



Together ~ for our community.

NSW Rural Fire Service Annual Report 2008





The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Emergency Services
Level 34, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in submitting to you for presentation to Parliament the Annual Report of NSW Rural Fire Service for the year ended 30 June 2008. Highlights of the year included:

- An allocation of \$35.5M for the provision of 259 new and refurbished tankers
- Overall coordination and management of seven section 44 bush fire emergencies declared in NSW, involving 14 local government areas and burning across 86,000 hectares of land
- Assisting the NSW State Emergency Service with the response to major flood and storm emergencies in the Hunter Valley, Central Coast and Western Sydney
- Assisting the Department of Primary Industries response to the outbreak of Equine Influenza
- A significant deployment of volunteers to South Australia to help fight fires on Kangaroo Island
- 8,932 developments assessed across the State
- 632 students successfully completed the RFS Cadet Training Program
- Member participation in MyRFS exceeded 10,600 registered users, with 5.3 million requests for pages and information.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985*, the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001*.

Yours sincerely

Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM
Commissioner

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Who we are & what we do.

More than 100 years ago the residents of the south-western New South Wales town of Berrigan formed Australia's first official bush fire brigade. The residents banded together as fire fighters for protection against the ever-present threat of bush fires.

On 1 September 1997 the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) was established by an Act of Parliament as the successor to that first bush fire brigade. The RFS is now the world's

largest volunteer fire service and continues to build on a century of experience in protecting some of the most fire-prone areas on earth.

Today, the RFS comprises more than 2,000 volunteer rural fire brigades and a total membership of just over 70,000. Salaried staff are employed to manage the day-to-day operations of the Service at Headquarters, regional offices and district fire control centres. These staff carry

out a variety of roles including operational management, administration, finance, planning, training, hazard reduction management, and engineering.

The role of volunteer fire brigades encompasses far more than preventing and fighting bush fires. Volunteer fire fighters are regularly called upon to attend building and structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, assist in search and rescue operations and help with storm

and flood recovery. The Service is responsible for structural fire fighting in more than 1,200 towns and villages across the State.

Brigade members are all volunteers and come from all walks of life. They combine the volunteer spirit of service with a professional approach to the protection of life and property within the community.

Vision, Mission & Values.

Our vision

To provide a world standard of excellence in the provision of a community-based fire and emergency service.

Our mission

To protect the community and our environment, we will minimise the impact of fire and other emergencies by providing the highest standards of training, community education, prevention and operational capability.

Values

The values that underpin all our actions are:

- **Our people** - Volunteerism and commitment
- **Professionalism** - In all we do
- **Community** - Mutual assistance
- **Quality Customer Service** - Internal and external
- **Continuous Improvement** - Co-operation
- **Honesty, Integrity and Trust** - Ethical standards and behaviour

Our Stakeholders & Customers.

Our customers

- The people of New South Wales
- Our volunteers and staff

Our stakeholders

- The people of New South Wales
- The Minister for Emergency Services
- The Government of New South Wales
- The Insurance industry
- Local Government
- Other emergency services
- Other Government agencies





Consumer Response.

The Service continued to be well regarded by its customers and stakeholders. Any complaints received are given attention and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Overseas Visits.

Details of overseas visits by staff are set out in Appendix O.

Key Statistics.



	07/08 \$M198	06/07 \$M168	05/06 \$M140	04/05 \$M134
Funding				
Brigades	2,058	2,077	2,100	2,069
Districts	126	126	128	132
Zones/Teams	39	39	38	39
Our people				
Volunteers	70,159	71,441	70,745	70,964
Salaried support and administration	710	685	680	649
Incidents				
Total number of incidents	17,569	20,186	19,590	17,342
Bush fires	2,271	3,361	2,865	2,659
Grass fires	2,157	3,420	3,888	3,533
Building fires	1,051	929	951	949
Vehicle fires	1,395	1,423	1,525	1,166
Motor vehicle accidents	3,538	3,415	3,225	2,289
False alarms	1,956	1,874	2,028	1,896
Other	5,201	5,764	5,108	4,850
Buildings				
Headquarters	1	1	1	1
Regional Offices	4	4	4	4
Tankers				
Funding provided for new and refurbished tankers to be allocated to brigades	259	260	230	210
Vehicles				
Current RFS fleet including marine craft				
Tankers	4,017	3,966	3,927	
Pumpers	54	51	58	
Personnel Transport and Command	658	857	814	
Bulk Water units	57	55	52	
Tanker Trailers	1,899	2,011	2,109	
Cargo, tip trucks, various trailers	281	266	83	
Communications vehicles and trailers	38	38	36	
Catering vehicles and trailers	66	64	64	
Marine	21	20	19	
Slip on trailers and miscellaneous	614	1,081	1,502	
Communications				
Radios	18,996	20,050	19,800	
Learning and Development – as at 31 December 2007				
Volunteers and their qualifications				
Bush fire fighters	35,429			
Village fire fighters	16,841			
Advanced fire fighters	10,896			
Crew leaders	7,241			
Group leaders	899			
First aiders	10,362			
Breathing apparatus operators	1,935			
Chain saw operators	4,797			
Rural fire drivers	6,193			
RFS Instructors	1,675			
RFS Training Facilitators	223			
RFS Training Coordinators	463			
RFS Assessors	1,124			
Total hours of local level RFS training	300,931			
Total hours of regional level RFS training	17,412			
Total hours of State level RFS training	7,799			

(does not include staff professional development training)

Commissioner's Report.

During the past twelve months the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) has achieved many significant outcomes across the State, while continuing to enhance its international reputation as a leader of emergency services both domestically and abroad.

In 2007/08 the Service completed an organisational strategic review, resulting in a new Strategic Plan for 2008-2012, as well as a new set of organisational values, which will place the Service in a better position to meet the many challenges ahead.

This year also saw the beginning of a reorganisation of the RFS Headquarters, which will improve the overall management, functions and legislative responsibilities, while streamlining the many operations we undertake.

This restructure will assist all members of the Service,

particularly volunteers, to access information and services more effectively.

The 2007/08 year also showed the versatility of the RFS in managing the response to a multitude of emergency incidents, from major bush fires to assisting other agencies in providing relief from severe floods and storms.

The bush fire season was dominated by a La Nina weather event, bringing relatively benign fire conditions to large parts of the State, compared to previous seasons. Despite these conditions, seven bush fires were declared under section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act*.

These major bush fires occurred in parts of Sydney, the Central Coast, the Lower Hunter, Northern Tablelands, Northern Rivers and New England regions. They resulted in the destruction

of two residential homes and 86,000 hectares being burnt. More than 755 Incident Management Team personnel and firefighters were involved in fighting these fires.

During the reporting period, a total of 13 total fire bans were declared.

Throughout the year, RFS firefighters attended a large number of hay bale, hay stack and hay shed fires. In total, there were more than 500 of these incidents recorded across the State, caused mainly by the spontaneous combustion of wet hay. During this time, the Service undertook a public education campaign, outlining the importance of correctly storing hay.

In June 2007, RFS volunteers assisted the State Emergency Service in communities up and down the coast, which had been hit by devastating storms and

floods. An intense East Coast low pressure system brought major flooding to the Central Coast and Hunter Valley areas, with the Sydney metropolitan area and Illawarra also affected.

Through their assistance, RFS members demonstrated a strong and varied set of skills and many have been presented with specially-struck medals from the NSW Government, thanking them for their contribution.

As well as providing assistance at home, the RFS has again demonstrated the high esteem in which it is held by other agencies. In December 2007, South Australia was hit by extremely high temperatures and experienced major fire activity. Following a request from the Country Fire Service, 214 RFS firefighters were deployed to Kangaroo Island. A number of staff were also sent to Adelaide to act as Liaison Officers.



The RFS also played a major role in the combat of the Equine Influenza outbreak across NSW. In total, about 140 staff and volunteers were involved in logistical and administrative support of the NSW Department of Primary Industries containment strategy.

The year has provided many milestones for the RFS.

During 2007/2008, RFS members spent more than 49,000 hours conducting community awareness and engagement activities in their local communities. This represents around 2,130 events and activities across the State. 749 events were specifically targeted at children and young people.

Compared to last year, there has been a 20 per cent

increase in the completion rate of the hazard reduction works program across the State. This is due to a number of elements, including the commitment by land managers, RFS brigades and staff and the provision of an additional \$36 million over four years by the Government.

The Service's successful Cadets program has continued to grow. Over the year, a total of 632 students successfully completed the expanded 10-week program, which teaches participants about community fire safety, fire suppression and volunteering. Approximately five percent of these students are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

2007/2008 also saw the rollout of the Service's program of standard designs for both brigade stations and

Fire Control Centres. The first of these will be completed and opened in the 2008/2009 financial year.

In May 2008, the Service marked the handover of the 3000th tanker to be provided to brigades under the RFS tanker program.

It was also pleasing to note that during 2007/2008, the number of volunteers participating on the web-based information site MyRFS exceeded 10,000. The MyRFS team is reporting more than 5.3 million requests for pages and information each year.

The year has once again shown the dedication and extraordinary commitment of our volunteers and staff. I thank all members of the RFS for their skill and tireless effort in providing support to communities across NSW and Australia.

I would also like to acknowledge the strong support of the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Nathan Rees, who made time to travel to many RFS events across the State and took the opportunity to get to know many of our volunteers and staff. Minister Rees also provided valuable support for Service reform and improvements that will benefit our members and the people of NSW.

I would also like to thank Richard Lyons, Director of the Office for Emergency Services and his staff for their support over 2007/2008.

I look forward to working with volunteers and staff to build on the successes of 2007/2008 in the coming year.



...RFS members spent more than 49,000 hours conducting community awareness and engagement activities in their local communities.

Rural Fire Regions and Office Access Details.



**Region East**

15 Carter Street
Homebush Bay NSW 2127
Tel 02 8741 5555
Fax 02 8741 5550

Region North

Level 4, State Office Block
Victoria Street
Grafton NSW 2460
Tel 02 6643 2512
Fax 02 6643 2515

Region South

7-9 Kylie Crescent
Batemans Bay NSW 2536
Tel 02 4472 4165
Fax 02 4472 4126

Region West

Shop 3, Lovell Place
Lovell Street
Young NSW 2594
Tel 02 6382 5677
or 02 6382 5678
Fax 02 6382 1731

Headquarters

15 Carter Street
Homebush Bay NSW 2127
Tel 02 8741 5555
Fax 02 8741 5550

Office hours at all locations are
0845-1700 Monday to Friday.

Governance.



Legislative
Bush Fire Coordinating Committee
Rural Fire Service Advisory Council
Fire Services Joint Standing Committee
Corporate Executive Group
Principal Officers



Legislative.

Our management and operational responsibilities are set down clearly in the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and can be summarised as follows:

- Protection of life and property for all fire related incidents within all rural fire districts in the State
- Safety and welfare of all volunteers
- Provision of effective training and resources to rural fire brigades
- Provision of emergency assistance to other emergency service organisations.

The three major bodies that govern the operations of the Service are the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (RFSAC), the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) and the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC).

The RFSAC has the following functions:

- Advising and reporting to the Minister and the Commissioner on any matter relating to the administration of rural fire services under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*
- Advising the Commissioner on public education programs relating to rural fire matters and on the training of rural fire fighters

- Advising the Commissioner on the issue of Service Standards
- Such other functions as may be conferred or imposed upon it by or under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

The BFCC is the peak planning body for bush fire management in New South Wales. The Commissioner chairs the Committee and has an overarching co-ordinating role and the Service provides the Secretariat.

The BFCC is responsible for planning in relation to fire prevention and coordinated bush fire fighting, and advises the Commissioner on bush fire prevention and mitigation and coordinated bush fire suppression. The Committee has such other functions as are conferred or imposed upon it by or under the *Rural Fires Act 1997* or other legislation. In carrying out any function that affects the environment, the Committee must have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development as set out in section 6(2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*.

The Committee must report to the Minister for Emergency Services on any matter referred by the Minister, and may report on any matter relating to the

prevention and suppression of bush fires, whether referred to it or not. Further, the Committee may enter into arrangements with the Minister for Lands or any public authority with respect to the reduction of bush fire hazards.

The *Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act 1998* provides legislative support for the work of the FSJSC.

The Committee's work of coordinating the activities of the fire services was supported by the Service's representatives, Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM and Chief Superintendent Stuart Midgley AFSM.

Day to day management of the Service is carried on under the direction of the Corporate Executive Group (CEG). This Group consists of the Service's senior managers and representatives of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association.

Details of representation and member attendances at these bodies are set out in Appendix N.

The Service is also represented on a number of external organisations:

- Australasian Fire Authorities Council and its various committees
- Association of Environment Education (NSW)

- Border Liaison Committees
- Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
- District Emergency Management Committees
- District Rescue Committees
- Emergency Services Communications Working Party
- Emergency Services Industry Reference Group
- Emergency Services Personnel Support Advisory Group
- Environmental Education Officers' Group
- Fire Protection Association
- GRN Joint Management Board – Department of Commerce
- Museum Education Officers' Group
- National Aerial Firefighting Centre
- NSW Health Disaster Management Committee
- Public Sector Occupational Health and Safety Group
- Standards Australia – various committees
- State Emergency Management Committee
- State Rescue Board.

All day-to-day activities of the Service are supported by the Service's Code of Conduct which applies to volunteers and salaried staff alike.



Principal Officers.

Commissioner

Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM

Mr Fitzsimmons was appointed Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service in September 2007, after acting in the position since May. Prior to taking on the role as Commissioner he was Executive Director Operations and Regional Management.

Shane has been a member of the Service since 1984 when he joined the Duffys Forest Brigade and where he remained as a member for ten years, at various times holding the positions of Captain and Deputy Group Captain.

In 1994 he was appointed Regional Planning Officer in Central East Region, eventually progressing to the position of Regional Coordinator before being appointed State Operations Officer. In 1998 Mr Fitzsimmons was appointed Assistant Commissioner Operations.

Mr Fitzsimmons has represented the Service at international

meetings in the United States, Singapore and Malaysia.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2001.

Acting Chief of Staff

Russell Taylor AFSM

Mr Taylor joined the RFS following the serious bush fires of 1994, as Education Officer. An English, History and Drama teacher by training, Mr Taylor has also had an extensive career in the media, and particular in the area of children's radio and television where he appeared and or wrote several series.

Russell has been Acting Chief of Staff since 2006, and prior to this was Manager Community Education for over nine years.

In 1980 Mr Taylor joined his local volunteer brigade where he served as Captain for 18 years and as Senior Deputy Captain for a further eight years (a position he still holds).

He is the recipient of The National Medal, Commissioner's

Commendation for Service and in 2003 the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Executive Director Strategic Development

Mark Crowweller AFSM

Mr Crowweller joined the Service in 1985 as a member of the Headquarters Brigade in the Warringah - Pittwater District where he held the positions of fire fighter, Deputy Captain, Senior Deputy Captain, Captain and Deputy Group Captain. In 1994 he was appointed Deputy Fire Control Officer and in 1996 was appointed Fire Control Officer for the same District.

In 1998 Mark was appointed Assistant Commissioner. He has been a member of the Review and Policy Sub-Committee of the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee; a State Council and Executive Member of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association; a member of the State Executive of that Association, and a member of the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.

Mr Crowweller has represented the Service on international projects in Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Brazil.

Prior to joining the Service Mr Crowweller was employed in the consulting engineering industry. He holds a graduate certificate, graduate diploma and Master of Management degree.

He was awarded the Commissioner's Commendation for Service in 1999, the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2003 and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

Executive Director Community Safety

Rob Rogers AFSM

Mr Rogers joined the Service in 1979 as a member of the Belrose Brigade in the Warringah-Pittwater District where he remained until 1995. During that time Rob held various Brigade positions including those of training officer, Deputy Captain and Captain.





In 1995 Mr Rogers was appointed Deputy Fire Control officer for the Greater Taree District, a position he held until 1998 when he was appointed Fire Control Officer for the Cessnock District.

In 2002 he was appointed Executive Director for Regional Management but later that year transferred to the newly created Risk Management Directorate that had been formed as a consequence of new legislative responsibilities that had been devolved to the Service.

Mr Rogers has represented the Service in international projects and fire fighting operations in the United States, Singapore and Malaysia.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2004.

**Acting Executive Director
Administration and Finance
Peter Hennessy**

Mr Hennessy has been employed in the NSW Public Service since 1969. His specialisation is in financial budgeting and monitoring.

Prior to joining the RFS in 1988 Peter worked in the Department of Health for 19 years and in the Department of Lands.

Mr Hennessy has responsibility for the financial and accounting functions of the Service.

**Executive Director
Operation Support
Keith Harrap AFSM**

Mr Harrap joined the Service as a member of Ku-ring-gai Brigade in 1968 and has held various positions ranging from volunteer to Assistant Commissioner.

Mr Harrap was appointed as Deputy Fire Control Officer for Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai in 1988 and then as Fire Control Officer in 1993.

From 2001 to 2004 Keith held consecutively the positions of Staff Officer and Acting Executive Director Operations Support. In 2004 he was appointed to the position of Executive Director, Corporate Communications.

Mr Harrap was elected to the position of Vice President (Salaried Officers) of the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) in 1994 and held that position for three years.

He is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and a member of the International Association of Wildland Fire. He is also an international representative on the IAFC Wildland Fire Policy Committee.

Mr Harrap was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 1999.

**Acting Executive Director
Operations and Regional
Management
Dominic Lane AFSM**

Mr Lane became an active member of the Milbrulong Bush Fire Brigade upon leaving school in 1984.

In 1993 Mr Lane was appointed to the position of Honorary Deputy Fire Control Officer for the Lockhart Shire Council a position he held until 1995

when he was appointed Fire Control Officer for the Wakool and Balranald Shire Councils in Western NSW.

Mr Lane accepted a newly created Fire Control Officer position for the Wakool and Murray Shires in 1996 and he undertook this role until 2000 when he was appointed Fire Control Officer for the Wollongong City Council.

In 2001 Dominic became an employee of the NSW Rural Fire Service and in 2004 was appointed Regional Manager for Region West. In May 2007 he was appointed, in an acting capacity, to the role of Executive Director for Operations and Regional Management.

Mr Lane has been involved in many major fire and emergency operations across the State and has been appointed as a section 44 incident controller of major bush fires on numerous occasions.

He was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2004.



Review of the reporting year.



Administration and Finance
Operations and Regional Management
The Year in the Regions
 East
 North
 South
 West
Operations Support
Community Safety
Strategic Development



Administration and Finance.

Overview

The level of funding allocated to the Rural Fire Fighting Fund for 2007/08 was \$198.6 million, an increase of 18 per cent over the previous year. This level of funding enabled the Service to continue its program to purchase new and second hand tankers and reduce the average age of the fleet.

Staff Services continued to demonstrate the commitment of the Service to its volunteers through the Volunteer to Career Forums. These forums have been successful and popular with volunteers and it is planned to continue them in future financial years.

The Service also continued to demonstrate its commitment to Chaplaincy and Family Support throughout the year, through the efforts of the Senior Chaplain and staff.

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Unit continued to provide high quality support in the areas of Facilities Management, Asset Management, Records Management, Fleet Management, warehouse

administration, telephony and reception services.

Records Management

In accordance with Government requirements, the Unit is developing and implementing a Functional Disposal Schedule to ensure records are kept as long as they are needed. This schedule will also save on storage costs and office or online space, preserving records with long-term value and prioritising records that require recovery in the event of a disaster.

Government Energy Management Policy (GEMP)

In line with the State Government's GEMP, the Service purchases electricity with six per cent Green Power.

The RFS Headquarters satisfies the Property Council of Australia's Grade A classification and achieves an Australian Building Greenhouse Rating Scheme (ABGR) 4.5 star tenancy rating, while minimising solar heat gain and maximising the use of daylight.

Other initiatives implemented during the year in review to further reduce energy

consumption included:

- Increased use of email, intranet and electronic publishing
- Energy efficient flat screen technology to reduce power consumption and heat load
- Continued use and improvement of recycling systems
- A reduction in the number of larger cars with high fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to smaller, cleaner and more fuel efficient vehicles.

Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP)

The NSW WRAPP requires all State Government agencies to develop and implement a plan to reduce waste and increase the purchase of recycled content materials.

During the 2007 WRAPP review period, the RFS recycled 4.18 tonnes of paper, 2.96 tonnes of cardboard, 241 toner cartridges and 50 computer processing units and five computer monitors. This compares to 3.47 tonnes of paper, 1.15 tonnes of cardboard, 132 toner cartridges and 34 computer processing units and 34 computer monitors recycled during the 2005 WRAPP review period.

During the period 6,030 reams of A4 paper were purchased, of which 2,180 had recycled content.

Financial Services

The Rural Fire Fighting Fund was set at \$198.6 million for 2007/08.

Internal Audits were performed in the Credit Card, Staff Travel and accounts Payable areas, with no adverse comments made in these audit reports.

In 2007/08, the Financial Services Section co-ordinated the awarding of major contracts across the Service including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Contracts were signed with various suppliers for a period of up to five years for items including Wild land and Structural fire fighting garments, gloves, goggles, boots, helmets and protective hoods. Evaluation of the items culminated in burn testing at Alberta University in Canada, one of the world's leading independent testing laboratories. The results of these tests showed the items met international standards of fire protection for both fabric and design, ensuring that our volunteers have the highest quality protective equipment.



Administration and finance cont'd.





In 2007/08 the Service began a review of printing procurement. This will continue into 2008/09, to ensure value for money in the delivery of printed training and public education materials.

The RFS is committed to working with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) in the process of collaborative purchasing. This collaboration has already led to many fire agencies achieving cost savings. Further developments over the next few years will see the provision of contracts allowing all AFAC agencies access to purchase goods at similar rates. The RFS and AFAC have also worked closely with NSW Procurement, part of the Department of Commerce, over the past year and continue to develop future strategies.

The Service began tender processes for fire fighting retardant in collaboration with other AFAC agencies.

The Financial Services Section continued to monitor and ensure compliance with the Service's relevant purchasing guidelines and contracts.

Staff Services

The Service's Human Resource (HR) Strategic Plan formally concluded on 30 June 2007, with over 90 per cent of its outcomes achieved for the two-year period.

The two-year qualification data collecting project was finalised, with figures showing an increase in the number of staff holding the qualification level required for their role from 44 per cent in 2004 to 77 per cent in 2008. The annual graduation ceremony

for RFS staff was held in March, with 85 graduates receiving a range of qualifications. More than 150 other staff also received funding through the Service's Professional Development Committee to meet their individual training and development needs.

Staff Services provided a stand at the National Careers and Employment Expo at Darling Harbour as part of the Premier's Department 'Careers that Count' project.

On-line exit and new entrant surveys were completed for a scheduled start of July 1 2008.

Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

The JCC, consisting of management and Public Sector Union representatives, meets on an agreed schedule at least six times a year to discuss a range of workplace/industrial issues.

Professional Development in the RFS

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) continued to promote the training and professional development of our 710 staff. This included a wide range of accredited courses from Certificate III and IV to Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Business Management.

Diversity (Equal Employment Opportunity, Ethnic Affairs Priority Statements and the Action Plan for Women)

The Service recognises there are differences in the organisational cultures (and appropriate recruitment and retention practices) between the salaried and volunteer environments. For

staff recruitment, the Service targets the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community. However, for volunteers more work needs to be done to broaden the appeal of the Service to people from CALD backgrounds. The Service is currently undertaking research in this area and will develop strategies and programs to increase the diversity among our volunteers.

The RFS provides fire awareness brochures in a variety of community languages, and runs a range of joint ventures with other emergency service organisations, such as the NSW Fire Brigades, targeting people from CALD backgrounds. The Service also conducts Fire Awareness programs, such as its Street Meet program within a range of diverse communities in and around urban centres. The Service has also been targeting young people from CALD backgrounds as part of its ongoing and highly successful Cadet program in high schools.

An analysis of the Service's volunteer demographics has identified that the Service is under-represented by communities from non-English speaking backgrounds. The Service is aiming to redress this imbalance with a number of projects to identify appropriate recruitment for under-represented groups, including building relationships within different communities and making it easier for them to join brigades.

Diversity also is addressed in the Service's Corporate Plan, with the 2008/09 Corporate Planning cycle to continue this focus by integrating the Ethnic

Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS) standard frameworks and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan in a more structured manner. This integration will also be supported by the review of the Service's Human Resource Strategic Plan, scheduled for early 2009. The outcomes of this plan will include details of EAPS and EEO related projects for salaried and volunteer members, as well as strategic programs for inclusion in forthcoming Corporate Plans.

The Service this year also undertook a volunteer survey seeking information regarding the cultural backgrounds of respondents and attitudes to diversity. The outcomes of the survey have informed a number of projects, including the development of the Service-wide organisational values. These values are designed to establish accountable behaviour and standards and will assist in both attracting and retaining a broader range of members, both salaried and volunteer.

2007 was the second year of the 'Volunteer to Career Program', which has now given more than 300 volunteers an understanding of recruitment practices and the different types of employment with the Service. With 20 per cent of staff at or nearing the age of retirement, this program helps ensure that any interested volunteers are equipped when seeking employment within the salaried ranks of the Service.

Another trainee of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ABTSI) background joined the Service, adding to the four ABTSI trainees taken on in 2006/07. Discussions are taking place with the

Administration and Finance cont'd.



Baulkham Hills District in relation to the introduction of a work experience program for people with a disability.

Spokeswomen's Program

An intranet site with information about the Spokeswomen's Program is available for all staff. The site contains contact details of all Spokeswomen's representatives and a feedback form to obtain feedback and suggestions from employees. A dedicated Spokeswomen's email address is also available. The intranet site incorporates

internal reference documents on upcoming seminars, workplace bullying, sexual harassment, training and professional development. The site contains a number of external reference documents including from:

- NSW Office for Women
- Women and Firefighting Australasia
- The Cancer Council
- NSW Health
- Australian Women and Leadership Forums

The Spokeswomen's Program has also promoted a sponsorship

initiative to recognise and reward female staff. A self-nomination system was introduced for female staff wishing to attend a professional development opportunity. In addition:

- Six female employees were nominated to attend the Women's Leadership Symposium in March 2008
- Two female employees were nominated to attend the Australasian Fire Authorities Council Developing Future Leaders program in July 2008.

An International Women's Day event was held at Headquarters in 2007/08. The aim of this event was to encourage females within the organisation and promote a networking opportunity.

The Spokeswomen's Program is developing a mentoring program to provide appropriate training for employees who wish to act as mentors to others. The Spokeswomen's Committee believes this project will be of great benefit to the Service and a positive initiative for our female employees.



Code of Conduct

A training session was held at the Service's Management Conference, in Newcastle, dealing with corruption prevention. The Service remains committed to the highest level of ethical behaviour and satisfactory conduct being displayed at all times. A recent review identified further strategies that will be the subject of consideration by the Corporate Executive Group.

Privacy and Personal Information Protection

The Service met all its legislative and policy requirements during the reporting period. The Director Staff Services, Mr Daniel Moroney, is the Service's Privacy Officer.

Disability Action Plan

The Service's Disability Action Plan complies with all legislative requirements, especially those relating to the access and use of premises and buildings by disabled persons.

Chaplaincy

The NSW Rural Fire Service Chaplaincy has offered assistance and support for the Service's 70,000 strong membership throughout NSW over 12 years. It involves clergy from various denominations and consists of a Senior Chaplain, Senior Family Support Chaplain, 37 volunteer district chaplains and nine Family Support Volunteers.

During the past year, 43 chaplains completed the Basic Critical Incident Stress Foundation Certificate Course.

The Senior Chaplain's, "Padre's Pen" monthly comment, published on the RFS intranet, which looks at issues, family concerns, spiritual issues and work relationships, has been well accepted.

During the year, two chaplains were inducted into the Service and two have relinquished their roles following clergy transfers. Currently there are four vacancies for chaplains at Cobar, Bourke, Ballina, Wyong, Gosford and Bega. Two of these

positions are in the process of being filled.

Members of the Chaplaincy Service travelled 66,073 kilometres during the year to carry out their ministrations.

To assist in understanding issues facing indigenous communities, all three Chaplaincy Training Conferences and the Crisis Intervention Conference have included presentations exploring some of the issues affecting these communities and expanding the knowledge of Aboriginal culture, with the assistance of Aboriginal people from across the State.

Operation Farmer's Child

For the second year in a row, the RFS has supported the Salvation Army's Farmer's Child rural Christmas appeal.

Coordinated by the Senior Chaplain, this year the appeal raised donations of \$6,300 and more than 2,000 gifts. Holidays at a coastal resort were also offered to families from rural areas.

Monetary donations were used to purchase gifts from locally-owned country stores in drought-affected communities and delivered by rural Chaplains across the State.

Full details of the activities of the Chaplaincy and Family Support Network are included in Appendix B.



Operations and Regional Management.



Overview

Due to significant summer rainfall across much of NSW, the 2007/08 fire season was moderate, in terms of major bush fire events. Seven section 44 emergencies were declared in NSW, involving 14 Local Government Areas and burning across 86,000 hectares of land. Total fire bans were declared on 13 days, although none were State-wide.

The 2007/08 season did see numerous haystack fires and the Service made a major contribution to NSW Department of Primary Industries in the provision of logistical and administrative assistance to the Equine Influenza control campaign. Likewise, assistance was provided to the State Emergency Service (SES) during the severe hailstorm event in Western Sydney and a deployment of 214 volunteers travelled to South Australia to assist with the fires on Kangaroo Island.

Other highlights of the year included continued close collaboration with other NSW emergency services, particularly for the Boundary Review process and the production of Mutual Aid Agreements with the NSW Fire Brigades. Joint projects with the SES on pager network amalgamations and upgrades continue, as does the provision of personnel to the SES Operations Centre during major events.

Operational Readiness

During the season, seven declarations were made under section 44 of the *Rural Fires Act*. The section 44 fires were between 6 July and 19 October



2007 and ran over a total of 38 days, with the longest single declaration being 17 days. Over 755 Incident Management Team personnel and firefighters were involved during the season 44s. In total for the season there were 1,119 aircraft taskings, with 372 associated with s44s. A further 747 taskings were involved in assisting the SES with flood relief.

Volunteers were also called to more than 500 hay bale, hay stack and hay shed fires throughout the State.

State Operations Centre Tours

During the year the Operations Section conducted more than 35 tours of the State Operations Centre, explaining the Service's Incident Management and operational systems, as well as demonstrating the state-of-the-art technology now being used. Many groups taking the tours were from NSW, however, others represented interstate and overseas bodies, researching improved methods of conducting their own emergency operations. NSW visitors included members of Probus and Rotary Clubs, Legacy, schools, the NSW Fire

Brigades, NSW Police Force, NSW Ambulance Service and RFS Brigades and Cadet Groups.

Overseas Deployment

Following requests from the United States of America in July 2007, a contingent of 44 Australian and New Zealand fire managers was deployed to assist in the wild fire emergency in Northern California. The RFS sent three fire managers in support of this deployment. The roles undertaken by the Australian and New Zealand contingent included divisional supervisors and aircraft managers. The emergency was scaled back following rain periods and a general easing in the weather conditions. The task force returned home in August, after a five week deployment.

Assistance to other State Combat Agencies

Following a request from South Australian Fire Authorities, 214 fire fighters were deployed to Kangaroo Island, and Liaison Officers were sent to Adelaide. The campaign lasted for a week in December 2007.

Equine Influenza Control Assistance

The RFS also provided logistical and administrative assistance to NSW Department of Primary Industries State Disease Control Centre (SDCC), Local Disease Control Centres (LDCC) and quarantine areas during the Equine Influenza outbreak. The assistance provided at quarantine stations included washing down vehicles and involved 140 staff and volunteers between August and October 2007.

Storm Damage

RFS crews provided assistance to the State Emergency Service following the impact of a series of major storms that began in June 2007. In December 289 appliances and 1,093 personnel, (including two Region South strike teams) were deployed to assist with the storms that hit Western Sydney and parts of Region West (including the Bland, Lachlan, Carathool, Hay and Wellington Local Government Areas).

Fire Weather Courses

The RFS, in conjunction with officers from the Bureau of

Meteorology, again conducted Fire Weather Courses, designed to provide insight into the complex world of fire weather forecasting. These courses have proven to be very popular and over the period, 75 officers from NSW fire agencies and authorities attended the courses at Queanbeyan, Bathurst and Armidale.

Procedures

One of the projects currently being undertaken by the Operations Section is a full review of all Operational Management Procedures, Incident Management Procedures and Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines. The new versions will be finalised in 2008/09. The Remote Area Fire Fighting and Driving Standard Operating Procedures have been reviewed and disseminated for comment and feedback. The consultation and feedback process has also been completed for the Working in Rail Corridors and Heavy Plant procedures.

Aviation

The RFS State Air Desk (SAD) is responsible for tasking and coordinating all aviation fire



Operations and Regional Management cont'd.



fighting resources, aviation specialists and logistical support to all coordinated bush fires in NSW. In support of the NSW State Emergency Service, the SAD also provides tasking and coordination of aerial resources and personnel to flood relief and storm operations within the State. The ACT Rural Fire Service also uses the SAD to provide aviation assets to assist in fire suppression operations in the ACT.

The RFS had a total of 115 aircraft available throughout the

2007/08 fire season, including an Air Crane and its air attack platform, seven medium capacity helicopters, five fixed wing bombers and the Linescanning King Air. As usual, the machines on seasonal contracts were supplemented by more than 50 aircraft operators and more than 100 aircraft on the Service's Call When Needed List of approved operators.

Due to the moderate 2007/08 fire season demand for aircraft was reduced. A total of 1,119 aircraft tasks were initiated by

the State Air Desk, with many of these in support of the SES and its flood relief efforts in the North and West of the State in December. Three teams of aviation specialists also provided assistance to the South Australian Country Fire Service for management of aerial fire fighting assets on Kangaroo Island in December 2007.

Volunteer Relations Unit

Throughout the reporting period the Unit assisted volunteers and staff across the State with 1,031 online membership enquiries

answered and referred to the relevant district, team or zone. In addition, 56 formal requests for support or assistance were received from volunteer members and managed to a successful outcome.

The Unit issued 280 Employer/Supporter Appreciation certificates, as well as 83 Life Member certificates signed by the Commissioner. A total of 7,500 National Parks and Wildlife Service annual passes were also distributed to members.



Over 2007/08 the Volunteer Relations Unit undertook a Volunteer survey in collaboration with the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre. The survey was made available both through the Bush Fire Bulletin and online, via the MyRFS volunteer website. In total 1,589 surveys were received, 531 hardcopy and 1,058 online. Results are being analysed and will inform the strategic and corporate planning processes.

The Unit has also developed a Volunteer Recruitment Kit, designed in accordance with results obtained from the Grainbelt Survey and lessons learned from other agencies. The kit is being trialled in a number of areas including Inverell, Gigai, Ashford, Oakwood, Delungra, Warialda, and Bingara. The analysis of the trials will be used to fine tune the project, with wider availability expected in 2008/09.

Exit Questionnaires have been circulated to members who have left the Service over the reporting period. A total of 2,142 surveys have been sent

out. More than 20 requests for action on local issues were received and managed. The data received is being analysed and internally reported on quarterly. The process will continue with monthly surveys and feedback being utilised to improve services.

Service Membership Unit

The Service Membership Unit continued to process a high volume of new memberships, transfers, dual memberships. It also processed rejoining members, the advancement of junior members to ordinary membership at age 16, checks for Child Related Activities (CRA), and new salaried staff members.

Over the reporting period, the unit processed over 5,880 membership, transfer and CRA applications.



The year in the Regions.

NSW Overview – RFS Regions Districts/Zones/Teams for Region North

Region North



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>1. Far North Coast Zone
Ballina
Byron
Tweed</p> <p>2. Northern Rivers Team
Kyogle
Lismore
Richmond Valley</p> <p>3. (Stand Alone District)
Clarence Valley</p> | <p>4. Mid North Coast Team
Bellingen
Coffs Harbour</p> <p>5. Lower North Coast Team
Nambucca
Kempsey</p> <p>6. Northern Tablelands Team
Inverell
Glen Innes Severn
Tenterfield</p> | <p>7. New England Zone
Armidale Dumaresq
Guyra
Uralla
Walcha</p> <p>8. Namoi / Gwydir Team
Moree Plains
Narrabri
Gwydir</p> <p>9. Tamworth Regional</p> | <p>10. Liverpool Range Zone
Gunnedah
Liverpool Plains
Upper Hunter</p> <p>11. Castlereagh Zone
Warrumbungle
Gilgandra</p> |
|---|---|--|---|



Snap Shot

The 2007/08 fire season began earlier than usual in July 2007, with section 44 declarations occurring in Northern Tablelands, New England and two in Northern Rivers. However, relief came in the form of good rain across the Region at the end of September and assistance was then provided to the State Emergency Service for storm related activities.

Through the year the Region's focus has been on our people, both salaried and volunteer. This saw events such as the annual Regional Exercise attended by 460 volunteers and staff. A total of 29 participants took part in

the Volunteer to Career program this year, with 12 temporary positions in the Region filled from volunteer ranks.

Professional development for salaried officers has also been a high priority, with 18 staff having the opportunity to act in other positions for skill and career development.

Community Education has also featured predominantly within the Region with a seven per cent increase in Community Education activities with the annual Community Education Forum held in Coffs Harbour hailed a success, by all who attended.

Management

Setting key performance targets and then working to achieve them has been vital to ensuring continuous improvement to service delivery in Region North. By clearly defining targets, managers have been better able to identify needs and opportunities at District/Team/Zone (DTZ) level and develop appropriate responses and initiatives.

Fire fighter health and safety has continued to improve, with all DTZs reporting full compliance in this area. Ensuring the continued health and safety of our volunteers is the Region's highest priority.

Improving brigade accommodation and facilities continues in an ongoing program, with the provision of rainwater tanks to the majority of stations proving to be very popular with volunteers.

Region North has been active in employing volunteers, where appropriate, as temporary operations support officers and as administration officers. This program has been promoted at Volunteer to Career forums and is working extremely well. This is providing volunteers with the opportunity to experience in more depth what salaried officers of the service actually do. It also will be of benefit to them if they want to later join the Service as staff.

Operations

Region North experienced a relatively moderate fire season, except for an intense period between August and September. Dry conditions and adverse weather resulted in four section 44 bush fire emergencies being declared in the Northern Tablelands, New England and twice in Northern Rivers. Good rain fell across the Region at the end of September, greatly reducing the fire threat.

Radio black spot eradication continued this year with new radio repeaters installed in a number of areas. Paging networks have also been upgraded and older transmitters replaced.

The Annual Field Exercise was again held at Glen Innes, attracting 460 volunteers and staff, together with 60 fire fighting appliances. Crew skills

were tested in 12 realistic fire scenarios managed by volunteers and staff from across the State. Crews were accommodated in a base camp at the Glen Innes showgrounds and more than 2,300 meals were prepared and served by the Region's catering teams.

A very successful multi-agency Incident Management Exercise was conducted at Ulmarra in June, with 46 personnel attending. The five-day event included a workshop where representatives from the Department of Environment and Conservation and Climate Change, Forests NSW and Rural Fire Service were introduced to the functional areas of an Incident Management Team. The workshop was followed by a three-day exercise that saw participants fill the roles of the IMT in a realistic scenario that tested their skills.

Fire Investigation and Remote Area Fire Fighting were priorities during the year, with the appointment of a full time Operations Officer, specialising in Fire Investigation.

Learning and Development

In the Region, more than 400 Learning and Development volunteers and staff continued their role of assisting RFS personnel to develop and maintain the skills appropriate to their roles.

While 40 per cent of training time was devoted to putting new members through the two Basic Fire fighter programs, almost as much time (35 per cent) was committed to specialist training

and other higher level skill enhancement activities. Region North once again conducted five workshops/forums where specialist instructors (in Breathing Apparatus, Village Fire Fighting, First Aid, Rural Fire Driving and Chainsaw Operation) were able to meet to exchange information and ideas on delivering instruction in their speciality.

The Region sponsored three meetings involving Head Office, Regional and DTZ Learning and Development staff – one of which also included several senior volunteer instructors – to discuss training issues and to provide a Regional level forum on all mainstream and selected specialist training courses. The Region also sponsored a number of courses that were not feasible to conduct at DTZ level and assisted in the conduct of some other courses that were still in the 'roll-out' stage. Additionally, Regional Office provided mentoring and audit assistance to DTZs to aid them in meeting their Learning and Development obligations.

Three Field Commander Workshops were carried out, open to both RFS personnel and those of other agencies, aimed at refreshing the skills needed for Division or Sector Commanders. The annual five-day combined Incident Management Workshop and Exercise was also successfully conducted at Ulmarra, with attendees from RFS, National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Forests and NSW Fire Brigades. One of the major challenges facing Region North in the Learning and Development area is the maintenance of high

levels of certification in Basic Firefighting for active members, and Crew Leader for all field officers. This is being actively addressed using a variety of strategies, according to local circumstances, by the Regions DTZs Learning and Development Officers and volunteer instructors.

Community Safety

A strong focus on Bush Fire Risk Management Planning has seen the Service take a lead role in the review and development of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMP) in each of the 14 Bush Fire Management Committees within the Region. The Service is undertaking a central facilitation role with each committee and this has ensured that the review process has been sufficiently supported to make solid progress towards completion.

The 2007/08 Regional Education Forum was hailed as the most valuable yet by the approximately 80 volunteers and 20 staff who attended. This major event provided individual mentoring and hands-on practice in selecting target markets for engagement and delivering programs to the community.

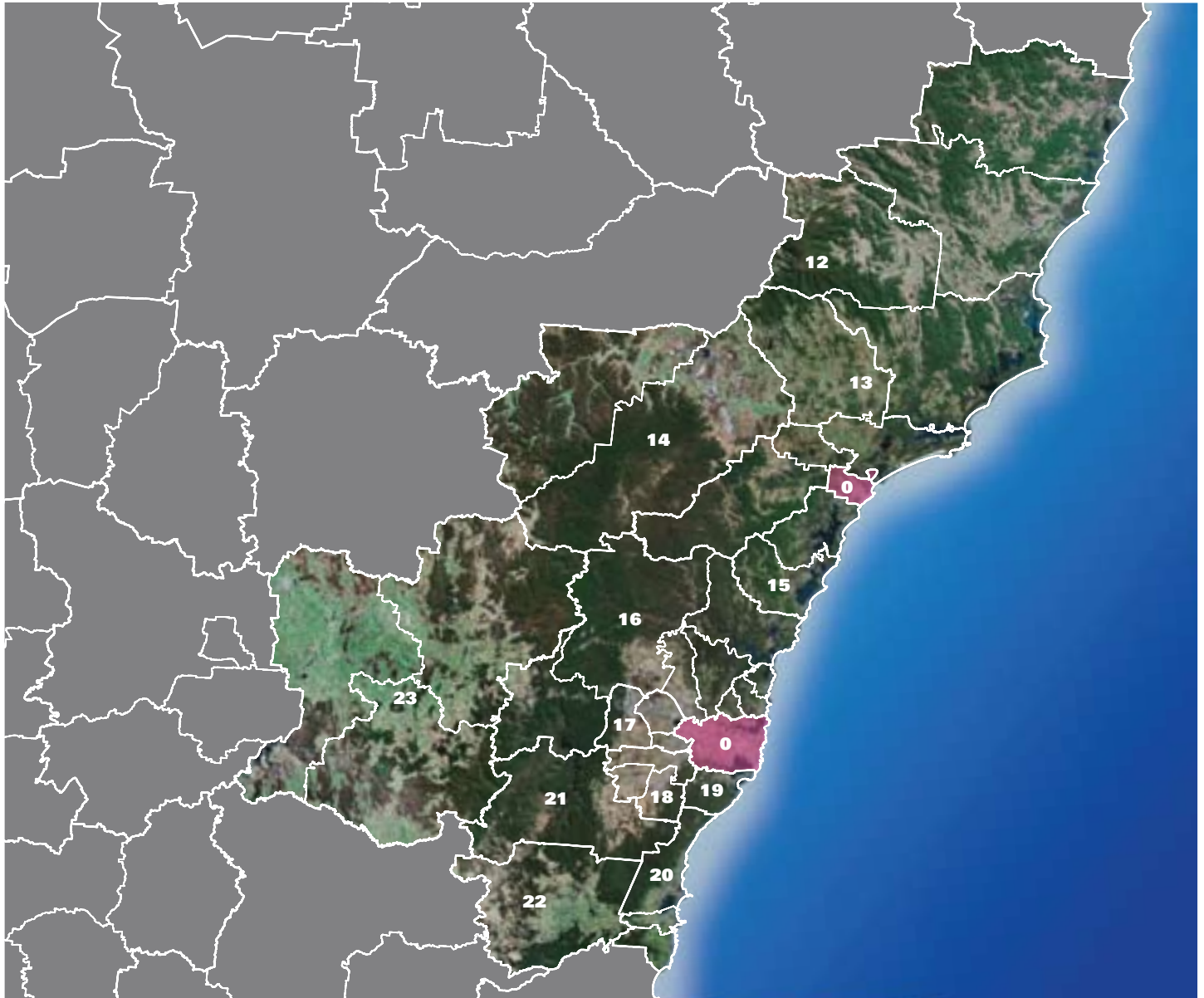
For the reporting period there has been a focus on increasing interactive programs with adults. This has seen targeted 'active engagement' programs increase to 15 per cent of our overall education efforts in 2007/08. This represents a 30 per cent increase in adult programs from the last reporting period, along with a seven per cent increase in overall education program delivery. Approved education strategies are in place in all DTZs.

Major field day exhibits at Primex and AgQuip have provided volunteer and salaried facilitators with the opportunity to interact directly with several thousand members of the public.

Throughout 2007/08 the Region continued to build professional depth within the Community Safety functional area, with 13 staff acting temporarily in community safety positions around the Region. In addition, a program of extending development to other functional areas has seen a number of non-Community Safety staff undertake Community Safety Officer training. A program is also in place to rotate willing staff from less busy areas through busier areas for short periods to provide for skills maintenance.

With the upgrading of the Bush Fire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) staff from each area attended formal training for the revised system, prior to roll-out.

A focus on community development and 'building the Service of tomorrow' has again seen the RFS Secondary School Cadets Program expanded within the Region. This year eight schools participated, resulting in 117 secondary school students completing the program. A number of students have gone on to join Rural Fire Brigades.



KEY

12. Manning Team

Gloucester
Greater Taree
Great Lakes
Hastings

13. Lower Hunter Zone

Dungog
Cessnock Maitland
Port Stephens

14. Hunter Valley Team

Muswellbrook
Singleton

15. The Lakes Team

Lake Macquarie
Wyong

16. (Stand Alone Districts)

Gosford
Baulkham Hills
Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai
Hawkesbury
Blue Mountains
Warringah/Pittwater

17. Cumberland Zone

Blacktown
Fairfield
Penrith

18. Macarthur Zone

Campbelltown
Camden
Liverpool

19. (Stand Alone District)

Sutherland

20. Illawarra Team

Kiama
Shellharbour
Wollongong

21. (Stand Alone Districts)


Wingecarribee
Wollondilly

22. (Stand Alone Districts)

Wingecarribee

23. Chifley Zone

Bathurst
Oberon
Lithgow

 Non-RFS



Snapshot

Region East was involved in major incident coordination across a range of issues during the 2007/08 period. In October 2007 the Region deployed strike teams to assist Districts/Teams/Zones (DTZs) with bush fires around Sydney, the Central Coast and the Lower Hunter.

October 2007 and March/April 2008 saw the Region organising strike teams to assist with large hazard reduction burning programs. The Region also organised large strike team responses in December 2007 to assist the NSW State Emergency Service and NSW Fire Brigades with storm response work and to assist the South Australian Country Fire Service with fires on Kangaroo Island.

Brigades within the Region responded to a total of 9,406 incidents, which amounted to

55 per cent of the State's total incident responses.

Management

During 2007/08, the Region's business and management personnel focussed on developing stronger relationships and consistency within DTZs. This involved liaising with Managers to ensure all DTZ staff had work plans and actively assisting DTZs with allocating work functions and responsibilities.

Additionally, the Business Unit co-ordinated the annual conference for 120 staff, with the theme "Individual Contribution = Team Performance". The conference incorporated interactive sessions that allowed staff to contribute to the future direction of the Service by participating in workshops focussing on some strategic issues facing the RFS in the four

functional areas of the Region and DTZs.

To enhance relationships between Regions, DTZs and volunteers, the Region was represented at 627 DTZ official functions or meetings during the reporting period. In addition, the Region has continued to support the Trainee Program, maintaining a total of 12 trainees as at 30 June 2008. Building on this program, the Business Unit conducted a joint induction program for trainees facilitated by Regional representatives and the trainee provider.

In relation to performance, 100 per cent of DTZs within Region East submitted a Business plan via the e-SDM program. The Rural Firefighting Fund estimate process was completed within timeframes, and budget recommendations were made through the appropriate channels.

The focus for Business and Management in 2008/09 will be on the wider implementation of the new business planning program and the continual building of relationships, accountability and responsibility. This will be achieved through formal mechanisms such as the Performance Management Planning and Review System, and professional development opportunities as well as informal means such as conferences, meetings and forums.

Operations

The work of the Operations Unit continued within the three groups - North, Central and South - established within the Region. In March 2008, the Unit conducted a Group Officer forum for 55 volunteers at RFS Headquarters. The forum saw a significant review of operational matters that impact on DTZs.

A renewed focus of fire investigation requirements has been achieved. This included two forums and the development of an action plan to ensure effective fire investigation across the Region.

The Unit conducted a Regional Exercise in May, with participation from 19 Brigades, six cadet teams, two communications units, five Catering Brigades, and staff from across the Region. The event was held at Cataract Scout Camp and included five main, five support and four cadet events.

The Unit also represented the Service on six of the State's 18 District Emergency Management Committees and Rescue Sub Committees, as well as



facilitating a number of meetings of Operations and Operations Support Officers.

Major incident co-ordination formed a major basis of the Unit's work during the period with support to bush fire (within Region and interstate), storm assistance and hazard reduction burning programs. In support of these activities a Regional Incident Management Team database was developed in order to properly capture the skills groupings, and to identify possible deployment periods and record officer movements.

The unit conducted reviews of several new and existing policies, standards and standard operating procedures. This included Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT), Operational Communications, Fire Investigation, fire boat criteria, Standard of Fire Cover program, Brigade Classification program, Red Fleet program, and Lord Howe Island operations.

Learning and Development

During 2007/08, the Learning and Development Unit continued to provide support to officers to deliver learning and development programs and provided feedback for ongoing program development.

In order to address the region's section 52 operational requirements and the Service Standard on Qualifications for RFS Members, additional training and assessment opportunities were provided to staff and volunteers. With the assistance of the Regional Operations Unit, the number of

qualified incident management personnel has been increased across the four key functional areas. As a result there are now 28 officers qualified for Incident Management Control, 48 for Incident Management Operations, 43 for Incident Management Planning and 47 for Incident Management Logistics.

In addition, some 85 volunteers and staff completed the introductory self-paced workbook Incident Control Systems for Incident Management Teams. The Region now has a total of 327 personnel with this qualification.

The region also provided training for the incident management stream Group Leader Analysis (GLA) /Group Leader Command (GLC) and Conduct Briefings and Debriefings courses. The GLA/GLC course was conducted at Baulkham Hills FCC for 24 participants. The Conduct Briefings and Debriefings course was conducted at Cumberland Training Centre, with 16 participants attending the program.

With the growing number of programs being developed and offered by the Service, there is a growing need to increase the number of instructors available. In 2007/08 seven Rural Fire Instructor (RFI) courses were delivered resulting in a further 112 volunteers with an opportunity to become qualified as RFIs.

Four Tanker Familiarisation Workshops were conducted at Bathurst and Campbelltown, with 125 participants attending across the four workshops. A Safe Food Handling Course was also

conducted by Restaurant and Catering at the new Picton Fire Control Centre for 18 catering support volunteers across the region.

Learning and Development audits continued during the period, in accordance with the Service's audit schedule. A total of three DTZ Learning and Development audits were conducted.

Community Safety

In 2007/08, the Community Safety Unit continued to work to reduce the vulnerability of local communities to bush fire. Key actions over the reporting period included facilitation and support of the bush fire hazard reduction program, this was done through training and mentoring of staff, assistance to Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) and coordination of programs across the region.

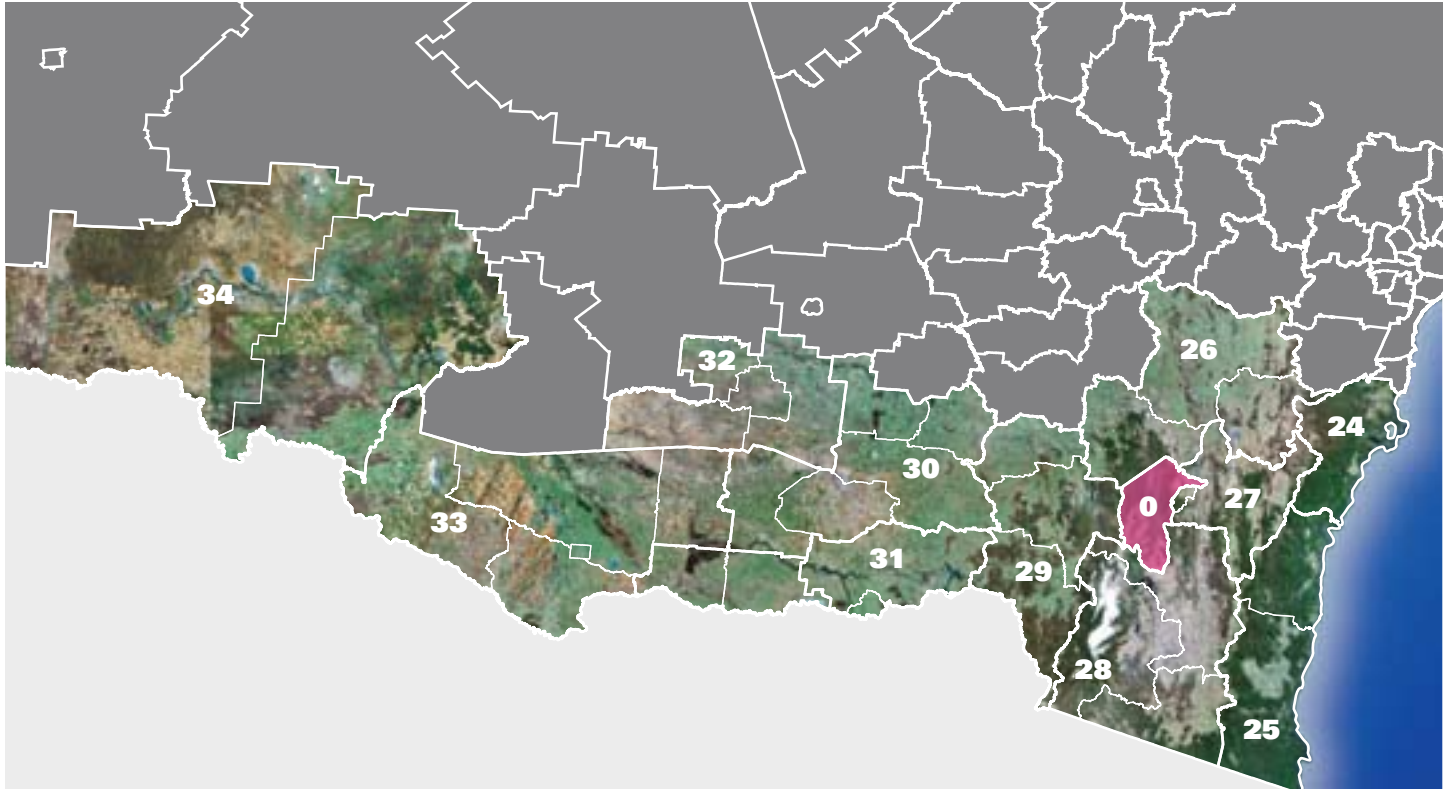
In order to support the BFMC process, 125 RFS staff have been trained in the revised Bush Fire Risk Management Planning process. In addition, assistance was provided to train NSW Fire Brigade officers, who act as Executive Officers in BFMCs, in the revised process. Over 70 per cent of Region East BFMCs had begun the new planning process by the end of the financial year. Regional Community Safety staff attended over 80 per cent of BFMC meetings across the Region. Training was delivered to all BFMC members in cooperation with headquarters staff.

In order to improve competency standards in training for Community Safety staff, two

courses were piloted in Region East, covering field skills, bush fire hazard assessment, fire and the environment, and Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate issuing.

Initiatives to improve community resilience continued to be important. A total of 1,204 community education activities were reported completed in Region East DTZs. In addition, 100 staff and volunteers attended a two day community education forum held at Mittagong which looked at better ways of communicating essential information to bush fire affected communities.

Region East continued its work supporting DTZs in processing Development Applications and Bush Fire Hazard Complaints. The number of bush fire hazard complaints, was lower than usual in 2007/08 reflecting lower perceived risk in the community due to wetter weather, and lower fire activity.



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>24. Shoalhaven</p> <p>25. Far South Coast Team
Bega Valley
Eurobodalla</p> <p>26. Southern Tablelands Zone
Yass Valley
Goulburn Mulwaree
Upper Lachlan</p> <p>27. Lake George Zone
Greater Queanbeyan
Palerang</p> | <p>28. Monaro Team
Bombala
Cooma-Monaro
Snowy River</p> <p>29. Riverina Highlands Zone
Gundagai
Tumbarumba
Tumut</p> <p>30. Riverina Zone
Urana
Lockhart
Wagga Wagga
Coolamon
Junee</p> | <p>31. Southern Border Team
Albury
Greater Hume
Berrigan
Corowa</p> <p>32. MIA Zone
Murrumbidgee
Griffith
Leeton
Narrandera</p> | <p>33. Mid Murray Zone ■ Non-RFS
Conargo
Deniliquin
Jerilderie
Murray
Wakool</p> <p>34. Lower Western Zone
Wentworth
Balranald</p> |
|---|--|---|--|



Snapshot

Like other areas of the State, Region South experienced a moderate fire season with no section 44 fire emergencies declared. The most significant incidents were two Class 2 fires, which occurred in the Mid Murray and Shoalhaven areas. Low grassland fuel loads and ongoing drought conditions continued across the western part of the region. Fire activity was minimal across the slopes, ranges and coastal areas due to moderate rainfall. Drought then wet conditions in some areas, couple with harvested forage, resulted in more than 400 haystack fires across the western part of the Region.

Region South assisted fire fighting operations in South Australia, with two strike teams and 11 incident management personnel deployed to assist with the Kangaroo Island fire. A strike team was tasked to assist Region East with the Sydney storms and eight incident management personnel provided administrative support to the NSW Department of Primary Industries during the Equine Influenza outbreak.

Management

Region South achieved a number of significant outcomes in meeting its management goals in 2007/08. These outcomes included 100 per cent compliance

achieved in Management Audits. These audits have provided a more consistent approach to management issues in line with corporate policies and standards as well as highlighting areas for business improvement.

The year also saw an allocation of 57 new and second hand fire fighting appliances within the Region as well as further removal and replacement of petrol appliances.

In conjunction with Staff Services and with financial support from the Rural Fire Service Association, the Region held its first Volunteer to Career forum at Wagga Wagga, with 24 volunteers attending. The forum

provides recruitment information for volunteers wishing to apply for future salaried positions. A similar forum will be held in 2008/09.

The annual Region South Conference was held in May 2008 at Mulwala. About 70 staff attended the conference, which covered issues such as organisational values, human resources, community hazards and volunteer workers compensation. The focus was to improve communication and inform staff of issues impacting on District/Team/Zones (DTZs). Quarterly Zone Manager meetings were also held during the year to provide updates and discuss relevant issues.

2007/08 saw the opening of a new Fire Control Centre at Albury. The Fire Control Centre is part of a multi-purpose Emergency Services Centre that will service both the NSW Rural Fire Service and the NSW State Emergency Service. The Corowa/Berrigan Fire Control Centre also underwent a major refurbishment and extension during the year.

The Region's volunteers were again recognised for their continuing commitment and service performed to the community, with 137 Long Service Awards issued and 69 National Medals awarded.

Operations

Six multi-agency field commander workshops were conducted during the year for Divisional Commanders and Group Captains. The workshops were attended by representatives of the Rural

Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forests NSW, with the aim of improving communications across agencies.

An Incident Management Workshop (IMW) and Exercise (IMX) were held at Cooma. The IMX provided an opportunity to enhance fire management capabilities of staff and volunteers and to test the functionality of the Cooma Fire Control Centre during emergencies.

The fifth Regional Exercise was held at Gundagai, with more than 300 volunteers and staff participating in scenarios including aviation, electrical safety, navigation, Critical Incident Stress management, vehicle maintenance and communications.

The Region's fifth Group Officer's forum was held at Narrandera, with 50 Group Captains attending. The forum allowed senior volunteers to further engage in the Service operational processes and management systems. Issues covered included hazard reduction, age trends of volunteers, changing demographics and a fire season briefing.

DTZs sharing borders with the Victoria and ACT held meetings to improve cooperation between the agencies. Standards of Fire Cover and Total Asset Management reviews were completed for all Region South DTZs and all fleet updates completed with timeframe for the 2007/08 period. Full compliance was also achieved in the completion of section 52 Plans of Operations for all DTZs.

Variations to the local Bush Fire Danger Period were received from Southern Tablelands, Lake George, Riverina Highlands, MIA, Riverina and Southern Border for the 2007/08 period. A total of 3,078 incidents were reported by brigades, with 1,513 of these fire-related.

Learning and Development

The Region had another busy year in training, with more than 76,000 hours of structured training programs provided across the Region. These included Basic Fire Fighter, Advanced Fire Fighter, Crew Leader and Group Leader. A further 22,000 hours were conducted in specialist courses and other programs.

Training in specialist areas such as Chainsaw, Rural Fire Driving and Breathing Apparatus was targeted at the instructor level.

The aim of this training was to better equip the DTZs and allow them to be self-sufficient in running these programs. Volunteers and salaried officers attended specialist training in South Australia in Compartment Fire Behaviour. This training will be used in both Village Fire Fighter and Breathing Apparatus Operator training programs across the Region.

Efforts continued to target staff training programs to meet the Service's minimum requirements for qualifications in all positions. Five of the Region's Learning and Development Officers upgraded their qualifications to the new Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Three staff completed the Diploma in Business, and three completed the Advanced Diploma in Business.

Demand for Group Leader training has fallen slightly, given the high number of volunteers now having this qualification. Rural Fire Instructor training has again proved popular with volunteers. The Region will place increased attention on this area, together with future courses in Conducting Briefings and Debriefings. A number of staff gained formal qualifications in the incident management areas of management, planning, logistics and operations during the 2007/08 period.

The Regional training plan includes scheduled training programs in the more remote areas of the Region. To attract and retain members within these areas, a Rural Fire Driver course was conducted in the Lower Western Zone. A Rural Fire Instructor course has also been scheduled for October 2008.

Full compliance was achieved in Learning and Development audits as specified in the Service audit plan. Audits were conducted in Lake George Zone, Mid Murray Zone and the Far South Coast Team.

Community Safety

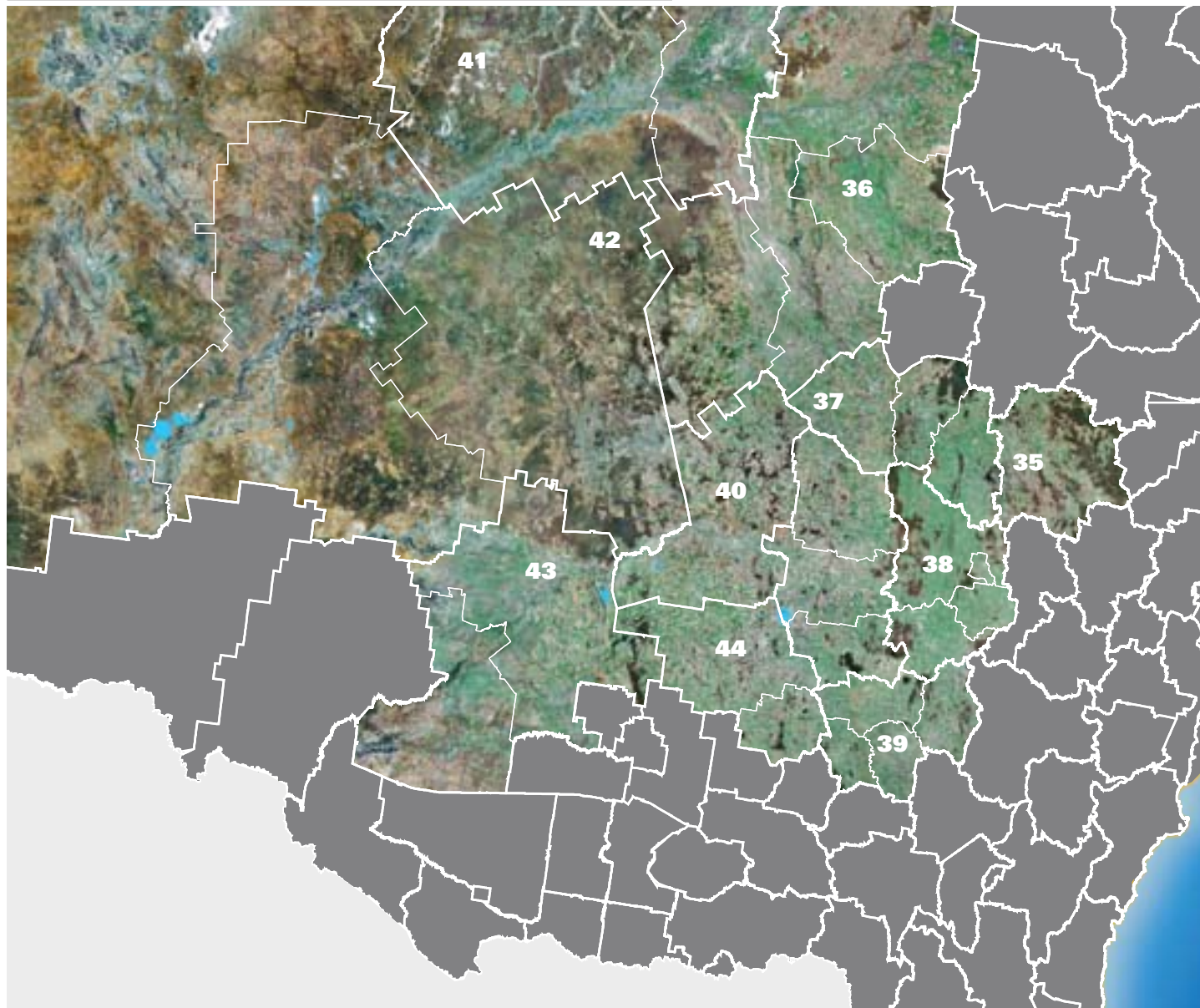
2007/08 saw an increase from two to eight in the number of groups participating in the RFS Cadet Program. In addition, 12 of the 14 Bush Fire Management Committees in the Region have now either completed or have made good progress towards completing the new Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.

Community Safety staff and volunteers participated in the annual Regional Community Education Forum, held jointly with Region West. As in

previous years, this forum challenged Community Education officers to examine current practices and to look at methods of more actively engaging the wider community to better prepare for bush fires. The Regional Community Safety Forum, held earlier in the year, focused on how best to engage communities at risk. The increase in numbers attending the forum indicates the importance the DTZs are placing on community education as an important fire management tool.

Across the Region, Community Safety Officers were responsible for dealing with a wide range of issues including hazard complaints, Development Application assessments, community education activities, and issuing Fire Permits and Hazard Reduction Certificates.

There was strong involvement with the development of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans and a number of Community Safety Officers also attended training in mapping systems (MapDesk and MapInfo) and pilot training courses developed by the RFS for Community Safety practitioners.



KEY

- 36. Cudgegong
- 37. North West Team
 - Walgett
 - Coonamble
 - Warren
 - Bogan
- 38. Orana Team
 - Narromine
 - Wellington
 - Dubbo

- 39. Canobolas Zone
 - Blayney
 - Orange
 - Cabonne
 - Cowra
- 40. South West Slopes Zone
 - Boorowa
 - Harden
 - Cootamundra
 - Young

- 41. Mid Lachlan Team
 - Parkes
 - Forbes
 - Weddin
- 42. Mid Lachlan Valley Team
 - Lachlan
- 43. Barwon Darling Zone
 - Brewarrina
 - Bourke

- 44. Far West Team
 - Unincorporated NSW
 - Central Darling
 - Cobar
 - Broken Hill (Non RFS)
- 45. Mid West Team
 - Hay
 - Carrathool
- 46. Bland Temora Zone
 - Bland
 - Temora



Snapshot

As with other parts of the state, Region West experienced a moderate fire season due to the continuing drought conditions in many areas, while other areas had substantial rainfall over summer. Overall, Region West experienced mild weather for the fire season with no real periods of extreme conditions.

The Region did respond to 145 hay stack fires, which kept the brigades busy over the summer period.

About 38,000 hectares were targeted within Region West for Hazard Reduction during the 2007/08 period. Thirteen broad scale Hazard Reduction

burns were conducted and 183 kilometres of containment lines were constructed for these burns.

No task forces were dispatched from the Region during the season, due to the minimal fire activity across the State. A small number of Incident Management Team (IMT) personnel were deployed to assist Region North in the early stages of the fire season and to assist the Country Fire Service in South Australia with the Kangaroo Island Fire.

Due to the quiet fire season, the only aircraft used within Region West were to conduct reconnaissance flights following lightning activity.

Management

For the third consecutive year, a core business plan was developed and implemented for District/Zone/Teams (DTZs) and the Regional Office. The DTZs within Region West achieved compliance of 84 per cent against the 57 programs of the business plan.

All DTZs within Region West have current and existing Service Agreements with their relevant Councils and all areas are holding Group Captain elections every three years. Around 68 per cent of brigades within Region West have an adopted Constitution and are working toward 100 per cent compliance.

Professional Development was again a priority of the Region, with 15 staff having the opportunity to act in other positions. In addition, all DTZ Managers were provided with a program called Capacity Building over the past year to assist in developing staff.

Once again a very successful and positive Volunteer to Career Forum was held, with 18 Volunteers attending. The aim of this program is to provide volunteers with information and skills to enable them to apply for permanent salaried positions within the Service. The Volunteer to Career Forum has been further supported by brigade members gaining valuable work experience within



the Region, filling 20 temporary Operations Support Officers and six temporary administrative staff positions for varying periods.

Operations

During the 2007/08 season Region West did not have any section 44 fire emergencies and of the 284 reported incidents, there were only 24 Class 1 fires. Hay stack fires proved to be the most prevalent incident, with 106 attended within the Region. A severe wind storm resulted in the most unusual call-out, with the bitumen blown off a road in the Mid West Team area. The south of the Region remained relatively dry however, and extreme fire weather conditions were minimal and fire activity remained low.

The first Regional Exercise conducted pre-fire season was held in September 2007 to enable volunteers to exercise their new skills for the fire season. This was another successful event with more than 90 volunteers in attendance.

Achievements in the reporting period included ensuring that all DTZs had a current section 52 Operations Plan, with an updated list of volunteers available for IMTs, likewise Out of Area Assistance Plans are also complete. Business Continuity Plans have progressed, with around three quarters of all DTZs having theirs completed.

Out of Area assistance was provided to Region North, with three IMT staff deployed to support section 44 fire emergency operations. One air attack supervisor was dispatched to assist the South Australian

Country Fire Service with the Kangaroo Island Fire. No pre or post season captain's meetings/debriefs were held, due to the low fire danger in the Region. Aircraft required minimal activation within Region West during the fire season, with only two reconnaissance flights conducted following storm activity.

An analysis was conducted across all DTZs to determine the need for additional Fire Investigators. This resulted in the Region conducting its first regionally based Wild Fire Investigation Course, at Forbes. A trial reporting of incident informative and stop messages by two DTZs in the Region (using radio to advise Katoomba Communications Centre) has been finalised for implementation on 1 July 2008. This trial has been made possible following liaison with NSW Fire Brigades.

Learning and Development

Learning and Development personnel across Region West focused on maximising the number of volunteers deemed competent at the end of the training year, rather than on the number of courses run. A key priority has been on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), particularly applied to the Crew Leader courses. A RPL event for Crew Leader Grasslands (CLG) was held at Hillston with nineteen volunteers achieving the CLG qualification.

There has also been a shift from using exclusively traditional assessment practices, to Fireground Assessment and

Evidence of Competency provided by peers. This has been very positively received by trainers and volunteers alike.

Three more Level Three Chainsaw courses have been delivered over the 2007/08 period by Region West staff. These were all successful and productive courses, developing not only skills but a great camaraderie among participants.

Successful Group Leader Analysis and Group Leader Command courses were also run during March and April in Cowra, with 20 attendees. Dubbo and Mudgee hosted two more Rural Fire Instructor courses, with another scheduled later in 2008/09, to be hosted by Forbes.

Community Safety

In 2007/08 Region West completed 27,593 hectares of hazard reduction, including 13 broad scale burns.

Cadet programs were run in Orana, Canobolas, Bland/Temora, Cudgegong and North West Teams over 10-week periods. These were very positive and engaging experiences for staff, the participants and communities. Further Cadet programs are planned for 2008/09.

A total of 213 Community Education programs were conducted throughout the Region. In addition, two Community Safety Facilitators and two Community Safety Assistant courses were conducted over the reporting period, with a total of 70 people attending. Training in the new Hazard Reduction Module was

also delivered across the Region to Community Safety Officers and managers.

A very successful combined Region West and South Community Education Conference was held in Orange in September 2007, with about 100 staff and volunteers attending. This conference format enabled volunteers and staff to network and share ideas across the Regions. It also provided a hands-on workshop to enable officers to hone their skills in delivering Community Education programs.

The Orana Team completed their Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFRMP) with the new map-based format. The majority of Region West DTZs will start their plans in 2008/09. The Canobolas BFRMP continues to set the standard across the State by establishing the ground work for the State BFRMP format. Many of the features in the Canobolas plan have been used to develop the new map-based format.

Operations Support.



Overview

The Operations Support Directorate includes areas such as Engineering Services, Learning and Development and Occupational Health and Safety Services. It also includes administrative support functions such as Ministerial Liaison and Statutory Committee Support.

As well as its core functions, during 2007/08 the Directorate undertook key projects, including further enhancement of the MyRFS internet portal for volunteers.

Engineering Services completed the prototyping of a new Category 11 Tanker, which will go into production in 2008/09. In addition, as part of the Service's commitment to fire fighter safety, the latest personal protective clothing (PPE) worn by its fire fighters was subjected to thermal performance tests at the University of Alberta in Canada. These tests proved yet again that the PPE supplied by the Service is of world-class standard.

The Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Section worked with both the NSW WorkCover Authority and the Rural Fire Service Association to improve the support provided to volunteers injured in the course of their Service activities. The appointment of a full-time Workers Compensation (Volunteer) Liaison Officer has further improved support to volunteers who are injured in the line of duty, including a "fast tracking" of the initial claims process.

Counselling and Support

The Counselling and Support Unit consists of three main areas of work. These are the



Critical Incident Support Services (CISS), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and the Member Assistance Program (MAP).

Throughout 2007/08, a range of activities was held for volunteers and staff to improve awareness and provide information on topics including: recognising depression and exploring treatment options, how to mitigate psychological injury and developing strategies to reduce stress. Several other motivational keynote addresses at conferences and seminars were also conducted, including 'Discovering Generation Y'.

Critical Incident Support Services (CISS)

This program is available to all members of the Service around the clock seven days a week. Every aspect of this work involved is strictly confidential and assistance is provided through Peer Support and trauma specialist interventions.

Services provided include pre-incident information and education sessions and group processing sessions (such as defusings, debriefings, and demobilisations). Services provided also include on-scene support, one-to-one assistance (either face-to-face or by telephone), follow up contact and referral to psychological assistance.

A stronger emphasis on building emotional and psychological resilience, increasing resistance to stress and promoting recovery through the identification of healthy coping resources has been well received at information seminars. The provision of psychosocial educational awareness sessions remains a

high priority and this year has again seen the linking of such presentations with DTZ training events in addition to those held at Brigade level.

In comparison to previous years, the actual number of people assisted has decreased due to fewer group support interventions taking place as more people are assisted individually.

In addition to joint training and cooperation initiatives with other emergency services' Peer Support Teams, this year has seen a strengthening of the working relationship between CISS and the Chaplaincy and Family Support programs, resulting in a greater and more comprehensive network of crisis support available. This is especially the case with regard to clinical consultation to these programs.

Advanced training for Peer Support members was undertaken in September and October 2007, and also in April 2008. Subjects included Secondary and Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, Personality Type Indicators and Self-Care Strategies.

Future goals include:

- Development and distribution of new CISS pamphlet
- Specialised training in Suicide Prevention & Intervention for Peers
- Two advanced team training activities.

Member Assistance Program (MAP)

The Service continues to recognise the need to support volunteers who may be affected

by a situation not directly relating to their operational involvement. In these cases, a referral and assistance program is available to help members and their families locate an appropriate practitioner within their geographical location if possible.

Together with seminars focussing on recognising depression and exploring treatment options, information concerning psychological services (provided under Medicare via referral from a medical practitioner) has received very positive feedback. It is planned to improve knowledge about these services throughout NSW by establishing a working relationship with the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health.

The program continues to be integrated with the Chaplaincy and Family Support initiatives, allowing for appropriate clinical advice and services to be offered. Comparative analysis indicates a stable utilisation of the referral service.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

This service, available to employees and their families, is provided through a dual mechanism of internal provision and an external contracted agency of qualified Psychologists and Practitioners.

The referral mechanisms to the external provider were again reviewed in 2007/08, in consultation with the external provider to ensure more effective engagement of services. There has been an increase in the number of clinicians available throughout NSW, and the development of telephone counselling and

support has assisted greatly in remote localities.

This year has also seen some use of the Manager Assist™ service offered to enable managers and supervisors to gain support and assistance with staff-related matters. Customer satisfaction surveys undertaken by the provider indicate a healthy satisfaction with services offered.

Engineering Services

Funding was allocated for 259 new and refurbished tankers to be provided to the brigades.

Key achievements included the design of the new generation prototypes of Category 1 tankers, as well as the re-design and prototyping of the Category 9 tanker. Associated with the Category 1 development was the new ring main spray protection system, providing enhanced protection to the crew. As well, the design includes improved access to tankers.

A podcast providing volunteers with an overview of the service's Category 1 Tanker was produced and released on both DVD and MyRFS. Volunteers are now able to view and download this information at their convenience.

Response lights and sirens also underwent a rigorous testing regime to determine optimal combinations for the RFS operational tankers and vehicles.

Extensive testing of fire fighters' Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was conducted during November at Alberta University, Canada. These tests again proved that our volunteers continue to enjoy leading edge protective garments.

Operations Support cont'd.



The 'Redfleet' fleet management system was expanded, with scoping of a vehicle production module started.

Learning and Development

The Service continues to provide Nationally Recognised Training and Assessment to all members through its Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status. Overall volunteer training activity has increased during the past 12 months.

The target numbers for training coordinators, assessors and trainers is based on the number needed to sustain the demand

within the RFS; these have plateaued just above 2,000 trainers and 1,000 assessors. Training support materials currently exist for most programs, including standard reference books, course guides and workbooks.

More than 50 volunteers have undertaken training to acquire the Certificate IV in Business, through TAFE or similar providers in the past twelve months, with the RFS funding five of the course's ten units.

The key entry qualification for many RFS staff positions is

the Certificate IV in Firefighting Supervision or the Certificate IV Public Safety (Firefighting Supervision).

Learning and Development Systems also provides technical development opportunities to staff and volunteers. A senior volunteer development program is run linked to the Volunteer to Career workshop, as well as professional development for Learning and Development staff.

Ministerial Liaison Unit

The Ministerial Liaison Unit dealt with 595 formal Ministerial and

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests over the reporting period, representing a reduction of about 20 per cent on the previous year.

The main variation was in the number of replies to correspondence (down from 296 to 130). The numbers of briefings, answers to Parliamentary Questions On Notice and House Folder notes required were similar to last year's figures. The Unit also responded to many telephone and e-mail requests for information about Ministerial and FOI matters.

The number of overdue items per week has remained low. The average response time for answering Ministerial requests was 15 days. This figure does not include House Folder and Estimates Committee notes, which are produced within short, non-negotiable timeframes.

Responses to FOI requests received by the RFS were processed to ensure their timeliness and consistency with legislation and government policy. The volume and complexity of FOI requests again increased this year. The figure of 54 applications processed represents a marginal increase over last year's 50 applications.

A high level of compliance with the statutory timeframes required under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* was achieved and only one decision was overturned on internal review. In keeping with the spirit of the FOI Act and the RFS commitment to transparency, nearly all the documents requested were released to



applicants. Only five documents were found to be exempt from release and a further six were released with minor deletions, generally to protect the identity of complainants.

The twice-yearly updates to the FOI statement and summary of affairs were produced for Gazettal on time.

Further statistics on FOI can be found in Appendix H.

MyRFS

MyRFS is a volunteer extranet website that provides RFS volunteers with access to Service information and systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Developments and enhancements to MyRFS over the 2007/08 fiscal year included the ability for Brigade Secretaries and Captains to manage their Brigade Contact book through MyRFS.

An additional enhancement was a report generator that

allows Group Captains to view comprehensive workforce management and personnel data in their area, allowing for better planning during fire season. A fully integrated Fire Updates module was released during the year, improving the quality of fire data available to volunteers during fire seasons, including Fire Maps and selected situation report (*SitRep*) information.

Podcasts on MyRFS are now being provided to enable volunteers to receive information in audio-visual format. There are currently three podcasts published on the MyRFS platform, focusing on areas of brigade life, training and equipment.

The MyRFS online kiosks were used in the marketing of MyRFS to volunteers. These kiosks provided a location at regional exercises and other volunteer gatherings for members to access the MyRFS site and talk to the Project Team. The kiosks have been a valuable addition to the promotion of MyRFS and

have contributed to the growing number of registered users.

The team regularly speaks to volunteer users of MyRFS by phone, email and in person around the state. The large majority of users engage in the planning process, freely offering suggestions, improvements and new features for the Service. This open and honest dialogue with volunteers is one of the indicators we have that communication with volunteers is improving as a result of MyRFS.

Member participation on MyRFS now exceeds 10,600 users, and the MyRFS web servers recorded more than 5.3 million requests for pages and information each year.

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare

For the Health Safety and Welfare Section, 2007/08 was effectively a consolidation year, with significant work undertaken in the development and implementation of health

and safety related policy and associated operational methodologies.

The season's moderate fire activity eased the workload often generated by a significant fire season and the Health, Safety and Welfare Section used the time to develop and implement its new injury management procedures and protocols.

Additionally, over the reporting period the Service significantly enhanced its capabilities in support of injured fire fighters, through the creation of a new full time position. The Workers Compensation (Volunteers) Liaison Officer is tasked with supporting volunteer members through the workers compensation and rehabilitation system.

Comparative trends in injury occurrence rates and associated compensation cost performance continue to show improvements.



Community Safety.



Overview

Interaction with the community before, during, and after fire events remains the main focus of the Community Safety Directorate. This, coupled with close working arrangements with other fire agencies, the NSW Police Force, land management agencies and the media, ensures that the RFS is able to provide support to both our volunteers and the community.

During the past year, the Directorate has been significantly involved in a number of key

projects, with its achievements including:

- Implementation of and training in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006*
- 8,932 developments assessed across the State by RFS staff
- 632 students successfully completed the Cadet Training Program
- 30 Media Liaison Officers were accredited to assist with District/Team/Zone media liaison with the media during fires
- Adoption of the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan policy and

guidelines by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee

- Continued support of and involvement in the 'Hotspots' Fire Project, which provides significant benefit to landholders
- Reviewing and consulting with the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Climate Change on proposed changes to environmental planning and protection legislation.

For 2008/09 the Directorate's focus will be to:

- Continue the implementation of *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006*
- Continue the new risk management planning framework, to provide a more realistic and useful instrument for use by fire authorities, land managers and the community
- Coordinate and enhance the Service's strategies to ensure ecologically sustainable practices are considered in fire fighting
- Continue developing a reporting model that will allow the Service to report



its community engagement activity outputs

- Develop strategies to help protect remote communities
- Monitor the impact of climate change on fire in the Australian landscape.

Development Control Services

Development Control Services aims to increase community safety through appropriate planning, design and construction of development in bush fire prone areas. This ultimately reduces exposure to the damage caused by bush fires and provides a safer environment for fire fighters and those assisting in fire fighting efforts.

Development Control Services continues to support staff in Rural Fire Districts in assessing new developments in bush fire prone areas. During the year under review, the Service assessed a total of 8,932 developments across the State. 2,623 of those development applications were referred to the Development Control Services Unit at Head Office. Of the applications processed by Development Control Services,

395 were for special protection developments (schools, hospitals, nursing homes and other vulnerable communities) and 1,605 were for subdivision developments.

Advice was provided to local councils and other agencies on local environment plans and bush fire protection under section 117 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The number of integrated development applications refused by the Service has fallen significantly over the past four years from 145 (5.3 per cent) in 2003/04 to 11 (0.55 per cent) in 2007/08. This shows the flexibility of the revised *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006* (PBFP) which allows more options and flexibility in achieving compliance for building in bush fire prone areas. It also highlights the effectiveness of continual training provided by Development Control Services to the development industry.

Since the release of PBFP, Development Control Services has provided support and training

to councils and other industry groups in the application of bush fire protection measures for development in bush fire prone areas. Workshops and training have been provided to councils across the State and other agencies such as the Department of Disabilities and Aged Care, State Property Authority, Department of Commerce and Resitech (Department of Housing, Property Development Division), as well as 80 accredited certifiers across NSW.

The transition to PBFP 2006 has been well received by councils, developers and the public generally.

Natural Environment Services

Natural Environment Services is responsible for developing and implementing environmental policy within the Service. This is particularly important in the area of bush fire hazard reduction activities, with the section helping councils, other agencies and the Service to undertake their activities in a more cohesive, planned and effective manner.

Natural Environment Services also provides analysis, advice, recommendations and policy on ecologically sustainable development; ensures compliance with environmental legislation and supports ongoing improvements for environmental protection.

The Section has continued to provide information, training and professional development for staff, councils and the community on the *Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code*. The Code provides a streamlined approach to environmental assessment (through a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate) for the majority of bush fire hazard reduction activities across the State. Where a certificate cannot be issued, Natural Environment Services undertakes the preparation of a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to determine whether the proposal can still proceed. This usually involves an assessment of threatened species and alternate actions to minimise the impact on those species identified.

The Section also developed and introduced a Fire and the



Community Safety cont'd.

Environment course during the year to assist staff in their understanding of the impacts of fire and fire management activities on the environment.

In 2007/08 the section also provided specification, testing and training for the revised environmental assessment module in BRIMS (the multi-agency Bush Fire Risk Information Management System).

During the year, 2,772 Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificates were issued by the Service, compared to 2,403 last year. In addition, three REFs were finalised during the year.

Media Services

Following a restructure of communications within the RFS, the Media Services Unit was created in November 2007. The Unit's role is to primarily focus on ensuring timely and efficient management of media relations across the State and continuing to provide ongoing media support to DTZs and brigades.

Media Services responded to hundreds of media inquiries in 2007/08, with on-scene media services provided at incidents including an explosion in the Hunter Valley and a Pyrotechnics fire in Wallerawang.

Public Liaison Units were established at seven section 44s across the 2007/08 fire season. Media Services focused on enhancing the Public Liaison System for major fires following debriefs with the Public Liaison Officers involved.

In the reporting year, Media Services successfully delivered a range of significant projects

including:

- Managing a number of film, television and commercial productions featuring RFS volunteers
- Training more than 400 media personnel, including journalists, camera operators, producers and photographers around NSW in bush fire safety. There are now more than 3,000 trained members of the media across the State
- Delivering Media Liaison Officer (MLO) training - 30 Media Liaison Officers have now been accredited to assist with DTZ media liaison and liaison with the media during fires.

Risk Management Performance

Risk Management Performance (RMP) Services include audit, investigation, reporting, management of mitigation grant funding and support for the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC) and the Service. These activities help improve community safety outcomes and fire management arrangements.

RMP provides reporting services for the Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC) and section 74 reporting, required under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The coordination of hazard reduction reporting requires the integration and analysis of different data sets from land management agencies and local councils. The hazard reduction figures are set out in Appendix C.

RMP manages a number of mitigation grant funding programs, including the Commonwealth/State Bush Fire Mitigation Program. These programs support land managers, local councils and

RFS Brigades in achieving critical hazard reduction works and the upgrading of fire trails. A significant enhancement in mitigation grant funding was provided in 2007/08 which has seen an increase in hazard reduction and fire trail works across the State.

Performance audits of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMPs) conducted pursuant to Section 62A(1) of the *Rural Fires Act 1997* continue, with 52 plans audited to date, including three during the reporting year. Details of these are set out in Appendix D.

BFRMPs are developed by local Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) and approved by the BFCC. The plans provide a comprehensive set of strategies for the reduction of bush fire hazards across all land tenures and agencies involved in bush fire management within the plan area over a five year period.

The strategies contained within BFRMPs are designed to treat five levels of bush fire risk. They define community assets such as houses, schools and hospitals and environmental assets such as threatened species and cultural heritage. The strategies cover prevention activities, community education, hazard reduction works, arson reduction activities and response planning. The BFCC approved a new upgraded BFRMP model and began its implementation during 2007/08.

Community Education

The Community Education Unit is committed to improving communities' fire safety knowledge, skills and attitudes.

This involves a process of interacting with communities and individuals at a grassroots level, building capacity over time and emphasising fire safety as a partnership between communities and the fire services.

The unit aims to improve the resilience and self-sufficiency of communities at risk. Programs and activities are localised to meet the needs and expectations of targeted communities and individuals. Community Education Strategies prepared by RFS Districts are designed to work in conjunction with the Bush Fire Risk Management Planning process to deliver real improvements in community safety and understanding of bush fire risk.

Over 2007/08 an increasing number of staff and volunteer members have chosen to improve their skills in community engagement by undertaking nationally recognised training qualifications delivered by the Community Education Unit. A total of 618 members now hold Community Safety Assistant (a 50 per cent increase on last year) and 104 hold Community Safety Facilitator (a 100 per cent increase). These qualifications provide the knowledge and skills to allow fire service members to effectively promote and implement fire safety in their communities.

RFS members spent more than 49,000 hours delivering community awareness and engagement activities in their local areas. This was represented by some 2,130 events and activities undertaken across the State.



Over the year, 749 events were specifically targeted at children and young people, including the expanded 10-week school-based Cadet Training Program. This program was conducted 34 times in 2007/08 and is designed to teach our future leaders about community fire safety, fire suppression and volunteering within their community. A total of 632 students successfully completed the program, with about five per cent from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The 2008 Australasian Education and Fire Awareness Conference, held in Newcastle, again attracted more than 400 delegates from across Australia and New Zealand to showcase best practice and new initiatives in community safety. For the first time the conference saw representation from every fire service in Australia and New Zealand, a recognition of its growing stature across the industry. The conference also featured a paper on Planning as Learning, an examination of policy-mandated collaborative Wildfire Planning from the United States of America. In 2009, the conference will be held in conjunction with the International Wildfire Management Australia Conference at Sydney's Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, allowing it to continue increasing its exposure to an international audience.

The RFS Library continues to support the research activities of staff and the training needs of volunteers. The number of people visiting the Library during the last twelve months has doubled from 605 to 1,136. During the same period, loans



Community Safety cont'd.

and document supply, from the Library's own collection or via network arrangements with other libraries, have increased from 1,288 to 1,433. Library staff have also researched and responded to 575 reference inquiries in 2007/08.

The valuable contribution of the RFS Library to the Australasian Libraries in the Emergency Sector (ALIES) network was acknowledged this year with the presentation of an Outstanding Service Award to the Senior Librarian. ALIES is a cooperative network which promotes and facilitates the sharing of knowledge and information resources between Australian and New Zealand emergency management agencies.

Community Hazards Management

District Bush Fire Risk Management Plans (BFRMPs) form the basis for planning bush fire hazard reduction works within Local Government Areas in NSW. The Community Hazard Management section develops the guidelines and frameworks for these plans and helps local Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) to develop BFRMPs.

The Section is also responsible for managing complaints about hazard reduction and providing members of the public with a facility to register concerns about bush fire hazards. As well, the section ensures that hazards are treated by issuing notices and engaging contractors to undertake works where a landholder fails to comply.

Community Hazards Management is committed to

the continuous improvement of the policy and planning instruments for bush fire planning under section 52 of the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The section also provides assistance and advice to BFMCs in the development of their BFRMP, as well as managing the issue of fire safety permits and penalty notices.

In 2007/08 the Section's key achievements included the adoption of the BFRMP policy and guidelines by the BFCC, along with the completion trials of a new map-based Risk Management Plan model in the Illawarra and Murray Irrigation Area districts. This new model is simpler to use, and allows for uniform sets of data to be gathered. With the trials now complete, the model will be implemented around NSW in 2008/09.

In addition, training was conducted for about 200 BFRMP facilitators for all BFMCs within the State and support was provided for 44 committees preparing BFRMPs.

The Section also oversaw the adoption of new prescribed burn planning policy and burn plan templates and continued its involvement with the collaborative research centre for the environmental risk management of bush fires at the University of Wollongong.

In 2007/08 work was undertaken to establish a bush fire fuels research project, and the section continued support and involvement in the 'Hotspots' Fire Project.

Business Development

The Rural Fire Service continues to develop professional and commercial opportunities, both within Australia and abroad, through the Business Development Unit.

Our international programs provide the RFS with an opportunity to enhance the professional development of our personnel and at the same time generate revenue. These programs also assist in positioning New South Wales as an international leader in emergency management.

During 2007/08, the RFS hosted a number of small delegations from Korea and the Peoples Republic of China at our Head Office in Homebush. The Business Development Unit also acted as the Australian managing partner for an AusAid-funded Smoke Haze project in South East Asia. This project is an international collaborative effort to reduce haze pollution in SE Asia. In May 2008, one of our volunteers attended an International Volunteer Fire Service conference in Japan, to represent our Commissioner on issues facing volunteer fire fighting agencies, including coping with natural disasters.

A total of \$61,600 was generated from our international project work for the 2007/08 financial year.

The Unit will continue to explore further international opportunities for both volunteers and salaried officers over the next financial year. A number of international programs have been scheduled for 2008/09.

Domestic business opportunities within NSW include corporate training programs in areas such as Fire Extinguisher, Bush Fire Awareness and Fire Warden Training. Our corporate training program continues to grow, with clients including Integral Energy, Transgrid, Energy Australia, Country Energy, Mobil and Railcorp.

RFS corporate training courses are conducted by qualified instructors drawn from the volunteer ranks of DTZs across the State. A proportion of the funds generated from these courses has been used to assist RFS Districts in providing additional equipment to their volunteers, in addition to funds allocated through the Rural Fire Fighting Fund.

A total of 69 corporate training courses were undertaken in 2007/08, raising a total revenue of \$89,587. The number of training courses to be conducted during the next financial year is expected to increase.

Details of international travel relating to business development are included in Appendix O.



Strategic Development.



Overview

Strategic Development is responsible for corporate planning and performance, organisational policy and standards, legal services, infrastructure coordination, systems audits and Information Services (including GIS, Applications Support, Applications Development and Information Technology).

Highlights in 2007/08 included the development of the Service's 2012 Strategic Plan and the organisational performance

management framework. In addition, work was completed on a major survey of all Brigade Stations and Fire Control Centres.

Important work was also done to refine the regulations governing the Service, with a project to replace the *Rural Fires Regulation 2002*. The fire weather and lightning strike systems have been enhanced to further improve information provided for fire fighting.

Other ongoing priorities include the establishment of a corporate

information management capability and the AFAC/CRC 'lessons learned' research facility. This will allow the Service to use data, information and research from a variety of fire agencies and organisations around the country and to benefit from their experiences as part of its decision making process.

Corporate Planning and Performance

The Corporate Planning and Performance Section is responsible for developing, implementing and supporting

the Service's planning, reporting, management, auditing and continuous improvement systems. The Section assists staff in other parts of the Service with the delivery of their key services by helping them adopt more systematic and planned approaches to their work.

The Section's achievements in 2007/08 included supporting the expansion and ongoing development of the Service's Internal Auditing function and the development of the eSDM Version 4 application. Work is

Strategic Development cont'd.

also under way on development of the new version of the Service's Standard of Fire Cover and Optimum Resourcing applications which will see the best use being made of its resources and equipment around the state.

The Section also began developing the Service's Business Continuity Management system and continued analysing key issues affecting the Service by finalising the Organisational Risk Assessment and Volunteer Surveys.

Work continued to facilitate the development of the Service's 2012 Strategic Plan and the 2010 Corporate Plan, as well as to implement elements of the Organisational Performance Management Framework.

Information Services

A number of improvements were made to the Service's information technology systems in 2007/08. The fire weather and lightning strike systems have been significantly enhanced with new features and are now live. These systems provide up-to-date information on lightning strikes, weather and hot-spot information from satellites and other sources.

The HeliFire and MapDesk projects were completed, bringing a powerful mapping ability to those officers in the field and in the air. In addition, a portable satellite access system was developed for Incident Management Teams, which allows increased bandwidth to be used wherever these teams are located.

A wireless networking system has been developed for regional and district offices and has been implemented in several locations. Such a system supports the increased demands of computing, while allowing for the mobility that is required for managing emergencies.

Information Services has also developed a simple, standard look and feel for all applications and a set of best-practice guidelines for applications and web sites. Planning has begun for the implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP), to replace the FireZone databases. The implementation of the ERP will be the section's most important project over coming years, as it will greatly improve the current computer-based systems and databases the Service uses to support the activities of its volunteers.

A Disaster Recovery facility has been implemented and tested, meaning the Service now has a Disaster Recovery Plan for all major services and applications and most minor ones. The facility is located away from the RFS with a capability for NSW Fire Brigades to switch on the Disaster Recovery systems if the RFS is unable to do so.

Policy and Standards Unit

The Policy Unit has continued to develop and review all policy documentation within the RFS, including Service Standards, Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines.

The four key areas of concentration in 2007/08

involved working towards the repeal and remake of the *Rural Fires Regulation 2002*, the development of revised organisational values, the maintenance of the policy development framework and the continued review and development of policy documentation.

Work is well underway to repeal the current *Rural Fires Regulation 2002* and replace it next financial year with an updated regulation. The new Regulation is planned to include some minor changes in the following clauses:

- Notice of intention to burn off or burn firebreak (cl.33) - the conditions are to be clearer and more flexible
- Hazard reduction on managed lands (cl.41) - definition is to be extended to cover certain classes of Crown Lands
- Penalty Notices (cl.48) - in respect of offences under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, the power to issue penalties is to be extended to RFS officers, (previously only provided to police and local government officers).

In accordance with the Guide to Better Regulation, the RFS has conducted preliminary stakeholder consultations on the proposed new regulation and public consultation in accordance with Premier's Memorandum No. 2006-17 and the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1989*. In all, 11 submissions were received and all supported the proposed Regulation, though some refinements have been incorporated to reflect comments made.

In 2007/08 the Service reviewed its existing organisational values.

Data was collected from various sources, including the 2006 volunteer survey, volunteer forums, management forums and CRC research. Developing a set of organisational values provides a reference point to help decision-making at all levels, supports the 2012 Strategic Plan and can also help improve relationships between members of the RFS.

Initially, executive workshops were conducted to develop an initial draft set of new values and to introduce the importance of organisational values to members. Both volunteers and staff were provided with the opportunity to put their views through a series of workshops that took place around the State.

The Policy Unit is continuing to develop and enhance the Service's policy development framework and to develop an effective communication strategy for all volunteers and staff, in order to ensure widespread dissemination of policy information and promoting a two-way exchange between the Policy Unit and all RFS members.

In 2007/08 the unit conducted an extensive review of all staff policies to ensure they met with legislative requirements and the corporate needs of the RFS.

Strategic Services and Infrastructure Planning

Legal and Coronial matters dominated the workload of the Strategic Services and Infrastructure Planning Section in 2007/08.

The year also saw the implementation of Standard Designs for both Brigade Stations and Fire Control Centres



and the Section continued with the Facility Survey, which will see every RFS Fire Control Centre (FCC) and Brigade Station visited, surveyed and documented.

Construction began on the first FCC to be built according to the Standard Design, at Orange in the Central West. The first Standard Design station will be built at Canobolas in the 2008/09 financial year. In addition, new Standard FCCs are planned for Illawarra, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo and Bland.

The RFS was involved in the following Coronial Inquests or Inquiries:

- Branches Lane Inquiry - (Finalised)
- Rachael Childs Inquest - (Finalised)
- Brad Pead Inquest - (Unheard-commencing in 2009).

No Coronial resulted in adverse comment against the Service during the reporting period.

The RFS also has an interest in the outcomes of work undertaken by the Bushfire

Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), with the Section continuing to liaise with the CRC to ensure the RFS receives the maximum benefit from its research. The Section has also worked with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) and the CRC on the new funding bid for the proposed replacement of the Bushfire CRC and the Fire and Environment CRC. This submission is due in late 2008.

Our Performance.



Management
Community Safety
Learning and Development
Operations



Our Performance.

Our Strategic Plan guides our performance and is based on the doctrine of continuous improvement.

The four key result areas that are the drivers for our performance are:

- **MANAGEMENT**
Managing our human, financial and physical resources in a competent and accountable manner
- **COMMUNITY SAFETY**
Providing a range of prevention and mitigation services to increase community awareness of risks, and involvement in their reduction
- **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**
Competent and productive leadership and management by people who are committed to our mission, and
- **OPERATIONS**
Ensuring rapid and effective response to emergency incidents and to prevent injury and loss.

This section of our annual report details our performance against these critical areas.



Management.

Managing our human, financial and physical resources in a competent and accountable manner

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Manage incidents more effectively	259 new and refurbished tankers allocated to brigades	Tanker annual upgrade targets met	Continue to provide funding for new and refurbished tankers
Promote and maintain professional standards and ethics for all salaried and volunteer members of the Service	100% of permanent staff within four weeks of commencement. Updated in June	% of new staff provided with appropriate induction training on ethical standards RFS Corruption and Prevention Strategy regularly reviewed and updated	100% of permanent staff within four weeks of commencement Updated annually
Increased participation in volunteering	10,600 volunteers who are registered users of MyRFS volunteer website	Net increase in members	12,000
Manage our human, financial and physical resources in a competent and accountable manner	Forward estimates prepared by due date and quarterly financial statements completed 45 audits 80% business improvement requests carried out as required 60% of corrective action requests closed in accordance with Service Standard 6.51 average sick days per employee 100% compliance with Worker's Compensation Legislation 81% of Brigade AGMs attended by staff Average of five meetings of brigade captains held Five meetings of Senior Management Teams 12 staff meetings held per District/Team/Zone	Full compliance with legislative reporting deadlines Number of audits conducted against target % requests closed off % requests closed off Reduction in average number of days sick leave Ensuring with Worker's Compensation legislation Percentage AGMs attended by staff Number of meetings held Number of meetings held as planned Number of meetings held as planned	100% completion of forward estimates 80 audits Target 75% Target 80% Target – 4 days 100% compliance Target 80% Target – two per District/Team/Zone Target – four per District/Team/Zone Target – twelve per District/Team/Zone
Ensure effective and efficient management of Major Service Projects	Methodology implemented Methodology implemented	Key projects managed using the Service's project management methodology Key projects completed on time and on budget	100% of projects covered 90% of projects completed on time and on budget
Improve waste reduction program	Achieved 96% target of materials purchased/recycled	Compliance with Government WRAPP policy	Maintain current levels of recycling
Record assets	Implemented new policy and systems resulting in 100% capture of assets	Percentage of assets recorded	Target of 100% to be sustained
Improve warehouse management	Instituted program of warehouse rationalisation	Percentage reduction in number of breaches of process	Full compliance with OH&S legislative requirements



Community Safety.

Providing a range of prevention and mitigation services to increase community awareness of risks and involvement in their reduction

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Property owners and occupiers made aware of their obligations and legislation is enforced	3,471 bush fire hazard reduction certificates were issued 21,518 Fire Permits were issued 2,021 hazard complaints received 86% of hazard complaints reduced within 6 months	Increased the number of bush fire hazard reduction certificates issued Maintained the number of Fire Permits issued to regulate the safe use of fire in the community Dealt with community concerns about bush fire hazards by effectively dealing with hazard complaints Reduced bush fire hazards within six months from the time that a property had been determined to be a fire hazard as the result of a complaint	Maintain an increase in the average number of certificates issued: Target 3,000 Certificates issued Maintain the average number of Fire Permits issued to regulate the safe use of fire in the community: Target 19,000 Permits issued Improve management of bush fire hazards to effectively reduce hazard complaints: Target 2,000 complaints Continue to increase the average % of bush fire hazards removed within six months from the time that a property has been determined to be a fire hazard as the result of a complaint: Target 87.8%
Reduce the number of human induced fire ignitions	89.8% of wildfires formally investigated had their cause determined 85.6% of structural fires formally investigated had their cause determined	A high proportion of wildfires and structural fires investigated and a cause and origin of ignition determined	Aim to improve the ignition management of fires in order to reduce the number of accidental, malicious and deliberate ignitions by improving the average % of fires cause determination: Target 80%
General community made more aware, and participates in reducing the risk of fire	691 Community Education youth programs completed	Exceeded benchmark level of the number of Community Education youth programs delivered	Exceeded benchmark level of the number of Community Education youth programs delivered: Target 660
Firefighting agencies, land management agencies and other key stakeholders know the level of bushfire risk and take appropriate action	100% of BFMC's have an approved Bush Fire Risk Management Plan 3 performance audits undertaken	All Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) have approved Bush Fire Risk Management Plans Monitor the implementation of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans	All Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) have approved Bush Fire Risk Management Plans: Target 100% Monitor the implementation of Bush Fire Risk Management Plans by undertaking audits: Target 5% of auditable plans
Potential impact of fire on built structures and their occupants is reduced	97% of developments assessed met requirements 97% completed within 40 day timeframe	Exceeded benchmark level of bush fire prone developments assessed that meet Planning for Bush Fire Protection Exceeded the benchmark % of lodged Section 100(b) Development Application assessments completed within required 40 day timeframe	Maintain the level of bush fire prone developments assessed that meet Planning for Bush Fire Protection relative to benchmark Maintain the % of lodged Section 100(b) Development Application assessments completed within required 40 day timeframe relative to benchmark: Target 90%
Improve format of Operations Plans	100% of BFMC's have an approved Bush Fire Operations Plan	All Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) have approved Bush Fire Operations Plans	All Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC) have approved Bush Fire Operations Plans: Target 100%
Encourage bushfire awareness	30 Community FireWise groups established 236 Kids FireWise programs conducted 392 schools visited	Encouraged communities to participate in structured community engagement programs	Promote improved fire safety and awareness across bush fire prone communities by implementing structured community engagement programs: Target 5% increase
Increase awareness and use of RFS library	1,136 library visitors 1,433 loans and documents supplied 575 reference inquiries	Increases the % of visitors, loans, document supply and reference inquiries	Increase the % of visitors, loans, document supply and reference inquiries

Learning and Development.

Competent and productive leadership and management by people who are committed to our Mission

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Develop and maintain a pool of competent trainers, assessors and training coordinators	>2,000 trainers >1,000 assessors >200 coordinators	Number of trainers, assessors and coordinators	Maintain current numbers of trainers, assessors and coordinators
Maintain / develop appropriate training management systems	Introduced system of self-audits	100% use of the system	Maintain and improve system data capture
Develop and maintain the supply of relevant training support material	Updates to five core course materials New releases, Safety Induction (SI), the Communications package (CCO and CCA), and Conduct Briefings and Debriefings (CBD) Also released are; the first of the Competency Maintenance Kits (CMK) and Exercise Drill material Learning & Development Systems actioned 962 orders for training resources	Maintain current numbers of trainers, assessors and coordinators Training materials are supplied on schedule and in correct quantities	Continue to update and develop training and assessment materials Improve order and delivery system to reduce number of discrepancy issues
Develop a range of exercise packs	Released first CMK exercise pack	Develop standard exercise format and introduce initial package of material	Maintain and improve material development
Monitor results and outcomes on Project Vesta for appropriate information dissemination	Published information in Talk about Training Newsletter	Disseminate information	Continue to publicise information and results through Talk About Training Newsletter
Relevant national Recognised Training Organisation (RTO) status maintained	Percentage of full or part required material meets quality standards Complied with AQTF	Completed VETAB audit and re-registration Completed VETAB audit and re-registration	Continue to maintain RTO status Continue to maintain RTO status



Operations.

Ensuring rapid and effective response to emergency incidents and to prevent injury and loss

What we said we would do	What we did	Measure	What we shall do next year
Reduction in the level of damage caused by fire	100% of Section 52 Plans of Operations reviewed in accordance with policy	Percentage of Plans reviewed annually	100% reviewed every two years.
	100% of new versions of S52 Plans finalised within specified delivery from receipt of new format	Percentage of Plans reviewed within six months	100% of plans within reviewed within six months
Aviation training	Training curricula developed	Training delivered annually	Evaluate curriculum as part of three year plan
	100% of aviation contractors audited to ensure compliance	Percentage contractors compliant	Continue RAMP compliance checks
Instigate Aviation Safety Advisory Committee (ASAC)	Audit of all national and state contractors	Percentage not audited	In-field audit program for 'Call when needed' operators
	ASAC merged into NSW and ACT Inter-agency Aviation Working Group (IAAWG)	NSW/ACT fire agencies and NSW SES represented on IAAWG	Quarterly meetings of IAAWG
Expand Remote Area Firefighting (RAFT) capacity	SOPs finalised and trialled	Adoption of SOPs	Working Party to review and update
Finalise and implement Mutual Aid Agreements (MAA) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with other agencies and utilities	MOU with NSW Ambulance Service awaiting ratification and draft MOU with electricity authorities now completed	MOUs completed and implemented 2008/09	Review, evaluate and expand
Ratification of Operational Communications Service Level Agreement with NSWFB	Agreement 99% complete. Draft circulated for comment	Endorsed by Fire Services Joint Standing Committee	Agreement implemented and disseminated
Improvement of radio coverage	88% coverage achieved	% of Radio coverage	86% coverage
	Twenty new transmission sites to mitigate black spots		
Improvement of pager coverage	70% coverage achieved	% of Pager coverage	65% coverage
	Worked with SES towards network improvements and expansions		

Our Performance.



Statement on Standards for the Provision of Services.

Service provision is in accordance with the commitments and criteria as detailed in the Service's Strategic Plan, copies of which can be obtained free of charge from the Service's website (www.rfs.nsw.gov.au), Headquarters and regional offices or by telephoning 02 8741 5555.

Contract and Market Testing

Policies and action plans have been developed to address issues of contract and market testing in areas of equipment supply, learning and development, and community education.

The Commissioner and senior staff of the Service undertake a

regular program of regional visits during which valuable feedback on service provision is obtained.

Electronic Service Delivery

The Service's Applications Development Unit continued to support business activities.

Regular enhancements will continue to be made to the volunteer intranet, MyRFS, as part of a program of continuous improvement.

There were a number of releases to the Bush Fire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) and as at 30 June, the system was being used by approximately 2,207 users from government agencies and local government, an increase of 70 per cent.

Work continued on providing spatial data in the BRIMS application as well as the Incident Control System (ICON). The geospatial database enabled the RFS to deliver a range of external data such as contours and roads, and internal data such as brigade locations and bush fire-prone land. Further releases related to ICON are being developed progressively, with ICON being used by 1,724 users from within the RFS and several external agencies.

Privacy and Personal Information

In response to the requirements of the *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998*, the Service has developed a Service Standard that specifies requirements for the handling of personal data collected during the course of

non-operational activities. This includes the personal particulars of Service members and recordings of non-operational radio and telephone calls.

The Standards also provide for a confidentiality undertaking by officers with access to personal information including the service's Firezone database. The necessary access protocols and procedures are in place.

Annual Report – External Costs and Availability

The total external costs incurred in the production of this report were \$49,950 +GST. The report is accessible on the Service's website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and copies may be obtained from the Service's headquarters at Homebush Bay.



Engagement of Consultants

Seven consultants were retained during the year at a total cost of \$1,429,551.

Consultancies equal to or more than \$30,000 were as follows:

	\$
Personnel and Industrial	66,000
Diplomacy Management Consultants (Industrial relations advocacy service)	
Global Fire Management (Service re-alignment)	56,100
Legal	382,915
Clayton Utz (General Support)	
Information Technology	653,071
Incheck Systems (General support and development of Bushfire Risk Information Management System)	
J.D and C.J.King (Facilities Survey)	83,605
Clear Lead (Service Delivery Model)	160,360
Consultancies less than \$30,000	
Managing Values (Policy development)	27,500
Total All Consultancies	\$1,429,551

Comparative figures for all consultancies for the two previous years were for 2005/06 \$585,329 and 2006/07 \$1,142,423.

Three year comparative costs

Seven consultancies were retained during 2007/08 at a cost of \$1,429,551

Seven consultancies were retained during 2006/07 at a cost of \$1,142,423

Four consultancies were retained during 2005/06 at a cost of \$585,329

Sale of Property

The Service does not own any property or land.

Payment Performance

A summary of the Service's payment performance for the year under review, and the two previous years, is set out in Appendix J.

The Service continues to meet its set targets and has done so through greater use of direct bank deposits.

There was no interest paid for late payments.

Major Assets

	2004/05 \$	2005/06 \$	2006/07 \$	2007/2008 \$
Computer Equipment	758,000	2,203,000	1,260,000	1,070,000
General Equipment	11,338,000	10,619,000	11,165,000	10,823,000
Fitout	4,368,000	3,934,000	3,415,000	2,929,000
Intangibles	0	102,000	753,000	566,000

Grants to Outside Organisations

	2005/06 \$	2006/07 \$	2007/08 \$
Nature Conservation Council	82,685	95,000	\$100,000
Volunteer Units (through Office for Emergency Services)	1,287,000	1,376,000	\$1,437,000
Total	\$1,369,685	\$1,471,000	\$1,537,000

Executive Remuneration

In light of the recognition by the State Government that the public has the clear right to know how much senior public servants are paid and the need for more transparency in the reporting of senior executive salaries at level 5 or above, the following information is provided:

Position	SES Level	Total Annual Remuneration
Commissioner Mr S Fitzsimmons	6	\$253,501

Significant Matter Raised in Statutory Audit Report

The matter relating to the State Rescue Board has been referred to the office for Emergency Services. A response will be provided to the Auditor-General after a full assessment of the matters raised.



Financial Statements.



Independent Auditor's Report
Statement by the Commissioner
Balance Sheet
Operating Statements
Statement of Recognised Income and Expense
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Summary of Compliance with Financial Directives
Program Statement - Expenses and Revenues
Notes to the Financial Statements



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

NSW Rural Fire Service

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the NSW Rural Fire Service (the Department), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2008, the operating statement, statement of recognised income and expense, cash flow statement, program statement - expenses and revenues and a summary of compliance with financial directives for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report:

- presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Department as at 30 June 2008, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations)
- is in accordance with section 45E of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (the PF&A Act) and the *Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005*.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Commissioner's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Commissioner is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the PF&A Act. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the Department's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Commissioner, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

My opinion does not provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the Department,
- that it has carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically,
- about the effectiveness of its internal controls, or
- on the assumptions used in formulating the budget figures disclosed in the financial report.

Independence

In conducting this audit, the Audit Office of New South Wales has complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical requirements. The PF&A Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General, and
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.

Heather Watson CA
Director, Financial Audit Services

All communications to be addressed to:

Headquarters
NSW Rural Fire Service
Locked Mail Bag 17
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

Telephone: (02) 8741 5555
e-mail: @rfs.nsw.gov.au

Headquarters
NSW Rural Fire Service
15 Carter Street
HOMEBUSH BAY NSW 2127

Facsimile: (02) 8741 5550



**NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

Statement by Commissioner

Pursuant to Section 45F of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 I state that:

- (a) The accompanying financial report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies, the applicable clauses of the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005 and the Treasurer's Directions;
- (b) The financial report exhibits a true and fair view of the financial position and financial performance of the Service for the year ended 30 June 2008; and
- (c) At the date of this statement there are no circumstances which would render any particulars included in the financial report to be misleading or inaccurate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Fitzsimmons', written over a horizontal line.

S Fitzsimmons AFSM
Commissioner



Balance sheet as at 30 June 2008

	Notes	Actual 2008 \$'000	Budget 2008 \$'000	Actual 2007 \$'000
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	8(a)	25,012	14,854	10,506
Receivables	9	4,244	4,503	4,503
Other	10	30	1,993	1,993
Total Current Assets		29,286	21,350	17,002
Non-Current Assets				
Plant and Equipment	11	14,832	16,240	15,840
Intangible assets	12	566	753	753
Total Non-Current Assets		15,398	16,993	16,593
Total Assets		44,684	38,343	33,595
LIABILITIES				
Current Liabilities				
Payables	13	7,716	6,421	6,021
Provisions	14	18,416	16,889	15,842
Total Current Liabilities		26,132	23,310	21,863
Non-Current Liabilities				
Provisions	14	433	1,148	248
Total Non-Current Liabilities		433	1,148	248
Total Liabilities		26,565	24,458	22,111
Net Assets		18,119	13,885	11,484
EQUITY				
Accumulated funds	15	18,119	13,885	11,484
Total Equity		18,119	13,885	11,484

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Operating Statement for the year ended 30 June 2008

	Notes	Actual 2008 \$'000	Budget 2008 \$'000	Actual 2007 \$'000
Expenses excluding losses				
Operating expenses				
Employee related	2(a)	70,177	65,375	59,950
Other operating expenses	2(b)	16,446	13,878	13,904
Depreciation and amortisation	2(c)	4,434	3,500	4,397
Grants and subsidies	2(d)	125,947	138,435	169,454
Finance costs	2(e) 8(b)	239	-	248
Other expenses	2(f)	6,069	5,386	5,341
Total Expenses excluding losses		223,312	226,574	253,294
Revenue				
Sale of goods and services	3(a)	350	-	452
Grants and contributions	3(b)	183,741	172,815	211,547
Other revenue	3(c)	8,948	7,255	10,692
Total Revenue		193,039	180,070	222,691
Gain / (loss) on disposal	4	94	-	(207)
Net Cost of Services	19	30,179	46,504	30,810
Government Contributions				
Recurrent appropriation	5	35,864	48,005	30,607
Capital appropriation	5	900	900	1,500
Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities	6	50	-	40
Total Government Contributions		36,814	48,905	32,147
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		6,635	2,401	1,337

Statement of Recognised Income and Expense for the year ended 30 June 2008

	Notes	Actual 2008 \$'000	Budget 2008 \$'000	Actual 2007 \$'000
TOTAL INCOME AND EXPENSE RECOGNISED DIRECTLY IN EQUITY	-	-	-	-
Surplus for the Year	15	6,635	2,401	1,337
TOTAL INCOME AND EXPENSE RECOGNISED FOR THE YEAR	15	6,635	2,401	1,337



Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 30 June 2008

	Notes	Actual 2008 \$'000	Budget 2008 \$'000	Actual 2007 \$'000
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Payments				
Employee related		(65,107)	(63,519)	(60,854)
Grants and subsidies		(131,213)	(109,468)	(177,492)
Finance costs		(239)	-	(248)
Other		(26,193)	(56,122)	(23,706)
Total Payments		(222,752)	(229,109)	(262,300)
Receipts				
Sale of goods and services		535	-	374
Grants and Contributions		183,820	146,397	211,308
GST Receipts		9,909	-	13,327
Other		9,375	42,055	9,398
Total Receipts		203,639	188,452	234,407
Cash Flows from Government				
Recurrent appropriation		35,864	48,005	30,607
Capital appropriation		900	900	1,500
Cash reimbursements from the Crown Entity		-	-	100
Net Cash Flows from Government		36,764	48,905	32,207
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	19	17,651	8,248	4,314
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Proceeds from sale of Plant and Equipment		3,372	4,980	3,101
Purchases of Plant and Equipment		(6,517)	(8,880)	(7,693)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(3,145)	(3,900)	(4,592)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES				
Proceeds from borrowings and advances	8b	20,000	-	20,000
Repayments of borrowings and advances	8b	(20,000)	-	(20,000)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		-	-	-
NET INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN CASH		14,506	4,348	(278)
Opening cash and cash equivalents		10,506	9,284	10,784
CLOSING CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	8a	25,012	13,632	10,506

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Summary of Compliance with financial directives for the year ended 30 June 2008

	2008			
	RECURRENT APPROPRIATION	EXPENDITURE/ NET CLAIM ON CONSOLIDATED FUND	CAPITAL APPROPRIATION	EXPENDITURE/ NET CLAIM ON CONSOLIDATED FUND
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
ORIGINAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION/EXPENDITURE	48,005	35,864	900	900
• Appropriation Act	48,005	35,864	900	900
OTHER APPROPRIATIONS/EXPENDITURE				
	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriations/Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund (includes transfer payments)	48,005	35,864	900	900
Amount drawn down against Appropriation		35,864		900
Liability to Consolidated Fund		-		-

	2007			
	RECURRENT APPROPRIATION	EXPENDITURE/ NET CLAIM ON CONSOLIDATED FUND	CAPITAL APPROPRIATION	EXPENDITURE/ NET CLAIM ON CONSOLIDATED FUND
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
ORIGINAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION/EXPENDITURE	34,303	30,607	1,500	1,500
• Appropriation Act	34,303	30,607	1,500	1,500
OTHER APPROPRIATIONS/EXPENDITURE				
	-	-	-	-
Total Appropriations/Expenditure/Net Claim on Consolidated Fund (includes transfer payments)	34,303	30,607	1,500	1,500
Amount drawn down against Appropriation		30,607		1,500
Liability to Consolidated Fund		-		-

* The Summary of Compliance is based on the assumption that Consolidated Fund moneys are spent first (except where otherwise identified or prescribed).

Program statement - expenses and revenues for the year ended 30 June 2008

SERVICE'S EXPENSES & REVENUES	Program 1*		Program 2*		Program 3*		Program 4*		Not Attributable		Total	
	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Expenses excluding losses												
Operating expenses												
• Employee related	65,763	56,170	963	859	788	747	2,663	2,174	-	-	70,177	59,950
• Other operating expenses	13,246	10,364	1,056	1,077	1,093	1,123	1,051	1,340	-	-	16,446	13,904
Depreciation and amortisation	4,434	4,397	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,434	4,397
Grants and subsidies	116,572	160,564	-	-	-	-	9,375	8,890	-	-	125,947	169,454
Finance costs	239	248	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	239	248
Other expenses	6,069	5,341	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,069	5,341
Total Expenses excluding losses	206,323	237,084	2,019	1,936	1,881	1,870	13,089	12,404	-	-	223,312	253,294
Revenues												
Sale of goods and services	350	452	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	350	452
Grants and contributions	183,516	211,322	-	-	-	-	225	225	-	-	183,741	211,547
Other revenue	8,118	9,942	-	-	-	-	830	750	-	-	8,948	10,692
Total Revenue	191,984	221,716	-	-	-	-	1,055	975	-	-	193,039	222,691
Gain/(loss) on disposal of non-current assets	94	(207)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	94	(207)
NET COST OF SERVICES	14,245	15,575	2,019	1,936	1,881	1,870	12,034	11,429	-	-	30,179	30,810
Government contributions**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36,814	32,147	36,814	32,147
NET EXPENDITURE/(REVENUE) FOR THE YEAR	14,245	15,575	2,019	1,936	1,881	1,870	12,034	11,429	(36,814)	(32,147)	(6,635)	(1,337)

* The name and purpose of each program is summarised in Note 7

** Appropriations are made on an agency basis and not to individual programs. Consequently, government contributions have been included in the "Not Attributable" column.



1 . Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) Reporting Entity

The NSW Rural Fire Service is a separate reporting entity and there are no reporting entities under its control. The NSW Rural Fire Service is a NSW government department. NSW Rural Fire Service is a not-for-profit entity and it has no cash generating units.

The reporting entity is consolidated as part of the NSW Total State Sector Accounts.

The consolidated financial report for the year ended 30 June 2008 has been authorised for issue by the Commissioner on 17 October 2008.

(b) Basis of Preparation

The Service's financial statements are a general purpose financial report which has been prepared on an accruals basis and in accordance with:

- applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations)
- the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and Regulation; and
- the Financial Reporting Directions published in the Financial Reporting Code for Budget Dependent General Government Sector Agencies or issued by the Treasurer.

Property, plant and equipment are measured at fair value. Other financial statement items are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Judgements, key assumptions and estimations management has made are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

(c) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements and notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards, which include Australian Accounting Interpretations.

(d) Income Recognition

Income is measured at the fair value of the consideration or contribution received or receivable. Additional comments regarding the accounting policies for the recognition of income are discussed below.

(i) Parliamentary Appropriations and Contributions

Parliamentary appropriations and contributions (including grants and donations) are generally recognised as income when the service obtains control over the assets comprising the appropriations / contributions. Control over appropriations and contributions is normally obtained upon the receipt of cash.

An exception to the above is when appropriations are unspent at year-end. In this case, the authority to spend the money lapses and generally the unspent amount must be repaid to

the Consolidated Fund in the following financial year. As a result, unspent appropriations are accounted for as liabilities rather than revenue.

(ii) Sale of Goods

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised as revenue when the Service transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership of assets.

(iii) Rendering of services

Revenue is recognised when the service is provided or by reference to the stage of completion (based on labour hours incurred to date).

(iv) Interest Revenue is retained by Treasury and therefore not recognised in the financial statements.

(e) Employee Benefits and other Provisions

(i) Salaries and Wages, Annual Leave, Sick Leave and On Costs

Liabilities for salaries and wages (including non-monetary benefits), annual leave and paid sick leave that fall due wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised and measured in respect of employees' services up to the reporting date at undiscounted amounts based on the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Unused non-vesting sick leave does not give rise to a liability as it is not considered probable that sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future.

The outstanding amounts of payroll tax, workers' compensation insurance premiums and fringe benefits tax, which are consequential to employment, are recognised as liabilities and expenses where the employee benefits to which they relate have been recognised.

The amount of annual leave is not present valued, however the effect of this would not be material.

(ii) Long Service Leave and Superannuation

The Service recognises liabilities for long service leave for all employees, except for those of the Office for Emergency Services. The liability in relation to the Office for Emergency Services is assumed by the Crown Entity, and the Service accounts for the liability as having been extinguished resulting in the amount assumed being shown as part of the non-monetary revenue item described as "Acceptance by the Crown Entity of Employee Benefits and other Liabilities". Long service leave is measured at present value in accordance with AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*. This is based on the application of certain factors (specified in NSWTC 07/04) to employees with 5 or more years of service, using current rates of pay. These factors were determined based on an actuarial review to approximate present value.

The current provision is based on employees with six or more years of service. The non-current provision is based on the unconditional right to defer settlement of payments for Long



Service Leave and includes employees with five to six years of service. Based on expected cash flows ten percent of the current provision for Long Service Leave has not been discounted because settlement is expected within twelve months of the reporting date.

The superannuation expense for the financial year is determined by using the formula specified in the Treasurer's Directions. The expense for certain superannuation schemes (i.e. Basic Benefit and First State Super) is calculated as a percentage of the employees' salary. For other superannuation schemes (i.e. State Superannuation Scheme and State Authorities Superannuation Scheme), the expense is calculated as a multiple of the employees' superannuation contributions. Actuarial gains and losses on defined benefits superannuation plans are recognised in the operating statement in the year they occur.

(iii) Other Provisions

Other provisions exist when: the Service has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

(f) Borrowing Costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenses in the period in which they are incurred, in accordance with treasury's mandate to general government sector agencies.

(g) Insurance

The Service's insurance activities are conducted through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund Scheme of self insurance for Government agencies. The expense (premium) is determined by the Fund Manager based on past experience.

(h) Accounting for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except:

- the amount of GST incurred by the Service as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of an asset or as part of an item of expense.
- receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.
- Cash flows are included in the cash flow statement on a gross basis.

However, the GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the Australian Taxation Office are classified as operating cash flows.

(i) Acquisitions of Assets

The cost method of accounting is used for the initial recording of all acquisitions of assets controlled by the Service. Cost is the amount of cash or cash equivalents paid or the fair value of the other consideration given to acquire the asset at the time of its acquisition or construction or, where applicable, the amount

attributed to that asset when initially recognised in accordance with the specific requirements of other Australian Accounting Standards.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised at their fair value at the date of acquisition.

Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

Where payment for an item is deferred beyond normal credit terms, its cost is the cash equivalent, i.e. the deferred payment amount is effectively discounted at an asset-specific rate.

Plant and equipment and intangible assets costing \$5,000 and above individually (or forming a part of a network costing more than \$5,000) are capitalised.

(j) Revaluation of Plant and Equipment

The Service does not revalue assets because the carrying value approximates fair value. The plant and equipment of the Service consists primarily of motor vehicles and ICT equipment items.

(k) Impairment of Plant and Equipment

As a not-for-profit entity with no cash generating units, the Service is effectively exempted from AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* and impairment testing. This is because AASB 136 modifies the recoverable amount test to the higher of fair value less costs to sell and depreciated replacement costs. This means that, for an asset already measured at fair value, the impairment can only arise if selling costs are material. Selling costs are regarded as immaterial.

(l) Depreciation of Plant and Equipment

Depreciation is provided for on a straight line basis for all depreciable assets so as to write off the depreciable amount of each asset as it is consumed over its useful life to the entity. In accordance with AASB 116; Plant and Equipment are depreciated at the rate of 20%, computer equipment at 33.3% per annum. The leasehold improvements (fitout) are depreciated over the period of the lease.

All materially separately identifiable components of assets are depreciated over their shorter useful life.

(m) Maintenance

The costs of day-to-day servicing costs or maintenance are charged as expenses as incurred, except where they relate to the replacement of a component of an asset, in which case the costs are capitalised and depreciated.

(n) Leased Assets

A distinction is made between finance leases which effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to ownership of the leased assets, and operating leases under which the lessor effectively retains all such risks and benefits.

1 . Summary of significant accounting policies cont'd

Operating lease payments are charged to the Operating Statement in the periods in which they are incurred there are no finance lease arrangements.

(o) Intangible Assets

The Service recognises intangible assets only if it probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Service and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Where an asset is acquired at no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value as at the date of acquisition.

The Service's intangible assets are amortised using the straight line method over a period of three years for Computer Software. As a not-for-profit entity with no cash generating units, the Service is effectively exempted from impairment testing.

(p) Rural Fire Fighting Equipment

The ownership of all fire fighting equipment purchased by the Rural Fire Fighting Fund is vested in the relevant local government council. The cost of such equipment is, therefore, expensed by the Service in the year of purchase.

(q) Funding NSW Rural Fire Service

Under the Rural Fires Act 1997 the contribution from Local Government is 13.3%, NSW Treasury 13% and the Insurance Industry 73.7%.

	2008 \$(M)		2007 \$(M)	
Local Government	13.3%	26.4	13.3%	22.4
Insurance Industry	73.7%	146.4	73.7%	123.9
NSW Treasury	13.0%	25.8	13.0%	21.9

Contributions are recognised on an accruals basis.

(r) Loans and Receivables

Loans and Receivables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Short-term receivables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial. An allowance for impairment is established when there is objective evidence that the Service will not be able to collect all amounts due.

(s) Other Assets

Other assets are recognised on a cost basis.

(t) Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the service and other amounts including interest. Payables are recognised initially at fair value, usually based on the transaction cost or face value. Short term payables with no stated interest rate are measured at the original invoice amount where the effect of discounting is immaterial.

(u) Budgeted amounts

The budgeted amounts are drawn from the budgets as formulated at the beginning of the financial year and with any adjustments for the effects of additional appropriations, s 21A, s 24 and/or s 26 of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*.

The budgeted amounts in the Operating Statement and the Cash Flow Statement are generally based on the amounts disclosed in the NSW Budget Papers (as adjusted above). However, in the Balance Sheet, the amounts vary from the Budget Papers, as the opening balances of the budgeted amounts are based on carried forward actual amounts i.e. per the audited financial report (rather than carried forward estimates).

(v) New Australian Accounting Standards issued but not effective

At the reporting date, a number of Accounting Standards adopted by the AASB had been issued but are not yet operative and have not been early adopted. The following is a list of these standards:

AASB 3 (March 2008) AASB 127 and AASB 2008-3
AASB 8 and AASB 2007-3
AASB 101 (Sept 2007) and AASB 2007-8
AASB 123 and AASB 2007-6
AASB 1004 (Dec 2007)
AASB 1049 AASB 1050 AASB 1051 AASB 1052
AASB 2007-9 AASB 2008-1 AASB 2008-2

The initial application of these standards will have no impact on the financial results.



2. Expenses excluding losses

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(a) Employee related expenses		
Salaries and wages (including recreation leave)	56,035	51,636
Superannuation –defined benefit plans	3,275	632
Superannuation- defined contribution plans	4,968	3,090
Long service leave	1,939	819
Workers' compensation insurance	437	639
Payroll tax	3,523	3,134
	70,177	59,950

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(b) Other operating expenses		
Auditor's remuneration		
- audit of the financial report	89	71
Operating lease rental expense		
- minimum lease payments	2,607	3,478
Maintenance	573	512
Travel	1,172	1,221
Telephones	911	972
Fees for Service	1,290	956
Printing and stationery	1,201	1,171
Consumables	252	245
Vehicle operation	764	523
All outgoing – Buildings	459	584
Projects	3,033	1,753
Staff Training	530	443
Legal Fees	380	122
Rescue and Emergency Training	288	184
Other expenses	2,897	1,669
	16,446	13,904

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(c) Depreciation and amortisation expense		
Depreciation		
Computer equipment	803	861
Plant and equipment	2,863	2,970
Fitouts	476	476
	4,142	4,307
Amortisation		
Intangibles	292	90
	4,434	4,397

2 . Expenses including losses cont'd

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(d) Grants and Subsidies		
Natural Disaster Mitigation Program	7,938	6,752
Volunteer Rescue Units	1,437	1,376
Regional Fire Associations	5,088	1,316
Payments for Council costs associated with		
Rural Fire Fighting activities and equipment	87,141	87,599
Emergency Fund – Natural Disasters	24,243	72,316
Other	100	95
	125,947	169,454

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(e) Finance costs		
Interest on short-term borrowings	239	248
	239	248

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(f) Other Expenses		
Workers' compensation insurance-volunteers	2,012	2,002
Public liability and other insurance	2,256	1,636
Aerial support	1,801	1,703
	6,069	5,341



3. Revenues

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(a) Sale of goods and services		
Rendering of services	350	452
	350	452

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(b) Grants and contributions		
New South Wales Fire Brigades	225	225
Insurance Company Contributions	146,397	123,924
Local Government Contributions	26,418	22,363
*Natural Disaster Welfare Relief	10,701	65,035
	183,741	211,547

* Natural Disasters Welfare Relief is restricted to emergencies that are declared under Section 44 of the Rural Fires Act.

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(c) Other revenue		
Sale of equipment	572	264
Superannuation- Defined benefit plans	-	1,173
Comcover	414	410
Business Development-Overseas Training	440	20
Section 44 –Interstate	486	544
Aviation-Use of contract by other agencies	3,941	5,356
Office for Emergency Services	1,055	372
Communications-contribution for shared networks	-	105
Other	2,040	2,448
	8,948	10,692

In accordance with Section 119(4)(b) of the Rural Fires Act, distribution of proceeds from the sale by Councils of fire fighting equipment between the Service and the Councils is in the same proportion to each body's contribution to the purchase of equipment as shown above. The Service's share of such proceeds totalled \$ 571,863 (\$263,538 in 2006/7).

4. Gain / (Loss) on disposal

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Gain / (Loss) on disposal of Plant and Equipment	3,372	3,101
Proceeds from disposal	(3,278)	(3,308)
Written down value of assets disposed	94	(207)

5. Appropriations

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Recurrent Appropriations		
Total recurrent draw-downs from Treasury (per Summary of Compliance)	35,864	30,607
Comprising: Recurrent appropriations (per Operating Statement)	35,864	30,607

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Capital Appropriations		
Total recurrent draw-downs for Treasury (the Summary of Compliance)	900	1,500
Comprising: Capital appropriations (per Operating Statement)	900	1,500

6. Acceptance by the crown entity of employee benefits and other liabilities

The following expenses have been assumed by the Crown Entity

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Long service leave	50	40

Also refer to Note 1(e) (ii)

7. Programs / activities of the service

- (a) **Program 1** Funding and administration of Rural Firefighting Services
Objectives: To promote effective rural firefighting services within the State, including the co-ordination of bush fire fighting and prevention activities.
- (b) **Program 2** Training of Volunteer Bush Fire Fighters
Objectives: To facilitate and promote the training of bush fire fighters.
- (c) **Program 3** Public Education and Information Services
Objectives: To promote community awareness of bush fire issues and generally educate the community in bush fire prevention, protection and safety.
- (d) **Program 4** Planning and Co-ordination of Rescue Services and Emergency Management
Objectives: To ensure the provision of comprehensive, balanced and co-ordinated rescue services and emergency management throughout New South Wales.



8. Current assets - cash and equivalents

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
(a) Cash and cash equivalents	25,012	10,506
Cash at bank and on hand	25,012	10,506

For the purpose of the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents include cash at bank, cash on hand, short-term deposits and bank overdraft. Cash and cash equivalent assets recognised in the Balance Sheet are reconciled at the end of the financial year to the Cash Flow Statements as follows:

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Cash and cash equivalents (per Balance Sheet)	25,012	10,506
Closing cash and cash equivalents (per Cash Flow Statements)	25,012	10,506

9. Current assets - receivables

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Current Assets		
Grants and contributions	246	327
Less: Allowance for impairment	-	2
	246	325
Other		
Sundry Debtors	2,230	2,049
GST	1,271	1,670
	3,501	3,719
Prepayments	497	459
	4,244	4,503

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Movement in the allowance for impairment		
Balance at 1 July	2	2
Amounts written off during the year	-	-
Amounts recovered during the year	(2)	-
Increase (decrease) in allowance recognised in profit or loss	-	-
Balance at 30 June	-	2

Details regarding credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk, including financial assets that are either past or impaired, are disclosed in note 21.

10. Current assets - other

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Over funded Superannuation (refer note 23)	30	1,993
	30	1,993

11. Non-current assets - plant and equipment

	Computer Equipment \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Leasehold Improvements (Fitouts) \$'000	Total \$'000
At 1 July 2007- Fair Value				
Gross Carrying Amount	3,759	16,295	4,768	24,822
Accumulated Depreciation	2,499	5,130	1,353	8,982
Net Carrying Amount	1,260	11,165	3,415	15,840
At 30 June 2008 – Fair Value				
Gross Carrying Amount	3,412	15,886	4,768	24,066
Accumulated Depreciation	2,342	5,063	1,829	9,234
Net Carrying Amount	1,070	10,823	2,939	14,832

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below.

	Computer Equipment \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Leasehold Improvements (Fitouts) \$'000	Total \$'000
Year ended 30 June 2008				
Net Carrying amount at start of year	1,260	11,165	3,415	15,840
Additions	695	5,679	-	6,374
Disposals	82	3,158	-	3,240
Depreciation expense	803	2,863	476	4,142
Net Carrying amount at end of year	1,070	10,823	2939	14,832

	Computer Equipment \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Leasehold Improvements (Fitouts) \$'000	Total \$'000
At 1 July 2006- Fair Value				
Gross Carrying Amount	3,621	15,045	4,768	23,434
Accumulated Depreciation	1,671	4,383	877	6,931
Net Carrying Amount	1,950	10,662	3,891	16,503
At 30 June 2007 – Fair Value				
Gross Carrying Amount	3,759	16,295	4,768	24,822
Accumulated Depreciation	2,499	5,130	1,353	8,982
Net Carrying Amount	1,260	11,165	3,415	15,840

Reconciliations

Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of plant and equipment at the beginning and end of the 2006/07 financial year are set out below.

	Computer Equipment \$'000	Plant and Equipment \$'000	Leasehold Improvements (Fitouts) \$'000	Total \$'000
Year ended 30 June 2008				
Net Carrying amount at start of year	1,950	10,662	3,891	16,503
Additions	171	6,782	-	6,953
Disposals	-	3,309	-	3,240
Depreciation expense	861	2,970	476	4,307
Net Carrying amount at end of year	1,260	11,165	3415	15,840



12. Non-current assets - intangible assets

	Software \$'000	Total \$'000
At 1 July 2007		
Cost (gross carrying amount)	892	892
Accumulated amortisation	139	139
Net Carrying Amount	753	753
At 30 June 2008		
Cost (gross carrying amount)	997	997
Accumulated amortisation	431	431
Net Carrying Amount	566	566

	Software \$'000	Total \$'000
Year ended 30 June 2008		
Net Carrying amount at start of year	753	753
Additions	143	143
Disposals	38	38
Amortisation (recognised in 'depreciation and amortisation')	292	292
Net Carrying amount at end of year	566	566

	Software \$'000	Total \$'000
At 1 July 2006		
Cost (gross carrying amount)	118	118
Accumulated amortisation	16	16
Net Carrying Amount	102	102
At 30 June 2007		
Cost (gross carrying amount)	892	892
Accumulated amortisation	139	139
Net Carrying Amount	753	753

	Software \$'000	Total \$'000
Year ended 30 June 2007		
Net Carrying amount at start of year	102	102
Additions	740	740
Amortisation (recognised in 'depreciation and amortisation')	89	89
Net Carrying amount at end of year	753	753

13. Current liabilities - payables

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs	1,141	560
Other operating expenses	959	2,047
Grants and subsidies	5,232	3,414
Other	384	-
	7,716	6,021

14. Current / non current liabilities - provisions

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Employee benefits and related on-costs		
Recreation leave	6,208	5,735
Long Service Leave	12,208	10,353
Payroll Tax	-	2
Unfunded Superannuation (refer note 23)	433	-
Total Provisions	18,849	16,090

In accordance with AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements* liabilities are classified as current where NSW Rural Fire Service does not have an unconditional right to defer the settlement of a liability for at least twelve months after the reporting date.

Notwithstanding this, it is estimated that the liabilities will be settled within the following periods:

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Aggregate employee benefits and related On-costs		
Provisions- payments expected within one year	1,841	1,584
Provisions- payments expected later than one year	17,008	14,506
Accrued salaries, wages and on-costs (Note 13)	1,141	560
	19,990	16,650



15. Changes in equity

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Accumulated Funds		
Balance at beginning of the financial year	11,484	10,147
Changes in equity – other than transactions with owners as owners		
Surplus for the year	6,635	1,337
Balance at end of financial year	18,119	11,484

There were no transactions with owners as owners

16. Commitments for expenditure

(a) Other expenditure commitments

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Aggregate other expenditure for the acquisition of equipment contracted for at balance date and not provided for:		
Not later than one year (including GST)	44,267	28,904
	44,267	28,904

The Service includes as commitments all outstanding amounts identified in councils' estimates for specific projects that are not at this stage completed. Whilst some of these are covered by contractual obligations and/or unfulfilled purchase orders, others relate to circumstances where contractual obligations have not been formalised. The Service did not have open orders at balance date.

Other Expenditure Commitments include input tax credits of \$1,031,455 (\$641,435 in 2006/2007) that are expected to be recoverable from the ATO.

(b) Operating lease commitments

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Future non-cancellable operating lease rentals not provided for and payable:		
Not later than one year	2,372	2,032
Later than one year but not later than five years	9,151	9,864
Later than five years	4,875	6,576
Total (including GST)	16,398	18,472

Operating lease commitments comprise motor vehicles, information technology equipment and premises for Head Office and Regional Offices.

17. Contingent liabilities and contingent assets

At balance date the Service had no contingent liabilities or assets.

18. Budget review

Net Cost of Services

The actual net cost of services was favourable by \$16.325M. This variation relates primarily to a favourable situation with Grants and Subsidies (Natural Disaster Mitigation Program) and other Revenue. Expenditure on the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program was delayed and not completed at 30 June 2008.

Current Assets

Current Assets were \$9.899M over budget. The increase relates primarily to the cash and cash equivalents on 30 June 2008 and are partly attributable to the favourable situation in relation to Grants and Subsidies expenditure.

Non-Current Assets

Non- Current Assets were below budget by \$3.558M due to expenditure on motor vehicle replacement being favourable.

Current Liabilities

Current Liabilities were \$2.822M over budget due to higher than anticipated Long Service Leave and Recreation Leave provisions. These expenditures relate to extra staff being entitled to long service leave and also increases in general salary rates.

Non-Current Liabilities

Non- Current Liabilities were \$0.715M below budget due to Superannuation liability.

Cash Flows

Total payments were below budget by \$6.357M primarily due to a decrease in grants and subsidies payments and in particular the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program where expenditure was delayed on various programs during the financial year.

Total receipts were \$15.187M in excess of budget due to recoups from Treasury as a result of increased Section 44 payments listed above and GST receipts.

19. Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to net cost of services

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Net cash flows from operating activities	17,651	4,314
Cash Flows from Government	(36,764)	(32,107)
Acceptance by the Crown Entity of employee benefits and other liabilities	(50)	(40)
Depreciation	(4,434)	(4,397)
Decrease/(increase) in provisions	(2,759)	152
Increase/(decrease) in prepayments and other assets	(2,222)	2,755
(Increase)/decrease in creditors	(1,695)	(1,280)
Net (loss)/gain on sale of plant and equipment	94	(207)
Net cost of services	(30,179)	(30,810)

20. Non-cash financing and investment activities

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Long service leave liability assumed by Crown Entity	50	40
	50	40

21. Financial instruments

The Department's principal financial instruments are outlined below. These financial instruments arise directly from the Department's operations or are required to finance the Department's operations. The Department does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments, for speculative purposes.

The Department's main risks arising from financial instruments are outlined below, together with the Department's objectives, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk. Further quantitative disclosures are included throughout this financial report.

The Audit Committee has overall responsibility for the establishment and oversight of risk management and reviews and agrees policies for managing each of these risks. Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced by the Department, to set risk limits and controls and to monitor risks. Compliance with policies is reviewed by the (Internal Auditors) on a continuous basis.

(a) Financial Instrument categories

Financial Assets	Note	Category	Carrying Amount	Carrying Amount
			2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Class				
Cash and Cash equivalents	8	N/A	25,012	10,506
Receivables	9	Loans and receivables (at amortised cost)	2,476	2,374
Financial Liabilities	Note	Category	Carrying Amount	Carrying Amount
			2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Class				
Payables	13	Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	7,716	6,021

Notes

1. Excludes statutory receivables and prepayments (i.e. not within scope of AASB 7).
2. Excludes statutory payables and unearned revenue (i.e. not within scope of AASB 7).



21. Financial instruments cont'd

(b) Credit risk

Credit risk arises when there is the possibility of the Department's debtors defaulting on their contractual obligations, resulting in a financial loss to the Department. The maximum exposure to credit risk is generally represented by the carrying amount of the financial assets (net of any allowance for impairment).

Credit risk arises from the financial assets of the Department, including cash, receivables, and authority deposits. No collateral is held by the Department. The department has not granted any financial guarantees.

Cash

Cash comprises cash on hand and bank balances within the NSW Treasury Banking System. Interest is earned on daily bank balances at the monthly average NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) 11am unofficial cash rate, adjusted for a management fee to NSW Treasury.

Receivables- trade debtors

All trade debtors are recognised as amounts receivable at balance date. Collectibility of trade debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Procedures as established in the Treasurer's Directions are followed to recover outstanding amounts, including letters of demand. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. An allowance for impairment is raised when there is objective evidence that the entity will not be able to collect all amounts due. This evidence includes past experience, and current and expected changes in economic conditions and debtor credit ratings. No interest is earned on trade debtors. Sales are made on 30 day terms.

The Department is not materially exposed to concentrations of credit risk to a single trade debtor or group of debtors. Based on past experience, debtors that are not past due are not considered impaired. There are no debtors which are currently not past due or impaired whose terms have been renegotiated.

The only financial assets that are past due or impaired are 'grants and contributions and sundry debtors' in the 'receivables' category of the balance sheet.

\$'000			
	Total ^{1,2}	Past due but not impaired ^{1,2}	Considered impaired ^{1,2}
2008			
< 3 months overdue	1,671	1,671	-
3 months – 6 months overdue	139	139	-
> 6 months overdue	666	666	-
2007			
< 3 months overdue	1,424	1,424	-
3 months – 6 months overdue	532	532	-
> 6 months overdue	418	418	-

Notes

- Each column in the table reports 'gross receivables'.
- The ageing analysis excludes statutory receivables, as these are not within the scope of AASB 7 and excludes receivables that are not past due and not impaired. Therefore, the 'total' will not reconcile to the receivables total recognised in the balance sheet.

(c) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Department will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due. The Department continuously manages risk through monitoring future cash flows and maturities planning to ensure adequate holding of high quality liquid assets. The objective is to maintain a balance between continuity of funding and flexibility through the use of overdrafts, loans and other advances.

During the current and prior years, there were no defaults or breaches on any loans payable. No assets have been pledged as collateral. The Department's exposure to liquidity risk is deemed insignificant based on prior period's data and current assessment of risk.

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods or services received, whether or not invoiced. Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in Treasurer's Direction 219.01. If trade terms are not specified, payment is made no later than the end of the month following the month in which an invoice or a statement is received. Treasurer's Direction 219.01 allows the Minister to award interest for late payment.

22. Consultancies

Consultancy fees paid for the year totalled \$1,429,551 (\$1,142,423 in 2006-07).

23. Superannuation - defined benefit plans

Funded Information

The Pooled Fund holds in trust the investments of the closed NSW public sector superannuation schemes:

- State Superannuation Scheme (SSS);
- State Authorities Superannuation Scheme (SASS);
- State Authorities Non Contributory Superannuation Scheme (SANCS);
- Public Sector Executives Superannuation Scheme;
- Local Government Employees Superannuation Scheme.

These schemes are all defined benefit schemes – at least a component of the final benefit is derived from a multiple of member salary and years of membership. All the schemes are closed to members.

Reconciliation of the Present value of the Defined Benefit Obligations

A reconciliation of the present value of the defined benefit obligation for the financial year to 30 June 2008 is as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Present value of partly funded defined benefit obligations at beginning of the year	6,613	1,646	19,804	28,063
Current service cost	289	89	171	549
Interest cost	409	100	1,247	1,756
Contributions by fund participants	160	-	212	372
Actuarial (gains)/losses	(240)	(45)	(929)	(1,214)
Benefits paid	(314)	(107)	(909)	(1,330)
Present value of partly funded defined benefit obligations at end of the year	6,917	1,683	19,596	28,196

Comparative information as at 30 June 2007 as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Present value of partly funded defined benefit obligations at beginning of the year	5,764	1,599	19,797	27,130
Current service cost	284	93	159	536
Interest cost	331	90	1,156	1,577
Contributions by fund participants	156	-	203	359
Actuarial (gains)/losses	409	34	(965)	(522)
Benefits paid	(331)	(170)	(517)	(1,018)
Present value of partly funded defined benefit obligations at end of the year	6,613	1,646	19,803	28,062



23. Superannuation - defined benefit plans cont'd.

Reconciliation of the Fair Value of Fund Assets

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Fair value of fund assets at beginning of the year	6,877	1,836	21,343	30,056
Expected return on fund assets	522	144	1,658	2,324
Actuarial gains (losses)	(809)	(261)	(3,275)	(4,345)
Employer contributions	325	103	288	716
Contributions by Fund participants	161	-	212	373
Benefits paid	(314)	(107)	(909)	(1,330)
Fair value of fund assets at end of the year	6,762	1,715	19,317	27,794

Comparative information as at 30 June 2007 as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Fair value of fund assets at beginning of the year	5,751	1,674	18,801	26,226
Expected return on fund assets	437	126	1,427	1,990
Actuarial gains (losses)	559	102	1,113	1,774
Employer contributions	305	103	316	724
Contributions by Fund participants	156	-	203	359
Benefits paid	(331)	(170)	(517)	(1,018)
Fair value of fund assets at end of the year	6,877	1,835	21,343	30,055

Reconciliation of Assets and Liabilities

A summary of assets and liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2008 is as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Present value of partly funded defined benefits obligations	6,917	1,683	19,596	28,196
Fair value of fund assets at end of year	(6,762)	(1,713)	(19,318)	(27,793)
Subtotal	155	(30)	278	403
Net liability (asset)	155	(30)	278	403

Comparative information as at 30 June 2007 as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Present value of partly funded defined benefits obligations	6,613	1,646	19,803	28,062
Fair value of fund assets at end of year	(6,877)	(1,835)	(21,343)	(30,055)
Subtotal	(264)	(189)	(1,540)	(1,993)
Net liability (asset)	(264)	(189)	(1,540)	(1,993)

23. Superannuation - defined benefit plans cont'd

A summary of actual return on fund assets for the year ended 30 June 2008 is provided below:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Actual return on plan assets	(456)	(117)	(1,391)	(1,964)

A summary of actual return on fund assets for the year ended 30 June 2007 is provided below:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Actual return on plan assets	833	229	2,772	3,834

Details of valuation method and principal actuarial assumptions as at the reporting date are as follows:

a) Valuation Method

The Projected Unit Credit (PUC) valuation method was used to determine the present value of the defined benefit obligations and the related current service costs. This method sees each period of service as giving rise to an additional unit of benefit entitlement and measures each unit separately to build up the final obligation.

b) Economic Assumptions

	30 June 2008	30 June 2007
Salary increase rate (excluding promotional increases)	3.5%	4.0% per annum to June 2008 3.5% per annum thereafter
Rate of CPI Increase	2.5%	2.5% per annum
Expected return on assets	8.3%	7.6% per annum
Discount rate	6.6%	6.4% per annum

Historical Information

	SASS Financial Year to 30 June 2008 A\$	SANCS Financial Year to 30 June 2008 A\$	SSS Financial Year to 30 June 2008 A\$
Present value of defined benefit Obligation	6,917,235	1,683,307	19,596,248
Fair value of Fund assets	(6,761,518)	(1,713,986)	(19,318,039)
(Surplus) Deficit in Fund	155,717	(30,679)	278,209
Experience adjustments-Fund Liabilities	(240,243)	(45,488)	(928,466)
Experience adjustments – Fund assets	808,803	260,735	3,275,411



23. Superannuation - defined benefit plans cont'd

Expense recognised in Operating Statement

Total expense recognised in Operating Statements for the year ended 30 June 2008 is summarised below:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Current service cost	289	89	171	549
Interest cost	409	100	1,247	1,756
Expected return on fund assets (net of expenses)	(522)	(144)	(1,658)	(2,324)
Actuarial losses/(gains) recognised in year	569	215	2,347	3,131
Expenses/(income) recognised	745	260	2,107	3,112

Comparative information as at 30 June 2007 is as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Current service cost	284	93	159	536
Interest cost	331	90	1,156	1,577
Expected return on fund assets (net of expenses)	(437)	(126)	(1,427)	(1,990)
Actuarial losses/(gains) recognised in year	(150)	(68)	(2,078)	(2,296)
Expenses/(income) recognised	28	(11)	(2,190)	(2,173)

Fund Assets

The percentage invested in each asset class at the Balance sheet date:

	30 June 2008	30 June 2007
Australian equities	31.6%	33.6%
Overseas equities	25.4%	26.5%
Australian fixed interest securities	7.4%	6.8%
Overseas fixed interest securities	7.5%	6.4%
Property	11.0%	10.1%
Cash	6.1%	9.8%
Other	11.0%	6.8%

Fair value of Fund Assets

All fund assets are invested by Superannuation Trustee Corporation at arm's length through Independent fund managers.

Expected Rate of Return on Assets

The expected return on assets assumption is determined by weighting the expected long – term return for each asset class by the target allocation of assets to each class. The returns used for each class are net of investment tax and investment fees.

	SASS Financial Year to 30 June 2008 A\$	SANCS Financial Year to 30 June 2008 A\$	SSS Financial Year to 30 June 2008 A\$
Expected employer contributions	305,055	103,843	339,512

22. Superannuation - defined benefit plans cont'd

Funding Arrangements for Employer Contributions

a) Surplus/Deficit

The following is a summary of the 30 June 2008 financial position of the Fund calculated in accordance with AAS 25 -Financial Reporting by Superannuation Plans.

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Accrued benefits	6,920	1,692	17,903	26,515
Net market value of Fund assets	(6,761)	(1,714)	(19,318)	(27,793)
Net (surplus)/deficit	159	(22)	(1,415)	(1,278)

Comparative information as at 30 June 2007 is as follows:

	SASS \$'000	SANCS \$'000	SSS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Accrued benefits	6,551	1,629	17,754	25,934
Net market value of Fund assets	(6,877)	(1,835)	(21,343)	(30,055)
Net (surplus)/deficit	(326)	(206)	(3,589)	(4,121)

b) Contribution recommendations

Recommended contribution rates for the Service as at 30 June 2008 are:

SASS	SANCS	SSS
multiple of member contributions	% member salary	multiple of member contributions
1.90	2.50	1.60

Comparative figures as at 30 June 2007 are as follows:

SASS	SANCS	SSS
multiple of member contributions	% member salary	multiple of member contributions
1.90	2.50	1.60

c) Funding Method

The method used to determine the employer contribution recommendations at the last actuarial review was the *Aggregate Funding method*. The method adopted affects the timing of the cost to the employer.

Under the Aggregate Funding method, the employer contribution rate is determined so that sufficient assets will be available to meet benefit payments to existing members, taking into account the current value of assets and future contributions.



22. Superannuation - defined benefit plans cont'd

d) Economic Assumptions

The economic assumptions adopted for the last actuarial review of the Fund were:

	30 June 2008	30 June 2007
Weighted-Average Assumptions		
Expected rate of return on Fund assets backing current pension liabilities	7.7%	7.7% per annum
Expected rate of return on Fund assets backing other liabilities	7.0%	7.0% per annum
Expected salary increase rate	4.0%	4.0% per annum
Expected rate of CPI increase	2.5%	2.5% per annum

Nature of Asset/Liability

If a surplus exists in the employer's interest in the fund, the employer may be able to take advantage of it in the form of a reduction in the required contribution rate, depending on the advice of the Fund's actuary.

Where a deficiency exists, the employer is responsible for any difference between the employer's share of fund assets and the defined benefit obligation.

The Local Government Superannuation Scheme – Year ended 30 June 2008

The Local Government Superannuation Scheme- Pool B (the Scheme) is a defined benefit plan that has been deemed to be a "multi-employer fund" for the purposes of AASB 119. Sufficient information is not available to account for the Scheme as a defined benefit plan, because the assets to the Scheme are pooled together for all Councils. The last valuation of the Scheme was performed by Mr Martin Stevenson BSc, FIA, FIAA on 19 June 2007 and covers the period ended 30 June 2006. This valuation found that the Scheme's assets were \$3,291.1 million and its past service liabilities \$2,980.3 million, giving it a surplus of \$310.8 million. The existence of this surplus has resulted in employers contributing in 2007/2008 at half the normal level of contributions. The financial position is monitored annually, and as a result of subsequent investment market conditions the Service will be required to contribute at the full notional contribution rate from 1 July 2008.

The Local Government Superannuation Scheme – Year ended 30 June 2007

The Local Government Superannuation Scheme- Pool B (the Scheme) is a defined benefit plan that has been deemed to be a "multi-employer fund" for the purposes of AASB 119. Sufficient information is not available to account for the Scheme as a defined benefit plan, because the assets to the Scheme are pooled together for all Councils. The amount of employer contributions recognised as an expense for the year ended 30 June 2007 was \$283,869. The last valuation of the Scheme was performed by Mr Martin Stevenson BSc, FIA, FIAA on 19 June 2007 and covers the period ended 30 June 2006. This valuation found that the Scheme's assets were \$3,291.1 million and its past service liabilities \$2,980.3 million, giving it a surplus of \$310.8 million. The existence of this surplus has resulted in employers contributing in 2006/2007 at half the normal level of contributions. The financial position is monitored annually.

24 . AFTER BALANCE DATE EVENTS

There are no events which occurred after balance day which effect the financial statements.

End of audited financial statements

Appendices.



Organisation Chart

Chaplaincy and Family Support Network

Hazard Reduction

Bush Fire Risk Management Plans –
Performance Audits

Review of Use of Credit Cards

Equal Opportunity Statistics

Staff Establishment

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Allocations to Councils – by Region

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Current Publications

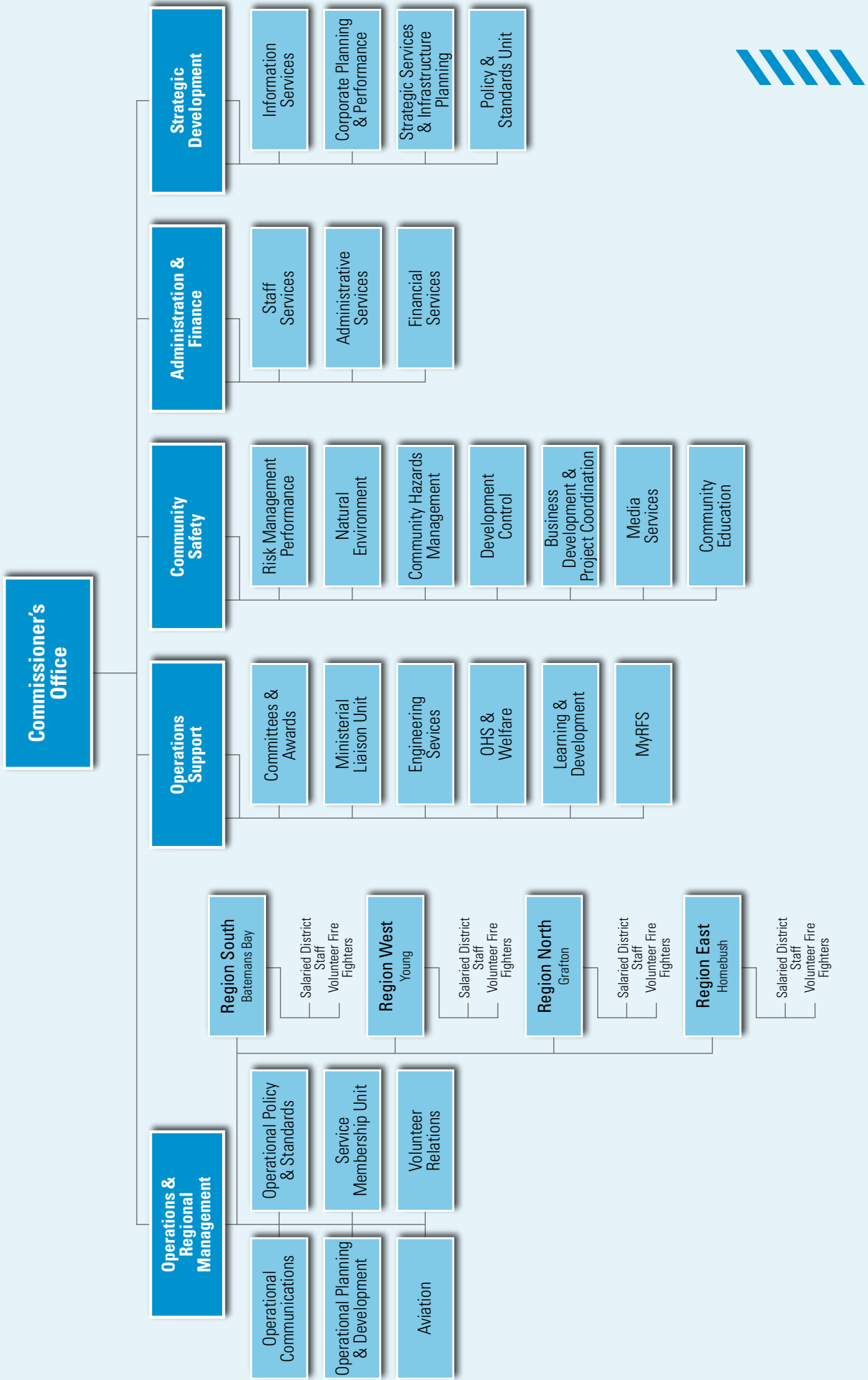
Statement of Performance of Commissioner

Committees

International Travel

Glossary

Appendix A.
Organisational chart



Appendix B.

Chaplaincy and family support network activity report - June 30, 2008

Col "A" Chaplaincy Activity	Col "B" Totals Carried Forward January 1997 - June 30, 2007	Col "C" Totals Senior Chaplain & Senior Family Support Chaplain 2007/08	Col "D" Totals 46 Volunteer Fire District Chaplains & Family Support Volunteers 2007/08	Col "E" Totals January 1997 - June 30, 2008
"A"	"B"	"C"	"D"	"E"
Visits to RFS Headquarters	1858	197	5	2060
Visits to Fire Control Centres	4598	78	521	5197
Visits with Fire Control Officers	5180	64	226	5470
Visits to Rural Fire Brigades	3948	58	187	4193
Regional Conferences	57	2	2	61
State Management Conferences	10	1	0	11
Brigade Captains Meetings	877	17	86	980
Seminars & Conferences	224	9	17	250
Station Openings & Dedications	193	3	9	205
Fire Fleet Blessings & Services	365	9	14	388
Personal & Family Counselling	3914	46	617	4577
Telephone Support & Counselling	3229	221	428	3878
Home Visits-Members & Family	4237	96	521	4854
Hospital Visitation-Members	1450	41	152	1643
Funeral Services Conducted	400	9	17	426
Infant Christenings/Dedications	336	21	21	378
Service Weddings	194	4	11	209
Rural Fire Service Callouts	2161	23	69	2253
Police Service Callouts	118	4	7	129
NSW Fire Brigades Callouts	94	0	5	99
NSW Parks and Wildlife Callouts	43	9	0	52
Salvo Care Line Callouts	149	13	0	162
Respond to Actual Suicides	53	1	3	57
Championship & Field Days	134	3	5	142
Critical Incident Support	171	7	5	183
Work Cover and other RFS Meetings	263	39	24	326
Total Kilometres Travelled	758088	*34320	31753	824161
*Salvation Army Supplied Vehicle KLM		6449		



Appendix C.

Bush fire community protection report

1. Bush Fire Community Protection - Properties protected report.

	Number of works planned or proposed #	Number of works completed #	Proportion of works completed v's planned %	Number of properties covered by completed works (1) #	Value of properties covered by completed works (2) \$'m
TOTAL BUSH FIRE PROTECTION WORKS	20,919	18,174	86.9%	185,094	\$92,107.8
Total programmed hazard reduction works	5,053	2,936	58.1%	74,605	\$32,826.2
Bush Fire hazard complaints	2,021	1,962	97.1%	3,728	\$1,640.3
Private land hazard reduction certificate	2,015	1,999	99.2%	2,635	\$1,159.4
Development control assessments	8,978	8,898	99.1%	58,980	\$36,617.7
Community education programs	2,852	2,379	83.4%	45,146	\$19,864.2

1. Some of the 'Number of properties covered by completed works' and 'Value of properties covered by completed works' have been derived, all other figures are sourced from the Bush fire Risk Management Information System (BRIMS) on 6th October 2008.

2. The value of properties protected is based on median insurance house & content value in Sydney 2004 - (McAneney K.J. 2005) .

1a. Completed hazard reduction works summary by tenure.

	Burning (hectares)	Mechanical (hectares)	Other (hectares)	Total (1) (hectares)
Catchment Authority	1,692.01	13.21	-	1,705.22
Commonwealth	251.00	1.20	-	252.20
Department of Lands	1,826.52	676.32	-	2,502.84
Local Government	1,162.97	8,715.40	585.48	10,463.85
National Park	48,496.91	1,016.84	0.03	49,513.78
Other (1)	91.61	13.27	-	104.88
Private	13,958.42	7,633.04	64.06	21,655.52
RailCorp	-	816.56	-	816.56
RTA (2)	-	6,822.12	-	6,822.12
State Forests	30,718.73	-	-	30,718.73
Total hazard reduction work	98,198.17	25,707.96	649.57	124,555.70

1. Grazing is only reported where the activity is specifically carried out for the primary purpose of bush fire risk management. Grazing for 2007/08 was 14,085.6 hectares.

2. The RTA have advised of an additional 5,936.25 hectares of mechanical hazard reduction works undertaken in the Sydney and Hunter Regions which are not captured in BRIMS.

1b. Hazard reduction works undertaken by the RFS.

While not a land management agency, members of the Service contribute significantly to hazard reduction activities in support of land management agencies and private property owners. During the reporting year, the Rural Fire Service undertook approximately 19,517.3 hectares of hazard reduction work protecting a total number of 9,772 assets with a value of \$4.30 billion (based on median insurance house and contents value in Sydney 2004 - McAneney K. J . 2005).

Appendix C.

Bush Fire Community Protection Report

1c Hazard Complaints received for 2007/08.

Members of the public can make complaints to the RFS or Councils about potential bush fire hazards. Complaints are investigated and if the land owner / manager does not agree to remove an identified hazard, a notice officially requiring the hazard to be removed will be issued. Where the landowner / manager fails to comply with this notice, the Commissioner can arrange the removal of the hazard at the owner's expense and where appropriate, impose penalties for failure to comply.

Land Tenure	Complaints Received	% of total
Private Land	1,599	79.1%
Council Land	243	12.0%
State Government Land	156	7.7%
To be determined	23	1.1%
Total	2,021	100%

Number of hazard complaint inspections undertaken	Number of formal notices issued under Section 66 of the Act.	Enforcement works undertaken under Section 70 of the Act.
2,178	287	48

1d. Hazard Reduction Certificates Issued for 2007/08.

(Streamlined environmental approval of hazard reduction - pursuant to section 100 F and G of the Act)

Certificate issuing Agency	Number issued	% of total
Catchment Authority	3	0.1%
Department of Lands	83	2.4%
Forests NSW	3	0.1%
Local Government Authority	441	12.7%
National Parks	169	4.9%
Rural Fire Service	2,772	79.9%
Total	3,471	100%

2. Fire Permits issued in 2007/08

Permits issued by:	Number issued	% of total
NSW Fire Brigades	120	0.6%
Rural Fire Service	21,399	99.4%
Total	21,519	100%



Appendix D.

Bush fire risk management plans – performance audits

	Total number of strategies	Plan % full term @ audit date	Total strategies implemented @ audit date	Implementation gap %
State averages all 52 audits	130.3	72.4%	43.1%	29.3%
Average of 5 plans audited in 2002/03	142.20	45.3%	44.9%	0.4%
Average of 15 plans audited in 2003/04	147.40	65.0%	51.2%	13.8%
Average of 12 plans audited in 2004/05	107.10	70.8%	39.5%	31.3%
Average of 9 plans audited in 2005/06	134.50	87.1%	48.4%	38.7%
Average of 8 plans audited in 2006/07	66.50	89.5%	37.4%	52.1%
Average of 3 plans audited in 2007/08	319.30	98.9%	41.8%	57.1%
Plans audited in 2007/08				
Canobolas	805	96.6%	91.6%	5.0%
Inverell	47	100.0%	16.2%	83.8%
Severn	106	100.0%	17.5%	82.5%

Performance audits are conducted under section 62A(1) of the Rural Fires Act 1997. In 2007/08 three bushfire risk management plan audits were conducted.

* The gap refers to the difference between the percentage of strategies that could be implemented over the full term of the plan (five years) and the actual percentage implemented at the time of the audit.

All of the audited plans were established under the 1999 Bush Fire Coordinating Committee Policy. A new model bushfire risk management planning process and policy commenced implementation in 2007/08. This will lead to a more performance based planning approach and will facilitate future performance auditing.

Appendix E.
Use of credit cards

All communications to be addressed to:

Headquarters
NSW Rural Fire Service
Locked Mail Bag 17
GRANVILLE NSW 2142

Telephone: (02) 8741 5555
e-mail: @rfs.nsw.gov.au

Headquarters
NSW Rural Fire Service
15 Carter Street
HOMEBUSH BAY NSW 2127

Facsimile: (02) 8741 5550



Your Ref:

Our Ref: 30th June 2008

Review of Use of Credit Cards

No irregularities were found in relation to the use of corporate credit cards during the year.

I certify that credit card use in the NSW Rural Fire Service has been in accordance with Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's directions .

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Fitzsimmons'.

**Shane Fitzsimmons AFSM
Commissioner**



Appendix F

Equal Opportunity Statistics

Staff Numbers by salary levels and EEO Groups

LEVEL	TOTAL STAFF	Respondents	Men	Women	Aboriginal People & Torres Strait Islanders	People from Racial, Ethnic, Ethno-Religious Minority Groups	People with a Disability
< \$35,266	15	15	2	13	0	1	3
\$35,266 - \$46,319	21	21	11	10	0	5	0
\$46,320 - \$51,783	102	102	25	77	1	13	3
\$51,784 - \$65,526	164	164	89	75	1	24	12
\$65,527 - \$84,737	325	325	265	60	4	22	25
\$84,738 - \$105,923	71	71	57	14	0	10	7
> \$105,923 (non SES)	33	33	31	2	0	4	1
> \$105,923 (SES)	5	5	5	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	736	736	485	251	6	79	51

Distribution of EEO Groups

EEO Reporting Groups	EEO Benchmark	RFS Percentage based on respondents 2008	RFS Percentage based on respondents 2007	RFS Percentage based on respondents 2006
Women	50%	34%	35%	36%
Aboriginal People & Torres Strait Islanders	2%	0.8%	0.9%	1%
People Whose Language First Spoken as a Child was not English	20%	11%	4%	4%
People with a Disability	12%	7%	7%	6%

It should be noted that any quantifiable data extracted from the Workforce Profile (i.e. EEO & EFT data) contains statistical information inclusive of approx 30 staff from the Office for Emergency Services (OES).

Appendix G.

Staff establishment

	Staffing Figure 2007/08	Staffing Figure 2006/2007	Staffing Number 2005/06	Staffing Number 2004/05
Comparative figures for the past three years Equivalent Full Time Positions (EFT)	EFT - 710	EFT - 685	EFT - 680	EFT - 649

Appendix H.

Freedom of information applications July 2007 to June 2008

Section A – Number of new requests	Personal	Other
New (including transferred in)	4	35
Brought forward from previous period	0	5
Total	4	40
Completed requests	4	39
Requests transferred out	0	0
Withdrawn requests	0	1
Total	4	40
Unfinished requests (carried forward)	0	4

Section B – What happened to completed requests	Personal	Other
Granted in full	2	28
Granted in part	1	3
Refused	1	8
Deferred	0	0
Total	4	39

Section C – Ministerial Certificates		Total
Number of Ministerial Certificates issued		0

Section D – Formal consultations		Total
Number of third party consultations received		4
Number of applications requiring consultation		7
Number of actual consultations undertaken		17

Section E – Amendment of Personal Records		
Number of records amended		0

Section F – Notation of Personal Records		
Number of records notated		0

Section G – FOI Requests granted in part or in full		
Basis of disallowing or restricting access	Personal	Other
s.19 application incomplete, wrongly directed	0	0
s.22 deposit not paid	0	1
s.25(1)(a1) diversion of resources	0	0
s.25(1)(a) exempt	1	3
s.25(1)(b), (c), (d) otherwise available	0	0
s.28(1)(b) documents not held	1	7
s.24(2) deemed refused, over 21 days	0	0
s.31(4) released to medical practitioner	0	0
Total	2	11



Section H – Costs and fees of requests processed	
Assessed costs	\$3,360
Fees received	\$3,300

Section I – Discounts allowed	Personal	Other
Public interest	0	1
Financial hardship: pensioner/child	1	0
Financial hardship: non-profit organisation	0	0
Total	1	1

Section J – Days to process	Personal	Other
0-21 days	3	25
22-35 days	1	9
Over 35 days	0	5

Section K – Processing time	Personal	Other
0-10 hours	4	34
11-20 hours	0	3
21-40 hours	0	0
Over 40 hours	0	1
Total processed		

Section L – Reviews and Appeals		
Reviews		Finalised
Internal reviews finalised		2
Ombudsman's reviews finalised		0
Administrative Decisions Tribunal appeals finalised		0
Total		2

Details of internal review results	Personal Upheld	Varied	Other Upheld	Varied
Access refused	0	0	0	0
Deferred	0	0	0	0
Exempt matter	0	0	1	0
Unreasonable charges	0	0	0	0
Charge unreasonably incurred	0	0	0	1
Amendment refused	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	1

Appendix I.

Allocations to councils 2008/2009 - in regional order

REGION EAST	\$	REGION NORTH	\$	REGION SOUTH	\$	REGION WEST	\$
Baulkham Hills	3,585,694.00	Ballina	638,422.00	Bega	2,802,116.00	Barwon Darling Zone	1,315,336.00
Blacktown City	1,329,059.00	Bellingen	1,691,115.00	Bombala	1,091,440.00	Bland/ Temora Zone	3,887,950.00
Blue Mountains	4,994,582.00	Byron	965,266.00	Conargo	1,010,309.00	Bogan	315,802.00
Camden	1,155,929.00	Clarence Valley Zone	4,153,024.00	Cooma-Monaro	1,478,760.00	Canobolas Zone	6,699,533.00
Campbelltown	1,607,184.00	Coffs Harbour City	4,222,325.00	Corowa/Berrigan Zone	1,649,913.00	Carrathool	1,260,090.00
Chifley	3,254,429.00	Gilgandra	944,773.00	Deniliquin	417,778.00	Central Darling	833,437.00
Dungog	1,514,543.00	Gunnedah	1,103,262.00	Eurobodalla	3,079,314.00	Cobar	877,576.00
Fairfield	259,212.00	Gwydir	1,273,038.00	Goulburn/ Mulwaree	1,697,288.00	Cudgong Zone	3,272,642.00
Gloucester	1,530,968.00	Inverell	1,314,607.00	Hume Zone	3,205,978.00	Dubbo City	2,026,790.00
Gosford	2,907,012.00	Kempsey	1,652,462.00	Jerilderie	840,331.00	Forbes	1,812,056.00
Great Lakes	2,895,937.00	Kyogle	1,303,230.00	Lower Western Zone	2,496,423.00	Hay	805,347.00
Greater Taree	2,545,106.00	Lismore	1,392,336.00	Murray	1,351,576.00	Lachlan	1,964,922.00
Hawkesbury	3,116,919.00	Liverpool Plains	1,644,592.00	MIA Zone	3,962,331.00	Narromine	1,500,336.00
Hastings	2,609,075.00	Moree Plains	1,215,120.00	Palerang	2,198,717.00	North West Zone	2,415,339.00
Hornsby	3,742,523.00	Nambucca	1,746,632.00	Queanbeyan City	977,781.00	Parkes	1,867,527.00
Hunter Zone	3,797,555.00	Narrabri	1,384,319.00	Riverina Zone	5,847,197.00	South West Slopes	4,351,346.00
Kiama	986,627.00	New England Zone	3,155,585.00	Riverina Highlands Zone	2,751,744.00	Weddin	1,067,428.00
Ku-ring-gai	870,740.00	Richmond Valley	1,720,667.00	Shoalhaven	5,293,414.00	Wellington	1,519,690.00
Lake Macquarie	3,961,294.00	Severn	1,421,050.00	Snowy River	1,664,522.00	Region Total	37,793,147.00
Lithgow	1,981,753.00	Tamworth Regional	2,931,578.00	Upper Lachlan	2,309,760.00		
Liverpool	1,290,723.00	Tenterfield	1,687,915.00	Wakool	1,112,108.00		
Lord Howe Island	16,808.00	Tweed	1,244,028.00	Yass	2,418,969.00		
Muswellbrook	3,128,349.00	Upper Hunter	2,383,362.00	Region Total	49,657,769.00		
Penrith	1,806,424.00	Warrumbungle	1,983,126.00				
Port Stephens	2,086,666.00	Region Total	43,171,834.00				
Shellharbour	1,036,395.00						
Singleton	2,851,443.00						
Sutherland	4,246,689.00						
Warringah	4,460,846.00						
Wingecarribee	3,025,341.00						
Wollondilly	2,722,124.00						
Wollongong	2,819,786.00						
Wyong	2,895,515.00						
Region Total	81,033,250.00						



Appendix J.

Payment performance

Accounts paid on time each quarter

YR07/08	Total accounts paid on time			Total amount paid
Quarter	Target	Actual	\$	\$
September	100%	96%	33,779	34,977
December	100%	88%	71,467	74,277
March	100%	88%	42,381	45,692
June	100%	91%	52,154	55,166

YR06/07	Total accounts paid on time			Total amount paid
Quarter	Target	Actual	\$	\$
September	100%	90%	26,079	28,977
December	100%	84%	62,026	73,841
March	100%	92%	71,411	77,621
June	100%	92%	56,973	61,928

Appendix K.

Risk management and insurance

Coverage	2007/08 \$	2006/07 \$	2005/06 \$
Workers Compensation	363,150	383,889	501,358
Motor Vehicle	316,640	269,030	206,610
Public Liability	1,682,720	1,246,460	923,300
Property	31,920	10,880	12,660
Other	85,890	7,180	9,900
Totals	2,480,320	1,917,439	1,653,828

The NSW Rural Fire Service is a member of the NSW Treasury Managed Fund that provides all the insurance requirements for most public sector agencies in this state. Total deposit premiums paid to the Treasury Managed Fund (with comparisons from the last two financial years) are set out above.

Appendix L.

Current publications

Annual Report
 Bush Fire Bulletin
 Standards for Asset Protection Zones
 Application Instructions for a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate
 Standards for Pile Burning
 Standards for Low Intensity Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Burning
 Guidelines for Permit Issuing Officers
 Guidelines for Subdivision Applications
 Guidelines for Single Dwelling Development Applications
 Planning for Bush Fire Protection
 Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code
 50 Years of Fire

The Burning Question
 Bush Firewise 1, 2, 3 and 4
 Kids Activity Book
 Fire Prevention Presentation Handbook
 Firesafe 1,2 and 3
 Fire Science Workbook 1
 Kids Activity Sheet
 Magnetic checklist
 Bookmark
 Magpie's Challenge
 Jigsaw Puzzle

Appendix M.

Statement of performance of Commissioner

Statement of Performance of Commissioner

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons was appointed to his position on 1 October 2007. His appointment has assured continuity in the management of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Members of the RFS were deployed to South Australia to assist with fire fighting operations on Kangaroo Island in December following a request from the South Australian authorities. This was yet another demonstration of the high regard with which our interstate colleagues view the NSW Rural Fire Service. Similarly, the international reputation of the Service continues to grow, with a number of overseas agencies requesting our expertise to assist in a range of fire management and related programs.

The Commissioner took the opportunity of a relatively quiet bushfire season in NSW to initiate a reorganisation of the Service headquarters to improve the overall management of the Service's functions and legislative responsibilities. The reorganisation will provide the Service with a streamlined management structure that will assist all members of the Service, particularly volunteers, to access information and services.

The Commissioner also completed a strategic review of the Service, resulting in a new Strategic Plan for 2008-2012, with the intent of ensuring that the Service is in a strong position to meet the challenges of changing demographics, new and emerging technologies, climate change and sustainability.

Significantly, an improved Bush Fire Community Protection Reporting system that captures all bush fire mitigation works was established this year. Rather than simply recording hazard reduction burns as a measure of activity, the value and number of assets protected through community education and other mitigation activities provides a more robust reporting system more accurately portraying the range and success of these activities. Additionally, bush fire mitigation works were enhanced through seasonal crews being deployed to areas to undertake the preparatory work prior to prescribed burning or other fuel management techniques.

Together, these important initiatives provide the people of NSW with greater bush fire mitigation and preparation and a greater understanding of the readiness of the State ahead of the next bush fire season.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons' management of the NSW Rural Fire Service continues to provide the impetus for the Service both to grow and to maintain its highest traditions of community service particularly through the invaluable work of its volunteer fire fighting force.



Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Emergency Services



Appendix N.

Committees

RURAL FIRE SERVICE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RFSAC)

Membership of the Council was

Commissioner S Fitzsimmons AFSM	(Chair)
Mr K Sullivan	(Insurance Council of Australia)
Councillor R Panton, OAM	(to 1 March 2008)
Councillor A Smith JP	(Local Government Association)
Councillor S Low AM	(Shires Association)
Supt Warwick Roche	(to 1 March 2008)
Suptintendent Stephen Raymond	(NSW Rural Fire Service Association)
Mr A Jaffray AFSM	(NSW Rural Fire Service Association)
Group Captain Jim Fahey	(NSW Rural Fire Service Association)
Mr R Pallin	(Nature Conservation Council)
Mr G Brown	(NSW Farmers Association)

The Council met on two occasions, and member attendances were as follows:

Comm Fitzsimmons	2
Mr K Sullivan	2
Councillor A Smith	2
Councillor R Panton	1 (to March 2008)
Councillor S Low	1 (from March 2008)
Superintendent W Roche	1 (to March 2008)
Superintendent S Raymond	1 (from March 2008)
Mr J Fahey	Nil
Mr A Jaffray	2
Mr R Pallin	2
Mr G Brown	2

BUSH FIRE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (BFCC)

Membership of the Committee was

Commissioner S Fitzsimmons, AFSM	- Chairman
A/Comm G Dewsnap, AFSM (to 1 March 2008)	- NSW Fire Brigades
Dep Comm J Benson, AFSM (from March 2008)	- NSW Fire Brigades
Dr R Dickson	- Forests NSW
Mr B Conroy	- Parks & Wildlife Division (DECC)
Cr A Smith, JP	- Local Government Association
Cr R Panton, OAM (to 1 March 2008)	- Shires Association
Cr S Low, AM (from 1 March 2008)	- Shires Association
Supt M Brett (to 1 March 2008)	- NSW Rural Fire Service Association
Supt D Hoadley (from 1 March 2008)	- NSW Rural Fire Service Association
Ass Comm D Clifford, APM, JP	- NSW Police Force
Ms A Reeves, OAM	- Nominee of the Minister for Environment
Mr R Pallin	- Nature Conservation Council
Mr G Brown	- NSW Farmers Association
Ms W Graham (until March 2008)	- Department of Community Services
Ms H Freeland (from March 2008)	- Department of Community Services
Mr T Wilkinson	- Department of Lands

The Committee met on four occasions, and member attendances were:

Comm S Fitzsimmons	4
A/Comm G Dewsnap, (to 1 March 2008)	1
Dep Commissioner J Benson	1
Dr R Dickson	2
Mr B Conroy	4
Cr A Smith, JP	4
Cr R Panton, OAM (to 1 March 2008)	2
Cr S Low, AM (from 1 March 2008)	2
Supt M Brett (to 1 March 2008)	1

Supt D Hoadley (from 1 March 2008)	2
Asst Comm D Clifford	0
Ms A Reeves, OAM	3
Mr R Pallin	4
Mr G Brown	3
Ms W Graham (until March 2008)	1
Ms H Freeland (from March 2008)	1
Mr T Wilkinson	4

FIRE SERVICES JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE (FSJSC)

The *Fire Services Joint Standing Committee Act, 1998* provides legislative support for the work of the Committee.

The Committee's work of coordinating the activities of the fire services was supported by the Service's representatives, Commissioner S Fitzsimmons AFSM and Chief Superintendent S Midgley AFSM.

The Committee met on four occasions and member attendances were as follows:

Commissioner S Fitzsimmons	3
Chief Superintendent S Midgley	3

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE GROUP (CEG)

The CEG, the Service's policy making body, met on eight occasions during the year and consists of:

Commissioner S Fitzsimmons, AFSM	Chairman
Assistant Commissioner R Rogers, AFSM	
Assistant Commissioner K Harrap, AFSM	
Assistant Commissioner M Crowweller, AFSM	
Mr R Taylor, AFSM	
Chief Superintendent S Yorke, AFSM	
Chief Superintendent J Parnaby	
Chief Superintendent D Lane, AFSM	
Chief Superintendent J Lucas	
Superintendent P Smith	
Mr P Hennessy	
Mrs R Johnson	
Group Captain B McKinlay, AFSM	
Superintendent N Turner	

Member attendances were:

Comm Fitzsimmons	- 7
R Rogers	- 6
K Harrap	- 5
R Taylor	- 6
M Crowweller	- 7
S Yorke	- 8
J Parnaby	- 8
D Lane	- 8
J Lucas	- 8
P Smith	- 8
P Hennessy	- 7
R Johnson	- 7
B McKinlay	- 8
N Turner	- 6

Appendix O.

International travel

Date	Country	Officer	Trip details
29 August – 12 September	USA	Sam Crothers	Evaluate DC10 Heavy aircraft water bombing capability, California.
10 – 15 September	South Korea	Brian Graham & Jessica Lee	Attend Korean Forest Service Symposium and discuss future business, Seoul.
23 – 25 October	USA	Tony Jarrett	Attend conference on Human Dimensions of Wildland Fire at Fort Collins, Colorado.
7 – 8 November	India	Brian Graham	Presentation to 2nd Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction New Dehli.
4 – 18 November	Canada	Ian Ridge	Testing of RFS fire fighting personal protective clothing at Dupont Edmonton, Alberta.
28 January – 10 March	USA	Brett Storey	Working with BLM on training and assessment in Boise, Idaho
29 February – 10 March	USA	Keith Harrap	Meeting with International Fire Chiefs and Fire Expo in Reno, Nevada.
25 – 29 February	Singapore	Brian Graham	Facilitate an ASEAN regional workshop as part of the ASEAN-AUSAID Smoke Haze Project.
23 – 31 March	South Korea	Brian Graham & Jessica Lee	Presentation of ICS and finalisation of MOU between RFS & Inje University, and informal discussions with National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Seoul.
25 – 29 March	Malaysia	Geoff Parish	Assist project partners with finalisation of ASEAN – AUSAID Smoke Haze Project, Kuala Lumpur.
21 – 27 April	South Korea	Brian Graham & Jessica Lee	Presentation to Fire & Disaster Management conference and attend Fire Expo conducted by NEMA in Daegu South Korea. Informal discussions with Samcheok City Mayor regarding SAFEM Expo.
12 - 20 April	USA	Richard Woods	Key note speaker on Fire Investigation at California/ Nevada/Hawaii Fire Management conference in Hawaii.
21 – 29 May	Japan	Peter Evans	Attend International Volunteer Fire Service Conference as Commissioner's representative in Tokyo.



Appendix P

Internal bravery and service awards and Australian fire service medal

During the reporting period for 2007/2008 the following Awards were made in the NSW Rural Fire Service:

Internal Bravery and Service Awards

	Volunteers	Salaried Staff	Total
Medal for Valour	Nil	Nil	Nil
Commendation for Bravery	1	1	2
Commendation for Service	Nil	Nil	Nil
Unit Citation for Bravery	Nil	Nil	Nil
Unit Citation for Service	12	1	13
Certificate of Commendation (Unit)	5	Nil	5
Certificate of Commendation (Indiv)	3	Nil	3
Totals:	21	2	23

Australian Fire Service Medal

	Volunteers	Salaried Staff	Total
Australia Day 2008	5	1	6
Queen's Birthday 2008	4	3	7
Totals:	9	4	13

Appendix Q.

Glossary

AFAC	Australasian Fire Authorities Council
AIIMS	Australian Interagency Incident Management System
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
BCM	Brigade Classification Model
BFCC	Bush Fire Coordinating Committee
BFMC	Bush Fire Management Committee
BFRMP	Bush Fire Risk Management Plan
BRIMS	Bushfire Risk Information Management System
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CFA	Country Fire Authority of Victoria
CISS	Critical Incident Support Services
CRC	Co-operative Research Centre
CSC	Customer Support Centre
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DECC	Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSW)
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
e-SDM	electronic Service Delivery Model
FIRS	Fire Incident Reporting System
FSJSC	Fire Services Joint Standing Committee
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSA	Guided Self Assessment
ICON	Incident Control on Line
ICS	Incident Control System
IS	Information Services
LGA	Local Government Area
Lineal Features	Lineal features include mechanical works undertaken for the purposes of creating firebreaks
MAA	Mutual Aid Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSWFB	New South Wales Fire Brigades
OCSLA	Operational Communications Service Level Agreement
PMPRS	Performance Management Planning and Review System
PMR	Private Mobile Radios
PWPD	People With a Physical Disability
RAFT	Remote Area Firefighting Team
RFDSA	Rural Fire District Service Agreement
RFS	NSW Rural Fire Service
RFSA	NSW Rural Fire Service Association
RFSAC	Rural Fire Service Advisory Council
RMS	Resource Management System
SDM	Service Delivery Model
SES	State Emergency Service
SMU	Service Membership Unit
SOC	State Operations Centre
SOE	Standard Operating Environment
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWS	Static Water Supply



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NSW Rural Fire Service

15 Carter Street
Homebush Bay NSW 2127

Locked Mail Bag 17
Granville NSW 2142

T 02 8741 5555

F 02 9737 0171

E Bushfire.Bulletin@rfs.nsw.gov.au

W www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

