest equipment.

The Zone Learning & Development Officer has been involved over the past 12 months in providing pilot training for CABA Crews based at the CFS Brukunga Training Facility in South Australia. The experience gained from this involvement will be invaluable in setting up similar facilities for the NSWRFs.



RFS & CFS Fire Crews on the LPG Pad at Brukunga SA



REGION WEST

CANOBOLAS ZONE

ANNUAL REPORT

Period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007

INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared in accordance with policy P7.1.5, [SOP P7.1.7-2](#) and [SOP P7.1.7- 3](#) in regard to the annual reporting on performance of regions and the exception report of districts.

This report contains the following elements;

- Summary of achievements,
- Region West Highlights.

In accordance with the new policy Region West can report on the performance of DTZ's by a summary report, based on a generic set of target performances.

High quality and consistent reporting has been something the Region has been striving for since its formation. This has now been achieved, firstly in 2005/06, and again this year, through; the use of the e-sdm across all Region West.

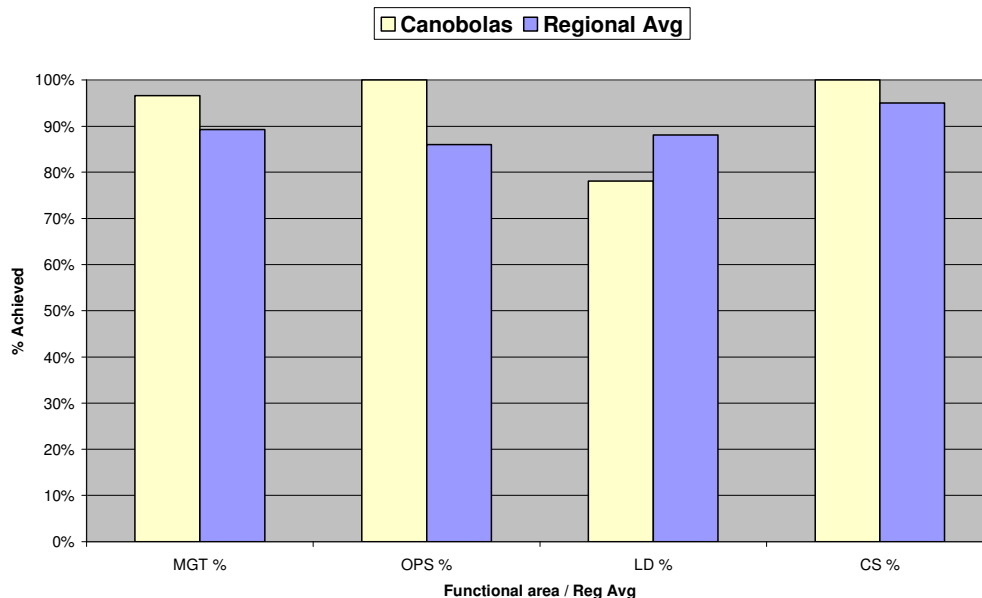
The dedication of the staff in collecting and reporting consistently is outstanding and very much appreciated.

TEAM / ZONE PERFORMANCE

Canobolas Zone achieved a reported average compliance of 96% (85% last year) against fifty six target actions. They have also achieved a reported completion rate of 97% (last year 78%) for management, 100% (last year 84%) for Operations, 78% (last year 79%) for L&D and 100% (last year 100%) for Community Safety.

Canobolas Zone was higher than the Regional average (89%) on reported completion rates for the 2006/07 year.

CANOBOLAS ZONE - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE - 2006/07



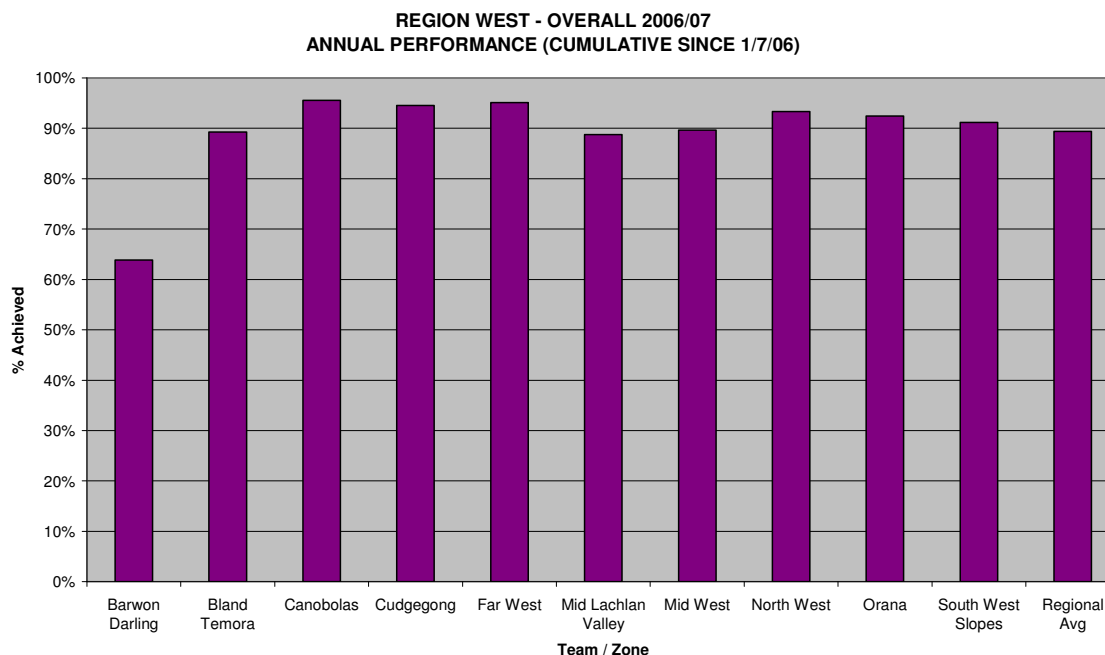
Achievements within the Zone

- S44's within Canobolas Zone and resource deployment to other areas.
- Continued Aerial support & management for Region West.
- Risk Management Plan input.
- Standard design of the new FCC.
- Construction of new Brigade Stations.
- Accept delivery of new & second tankers to further enhance the old fleet.
- Apply for funding of the Aviation / Support Truck.
- Development and rollout Aerial Fire Fighting Infrastructure.
- Development of Communications Enhancement for Mount McDonald & Cowra sites.
- Hazard Reduction target achieved.
- Extensive funding for trails and HR preparation work on private property.
- "Gum Tree" consultation meetings again held for the year.
- Stores Management bar coded system completed.

REGIONAL OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The Region has achieved 89% completion (up from 81% last year) of the fifty six programs/actions within the Business Plan. The significant majority of DTZ's had above 89% reported achievement.

The Community Safety KRA had nine of eleven actions 100% complete, Next was the Management KRA with eight of twenty two actions 100% complete, then was Learning & Development with two of eight, then Operations with one from fifteen.



FUTURE 2007/08 PRIORITIES / ACTIONS

- Group Officer Forums to be held prior to and after the Fire Season.
- Focus on the 'Volunteer to Career' outcomes and potential for further programs to be held / implemented.
- Conduct Regional Exercise, which in 2007 will focus on providing an assessment opportunity for senior volunteers for mainstream qualifications.
- Implementation of the new Bushfire Risk Management Plans.
- Incident Management Exercise will again be held to increase the staff and volunteers skills in major incidents.
- The Region has already commenced building on the success of 2006/07 with a revised business plan for 2007/08.
- Work has already commenced upon the DTZ's identification and mapping of potential hazard reduction works for the upcoming fire season and beyond.
- Community Safety training courses to be conducted include; CSF, PBS, CSA.
- Cadet programs to be completed at Mudgee, Parkes, Quandialla, Young, Kandos, Peak Hill & West Wyalong

FINAL SUMMARY

Region West could not produce or maintain the highest standards of professionalism without the outstanding work of the dedicated volunteers and staff. It is through these dedicated people that the Region has achieved such significant achievements, through a very busy fire season and the ever increasing expectations, sometimes brought about by our own previous successes.

It should also be noted that the Region has once again achieved remarkable success in a whole range of programs and actions. This success is reflected in operational achievement, volunteer relations, community engagement and valued stakeholder relationships.

I thank all the staff of Canobolas Zone for their efforts in achieving so much during 2006/07.

Regional Manager
23 July 2007



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTED PERFORMANCE

CANOBOLAS ZONE

2006/2007

FUNCTIONAL AREA	%
MANAGEMENT	97%
OPERATIONS	100%
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	78%
COMMUNITY SAFETY	100%

OVERALL 96%

Congratulations to your staff on these achievements

Paul Smith
A/Manager Region West
26 July 2007

NSWRFS CANOBOLAS ZONE PROJECTS FOR 2007/2008.

1. Construction and relocation to the new FCC and Training Centre.
2. Construction of 5 new Brigade Stations.
3. Officially Open 3 Stations recently completed.
4. Accept delivery of 7 new Tankers.
5. Possibility of up to 6 second hand tankers.
6. Internal Program of 3 second hand tanker upgrades.
7. Aviation / Support Truck.
8. Complete negotiations and implementation of Country Energy sponsorship and alliance.
9. Development and rollout Aerial Fire Fighting Infrastructure.
10. Installation of water tanks for Fire Stations.
11. Full implementation of preventative maintenance for Fleet.
12. Full implementation of preventative maintenance for Radio System / Paging Communications.
13. Replacement of Motorola Radios.
14. Two additional Group vehicles.
15. New Staff member as Systems Support Officer.
16. Communications Enhancement for Mount McDonald & Cowra sites.
17. Completion of 3 yearly Group Officer elections.
18. Hazard Reduction target of 9471 ha plus 6000 ha catch up.
19. Funding for trails and HR preparation work on private property.
20. Fire Trail Signage Project.
21. "Gum Tree" consultation meetings 41 - 60 planned for the year.
22. Stores Management bar coded system completed.
23. Canobolas Zone hosting Region West Exercise at Neville.
24. Officially Open the new FCC & Training Centre of Excellence.