

# BUSH FIREbulletin

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- pictorial

Flooding across  
the state

Fireworks factory  
goes off with a bang

Commissioner  
Fitzsimmons speaks  
about his plans for  
the future

# KANGAROO ISLAND FIRES

THE FULL STORY INSIDE

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PREMIER GETS BEHIND NEW TECHNOLOGY

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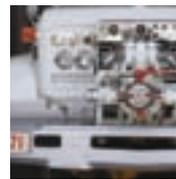
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The views expressed in articles in the Bush Fire Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views or the policies of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

# FOREWORD



The 2007/08 fire season has seen a welcome reprieve from the usual drought driven heat and extreme fire behaviour that has marked our Summers over the last decade or so. Despite the lull in bush and grass fire activity across the State, many volunteers have been busy assisting the SES with storm and flood damage as well as tackling 400 to 500 haystack fires. This has been a huge commitment and I thank everyone for their hard work.

Despite wet weather in many parts of the State, hazard reduction burning is still being undertaken by brigades. Many of these burns have been highly successful, which will augur well for the upcoming Summer. I would encourage all brigade members to participate in hazard reduction activities where possible, as it is a critical component of protecting local communities from fire.

I also encourage every volunteer to get to know the role of their local Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) and their volunteer representatives. They will ensure your views are fairly represented on the BFMC and that we are all working together to prioritise important hazard reduction works in your local area.

The risk management planning process is currently being re-designed to ensure the system is further simplified yet effective. The Bush Fire Risk Register is explained in pages 44 and 45. It will make identifying and planning hazard reduction works easier and more efficient. These improvements are just the beginning of a raft of changes in risk management and more announcements will be made in upcoming issues of the Bush Fire Bulletin.

I am very pleased to be unveiling the new RFS 2012 Strategic Plan in this issue of the Bush Fire Bulletin. The *2012 RFS Strategic Plan: Protecting the community in a sustainable way* is the long term vision for the Service that will ensure we continue to lead the way in fire management.

As mentioned previously, I was extremely honoured to be appointed Commissioner of the RFS in 2007. I trust that the article in this issue about my time at the RFS will provide an insight into my passion for the Service, its members and the communities that we work together to protect.

Once again, many thanks for your ongoing commitment and enthusiasm for the Service. I look forward to meeting with many of you over the coming months.

Shane Fitzsimmons, AFSM  
Commissioner

# OUR VALUES UNDERPIN ALL OUR ACTIONS

# THE SERVICE IN FOCUS



## MAC THE KID

This is four-year-old Mac Gilligan in his prized set of firefighting overalls.

His dad, Adam Gilligan, Senior Deputy Captain at Seaham RFB, says Mac just can't wait until he is old enough to become a junior member of the brigade.

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR MALAYSIAN COURSE

Volunteers are being invited to apply to participate in an International Structural Firefighting Course in Malaysia. The course is hosted by the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department (BOMBA) and this will be the third time RFS has sent a delegation of volunteers to the training course.

The volunteers will participate in a wide range of training activities and exercises including high rise firefighting and urban search and rescue. They will also be invited to share knowledge of Australia with participants from more than 50 other countries. It is believed that the RFS firefighters will be the only volunteers taking part in the course. The course will run for two weeks from 11 August to 22 August.

Further enquiries can be made with your district or zone manager.

## IN APPRECIATION



On behalf of the Kangaroo Island Community and Council I would like to thank each and every member of your organisation who came to support our community during the Kangaroo Island fires in December 2007.

The impact from the fires on our community were immense, but the potential for devastation was averted due to the efforts of volunteers such as yourselves, who so willingly came to our aid. We greatly appreciate your commitment and skill in helping defend and support our community when our need was greatest.

Once again, on behalf of the Kangaroo Island Community we thank you for your efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor Jayne Bates  
Kangaroo Island



## CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR SMOKE ALARM BATTERY

This year the RFS participated in the *Change your clock, change your smoke alarm battery* campaign. Daylight savings ended a week later on the first Sunday of April, giving everyone a week longer to enjoy the extra sunlight. At the same time, the RFS reminded everyone to change their smoke alarm batteries when you change back your clocks.

*Change your clock, change your smoke alarm battery* is an annual fire safety campaign promoting the importance of working smoke alarms and is supported by Duracell. Smoke alarms provide a vital early warning signal in the event of a fire and Winter is the prime time to be aware of house fires. In 2007 there were just under 11,000 residential fires in Australia resulting in 70 deaths, 22 of those were in NSW.

### WIN A DURACELL BUNNY!

Kids can win a Duracell Bunny by sending in a drawing or story about their local brigade to the Bush Fire Bulletin. The two most vibrant and interesting drawings or stories will win a Duracell Bunny. Send drawings and stories to [bushfire.bulletin@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushfire.bulletin@rfs.nsw.gov.au) or Bush Fire Bulletin Locked Bag 17, Granville NSW 2142.

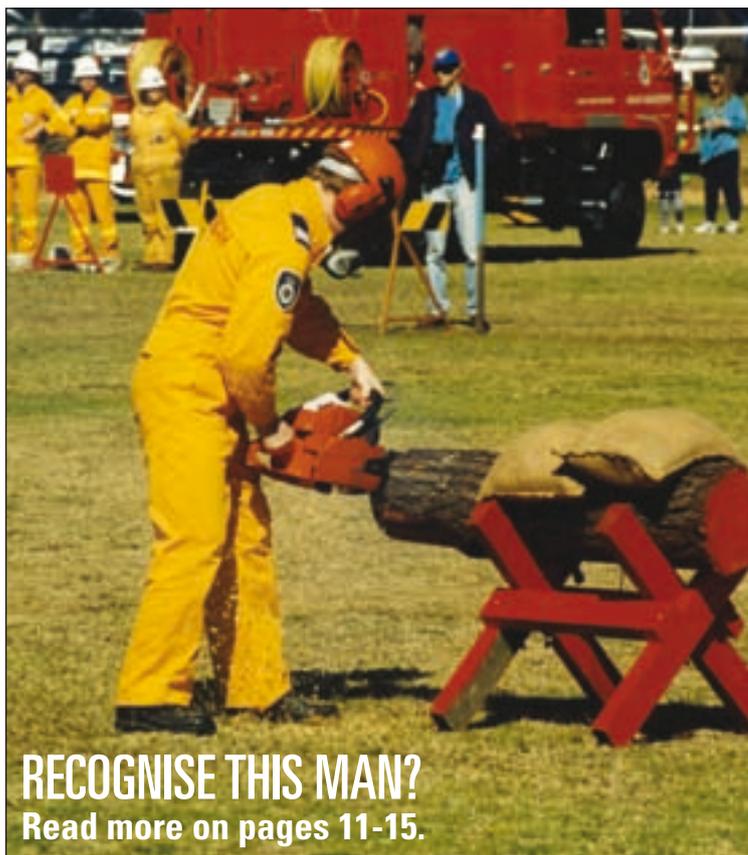


## VOLUNTEER TO CAREER WORKSHOPS

The Service is proud to announce that nominations are officially open for this year's Volunteer to Career workshops.

The Volunteer to Career (V2C) workshops are held in partnership with the RFSA and are designed for volunteers who are considering a career in the Service. Sixty-five percent of staff employed with the RFS are currently volunteers or have a volunteer background. This initiative has the full support of the Commissioner.

The workshops are held in the regions over a weekend. They will familiarise you with the sorts of jobs available and what they involve, the entry qualifications required, how people are selected for jobs, how to apply and what the job interview process involves. Nomination forms and promotional flyers with dates and locations can be downloaded from MyRFS and the RFSA website.



**RECOGNISE THIS MAN?**  
Read more on pages 11-15.



## ANNUAL NORTHERN FUND RAISER

For the third year in a row the Northern Rivers Team have held a successful Christmas raffle, this year raising over \$5000.

Gary Fox, owner of the Good Guys in Ballina, generously offered the four main prizes of electrical homewares. The Ballina Shire Mayor, Phillip Silver, presented the prizes outside The Gary Fox Good Guys Store in Ballina in December.

At the presentation of prizes, the Broadwater Brigade put their Cat 1 tanker on show and answered questions from the public. Meanwhile the catering unit put on a BBQ and raised a further \$100.

The catering unit raised \$1000 to help purchase a mobile cool-room. Brigades from outside the team area took up the challenge to raise funds with one non-active member raising more than \$400 and another member sold \$1500 worth of raffle tickets.

**ABOVE:** Michael Anstee Raffle Coordinator thanking Gary Fox, owner of the Good Guys store in Ballina, who offered the raffle prizes.

**RFS OPEN DAY - 20 September 2008**

**RFS OPEN DAY**  
MEET YOUR LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS

Plans are well underway for the 2008 RFS OPEN DAY to be held on Saturday 20 September. Feedback from volunteers provided a new direction for this year's RFS OPEN DAY. Recommendations include the title, logo, increase advertising as well as delivering resources earlier.

The **2008 RFS OPEN DAY Event Guide** will be launched in June on MyRFS and the Intranet providing volunteers and staff with all the details and tools they require to plan, organise, conduct and evaluate a successful RFS OPEN DAY event. Stay tuned in June on [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au) for more information on the 2008 RFS OPEN DAY Event Guide.

# INCIDENTS

## KANGAROO ISLAND DEPLOYMENT

By Insp Ben Shepherd

Photos by Matthew Schroder, Dean Symons, David Bent and Sean Bremner

**W**hile New South Wales enjoyed its quietest start to a fire season in almost a decade, our southern counterparts sweltered in the heat and suffered under extreme fire danger.

On the afternoon of December 6, Kangaroo Island (KI), which lies to the south of Adelaide, experienced a dry lightning storm which resulted in 12 fires across the island. Four of the fires were rounded up quickly but the final eight continued to grow.

With local resources already stretched, initial discussions between RFS and CFS Aviation sections occurred on 8 and 9 December. This led to the first commitment of RFS personnel dispatched to Kangaroo Island. Twelve aviation experts flew to Kangaroo Island on Sunday afternoon to start work first thing Monday morning.

On the Monday morning a national phone hook-up of fire services focussed on the broad resource requirements for South Australia, taking particular note of the forecast for worsening weather over the next week. It was agreed that the RFS would increase its commitment to include liaison officers, strike team leaders and 132 firefighters.

As the requests for personnel were passed to districts and brigades, RFS volunteers quickly began to answer the call. Within an hour crews from across the Sydney Basin, Illawarra, Hunter Valley, Lake Macquarie and Lithgow had been identified and began to make their way to Sydney to catch a flight to Adelaide that afternoon. They would form Task Force East 01/07.

A further strike team from Region South was formed with crews from Corowa, Lavington, Mathoura, Buronga and Tooleybuc who made their way south by road. They would form Strike Team South 001.

## Task Force East 01/07

By Dean Symons

Crews from Sydney left on a chartered flight at approximately 1800hrs on Monday night and on arrival in Adelaide were taken to the South Australian Police Academy for a brief overnight stay. The following morning, staff and volunteers were loaded onto coaches and driven to the South Australian coastline to board a ferry to Kangaroo Island.

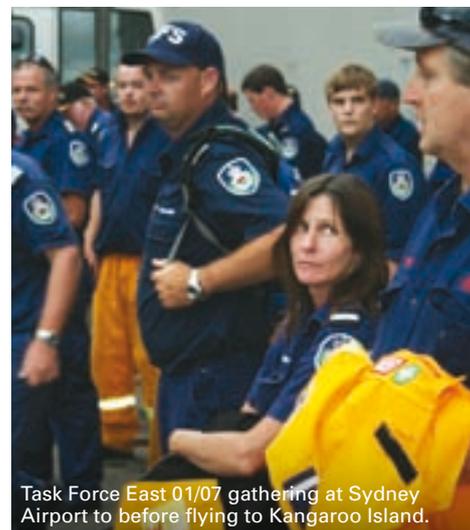
Task Force East 01/07 were given the task of night shift patrolling and mopping up. They worked off appliances supplied by the CFA and CFS. Strike teams were divided up into smaller groups and assigned a group officer along with a local CFA/CFS officer to aid with navigation and local knowledge of the fire ground.

***“The Chase fire...broke containment lines and took a hard run into the bush and pine forest.”***

Fire activity for our crew on the first two nights was relatively calm though the work undertaken by the East crews was essential in ensuring the fires didn't spread in the difficult day time weather. The final night saw a dramatic change in these benign conditions with a shift that would be the defining memory many would take from the island.

The Chase fire, one of the larger fires burning on the island, broke containment lines and took a hard run into the bush and pine forest. Back burning commenced early in the night and extreme fire activity was experienced along the dozer trail. Flame heights of over 40 metres were observed as minor spot fires broke out on either side of the trail. An unforeseen wind change moved through the area forcing crews to halt burning operations and pull back to monitor the progression of the fire.

They continued on through the night pushing ahead with the burning operation so that the fire could be pulled up later the following day.



Task Force East 01/07 gathering at Sydney Airport to before flying to Kangaroo Island.

Later in the morning, coming straight off the fireground after a long night, and after a quick bite to eat, Task Force East 01/07 were shuttled back onto a bus. They were quickly taken to the local airport and flown off the island on small 9-17 seater aeroplanes. Flying out of Adelaide and directly to Sydney, the weary crews finally arrived back at Sydney Airport to be picked up by their districts.

## Strike Team South 001 sets off by road

By David Bent

As quickly as the Region East teams came together, another group in the south of the state prepared itself for the long drive to Kangaroo Island. Five Cat 1 tankers from Lavington, Corowa, Buronga, Tooleybuc and Mathoura left at approximately 1400hrs on Monday night along with Group Officer Bob Kuhne (Hume Zone) and the Lavington command vehicle.

The brigades met the following day in South Australia. A large proportion of the team spent Tuesday night at the CFS State Training Centre, Brukunga, in the Adelaide Hills, because of the constraints on the ferry to Kangaroo Island.



**AIR CRANE OVER  
CHASE FIRE ON  
KANGAROO ISLAND**

Photo by Sean Bremner.



### Exceptional diligence and patience

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the staff and especially the volunteers in their positive and professional approach to our recent deployment to South Australia. Their diligence and patience in difficult conditions illustrated the true worth of all RFS personnel involved. Their ability to adjust to differing operating structures and methods was exceptional. I thank you for seeing out your commitment.*

Supt Bryan Daly,  
Region North Operations Manager,  
Senior Interstate Liaison Officer

The following day, Wednesday 12 December, the strike team travelled under escort to a secondary ferry terminal at Wirinna Cove. All five Cat 1's were loaded onto the ferry for the two-hour trip to Kingscote, Kangaroo Island. It was very relaxing until the ferry's captain announced: "I've got to get rid of some weight from this ferry as I have only got 1.8 metres draught at the other end. At the moment we cannot land."

So, five Cat 1's emptied the 15 tonnes of water they were carrying. The dolphins running alongside really enjoyed the hosing they received as the trucks were emptied.

At 1300hrs on Wednesday, Strike Team South 001, was deployed around the south coast of Kangaroo Island, to complete back burning and chase spot fires. The day ended with the team returning to Parndana Staging Area where a base camp had been set up around the local school and football ground.

***"...the area had been 'red flagged' and was under major threat. Fire impact was expected within 10 minutes."***

The next morning, Thursday, the briefing for the day's work was extremely concerning and required close examination. The conditions were "extreme" with the fire in the Chase National Park expected to break containment lines, putting a major portion of the Island's tourist assets in jeopardy. Strike Team South 001 was tasked with protecting the Rocky River Settlement which consisted of several houses, a major works depot, a fuel depot, a research centre, visitors centre and a major ablation block. These buildings represent the Island's main source of income.

Around lunch time, the team received a message from Group Officer Bob Kuhne, that the area had been "red flagged" and was under major threat. Fire impact was expected within 10 minutes.



Strike Team South 001 had made suitable safety arrangements. They had placed a coat of foam over the assets, took up position to save the assets and then prepared for fire overrun. They also received assistance from a close (sometimes very close) relationship with the air crane heavy helicopter that had arrived from Canberra.

After the fire had impacted the only loss was a single barbecue area, the remainder was saved, although slightly singed.

Group Officer Bob Kuhne described the fire as fierce. "The flame height was between 20 and 30 metres," he said, "It was a matter of preparedness, awareness, use of spotters (scouts), and knowing the right time to 'get out'."

The remainder of the day was spent cleaning up and preparing further control lines for the evening shift. Most of Friday was spent ensuring that the fire stayed within containment lines, with some back burning. After the efforts of the previous day, it was almost relaxing.

Strike Team South 001 had the only RFS vehicles on the island. They left their trucks for the incoming crews on Saturday and departed for Kingscote Airport where they were flown to their home areas.

Strike Team South 002 was despatched (by light aircraft) to Kangaroo Island on Sunday 16 December, however after 24 hours were despatched back home, again by aircraft. Drivers were left to get the vehicles off the island and returned home on Tuesday 18 December.

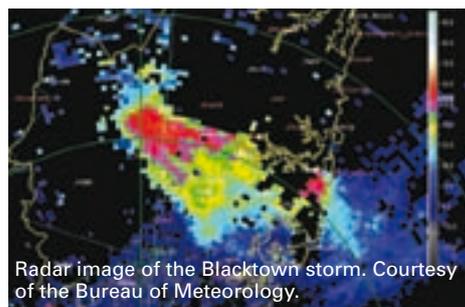
**Note:** A message of thanks to all firefighters from the Mayor of Kangaroo Island is featured on page 2.

**TOP RIGHT:** Strike Team South 01 and their tankers were ferried across to Kangaroo Island. Photo by David Bent.

**TOP & MIDDLE LEFT:** Photos by Sean Bremner.

**ABOVE:** Volunteers at Sydney Airport leaving for KI.





Radar image of the Blacktown storm. Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology.

## HAILSTORM BATTERS BLACKTOWN

By Michael Shaw, Media Assistant  
Photos by Insp Ben Shepherd and Chris Garlick

Residents in Sydney's west battled the elements after a fierce storm swept across the region on 9 December, sending down torrential rain and hail the size of cricket balls.

The storms lashed Blacktown and nearby suburbs with such ferocity that a Natural Disaster was declared. Hailstones smashed homes and vehicles, blackened out traffic lights and cut off power requiring the intervention and assistance of emergency service crews.

The RFS joined forces with the NSW Fire Brigades to assist the SES in bringing relief to the residents of the area, draping tarps over damaged roofs, and removing fallen trees. A feature of the operation was the cooperation of the services involved, who tirelessly gave up their time to help out those who were in need.

Minister for Emergency Services, Nathan Rees thanked the volunteer services for their efforts, acknowledging their selflessness and generosity.

"These people give their time without expecting anything in return, other than the satisfaction for helping those in need," Minister Rees said.

With continuing rain and storms over following weeks about 7,200 calls for help were answered. The damage bill is likely to exceed \$400 million for insured property.

**TOP:** RFS and SES worked together to restore order to western Sydney.

**TOP RIGHT:** Photographers around western Sydney were keen to record the massive size of hailstones that descended on western Sydney.



NSW Fire Brigades and RFS used cranes to restore damaged houses.



More than 5,600 calls for help were answered by emergency services.



A car was trapped by the rising water from the Warrena Creek, near Coonamble.  
Photo by Georgina Primmer.

## RAIN, HAIL, AND SOME FIRE

By Matthew Schroder, Media Services

### A very different fire season for northern NSW

It was a very different fire season for northern NSW this year. The need to control fires in the early part of the season was quickly overtaken by the call to assist SES in mopping up after the dramatic storms and floods.

When the Lismore hailstorm hit the area in October RFS volunteers were still fighting the Bundjalung S44. In fact while the S44 operation was being coordinated at the Fire Control Centre in Yorklea, the FCC was itself struck by the hailstorm. About 20 vehicles in the car park were damaged along with the rotor blades on a Bell 206 Jet Ranger Helicopter. There was no damage to the building.

From that point on, however, RFS staff and volunteers were supporting SES by getting their feet wet by sand-bagging, tarping roofs, rescuing residents from isolated homes, clearing debris and delivering supplies.

Emergency Services Minister, Nathan Rees visited the region on 5 January and made Natural Disaster Declarations for the Tweed and Kyogle shires. Minister Rees said the floods had caused considerable inundation and disruption to Kyogle, Murwillumbah and villages along the Tweed.

"I carried out an aerial survey of the region today and spoke to a number of residents and visitors who had been evacuated over night," Minister Rees said.



Kyogle received considerable inundation in early January. Photo by Rodney Brown.

"Acting on the advice from local MP, Thomas George, Kyogle Mayor Cr Ernie Bennett, Tweed Council and the SES, I had no hesitation in declaring the Kyogle and the Tweed Natural Disaster areas."

### North West Zone floods

Late in December the area further west had been affected by flooding. Saturday 22 December 2007 saw a record rainfall of 171mm fall over night in Coonamble, taking the towns rainfall total over a twelve day period to 279mm. Heavy rainfall was also recorded at both Gulargambone and Carinda during this time. A number of brigades rescued vehicles and people from flood waters.

Carinda's main street was inundated with water and the town brigade was called to assist the SES with pumping of water from the streets. Members assisted pumping for approximately five hours.

Gulargambone residents were also inundated with water. Brigade members responded in their own vehicles to assist those in need. Brigade members pumped water for approximately eight hours.

Coonamble Headquarters brigade were called out twice on the 22 December to assist members of the public who had driven into the floodwaters. The first vehicle became stuck in the flooded Eurimie Creek,

## Far North Coast Zone and Northern Rivers Team



Photo by Phil Campbell

Large parts of the North Coast were flooded by heavy rainfall that commenced on the 3 January. Many townships were affected by this flooding and requests for RFS assistance began at around 0900hrs in the Far North Coast Zone, with the Northern Rivers Team activated on Friday 4 January.

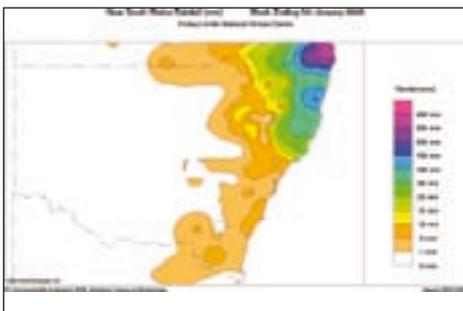
On the 6 January nearly 300 people were evacuated to escape the rising flood waters. Chillingham Brigade, west of Murwillumbah, lost radios, a pump and pagers in the flood waters.

From each area seven shifts were filled. Volunteers put in a mammoth 100 hours of work to assist their communities in recovering from the storms.

This work continued through to 1400hrs on the 8 January for the Far North Coast Zone and to the 12 January for the Northern Rivers Team.

**TOP LEFT:** The Minister for Emergency Services, Nathan Rees, (centre) visited the flood affected areas in October with the Member for Lismore, Thomas George (left) and from the SES, Richmond Tweed Region Controller, Scott Hanckel (right). Lismore was declared a Natural Disaster after over 500 requests for assistance were received.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Rainfall map for NSW in the first week of January, courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology.



The second vehicle was trapped in the rising water from the Warrena Creek on the Baradine Road. The driver of this vehicle had to be rescued by the local SES flood boat. The driver and passenger were both unhurt.

Christmas Eve saw the Coonamble Headquarters assist the SES and NSWFB with pumping of water from several locations within the town. Back up crews were called from Warren district to assist with pumping overnight.

No major flooding occurred in Coonamble town itself, however many farmers lost stock and fencing.

when the crew arrived on scene the driver was out and unhurt, but the vehicle was down stream from the road.

### Northern Rivers Team

**Total Resources Committed**

- 37 Tankers
- 10 Group Officers
- 129 Firefighters

**Areas Assisted**

- Kyogle
- Yorklea
- Tuncester
- Wiangaree

**Brigades Involved**

- Rappville
- Yorklea
- Bonalbo
- Bungawalbyn
- Green Pigeon
- Kyogle Headquarters
- Tullera
- Wiangaree

### Far North Coast Zone

**Total Resources Committed**

- 22 Tankers
- 6 Group Captains
- 75 working hours completed

**Areas Assisted**

- Bangalow
- Billinudgel
- Byron Bay
- Central Byron Bay
- Chillingham
- Chinderah
- Main Arm
- Mullumbimby
- Murwillumbah
- Ocean Shores
- Tumbulgum
- Tyalgum
- Wilson Creek

**Brigades Involved**

- Federal
- Billinudgel
- Byron Bay
- Chillingham
- Cudgen
- Bilambil
- Main Arm
- Mullumbimby
- Murwillumbah
- Tyalgum

### North West Zone

**Total Resources Committed**

- 1 Alpha
- 1 Bravo
- Warren Service vehicle
- NW16 Alpha
- Carinda 2 tanker
- In Gulargambone members used their own private pumps and tankers

**Areas Assisted**

- Coonamble township and surrounding areas
- Gulargambone
- Carinda

**Brigades Involved**

- Coonamble HQ
- Gulargambone
- Carinda Town
- Nyngan HQ
- Warren HQ: tanker support only



## FIREWORKS IN LITHGOW

Story by Insp Greg Wardle, Operations Officer  
Chifley Zone/Lithgow. Photos by Insp Ian Jackson

**A**n explosion in a fireworks factory and storage facility near Lithgow last December caused extensive damage to 75 percent of the factory and the blast was felt 30kms away.

The Howards & Sons Pyrotechnics facility, west of Wallerawang, 10km north west of Lithgow, exploded on Saturday 8 December 2007 at around 2200hrs.

Twenty-eight shipping containers and eight large buildings received a considerable amount of damage. Twelve residential houses in the area were damaged, including the house of two RFS volunteers.

Late Saturday night Wallerawang Capt Ernie Hughes rang the Duty Officer, Supt Tom Shirt, and advised that he believed that the fireworks factory had gone up. Supt Shirt confirmed this and responded with the

following Rural Fire Brigades: Wallerawang, Portland, Marrangaroo, South Bowenfels, Cullen Bullen and Group Central. Eglinton brigade brought a pumper and bulk water was transported from Bathurst. Included in this deployment were Insps Greg Wardle and Ian Jackson along with four units from the NSWFB and a Duty Commander.

On arrival, the responding units found that at least one container of fireworks had exploded and that others were in danger of igniting. Due to the threat of more explosions and the amount of shrapnel found from the initial explosion, an exclusion zone of 1km was declared around the site.

As this incident was within NSW Rural Fire Service zoning area, Insp Greg Wardle became the Incident Controller, Insp Ian Jackson assumed the role of Safety Officer and the NSWFB Duty Commander became the Operations Officer.

The decision was made to wait and monitor until the fireworks in the damaged building

had burnt out and soon after most units were stood down except two RFS and two Fire Brigades units.

At first light, police and firefighters were sent out to assess damage to the nearby rural properties and found that a number of residential dwellings had sustained substantial damage.

An inspection revealed that around 75 percent of the storage facility area on the site had been partially destroyed. The NSW Police bomb squad and WorkCover later took over control of the site.

Investigations are still underway to identify the cause.

**ABOVE:** Seventy five percent of the fireworks factory was damaged by the explosion which took place late on a Saturday night. Eight brigades were involved with the response.

**TOP RIGHT:** Aerial view of the Howards & Sons Pyrotechnics facility before the explosion.

# THROUGH THE RANKS

## COMMISSIONER FITZSIMMONS TALKS ABOUT HIS ROLE IN THE TOP JOB

By Insp Ben Shepherd, Media Services

In his late 30s, Shane Fitzsimmons is the Rural Fire Service's youngest ever Commissioner. He is a man with a young family and fresh perspective coupled with a wealth of strategic and operational fire knowledge across all facets of bush fire management.

Shane's approachable nature and widely touted "open door policy", along with his commitment to volunteers and staff, augurs well for a fresh, stable and expansive future for the RFS.

### The early years

#### *Calm in the face of danger*

Shane Fitzsimmons joined the RFS in 1985 with Duffy's Forest Brigade in Sydney's north. Ian Stockwell, a fellow member of the brigade and now an Operations Officer with the Service remembers that period.

"Shane joined the brigade when he was about 15," he said, "I think it was his father who persuaded him to join - to keep an eye on him. But Shane was dedicated and always made himself available."

Ian Stockwell must have been impressed with the young Shane Fitzsimmons because he later offered him a job as an apprentice motor mechanic at Sundells Holden.

"I told Shane: 'You should always treat your employees with respect, some day they may end up your boss'. Little did I know how true my words would be!"

In January 1994, Shane, now Captain of Duffy's Brigade, was promoted to Group Officer, to help manage local crews fighting fires across the state.



Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons assisting with crew movements in the Shire bus during the 1990s.



On one memorable Saturday afternoon Shane, accompanied by a local appliance, undertook property protection in the back streets of Ingleside in Sydney's north. Conditions deteriorated quickly and the crew became surrounded by fire. Like most seasoned firefighters, the Commissioner recalls the day well.

"It was an extremely busy day and we encountered aggressive fire behaviour," he said. "I remember being locked in to a property on the plateau in Ingleside with a tanker and crew from Beacon Hill. We concentrated on remaining calm and seeking refuge in a clear area – all the things that we had been taught in training. Once the front had passed we were straight back into the firefighting effort."

Shane and the crew demonstrated outstanding calm in the face of danger. So much so, that the audio recordings from this entrapment are used today in training for the Warringah/Pittwater Communications Brigade. Those who listen to the recordings still get goose bumps.

"I think it is a little like the duck on the pond analogy," the Commissioner said, "It appears that everything is calm up above, yet there are a million things happening underneath the surface."

**TOP LEFT:** In 1994, The Manly Daily, featured the good work of Shane and the Duffy's Forest brigade.

### RFS employment A lifelong dream

Not long after those fires in 1994, Shane took up a full time position with the RFS as Regional Planning Officer for the then Central East. It was a decision he did not take lightly.

"From my youngest years I had it in my mind that I would love to get employment in the organisation," he said.

In his first role as Regional Planning Officer Shane was responsible for firefighting risk management and operational planning and coordination as well as standards of fire cover from the Illawarra to Port Stephens and west to Lithgow.

"For a long time I was able to sustain both a salaried role and a very active volunteer involvement. Although it did become apparent that I could not sustain both particularly well, due to the travel and other commitments I had signed up to.

"I certainly miss not being on the end of a hose - to coin the phrase. But I also very much miss the brigade life, the brigade camaraderie and both the operational and social aspects of brigade life.

"I have maintained close relationships with my original brigade and other brigades in my local area. If time permits I would like to go back from time to time and participate in being a member and maybe doing some hazard reductions."



**TOP:** Shane with his late father, George Fitzsimmons. It was George who persuaded Shane to join the brigade as a 15 year old.

**ABOVE CENTRE:** Hazard reductions in Duffys Forest.

**ABOVE:** Shane washing the group officer's vehicle after the '94 fires.

With the Minister for Emergency Services, Nathan Rees, at the launch of the 2007 Bush Fire Danger Period.



## State Operations

### *A time of expansion*

In early 1996 he was promoted to manage the State Operations Section. His focus was to be on fire management, operations and communications on a statewide basis. It saw Shane actively involved at a time of substantial growth.

It was also the period when the old Bush Fire Service became the Rural Fire Service of today. The management of the Service at this time was paramount as 143 individual fire services merged into one.

“It was a busy time that saw development in all aspects of the Service,” he said, “Communications benefited with the development of a dedicated state wide radio system and the migration to a GRN/ VHF PMR platform.

“The Service’s aviation ability also received a boost with the formal introduction of a structured and cohesive agreement for the engagement of aircraft.

“Operations developed a more streamlined and cohesive response planning with the introduction of a 24 hour Call Centre at State Operations and single number Triple Zero (000) call taking facilities as well as migrating from STARG to Strike Teams.

“This time also saw the development of a more formal agreement with NSW Fire Brigades with the introduction of a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU). This gave a meaningful and consistent approach to such things as boundary variations and mutual aid agreements across NSW.”

## Assistant Commissioner

### *Learning to surf the culture of change*

Within two years, Mr Fitzsimmons had become Assistant Commissioner Operations. Over the years his position grew to incorporate regional management and the establishment of an Operational Communications 24 Hour Support Centre. Shane was happy to be a key player in a team bringing about these changes.



The investiture of the Australia Day AFSM Awards 2007 at Government House. The Commissioner (centre). Left to right: Trevor Anderson, Mick Beltran, Don Luscombe and Les Stewart.



At the launch of the 2007 Bush Fire Danger Period.

"Change in any organisation is often met with a raft of challenges," he said, "The interesting thing about change in the RFS is that it comes out of the inherent culture of the organisation. The RFS has a culture of continual improvement and betterment.

"A lot of the reforms that were undertaken in the past, and those that will be undertaken in the future, have been driven by internal demand for years. There was a call for consistency and standardisation from the staff and volunteers. There was a desire to remove the frustrations of dual accountability between FCO and the local government supervisor and the FCO and Commissioner.

"It was, and always will be, important to have a corporate approach to standardisation while not detracting from local autonomy and application."

As Assistant Commissioner Operations, Shane was responsible for the coordination

of all firefighting arrangements during some of the largest bush fires in the state's history, including the 2001-02 and 2002-03 fire seasons.

These fire seasons have been described as some of the most protracted, spreading across vast geographic zones of NSW and resulting in one of the largest coordinated firefighting efforts in NSW.

### The growing pressure on volunteers

Commissioner Fitzsimmons acknowledges the exponential expansion of the Service since the highly publicised fire season of January 1994.

Along with this expansion have come higher public expectations. The management of these expectations is at the forefront of the Commissioner's mind.

***"The day that there is an artificial divide between the Commissioner and the front line workforce would be a sad, sad day."***

"There have been a lot of changes in society's expectations over the past decade. Our training and equipment for volunteers and staff needs to reflect those changes.

"It is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that the training is right and the equipment is right to meet all of those challenges."

"After speaking with volunteers, I appreciate that they want to offer a more meaningful contribution to their communities and to other emergency services colleagues."

While many brigades are calling for enhanced and specialised training, the Commissioner is keen to keep a balance between specialised training and the need to sustain minimal requirements of basic bush firefighting skills.

To this end the RFS has been undertaking Brigade Classification over the past 12 months. Each brigade throughout the state has been identifying their core roles. This classification scheme will allow the service to customise training and equipment to better suit its members.

"The challenge now lies with Brigade classification," he said, "Members need to agree and commit to the roles that they are comfortable with. The most appropriate training and equipment will follow."

### Providing new opportunities for participation

Throughout the history of the RFS, the need to encourage new volunteers into the Service has been an issue. The availability of potential members has changed with the times. Increasingly, work commitments eat into the free time available to volunteers. Migration away from rural areas has also seen some brigades struggling to maintain numbers.

"There are many more things that will come up in the years ahead," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said. "Not everybody who volunteers wants to be a firefighter, for example. We do need to allow people from the community to come on board in different, yet vital, roles." "For example, in my own area, a fire spotting tower was built and it was decided to advertise locally to find out whether people would be interested in joining a tower brigade with the principal role of fire spotting on extreme fire weather days. The influx of interest was quite high. Many people, including retired members as well as those who had not had any role with the RFS previously, were happy to undertake some basic training and play a role that would assist in the broader firefighting effort.



Shane addressing the volunteers before they were deployed to Kangaroo Island December 2007.



The opening of the Rylstone Station in Mudgee, March 2008.





***“At the end of the day we need to maintain a strong viable volunteer structure - as volunteers are our most valuable asset.”***

“There is room and opportunity across the brigade structure to provide a greater flexibility in all manner of areas such as logistical support, reconnaissance and planning.”

The Commissioner sees the diversity of age, religion and nationality within the RFS as one of its great assets. Ensuring that volunteers are included in all aspects of the Service’s activities including Incident Management Teams, public education, and tanker development, is all part of the future

for what is the largest volunteer firefighting service in the world.

“At the end of the day we need to maintain a strong viable volunteer structure - as volunteers are our most valuable asset.”

### **A Commissioner who welcomes interaction**

In the middle of January 2008 the RFS was involved with a large explosion at a winery in the Hunter Valley. This event rocked the local community as well as many of the local brigades. Shane took time to visit the site to talk one on one with those involved.

“I think it is critically important to maintain that contact. The day that there is an artificial divide between the Commissioner and the

front line workforce would be a sad, sad day.

“It doesn’t matter where you operate in this organisation, whether you are a volunteer, an employee or a member of the executive, it is critically important that everyone can interact easily.

“I want people to feel free to meet and talk to me. For me it is vitally important. Genuine communication can never be underrated. I am happy to receive feedback and I want people to know that I am one of the people that they can give feedback to.”

Shane is honoured to lead the world’s largest volunteer fire service and he is well aware of the need to continually evolve. His vision, his passion and his dedication are sure to impact the Rural Fire Service for many years to come.

# 2012

## NSW Rural Fire Service STRATEGIC PLAN

### 2012 – A plan for the future

The RFS has recently adopted a strategic plan, a move coordinated by Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

The 2012 Strategic Plan describes a long term vision for the entire organisation spanning five years. The Plan is designed to:

- link planned RFS activities with the

requirements of the Government (NSW State Plan) and the community

- provide a unity of purpose for all RFS members and stakeholders
- inform lower level plans, including specialist plans such as the Total Asset Management Plan, Human Resources Strategy, and the Information and Communications Technology Strategy, as well as short and medium term plans such as the Corporate Plan, Business Plans and the Results and Services Plan.

The RFS Executive, Regional Managers and relevant section managers were involved in the Plan’s formation. The Plan was extensively informed by internal and external research including volunteer surveys, volunteer conferences, Bush Fire CRC research and the State Plan.

Four key areas will receive the Commissioner’s attention:

- Climate change
- People and membership
- Technology and research
- Public and community scrutiny

The 2012 Strategic Plan will be important for volunteers, staff and our relationships with other agencies and communities. It will also provide a basis for improved performance measurement in agencies such as Treasury.

**A lift-out poster of the 2012 Strategic Plan and the three vital areas of Volunteers, Staff and Stakeholders is included in this issue of Bush Fire Bulletin.**

# LITTLE PITTWATER BAY FIRE

By Alex Chesser, Operations Support Officer,  
Warringah Pittwater Rural Fire District  
Photos by Matthew Reeves

**A**t 0553hrs on Monday 1 October, 2007, the Warringah/Pittwater Rural Fire District took receipt of a Triple Zero(000) call indicating bush alight at Little Pittwater Bay, on the Hawkesbury River, within the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

The appliances that first arrived at the scene confirmed a fire travelling up from the river in an easterly direction under a north-westerly winds towards West Head Road.

Firefighting strategies were hampered by the inaccessibility of the fire and RFS boat crews were unable to attack the head of the fire due to cliffs. Support was arranged through the state air desk. Bucketing by rotary wing aircraft working out of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Depot at Mount Colah was arranged. Due to the remote location of the fire and its potential to spread towards communities under the prevailing weather conditions, the fire was declared a Class 2.

Conditions deteriorated further and despite continuous bucketing the fire crossed West Head Road spreading towards The Basin Camping area and the communities of Mackerel Beach and Currawong Beach. Due to school holidays, there were hundreds of campers at the Basin Camping area. They were quickly evacuated. The southern flank of the fire was contained by aerial attack and backburning commenced after dark.

***“Due to school holidays, there were hundreds of campers at the Basin Camping area. They were quickly evacuated.”***

At 1130hrs on Tuesday October 2, 2007 the Little Pittwater Bay fire was estimated to be approximately 223ha in size, and had impacted both The Basin and Currawong Beach. A hazard reduction done in 2005 had stopped the spread of the fire into Mackerel Beach. In the afternoon the Warringah/Pittwater BFMC met to discuss the severe fire weather forecast and the associated potential of fire escape. While the fire was largely contained at this stage

the committee recommended that a Section 44 declaration be made. Final backburning was completed during the night resulting in general containment but with active fire within the lines.

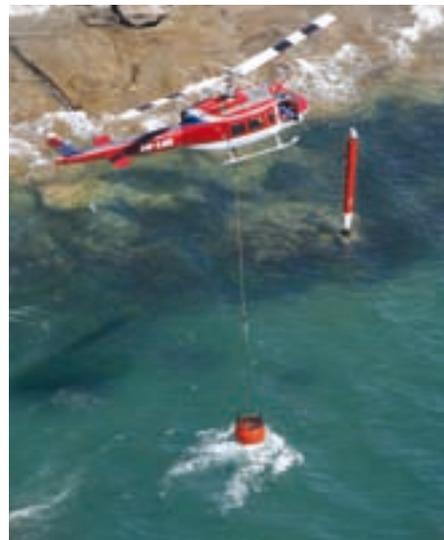
Wednesday October 3 saw a Total Fire Ban being declared as temperatures rose into the high 30s and winds over 50kph from the north-west. A number of RFS and NPWS crews continued to patrol the fireground with aerial support to ensure containment lines were not compromised. Several spot fires occurred and a combination of water bombing and ground attack ensured they were quickly contained. At 1410hrs another fire near Oxford Falls started. An immediate response by RFS, NSWFB and helicopters saw the fire quickly contained with one house suffering damage. As the weather conditions eased in the late afternoon, it appeared that control lines surrounding the Little Pittwater Bay Fire would hold.

Crews continued to patrol and mop up the Little Pittwater Bay Fire throughout the 4, 5 and 6 October. On the afternoon of 6 October the fire was declared out and the Section 44 declaration was revoked.

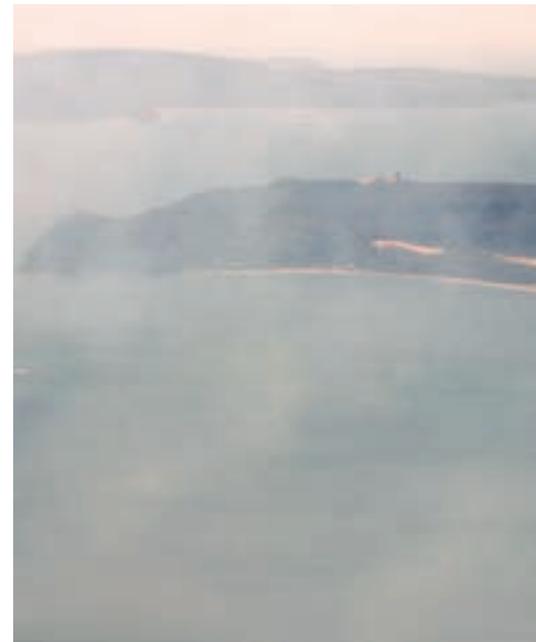
**LOWER CENTRE:** National Parks and Wildlife Service and RFS crews on West Head.

**BELOW:** Taking water off Flint and Steel Beach.

**BELOW LEFT:** Containing a spotfire on Flint and Steel Track.



National Parks and Wildlife Service crews working in West Head region.



National Parks and Wildlife Service and RFS crews on West Head.



Firebird 279 preparing to transport crews



Barrenjoey Headland shrouded in smoke from the Little Pittwater Bay fires.



Flying within West Head region.



Looking south of Flint and Steel containment line.



1.



2.



3.



4.



The tractor lost in the haystack fire in Harden, near Cootamundra.



A tractor and other equipment were destroyed in a hay shed in Lake Albert, near Wagga Wagga.

## RECORD NUMBERS OF HAYSTACK FIRES

By Insp Ben Shepherd, Media Services and Greg Jackson, Mid Lachlan Valley Team

**A**n unprecedented number of haystack fires have characterised this fire season. As many as 10 fires per day were being reported to RFS State Operations in early January.

The majority of fires occurred in Region West and South with a substantial number in the Riverina area and Mid Lachlan Valley areas.

The rash of haystack fires began when the weather warmed up in early October. By mid-January the number of fires in NSW had passed 350 and districts undertook a statewide media blitz to warn farmers about dangers of haystack fires.

The increase in haystack fires can be traced back to the failure of Spring rains. When

rain in early Spring did not eventuate many farmers cut their crops early for hay - while the plants still contained moisture. The warmer weather that followed in early October created a lethal mixture. Within the hay bales the extra moisture and warmer temperatures accelerated bacterial growth and led to spontaneous combustion.

### The single biggest loss was in Deniliquin

While there has been large number of bales lost this season the biggest single loss occurred in the Deniliquin area in the Southern Riverina when approximately 10,000 bales were burnt.

Rangemore Brigade was called to the Yambinya Feedlot around midday on December 6 to assist a private tanker and staff who were already on site. On arrival Captain Kingsley Green reported that approximately 1600 tonnes of hay stacked

in rows 10 metres apart, was alight. Within 15 minutes the fire which had begun on the southern side of the stack spread rapidly to engulf the entire stockpile.

RFS crews concentrated on protecting an adjoining pile of cotton seed which was valued at over \$1.2 million. Crews saved over \$1.1million worth of feed and overall losses were kept to a minimum.

Rangemore Brigade continued to monitor the fire with feed lot staff for another week. Estimated loss for the fire was over \$670,000.

### Hayshed saved in Boonara

A report came in to Mid Lachlan Valley Team's duty officer at 2300hrs on 6 January 2008 that a new shed, valued at \$200,000 and containing approximately 5,000 large bales worth approximately \$87,500, was in imminent danger of being destroyed by fire. The moisture content was around 90

percent and temperatures were rising. A light smoke or steam had been detected. It only affected one bay of one side of the stack. Upon checking the bales on the outside of the shed it was determined that at least 50 bales were likely to self combust in the near future if action was not taken.

There was concern that disturbing the bales would ignite a fire, so Group Captain Peter Cannon called for two brigades to assist while the suspect bales were removed. This task was completed by 0530hrs, 7 January with no fire. The suspect bales were individually isolated so as to not cause any problem should they ignite at a later time.

### Team effort in Coonamble

The new Coonamble Feedlot which has been operating for approximately 12 months has experienced three separate haystack fires during early January 2008.

Coonamble Headquarters Brigade responded on all three occasions with the assistance of the Gulargambone Brigade and the ever willing volunteers from both brigades.

In the first call out there was an estimated 200 large square bales destroyed, followed by approximately 500 then 250 large square bales at each of the two other incidents.

As many would agree, there is little the brigades can do to extinguish haystack fires. Our method for the first and smaller stack was to move the smouldering hay onto a suitably prepared area and allow it to burn out while the brigade monitored the situation.

Following the second call-out, the CSO visited the feedlot and met with the manager and one of the local shareholders to discuss the situation.

After a short discussion, the feedlot agreed to grade a large area adjacent to the stacks and then transfer all remaining unburnt bales onto the bare area in smaller stacks. This would reduce the loss should another fire occur and would allow greater access for the brigades.

The management of the feedlot also obtained a hay probe fitted with a temperature gauge and tested each remaining bale. These were then stacked in to three sections on the well prepared area in accordance with the temperature measurement.

The staff of the North West Zone would like to thank the brigades for their ongoing support and professionalism. We would also like to thank the management of the feedlot for their cooperation in preparing the new area and taking the trouble to safeguard the remaining unburnt hay.

**FAR LEFT: 1 and 2:** A pile of hay in Harden, near Cootamundra.

**3 and 4:** Moxey hayshed fire.



The biggest single loss in a haystack fire this season was in Deniliquin with around 10,000 bales burnt.



Hay was transferred onto bare ground to burn out at the Coonamble Feedlot.



After three fires in one month, RFS and Coonamble Feedlot managers worked together to save a large proportion of their hay.

## RFS JOINS POLICE AT BATHURST 1000

The RFS was part of a very successful operation to keep spectators safe at the Bathurst 1000 motor sport event last October.

Widely touted as the safest and most sober Bathurst 1000 in many years, last year's race was the focus of a concerted effort and extensive planning from all the emergency services including six brigades of the RFS.

Police were highly visible at the race with ramped up security measures and restrictions on alcohol. The RFS gave 24 hour fire protection for the race over the four days.

Six brigades were involved in the planning and operation including Bathurst Headquarters (13 members), Eglinton (17 members), Rockley (1 member), Rock Forest (9 members), Fitzgerald's Valley (3 members), Raglan (6 members), Perthville (8 members) and Heathcote (4 members) with a tanker from the Heathcote brigade.

The increased security for the 2007 race meant the scope of RFS involvement was greater than in the past. Supt Terry Jackson, Operations Officer of Region East Coordinated the event at a Regional level and Insp Greg Wardle, from Chifley Zone, coordinated the event at the local level. Both officers worked closely with police, NSWFB and other emergency services over a seven month period prior to the event. Highly confidential monthly planning meetings were conducted at Bathurst Police Station in the lead up to October. In the final few months the brigades were involved with meetings and an exercise.

### New era in planning

Planning for the event heralded a new era in major incident planning. Initiated by the Public Order and Riot Squad (PORS) in the NSW Police, the planning spanned over seven months and along with the RFS included local government, local hospitals, all emergency services and even the army and the Department of Corrective Services.

Supt Terry Jackson said the entire process of planning for a major incident was very very successful by utilising large scale site exercises and desk top exercises of possible scenarios.

"As part of the planning process a large scale exercise was held on Mount Panorama prior to the event," Supt Jackson said, "Exercise Aroona was conducted by police and included participation by all emergency and community services that would be involved with the actual race event. It tested all the systems and how we might respond in the case of a major incident with a large number of injuries.

"Two RFS brigades were involved in this exercise – Bathurst HQ and Eglinton," he



Bathurst 1000 attracted 100,000 spectators over the week of races.



Eighty-five RFS personnel were involved.



The RFS gave 24 hour fire protection for the race.

said, "The mountain was locked down and five possible scenarios were enacted during the afternoon and extended into the night. Four of the five scenarios included fires." The exercises were very life-like with professionally staged props, explosions and about 250 people coached in to react as a hostile crowd. This proved very useful in identifying any weaknesses in RFS systems and in particular in the way the emergency services work together in a volatile crowd and restricted environment.

"One of the main lessons learned was how police manoeuvre to gain crowd control," Supt Jackson said, "and how our brigades can work within this process. It was also very beneficial for the police as they were able to gain an appreciation of our objectives and how we manage an incident on site."

### The 1000 race: October 3-10

During the motor sporting event itself, Supt Terry Jackson was stationed on the mountain top. Two RFS brigades were stationed on the mountain top and a further three brigades were stationed on the lower mountain near the campsites and pits.

As part of first response fire management, the Heathcote Brigade's Cat 1 tanker was brought to Bathurst. The tanker is designed for aircraft and oil terminal fires and therefore is equipped with a high volume monitor that is controlled internally. In the case of a hostile crowd, this allows for a first attack which still gives protection to the crew. A team of four firefighters who are

specially trained in the use of the unit were stationed at Bathurst for the race. A major incident status was declared for the five key days of races. An Incident Management Team (IMT) was established at the Bathurst Police Station. There were two twelve hour shifts, each shift had an Incident Commander, Operations Officer and Logistics Officer.

A clearly defined area extending about 1km around the Mt Panorama circuit was established and divided into sectors. Sector Alpha was across the top of the mountain, Sector Foxtrot was all of the area within the racing circuit and Sector Kilo was the area south, west and north of the circuit. There was a Liaison Officer stationed at the police compound at the top of the mountain on a 24 hour basis. During the five days there were two units (Bathurst HQ and Heathcote) and a Group Officer, in Alpha Sector, two units (Rock Forest and Raglan) and a Group Officer in Foxtrot Sector and one unit (Perthville) in Kilo Sector.

The brigades responded to incidents from Wednesday 3 October through to Wednesday 10 October. During this time the number of personnel was 85 working in twelve hour shifts, 11 units were used with a total of 1,713.5 person hours.

There were over 100,000 spectators with more than 1000 camp sites. Eighteen incidents were reported through Triple Zero (000) and all were attended to. A further 100 incidents were not recorded through the Triple Zero (000) system.

## MVA SKILLS PUT TO THE TEST OVER SUMMER

**B**etween November and February, the RFS responded to over 1500 motor vehicles accidents, three of which were significant incidents.

In mid-January, Insp Steve Hall caught these spectacular photos of a fuel tanker alight on the Newell Highway near Moree. (*right, photos 1-4*)

A Triple Zero (000) call was placed at around 0730hrs explaining that a fuel tanker was alight. The dog trailer on a B Double had fallen over – possibly due to a blown tyre. The rigid tanker was carrying 28,000 litres of diesel, the trailer was holding a further 28,000 litres of diesel and 3,500 litres of unleaded petrol. The fallen dog trailer held 14,000 litres of diesel.

The driver of the B Double called Triple Zero (000) only after he himself had tried to disconnect the dog trailer from the rest of the truck. Unable to pull the pin, he disconnected the rigid part of the truck and drove away from the scene unhurt. The dog trailer caught a spark and began to burn.

Three RFS brigades responded - Pallamallawa, Ashley and Croppa Creek and some members from Oodnadatta Brigade. Later in the day the Amaro Catering Unit attended the scene. NSW Fire Brigades also responded with a pumper as well as a HAZMAT team from Narrabri. Police, Ambulance, SES, RTA and EPA also attended. Insp Steve Hall was the RFS liaison.

On assessment, the NSWFB commander decided to let the fuel burn out rather than quash the blaze. As the fuel burned the aluminium tanks melted and folded in on themselves, leaving the fuel contained, although well alight.

RFS volunteers were positioned strategically around the incident in case of a grass fire. At one point the grass did begin to smoulder but was controlled within 500 metres of the burning truck.

The truck fire self extinguished at around 1630hrs. NSW Fire Brigades used foam to cool the bitumen and the last of the trailer's chassis. The RTA conducted repair work on the road and was able to reopen the Newell Highway in the early hours of the next day – 18 hours after the initial incident.

Trucks were reportedly lined up from one side of Moree to the other waiting for access to the Newell Highway. One resident claimed the waiting drivers were ordering take-away pizzas all night long!

### Paint and thinners spill

On Friday 30 November at 1843hrs a B Double rolled over spilling paint, thinners and diesel across the Gwydir Highway near Collarenebri. RFS crews responded from Collarenebri, along with members from Grawin, Lightning Ridge, HAZMAT from Dubbo, NSW Fire Brigades from Walgett, Coonamble and Gilgandra and Walgett Council. The incident was eventually cleared up with the highway reopening at 2000hrs on 1 December. (*see photos on lower right*)



## THE ROAD THAT BLEW AWAY

### Could this be the weirdest call out for 2007?

It was late December in the Hay district and the area had been recently drenched in rain. Firefighters were calm despite the warm weather and thunderstorms. They were even preparing to knock off early for the Christmas break.

Late Friday afternoon, 21 December, however, Hay Fire Control Centre received a report that a mini tornado had just passed through a local property destroying a woolshed and damaging the homestead and several cottages. (see photos bottom right)

A few minutes later Hay Group Captain, Jim Crossley, reported in with another incident on the Cobb Highway. Jim had himself just received a call from a passer-by saying that "the bitumen had blown off the road" near his property.

There was stunned silence for a few seconds in the Fire Control Centre. Jim is not generally known as a practical joker. Jim explained.

It turns out this section of the Cobb Highway had been laid down on geotextile matting. Five hundred metres of the bitumen had been picked up by strong winds and landed on the table drain. Some of the road had even ripped off entirely and flown 50 metres away.

### **"There was stunned silence for a few seconds in the Fire Control Centre."**

This strange event also proved to be a safety hazard. The heavy and sudden rain turned the "naked" road surface into a bog. There were fears that an unsuspecting motorist would drive at speed onto the wet surface and have an accident.

Group Captain Jim Crossley was able to warn traffic at one end of the damaged road, however a car became bogged at the opposite end! An RFS crew quickly gathered to do the traffic control.

RTA were notified, assembled their emergency crew and travelled 120kms from Hay to assist.



Just in case the bitumen that blew away became a 'rural myth', Jim's son, Robert, brought out his camera to record it for posterity.

**TOP AND CENTRE:** Bitumen and matting lifted, flipped and blown off the Cobb Highway near Hay.

**RIGHT:** The mini tornado that damaged the Cobb Highway also passed through a local property destroying a woolshed and damaging the homestead and several cottages.



## THIS ISSUE'S COMPETITION WINNERS

In the last issue of Bushfire Bulletin we offered the chance to win \$500 worth of equipment for your brigade by sending in a photo or story for publication. The Brigade's who won are:

### SHOALHAVEN DISTRICT

Sean Bremner, Air Attack Supervisor, Shoalhaven District sent in some brilliant pictures from the deployment to Kangaroo Island. See pages 4-6.

### BELROSE BRIGADE

Brian Geach from Belrose Brigade sent in a story about his visit to firefighters in the Catskill Mountains, USA. Check out his photos and story on page 55.



## 'INSPECTOR' SAMSON SAVES THE DAY

Story and photos by Capt Sean McLoughlin, Ingleside Brigade

It was the night before Christmas and Samson, the trusted family German Shepherd, was barking so loudly he woke the whole family. This Ingleside family got up to find their garage well alight.

Ingleside RFB crew was able to respond immediately (at 0349hrs) with the district's instant response vehicle 'Flyer' (Cat 1 Pumper). Ingleside RFB was paged for the additional Cat 1 and additional appliances responded from Terrey Hills RFB (Pumper), NSWFB - Mona Vale and RFS Group 2.

The 'Flyer' was first on scene and confirmed a garage well alight and accounted for all occupants. An RFS Breathing Apparatus (BA) team used a single 38mm attack line on the seat of the garage fire. The Ingleside Cat 1 arrived with the Ingleside Brigade Captain assuming Incident Control and later the NSWFB Station Officer assumed Operations Officer role.

An additional RFS BA team arrived and assisted the first RFS BA team in bringing the fire under control. At the same time the NSWFB crew assessed and extinguished the fire that had extended into the office of the house.

Access to the seat of the fire was hampered by the large amount of equipment stored in the garage. This was quickly overcome by continuing to attack the fire from both the internal and external entrance to the garage, as well as by applying AFFF (foam) from a 25mm foam branch to the vehicle and a flammable liquids storage cabinet.

A number of LPG cylinders were removed from the garage and cooled. Crews monitored the partial roof collapse and cracked walls.

Fortunately the quick response and appropriate actions of both RFS and NSWFB crews, meant that only minor fire damage was sustained to the house, although an office and laundry area were gutted. There was significant smoke damage to the rest of the property, with water damage being prevented by using Cat 1 non-percolating hoses. The estimated damage to the house was \$150,000.

All crews and services worked harmoniously and everyone was grateful Samson had prevented a major catastrophe at Christmas.

**TOP:** Samson, the family German Shepherd, alerted the family to the fire in the early hours of the morning.

**CENTRE:** Access to the seat of the fire was hampered by equipment stored in the garage.

**RIGHT:** Damage to the house was contained to the garage and the adjoining office.



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## QUICK TO ARRIVE AT HOUSE FIRE

Story and photos by Insp Ben Shepherd

In the early morning on Tuesday 15 January 2008 the Lemon Tree Passage Brigade were called to a reported house alight in Elizabeth Street, Lemon Tree Passage.

The Captain, Keith Jones could see the house well alight when leaving his home to attend the station. He went directly to the incident to find neighbours entering the second storey bedroom and rescuing a man who was trapped. The trapped gentleman was successfully extracted and resuscitated in the front yard. Three other adults and three children had already escaped from the house before the fire took hold.

The Lemon Tree Passage Brigade was on scene within minutes and went straight into offensive firefighting. The Brigade was backed up with units from Tanilba Bay and Salt Ash under the guidance Group 1 Les Bowden, further assistance was sought from NSWFB.

All units worked well to hold the fire to the second storey. The ground floor suffered only smoke and water damage with tarps laid over furniture and possessions in an effort to protect them.

An initial investigation by the RFS and police revealed that the fire may have been caused by an electrical fault in the second storey living room.

**TOP:** The second storey window on the right of the house is where neighbours, using a ladder, entered the bedroom to remove the occupant who had become trapped.

**RIGHT:** RFS volunteers begin initial investigations under the guidance of Rural Fire Investigator, Neil Raymond.



# GENERAL NEWS

## VOLUNTEERS HONOURED ON AUSTRALIA DAY

By Matthew Schroder, Media Services

Australia Day, 2008 saw a number of the NSW Rural Fire Service's most experienced members recognised for their commitment and dedication to the community.

The Governor General, His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery, announced the recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), which recognises distinguished service of an individual who shows leadership, dedication or achievement in the Service.

"These six RFS members are deserving of one of the Service's highest accolades and I congratulate all of them for their tireless dedication to the NSW community," said Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons following the announcement of the Australia Day Honours 2008.

"Each one of our AFSM recipients has demonstrated a superior knowledge of firefighting and imparted a wealth of experience to the communities in which they reside.

"Neville Anderson has been a member of the RFS for over 39 years and has been tasked to fires across NSW, including the Christmas 2001 bush fire emergency in the Clarence area. He is a natural leader and currently holds the rank of Group Captain.

"Brian McKinlay joined the RFS in 1963 as a member of Berowra Brigade in the Hornsby District. Through dedicated service he has since risen to the rank of Group Captain within the Hawkesbury District. Additionally he currently holds the position of President of the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA).

"Stephen Weyman was instrumental in the formation of Orchard Hills Rural Fire Brigade and has over 36 years of inspiring and respected service. Group Officer Weyman is respected for his knowledge, valuable

commitment and distinguished service to the community.

"Clive Linnett joined the Ivanhoe Rural Fire Brigade in 1961 and is a true example of what it means to be a volunteer in the remote areas of NSW. Over his 46 years of service Group Officer Linnett has conducted himself with the utmost dignity of service and his leadership style has won the respect of many RFS volunteers.

"Peter Murphy joined the RFS in 1982 and is a professional and highly respected member. His leadership and cool composure in the face of strenuous circumstances has led to his enormous value during a variety of emergency incidents. He embodies the ethos that is typical of the RFS.

"Clinton Jessop-Smith has held the position of Senior Group Officer for the past ten years after joining the RFS in 1973. He has been involved in many out of area commitments including the recent Blue Mountains campaign. He is a well respected officer and is held in high regard by volunteers and staff," said Commissioner Fitzsimmons.

### Full list of 2008 AFSM recipients:

**Neville Anderson**  
Group Officer – Clarence Valley District

**Brian McKinlay**  
Group Officer – Hawkesbury District

**Stephen Weyman**  
Group Officer – Cumberland Zone

**Clive Maxwell Linnett**  
Group Officer – Central Darling District

**Peter Murphy**  
Group Officer – The Lakes Team  
Staff Member – Lower Hunter Zone

**Clinton Jessop-Smith**  
Group Officer – Cumberland Zone



Neville Anderson



Brian McKinlay



Stephen Weyman



Clive Linnett



Peter Murphy



Clinton Jessop Smith



**A SEVERE STORM  
APPROACHING  
BULLI FIRE  
CONTROL CENTRE**

Photo by Maree Larkin.



# RADIO OPERATION

By Chief Superintendent Alan Brinkworth,  
 Manager Operational Readiness,  
 Chief Superintendent Bruce McDonald,  
 Manager Operational Communications and  
 Nigel Everest, Audit & Compliance Officer,  
 Operational Communications, Region West

**T**he role of radio communication is vitally important to any emergency operation, as this enables various agencies, units and/or personnel to communicate with each other to achieve effective and efficient coordination of the incident in line with ICS principles. A communications network consists of radio transmission equipment, such as repeaters, mobile radios in vehicles, hand-held radios and a facility such as a Fire Control Centre (FCC), which controls the network. In some instances, it may be necessary to augment the communications system by the addition of temporary portable repeaters or an Operational Command Vehicle (OCV).

The RFS commenced migration to a standard, state-wide radio communications platform in the mid 1990s. A number of factors influenced the Service's decision in this regard, including the results of the inquiry into the January 1994 fires, the development of a NSW Government Radio Network (GRN) and the decision by the Federal governing body, then known as the Australian Communications Authority (ACA), to "narrow band" frequencies under a national spectrum management initiative. Narrow Banding simply meant that the spacing between radio frequencies was reduced from 25 KHz to 12.5 KHz. Prior to the adoption of a standard UHF Private Mobile Radio (PMR) network, there

were very few local RFS Districts operating on dedicated common radio networks. Where radio networks did exist, they were typically shared with Council and operated on different frequency bands including Very High Frequency (VHF) mid and low bands, as well as various UHF Citizen's Bands (CB). It is also worthy to note that the ACA narrow banding and allocation of spectrum, resulted in an unavailability of the VHF bands.

## What is the difference between GRN (UHF) and PMR (UHF)?

**GRN** is a trunked radio system. A trunked radio system is one in which many users share the use of a common pool of radio frequencies. As you move from area to area the frequency you are using and the repeater through which you are communicating may change, although this will not be apparent to you. A computer controlling the system automatically allocates the appropriate frequency and repeater to your call. Parallels in this regard could be drawn to the technological operation of a mobile phone network.

In NSW the GRN has a limited footprint which does not cover the entire state and as such is used, where appropriate and in line with responsible communications planning protocols.

**PMR** systems consist of a series of local repeater networks each enabling communications within a specific geographical area. You need to be working off one of the local repeaters to contact

another station on the local repeater channel. PMR radio systems are used in most Districts/Teams/Zones as the primary local RFS radio system. The RFS has 359 PMR radio transmission sites across NSW. The RFS uses radio communication at three operating levels, strategic, tactical and task. In order to do this, different technologies and parts of the spectrum band are utilised.

- **Strategic communications** are broadly described as those between Regional Offices, District FCCs, satellite District Offices and the RFS Headquarters. The strategic network (StratNet) is designed as a point to point radio system using targeted antennas in order to deliver communications from one end of NSW to the other. Any broadcast coverage on StratNet is simply a bonus, not an engineered solution. StratNet uses a mixture of GRN and PMR.
- **Tactical Communications** are typically between FCCs and fire appliances, tankers or aircraft and are used for day to day operations and general brigade management. Tactical utilises one of the two types of systems, either GRN or PMR both of which are within the UHF part of the spectrum, however, the majority of Districts/Teams/Zones operate on PMR.
- **Task Based Communications** are those between tankers, between tankers and firefighters or between firefighters on an incident ground. VHF is used generally on the eastern seaboard and more densely populated areas and UHF-CB (Citizen's Band) is used in some rural

Continued on page 33

## XTL 5000 03 Tankers and White Fleet



## RADIO OPERATION (XTL 5000 03)

- **TO TURN XTL 5000 03 on**, briefly press "ON/OFF Button". Radio is programmed to come "on" after about ten seconds.
- **TO TURN OFF**, press the "ON/OFF Button" momentarily or use **tanker's isolator**.  
*Note that when ever power is isolated then restored, radio will return to its previous state (i.e. same Channel and Zone etc)*
- **CHECKING VOLUME** on the XTL 5000 03 check the volume position by pressing the volume "VOL" button either up or down and you should see a "Bar Graph" and "Volume xx" displayed. It ranges between 0 – 15 and a good starting point is about half way at "7", then regulate volume level from this point.
- **SELECTING A ZONE:** To switch between Zones with the XTL 5000 03, briefly press the "Soft Key" under the "Zone" in the display. Then use the "Navigation Keypad" left/right to select desired Zone then press the "Home Button" or "PTT", this will lock you on to the desired Zone.

### THE ZONES ARE:

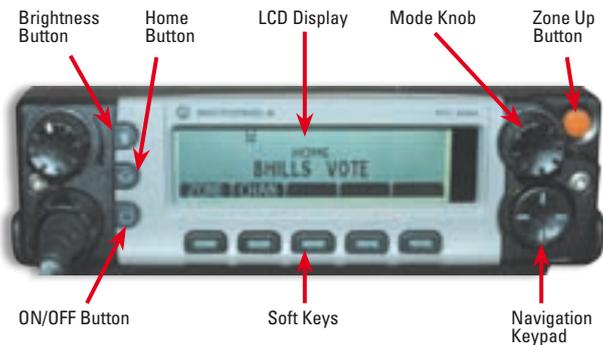
Position	Displayed XTL 5000 03	Channel Prefixes
One	"HOME" Zone	Group name for Vote or GRN or Site
Two	"PMR" Zone	"P" with channel number
Three	"GRN" Zone	"G" with GRN talk group name
Four	"FIELD OPS" Zone	"F" with channel name and type
Five	"STRATNET ESO" Zone	"S" with channel name and type

**SELECTING A CHANNEL:** To switch between Channels, briefly press the "Soft Key" under the "CHAN" on display. Then by using the "Navigation Keypad" left or right which scrolls up and down the channels, stop at the desired channel, and then press the "HOME Button" or press "PTT", to lock you on the desired channel.

You can also use the "Mode Key" up or down to select the desired channel, without needing to press "HOME Button".

**Alternatively:** Briefly press the "Soft Key" under the "CHAN" in display. Then through the "Numerical Keypad" enter channel location number, all digits, of the desired channel, then press the "HOME Button" or "PTT" to lock you on the desired channel.

## XTL 5000 05 Desktop, FCC and Aircraft



## RADIO OPERATION (XTL 5000 05)

- **TO TURN XTL 5000 05 on**, briefly press "ON/OFF Button". Radio is programmed to come "on" after about ten seconds.
- **CHECKING VOLUME**  
By using the "Volume Knob" rotate to about 12:00 o'clock position as a good starting point then regulate volume level as desired.
- **SELECTING A ZONE:** To switch between Zones briefly press the "Soft Key" under the "Zone" in the display. Then use the "Navigation Keypad" left/right or rotate the "MODE Knob" to select desired Zone, then press the "Home Button" or "PTT", this will lock you on to that Zone. Alternately, pressing "Zone Up Button" will advance you one Zone up.

### THE ZONES ARE:

Position	Displayed XTL 5000 05	Channel Prefixes
One	"HOME" Zone	Group name for Vote or GRN or Site
Two	"PMR" Zone	"P" with channel number
Three	"GRN" Zone	"G" with GRN talk group name
Four	"FIELD OPS" Zone	"F" with channel name and type
Five	"STRATNET ESO" Zone	"S" with channel name and type

**SELECTING A CHANNEL:** To switch between Channels scroll up or down by using the "MODE Knob" to reach the desired channel.

## XTS 5000 R Portables



## RADIO OPERATION (XTS 5000 R)

- **TO TURN XTS 5000 R Portable on** use the "ON/OFF & Volume Knob", if fully anti clockwise, rotate clockwise past a click point and radio should come on with some information in the display. Otherwise, if not fully anti-clockwise and no display, battery may be or is probably flat, replace or recharge battery.
- **TO TURN OFF**, rotate "ON/OFF & Volume Knob" fully anticlockwise, past click.
- **CHECKING VOLUME**  
XTS 5000 R Portables you need to rotate "ON/OFF & Volume Knob" clockwise to about half way position as a good starting point, then you can regulate volume level.

**SELECTING A ZONE:** To switch between Zones with the XTS 5000 R (Portable) use the "ZONE Knob", rotating knob will scroll between "Zones". As the Portable does not display Zone name you will need to observe the channel prefix i.e. F, G, and P etc, which indicates which Zone you are in.

### THE ZONES ARE:

Position	Displayed 03 & 05	Channel Prefixes
One	"HOME" Zone	Group name for Vote or GRN or Site
Two	"PMR" Zone	"P" with channel number
Three	"GRN" Zone	"G" with GRN talk group name
Four	"FIELD OPS" Zone	"F" with channel name and type
Five	"STRATNET ESO" Zone	"S" with channel name and type

**SELECTING A CHANNEL:** To select a Channel, briefly press the "Soft Key" under the "CHAN" on display. Then by using the "Navigation Keypad" left or right which will scroll up and down channels, stop at the desired channel, and then press the "HOME Button" or press "PTT", to lock you on the desired channel.

**Alternatively,** Briefly press the "Soft Key" under the "CHAN" in display. Then through the "Numerical Keypad" enter channel location number, all digits, of the desired channel, then press the "HOME Button" or "PTT" to lock you on the desired channel.



# RADIO OPERATIONS

## NSW Rural Fire Service REGION NORTH - PMR RADIO

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site	Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site	Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site				
<b>CLARENCE VALLEY</b>				<b>NAMOI GWYDIR</b>				<b>NORTHERN TABLELANDS</b>							
18	P001	Clarence Valley		47	P030	Moree	Laurel Vale	25	P008	Tenterfield	Girrad State Forest				
38	P021	Clarence Valley	Clarence Peak	49	P032	Narrabri	Gwabegar	27	P010	Glen Innes Severn	Martins Lookout				
41	P024	Clarence Valley	The Bluff	51	P034	Gwydir	Clifton Hill	28	P011	Tenterfield	Mt McKenzie				
53	P036	Clarence Valley	Pickabooba Trig	69	P052	Moree	Mungindi	30	P013	Inverell	Grampion Ridge				
55	P038	Clarence Valley	Cangal East	72	P055	Moree	Mt Mitchell	37	P020	Tenterfield	Acacia Plateau				
75	P058	Clarence Valley	Mt Tuting	85	P068	Gwydir	Warialda	48	P031	Glen Innes Severn	The Magistrate				
76	P059	Clarence Valley	Pinebrush	86	P069	Narrabri	Mt Kaputar	52	P035	Glen Innes Severn	Frog Hollow Trig				
77	P060	Clarence Valley	Halfway Creek	87	P070	Moree	Moree	58	P041	Inverell	Hallam Trig				
<b>FAR NORTH COAST</b>				89	P072	Gwydir	Batterhams Lookout	74	P057	Tenterfield	Haystack Mtn				
39	P022	Tweed	Burringbar	91	P074	Gwydir	Blue Nobby Mtn	90	P073	Inverell	Uambi				
48	P031	Byron	Cape Byron	90	P073	Moree	Clylie Site 1 Moree	<b>TAMWORTH</b>							
50	P033	Tweed	Mt Nardi	<b>NEW ENGLAND</b>				23	P006	Tamworth	Mt Baldwin				
62	P045	Ballina	North Teven	41	P024	Walcha	Forest Hill Trig	24	P007	Tamworth	Blue Nobby Mtn				
68	P051	Byron	Mullumbimby	49	P032	Guyra	Mt Rumbee	38	P021	Tamworth	Turkey Mtn				
87	P070	Tweed	Springbrook	53	P036	Uralla	Mt Salisbury	40	P023	Tamworth	Moonbi Trig				
88	P071	Ballina	Buckombil Mtn	54	P037	Guyra	Teanghi Hill	42	P025	Tamworth	Baldy Knob				
<b>LIVERPOOL RANGES</b>				56	P039	Walcha	Ryarrukka SF	43	P026	Tamworth	Mt Soma				
45	P028	Quirindi	Mt Tamarang	62	P045	Dumaresq	Point Lookout	70	P053	Tamworth	Mt Blanche				
49	P032	Merriwa	Coolah Tops	71	P054	Dumaresq	Little Duval	<b>LOWER NORTH COAST (TWIN RIVERS)</b>							
50	P033	Quirindi	Quirindi	78	P061	Walcha	Blakes Hill	36	P019	Kempsey	Boonanghi Trig				
54	P037	Gunnedah	Black Jack Mtn	79	P062	Walcha	Porters Camp	50	P033	Nambucca	Sugarloaf Mtn				
61	P044	Murrundi	Mt Helen	<b>NORTHERN RIVERS</b>				76	P059	Nambucca	Yarrahapinni				
76	P059	Scone	Rossgole Lookout	22	P005	Richmond Valley	Mallanganee	87	P070	Nambucca	Mt England				
78	P061	Merriwa	Merriwa	49	P032	Richmond Valley	Pickabooba Trig	<b>WARRUMBUNGLES</b>							
83	P066	Scone	Black Mtn	59	P042	Lismore	The Channon	39	P022	Coolah	Mendooran				
86	P069	Scone	Hunter Springs	63	P046	Lismore	Lismore	41	P024	Gilgandra	Needle Mtn				
89	P072	Merriwa	Kars Springs	64	P047	Richmond Valley	Naughtons Gap	43	P026	Gilgandra	Wamboin plains				
<b>MID NORTH COAST</b>				76	P059	Kyogle	Woodenbong	47	P030	Coonabaraban	Siding Springs				
39	P022	Bellingen	Mt Hyland	81	P064	Kyogle	Homeleigh	62	P045	Coonabaraban	Wanda Trig				
44	P027	Bellingen	Mt Wondurrigah	82	P065	Richmond Valley	Woodburn	63	P046	Coonabaraban	Baradine				
71	P054	Coffs Harbour	Halfway Creek	83	P066	Kyogle	Haystack	67	P050	Coolah	Coolah				
72	P055	Bellingen	Francis Lookout												
78	P061	Coffs Harbour	Boambee												
80	P063	Coffs Harbour	Orara East												
85	P068	Coffs Harbour	Mt Wondurrigah												

NSW Rural Fire Service Operational Communications

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## NSW Rural Fire Service REGION SOUTH - PMR RADIO

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site	Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site	Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>FAR SOUTH COAST</b>				<b>MID MURRAY</b>				<b>RIVERINA HIGHLANDS</b>			
31	P014	Eurobodalla	Plumwood	23	P006	Conargo	Conargo	24	P007	Tumut	Tumorrana Mtn
34	P017	Eurobodalla	Big Bit	28	P011	Murray	Bunnaloo	48	P031	Tumbarumba	Kendall
36	P019	Bega Valley	Wolumla Peak	34	P017	Jerilderie	Jerilderie	65	P048	Tumut	Werboldera Trig
37	P020	Bega Valley	Mumbula	36	P019	Murray	Mathoura	70	P053	Tumbarumba	Ikes
38	P021	Bega Valley	Peak Alone	37	P020	Wakool	Barham	73	P056	Gundagai	Gundagai Trig
43	P026	Bega Valley	Bimmil Hill	39	P022	Murray	Calimo	75	P058	Gundagai	Mt Ulandra
47	P030	Eurobodalla	Peak Alone	43	P026	Jerilderie	Coleambally	78	P061	Tumut	Mt Adrah
78	P061	Eurobodalla	Boundary Mtn	45	P028	Murray	Moama	82	P065	Tumbarumba	Greg Greg
85	P068	Bega Valley	Timbillica	46	P029	Wakool	Moulamein	110	P093	Tumbarumba	Mount Ginini
88	P071	Eurobodalla	Narooma	47	P030	Windouran	Glennmire	<b>SHOALHAVEN</b>			
<b>LAKE GEORGE</b>				54	P037	Windouran	Bundyblumblah	26	P009	Shoalhaven	Big Bit
21	P004	Tallaganda	Meangora Trig	56	P039	Murray	Tuppall Rd	27	P010	Shoalhaven	Bherwerre Trig
25	P008	Tallaganda	Boundary Mountain	66	P049	Wakool	Murray Downs	29	P012	Shoalhaven	Red Rocks
32	P015	Yarrowlumla	Mt Ginini	70	P053	Deniliquin	Deniliquin	35	P018	Shoalhaven	Boyne Trig
33	P016	Tallaganda	Mt Cronin	75	P058	Wakool	Tooleybuc	59	P042	Shoalhaven	Bewong
61	P044	Tallaganda	Budawang	79	P062	Wakool	Lowbidgee	74	P057	Shoalhaven	Fishermans
80	P063	Tallaganda	Gibraltar	<b>MONARO</b>				77	P060	Shoalhaven	Sassafra
81	P064	Yarrowlumla	Mt Cronin	29	P012	Cooma Monaro	Mount Eagle	70	P053	Shoalhaven	Budawang
87	P070	Yarrowlumla	Bald Hill	35	P018	Snowy River	Bald Hill	83	P066	Shoalhaven	Moeyan Hill
<b>LOWER WESTERN</b>				40	P023	Bombala	Mt Thoko	84	P067	Shoalhaven	Kangaroo Valley
18	P001	Wentworth	Murrugi Station	53	P036	Snowy River	Perisher Mtn	<b>SOUTHERN BORDER</b>			
45	P028	Balranald	Freemount Station	56	P039	Snowy River	Ingebyra Trig	48	P031	Hume	Goombargana Hill
50	P033	Wentworth	Wenba	57	P040	Cooma Monaro	Emerald Hill	49	P032	Holbrook	Mount Jingellic
52	P035	Balranald	Balranald	60	P043	Cooma Monaro	Gibraltar	53	P036	Berrigan	Stony Hill
55	P038	Wentworth	Mallee Cliffs	63	P046	Bombala	Mallee Hill	71	P054	Holbrook	Mount MacKenzie
59	P042	Wentworth	Pooncarie	64	P047	Bombala	Mount Delegate	72	P055	Hume	One Tree Hill
64	P047	Balranald	Euston	71	P054	Cooma Monaro	Mount Roberts	74	P057	Culcairn	Peddles Hill
66	P049	Wentworth	Trelega	75	P058	Bombala	Bombala Trig	87	P070	Holbrook	Mount Burngoogee
70	P053	Balranald	Darriick	79	P062	Snowy River	Wambrook Trig	89	P072	Corowa	Goombargana Hill
72	P055	Wentworth	Dareton	<b>RIVERINA</b>				<b>SOUTHERN TABLELANDS</b>			
89	P072	Balranald	Melton Grove	42	P025	Urana	Cullivel Rd	19	P002	Yass	Mt Spring
<b>MIA</b>				63	P046	Lockhart	Galore Hill	20	P003	Upper Lachlan	Mt Mary
44	P027	Murrumbidgee	Gundaline	66	P049	Coolamon	Welman Trig	24	P007	Upper Lachlan	Bannaby Hill
46	P029	Griffith	Scenic Hill	77	P060	Wagga Wagga	Mt Flakney	26	P009	Upper Lachlan	Mt Gray
52	P035	Murrumbidgee	Koonwarra	78	P061	Wagga Wagga	Mt Boongoogy	59	P042	Upper Lachlan	Tuena
62	P045	Leeton	Square Head	85	P068	June	Mt Ulandra	71	P054	Upper Lachlan	Redground
68	P051	Narrandera	Quarry Trig	86	P069	Coolamon	Coolamon	74	P057	Upper Lachlan	Black Trig
				90	P073	June	June	76	P059	Upper Lachlan	Cowley Hills
								89	P072	Upper Lachlan	Snowy Mount

NSW Rural Fire Service Operational Communications

As at 18.12.07

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# OPERATION UPDATES



## NSW Rural Fire Service REGION EAST - PMR RADIO

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>BAULKHAM HILLS</b>			
98	P081	Baulkham Hills	Hillside
218	P102	Baulkham Hills	Wiseman Ferry
219	P103	Baulkham Hills	Rogan Hill
<b>BLUE MOUNTAINS</b>			
106	P089	Blue Mountains	Horsley Park
106	P089	Blue Mountains	Mount Tomah
106	P089	Blue Mountains	Faulconbridge
106	P089	Blue Mountains	Katoomba
106	P089	Blue Mountains	Narrow Neck
<b>CHIFLEY / LITHGOW</b>			
18	P001	Oberon	Mount Lambie
20	P003	Bathurst	Monkey Hill
21	P004	Bathurst	Mt Ryan
24	P007	Greater Lithgow	Airly Turret
25	P008	Greater Lithgow	Sunny Corner
26	P009	Oberon	Falls Hill
29	P012	Greater Lithgow	Mount Lambie
30	P013	Greater Lithgow	Hassans Walls
31	P014	Oberon	Mt Defiance
33	P016	Oberon	Shooter Hill
35	P018	Bathurst	Ovens Range
<b>CUMBERLAND</b>			
108	P091	Penrith	Glenbrook
115	P098	Blacktown	Horsley Park
<b>GOSFORD</b>			
97	P080	Gosford	Mount White
100	P083	Gosford	Kincumber Mountain
N/A	P195	Gosford	Cowan
107	P090	Gosford	Somersby
113	P096	Gosford	Boomerang Ridge
<b>HAWKESBURY</b>			
19	P002	Hawkesbury	Kurrajong Heights
31	P014	Hawkesbury	Wisemans Ferry
79	P062	Hawkesbury	Grassy Hill
82	P065	Hawkesbury	Bucketty

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>HORNSBY</b>			
112	P095	Hornsby	Cowan
417	P217	Hornsby	Hornsby heights
418	P218	Hornsby	SAN Hospital
419	P219	Hornsby	Simpons Hill
N/A	P242	Hornsby	Mount White
<b>HUNTER</b>			
34	P017	Cessnock	Mt Warrawolong
35	P018	Cessnock	Mount Sugarloaf
75	P058	Cessnock	Brokenback
<b>HUNTER VALLEY</b>			
20	P003	Singleton	Mount Dyring
70	P053	Muswellbrook	Mount Arthur
<b>ILLAWARRA</b>			
94	P077	Wollongong	Maddens Plains
99	P082	Wollongong	Mount Keira
104	P087	Kiama	Saddleback Mountain
105	P088	Shellharbour	Knights Hill
111	P094	Wollongong	Helensburg
N/A	P224	Illawarra	Cordeaux colliery
<b>LOWER HUNTER</b>			
18	P001	Dungog	Mount Richardson
25	P008	Dungog	Mount George
30	P013	Port Stephens	Gan Gan Hill
74	P057	Port Stephens	Wallaroo Hill
<b>MACARTHUR</b>			
92	P075	Campbelltown	Varroville
114	P097	Camden	Razorback Range
116	P099	Liverpool	Horsley Park
<b>MANNING</b>			
21	P004	Great Lakes	Cabbage Tree Mountain
26	P009	Great Lakes	Smiths Lake
31	P014	Great Lakes	Coolonglook
32	P015	Great Lakes	Nerong
N/A	N/A	Great Lakes	Peppers Mountain
19	P002	Greater Taree	Middle Brother
34	P017	Greater Taree	Nabiac
58	P041	Greater Taree	Mount Marie

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>MANNING Continued</b>			
28	P011	Hastings	Middle Brother
55	P038	Hastings	Combyne
63	P046	Hastings	Cairncross
89	P072	Hastings	Jolly Nose
81	P064	Gloucester	Mount Berrico
82	P065	Gloucester	My Myra
88	P071	Gloucester	Mt Ganqhat
<b>SUTHERLAND</b>			
102	P085	Sutherland	Heatcote
220	P104	Sutherland	Garawarra
221	P105	Sutherland	Sutherland
<b>THE LAKES</b>			
NF	P113	Wyong	The Bar
NF	P118	Lake Macquarie	Russell Trig
NF	P149	Wyong	Scaddens Ridge
NF	P178	Lake Macquarie	Mount Sugarloaf
<b>WARRINGAH PITTWATER</b>			
93	P076	Warringah	Terrey Hills
420	P220	Warringah	Frenchs Forest
421	P221	Warringah	Cowan
422	P222	Warringah	Biggala Plateau
<b>WINGECARIBEE</b>			
96	P079	Wingecaribee	Mt Gibraltar
103	P086	Wingecaribee	Wombeyan
109	P092	Wingecaribee	Freestone
223	P107	Wingecaribee	Hill Top
224	P108	Wingecaribee	Robertson
<b>WOLLONDILLY</b>			
95	P078	Wollondilly	Razorback Range
110	P093	Wollondilly	Nattai
222	P106	Wollondilly	Mt Gibraltar

NSW Rural Fire Service Operational Communications

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## NSW Rural Fire Service REGION WEST - PMR RADIO

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>BARWON DARLING</b>			
21	P004	Brewarrina	Cartlands
37	P020	Brewarrina	New Years Range
38	P021	Brewarrina	Brewarrina
42	P025	Bourke	Mt Oxley
45	P028	Bourke	Louth
45	P028	Brewarrina	Brewarrina
46	P029	Bourke	Willara
47	P030	Bourke	Tarwoona Downs
48	P031	Brewarrina	Mt Oxley
<b>BLAND TEMORA</b>			
25	P008	Temora	Ariah Park
29	P012	Bland	Booberoi Hills
44	P027	Bland	Billy's Lookout
46	P029	Temora	Gogobilly Hill
51	P034	Bland	West Wyalong
55	P038	Bland	Narriah Mountain
<b>CANOBOLAS</b>			
27	P010	Cabonne	Mt Coonambro
32	P015	Cowra	Conimbla Range
58	P041	Cabonne	Mt Ragan
61	P044	Blayney	Mt Macquarie
70	P053	Orange	Clark Trig
71	P054	Cabonne	Flagstaff Hill
72	P055	Cowra	Mt McDonald
83	P066	Cabonne	Curra Creek
85	P068	Orange	Mt Canobolas
88	P071	Cowra	Bellevue Hill
<b>CUDEGONG</b>			
19	P002	Mudgee	Mount Bodangora
21	P004	Rylstone	Bald Mountain
26	P009	Mudgee	Flagstaff Hill
33	P016	Mudgee	Botobolar North
72	P055	Mudgee	Monkey Hill
81	P064	Mudgee	Mt Cocoble
87	P070	Rylstone	Airly Turret
90	P073	Rylstone	Mount Coricudgy

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>FAR WEST</b>			
42	P025	Cobar	Tambua
54	P037	C/ Darling	Barraoo
23	P006	Cobar	The Peak
37	P020	Cobar	Maroobee Station
42	P025	C/ Darling	White Cliffs
45	P028	Unic Area	Coombah Home
46	P029	Cobar	Caronga Peak
50	P033	Cobar	Tilpa
50	P033	Unic Area	Glen Lyon
51	P034	C/ Darling	Andersons Hill
51	P034	Unic Area	Thackaringa
54	P037	Cobar	Kaleno
55	P038	C/ Darling	Ivandale Station
56	P039	C/ Darling	Macullochs Range
76	P059	C/ Darling	Darnick
76	P059	Cobar	Gilgunnia
<b>MID LACHLAN</b>			
18	P001	Lachlan	Manna Mountain
41	P024	Lachlan	Boona Maintain
49	P032	Parkes	Mt Gillenbine
53	P036	Lachlan	Gorman Hill
60	P043	Weddin	Bogolong Hill
63	P046	Forbes	Mt Tallabung
70	P053	Parkes	Kadina Trig
<b>MID WEST</b>			
28	P011	Carrathool	Mt Booteragandra
40	P023	Carrathool	Toms Lake
41	P024	Carrathool	Carrathool
42	P025	Hay	Maude
50	P033	Carrathool	Waranary Hill
53	P036	Hay	Toms Lake
57	P040	Hay	Hay
58	P041	Carrathool	Conapaira Trig
73	P056	Hay	Walgrove Homestead
82	P065	Hay	Galah

Old Ch	New Ch	DTZ	Base Site
<b>NORTH WEST</b>			
29	P012	Walgett	Woolaroo
33	P016	Walgett	Walgett
39	P022	Coonamble	Mount Foster
41	P024	Bogan	Caronga Peak
42	P025	Walgett	Come by Chance
44	P027	Coonamble	Magometon Hill
45	P028	Coonamble	Toora Station
45	P028	Bogan	Babinda Trig
47	P030	Bogan	Girilambone
47	P030	Walgett	Cumborah
48	P031	Bogan	Mount Foster
50	P033	Walgett	Nygan
52	P035	Walgett	Mt Brandon
65	P048	Coonamble	Needle Mountain
72	P055	Walgett	Warren
<b>ORANA</b>			
22	P005	Wellington	Flagstaff Hill
25	P008	Orana	Wamboin Plains
28	P011	Dubbo	Sappa Bulga Trig
31	P014	Dubbo	Cumbarella
34	P017	Wellington	Mount Bodangora
38	P021	Narromine	Sappa Bulga Trig
64	P047	Dubbo	Mogrigy
70	P053	Dubbo	Clark Trig
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>			
76	P059	Young	Mt Crowther
80	P063	Coota	Mt Bethungra
81	P064	Young	Thudungra Hill
82	P065	Harden	Rocky Hill
83	P066	Harden	Coppabella Hill
86	P069	Booroowa	Mt Darling
91	P074	Booroowa	Mt Canemumbola

NSW Rural Fire Service Operational Communications

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Pull out this section to display in your station or Fire Control Centre

## NSW Government Agency Liaison Channels 1

GRN Operations					
RFS Old (Till Dec 2009)	RFS New (April 2007)	NSWFB	NSW SES	NSW Ambulance	ACT Emergency Services Current
147 ELSO 1	S31 ESO 1	1201 ESO 1	(S) 189-LO-ES-1	(Z7) ESO CHAN 1	(C) ESLO-1
148 ELSO 2	S32 ESO 2	1202 ESO 2	(S) 190-LO-ES-2	(Z7) ESO CHAN 2	(C) ESLO-2
149 ELSO 3	S33 ESO 3	1203 ESO 3	(S) 191-LO-ES-3	(Z7) ESO CHAN 3	(C) ESLO-3
150 ELSO 4	S34 ESO 4	1204 ESO 4	(S) 192-LO-ES-4	(Z7) ESO CHAN 4	(C) ESLO-4
151 ELSO 5	S35 ESO 5	1205 ESO 5	(S) 193-LO-ES-5	(Z7) ESO CHAN 5	(C) ESLO-5
152 ELSO 6	S36 ESO 6	1206 ESO 6	(S) 194-LO-ES-6	(Z7) ESO CHAN 6	(C) ESLO-6
153 ELSO 7	S37 ESO 7	1207 ESO 7	(S) 195-LO-ES-7	(Z7) ESO CHAN 7	(C) ESLO-7
154 ELSO 8	S38 ESO 8	1208 ESO 8	(S) 196-LO-ES-8	(Z7) ESO CHAN 8	(C) ESLO-8
155 ELSO 9	S39 ESO 9	1209 ESO 9	(S) 197-LO-ES-9	(Z7) ESO CHAN 9	(C) ESLO-9
156 ELSO 10	S40 ESO 10	1210 ESO 10	(S) 198-LO-ES-10	(Z7) ESO CHAN 10	(C) ESLO-10
	S41 ESO 11	1211 ESO 11		(Z7) ESO D CHAN 11	(C) ESLO-11
	S42 ESO 12	1212 ESO 12		(Z7) ESO D CHAN 12	(C) ESLO-12
	S43 ESO 13	1213 ESO 13		(Z7) ESO D CHAN 13	(C) ESLO-13
	S44 ESO 14	1214 ESO 14		(Z7) ESO D CHAN 14	(C) ESLO-14
	S45 ESO 15	1215 ESO 15		(Z7) ESO D CHAN 15	(C) ESLO-15
	S46 ESO 16	1216 ESO 16		(Z7) ESO D CHAN 16	(C) ESLO-16
	S47 ESO 17			(Z7) ESO D CHAN 17	(C) ESLO-17
	S48 ESO 18			(Z7) ESO D CHAN 18	(C) ESLO-18
	S49 ESO 19			(Z7) ESO D CHAN 19	(C) ESLO-19
	S50 ESO 20			(Z7) ESO D CHAN 20	(C) ESLO-20

ESLO 10 is a permanent patch to Sydney Police VKG (Note: Prior permission is required for use of this channel)

Simplex & Repeater Operations					
NSWRFS (Till Dec 2009)	NSWRFS (New March 2007)	NSWFB SIMPLEX	NSW SES SIMPLEX	NSW Ambulance SIMPLEX	ACT Emergency Services Current
13 SIMP SHR 1	S51 ESO SIM 1	1301 ESO SIM1	(S) 201*SIMP SH1	(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 1	(C) ESO SIM 1
14 SIMP SHR 2	S52 ESO SIM 2	1302 ESO SIM2	(S) 202*SIMP SH2	(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 2	(C) ESO SIM 2
15 SIMP SHR 3	S53 ESO SIM 3	1303 ESO SIM3	(S) 203*SIMP SH3	(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 3	(C) ESO SIM 3
16 SIMP SHR 4	S54 ESO SIM 4	1304 ESO SIM4	(S) 204*SIMP SH4	(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 4	(C) ESO SIM 4
17 SIMP SHR 5	S55 ESO SIM 5	1305 ESO SIM5	(S) 205*SIMP SH5	(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 5	(C) ESO SIM 5
	S56 ESO SIM 6	1306 ESO SIM6		(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 6	(C) ESO SIM 6
	S57 ESO SIM 7	1307 ESO SIM7		(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 7	(C) ESO SIM 7
	S58 ESO SIM 8	1308 ESO SIM8		(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 8	(C) ESO SIM 8
	S59 ESO SIM 9	1309 ESO SIM 9		(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 9	(C) ESO SIM 9
	S60 ESOSIM 10	1310 ESOSIM 10		(Z7) ESO SIMPLEX 10	(C) ESO SIM 10
	S61 ESO RPT 1	1311 ESO RPT 1		(Z7) ESO REPEATER 1	(C) ESO RPT 1
	S62 ESO RPT 2	1312 ESO RPT 2		(Z7) ESO REPEATER 2	(C) ESO RPT 2
	S63 ESO AIR 1	1313 ESO AIR 1	Not fitted to current profile	(Z7) ESO AIR 1	Not fitted to current profile

ESO AIR 1 is Police Analogue 65 Simplex

**From page 28**

areas. The Service is, however, gradually moving away from CB radio usage as the name "Citizen's Band" implies, it is an uncontrolled network open to use by anyone.

**Aircraft Communication** adds a whole new dynamic to the communications sphere. Pilots must always listen to the air band radio to ensure their operational safety while flying and are also required, dependant on the operation, to listen to another agency's channel through the same headset. All RFS contract aircraft are fitted with a PMR/GRN radio in order to communicate with the RFS Incident Management and another radio with other land management agencies' frequencies.

The Service has procedures in place for first attack communications with ground based commanders, which essentially relates to the first hour or so of fire operations. Beyond that, aircraft migrate to the communications plan developed for the incident, which enables them to operate safely, while still receiving relevant tasking from the Incident Management Team (IMT). The IMT may be at a FCC or on the fireground but to avoid any confusion it must not be both.

**Firefighting appliances** are equipped with Motorola radios capable of accessing either GRN or PMR depending on the channel selected. The original product was the MCS 2000, however, a replacement program has commenced to upgrade those products to

the newer 5000 series Motorola product, which has both analogue and digital UHF capability.

The NSW State Government is progressively digitising the GRN radio network, work which will be completed by mid 2009. Only GRN is being digitised at this time. However, this has been the driver for the replacement of all existing radio products and will enable the RFS to continue to benefit from having access to two radio networks.

Currently the GRN network is operating in a "mixed mode" which allows compatibility between analogue and digital products, a situation that will remain until late 2009. During this time the RFS will replace mobile, fixed and handheld Motorola GRN registered radios, the majority of which are either Motorola MCS2000 or MTS2000.

The new 5000 series product has a larger channel capacity than the older ones and as a result the look and feel of the profile will be different. The new profile will consist of five separate zones as developed by the working party of volunteer and salaried representatives from across the state. These zones will be:

- **HOME** zone, which has a voting capacity, is tailored to your local PMR and GRN channels. At this stage the voting capacity can not be extended beyond your local PMR network.

- **PMR** zone, which does not vote and has all the PMR channels across the state.
- **GRN** zone, which has all the RFS GRN channels across the state.
- **FIELD OPS**, which has all the Simplex and portable repeater channels for field operations.
- **STRATNET ESO**, which has all the Strategic Network and Emergency Service Liaison channels.

**Interagency communication** utilises a system known broadly as radio liaison channels, which have been in place for some time, using either GRN or Simplex. Liaison channels provide a known standardised means of tactical communication between the RFS commander and the commander of other agencies, usually on the fireground.

The Motorola radio replacement program, which has already commenced, will renew some 6500 tactical radio terminals that our firefighters use to communicate in their various duties. There are still approximately another 18,000 terminals servicing the other areas of strategic and task based communications.



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The pilot camera system has been installed on a fire observation tower in Berowra and is fully automated.

The Premier Morris Iemma launched the trial of the Firecam technology.



## HIGH TECH FIRE DETECTION ON TRIAL

In a world-first, a new high-tech remote camera system is being trialled by the RFS. Premier Morris Iemma, Emergency Services Minister Nathan Rees and RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons inspected the new system at Berowra in Sydney's north in late December 2007.

The pilot camera system has been installed on a fire observation tower in Berowra and is fully automated. Once it detects a fire, an alarm is sounded to alert firefighters. The camera also zooms in on the area to detect any possible arsonists.

"This is our latest weapon to catch dangerous firebugs," Premier Iemma said.

"FireCam is a fully-automated camera surveillance system which will significantly enhance our fire detection capability.

"FireCam is based on Chubb UK's 'ForestVu' system and has been specially designed to automatically detect smoke plumes, using recognition software that does not require an operator.

"The cameras can detail the size, temperature and speed of the fire before crews have even left the fire station.

"Firefighters will be safer and better prepared when they reach the blaze."

The Premier said the system has been used successfully overseas for oil rig and tunnel fire detection but this is a world first for bush fire spotting.

## New Fire Control Centre for Hornsby

The Premier also announced that the Hornsby RFS Fire Control Centre would be relocated to a new \$3 million Fire Control Centre to be constructed on the Berowra site.

"The NSW Government will provide the bulk of the funding through the Rural Firefighting Fund with contributions from our partners in this venture Hornsby and Kurung-gai councils," he said.

Emergency Services Minister, Nathan Rees said the development application has been submitted to Hornsby Council and the new centre was expected to be completed in 2009.



The highlight of the event was guest speaker, Sue Talbert.

## RFS STAFF GET BEHIND THE PINK BREAKFAST

By Amanda Carroll, Systems Audit Officer

RFS staff at the Homebush Bay headquarters in Sydney attended the Pink Breakfast in support of the fight against breast cancer.

The Pink Breakfast featured pink cream and pancakes, strawberries, fruit kebabs (fantastic!) pikelets, along with more of that delicious pink cream! It was a fun way for the staff to lend their support to breast cancer research.

Pink Breakfast is part of the national Pink Ribbon Day campaign and is held every year to raise money and awareness for breast cancer research, prevention and education campaigns. It also serves to foster hope for those affected by this life threatening disease.

The highlight of the event was guest speaker Sue Talbert. Sue is a member of both the Kenthurst Brigade and the Critical

Incident Support Services. A health care worker herself, Sue told a rapt audience about her startling discovery that she did indeed have breast cancer. She spoke about the treatment and the emotional rollercoaster that followed. Sue is now cancer free and happy to talk about her journey. She really is an inspiration. We are most grateful to her for coming along and talking to us.

The event was sponsored by the Spokeswoman's Committee. Raffle prizes which had been donated by the Rhodes Shopping Centre retailers included cinema tickets, beauty treatments, hair treatments, tea packs, health and nutrition packs, an Angus and Robertson gift voucher, wine and flowers.

A very happy morning was spent together for those present and the wash up was a donation of over \$1,100 to the research and development of Breast Cancer Awareness. Well done NSW Rural Fire Service!

## KU-RING-GAI CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Story and photos by Mariell Taylor,  
Ku-ring-gai Brigade

**K**u-ring-gai Brigade celebrated 50 years of service to the community with a dinner at Roseville Golf Club late last year.

Rural Fire Service (RFS) Executive Director for Community Safety, Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers was present on behalf of Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons. Executive Director of Operations Support, Assistant Commissioner Keith Harrap, a former captain of the brigade, also attended the night of celebrations. Other guests included District Manager, Superintendent Angelo Baldo.

The brigade was also very pleased to welcome some firm friends from Ku-ring-gai council including Mayor Nick Ebbeck, six councillors and manager of Engineering Services for the council, Ian Taylor.

Some former members of the brigade travelled from around Australia to attend, bringing the total number of guests to over 120.

The night was hosted by the positively brilliant Alan Glover, a former member of the brigade and a current member in the Hunter Valley. Alan kept us all in stitches for most of the night, regaling us with stories from the past and encouraging us to share more as we caught up with friends. The evening began with drinks on the verandah as a storm rolled in and provided us all with a spectacular light show.

***“There were stories about the big fires, the really big fires, the storms, the long drives, the good times and the difficult times.”***

A slideshow featuring photos, old movies and news footage was played throughout the evening reminding us of the rich history enjoyed by Ku-ring-gai Brigade. Not many brigades have their own song, for example. Ku-ring-gai members had a ball singing along to “From the Ridges of Ku-ring-gai” following the lead of Neil Cameron-Smith our esteemed choir leader. Thankfully, the screeching of the less vocally talented of us, was drowned out by the heady renditions from senior members who remembered the words fondly.

Our MC kept us on our toes with ‘more costume changes than a Madonna concert’ in a journey through examples of volunteer PPE attire over the decades, from the thong brigade (shorts, t-shirt and thongs), to the white overalls and finally to the current yellows.

The keys to the new Ku-ring-gai tanker were presented to Captain John Corry by Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers along with a



number of plaques of commendation from the RFS and Ku-ring-gai council.

Life membership was presented to Roger Dixon, Neil Cameron-Smith and Ian Hall, who have all offered over 35 years of service to the brigade. They join the existing life members Dave Cordery (foundation member), Assistant Commissioner Keith Harrap, Captain John Corry and John Werner.

During the evening there were many stories told about the big fires, the really big fires, the storms, the long drives, the good times and the difficult times. Times when fires were a bit too close for comfort and times when you were glad you had your mates on the crew. Other times when you were proud to be part of a huge task force and times marching down George Street in a victory parade.

Stories were told of places you never dreamed you would end up - from the local suburbs, to the rugged mountains, to lunch in a Paddington pub with the tanker parked on the footpath.

There was so much socialising that some of us wondered where the night had gone.

In any such an event, a committee had been formed to plan and co-ordinate the evening. Special thanks go to the Roseville Golf Club, Alan Glover; and our committee members David Leck, David Cordery, Ian Hall and Roger Dixon for such brilliant work.



**TOP RIGHT:** The positively brilliant Alan Glover, a former member of the brigade and still a current member in the Hunter Valley brigade and committee leader, David Leck.

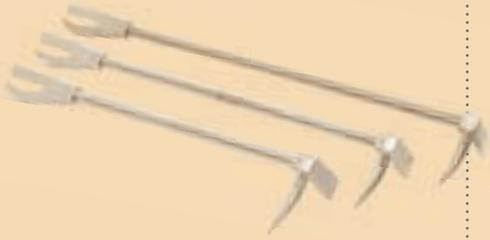
**TOP LEFT:** MC Alan Glover in one particularly fetching ‘non-regulation’ Summer version of the old overalls.

**LOWER LEFT:** Neil Cameron-Smith our esteemed choir leader along with other Ku-ring-gai members had a ball singing along to “From the Ridges of Ku-ring-gai”.

**LOWER RIGHT:** Executive Director for Community Safety, Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers presented the keys to the new Ku-ring-gai tanker as well as a number of plaques of commendation to Ku-ring-gai Brigade.

**BELOW:** The new logo for Ku-ring-gai Brigade celebrating the 50th anniversary, drawn by Violeta Dumitru.





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## LIKE MOTHS TO THE FLAME: DAVIDSON RFB ATTRACTS A CROWD

Photos by Graeme Last, Davidson Brigade

**D**uring Summer evenings, every 20 minutes 30 to 40 visitors stream through the Davidson Rural Fire Brigade. In fact, last December the station probably hosted an extraordinary 4000 visitors.

What is their secret for attracting the public's attention?

Christmas lights.

For two weeks every December the Christmas lights along Borgnis Street in Davidson are so bright it is said that they can even be seen from space. And as the first property on Borgnis Street, the Davidson RFB has pride of place.

***"The station is manned every night to manage the hundreds of children looking at the tankers."***

The street attracts thousands of cars, pedestrians and even coach loads of people from around Sydney.

President of Davidson RFB, Graeme Last, said the station is manned every night to manage the hundreds of children looking at the tankers and to answer the questions from their parents.



"The Brigade was quick to realise the community education potential of this yearly event," Mr Last said, "Most of the locals are eager to learn about fire safety while the visitors from further afield are surprised to hear that the RFB is a volunteer organisation."

Mr Last is quick to agree that the brigade's light display is not the most spectacular on the street.

"Initially the Davidson members went the 'whole hog' and attempted to decorate the station by stringing lights from every available space and on the roof," he said. "Then there was a succession of busy fire seasons... Now we focus on a more sedate display that can be easily erected and dismantled."

The members relish the opportunity to regale visitors with firefighting stories and to provide them with appropriate Firewise material.





**ILLAWARRA ADDS SOME FUN TO FIRE SAFETY**

Story by Sandra Bilaniwskyj, Illawarra Community Safety Brigade  
 Photos by Maree Larkin, Illawarra Community Safety Brigade

Enthusiastic children, fire station tours, games, plays, craft activities and fire safety talks ensured the success of our fire awareness holiday program. Held on two consecutive days in January, youngsters ranging in ages from five to 11 gathered at

Helensburgh and Dapto Rural Fire Service stations respectively for our program.

Members from our newly formed Illawarra Community Safety Brigade together with Wollongong Council and the Botanical Garden's staff were on hand to enable the children to experience first hand 'getting down low and go, go going' in our smoke house, using a fire hose, making bush crafts as well as writing and performing fire safety plays for their parents.

**TOP LEFT:** Some of the kids made flame masks.

**TOP RIGHT:** Jake McKenna, nine years old (left) and Jarrod Wynn, 11 years old (right), with Smokey the Koala at the Helensburgh Rural Fire Station.

**LOWER LEFT** Volunteer Jacqui Dingwall talking to the children at the Dapto Rural Fire Station on fire safety.

**LOWER RIGHT:** Volunteer Sandra Bilaniwskyj talking to the children at the Dapto Rural Fire Station on fire safety.

Our special guest, making an appearance on both days was Smokey the Koala who delighted children and parents alike with his demonstrations of 'Stop, drop, cover and roll'. Exhausted yet well informed children, departed the centre some three hours later armed with a bag full of resources to remind them of their visit and to reinforce their newly gained knowledge.

**WORLD YOUTH DAY**

Initiated by Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day has been held every year since 1986 when the first event was held in Rome. Sydney will host the 10th international WYD and XXIII WYD overall.

Pilgrims can be expected to be taking part in activities across Sydney from July 10, up to the official opening on July 15 and through to the Closing Mass on Sunday July 20. It is estimated that Sydney will receive 300,000 visitors, including 125,000 from

overseas. The previous World Youth Day, held in Cologne, attracted 1.2 million people to the Final Mass.

RFS volunteers are being sought to assist the World Youth Day Police Volunteers. Volunteers will receive their uniform, lunch on the days they are working and travel on public transport around metropolitan Sydney.

Interested volunteers should contact their Fire Control Centre or visit [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au) for more information.







## FIRST CADET PROGRAM FOR LIVERPOOL

By Ros ten Brink, A/ Fire Mitigation Officer, Liverpool Range Zone

The first ever Cadet Secondary School Program by Liverpool Range was held last year with 17 students receiving certificates of participation at the school's end of year assembly in November.

Students from St Joseph's High School, Aberdeen took part in the 10 weeks of training, under the guidance of staff and volunteers from the Liverpool Range Zone. The 13 girls and four boys from St Joseph's loved the practical approach of the program - especially anything that meant they could squirt water!

The timed races were popular. In one event two staff members decided at the last

minute to form a team to compete against the two teams of five students. The staff won - even with their delayed start. Just goes to show that wisdom comes with age!

The growth in the leadership skills of the students was evident to all who attended the training. The Deputy Principal of the school, who was present at many of the weekly sessions, was extremely positive about the program and suggested it be run at the school again.

**TOP LEFT:** Liverpool Range Zone officers with the cadets from St Joseph's: Left to right: Graham Brown, Fire Mitigation Officer; Kim Brown, Deputy Captain Community Education; Insp Andrew Luke, Community Safety Officer; Andrew Davis, A/ Regional Mitigation Compliance Officer; Peta Luke, Community Education and Ros ten Brink, Administration Officer.



**TOP RIGHT:** The 13 girls and four boys from St Joseph's loved the practical approach of the program - especially anything that meant they could squirt water!



## MOST OUTSTANDING CADET

Meet fire cadet Melissa Watson. Melissa was awarded the Most Outstanding Cadet for 2007 at McAuley Catholic Central School in the Riverina Highlands Zone.

Community Safety Officer and Cadet Coordinator for the RFS, Insp Peter Jones, said Melissa was selected for her commitment to the RFS Cadet Program, her skills as a firefighter and her leadership qualities.

"Melissa was a clear choice; she has great organisation skills and has improved her knowledge and ability as a firefighter over the last year. Melissa was also instrumental in the Tumut teams securing a Silver and a Bronze Medal at the National Fire Cadet Competition in Sydney last October." Melissa will attend boarding school in Sydney in 2008 and she will be missed by her peers.

# CORPORATE NEWS



## SMALL OFFERINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

By Matthew Schroder, Media Services

The official charity for the RFS, Coffee4Kids (C4K) encourages everyone to give up one cup of coffee once a week and donate the cash to children in need.

Several RFS members established the Coffee4Kids Foundation (C4K) about two years ago. Up until now C4K has encouraged staff of the RFS to be involved but now volunteers are also welcome to donate. A Volunteers Strategy for C4K was launched by Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons in December last year. He said:

"Coffee4Kids is the official charity of the RFS and was established by members of the RFS...to help children with cancer, mental illness, children in intensive care and kids who are homeless or abused."

"I ...felt privileged to be asked to be the ambassador for the Coffee4Kids Foundation," the Commissioner said.

"It is a simple idea: Just give up one cup of coffee per week to help sick kids."

One hundred percent of funds raised by C4K is given to children's charities. The Children's Hospital at Westmead is currently the major recipient.

Founder of C4K, Assistant Commissioner Mark Croswell, said the RFS is already a highly respected organisation and could take the lead in creating change for children in need.

"We realised that as a unified and cohesive organisation we had a significant capacity to make a difference to the lives of children through a simple but effective concept of donating the value of a cup of coffee per week to children's charities."

It may be that flat white on the way to work, or the post-lunch mocha, but going without these little pick-me-ups can drastically change a child's life. Kids like William and Joel. Here are their stories:

### William's story

Maryanne Carmichael will remember the late 1990s not because she was a founding member of the NSW Rural Fire Service, but because on Australia Day 1999 she was told her baby son William had two hours to live, and yet he survived.

Welcomed into the world by Maryanne and her husband Shaun Carmichael on the 16 January, William was rushed back into hospital for emergency heart surgery only ten days later.

"William was admitted to the Grace Ward, neo natal intensive care unit, with a coarctation of the aorta," Maryanne said, "It was a complete blockage of the vital blood passage in the heart."

***"It just goes to show that when lots of people get behind an effort within an organisation, their small individual contributions combine and make a big contribution"***

"Everyone at the hospital is brilliant," Maryanne said, "Apart from the excellent medical care, they have quiet places, like courtyards, where we could just sit. It was so important that we were able to stay on site."

William's other siblings were cared for by relatives, allowing Maryanne and Shaun to give their full concentration to William at the hospital.

RFS Chaplain Ron Anderson, also offered help. He arrived at the hospital at 2330hrs to sit with the shocked and upset parents.

It was a sweet irony that when Maryanne was nervously walking the corridors of the ward she came across a plaque with her own father's name on it. Maryanne's father and the employees in his business had donated money to the hospital and the plaque marked the cot their business had sponsored.

"It just goes to show that when lots of people get behind an effort within an organisation, their small individual contributions combine and make a big contribution," she said.

"You always hope that it doesn't happen to someone you know. But the reality is that by making small contributions at work you can make a difference and it could well be helping someone you know and love."

### Joel's story

As part of the launch of the C4K volunteer's strategy, North Rocks Brigade brought in their tanker for the delectation of the kids from The Children's Hospital at Westmead. Eight-year-old Joel Ronayne was one of the visitors at the launch and is pictured here (*right*).

Joel has a disease called Neurofibromatosis. He was still a baby when he experienced his first broken leg and since then has had 17 operations on his leg. He came close to having his leg amputated when one of the doctors at The Children's Hospital at Westmead proposed a new procedure. In a world-first, the doctor used the procedure to save the boy's leg. After the operation, Joel was able to walk for the first time – he was 4 ½ years old.

Joel was happy to attend the launch of the Volunteers Strategy for C4K and got to try on some yellows while he was at it.

**RIGHT:** North Rocks Brigade kindly brought their tanker into the RFS headquarters for several children from The Children's Hospital at Westmead to view. Pictured is Joel Ronayne.



**KIDS GET  
THE HELP  
THEY NEED**

Photo by Insp Ben Shepherd



## Five strategies for giving

### 1. Take a Tin

Set up a C4K Tin near your tea room. The Foundation can provide C4K money tins to brigades. The goal is to collect \$5 per week (more if you are feeling generous!) Once full, simply return the tin to C4K at HQ.

### 2. Brigade Annual Charity event

Many brigades hold regular events such as annual dinners, AGMs and other initiatives. Raise \$260 at one of these events and you'll have achieved your \$5 per week goal.

### 3. Sales of C4K merchandise

The Coffee4Kids Foundation has a range of merchandise available for sale to assist brigades in raising funds for the Foundation. Visit [www.coffee4kids.org.au](http://www.coffee4kids.org.au) to view merchandise available.

### 4. Regular automatic donations to the Foundation by the Brigade

Arrange a regular automatic payment from the brigade's social account. The Foundation can then arrange for regular receipts.

### 5. One-off or regular automatic donations to the Foundation by an individual

Regular transfers direct to the Foundation account can be established by individuals on a one-off or regular basis. All donations are fully tax deductible and receipts will be supplied.

To register your interest in supporting the Foundation, simply email us at: [C4K@Coffee4Kids.org.au](mailto:C4K@Coffee4Kids.org.au) for an application form or call (02) 8741 5555 and ask to speak to a C4K advisory committee member.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Many of us know children who are seriously unwell and many of us have seen the toll that serious illness can take on the families of those children.

As firefighters, we also attend incidents where children may be inadvertently affected. The injuries or pain suffered by a child can be hard to forget.

As Commissioner of the RFS, I was pleased and felt privileged to be asked to be the ambassador for the Coffee4Kids Foundation.

Coffee4Kids, is the official charity of the RFS, and was established by members of the RFS in February 2006 to help children with cancer, mental illness, children in intensive care and kids who are homeless or abused.

It is a simple idea: Just give up one cup of coffee per week to help sick kids.

Already since February 2006, more than 150 RFS staff have raised over \$25,000 through the C4K Workplace Giving Program. For that, I want to personally thank you.

A further \$8,000 was raised last year from events held throughout the year. In total, the RFS has raised \$33,527 in 12 short months.

### Coffee4Kids Volunteer Strategy for 2008

This year, we are launching Phase Two of our giving program. The Coffee4Kids Volunteer Strategy will allow all of our brigades to voluntarily participate and by doing so extend the Service's ability to make a real difference to the health, safety and well being of our children.

I encourage all brigades in NSW to make a contribution to the Foundation and get involved.

Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM  
Commissioner  
NSW Rural Fire Service



Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons with Joel Ronayne at the launch of the C4K Volunteer Strategy.



## FAMILY OFFERS LAND FOR A NEW AIRSTRIP IN TARCUTTA

**A**n airstrip has been commissioned in Tarcutta that will dramatically improve access to fires in the Tarcutta, Book Book, Humula, Umbango and Oberne brigade areas.

The airstrip is situated on *Alloomba*, a property owned for generations by the Belling family who are also members of the local RFS. The airstrip is eight kilometres south west of Tarcutta and adjacent to the Hume Highway. Along with the new 1km long fully marked airstrip, it also has a 30,000 litre water tank.

A crowd of over 90 local people and guests were present to witness the commissioning of the Tarcutta Airstrip on Tuesday 18 December.

Riverina Zone Manager, Supt Joe Knox acknowledged the guests attending, including RFS Manager Operational Aviation, Chief Supt Maryanne Carmichael and Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Kerry Pascoe.

“The generous support of the Belling family and volunteer efforts of Tarcutta Brigade members to establish this facility, will increase the protection of the local community,” Supt Knox said.

The crowd was entertained by a spectacular water bombing demonstration adjacent to the airstrip. It was the first flight off the airstrip and was piloted by David Baines of Kennedy Air-Ag flying Bomber 288, an AT-802 Air Tractor. Volunteers from Forest Hill Brigade had loaded the aircraft.

Tarcutta Brigade life member, Bill Belling and his family were presented with a plaque to commemorate the commissioning and acknowledge their contribution to the project.



**TOP:** Pilot David Baines in Kennedy Air-Ag Bomber 288 treated the crowd to a spectacular water bombing display. Photo by Grant Roberson.

**ABOVE:** Riverina Zone Manager Supt Joe Knox with Fay and Bill Belling at the commissioning of the Tarcutta airstrip. Photo by Karen Piper.

## FIRST INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN WRAPS UP

**T**he RFS has just wrapped up the first ever internal audit plan.

The benefits of the audit are already being experienced in the following areas:

- **The release of a new service standard for the appointment of group officers.** The amendments made to the old Service Standard (SS) 2.2.2 Appointment of Group Officers have recently been amalgamated with SS 2.1.4 Appointment of Brigade Officers to become the new SS 2.1.4 *Appointment of Field and Group Officers* which incorporates all of the previously identified improvements.
- **The release of the new Training SOPs.** The amendments made to the old Training SOPs have resulted in a more outcomes

focused (rather than prescriptive) approach to training in accordance with the 2007 Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and have enabled the development of more auditable criteria.

Around 50 auditors were involved in the initial project with over 60 now involved.

The Audit Unit has also recently completed the mammoth task of collating the Business Improvement Requests from the 2005-2007 plan. Every request has been discussed and plans are in place to implement improvements.

### New database of business improvements

Based on these discussions, the Audit Unit has established a database for all business improvements. This database will allow for

regular reporting to management and allow for effective change.

### Input from staff is vital

The entire audit process could not happen without the input of each and every member of staff. The audit process has established a conduit to move innovative input from staff up the chain of command in order to be implemented and improve RFS business practices.

Thank you for your continuing patience with the audit program. The Audit Unit is now busy preparing the next audit schedule which will take the RFS into 2010.

The maps generated by the Bush Fire Risk Register program will revolutionise the risk assessment process.



## THE RISK ASSESSMENT MAP WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

The new policy on Bush Fire Risk Management planning will significantly change the way that bush fire risk is assessed and treated. This new approach to risk planning was endorsed by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee in August 2007.

The old methods of assessing risk of bush fires using lengthy assessment documents, which sometimes numbered 100 pages, will now be recorded in an easy to read computer-generated map.

Executive Director Community Safety, Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers, is encouraged by the simplification of the process and the development of a specialised computer application called the Bush Fire Risk Register.

"We are making the risk plans more useful and accessible to all RFS staff and volunteers, as well as other agencies," he said, "This plan provides the overarching strategic direction for bush fire management across all land tenures."

The Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP) is an inter-agency plan that

assists the RFS and coordinates efforts to reduce risk across the state, combining the resources of agencies such as the Department of Environment and Climate Change; Forests NSW; Local Government; NSW Fire Brigades; Department of Lands, Road and Traffic Authority and RailCorp.

***"We are making the risk plans more useful and accessible to all RFS staff and volunteers, as well as other agencies."***

"With a potential increase in risk posed through climate change, risk plans will help prioritise the areas where we should perform targeted community education activities, hazard reduction works and help us to better manage how volunteers can assist," Assistant Commissioner Rogers said.

### Worth a thousand words!

The maps generated by the Bush Fire Risk Register program will revolutionise the risk assessment process.

They will identify the human, economic, environmental and cultural assets at risk, prioritise the risk and then assign treatments over the next five years to mitigate the risk.

Local knowledge is an important tool in this process.

Along with assets, Strategic Fire Advantage Zones and Asset Protection Zones will also be indicated.

### What is an asset and how do we assess the risk?

Assets are only assessed if they are at risk from bush fire. They can be:

- human settlement (towns, villages, nursing homes)
- economic (local industry, transport/power infrastructure, tourist)
- environmental (endangered and locally important plants and animals)
- cultural (Aboriginal, non-indigenous or other)

Risk ratings are then allocated to each asset.

The Bush Fire Management Committee's (BFMC's) area of jurisdiction is split into areas so they can be displayed on each map. Each map has the assets identified in order of priority. There is a reference number for the map and the treatment assigned.

Underneath the map the treatments are listed in priority with a year and responsible agency.

The new maps identify assets and Strategic Fire Advantage Zones.



For each asset the risk is determined using a series of questions about the *consequence* and *likelihood* of a fire impacting on it.

To determine the risk of a fire impacting on an asset the following conditions are documented:

- the threat posed to the asset (such as vegetation type, slope and separation distance)
- the asset's vulnerability (how prepared are the community members and properties)
- the likelihood of a fire occurring and then spreading to an asset

Risk ratings are then allocated to each asset.

### What is a treatment and how do we assign them?

In order to reduce the risk to assets, the BFMC assigns treatments to the assets at risk. Treatments can include hazard reduction, community education and preparedness.

### ***"There is a great opportunity for volunteers to provide input to the risk management plans."***

The BFMC decides on the schedule of treatments for the year and allocates which agencies will be responsible. The treatments that are entered into the plan help land managers fulfil their legal obligations to reduce the risk of fire in the landscape.

### **Greater volunteer participation**

Acting Manager Community Hazards Management, Dr Simon Heemstra says the new planning process will encourage greater volunteer participation in fire prevention.

"The risk plan empowers volunteers to understand the significance of their involvement in treatments such as hazard reductions and community liaison," he said, "It also allows volunteers to participate in prioritising treatments in their area."

Responsibility for implementing the plan is with the BFMC, which has a volunteer representative along other stakeholders and the local community.

"There is a great opportunity for volunteers to provide input to the risk management plans," Assistant Commissioner Rogers said. "Using their local knowledge and understanding of their area, volunteers are being invited to identify the priority assets, risks and what we need to do to treat them."

**Bush Fire Risk Management plans are currently being reviewed and prepared in all BFMCs across the state, for more information on the plans, or for more information on how you can help, contact your local Fire Control Centre.**



***“...the loss of such a generous and passionate person will be felt by Australian firefighters...”***

“Col was a pioneer in aerial firefighting and his knowledge, skills and experience were of the highest standard.

“He had exceptional knowledge of fires and he was regarded as one of the most experienced fire bombing pilots in the industry.

“As a contractor with the RFS since the 1990’s, he has been integral to firefighting operations at some of the largest fires in the state. Col was professional, innovative and his wealth of knowledge enhanced both the aviation industry and firefighting across the country.

“The firefighting industry is very close and the loss of such a generous and passionate person will be felt by Australian firefighters and those he battled major fires with in other parts of the world.

“Col will be sadly missed by the RFS and our thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues at this difficult time,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said. ///

## AN ICON OF FIREFIGHTING DIES IN TRAGIC ACCIDENT

The NSW Rural Fire Service is deeply saddened by the loss of a long term contractor and friend Colin Pay, who was an icon within the aerial firefighting industry.

On 7 December, 2007, Col Pay died while testing an experimental in-flight water collection system in his Air Tractor 802 on Lake Liddell in the Hunter Valley. The aircraft was modified with skis attached to the aircraft’s landing gear that skimmed the water’s surface forcing water through to the holding tank.

Col had accrued over 29,800 flying hours in his esteemed career as an agricultural pilot and was responsible for training and mentoring many aerial firefighting pilots currently flying for the RFS. Pay’s Air Service have five fixed wing agricultural aircraft used for water bombing registered for use with the RFS. He also held contracts in Victoria and overseas in Portugal.

Col Pay also had an impressive collection of warbirds and entertained many people at airshows across the country in his Spitfire and Kittyhawk.

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said that Col was the epitome of a professional aviator partnering in the fire management business.



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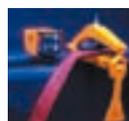


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# MyRFS

## HAVE YOU EVER HAD A DIFFICULTY REGISTERING FOR MYRFS?

Then we want to hear from you. Send us an email at [myrfs@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:myrfs@rfs.nsw.gov.au) and tell us about the problem. Our MyRFS Support team will be happy to help you get registered.

Perhaps the information you've been given doesn't seem to be correct, or MyRFS just isn't accepting the information you've been given? We want to speak to you about these types of problems so we can get you logged in.

You can also reach Jess or Matt during business hours on 1300 269 737 for over-the-phone assistance and advice.

MyRFS is a valuable tool to help manage your brigade activities, and keep you informed about what's happening. Very soon your district will be able to communicate with you directly through MyRFS, so it's important that you're connected.

Get in contact with us if you've had a problem and we'll be very happy to help you get things sorted out.

## Group Captain Reports module

Earlier in the year we released a Group Captain reporting module to help Group Captains do their jobs more easily. Access to this module is currently available to Group Captains and deputy group captains via a special reports link on the home page of MyRFS.

This relatively new reporting module allows these officers to extract a variety of brigade-related data and training information from our systems in order to help them in their leadership and management activities.

Current data sets that can be extracted from this reporting module include: Active and Operational status, brigade contact book information and role-based selection criteria. The reporting module also allows qualification information to be reported.

Reports from this module can be extracted in either Microsoft Excel or Comma Separated Values (CSV) format, suitable to be imported into most spreadsheet programs.



If you want more information about how to use this module then please contact Jess or Matt on the MyRFS Helpline during business hours on 1300 269 737 or send them an email to [myrfs@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:myrfs@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

## MyRFS podcasts

Podcasts are like a computer-based radio show that helps you stay up to date with things that are happening around the RFS.

Two new podcasts have been released this year on MyRFS:

**Brigade Life** is an upbeat and informative podcast talking to brigades about what things are like in their brigade. Brigades nominate themselves to be interviewed by Matt Gould, the host of the program, member of Silverdale brigade and recent addition to the MyRFS team.

**FireCast** is a Learning and Development Systems podcast for RFS trainers and assessors. This show is a quarterly program and features a lively panel discussion on relevant training topics. This show is hosted by Wendy Joung from RFS Learning and Development Systems.

Podcasts are an exciting new way to get news and important information. You can get the latest shows by subscribing to the

podcast, and listening to the show in a free downloadable player. We have a list of free software options on the MyRFS Podcasts page on the MyRFS website. When you subscribe to a podcast you will automatically get new version of the podcast as soon as they are released.

Even if you don't subscribe you can always listen to the shows on MyRFS by clicking the 'Listen Now' button on the individual podcast pages.

Next time you're on the MyRFS website, visit MYRFS Podcasts.

## Regional exercises: We're coming back!

Running hot on the heels of Region North exercises at Glenn Innes, MyRFS also attended the Region South Exercises for the second year in a row.

Like last year, MyRFS had a tent setup and ran a hands-on session where everyone in the brigade saw the latest features of MyRFS, checked their personal information and asked question about the site. There was even an opportunity to participate in the planning of new MyRFS features. 

**TOP:** FireCast podcast discussion panel.

The Spiritual Brigade:  
both trainee priests and bush firefighters.



## NOT YOUR AVERAGE FIREFIGHTERS THE STORY OF ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE, SPRINGWOOD

Story and photos by John Cox,  
Hunter Valley RFB

**V**ery few people would be aware that there was once a bush fire brigade made up of men training for the Catholic priesthood. This is their story.

Long before the present St Columba's High School at Springwood in the Blue Mountains was established in 1978, the College was actually an educational establishment for the training of priests for the Australian Catholic Church.

Records in the College archives from the early 1900s often refer to the ravages of bush fires around the Springwood area and note the occasional suspension of classes for many days when all students were called out to assist with the firefighting efforts in the local area. The tower on the main building at the College was often used by staff and students as a lookout for spotting smoke and noting the progress of fires moving out of the lower Grose Valley and Springwood Creek.

It was once common practice during major fires for firefighters to conduct emergency back burns around the College in a last ditch effort to halt fires crossing from the Grose Valley into the lower areas of the Blue Mountains or to save the buildings at the College.

After the severe fires of 1968, the presence of up to 100 young men aged between the 18 and 25 years, in residence at the College

was acknowledged as a valuable resource for firefighting. The local fire control officer and brigade captain met with the College authorities and students and agreed on a charter of roles and responsibilities (rather like the present day mutual aid arrangements) with Blue Mountains Council supplying a displaced tanker and some equipment to the College.

### Dedicated to the memory of Mr Bill McIntyre, Winmalee Rural Fire Brigade

This arrangement was expanded in 1975 after discussions with the local Brigade North Springwood – now Winmalee – and the local Fire Control Officer, Phil Koperberg assisted by his deputy, Vince Ward formed the "St Columba's division" of Winmalee Brigade. About 30 students signed up and a captain and deputy leaders were appointed to head up the St Columba's crew. I was part of this original crew.

At this time, the old tanker was replaced with a 1942 Chevrolet Blitz complete with new red paint, new tyres, 10 pairs of overalls and 10 helmets, 10 five gallon knapsacks and 20 rake-hoes and even a two way radio! Dry firefighting was the order of the day, as our truck was only equipped with two short one-inch rubber hoses on huge reels.

This brigade was not a formally constituted brigade but operated under the supervision of Winmalee Brigade Officers at hazard reductions, training afternoons and fires. Because the "College Boys" as the locals called us, outnumbered the Winmalee

members we agreed not to hold voting rights as some thought that we might stack the local brigade. But we were happy to assist the community in a very practical way. The issue of protective clothing was unheard of back then, so the first 10 members to the fire wagon got the gear - which made for a very quick turnout of the crew and tanker!

Winmalee Brigade also received a New Bedford appliance and the College tanker became known as Winmalee Tanker No.2. The Blitz tanker's local identification was '13' and a small identification plate painted with the number 13 entwined by a 'black cat' was mounted below the left hand headlight.

### An art as much as a science

Our training was conducted by Mr Bill McIntyre, a very well respected long time member of Winmalee, who sadly passed away in recent times. His practical approach to firefighting and invaluable experience taught us that firefighting is as much an art as it is a science. Other brigade members, including two young deputy captains by the names of Peter Kinkead, now a superintendent and Don Luscombe, who has been a senior group officer, also assisted and inspired the College firefighters.

Most Saturday afternoons were spent training with Winmalee members, assisting in the preparation and conduct of hazard reductions, clearing fire trails, practising drills and skills and attempting to keep the Blitz in first class condition - it was even polished every Saturday! Occasionally the College authorities allowed us to stay out with the brigade for a

barbeque at the end of the day. Much to the surprise of the Winmalee Brigade members, some of the students enjoyed a cold beer or two. Alcohol was not allowed on College property, although we could drink alcohol outside the college grounds. It was not generally known then that "College Boys" stored our cold beer in a hessian sack sealed with an old rope and dropped into the 300 gallon water tank on the tanker. (This wasn't all that successful as the rope snapped and the lot sunk to the bottom of the tank!) I am sure that neither the College authorities nor the FCO would have been impressed. But it seemed a good idea at the time!

***"The issue of protective clothing was unheard of back then, so the first ten members to the fire wagon got the gear - which made for a very quick turnout of the crew and tanker!"***

On the operational side we were involved with fires around the lower Blue Mountains, especially during the week when brigade members were away in Sydney at work. We assisted with the fire emergencies of 1975 and 1977 and with searches for lost and missing persons at Glenbrook and Springwood.

A highlight for the St Columba's brigade was winning first place in the annual Blue Mountains Field Day competition in 1977. We were thrilled to receive hoses, trophies, more rake-hoes and a brand new light bar.

Unfortunately the light bar was powered by 12 volts and our 'Blitz' was six volts. We managed to acquire an old 12 volt battery from a local farmer which was wedged near the passenger's seat in the Blitz and wired directly to the light bar on the roof. The passenger's unfortunate task, besides answering the radio, was to hold the wires onto the battery terminals when responding. Not an easy job when bouncing along local roads and fire trails! The light bar revolved ever more slowly in operation until we returned to station to charge the battery up.

We thought the fire truck looked great when responding along Hawkesbury Road despite the Blitz's top speed being 50kph until we reached the steep hill near Springwood golf course. That was when the truck was back into first gear and crawling along at about 2kph. It was quicker for the crew to walk up the hill and wait for the truck!

Winning the Blue Mountains Annual Field Day drew more than local publicity. A major Sunday newspaper in Sydney ran a story about St Columba's College brigade and the Field Day win with the headline: Holy Smoke.

At the end of 1977 St Columba's College closed. All the students training for the priesthood transferred to another establishment at Manly within the shire of Warringah. However, this was not the end of the story of the men who served in the



St Columbas Winners Field Day 1977.



College Boys. Author, John Cox, third from the left.



The Black Cat, Tanker 13.

St Columba's brigade. The move to the Warringah Shire prompted an invitation from Warringah Headquarters Brigade for us to join them. About 15 students accepted the invitation and served with the Warringah Brigade for nearly four years by which time we had completed our training for the priesthood and left the College.

Some of those men joined their local brigades in the parishes in which they served as priests. I am sure that all of us who served in the Rural Fire Service when we were training for the priesthood still hold fond memories of the experience which began with St Columba's College brigade and one of them even works as a staff member in the Hunter Valley Rural Fire Service. 

# SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

## BRIGADE IN PROFILE: NAROOMA

**Name of Brigade:** Narooma Rural Fire Brigade  
**Year brigade formed:** 1939  
**Current Captain:** Mick Marchini  
**Current President:** Neil Crawley  
**D/T/Z:** Eurobodalla / Far South Coast / Southern

### Can you give us a brief history of the brigade?

The Narooma Rural Fire Brigade was formed after the Black Friday fires in Victoria 1939.

At that time a public meeting was convened by a local policeman who was elected first Captain. The first vehicle used by the brigade was donated.

The brigade handled both urban and rural fires until 1994. In 1994 the NSW Fire Brigades gazetted the central urban area south of the Wagonga Inlet Bridge.

We currently have 27 active firefighters, 15 non-active members and seven cadets.

### What are some unique parts of your brigade's history?

Narooma is one of the first, if not *the* first brigade, formed in Eurobodalla district.

It has always supplied appliances and crews for out-of-area response and attended incidents all over NSW as well as in many parts of Victoria.

Historically the area has been subjected to many serious structure fires including the Narooma High School.

The brigade became CABA equipped in the early 1980s and is now a fully operational Village 2 Brigade which is equally competent in the grass roots responsibility of bush fire.

### What type of area do you cover?

We have an extensive amount of bushland with numerous farms and some small



residential estates. There are also large residential areas plus an industrial complex on the outskirts of the town.

We automatically respond to structure fires with NSWFB in the centre of town, which has several schools, clubs and three large shopping centres. We also support neighbouring RFS brigades as part of our CABA capability.

### What types of incidents does your brigade attend?

Being a Village 2 Brigade, we attend all incidents involving motor vehicle accidents, structure and bush fires. We also further assist other emergency services with roles such as search and rescue and storm and tempest operations.

We assist local VRA (Volunteer Rescue Association) at major rescue incidents including search and are always the first crew called in by RSPCA and WIRES for animal rescues.



We are located on the Princes Highway and therefore are called to numerous motor vehicle accidents throughout the year. Being a coastal region we are also called upon to assist with searches along the coastline.

### What vehicles do you have?

We have a Category 1 Heavy Tanker, Category 11 Pumper, Category 9 Ultra Light Tanker. We also garage a PC utilised by brigades in the south of Eurobodalla Shire.



#### What type of training do you conduct and how do you go about doing this?

Every Wednesday night we do various forms of training from Basics Training, Crew Leader Training and all varieties of specialist training.

We attend our hot fire training facility on a regular basis to tune up on our specialist skills and assist the NSW Police Force with their forensics training by burning rooms full of furniture and then conducting offensive and defensive firefighting.

Our members assist on most courses conducted in our Shire which improves their own skills by teaching others and keeps the brigade up to date with any changes in training methods.

#### What are some unique skills and features of your brigade?

We are a CABA brigade and can be called to many areas throughout nearby Shires. Our brigade is often called away for Task Force commitments due to our strong membership.

We do have a variety of very skilled members in our brigade including chainsaw and 4WD enthusiasts, several carpenters, mechanics, metal workers and a vet (who comes in very handy during animal rescues and bush fires where animals become involved).

We have two members qualified to Group Officer level, two members have Crew Leader status with several members undertaking the final steps of their qualifications in the Crew Leader course. Most members have completed their Advanced and Village Firefighters and Senior First Aid courses.

There are 12 CABA operators and 15 drivers have a heavy vehicle licence.

We have encouraged membership from the outer extremities of our area and this has been successful in passing on Bush Fire Awareness to outback areas and also having qualified firefighters on scene very quickly to give accurate reports for assistance.

#### What are some unique features of your community?

Our area is very popular for holidays and retirement, and has been voted the third most temperate climate in the world. We are in a top spot, located right on the water, only four hours from Sydney and three hours from Canberra, with some of the best fishing and one of the greatest golf courses in Australia.

Our population will increase from 8,500 in the off season up to 30,000 during holiday periods.

The "Mexicans" from Victoria are also very partial to this location!

#### What community events does your brigade participate in?

We give lectures to preschools, kindergartens, primary schools and high schools in fire awareness.

We have lectured and assisted Rotary, APEX, and other charitable organisations with their good causes including the Salvation Army in their Red Shield appeal.

We recently assisted our local churches preparing for the arrival of the 'Cross and Icon' for the World Youth Day procession which passed through Narooma.

## OFFICER IN PROFILE: CHRISTOPHER J SMITH

**Name:** Christopher J. Smith.  
**Rank:** Group Captain, Central Group,  
Bega Valley District.  
**Years in Service:** 39 years (1969 – 2008)

### How did you get involved in the service?

This is a question that I have asked myself a number of times over the last few years. I did not have an answer for a while, but I came to realise that the answer was deep in my childhood. The only thing I remember from my childhood was the day my family lost our house in the February 1952 bush fire. I was two and half at the time.

By the time I was about six years old, I would help my father to "burn off". I was 17 when I was involved in my first fire. We spent eight hours working side by side with the Eden Bush Fire Brigade, fighting to save my boss's property. Soon after that I became friendly with the Merimbula Bush Fire Brigade Captain and on seeing a fire burning into the township, I thought it was time that I joined the brigade.

### Can you give us a brief history of your progression through the service?

I joined the Merimbula Bush Fire Brigade in early 1969 and in 1970 I became Deputy Vice Captain, the next year when the Captain resigned, I was voted in as Captain. I was to hold this role for the next 33 years. In 1974 when the Group Captain for the Pambula-Merimbula Group resigned at the Captain's Meeting I was voted in as Group Captain. I have held this position in one form or another ever since. In 1989 I attended a State Instructors Course which would turn out to be the first of many courses that I would attend over the next 18 years.

### What has been your most memorable moment?

It was a fire about twenty years ago and it was memorable for all the wrong reasons.

The fire was in a Chinese restaurant and it was the second fire for this restaurant within a couple of years. The fire had started in the kitchen at the back at about 2200hrs. After we did what we could at the back, myself and a couple of other firefighters moved around to the street side of the restaurant where we gained access through a small side door.

We moved inside with a 65mm hose lying on our stomachs in the water and alcohol from the bar. The Deputy Captain, who did not see us go around to the street, thought it was about time to gain entry to the fire from the front of the restaurant. He took an axe from the Cat 9 and cut his way into the restaurant through the double cedar and glass doors only to find us already in there, saying: "How in the hell did you get in?"

We had a street full of onlookers just out of the pub that saw it all. It took a while to rebuild our reputation.



### What has been your most challenging fire?

My most challenging fire would be on New Year's Day 2006 in Merimbula. I have been involved in a lot of large and long fires but for every fast moving fire, with the potential for the loss of life and property this would be the worst. The temperatures were around 42 degrees Celsius and humidity of 16 percent. The wind was coming out of the north-west and gusting to 45kph.

This fire was burning between the coast and the town on the eastern side, moving south-east. A forecast south-west change would push the fire back onto itself, but when the change arrived, the wind came in from the east. With the crews working close to the fire edge on the western side of the fire and no warning of the easterly change their "fire over run" training payed off. Looking at photos and video footage after the fire was over, I could see that we had flame heights of 50 metres with secondary combustion in the smoke column.

### What do you think is the most significant change you have seen in the service?

The introduction of radios and, of course, training. It would be hard to separate these two. If it was not for the training that we now do, I would have lost firefighter's lives on the day of the Merimbula fire.

### What is the strangest thing you have experienced at a fire?

Seeing people on a hot day going into the bush as a back burn is about to be lit with overcoats on and returning a few minutes later with their coats bulging. One can only guess what may be under their coats....

### What do you miss from before you were a groupie?

It was so long ago that I do not know what it is like not being a Group Officer!

### What perceptions of the RFS were changed when you became a groupie?

The main perceptions that have changed for me is the much broader role of the Group Officer than that of operations as it was 10 or 15 years ago. We are now part of the senior management team and central link between the volunteers and staff.



### What is your favourite Service Standard and why?

Service Standard 1.3.2 would be my favourite one, not for the power that it gives officers but because of the protection this service standard gives officers to carry out their duties.

### Any final thoughts or comments?

We need to continue to improve our communications with the volunteers at all levels within the service by any means that are available.

**TOP & BOTTOM:** Christopher J. Smith has been Group Captain in the Bega Valley District since 1970.

**CENTRE:** The Merimbula Fire of 2006 was Chris Smith's most challenging fire.

# ABOUT BOOKS

## THE FIRST TRULY COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF FIRE WRITTEN BY AN AUSTRALIAN

### BURN

By Paul Collins,  
Allen & Unwin, 2006

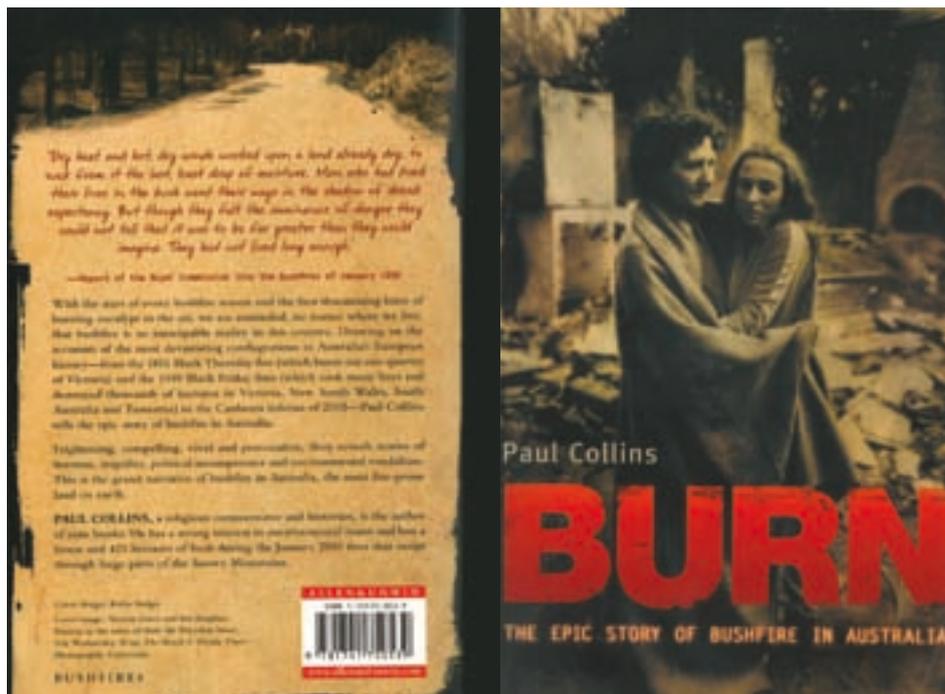
By Russell Taylor,  
Commissioner's Chief of Staff

While this review of *Burn* is a little late, such an important publication not only needs to be brought to the attention of firefighters, it cries out to be read.

Anyone interested in the significant fire history of Australia will be fascinated and appalled with the intensity and destruction reaped by some of the worst fires in our history.

But this book is more than that. It contains great insights into the lives of the people involved and places them in their social context which, given that Paul Collins takes the Black Friday fires of 13 January 1939 as his starting point, is in so many ways different to our times. His sweep of history brings us almost up to date as he includes the Canberra fire of 2003 and the subsequent fires of the Brindabella and Snowy Mountains.

This is no dry chronicle of events by any means. Collins quotes eyewitnesses and provides vivid accounts of the circumstances



in which people found themselves. Paul Collins is the author of nine other books and can often be heard on radio commenting on environmental, historical and religious issues.

His work here provides the first truly comprehensive history of fire written by an Australian. Previously this space was occupied by the US author Stephen J. Pyne, (*Burning Bush*, 1991 and *The Still Burning Bush*, 2006) from which Collins draws a lot of his information. While

Pyne's books tend to be academic and therefore somewhat dry, Collins captures the spirit and lives of the people he describes.

In the final stages of the book, Collins enters into the debate about prescribed burning and the role and nature of fire in the landscape. While I do not agree with many of his arguments, I do applaud his thoughtful and constructive entry that will raise questions for those who read and relish *Burn*.

## WIN A BOOK!

You can have your book review published in Bush Fire Bulletin.

Send us in 100 words describing your most memorable bush firefighting story. It could be a time when you were amazed by the courage of your mates or touched by their care or laughed yourself silly about something unexpected that happened out in the field. Photos are also welcome.

The best two responses will receive a copy of a book for review. All the books are related to bush firefighting. We'll publish your review in the next issue of Bush Fire Bulletin.

### Step One:

Send us 100 words on:  
Your most memorable bush firefighting story.

You can send via email to:

[bushfire.bulletin@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushfire.bulletin@rfs.nsw.gov.au) or write to Bush Fire Bulletin, Locked Mail Bag 17, Granville, NSW 2142. Don't forget to include your contact details and postal address.

### Step Two:

The two winners will be sent a book about bush fires or firefighting for review.

### Step Three:

Write your review. About 3-400 words.

### Step Four:

Check out the upcoming issue of Bush Fire Bulletin to see your published work.

#### Terms and Conditions:

- You must be a registered RFS volunteer to be eligible for the prize.
- Entries not selected to win a prize may still be published in the Bush Fire Bulletin.
- Prize winners are at the discretion of the Bush Fire Bulletin editorial team and all decisions are final. No correspondence will be entered in to.

# WORLDFIRE



## BABY THROWN FROM BURNING BUILDING

February 2008

**A** baby survived after being thrown from the third floor of a blazing German apartment building.

But at least nine people, five of them children, died in the fire in the city of Ludwigshafen, police say.

Police found eight bodies in the building, while one woman died in a hospital after the fire, police spokeswoman Simone Eisenbarth said. Twenty-two people were in hospital.

Investigators were not able to enter parts of the smouldering building because the structure, much of it made of wood, was in danger of collapsing.

The cause of the fire, which started in the afternoon, was not clear and the victims had not yet been identified.

Police said 24 people - all Turkish citizens - were registered as living in the four-storey building, but more people had been in the house because of carnival celebrations.

The house's old wooden staircase collapsed after the fire broke out and that, in some cases, residents threw their children to police officers before jumping out of the building themselves.



## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LONDON POULTRY MARKET FIRE

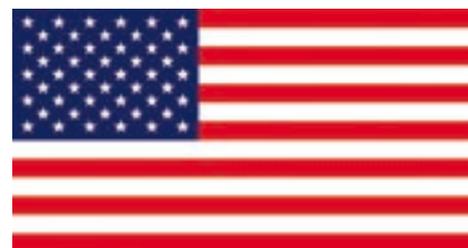
January 2008

**A** special service was held in January this year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Poultry Market fire, during which two London Fire Brigade firefighters lost their lives.

Station Officer Jack Fourt-Wells and Firefighter Richard Stocking died while tackling the blaze on Smithfield Street on 23 January 1958. At 0200hrs that morning the brigade was called to the Union Cold Storage company where they found smoke coming out of the lift shafts. Around a thousand firefighters from 58 fire stations fought the blaze throughout the day.

Deputy Commissioner of London Fire Brigade Roy Bishop, dignitaries and members of the brigade joined traders and workers, including those who witnessed the fire which raged for four days 50 years ago, at the service.

Smithfield Market Tenants' Association Deputy Chairman, Mark Twogood said: "The dedication shown by all those firemen involved in fighting the fire in this Market in 1958 epitomises the service which Londoners know the Fire Brigade is ready to deliver every day."



## OVERHEATED BRAKES CREATE A FIRE HAVOC

January 2008

**A** fire in a car park took 106 firefighters two hours and fourteen minutes to quash in Los Angeles in January this year.

The initial report indicated that a car was burning in a parking structure. Once Fire Department resources arrived on scene, they found a car, fully engulfed in flames. The fire extended into a condominium unit located in the second floor of the three storey complex.

Fire resources aggressively deployed handlines and began the fire attack, while the roof team attempted diligent ventilation efforts.

The persistent fire travelled up the walls and through the heater ducting in the open web roof and floor construction, spreading to two adjacent units. The occupants of the units had self evacuated.

In the end it took 106 firefighters two hours and fourteen minutes to contain and knock down the fire.

The cause was listed as accidental. Overheated brakes ignited a vehicle tyre. The preliminary dollar estimate was \$1.2 million dollars (\$1 million structure and \$200,000 contents).



## A FEW BEERS WITH FIREFIGHTERS IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

Story and photos by Brian Geach, Belrose Brigade

**Over the recent Christmas period Brian Geach, a photographer and firefighter from Belrose Brigade in Sydney, visited fellow firefighters in snowy New York state. He writes here about our American counterparts.**

It is minus 14 degrees Celsius and snow blankets the small town of Lew Beach in the Catskill Mountains, 170 kms north of New York City.

I'm here for the Christmas holidays and the local Beaverkill Volunteer Fire Company have kindly invited me over to the firehouse for a chat and a few beers. Phillip Bellows, a veteran of 30 years standing and the current treasurer, welcomes me and introduces me to the Fire Chief, Heath Carlsen.

On the surface, Beaverkill and my brigade, Belrose could barely be more different. The response vehicles housed in the garages are as different from the Australian vehicles as is the climate. I notice there are some organisational differences too. But the commitment and sense of community among these volunteers would be overwhelmingly familiar to any RFS member.

The station itself is immaculately maintained, and there are three white liveried tankers and pumpers in the bays. The largest tanker, a 1987 International, carries 7000 litres of water. This is critical. Winters are so cold here that there is no functioning hydrant system in the area. The station itself is 36 years old and was built after a disastrous fire in 1971 when most of the town was destroyed. At this time, the old Studebaker tanker was replaced by a GMC pumper that still resides at the station and is occasionally put to use.

The harsh winters mean the majority of calls are for house fires and motor vehicle accidents. Brush fires in the summer are rare and are usually contained easily.

The volunteers carry the weight of responsibility for their town as the nearest full time brigade is over thirty kilometres away. Active membership of the company stands at about 28 and is drawn from the local community. They range in age from 16 to 71 and are all contactable by pager or by the town siren. All the volunteers undergo an annual and mandatory physical examination. Training is conducted at the firehouse every Monday evening and all volunteers are Rescue and CABA qualified.

**From Top - left to right**  
Beaverkill Valley Firehouse showing all three operational units.

Phillip Bellows, 30 year volunteer veteran of the Beaverkill Valley Fire Company.

Studebaker pumper and crew, circa 1955.

Beaverkill Valley's two main response vehicles. From left, 1991 Ford f450 pumper and 1987 International pumper.

1971 GMC pumper in immaculate condition and still operational.

Lew Beach, Beaverkill Valley.





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### FREE CAP!!

As shown in the previous Bulletin and only while stocks last (there aren't many left!). Buy 1 each of the 'new' Emblem and Logo Caps and receive 1 of the 'original' Emblem Caps FREE that means 3 Caps for only \$17.00. (or 6 caps for \$34.00 if you order in multiples).

### Featured Item



### Large Heavy Duty Nylon Kit Bag

Specifically designed for emergency services. 5 External Zipped Pockets including 'wet' and boot pockets. Shoulder & hand carry straps. Length 73cm - Height 33cm - Width 31cm

(If ordering multiple bags for a brigade, we can individually number them for easy identification) eg EDEN 1, EDEN 2, etc. at no extra cost

You may send orders via post, fax, email or on the website. OF COURSE, IF YOU AREN'T ON THE WEB, WE CAN ALWAYS POST OR FAX AN ORDER FORM TO YOU.



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# FIREWISE<sup>TM</sup> Fact

Going on holidays is fun, but it should be safe too.

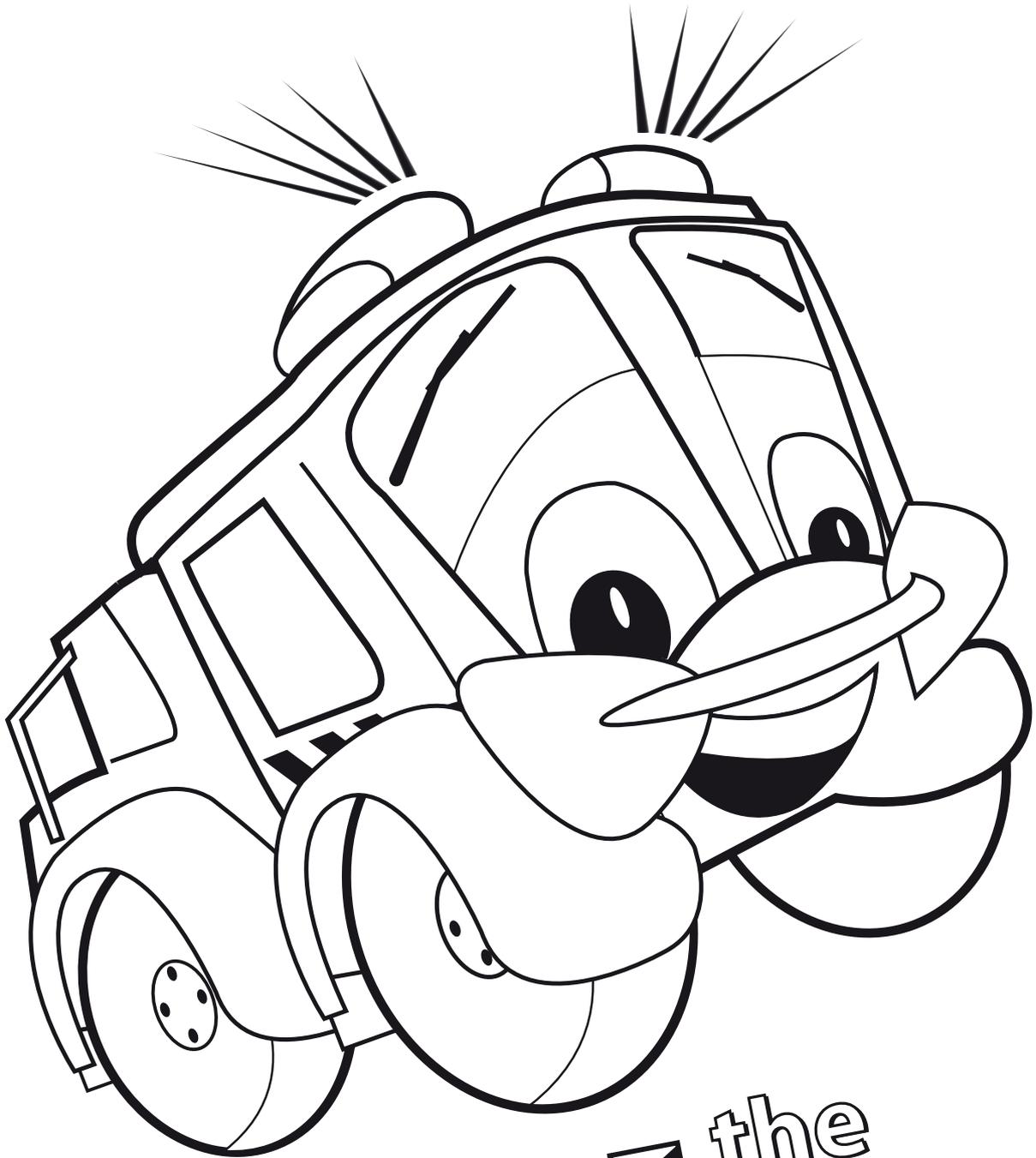
## Bush Fire Safety on Holidays

Remember these holiday fire safety tips when you go camping or caravanning:

- Is there a Total Fire Ban in the area?  
This means that the day is going to be very hot and there is a good chance that a fire can start.
- On Total Fire Ban days you are not allowed to light any fire (not even a cooking fire). Make sure mum and dad know this.
- Even if there is no Total Fire Ban you still need to be careful. During the Bush Fire Danger Period (October 1 – March 31) there are restrictions on camp fires – check the RFS website to find out more: [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- Before going to sleep or leaving the camp site area, make sure all fires have been put out completely and the BBQ is turned off.
- Take a radio (with extra batteries) when you go camping and listen to the news for any updates. It is best to find the local radio station in the area you are staying and to listen to that. The local radio station will keep you updated in case any fires break out.
- When you stay in a caravan park or camping area, check if there is a fire evacuation plan or bush fire safety plan when you arrive.
- It is very dangerous to be travelling on the road if there is a bush fire in the area. If you see smoke ahead, play it safe by turning around and finding an alternate route. Don't risk getting caught in a bush fire.
- Don't go bushwalking if you know there's a fire in the area. Stay alert when out in the bush and always make sure someone knows where you are.



Colour me in



**Reese** the fire tanker



## FIFTY YEARS AGO: March 1958

The Bush Fire Bulletin – the journal of the NSW Rural Fire Service has been in circulation for 56 years. The first issue was published on 1 September 1952 by the then Bush Fire Committee.

### Fire demon cuts loose

Compiled by Megan Jones, Librarian, RFS Headquarters

Fifty years ago in March 1958, the Bush Fire Bulletin (March 1958) described the previous Summer as a season where the “fire demon cut loose with an unprecedented burst of sustained ferocity”. There were 1,211 reported fire outbreaks amounting to £2,718,861 (\$5,916,058) in stock and property damage.

The Bulletin made special mention of significant outbreaks in Lockhart and between Bathurst and Dubbo. The largest

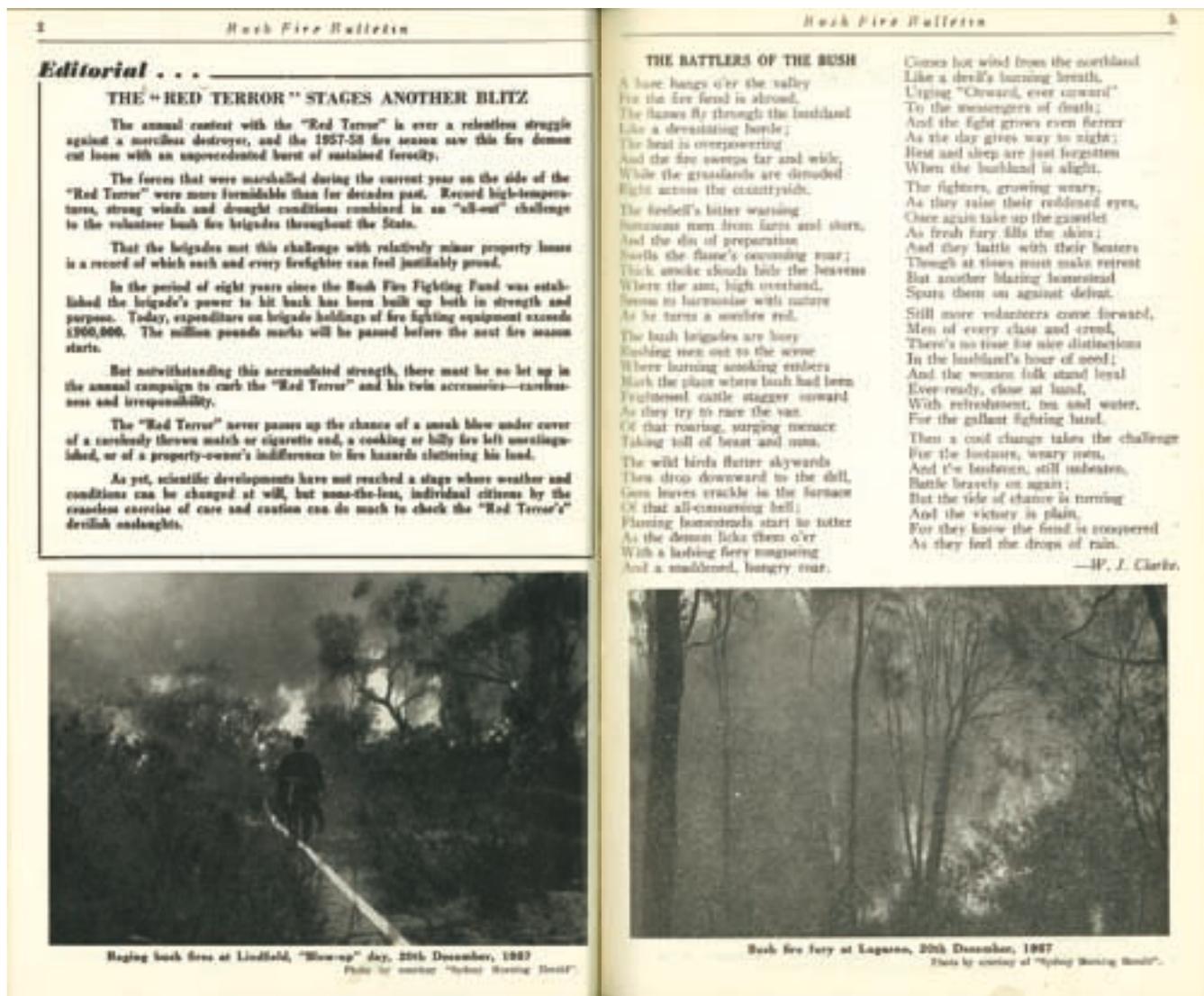
fire was in the Mount Hope, Roto and Matakana districts which spread over half a million acres (202,342ha).

Leading up the Summer, starting in August 1957, NSW had experienced heatwave conditions accompanied by strong northerly and north-westerly winds. These extreme fire danger conditions were exacerbated by the drought and drying up of ground water.

“...in the face of these explosive conditions of fire danger, the volunteer bush fire brigades again proved themselves a major force in the control and suppression of fire outbreaks,” the Annual Report of that year noted.

H. E. Messer, chairman of the Bush Fire Committee reports that the “incident of fire this past Summer has been state-wide. Hardly any district was fire free, and...the volunteer brigades gave excellent service.” Success fighting these outbreaks and surviving this bad season was attributed to:

- Total fire bans
- Publicity campaigns improving community fire consciousness
- Improved equipment and organisation of brigades
- Early detection of outbreaks and rapid communications



### RFS Library

The RFS Library welcomes all members of the NSW Rural Fire Service and is also open to researchers and members of the public. The Library holds a collection of resources focusing on bush fire management. Also other fire-related subjects, environmental management, community education, volunteer management, organisational theory and health and safety. Contact the librarians, Barbara Glass and Megan Jones, on 8741 5456/5 or by email at [rfs.library@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rfs.library@rfs.nsw.gov.au).

### Location & Opening Times

15 Carter St, Homebush Bay, NSW 2127 | Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.

# BUSH FIRE BULLETIN READER SURVEY

Overall, how appealing did you find this edition?

- Very appealing
- Fairly appealing
- Neutral
- Fairly unappealing
- Very unappealing

Comments: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

For each of the following, please indicate or comment on the features you were interested in reading in this issue (tick column applicable)

	Yes, I was interested	No, I wasn't interested	I will use this section
<b>Incidents</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
<b>Corporate News</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
<b>General News</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
<b>Training</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
<b>Operations Pull-out</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....
<b>Spotlight on Volunteers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....	<input type="checkbox"/> .....

Please list the types of stories, or specific story ideas, you are interested in reading in the Bush Fire Bulletin

.....

.....

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 Reply Paid 67059 Granville NSW,  
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**or email your details to:**  
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	Measurements (Width x Height)	Casual Rate Per Issue	RHP First 12 pages	12 Month Contract rate	12 Month Contract RHP First 12 Pages
Spread	<input type="checkbox"/> 420 x 297mm	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2810	<input type="checkbox"/> \$3232	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2670	<input type="checkbox"/> \$3070
Full Page	<input type="checkbox"/> 210 x 297mm	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1405	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1616	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1335	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1535
1/2 Page	<input type="checkbox"/> 132 x 186mm	<input type="checkbox"/> \$984	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1132	<input type="checkbox"/> \$935	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1075
Inside Front Cover	<input type="checkbox"/> 210 x 297mm	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2038	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1936	NA
Inside Back Cover	<input type="checkbox"/> 210 x 297mm	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1967	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1869	NA
Outside Back Cover	<input type="checkbox"/> 210 x 297mm	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2178	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2069	NA

# CREW WITH THE COMMISSIONER!

# WIN



## Your photo or story could win your brigade a VIP crew member for a shift - Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons.

In the interview with the Commissioner on pages 11-15, he said:

***"I certainly miss not being on the end of a hose - to coin the phrase!... If time permits I would like to go back ... and participate in being a member and maybe doing some hazard reductions."***

He said it. Now it is your chance to take the Commissioner up on his word!

Send us a story and photographs about events in your brigade and you

could crew with the Commissioner. Whether you are a member of catering brigade, communications brigade or you are putting the wet stuff on the hot stuff, we want to hear from you.

You could be the one giving the Commissioner the order to put in the line or have him rescue your hose bowl. Imagine having him using your call sign to provide a SitRep to FireCom ...or trading that sandwich for a lolly pack at lunch during an HR.

Throughout the year, RFS members from across NSW send in amazing stories and

photos to the Bush Fire Bulletin depicting the highs and lows of firefighting. It's what makes your magazine vibrant.

So whether it's a story you have written about a local volunteer who is making a difference in their community, or an amazing photo a member of your brigade has taken of a structure fully involved in fire, we would like to receive your individual brigade contributions.

And don't forget – win or lose - the RFS will publish the very best stories and photos in a future issue of the magazine. This may be

the only chance to win this prize, so ...what are you waiting for?

### HOW TO ENTER

Email your story or photograph to Bushfire.Bulletin@rfs.nsw.gov.au. (Please send photos as separate jpg attachments, in as high a resolution as possible.) Indicate in the subject line that you are entering for a chance to "Crew with the Commissioner". Then, be sure to read the next issue of the Bush Fire Bulletin to see if your brigade has won!

This issue's winners are announced on page 22.

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