



NSW Rural Fire Service

Canobolas Zone



2007/2008 Annual Report

OUR VISION

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

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

OUR MISSION

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



Executive Overview

The 2007-08 year proved to be very busy for the Canobolas Zone despite the fact that we had a quiet fire season. A record budget allocation of some \$7.2M which was the highest in the State was combined with the highest amount of hazard reduction in the State with a figure of 11,408 hectares completed.

This year also saw the final planning and construction of the first Standard Design Fire Control Centre to be built for the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Significant inroads were made into the continued upgrading of our tanker fleet as well as a major water tank project, further development of the aviation infrastructure and the continuation of our very successful "Gum Tree Meeting" engagement program.

COMPLETED CANOBOLAS ZONE PROJECTS FOR 2007/2008.

1. Construction of the new FCC and Training Centre.
2. Accept delivery of eight new and eight refurbished Tankers.
3. Aviation / Support Truck.
4. Development and rollout Aerial Fire Fighting Infrastructure.
5. Installation of water tanks for Fire Stations.
6. Full implementation of preventative maintenance for Fleet.
7. Full implementation of preventative maintenance for Radio System / Paging Communications.
8. Five additional Group vehicles.
9. Canobolas Staff contributions to State and Regional Hazard Mitigation Projects.
10. Hazard Reduction target of 9471 hectares surpassed with 11,408 hectares completed.
11. Funding for trails and HR preparation work on private property.
12. "Gum Tree" consultation meetings successfully completed.
13. Canobolas Zone hosted Region West Exercise at Neville in September 2007..
14. Commencement of the RPL process for Crew Leader for our Captains and Deputies.
15. Successfully completed our Risk Management Plan audit with the highest result (91.68%) ever achieved.
16. Received record funding of \$7.2M from the Rural Fire Fighting Fund.

Management

Staff

Significant challenges were provided to our staff this year. The Zone Manager, David Hoadley, was seconded to Head Office to manage the State Hazard Mitigation Project and our Community Safety Officer, Arthur Sharp was seconded to Region West to manage the Regional contribution to the State Project.

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

During the year we gained the support of several temporary Operations Support Officers and a temporary Administration Officer to support the Zone in the absence of our seconded staff.

In addition to the direct Canobolas Zone employees, Head Office has based a Community Safety staff member at the Canobolas Office to work in Region West on specific projects including the development of the RFS Cadet program.

Financial

The Canobolas Zone received a total allocation from the Rural Fire Fighting Fund of \$7,188,749 for the 2007/208 year which was an increase of \$2,221,465 on the previous year.

Each Council received the following allocation:

Blayney	\$1,860,401
Cabonne	\$2,587,115
Cowra	\$1,449,495
Orange	\$1,291,739
Total	\$7,188,749

Our Councils are responsible for contributing 13.3% to the total budget. All of our Councils agreed to extend their contributions above their budgets to take up additional tankers and significant funding for hazard reduction activities..

The actual Council contribution for the year was \$769,305 and was split between the Councils on the following basis:

Council	Estimated 13.3% October 2007	Actual Contribution
Blayney	\$204,470	\$201,660.62
Cabonne	\$278,707	\$280,737.91
Cowra	\$149,438	\$150,481.89
Orange	\$136,310	\$136,424.33

Fire Control Centre.

The Rural Fire Service embarked upon a standard design model for all new Fire Control Centres and Brigade Fire Stations that will maintain a standard across the State for the administration, coordination housing for resources. The Fire Control Centre planning alternatives allow for small, medium and large facilities depending upon the needs of individual District/Team/Zones.

During 2007/08 the Canobolas Zone, through our constituent Councils, commenced construction of the first standard design Fire Control Centre in NSW. This followed a rigorous period of involvement by Canobolas Zone Region West and Council staff into the design format of the standard plans.



Forest Rd Site preparation Dec 2007

The site at Cadia and Forest Roads south of Orange was leased by Orange City Council from the Department of Lands and the relevant Development Application for the “Large” Fire Control Centre was approved by Orange City Council. The successful tender, Bilas Knight, from Camden, was appointed in late November 2007 and construction began early January 2008.



Framing Stage April 2008

The Management of the construction has been overseen by Orange City Council Technical Services Staff and their efforts in ensuring the maintenance of timeframes has been a hallmark in the efficiency of the project.

Completed in early August 2008, the facility provides the most innovative capabilities for training, operations and administration for local volunteers and staff along with a capability of providing services to the wider community.



The Fire Control Centre will be capable of providing a range of services to the Brigades, Councils and communities of Canobolas Zone and the facility includes the following list of capabilities

- Operational capability for all classes of incidents
- 24 hour back up power generation
- 60KVA Uninterruptible Power Supply
- Full suite of agency communications equipment
- Training facilities for all types of events
- Conference facilities for RFS and its constituent Councils and agencies
- Multiple breakout areas for training and meetings
- Large storage facility for equipment
- 500,000L water storage plus dam storage
- Serviceable helipad

On behalf of the Canobolas Zone staff and volunteers I would like to pass on to our Councils our sincere thanks for your support for this project. Special mention must also be made for the contribution by Orange City Council for their construction funding and project management that has ensured such a successful outcome.

Brigade Consultation.

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

The objectives of these meetings are:

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

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

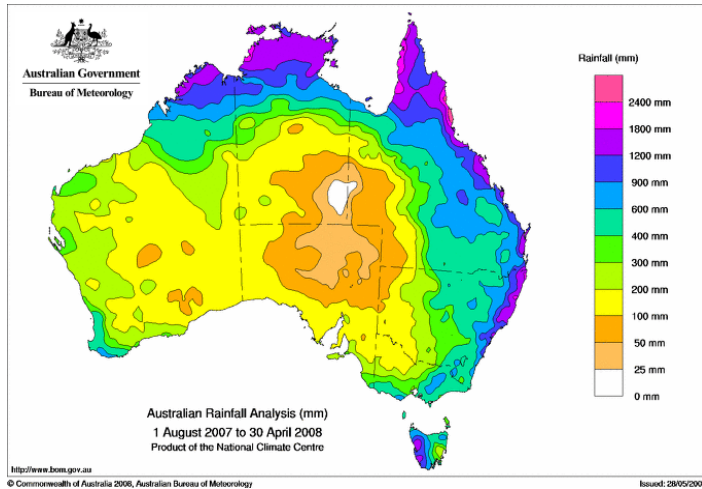
During 2008 these meetings identified many opportunities for hazard reduction on private land as well as on Forest NSW and NPWS tenure.



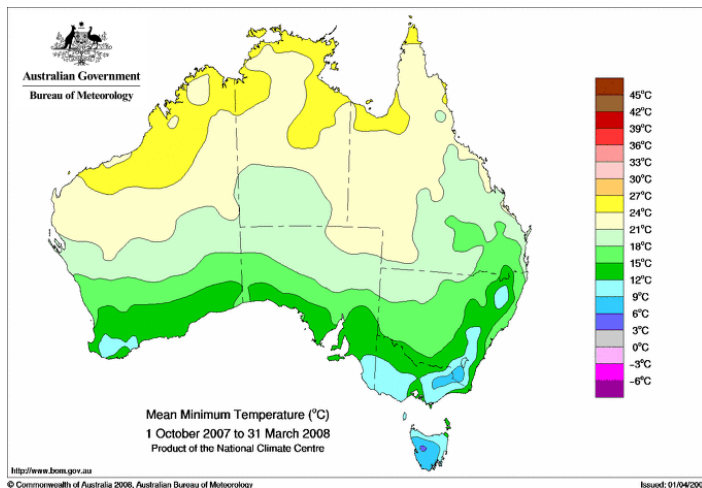
Gum Tree Meeting at Cowra 2007

Operations

Fire Season 2007/08 proved a welcome relief for volunteers and staff with a significant reduction in the number of incidents reported and responded to across the Zone. Milder conditions and light pre summer rain assisted in the provision of relatively benign fire danger for the majority of the Bush Fire Danger Period.



Generally warm temperatures and dry conditions presented during late August and early October, this necessitated in the Canobolas Zone Bush Fire Management Committee altering the commencement of the local Bush Fire Danger Period from November 1 forward one week to October 26.



The largest cause of fire during the period was lightning activity from a number of storm fronts that passed through the area. Generally these storm events caused multiple ignitions across many brigade areas over a period of hours.

Out of Area assistance requests were limited in the 2007/08 year to one Strike Team deployment for three days to the Blacktown area during December 2007. This Strike Team consisted of 2 tankers, 1 Command Vehicle and 10 personnel.

Incidents

Across the Zone our Brigades responded to a total of 342 Incidents during the 2007/08 reporting period. The table below details the type of responses by Council area.

Council	Fires	MVA's	Others Good intent & False Alarms	Totals 2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
Blayney	22	11	13	46	78	56
Cabonne	90	36	13	139	230	196
Cowra	69	13	17	99	98	101
Orange	33	9	16	58	122	88
Totals	395	66	70	342	528	441

Total incidents are down by 186 on the previous year and down 101 on the 2005/06 year indicating the moderate season that was experienced.

The major intrusion during 2007/2008 for incident response was the regular occurrence of either hayshed or haystack fires. Brigades across Canobolas Zone were responded to in excess of 40 separate hayshed and haystack fires from the period October through to February, and almost 600 similar instances across the state.



Whilst there is still some research ongoing into the cause of these fires, there is strong evidence that many of the responses were to cereal hay cut and baled as the result of failed grain crops.

The number of responses to Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA's) and "Other Incidents" have remained consistent with the previous year, however when compared over a three year period these numbers generally seen a decline by around one third historically.

Maintenance

The maintenance project continued during 2007/08 across the Fire Fighting tanker fleet, thanks to additional maintenance funding provided by Region West.

All tankers were afforded a "Service" and at the same time received a roadworthy inspection and an inspection of the fire fighting apparatus, as required by the Rural Fires Act.

The Service centres for these works are decentralised to limit the amount of travelling required by volunteers, as well as constrain the fuel expenditure. These centres have all been selected for their capability and expertise in providing the required maintenance for heavy vehicles and have all gained the certification required to perform the RTA HVIS (Heavy Vehicle Inspection Scheme).

The approved service centres are

- Orange City Council Depot
- Blayney Council Depot
- Tracserv Trucks – Orange
- Tracserv Trucks – Cowra (Waugoola Station)
- Tracserv Trucks – Yeoval (Kerin Engineering)
- Cowra Truck Wreckers
- Cabonne Council Depot - Cudal

Tanker Upgrading.

Funding of \$1,334,692 was allocated for tankers during 2007/2008.

A total of 33 Fire Fighting Tanker resources and support vehicle movements have been made across the Zone as a result of this funding during the year.

The major focus has been on the removal of all petrol powered vehicles from service and with the finalisation of the movements tabled below there will be a total of seven petrol vehicles remaining in service, with an expectation that all petrol heavy tankers will be redundant during 2008/09.

The allocation of 2nd hand tanker funding has allowed the purchase of an additional 5 vehicles for Group Officer and volunteer use. These units have been fitted with the equipment necessary to enable our senior group personnel to perform the operational role of Divisional Commanders and fire ground coordinators at major events. The vehicles also allow scope for travel capability to the meeting schedule pertinent to our Group personnel.

COUNCIL	BRIGADE	TANKER
Cabonne	Cargo	New Cat 7
	Yeoval	New Cat 7
	March	New Cat 7
	Molong	Cat 7
	Washpen	Cat 7
	Lockwood	New Cat 2
	Washpen or Panuara	Cat 1
	Mt Pleasant	Cat 1
	Eulimore	Cat 1
	Murga	Cat 2
	Mogong	Cat 1
	Mullion Creek	Cat 7
	Yeoval	Cat 1
	Boomey	Cat 2
	Gamboola	Cat 1

Blayney	Neville	Cat 1
	Blayney	New Cat 1
	Carcoar	New Cat 1
	Barry-Hobbys Yards	Cat 1
Cowra	Torrington	Cat 1
	Warwick - Glenlogan	Cat 1
	Koorawatha	Cat 7
	Walli - Islands	Cat 7
	Gooloogong	New Cat 2
	Porters Mount	Cat 7
	Mount McDonald	Cat 7
	Woodstock	Cat 1
Orange	Orange	New Cat 17
Zone Resource	Cowra Group	Land Rover
	Cowra Group	Land Rover
	Tablelands Group	Land Rover
	Goobang Group	Land Rover
	Nangar Group	Land Rover

Aviation

Aviation resources were also benefited by the inflow of grant funding during 2007/08 and together with the RFS water tank project the Zone has been able to boost the level of on site infrastructure at our strategic airbase and airstrip locations as well as add to the logistical support through additional fast fill trailers to support the aviation operations.

The following strategies have been achieved in 2007/08

- Installation of 2 x 20,000L tanks for retardant at Canobolas Airbase at Orange.
- Installation of 2 x 20,000L tanks for retardant at Cowra Airbase.
- Installation of a 245,000L water tank at Cowra Airbase.
- Installation of an additional 245,000L tank at Canobolas Airbase at Orange..
- Installation of a water supply bore at Cowra Airbase.
- Installation of a 245,000L water tank at Trajere (Eugowra) airstrip.
- Installation of underground supply plumbing at Obley (Yeoval) airstrip.
- Training provided to personnel from Waugoola and Orange Brigades in Air Base Support and Aviation Basic Knowledge.
- Delivery of a specialist aviation support truck for Zone operations.
- Commissioning of 4 fast fill trailer units supplied by RFSA funding for:
 - Byng Emu Swamp
 - Trajere
 - Cudal
 - Waugoola

Community Safety

Hazard Reduction

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

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

Since 1 July 2007 and up to 30 June 2008 the Community Safety Staff of Canobolas Zone carried out the following works.

	Blayney	Cabonne	Cowra	Orange
Development Applications 79BA / 100B	1	23	0	0
Permits Section 87 & 88	28	222	170	31
Hazard Reduction Complaints	57	39	56	293

Hazard Reduction Activities

The Canobolas Zone Risk Management Plan seeks to treat 9,471 hectares annually across all land tenures. During this year the Canobolas Zone had access to significant funding which allowed us to complete additional works on private property.

Our Councils also received \$140,500 which has allowed for a significant increase in the area that has been completed.

The Canobolas Zone Bush Fire Management Committee that covers the four Council areas has plans to increase the works program to 22,299 hectares in 2008/2009 to ensure the targets that are set in the Risk Management Plan are achieved.

CANOBOLAS ZONE HAZARD REDUCTION ROLLING RECONCILIATION 2004 - 2009

	Annual Benchmark	Completed 2004/2005	Completed 2005/2006	Completed 2006/2007	Completed 2007/2008	4 Year Target	Completed
Private	4,709	3,859	9	3,494	5,040	18,836	12,402
Crown	1,227	2,385	2,273	2,273	5,199	4,908	12,130
NPWS	2,278	2,485	20	711	822	9,112	4,038
FNSW	1,257	2,204	300	422	347	5,028	3,273
Totals	9,471	10,933	2,602	6,900	11,408	37,884	31,843

Risk Management Plan Benchmarks.

**The total target at the end of year four was – 37,884 hectares.
Works completed for this period – 31,843 hectares.
Prepared and ready to burn in 2007/2008 delayed by weather – 5,329 hectares
Weather permitting total would have been – 37,172 hectares
Works Program for 2008/2009 – 22,299 hectares.
Five year target – 47,355 hectares.
Estimated five year result – 54,142 hectares – SURPLUS 6,787 hectares.**

Risk Management Plan Audit.

During the year Canobolas Zone participated in an audit of our Risk Management Plan. Data was collected from all participating Agencies within our Zone for the Section 62A Commissioners audit.

Canobolas Zone achieved a 91.63% compliance in the draft Audit Report. This represents the highest result ever achieved by a BFMC and will be reported in the RFS Annual Report.



Markams Hazard Reduction 2008.

Cadets.

Canobolas Zone has undertaken Cadet courses during the year at Orange Christian School (18 students), James Sheahan Catholic High School (22 students) and Cowra High School (15 students).

A number of students have indicated that following this Cadet training they are interested in continuing and involvement and will look to join a Rural Fire Brigade. A keen group of staff have been supported by a team of enthusiastic volunteers from Orange, North West, Springside and Waugoola brigades. Without doubt it is the dedication of these volunteers that have made this program so successful.



Canobolas Cadets in action.

Learning and Development

Another successful year of training was conducted within the Zone, by our staff and volunteers.

The Canobolas Zone also hosted the Region West Exercise at Neville in September 2007. This provided an excellent training and assessment event and contained many practical exercises to sharpen the skills of those who participated. A feature of the weekend was the introduction of real fire into the hazard reduction scenario in the Neville State Forest.

During 2007 a total of 304 members nominated for the following courses.

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

- Aviation Operations
- Air Attack Supervisor
- Rural Fire Driving
- Bush Firefighter
- Village Firefighter
- Advanced Firefighter

- Crew Leader
- Senior First Aid
- Business Management
- Breathing Apparatus Operator
- Incident Management Workshop
- Incident Management Exercise
- Rural Fire Instructor
- Combined Agency Exercises (NSWFB, NSW Police)
- Bush Fire Awareness
- Chainsaw Operations
- Compartment Fire Behaviour
- Hot Fire Pad Instruction
- Group Leader
- Permit Officer Workshop



Chainsaw Course Cowra 2008.

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

Canobolas has been instrumental in developed an assessment process for our Captains and Deputies to be assessed by RPL and RCC for their Crew Leader qualifications. This was tested on 11 volunteers during this year and it is planned to extend this opportunity to many more volunteers in the next year.



Training Exercise House Burn September 2007.



REGION WEST

CANOBOLAS ZONE

ANNUAL REPORT

Period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

INTRODUCTION

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

This report contains the following elements;

- Summary of achievements,
- Region West Highlights.

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

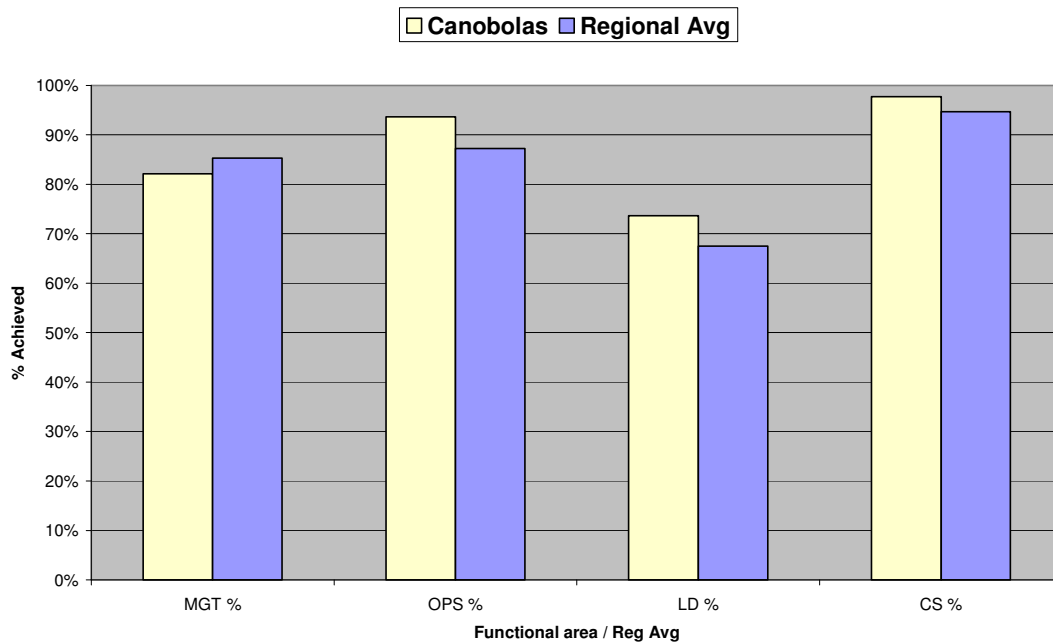
High quality and consistent reporting has been something the Region has been striving for since its formation. This has now been achieved, with the use of the eSDM across all Region West for the last three reporting years.

The dedication of the staff to collect data and report consistently is outstanding and very much appreciated.

TEAM / ZONE PERFORMANCE

Canobolas Zone achieved a reported average compliance of 86% (96% last year) against fifty-seven target actions. They have also achieved a reported completion rate of 82% for Management (last year 97%); 94% for Operations (last year 100%); 74% for L&D (last year 78%) and 98% for Community Safety (last year 100%).

CANOBOLAS ZONE - EOY- 2007/08



Canobolas Zone was well above the Region average (84%) on reported completion rates for the 2007/08 year.

Achievements within the Zone

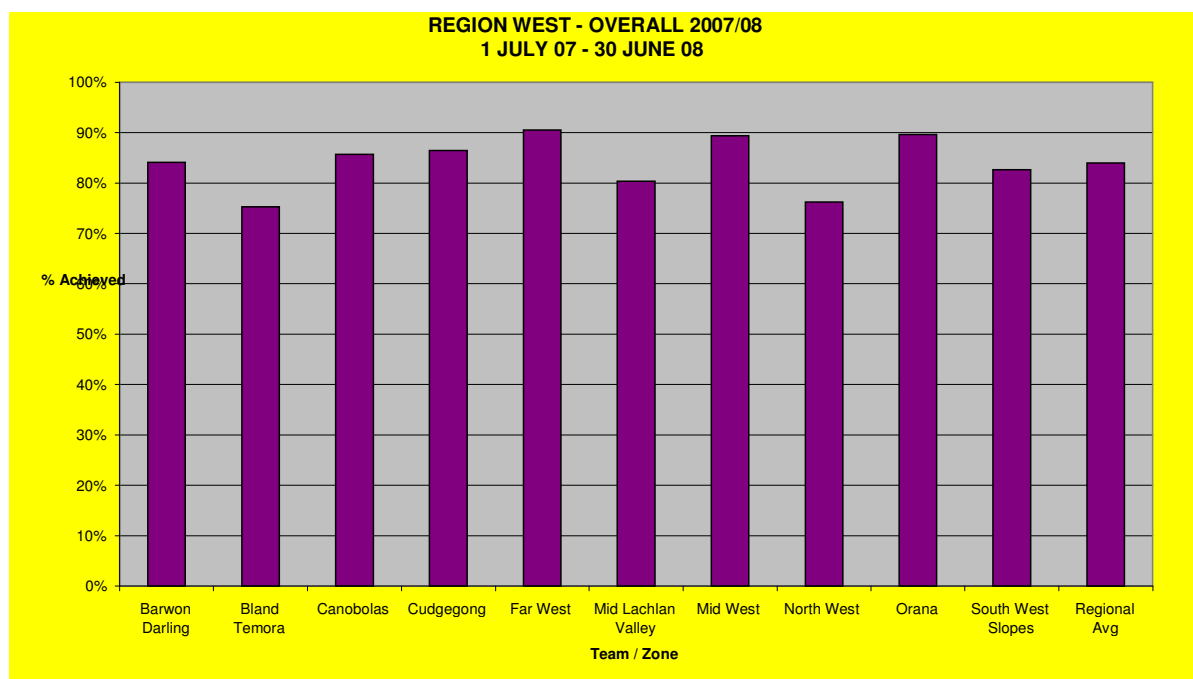
- Canobolas Zone achieved the joint highest HR results in the State for 2007/2008;

- First new Standard Design FCC being constructed;
- Canobolas Zone has developed an RPL process for all Crew Leader courses;
- The Canobolas Zone SWS Project is installing 40 large tanks comprising 4,920,000 litres, equivalent to 1,640 Cat 1 loads;
- Aviation infrastructure completed at 5 of the first 6 identified sites (water / mixing and loading equipment);
- Eight additional Group Officers vehicles bought into service;
- Staff contributions to State hazard reduction project;
- Three volunteers provided with Operational Support opportunities for personal development;
- Gum Tree meetings continue - 2 weeks across 12 sites up to 30 brigades contacting 200 volunteers;
- Four Cadet programs rolled out across three campuses.

REGIONAL OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The Region has achieved 84% completion (down from 89% last year) of the fifty-seven programs/actions within the Business Plan. The majority of DTZ's had 80% or above reported achievement.

The Community Safety KRA had six of eleven actions 100% complete, with four at a level of 89% and above. The Management KRA ended with one of twenty-four actions 100% complete, however seventeen other actions fell into the 80-99% category. Learning & Development finished with three of eleven actions at 100%, with four actions in the 80% and above category. Finally Operations finished one action achieving 100%, and nine actions achieving 80% and above.



FUTURE 2008/09 PRIORITIES/ACTIONS FOR THE REGION

- Team Managers professional development.
- Group Officers forum
- Volunteer to Career day again held,

- Regional Exercise - incorporating hazard reduction scenario & provide opportunities for Brigades to train in real life situations with other emergency services
- Hazard Management targets to be met.
- DTZ meeting on a 'cluster' basis to better inform all staff.
- L&D systems to better refine RPL/RCC/Red Lining of senior volunteers for qualifications.
- Better data management within existing corporate systems.
- Reduction of petrol tankers within Region West.
- Community Safety Facilitators & Assistants course's
- Plan a Prescribed Burn course conducted.
- Complete Prescribed Burn supervisor accreditation practical.
- Smoke Management Accreditation via RTA. Course designed to give RFS staff Workcover approved qualifications for placing signage on public roads for HR Burns.
- Mapinfo course - maintain spatial data
- Combined West/South Community Education Conference
- State Community Education Conference - new venue
- CSO 1a & 1b courses for new CSOs
- Development Assessment course for new CSOs, interested Managers & current CSOs requiring a refresher
- Fuel assessment course for state reporting
- Training of Additional Fire Investigators to enable Z/Ts to be self sufficient
- Regional IMW/IMX conducted & additional Staff & Volunteers trained in IMT Functional areas
- Develop Z/T Staffs understanding of Fuel Sampling procedures
- Facilitate Regional Operation Forums to focus on topical issues affecting Ops staff.

FINAL SUMMARY

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

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

I thank all staff of Canobolas Zone for their efforts in achieving so much during 2007/08.

Regional Manager
23 July 2008

NSWRFS CANOBOLAS ZONE PROJECTS FOR 2008/2009.

- Official Opening of the new FCC and Training Centre.
- Construction of 3 new Brigade Stations.
- Accept delivery of 4 new Tankers.
- Possibility of up to 6 second hand tankers.
- Internal Program of 2 second hand tanker upgrades.
- Complete negotiations and implementation of Country Energy sponsorship and alliance.
- Continued development and rollout Aerial Fire Fighting Infrastructure.
- Continued installation of water tanks for Fire Stations.
- Development of a new Risk Management Plan..
- Replacement of Motorola Radios.
- Communications Enhancement for Mount McDonald & Cowra sites.
- Completion of 3 yearly Group Officer elections.
- Hazard Reduction Works Program for 22,297 hectares.
- Spending our \$860,840 allocation for hazard reduction works.
- Fire Trail Signage Project.
- Continue "Gum Tree" consultation meetings.
- Stores Management system completed.
- Continue the RPL Project for Crew Leaders.