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# BUSHFIREbulletin

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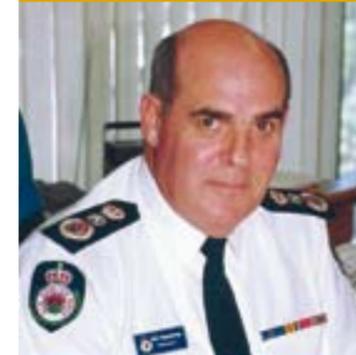
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# OUR VALUES UNDERPIN ALL OUR ACTIONS

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# FOREWORD



I am pleased to say that good progress is being made by Chief Supt. Bruce Holz and his team with the process of reviewing Service Standards and Standard Operating Procedures.

The new draft constitution is ready for release and I'm sure RFS brigades will find it far less prescriptive, more flexible and more readily adaptable for individual brigade applications.

As this complex review process continues, with the purpose of making the volunteer workload less onerous, many standards will be shaped more in the guise of "guidelines" than rigid and prescriptive requirements. I commend the efforts of Bruce Holz and all those working with him on this project.

I hope our volunteers will see the benefits when the task is complete.

Financially, the Service is on a sound footing. We have enjoyed another significant increase in our budget which will allow us, amongst other things, to increase expenditure on brigade stations/sheds and so forth from \$2M to \$10M and will provide an opportunity for us to increase our tanker production from some 200 units to approximately 220 units.

Whilst I appreciate that many brigades are still waiting for newer vehicles and accommodation, and their patience is appreciated, it is satisfying to note that modern tankers and equipment are becoming the norm rather than the exception.

Finally, given that there are some indicators suggesting that the fire season may well be difficult, I again ask all our volunteers to exercise caution and put safety first, always.

Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM  
Commissioner

# INCIDENTS



## WILD STORM ACTIVITY IN BOURKE

At about 1700hrs on 21 February 2006 a wild storm tore through the northern part of the Bourke township.

Winds estimated in excess of 100 kph ripped trees out of the ground and even removed parts of the roofing of a local supermarket.

### THE ROOF... WAS RIPPED OFF, LIFTED OVER THE HOUSE AND DUMPED IN THE STREET, BRINGING DOWN POWER LINES

Wortumurtie and Coomah Sts sustained the most significant damage. The roof of the back patio of a Coomah St home was ripped off, lifted over the house and dumped into the street, bringing down power lines.

At the height of the storm properties in Wortumurtie St were damaged by falling trees and properties along Mooculta St had severe roof damage.

### Teamwork comes to the fore

SES crews were dispatched accompanied

by RFS brigades from Bourke Headquarters and Pera Bore.

"It was a huge effort by both agencies and using the RFS specialist skills with chainsaws enabled the SES to attend an over-abundance of other incidents ensuring that all these properties were safe and secured," said RFS Barwon Darling Zone Community Safety Officer Inspector Ross West.

### Single channel communications

Using new SES radios enabled a single channel to be used for both SES and RFS communications, which assisted the operation.

Co-ordinated contributions from the Bourke Shire Council and Country Energy were greatly appreciated.

Crews returned to their stations at about 2200hrs, with the shire council back on the job first thing the next morning.

**Top:** Coomah St suffered much of the damage during the storm in Bourke.

## TRUCK MAKES UNEXPECTED HOUSE CALL

By Media Assistant Matthew Schroder & Inspector Greg Wardle

At 1449hrs Monday 3 July RFS Chifley Zone Office received a triple zero call reporting an MVA with a rolled car on the corner of Hamilton and Willetton Sts Eglinton.

The Fire Control Centre responded Eglinton Rural Fire Brigade and an Inspector. They arrived on scene within 10 minutes of the '000' call to find a far worse situation than originally reported.

A car had failed to stop at a give way sign, resulting in a collision with a truck.

The car had been pushed on its roof for 10 metres up the road, trapping the occupant inside.

### NSW FIRE BRIGADES WORKED WITH RFS CREWS TO SECURE A POTENTIAL GAS LEAK

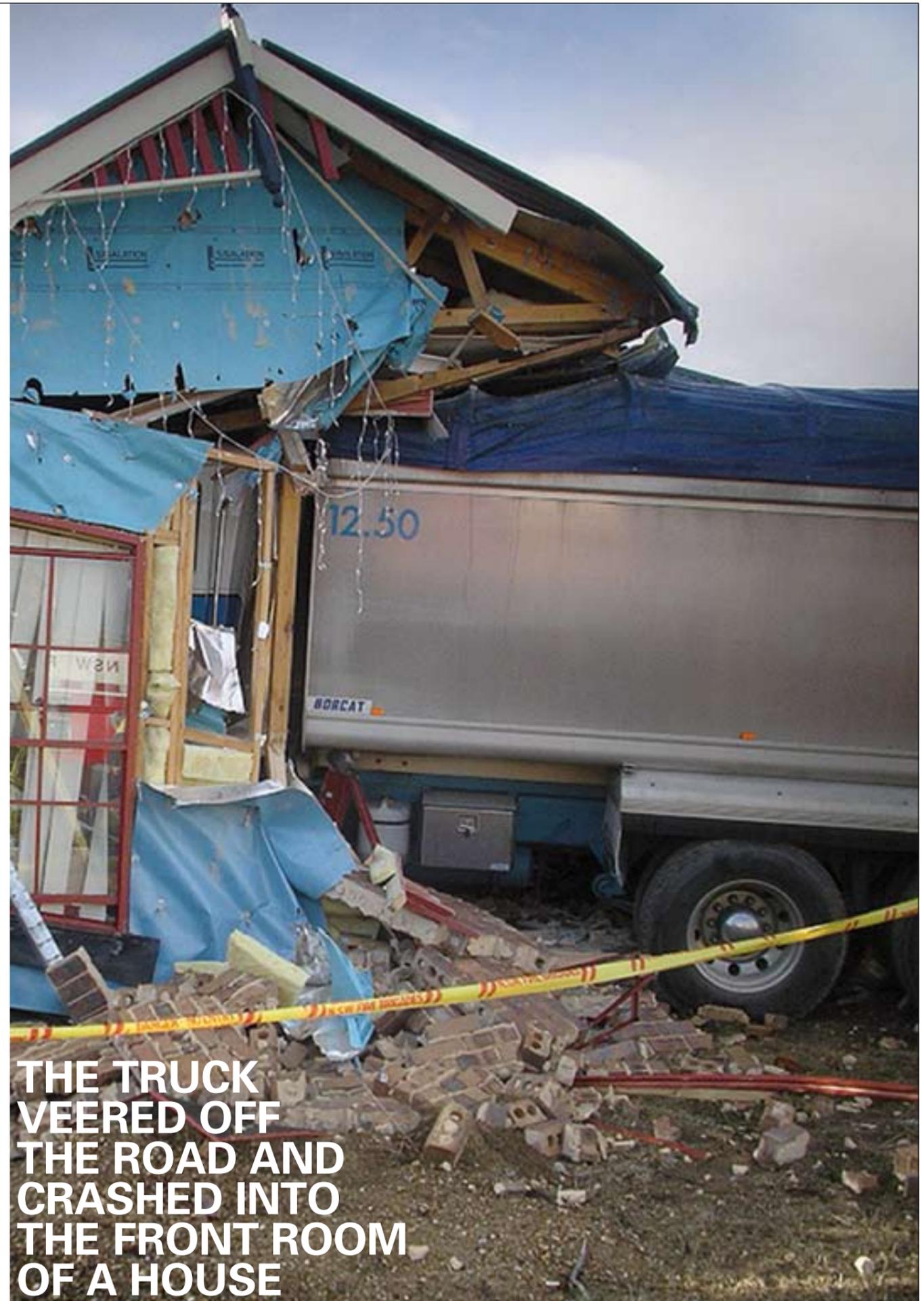
The truck veered off the road and crashed into the front room of a house.

NSW Fire Brigades worked with RFS crews to secure a potential gas leak. Police and Ambulance attended the incident and Ambulance crews treated the occupant of the overturned car, who was taken to Bathurst Hospital for further treatment.

RFS personnel remained on scene while the Police and RTA carried out an investigation.

The truck was removed from the house at 1823 hrs. No one was in the house at the time of the accident.

**Right:** The house was extensively damaged from the impact of the truck. Photo by Brett McMillan



## THE TRUCK VEERED OFF THE ROAD AND CRASHED INTO THE FRONT ROOM OF A HOUSE

## KEMPS CREEK TIP 7-DAY FIRE

By RFS Media Officer Rebel Talbert

At about 1735hr on Friday 24 February 2006, Kemps Creek 1 and 9 from RFS Macarthur Zone were called to a fire at Brandon Tip on Elizabeth Drive, Kemps Creek.

Upon arrival, Kemps Creek crews found one large pile of bulk, clean timber well alight with the threat of spotting into adjacent piles.

### Limited onsite water

With limited on site water available, additional crews from RFS Macarthur and Cumberland Zones were called in to assist.

The main pile, which was 100m x 40m x 30m high, initially produced flame height in excess of 30m, resulting in large amounts of dense smoke. It had the potential to spot into surrounding grasslands.

### CREWS WORKED TO PROTECT GRASSLANDS AND OTHER ASSETS FROM RADIANT HEAT

Crews worked to protect grasslands and other assets from radiant heat and ember attack and continued to cool down the main pile while strategies were developed.

Two 30,000 litre bulk water carriers were called in from Warringah Pittwater and NSW Fire Brigades to support local bulk water carriers. Two privately owned dozers and a bulk water carrier assisted crews to contain the fire to one pile.

### Firefighters work until dawn

More than 110 firefighters worked until midnight to control the threat and four crews remained on scene overnight until 0600hr when crews returned to begin dismantling the pile.

Helitak 401, a Bell 214B medium helicopter, was placed on standby at Bankstown Airport as a precautionary measure while the pile was dismantled on Saturday.

### Contractors join the fight

Late Saturday afternoon the RFS approached the owner to bring in contractors to take over firefighting operations so that local crews could progressively stand down.

RFS crews assisted the contractors to pull apart the piles on Sunday and continued overall management of the fire, but handed operations over at 1600hrs on Sunday 26 February.

Local RFS crews were called to the fire numerous times over the next five days as the pile continued to issue smoke and the glow could be seen by passing motorists on Elizabeth Drive at night.

The fire was declared out at 1515 hrs on Friday 3 March 2006.



RESOURCES	CAT
Kemps Creek	1
Kemps Creek	9
Austral	9
Austral	2
Camden West	1
Erskine Park	1
Eastern Creek	1
Horsley Park	1
Horsley Park	7
Hoxton Park	2
Hoxton Park	9
Lyndwood Park	1
Luddenham	1
Narellan	1
Narellan Pump	
Narellan Lighting Unit	
Plumpton	1
Regentsville	1
Varroville	1
Appin	1
Silverdale	1
Campbelltown	Bulk Water
Warringah Pittwater	Bulk Water
NSW Fire Brigades	Bulk Water
Macarthur	Catering
NSW Police	
Ambulance NSW	
Helitak 401 Bankstown	Bell 214B

RFS crews worked all night to contain the blaze which initially produced flame height in excess of 30 metres.  
Photos by RFS Media Officer Rebel Talbert



## RFS team enters burning building

The four of us were able to enter the hotel and evacuate all occupants from the building. As there was no sign of fire or smoke in the rooms on the top floor, we were able to conduct a room to room search to ensure there were no other occupants in the building. Electrical power fuses were removed and the power was shut off.

Firecom was again contacted, calling for additional resources from Gurley and Narrabri HQ RFB, NSW Fire Brigade (NSWFB) from Narrabri, Police, Ambulance and Country Energy.

### Bellata RFB joins the attack

Bellata RFB arrived soon after and commenced a defensive attack on the fire, assisted by Chris and Alan McLachlan. I took on the role of Incident Controller, setting up Bellata Control, while Inspector Hall directed operations. Gurley RFB Deputy Captain Ben Hurle, enroute to the course at Narrabri, arrived on scene and assisted until Gurley brigade arrived.

All bystanders were removed from the area as power lines were arcing, with the possibility of dropping to the ground. Water hydrants were located, some of which had been covered by bitumen during previous roadworks. A 22,000 litre water tank in the service station across the highway was also located for water.

### Newell Highway closed

It became necessary to close the Newell Highway as smoke had reduced visibility to almost zero. My Service vehicle, with warning beacons activated, was used to block the south-bound lane. Traffic was able to be diverted around the area without any problems.

Warialda 9, with Captain Karen Hedges and Stonefield RFB Captain David Farrell, who were also enroute to the RFD course, activated their warning beacons and blocked the north-bound lane.

During the following 45 minutes or so Gurley 1, Narrabri HQ 1 and 7, NSWFB Narrabri Pumper, Ambulance, Police and Country Energy arrived on scene. The Police set up a command post in the service station, which had closed, with fuel pumps shut down.

### HAZMAT Unit comes from Narrabri

NSWFB Captain Brett Sills took on the role of Operations Officer and directed his crews to start offensive firefighting within the building. Captain Sills responded the NSWFB HAZMAT Unit from Narrabri to assist with CABA operations. RFS CABA operators started offensive firefighting from the rear of the building while NSWFB operators entered through the front door. Defensive firefighting ceased at this time to allow CABA operators maximum visibility.



## HISTORIC NANDEWAR HOTEL BLAZE

Story by Inspector Marty Thick  
RFS Namoi Gwydir

Photos by Inspector Thick and  
Inspector Steve Hall

Firefighters battled to save the historic Nandewar Hotel, a valued part of the Bellata community which was gutted by fire on 29 April 2006.

Many RFS firefighters diverted their attendance at a driving course in Narrabri to attend the incident...Inspector Marty Thick tells the story.

On Saturday 29 April 2006, I was travelling to Narrabri in my Service vehicle to instruct a Rural Fire Driving Course at the Narrabri Fire Control Centre.

With me were Pallamallawa Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) Captain Chris McLachlan and President/Firefighter Alan McLachlan and the newly appointed Namoi Gwydir Team Operations Officer, Inspector Steve Hall.

### WE COULD SEE FLAMES BETWEEN THE GUTTERING AND THE ROOF AT THE NORTH EAST CORNER OF THE BUILDING

At about 0810hrs as we proceeded through the town of Bellata, we were waved down by a truck driver who informed us that the Nandewar Hotel was on fire. Upon taking a closer look at the building, we could see flames between the guttering and the corrugated iron roof at the north-eastern corner of the building.

Inspector Hall immediately radioed Firecom, informing Duty Officer Inspector Michael Roper of the incident and to respond the local Bellata RFB.

## RFS FIREFIGHTER... HIT BY FALLING DEBRIS WHEN PART OF THE TOP FLOOR VERANDAH COLLAPSED

It was around this time that an RFS firefighter was hit by falling debris when part of the top floor verandah collapsed. He was treated by on-scene Ambulance officers, then transported to Narrabri Hospital. After precautionary x-rays and observation, he was later released from hospital and allowed to go home. He stopped at the incident to assure all concerned he was OK.

The charged line being used by the NSWFB CABA operators was cut by falling debris and they exited the building, along with the RFS CABA operators.

### Fire takes hold

In my role as Incident Controller I continually liaised with Captain Sills and the Police commander Inspector Steve Gallagher. It had become obvious to both Captain Sills and I that the fire had taken too big a hold on the building and offensive firefighting was becoming a very unsafe option.

As the fire had spread to the majority of the building, offensive firefighting ceased and the RFS continued to direct hose lines into the building, from the safety of the hotel yard areas. We discussed with Inspector Gallagher the necessity to erect barriers to prevent falling debris from spilling out onto the highway so the road could be re-opened. Inspector Gallagher organised for Narrabri Shire Council to install the barriers.

As the incident progressed, I released Narrabri RFS and NSWFB crews, leaving Bellata 1 and Gurley 1 on scene to continue defensive firefighting, in effect, just cooling the structure.

Eventually all agencies departed the scene, Bellata Control closed down and only Bellata Category 1 tanker remained on scene.

### Tireless efforts

I can only praise the dedication and effort of the RFS firefighters who worked tirelessly to save this historic, and much valued, heritage building. All agencies, including the Police and Ambulance officers, worked exceptionally well together and carried out their own duties to the highest standards.

I also speak very highly of our counterparts NSWFB, who also did everything possible to save the structure. I can add that it was a pleasure working with Captain Sills controlling this incident. Decisions were made in unison and acted upon without question or delay, especially when the safety of firefighters and members of the community were at risk.



## AEROSOL FACTORY FLARE UP

Story by RFS Media Officer Cameron Wade

Just before 1400hrs on Monday 19 June Oakville Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) in the Hawkesbury District was paged to assist NSW Fire Brigades with a factory fire in the suburb of Mulgrave near Windsor.

### New trailer put to the test

Oakville RFB had just finished setting up their village protection trailer. This unit was full of 65mm hose, ground monitors and extra stand pipes. The trailer was about to be tested with one of the largest operations the Hawkesbury had seen for some time.

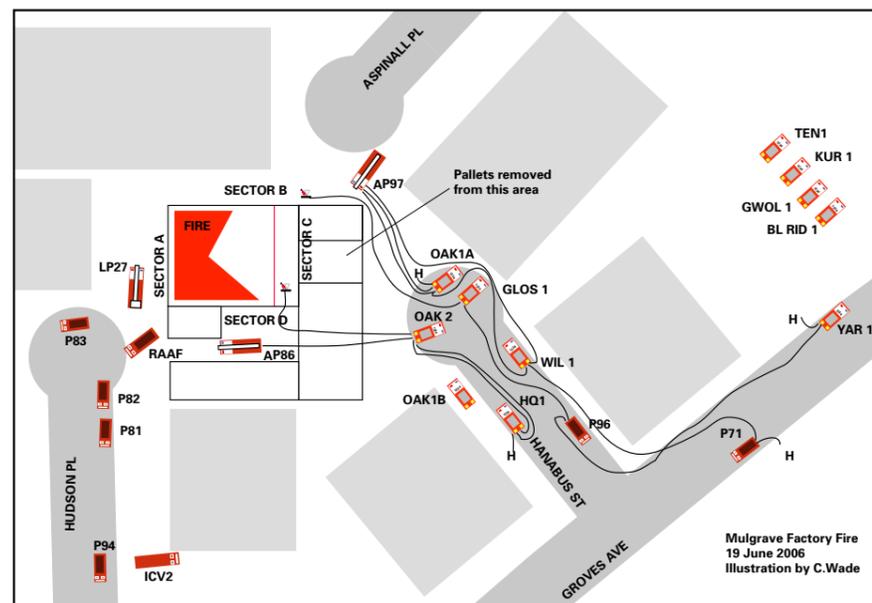
The factory manufactured aerosol cans for the automotive industry and was surrounded by storage facilities including gas and fuel installations. Part of the manufacturing plant was on fire. The building was a tilt slab construction with fire walls separating the factory from the storage areas.

### HAWKESBURY GROUP 2 WAS THE FIRST RFS VOLUNTEER ON THE SCENE AND IMMEDIATELY GAVE AN INFORMATIVE SITREP

Hawkesbury Group 2 was the first RFS volunteer on scene and immediately gave an informative sitrep. Based on this information and their own view of the massive smoke column, Hawkesbury FireCom paged an additional four brigades.

### Large crowd causes problems

Group 2 met with the NSW Fire Brigades Incident Controller who was the Station Officer (SO) of Riverstone (83). Also on scene were Windsor (81) and Richmond (82) pumpers. It was agreed that the RFS would



set up in Hanabus Place and immediately provide exposure protection on sector C.

A large crowd had gathered plus those who had been evacuated from the complex involved, causing traffic problems for crews.

Oakville 1A and the PC with village trailer were the first RFS appliances to arrive and were tasked to sector C. Ground monitors were deployed to the corners of B and C sectors and C and D sectors.

## A SHOWER OF EXPLODING AEROSOL CANS... RAINED DOWN ON THE FIREFIGHTERS

The monitor in C and D was actually aimed at the internal fire wall in an attempt to keep the fire from spreading into the unaffected area of the factory. The deployment of 65mm hose and ground monitors took place under a shower of exploding aerosol cans which rained down on the firefighters as they worked.

### Water supply relays

Water supply was going to be a priority and relays were set up as soon as other appliances arrived. Oakville 1B, Hawkesbury HQ 1, Wilberforce 1, Yarramundi 1 and Glossodia 1 arrived over the next 30 minutes and formed part of the relay of water to various monitors and appliances including Aerial Pump 86(Penrith) and Aerial Pump 97(Huntingwood).

Rescue pump 71(Castle Hill) and Pump 96 (Schofields) also formed part of the relay which fed water to B, C and D sectors of the fire.

### Forklift firefighter

As this was being set up crews from Oakville were protecting the massive storage facility exposure on the C side of the fire. One of the crew was a forklift driver and under instruction from the IC and Group 2 removed 14 pallets of flammable material. They were stored in an undercover storage area against the C wall of the factory. They were moved away from the fire area.

Hawkesbury FireCom had additional units activated and staged near the incident in case further resources were required. Tennyson, Kurrajong, Grose Wold and Blaxland Ridge were all nearby but not required.

### RAAF called in

The fire continued to burn at high intensity into the evening. The RAAF airport appliance was brought in an attempt to put a foam layer over the fire.

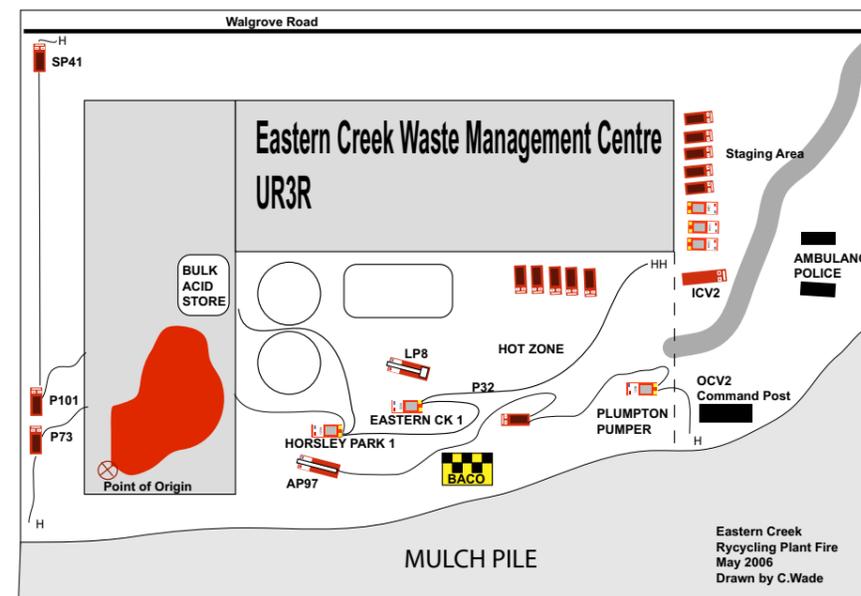
The other major issue was the runoff from the firefighting effort. NSWFB appliances were responded to areas around the incident to collect the toxic runoff. This was a large Hazmat incident.

RFS appliances were in operation until 2030hrs. NSWFB took over sector C and their operations continued for several days. In all 11 appliances and nearly 100 firefighters from the RFS attended.

NSW Fire Brigades Blacktown A Platoon.  
Photo by NSW Fire Brigades  
Blacktown A Platoon  
Illustration by Cameron Wade

## 150 FIREFIGHTERS TAME EASTERN CREEK FACTORY FIRE

Story by RFS Media Officer Rebel Talbert



At 2032 hrs on Friday 12 May 2006 the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) ComCen received a call to a confirmed structure alight on Old Wallgrove Road, Eastern Creek.

Horsley Park Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) from Cumberland Zone was immediately dispatched along with Station 97 from NSWFB. En route both reported large volumes of smoke visible from the call address.

### Compost factory well alight

Upon arrival, Horsley Park 1 found the 250 x 50 metre compost factory well alight and additional tankers were requested to respond to the scene. Horsley Park 1 started direct attack on the fire before retreating to protect a 20,000 litre tank of flammable liquid from flame impact.

### OPERATORS FROM BOTH SERVICES WORKED INTERNALLY TO SUPPRESS THE FIRE

Additional appliances from the RFS and NSWFB continued to arrive over the next three hours. About 20 BA operators at a time from both Service's worked internally

to suppress the fire, while NSWFB aerial appliances worked to cool adjoining structures and to cut ventilation holes into the roof.

### Fire reignites for five hours

The fire continued to re-ignite until about 0130 hrs on Saturday morning while an RFS excavator driver wearing BA worked to pull apart compost mulch. BA crews continued fire suppression, ventilation and overhaul of the building until 0824 hrs when a stop was put on the incident.

In total about 10 per cent of the 250 x 50 metre, lightweight metal construction building was destroyed by fire. 10,000 tonnes of mulch were involved in fire and substantial damage occurred to conveyor belts and machinery inside the building.

### Huge 12-hour team effort

About 150 firefighters from 10 RFS Cumberland Zone brigades and 26 NSWFB stations worked for 12 hours to stop the spread of the fire and render the area safe. The RFS handed the incident over to a private contractor for salvage work and contaminated water handling at 0824 hrs on Saturday 13 May.



### TAMWORTH RAFT CALLED IN TO CONTAIN LIGHTNING STRIKE FIRE

Tamworth Remote Area Fire Team was inserted into difficult terrain to contain a lightning strike fire 1km from the \$80m Nundle State Forest in February.

The fire was extinguished within four hours with the use of helicopter precision water dropping and RAFT personnel chainsawing and log rolling.

### RFS BRIGADES

Horsley Park  
Eastern Creek  
Plumpton  
Regentville  
Erskine Park  
Marsden Park  
Schofields  
Berkshire Park  
Mulgoa  
Orchard Hills  
Communications

### NSWFB Stations

Huntingwood  
Mount Druitt  
Seven Hills  
Blacktown  
Parramatta  
HAZMAT  
Smithfield  
Dunheved  
Penrith  
Wentworthville  
Busby  
St Marys  
Fairfield  
Cabramatta  
Rockdale  
Glebe  
Ashfield  
Lakemba  
Gladesville  
Matraville  
Gordon  
Concord  
Horningsea Park  
Campsie  
Engadine  
Liverpool  
Operational Communications

Top: The compost facility at Eastern Creek is part of a Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) between the RFS and NSW Fire Brigades.

Pictured are Group Captain Tamworth Zone Steve McCrae, Darryl Allsop, Peter Gehrig and Dallis Ramage. Photo by Lachlan Onslow Fleet Helicopters (Firebird 211).

# GENERAL NEWS

## PUTTING NSW'S FIRE HISTORY AND FUEL LOADS ON THE MAP

Government fire and public land management agencies have combined their skills on two projects to map fire history and assess the fuel loads for a significant part of NSW.

### Fire history

The RFS is working with Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Forests NSW in a multi-agency project to map the history of the state's fires.

The information collected as part of this statewide project will be used to assist the government agencies in their fire management planning processes.

### Digitising 40 years of data

Maps of past fires and hazard reduction burns dating back to 1962 have been collected as paper records for the Special Areas managed by the SCA and NPWS. The Special Areas surround the SCA's dams and other water storages and cover about 3,700 square kilometres of bushland.

The paper records have been digitised, with details such as the start and end dates and names of past fires, being recorded by all four agencies.

### INFORMATION ON HOW OFTEN A LOCATION HAS BEEN BURNED SINCE 1962 AND THE LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN FIRES

The fire histories collected will provide information on how often a location has been burnt since 1962 and the length of time between fires. The time since the last burn is important for estimating the possible fuel loads that have accumulated since the last fire.



### Catching expertise

The SCA has become involved in the project due to its technical expertise in bringing together the fire histories from other state agencies and developing historical records.

SCA regularly uses satellite imagery to map the extent of wildfires and hazard reduction burns. They have used imagery dating back to 1983 to manually locate fires not already recorded in the collected histories.

### Fuel load measurement

The same NSW agencies are involved in evaluating a range of remote sensing methods (airborne and satellite) through the Natural Disaster Mitigation Program.

No single method has yet been shown to quantify all aspects of fuel loads, from surface to canopy, so a wide range of sensors will be trialled to quantify the greatest number of fuel attributes.

### A meeting of minds

The Bushfire CRC, CSIRO, University of NSW and Australian environmental engineering company GHD are also involved in the project.

The satellite sensing methods being tested include ASTER, Hyperion, Landsat and SPOT 5. The airborne methods include Daedalus 12 channel multispectral,

digital multi-spectral imagery, HyMap Hyperspectral Scanner and LIDAR laser scanner.

## USING OPTICAL SENSORS ON BOARD SATELLITES TO MEASURE FUEL LOADS

An SCA methodology using optical sensors on board satellites to measure fuel loads and record the severity, intensity and boundaries of fires will be further tested through the project.

### RFS volunteers in vital role

RFS volunteers assisted to undertake the field assessments at 130 sites in the study area. The procedure used an updated visual fuel assessment methodology based on work by Dr Kevin Tolhurst and Dr Peter Ellis from the Bushfire CRC. This methodology is being validated by using destructive sampling to measure the fuel load.

NPWS and Forests NSW are collecting vegetation structure, floristics and crown health as part of a parallel project.

The fuel load assessment project promises three important outcomes:

1. The development of a state-of-the-art fuel load assessment method that can accurately and reliably determine tonnes per hectare by visual assessment;
2. The development of the means to determine fuel loads on the ground by remote sensing imagery; and
3. Proving the efficacy of the SCA fuel load assessment methodology in another fuel type and location.

The project is well advanced in achieving the first of these outcomes. Further detailed analysis is being undertaken in relation to the other two outcomes.

**Top:** RFS members assess ground fuels as part of the fuel load measurement project. **Photo by Geoff Parish, Gosford.**

RFS Commissioner Phil Koperberg met with Deputy Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade Roy Bishop at RFS headquarters on 2 February 2006. The RFS was part of a tour of Australian fire authorities.



## RFS COMMISSIONER PHIL KOPERBERG AND THE LONDON FIRE BRIGADES' DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Photo by RFS Media Officer Rebel Talbert



## NEW OCV MAKES COMMUNICATION AS EASY AS ABC

Communication for firefighters will improve with the arrival of NSW's first state-of-the-art RFS Operational Command Vehicle (OCV) in Sutherland.

The state government funded \$203,000 vehicle not only improves voice communication.

## ELECTRONICALLY TRANSFER MAPS, INCIDENT ACTION PLANS AND FIRE UPDATES... TO AND FROM THE FIREGROUND

For the first time, RFS personnel will be able to electronically transfer maps, incident action plans and fire updates through faxes, email and database entries directly to and from the fireground.

### Tactical advantages

The new equipment and vehicle mean firefighters will have better radio contact and information flow between fireground crews, with all firefighting agencies, aircraft and with incident managers in Fire Control Centres.

This makes it easier for firefighters to coordinate firefighting tactics, call for resources and assistance and advise of fire spread and behaviour.

### Taking the high ground

To deal with the inherent difficulties of communication on the fireground, the RFS has developed a range of 'comms vans'. These are generally small buses with seats removed and radio equipment installed, which are placed on hills or other locations to provide better coverage.

While these vans continue to be effective and useful, the new OCV will improve and standardise these vehicles.

All communication solutions available are within the new van, from satellite phones to portable repeaters, a 6m telescopic mast to maximise reception and transmission and a range of radios and back up power systems.

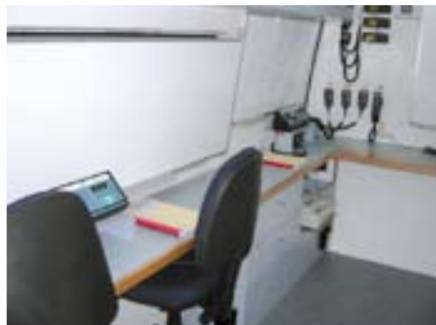
### Minimal set-up time

Because it is fitted with advanced technology the van simply pulls into position to provide almost immediate communication solutions, with little or no set up time. It is easier to drive and has a more effective working space for three operators than bus based OCVs.

### THE SUTHERLAND OCV IS EXPECTED TO BE THE FIRST OF SEVERAL ACROSS NSW

The van can be placed closer to firefighters to provide a focal point for information collection and distribution, providing all their communication requirements, reducing travel and work to access information and resources from Fire Control Centres.

Standardisation means all RFS communications personnel can easily and efficiently move from one OCV to another and be familiar with the systems.



The Sutherland OCV is expected to be the first of several across NSW with the standard design and equipment. With the development and project management costs involved in the creation of the first OCV removed, subsequent models may cost around \$180,000, depending on the features required.

#### Features of the new OCV include:

- High roof, long wheel base, air-conditioned, Mercedes Sprinter (similar to RTA traffic control units)
- More manoeuvrable and easy to drive than bus based OCV
- Comfortable, safe working space for three operators
- Telescopic mast extends 6m to maximise reception for various frequencies
- 7 fitted radios (3 x GRN/PMR/ Interagency Liaison, 1x fireground, 1xNPWS and State Forests, 1xUHF CB, 1x Airband)
- 8 roof aerials for radios
- Telephones - 1 satellite, 3 CDMA for voice, fax and data transfer via web
- Three work stations, surrounded by white boards
- Electrical inverter providing 12 volts to 240 volts, two large gel batteries for 12 volt current
- Patching arrangement on rear of vehicle patched to operator inside in whatever configuration required – operators can select a different GRN channel at will from inside the OCV
- Operator headphones, foot peddle push to talk enables hands free
- Laptop, colour printer, scanner, photocopier for printing and distributing maps and incident action plans and other information to and from the fireground
- Developed following research on Victorian Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service communication vehicles.

## OLD HAZELTON FACILITY UPGRADED FOR AERIAL FIREFIGHTING

Photos by David Hoadley

The old Hazelton facility at Cudal received some attention during the 2005-06 fire season from RFS Canobolas Zone (Orange, Cowra, Cabonne and Blayney councils) to facilitate use of larger, modern, water bombing aircraft for firefighting.

"It is appropriate that this project was installed at the Cudal airport to enhance our firefighting ability," RFS Canobolas Zone Manager Supt David Hoadley said.

## THE USE OF AIRCRAFT IN FIREFIGHTING TODAY IS BUILDING ON THEIR PIONEERING WORK

"Canobolas volunteers and the wider community remember and appreciate the early contribution made to aerial firefighting by the Hazelton family and the use of aircraft in firefighting today is building on their pioneering work."

During the 2005-06 fire season Canobolas Zone brigades had great success with the use of aircraft to hit fires quickly from the air in conjunction with volunteer ground crews to keep the fires small and to extinguish them quickly.

### Strategically positioned aircraft

Specialist aircraft under Commonwealth contract (part of a number of State and Commonwealth contracted aircraft strategically positioned around NSW) and a retardant batching plant based at the Canobolas Air Base operated at Orange Airport.

Additional State contract aircraft also based at Cowra were valuable in support of brigades in the Canobolas Zone and the neighbouring Council areas in RFS Region West.

The Cudal airport project included construction of a 247,000 litre tank as part of a loading facility that is capable of initially providing 75 loads to firefighting aircraft.

### Reducing turnaround time

The upgraded Cudal facility is the second in a series of planned resources that will assist in reducing turnaround times for aircraft and increase their effectiveness in support of volunteers across RFS Region West. The Cudal tank was a joint initiative of the



RFS and local Rural Fire Brigades, Cabonne Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Forests and Cobbs Machinery (the current owners of the site) with a total cost of about \$30,000.

Construction of the tank by contractors started on 2 February with RFS volunteers laying 1km of water pipes and erecting fences at the facility.

**From top:** RFS volunteers laid about 1km of pipe for the water tank at Cudal Airstrip. Photo by Supt. David Hoadley.

A 247,000 litre tank was installed at the old Hazelton's facility at Cudal Airport to assist aerial firefighting in RFS Region West. Photo by Supt. David Hoadley.

## ECHIDNA GETS ANTSY: WANDERS OFF BEATEN TRACK

Sutherland District Field Officers got a spiky surprise recently when they came across an echidna while working along a fire trail in Bangor. The disoriented mammal was deposited safely back into its natural habitat by Richard Soar shortly after – but not before posing for a few photographs.



**Below:** Children enjoy the RFS display at the Maitland Super Show where smoke alarms featured as a theme.

## ALARMING DISPLAY AT MAITLAND SUPER SHOW

By Martin Siemsen, RFS Hunter Zone Acting Community Safety Officer

For the past few years the RFS Hunter Zone Community Education Group and brigade volunteers have attended the Maitland Super Show.

This year the group decided to try something different. Rather than just handing out material, a theme was chosen for this year's display: smoke alarms.

## THEN A BRAVE SOUL CAME UP WITH THE SUGGESTION TO INVOLVE NSW FIRE BRIGADES

Then a brave soul came up with the suggestion to involve NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) to help deliver information about smoke alarms and their Smoke Alarm and Battery Replacement for the Elderly (SABRE) program.

Once these ideas started, they just kept on coming! A smoke alarm board display was created and the personnel selected to present the information, but the group wanted perfection.

### Bunnings come to the party

When the local Bunnings store was asked for their support, they came to party and supplied a Home Fire Safety Smoke Package

consisting of two smoke alarms, a 1kg dry chemical fire extinguisher and a fire blanket.

The Super Show Coordinator then came up with the idea to give this package away as a prize. To enter, members of the public submitted evaluation forms, and once the show was complete, a local Hunter resident was the lucky winner.

And what luck they were having - the resident did not have any home safety products and was about to purchase some of these items.

### Over 800 show bags!

This year's Super Show was down in numbers due to weather, however, there were over 800 show bags given out and numerous enquires that followed.

There were over 200 evaluation forms filled out with a "thumbs up" for the RFS and NSWFB section and a letter from one of the local primary schools thanking us for the educational display and assistance given to their group.

### Successful joint venture

The smoke alarm theme was very successful for the Hunter and the community education group will be incorporating this into their next big event - Steam Fest.

The cooperation between NSWFB and RFS was also a success and showed both fire Services working together with the common goal of FireWise.



## SHOALHAVEN CADETS MEET THE PRIME MINISTER

By Insp. Chris Palmer, Shoalhaven Learning & Development Officer

Members of the RFS Shoalhaven cadet program formed part of the Prime Minister's guard of honour at the Nowra School of Arts building on 24 April 2006.

### PM praises Service

The Prime Minister addressed cadets from the Defence Force and the RFS in the School of Arts Annex, speaking at length about what a magnificent service the RFS provides not only to NSW but also to other states as well.

## THE PM MENTIONED THE EFFORTS OF THE RFS IN THE CANBERRA FIRES

In particular he mentioned the efforts of the RFS in the Canberra Fires.

He thanked each and every volunteer for the time and commitment they gave and met some of the cadets before touring Nowra.

### 4-year youth program

RFS Shoalhaven in conjunction with the Shoalhaven Youth Volunteer Initiative (SYVI) have been training students from high schools in the Nowra area for the past four years.

Training is conducted on the students' normal sports afternoon. A formal certificate presentation is held and representatives of the Commissioner as well as state and federal parliament members attend to present awards to students.

For more information on the RFS Cadet Training Program go to page 38.

**Top:** Prime Minister John Howard addresses RFS Shoalhaven Cadets. Photo by provided by Federal Member for Gilmore, Joanna Gash's office



## HIGH COUNTRY FIRE RESEARCH

An alpine paddock in the NSW Snowy Plains was the venue for the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) High Fire Project Open Day on 20 March 2006.

Around 80 people made the 4WD trek to the open-air venue to see and hear the ongoing progress of the research trial of fire and fuels in the high country.

The RFS is a core partner in the Bushfire CRC. Guests were welcomed by property owners and RFS members Barry Aitchison and Darvall Dixon, and treated to a bush-style barbeque under the shade of an RFS marquee and surrounding snow gum woodlands.

### Landholders provide solution

The project's field research has been under development for almost a year. One of its major challenges, finding a suitable alpine site in the Snowy Plains, has been solved through the generous cooperation of local landholders.

The research project will enable development of a formal risk model for the risk posed by wildfire in the high country by considering fuel dynamics, fire history, fire weather, climatology and terrain.

## THE PROJECT WILL ALSO CONSIDER THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF GRAZING AND PRESCRIBED BURNING IN THE SNOWY PLAINS.

The project will also consider the combined effects of grazing and prescribed burning in the Snowy Plains. Three research sites in grassland and snow gum woodland will be used to develop a better understanding of the role of prescribed fire and grazing in mitigation of high intensity fires in high country ecosystems.

During the open day, High Fire project leader Mark Adams, project manager Maria Taranto and Bushfire CRC Chief Executive Officer Kevin O'Loughlin gave a general overview of High Fire and other Bushfire CRC projects. David Cheal, the manager of Flora Ecology Research at the Arthur Rylah Institute in Melbourne spoke of the importance of the research.

### Community forum

RFS Assistant Commissioners Rob Rogers and Shane Fitzsimmons attended the launch and a community forum attended by about 25 people at Berridale Fire Control Centre that evening.

**Top:** Almost 80 people sheltered beside the NSW Rural Fire Service marquee during the launch of the HighFire project by the Bushfire CRC.



**COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATIONS**

Rural Fire Service volunteers and staff from around NSW were presented with special commendations and awards by Commissioner Phil Koperberg on St Florian's Day, the International Day of Firefighters, 4 May 2006.

"Each year members of the RFS are faced with situations which call for courage and dedication of a very high order, and each year the Service tries to recognise their contribution and achievements," Commissioner Koperberg said.

**Four Commendations for Service**

"This year I am very proud to have been able to award Commendations for Service to four RFS members including Patrick Quinn, from Ganmain brigade, who attended a serious unit fire in which his sister passed away."

"Likewise, Graham Forward, of Mountain Lagoon brigade, was commended for his efforts in assisting an elderly lady, whom he resuscitated after finding her collapsed unconscious on a roadway.

"Group Officer Barry Harvey received a Commendation for his dedicated leadership

in the Wollondilly Rural Fire District and Superintendent Ken Lucas for his exceptional service in the important field of Fire Investigation."

Certificates of Commendation this year were awarded to Robert Vinzenz of Glenbrook/Lapstone brigade, headquarters officer Leigh Pinnington, Olivia Carter of Hornsby brigade and Barry Whalan from Eulomogo brigade.

**A JOINT CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION HAS BEEN AWARDED TO 22 BRIGADES IN THE GOSFORD RURAL FIRE DISTRICT**

In recognition of the outstanding work done during the New Year's Day fires this year a joint Certificate of Commendation was awarded to 22 brigades in the Gosford Rural Fire District. Along with the Gosford and Fire Control Centre personnel.

**Award for training package**

A Certificate of Commendation was also presented to the Mid Lachlan Valley Training Team for its work to develop a comprehensive training package on fighting grassland fires.

Coonabarabran Fringe brigade members were awarded a Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service for their work at a fire in a car dealership.

"I congratulate all these recipients for their dedication and exceptional service, they truly represent the best ideals of the NSW Rural Fire Service," the Commissioner said.

The full award citations and photographs of recipients can be seen on the RFS public website at [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au).

**Top: Award recipients received their certificates and medals during the St Florian's Day ceremony at RFS Headquarters.**  
Photo by Adam Hollingworth

Commissioner Phil Koperberg officially opened Mylstrom RFB station on 27 May. Photo by Claire Poignand



**AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDALS 2006**

A number of outstanding RFS members have been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal, given for exemplary service on the part of an individual RFS member.

The leadership and dedication shown by these members has enabled the Service to move forward, providing professional emergency and fire awareness services to the people of NSW.

Australia Day Honours and Awards Recipients:

- Leslie Bowden, Group Captain Port Stephens
- Brian Favelle, Hannanvale RFB
- Alan Robinson, Glenbrook RFB
- Grant Anderson, Insp. Clarence Valley
- Jack Tolhurst, Insp. Blue Mountains
- Jim Drinnan, Camden West RFB
- Andy Jaffray, Oak Flats RFB

Queen's Birthday Honours and Awards Recipients:

- Bruce Smith, Deputy Group Captain Eurobodalla
- Alan Gillespie, Supt., Manager Lower Hunter
- Allan Brett, Deputy Group Captain Warringah Pittwater
- Bill Rodger, Deputy Captain Wilberforce RFB
- Gordon Hill, Chief Supt., Region West Operations Officer
- David Messenger, Forbes RFB

Full details of the recipients' nomination statements are available online at the RFS public website [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au).

**From Top:** Assistant Commissioner Mark Crowweller with AFSM recipients Andy Jaffray, Jack Tolhurst, Jim Drinnan and Grant Anderson at the investiture ceremony, Government House, 4 May 2006. Photo by Adam Hollingworth.

Commissioner Phil Koperberg (centre) pictured with Brian Favelle, Alan Robinson, Leslie Bowden, and Ken Rawlinson (2005 recipient). Photo by Adam Hollingworth.



**COMMISSIONER'S EVENTS AND VISITS MAY - JUNE - JULY 2006**

**4 MAY**

Presentation of Commissioner's Commendations to RFS members on St Florian's day at RFS headquarters, Homebush Bay

**6 MAY**

Moore Creek RFB Station opening, Tamworth

**9 MAY**

Region East Conference, Port Stephens  
11 May Region North Conference, Coffs Harbour

**13 MAY**

Region South volunteer forum, Albury

**19 MAY**

Australasian Education and Fire Awareness Conference, Newcastle

**27 MAY**

Mylestom RFB Station opening, Bellingen

**30 MAY**

Wollongong national medals and long service awards

**13 JUNE**

Wedderburn RFB Station opening and tanker handover with the Minister Emergency Services

**3-5 JULY**

Bushfire Cooperative Research Council

**8 JULY**

Presentation of Tankers & Medals - Macarthur Zone

**22 JULY**

King Creek Station Opening & Hastings District Medals - Wauchope



**NATIONAL ESCAPE DAY**

A number of RFS brigades participated in the first National Escape Day, held in conjunction with McDonald's Family Restaurants on 3 June 2006.

McDonald's formed a partnership with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) in a bid to ensure that all jurisdictions were able to participate.

**Helping families escape from fires**

National Escape Day was designed to encourage people to formulate an escape plan to cope with house fires.

**VISITORS COULD DRAW UP AN ESCAPE PLAN ON SPECIALLY PRINTED TRAY MAYS**

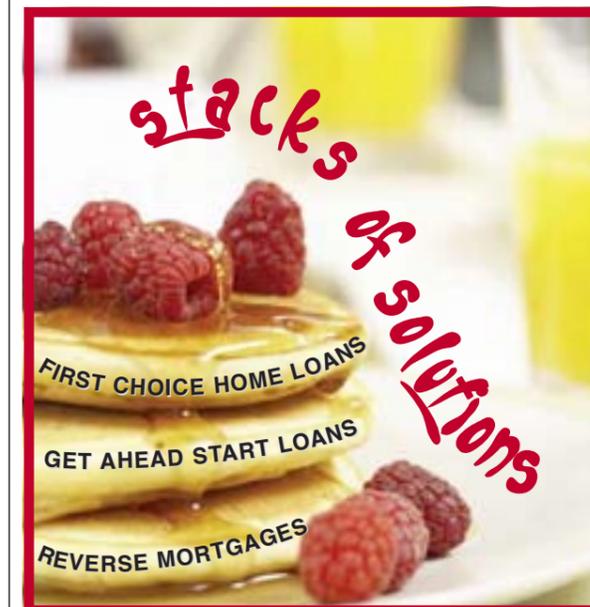
Firefighters from RFS and NSW Fire Brigades provided advice at local McDonald's restaurants, where visitors could draw up an escape plan on specially printed tray mats.

The day will be evaluated by all stakeholders at the AFAC meetings to be held in September/October 2006. However, early feedback has been positive both from the public and fire Services perspective.

**Increased involvement**

The RFS had limited involvement in the program this year and will be considering an extension of it in coming years. RFS crews either participated on the day in their own right or combined with NSWFB units to assist families to formulate their home fire escape plans.

**Top:** Community Safety Assistants from RFS Lakes Team provided information at the McDonald's store on the F3 at Jilliby. Photo by Insp. Shane Geerin.





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**BIG BROTHER HELPS FIGHT FIRES**

By Ben Shepherd, Captain Terrey Hills RFB

Recently the Warringah-Pittwater RFS installed two high powered surveillance cameras on their fire tower to assist with spotting and confirming smoke sightings in the area.

**Huge coverage pays dividends**

The cameras cover from Sydney CBD to areas of Hornsby and even into Gosford.

**THE CAMERAS WERE USED ON NEW YEARS DAY TO TRACK THE GOSFORD FIRES**

The cameras were used on New Years Day to track the Gosford fires, clearly showing the defined columns of each fire, smoke colour and had the ability to zoom in on spot fires.

**Everyday viewing**

Fire control staff use the system daily to confirm smoke sightings or to even check on potential storms that may be about to hit the area.

Officers can pan across the area, confirm a sighting and then make an assessment on resources that may be required, within seconds.

The system can record everything viewed by the cameras, which can be used later to assist in training or in an investigation.

Sites may also be set up in remote locations and dialled into through a PC. This then gives the user full control over a camera perhaps hundreds of kilometres away. Has the 'Big brother' era truly arrived? Perhaps. But when it can play a vital role, it's all for the best!



Rural Fire Brigades from Wingecarribee Shire joined with NSW Fire Brigades and National Parks and Wildlife to present firefighting and bushfire management to children from Southern Highlands Christian School, Bowral on Wednesday 8 February 2006.

Photo by Norm Britten



**CANON AGAIN SUPPORTING RFS BRIGADES BY PRODUCT DONATION**

Through the ongoing generosity of Canon Australia the RFS has taken delivery of a large range of office products for use by brigades.

The products, which consist of either superseded models or new product in damaged cartons (seconds), all carry a full Canon warranty.

This is the second product donation made by Canon. A \$100,000 donation was made by the company in 2004.

Distribution of the products will be through district offices which will be provided with a list of the donated products and asked to identify those brigades that have a definite need for a particular item.

Products will be sent from RFS Headquarters to the respective brigade secretaries.

A full list of brigades and supplied products will be included in the next edition of the Bushfire Bulletin.

## NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE LIBRARY

### The library is the place to

- See footage of vintage Holden utes battling grassfires!
- Get ideas for your brigade training and volunteer activities!
- Learn more about firefighting techniques!
- Study footage of famous fire incidents!
- Browse firefighting magazines from all over the world!
- Read the Daily Telegraph!

### We have

- Over 600 videos and DVD's, from training videos like Structural Firefighting to DVDs like The RFS Story
- More than 4,000 books, reports, conference papers and training manuals. Titles range from How to Motivate People to Automotive Mechanics Fundamentals
- Magazines & Journals. 60+ titles, from Firehouse to Harvard Business Review
- Daily newspapers include the Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph, The Australian. We also hold weekly issues of The Land as well as RFS press clippings.

### Facilities

A chillout reading area, desks, computers, a photocopier and video player. And sometimes there is a jar of sweets.

### Borrowing

You can search the library catalogue via the RFS Intranet. RFS staff and volunteers can borrow items for 4 weeks. Volunteers can contact the library directly to arrange a loan and items can be posted out to your home address.

### Brigade Visits

Brigades are welcome to visit the library evenings or Saturdays. Contact us to discuss.

### Who can visit the library?

All members of the NSW Rural Fire Service are welcome. The library is also open to researchers and members of the public by arrangement with a Librarian.

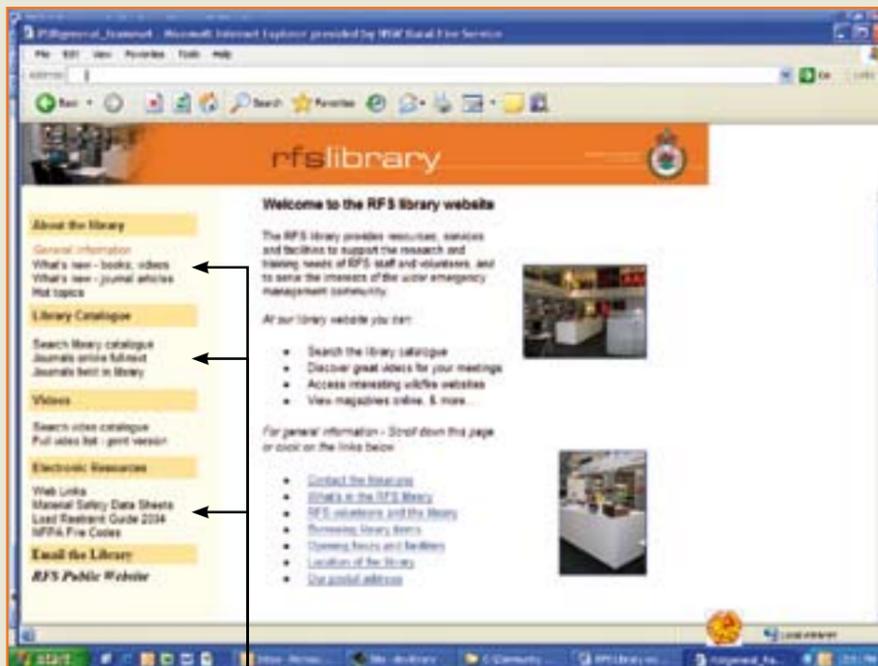
### Location & Opening Times

15 Carter St  
Homebush Bay NSW 2127  
Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

### Contact the librarians

Barbara Glass, Senior Librarian  
Phone: 8741 5456

Kristine Wendtman, Librarian  
Phone: 8741 5455  
Email: [RFS.Library@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:RFS.Library@rfs.nsw.gov.au)



The latest books, videos etc in the library

Search library catalogue

Electronic resources

**RFS librarians help to fight fires with information!**

### LIBRARY ON MYRFS

RFS Library website is now available to our volunteers on the RFS volunteer website MyRFS – [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au)

- Logon to MyRFS  
Click on Links in the left-hand navigation

If you have any questions or suggestions, or would like the RFS library staff to assist you with you inquiry, contact us at [RFS.Library@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:RFS.Library@rfs.nsw.gov.au) or telephone us at 8741 5456 or 8741 5455.

## MYRFS: 1 YEAR ON AND 6000 MEMBERS STRONG



**M**yRFS, the RFS volunteers' website, turned one-year-old in July and can boast significant new features and nearly 6000 registered users.

### Connecting with members

These features are part of the ongoing development program that will continue through 2006-2007 to connect volunteers with the information they need to assist their community.

Over the last year, a regular stream of users has connected to MyRFS to get a range of information including brigade statistics, membership information and news. Additionally, volunteers can get operations based information like the Operations Brief, aircraft movements and notifiable incidents.

### IMPORTANT NEW FEATURES COMMEMORATE THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Three new features are being launched to commemorate the one year anniversary.

**Hazard reduction reports** directly from the

Bushfire Risk Information Management System (BRIMS) show brigades the current hazard reduction activities planned for their area, enabling brigades to monitor burning activity.

**Permit reports** display permits that have been issued within a brigade's district in preparation for the season ahead.

**Maps of district and brigade areas** will be available from July this year. This is the last feature for phase two, and there are plans to expand the range of maps during the next phase of MyRFS which started in July.

### Online Brigade Management Resources

**The Brigade Contact Book** is an online version of the printed brigade register report volunteers have always been able to request from their district office.

### A BRIGADE MEMBER WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE MOST CURRENT CONTACT DETAILS OF MEMBERS THROUGH THE CONTACT BOOK IN MyRFS

When a volunteer updates their contact details using MyRFS this will be immediately reflected in the online Contact Book for members of their own brigade to see. A Brigade member will always have the most current contact details of members of their brigade, through the Contact Book in MyRFS.

This functionality has been provided for brigade-related functions and activities only, as outlined in Service Standard 1.1.14 – Personal Information and Privacy.

### Forms and Documents

Since June 2006 these include: Operations, Safety and Welfare, Community Education, Training and Administration. Equipment information is on the way.

### Stronger Connections

In 2007 MyRFS will include features allowing brigades and districts/zone/team staff to publish information directly to their members. This means documents such as training calendars, meeting minutes and fundraising activity information can be made available directly to members through the MyRFS website.

"As we've travelled around this year, it's been encouraging to hear all the comments and great suggestions from volunteers," said James Williams, Project Manager for MyRFS.

"Volunteers are telling us 'you said you'd do it, and you did!'"

"Collaboration with our RFS volunteer focus groups state-wide has ensured that we've delivered the functionality volunteers have been asking for."

MyRFS development continues through 2006-07. RFS volunteers can register themselves for MyRFS at the website [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au).

## HAWKESBURY RESCUE EXPO SHOWCASES RFS SKILL AND TECHNOLOGY

Photos by Belinda Landry



# SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

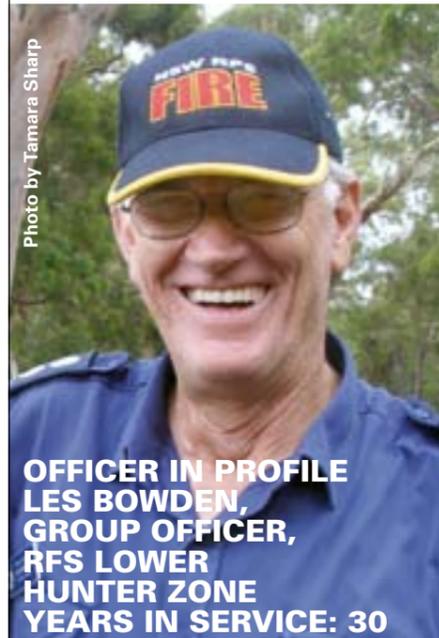


Photo by Tamara Sharp

**OFFICER IN PROFILE**  
**LES BOWDEN,**  
**GROUP OFFICER,**  
**RFS LOWER**  
**HUNTER ZONE**  
**YEARS IN SERVICE: 30**

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

There was a large fire in the area where I lived. A woman was riding around on a horse yelling out that the fire brigade needed help. So I grabbed a pair of spare overalls and jumped on the truck.

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

From day 1 I was heavily involved in training. Back then there was no real formal training, so I helped in training until the modules and standards were up and running. I became a Deputy Captain and then a Captain. For the past 10 years I've been a Group Captain.

#### ALL FIRES ARE MEMORABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE ALL DIFFERENT

#### What has been your most memorable moment?

All fires are memorable because they are all different. I like the camaraderie in the Service, meeting all the people and members as you travel.

#### What has been your worst fire?

The 1994 fires were the biggest fires I attended. It was fast moving, took a lot to contain and round up. We also had to deal with the old equipment. It was hard yakka.

**What do you think is the most significant change you have seen in the Service?**  
 Zoning. It has been great for the Service, from there we can only get better.

#### I THOUGHT HE WAS A LITTLE BIT CRAZY BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T FIT A HORSE INTO THE CAR

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

We attended a motor vehicle accident involving a Mitsubishi Express. The driver walked up to me and asked me to get the horse out of his car. I thought he was a bit crazy because you couldn't fit a horse into the car and there was no trailer. It turned out they had hit a horse and it was in their car.

#### What committees/projects are you involved with for the Service?

I was involved with training up until two years ago. I like to get a little involved with the FireWise side of the Service. I had been on the State Operations Committee as an RFS member, but am no longer on that.

#### What do you or did you do outside the Service?

I was a salesman for Streets Ice Cream. Then I was a transport supervisor for Cadbury Schweppes before working as a salesman for Arnotts for about 20 years.

#### Any final thoughts or comments?

There are a lot of people on the fireground who would be a great asset to the RFS if they were employed. So long as the RFS listens to volunteers they can only go forward.

**OFFICER IN PROFILE**  
**JIM FAHEY,**  
**GROUP CAPTAIN,**  
**HORNSBY-KU-RING-GAI**  
**YEARS IN SERVICE: 35**

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

I had a mate in the Service when I was 16, and was lured in by him

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

I joined Westleigh brigade when I was 16. I was voted in as Deputy Captain when I was 18. I was heavily involved with the brigade up until I was asked to move to Hornsby HQ

brigade as Captain. The brigade was all but dormant and I was asked to reinvigorate it. In 1992 I was voted in as Deputy Group Captain. In 1994 I was involved in the fires in Lane Cove Valley, Hornsby and Baulkham Hills. I was made Group Captain of Operations in 2000 and was heavily involved with fireground operations in the 2001/2002 fire season. My journey through the Service has been a family affair, with my son joining in 1998, and my wife as call out officer for Hornsby HQ Brigade.

#### What has been your most memorable moment?

The 1994 fires and the Black Christmas fires. They were huge and very successful campaigns, where we saved many thousands of homes compared with very little property loss.

#### WHEN WE DROVE INTO WINCHESTER ROAD IT WAS LIKE DRIVING INTO HELL

#### What has been your worst fire?

Winchester Rd, West Killara, part of the Lane Cove Valley Fire. When we drove into Winchester Rd it was like driving into hell.

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

The increase in the level of training in the Service and the upgrade in equipment from the old Blitzes to the appliances we have now.

#### What committees/projects are you involved with for the Service?

I've always been involved on a district level, particularly with hazard reductions and operations.

#### What do you or did you do outside the Service?

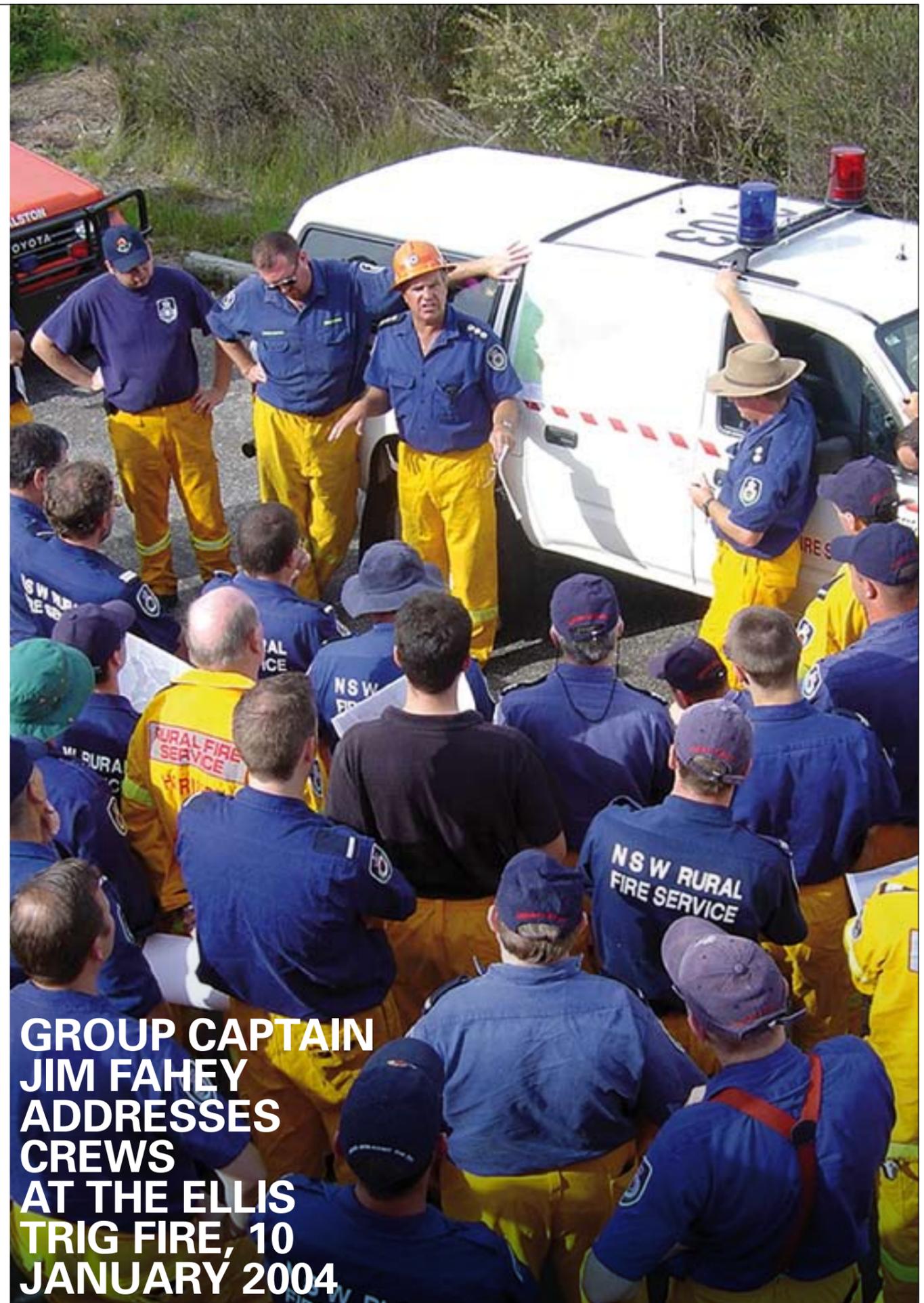
I was self employed, ran my own heavy vehicle repairs and maintenance business. Now I am a plant manager for a factory in Sydney.

#### Most amazing opportunity the Service has provided you with?

Just to work with the volunteers. To meet people from every walk of life, and to be associated with a wide circle of friends.

#### Any final thoughts or comments?

The Service needs to be mindful of the volunteers' time. Time is hard to come by for volunteers as we have a life outside the Service, and we need to make sure that the time they can spare is being used productively.



**GROUP CAPTAIN**  
**JIM FAHEY**  
**ADDRESSES**  
**CREWS**  
**AT THE ELLIS**  
**TRIG FIRE, 10**  
**JANUARY 2004**

## NOW AND THEN... ANTIQUE FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT DISPLAYED

By Cudgegong Community Safety Officer  
Paul Dewick

Australian bush firefighting equipment from the ancient to the most modern was on display at the Mudgee Showground on Sunday 29 January 2006 during the Cudgegong Antique Machinery Club's Vintage Rally and Swap Meet.

Cudgegong Rural Fire District hosted the display for the fourth time, drawing hundreds of adults and children to see the colourful collection of equipment and learn more about fire safety.

As an added attraction, the RFS brought its local Firewise Trailer, a resource shared with Orana Team, to this year's exhibition.

### Group Captain's collection

The old-to-new exhibition was launched in 2003 by Group Captain Alan Selman of Mudgee, who assembled a vast collection of equipment from bygone days. The collection includes a 1940 Chevrolet Striker four-wheel drive fire truck first put into service fighting fires in the Blue Mountains and now owned by Don Lewis, former Mudgee Group Captain (retired) of Gulgong.

"We have things dating back to the 1930s and 1940s, including antique stirrup pumps that an old-timer told us were the most modern equipment on the fireground at a fire he attended before World War II," Mr Selman said.

### From knapsacks to vintage vehicles

Mr Selman, better known locally in the district by his nickname, Yowie, has collected an incredible array of other equipment including leather and canvas beaters used to attack grass fires in years gone by, an original 1939 tin knapsack spray unit, antique water pumps and chainsaws, and one of the first radios used in the local council bush firefighting vehicles.

## THE VEHICLES ON DISPLAY HAD ALL SEEN ACTIVE SERVICE IN THE FORMER MUDGEE OR RYLSTONE DISTRICTS

The vehicles on display had all seen active service in the former Mudgee or Rylstone districts, including a C1300 from Crudine Brigade, a two wheel drive KDL Bedford from Cooyal Brigade through to the latest Category One appliance from the Headquarters Brigade.

### Stories of the past

The day was a huge success, with in excess of 300 visitors passing through the RFS



display. Many reminisced about fires long ago fought and how the equipment was very different to that used today; often a branch broken from an unburnt tree did the job back then.

The event was staffed by members of the Cudgegong Firewise group and volunteers from the Lawson (Cudgegong) and Headquarters Brigades.

### Calling all bowerbirds

Plans are already under way for next year's display. If anyone has any equipment that is long retired from active duty and wishes to

loan or donate it to the event, or even swap stories on the "good" old days, they can contact Alan through Cudgegong Fire Control on 02 6372 4434.

**From Top: Lawson (Cudgegong) Rural Fire Brigade Captain Barry Wells, Group Captain Alan Selman, and Deputy Captain (and Firewise member) Bill Burns, all helped organise the day. Photo by Jon Chapman (Headquarters Brigade)**  
Antique firefighting appliances collected by RFS members added to the display of old vehicles at Mudgee Showground. Photo by Jon Chapman (Headquarters Brigade)

Top: Discussions with Mandagery volunteers helped RFS Canobolas Zone formulate its community education and firefighting strategies.

## A YARN IN THE SHEARING SHED IMPROVES FIREFIGHTING

Volunteer consultation is firmly entrenched in RFS Canobolas Zone's management plans. Indeed, a cup of tea provided by FireCom in a local shearing shed has proved to be a valuable communication tool.

The second stage of volunteer consultations across Cowra, Orange, Blayney and Cabonne Shires reviewed the fire season and RFS activities across the Zone. The zone manager, operations and community safety staff attended 10 meetings with 200 brigade and community members in May 2006.

The objectives of these meetings were to:

- improve communication and understanding between volunteers and staff
- build lasting and long term relationships and alliances with volunteers
- really engage with volunteers by listening to their needs or concerns
- promote mutually beneficial results.

### Concerns about high fuel loads

"The initial round of meetings held prior to the fire season in November 2005 gave volunteers an opportunity to voice their concerns about high fuel loads in the grassland country and the need to supply multiple resources, plant and aircraft for incidents that were likely to occur during the summer", said RFS Canobolas Zone Manager Supt David Hoadley .

"In response to this advice from our volunteers, zone staff developed strategies to deploy multiple brigades and swift initial air attack with the support of the State Air Desk. Aircraft were contracted to ensure fire outbreaks on days of very high fire danger were kept small and containable."

### Volunteers' viewpoints

At the latest round of meetings volunteers provided their comments on the operational aspects of firefighting strategies used over the summer.

### OVERWHELMING SUPPORT BY THE VOLUNTEERS FOR THE STRATEGIES

"There was overwhelming support by the volunteers for the strategies we had all agreed on and developed together," Supt. Hoadley said.

"Positive comments were regularly made on aircraft effectiveness and the active staff support to our brigades in quickly providing the required resources for each incident.

"Any previous barriers between districts and brigades within the Zone have been effectively dealt with as we have all reflected on how well everyone worked together during the summer."



### Communication builds rapport

Active communication is helping to build a strong rapport between staff and volunteers.

"The message we get at each meeting from volunteers is to keep these meetings going as they are productive and enjoyable", Supt. Hoadley said.

### THE OTHER MAJOR ISSUE... THE NEED TO EDUCATE OUR COMMUNITIES ABOUT FIRE MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION

The other major issue to surface out of the May 2006 meetings was the need to educate our communities about fire management and prevention.

RFS Canobolas Zone staff and volunteers have agreed that the best strategy to address this problem would be to distribute

a one page newsletter to their communities in councils' quarterly rate notice.

This newsletter will contain information relevant to the rate notice mailing dates and could include:

- the Bush Fire Danger Period (dates, obligations etc)
- awareness for new residents
- smoke detectors
- what a Toban means
- permit requirements
- home preparation
- heater maintenance
- RFS contact details
- how to report fires (what is the relevant information to provide).

Volunteers also expressed a desire to invite local councillors to future consultation meetings to ensure that Councils were kept up to date on volunteer and Service issues.

**Centre: Cargo volunteers discuss the fire season.**

# RESPONSE DRIVING

All items are embroidered with the RFS logo

Item	Price	Qty	Colour	Size	Total
Polo Shirt - Double stitched Polyester/Cotton with pocket & Australian made	XS-XXL 3XL-7XL (L)emon/(N)avy/(W)hite XS, 6XL-7XL (N)avy only				\$29.00 \$31.00
T-Shirt - Double stitched 100% Cotton & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-6XL (N)avy/(W)hite 6XL (N)avy only				\$18.00 \$20.00
Polar Fleecy Jumper - Half zip front with 2 slant pockets at bottom	XS-3XL (N)avy only				\$42.50
Polar Fleecy Jacket - Full zip front, Elasticated cuff, Draw cord waist	S-XXL (N)avy only				\$52.50
Sloppy Joe - Super fleecy / Low pill with round neck & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-6XL (N)avy only (N)avy only				\$29.00 \$31.00
Dress Jumper - 80/20 Wool/Polyester blend, Shoulder & Elbow Patches, Epaulettes, Pencil pockets & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-5XL (N)avy only (N)avy only				\$85.00 \$87.00
Beanie - Acrylic - One size fits all - Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (N)avy only				\$11.00
Beanie - Fleecy - One size fits all - Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (N)avy only				\$13.50
Cap - Baseball - Brushed cotton, Adjustable velcro, One size fits all, Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (N)avy only				1-24 \$8.50 / 25-99 \$8.00 / 100+ \$7.50
Medium Kit Bag - Heavy duty nylon & zips, Base board, 3 external zipped pockets with shoulder & hand carry straps	L 50cm x H 30cm x W 20cm				\$35.00
Large Kit Bag - Heavy duty nylon & zips, Base board, 5 external zipped pockets including "Wet" & Boot pockets with shoulder & hand carry straps	L 73cm x H 33cm x W 31cm				\$45.00
Garment Sizes	XS S M L XL XXL 3XL 4XL 5XL 6XL 7XL				Postage & Handling per shipping address (Includes badges if part of order)
	85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135				\$6.60
<b>Total</b>					

**SPECIAL OFFER** - Order 10 or more garments (excluding caps and bags) and your brigade name will be embroidered under the RFS logo at no extra cost

Please print Name <b>and</b> / <b>or</b> Brigade for embroidering on garments and kit bags. Name <b>or</b> Brigade \$5.00 or Name <b>and</b> Brigade \$8.00	Type (Please Tick)			Total
	Name	Brigade	Both	

\*Red on Gold badges are Proban backed

Sew on embroidered Name or Brigade badges - 9cm x 3cm	Colour (Please Tick)			Qty	Total
	White on Navy	Red on Gold*	Red on Navy		

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## Driving Under Emergency Conditions

Generally RFS vehicles are required to 'respond' as part of the initial response to an emergency incident, under the instruction of the Incident Controller (IC), District/Team/Zone Manager (D/T/Z) or other person with delegated authority.

Driving under emergency conditions starts from receipt of the instruction to 'respond' in an RFS vehicle and stops when there is no longer a risk at an incident or a requirement to respond.

A response by the RFS is defined as driving beyond normal traffic regulations but within the exemptions under the Australian Road Rules, using lights and sirens as appropriate for the conditions, to provide both adequate warning to and maintain the safety of other road users.

**Remember – if you have an accident en-route to an emergency incident you have defeated the purpose for which you were responded.**

Members in private vehicles driving to the brigade station or direct to the incident are to observe all Australian Road Rules at all times.

Support vehicles (communications, catering, CABA support, lighting, supply, crew transport, etc.) and appliances called later to assist should proceed (i.e. drive normally, obeying all traffic rules and without using lights and siren) to the incident unless there is an explicit instruction to respond by the IC, D/T/Z Manager or other person with delegated authority.

## RFS Standard Operating Procedures

Certain exemptions for emergency vehicles exist under the Australian Road Rules 1999. Rule 306 provides certain exemptions for drivers of Police and other emergency vehicles to operate 'outside' traffic legislation under limited circumstances provided that 'reasonable' care is taken. However, even the most serious emergency does not legally excuse a reckless disregard for the safety of others.

**Regardless of legislated exemptions, RFS drivers are to come to a complete stop and not proceed until it is confirmed as safe, if they encounter:**

- Red traffic lights or a 'Stop' sign.
- Unguarded railway crossings with limited visibility or if a train is approaching.
- Blind intersections.
- Intersections where traffic in some lanes is not visible.
- Intersections where the RFS vehicle does not have right of way.

**RFS drivers are to slow down to a speed which will allow them to quickly stop and avoid a collision, and stop whenever it is not confirmed as safe, if they encounter:**

- 'Give way' signs.
- Pedestrian crossings (unoccupied).
- Buses setting down passengers.
- The vicinity of schools when students are arriving or leaving.

## Traffic Rules

RFS drivers will comply with specific regulations from the Australian Road Rules and the NSW Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Regulation, which include:

- Speed limit in a school zone.
- Speed limit when passing school bus displaying an illuminated 40km/h speed limit sign/lights.
- Stopping at a children's crossing.
- Giving way at a pedestrian crossing.
- Not entering a level crossing when a train is approaching.

## Road Works

Drivers responding under emergency conditions will comply with the speed limits posted at locations where road works are in progress and will also stop when instructed by traffic controllers (Note: traffic controllers are required to progress emergency vehicles when safe to do so).

## Pedestrians

Pedestrians do not have to assist the passage of an emergency vehicle. The driver of an RFS vehicle can't force a passage through pedestrians, but whilst pedestrians may choose to give way, the driver must be prepared to stop for pedestrians at all times.

## Other Road Users

**Regardless of the urgency, no exemption gives the RFS driver the authority to force another road user to break the Australian Road Rules.**

# RESPONSE DRIVING

## ALWAYS WEAR SEATBELTS

### Responding on FREEWAYS AND HIGHWAYS

- 1 Take note of **speed advisory signs** - they are a good indication of how fast a truck can safely travel
- 2 Know where **emergency vehicle u-turn bays** are located
- 3 If using the **left-hand breakdown lane** use extreme caution



### Responding in URBAN AREAS

- 1 Stop at red lights and stop signs
- 2 Don't travel too close to **other responding emergency vehicles**
- 3 Be ready for **unexpected reactions** from other drivers



### Responding in RURAL AREAS

- 1 Watch out for **cattle**
- 2 Watch out for **slow moving farm machinery**
- 3 Slow down when crossing **fords or narrow bridges** and observe weight limits



### Responding in RURAL TOWNS

- 1 Stop at **unguarded railway crossings**
- 2 Watch for **cars parked rear to curb** suddenly pulling out
- 3 Watch when going from **tarmac to dirt roads**





A motor vehicle accident (MVA) is really a misnomer, as all accidents could be avoided if the circumstances were different, so more realistically they are motor vehicle crashes. Crashes are influenced by three main categories of factors: our behaviour and distractions; our vehicle and its capabilities; and the road or track on which we are driving coupled with the accompanying weather conditions.

**There have been 84 incidents involving RFS service vehicles reported to State Operations since 2000 of which 62 were crashes, 19 were affected by fire and 3 which were subjected to the impact of a falling tree.**

Within the last twelve months Brigades responded to approximately 1,600 accidents within Rural Fire District, many of which were fatal. According to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau there were 1636 fatalities during 2005 of which 518 were in NSW. Unfortunately such fatalities are so numerous that many do not even make the daily news unless there are multiple fatalities, an innocent victim is killed, there is some specific media interest or it occurs over a public holiday period. It should also be noted that according to Roads and Traffic Authority statistics there are around 26,000 people injured annually, many of whom are seriously injured requiring longer term hospitalisation, with ongoing trauma which often results in total disruption of their family life and their career.

### Visible and Audible Warning Devices

Visible and audible warning devices (lights and siren/two tone air horns) must be used at all times, whilst driving 'outside' traffic legislation under emergency legislated exemptions, however sirens may not be appropriate

**on private lands or in remote or rural areas in circumstances where there is livestock, there is no other traffic or there is no safety advantage to be gained by their use. Visible warning devices are still to be used at all times.**

The driver must have control of the visible and audible warning devices and shall make decisions on the applicability of their use.

Driving under lights and sirens may adversely affect a number of drivers, particularly when the adrenalin is flowing and there seems to be an urgency to get to an incident.

**You must consider the type of incident and determine whether it is life threatening and adjust your driving accordingly. Will a few seconds make any difference to the outcome?**

### Distractions

Talking on a mobile phone or text messaging is illegal and can distract the driver, but equally providing a SitRep over the radio will provide a similar distraction so care must be taken. Trying to read a map and drive is also very hazardous.

Other distractions may include personnel in the vehicle. For example the Officer in Charge should ensure that they do not distract the driver when briefing the crew en-route.

### Our vehicle and its capabilities

Many of our members are used to driving motor cars rather than heavier trucks so the driver must always be aware of increased stopping distances, reduced manoeuvrability and different cornering dynamics.

Seat belts must always be worn by all members except when direct firefighting on the fireground and generally it is also safer if the windows are fully wound up.

### The road or track on which we are driving coupled with the accompanying weather conditions

Consider the particular type of road, track or trail surface, coupled with the width and number of lanes, road markings, particularly unbroken double lines, the posted speed limit and advisory speed signs. Then add to this the results of adverse weather conditions such as wet or icy surfaces, minor flooding, foggy conditions and of course darkness and you are starting to identify some of the aspects which contribute to crashes. Always look ahead to identify all hazards and adjust your driving accordingly.

The Rural Fire Service has introduced a Crash Free Driving Course, so when this becomes available to you, it would be great to take advantage of the opportunity.

### Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act 1999 and the Crimes Act 1900

**There are no exemptions for drivers for negligent, furious, reckless, predatory or menacing driving, negligent or dangerous driving causing death or grievous bodily harm, driving at a speed or in a dangerous manner.**

Failure to meet the requirements of "reasonable care" may mean that the driver is subject to civil and/or criminal liability in the event of a collision.

Chief Superintendent Alan Brinkworth AFSM  
Manager Operations, Policy and Standards

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## WOODENBONG'S ANZAC DAY BLAZE OF GLORY

Story by Greg Gulliver,  
Senior Deputy Captain, Woodenborg RFB  
Photos by Kim Taylor, Woodenborg RFB

The Woodenborg Rural Fire Brigade (RFB), located on the Kyogle Tenterfield border, had the honour of playing an important part in this year's local Anzac Day march.

Brigade volunteers joined veterans, ex-servicemen and women, RAAF Base Amberley personnel, local school representatives and many others in the annual commemorative service on 25 April.

### Riderless whaler leads the way

The march was led by a riderless whaler (Australian stock horse) carrying a military saddle and rifle, followed by a piper. Then came the proud NSW Rural Fire Service members and the Woodenborg Cat 1 tanker.

All members agreed that it was a privilege to be invited to lead the march on this special day.

### Annual flyover

Once again, the town of Woodenborg was treated to a flyover from an F1-11 from nearby Amberley. This has become a yearly event on Anzac Day.

## THOSE GATHERED HEARD THE STORY OF A LOCAL DIGGER

After the march, the traditional Anzac service was held in the Woodenborg Public Hall where young and old gathered to participate in the remembrance of the fallen.

Those gathered heard the story of a local Digger whose letters sent home during World War I made everyone again realise what a sacrifice these people made in these wars.

It was a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by Australian servicemen and women, this Digger being one of the many who didn't make it home.

**From top:** Woodenborg RFB member Ken Fahy standing in front of the riderless whaler Woodenborg Cat 1 and members leading the Anzac Day parade.

## SHANES PARK MEDAL TALLY

By Daniel Busch, Captain, Shanes Park RFB

On Sunday 12 March 2006 members from Shanes Park Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) from the Cumberland Zone competed in the NSW Police athletics games at the Blacktown Olympic softball stadium.

Members of Shanes Park ran in both the 400 metre single and 400 metre relay race.

### Fierce competition

Competition was fierce on the day with a RFS ladies contingent from the Wyong district applying pressure (and support) to the Shanes Park members in both races.

## BRIGADE MEMBERS ENDED THE DAY WITH A SILVER MEDAL IN THE 400 METRE RELAY

Brigade members Danny Busch, Glen Turner, Daniel Staples and Bill Errington ended the day with a silver medal taking 2nd place in the 400 metre relay.

Other Brigade members competing on the day were Todd Arthur, Mick Turner, Robert Pate and Keith White.

### Catering for competition

The medal tally was surprising, given the brigade initially attended the event to provide catering for competing Police and other emergency service personnel.

**Below:** Shanes Park RFB members with their athletics medals



## NEW FIRE STATION OPENING

By Tamara Sharp Salt Ash / Williamtown RFB Secretary

A green tree frog, blind in one eye, travelled a kilometre down a busy main road to see the official opening of the Salt Ash/Williamtown Rural Fire Brigade's (RFB) new station on 10 December 2005.

The brigades are uncertain as to how the old station frog followed them to their new location. However, one popular theory is that it made the effort because it knew of the wonderful future the new station holds for all.

A single bay station was built in Salt Ash in 1972 in Lemon Tree Passage Rd and after the 1994 fires was extended to fit three vehicles... but only just!

## THREE SPACIOUS BAYS ALLOWING PLENTY OF ROOM TO WALK AROUND THE TRUCKS

### Not so squeezey

The new station in Michael Drive consists of three spacious bays allowing plenty of room to walk around the trucks and restock

them inside the station. It also contains a kitchen with hot water, a meeting room, single sex and disabled toilets and showers downstairs with a private office and decent sized training room upstairs.

This is an unbelievable setting compared to the previous one-and-a-half bay station where three trucks were continually shuffled.

### Who's who in the region

At the opening were local councillors, RFS Region East Manager Chief Supt Bruce Holtz, Lower Hunter Zone Manager Supt Alan Gillespie, RFS Chaplain, Group Officers, Brigade Captains and brigade members, Salt Ash Public School and various churches and businesses who have offered continued support.

First to speak was Cr Craig Baumann who outlined the history of the Williamtown/Salt Ash Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, now Salt Ash/Williamtown RFB, where an old farm shed in Oakvale was originally used to house the equipment.

### Thanks to a professional team

Captain Tracy Lowe gave an insight into the brigade and the support it receives. She also reminded everyone of the very professional team of firefighters who selflessly devote a lot of time, effort and energy into protecting the community.

Capt. Lowe and Cr Baumann unveiled the plaque, proudly marking this significant day for the brigade and community.

## A slice of life in the new station

After the station and firefighters were blessed by the RFS Chaplain, a delicious cake featuring a photo of the new station was cut and quickly devoured before a barbecue lunch

A highlight of the opening was the beautiful singing of the National Anthem and 'Jingle Bell Rock' by the Salt Ash Public School Choir – despite the sheer height of the station's roof adding an interesting variable to their young voices!

## Opening turns into 'open day'

An equipment demonstration was conducted on the field at the station doorstep (another luxury for training) displaying powerful manned and unmanned nozzles. Community Education show bags were handed out as the event became an 'Open Day' for the amazed public.

Salt Ash/Williamtown RFB is extremely pleased with their new station and the conveniences and efficiency it will bring to brigade practises. Entirely funded by the Port Stephens Council the crews are grateful for their contribution in making volunteer services more efficient and comfortable.



## HATS OFF FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

**H**er father's old hat serves as a constant reminder to RFS Far West Team Operations Officer Robyn Martin of her core responsibilities – RFS volunteers.

The Captain of Sandy Creek Brigade for 51 years, Robert Hyde was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2000. Bob's old hat sits on Insp. Martin's desk as she carries out her work for volunteers and communities in Cobar, Central Darling and the Unincorporated Zone of NSW.

### A story that salutes all volunteers

Insp. Martin entered the story of her father and his hat to a competition in The Land newspaper. Both the story and the hat went on display at the 2005 Sydney Royal Easter Show. Since then she has had many requests for copies of the story.

"I guess it was written not just about my dad, but for that whole amazing generation of our older volunteers who made the RFS what it is today," Insp. Martin said.

### BOB'S OLD HAT

By Insp. Robyn Martin, Far West Team Operations Officer

**W**hen I look at the old hat sitting forlornly on my desk, my mind drifts back to my youth and strong memories are evoked of Bob, the hat's old mate. Bob was a bushman, born and bred in far western NSW, a man who never ventured far without his trusty Akubra planted on his head.

My earliest memories of Bob are of his rakish smile, and his hat sitting jauntily on his head while he steadied his horse. In later years, the horse would be replaced by a bike but the faithful hat remained. I smile at the diesel and oil stains on the hat, remembering the long days Bob spent operating dozers, trying to earn enough money to buy the family farm.

### WHENEVER THERE WAS ANY GREASE AROUND, BOB AND HIS HAT WOULD SURELY FIND IT

Later, his son would operate the dozers while Bob looked after his stock, but if there was ever any grease around, Bob and his hat would surely find it. Bob was captain of his local bushfire brigade for more than 50 years, and the big fire seasons of 1974 and 1984 meant Bob was gone with the brigade for weeks on end. The fires were big news and TV crews were everywhere. Bob became a favourite with the "journos" and for a while, his hat was a regular feature on the nightly news.

### HIS HAT WAS A REGULAR FEATURE ON NIGHTLY NEWS

Bob spent 70 years on his beloved western property, until sadly, in what has become a fairly common event, the family partnership was dissolved and the station sold. Forced from the land he loved, Bob retreated to town, taking with him his kelpies and his hat.

In his twilight years and with his memory failing, Bob now spends his days on the front veranda of the old cottage in town, watching as life passes slowly by. When I visit him,

I wish for those days of old; happier days when he had a need to wear a hat.

### IT WAS HIS PILLOW FOR THOSE FEW PRECIOUS MOMENTS OF REST ON THE FIREGROUND

His hat - it protected him from scorching summer heat, from the cold and pouring rain; it was his pillow for those few precious moments of rest on the fireground; his only protection when he fell from his bike (as he did); and of course, a water dish for his dogs who were never far from his side. It was his offside in the stockyards, helping push stubborn sheep up a race or wayward cattle into a yard.

The dogs are all gone now, the sheep and fires, droughts and floods a distant memory for a sad old bushman with a broken heart. The hat, however, has pride of place in an air-conditioned office in town. You see, I am Bob's youngest daughter and I am a salaried officer in the NSW Rural Fire Service. I use the old hat at displays, shows and field days alongside all the latest protective clothing and helmets. The purpose of the old hat is supposed to show just how far we have come in the provision of safety equipment for our volunteer firefighters.

The old hat has proven to be a great educational tool and a real talking point for visitors to our display. I guess nearly everyone has a story about a hat and this is mine.

I reckon I just like having the old hat close by; like my dad, I have learnt that as we get older, our memories become our most precious possession.

## DODGE FIRE TANKER BASHES TO BUNDABERG

Story by Brian Graham, RFS Region East Operations Officer

**D**riving a Dodge and a pick-up, NSW firefighters have raised about \$17,000 for Variety NSW on the Brookvale to Bundaberg Bash from 23 July to 2 August 2006.

Excalibur Bash Trucks entered a 1970 F100 pick-up and a 1965 Dodge AT4 bushfire tanker, supported by a 4WD Nissan Patrol.

### Helping kids dodge fires

Four RFS volunteers will be in the Dodge and two retained NSW Fire Brigades firefighters from Lawson will be in the pick-up, distributing fire awareness information to kids along the route, and raising money for Variety's children's charity as they go.

The RFS volunteers include Greg Frullani, Captain Woodford RFB (Blue Mountains) and Keith Lang, Woodford RFB member. They will be joined by RFS Development Control Manager Lew Short, the successful winner of a raffle which earned him a place on the crew.

### THE SUPPORT VEHICLE WILL BE MANNED BY RFS COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND NSWFB COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Resources from both firefighting agencies will be used at schools throughout the Bash route to promote fire safety to children, and both agencies were also working to provide items of office equipment for staff at some of the schools.

### Firefighting demonstrations

The Excalibur Bash Trucks team will entertain the children with firefighting demonstrations and distribute hundreds of gifts from various sponsors.

The team is also supported by publisher Doubleday Australia Pty Limited. This year Doubleday is organising Creative Writing Competitions for more than 90 small Australian schools which will be visited by the seven separate State Variety Bashes.

### \$2 million a year!

The annual New South Wales Variety Bash routinely nets more than \$2 million each year to assist Australian children with special needs. The Excalibur Bash Trucks team has been participating for more than five years, and this year promises to be the best so far.

Involvement from the NSW Fire Brigades and the NSW Rural Fire Service has empowered this team to achieve far more than ever before, and to deliver happiness and real benefits to countless children all over Australia.



## KIOLOA BRIGADE CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

**K**iohoa RFB in Shoalhaven district held a birthday party at their station on 4 March 2006 to celebrate 70 years of active firefighting.

The evening was well attended and, after presentations, attendees danced until the wee hours of the morning to the music and singing of local entertainer Michael Downie.

### BRIGADE'S HISTORY PRESERVED

The brigade's history has been compiled by Joy London, Reg and Innes Collins, and Ray and Dorothy Watts through Marie O'Connell.

The account includes the transition from firefighting with axes and shovels to the acquisition of tankers, and tells of the major incidents attended in 1948, and 1952 and 1968 near the Clyde River, as well as the 1994 fires.

## TODAY'S BRIGADE HAS STATE OF THE ART EQUIPMENT

"Compared to our beginnings, today's brigade has state of the art equipment with the big tankers, hoses and pumps and also the radios and assistance of the helicopters, better training, uniforms and safety equipment," Mrs O'Connell said.

"The Kioloa Brigade has a strong and willing membership and a bright future ahead with their ability to protect not only our own area but also to travel and assist others."



**MUSIC AND MOTORS  
AT JINDERA AND  
WALLA WALLA**

Below: Walla Walla brigade Captain John Jacob parades the 1923 Garford Fire Engine during the station opening.



When Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers ventured south to the Hume Zone last November, the regionally renowned Gazoo Band heralded his arrival at the Jindera Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) Station.

**THE GAZOO BAND WAS FORMED IN THE EARLY NINETIES WHEN THE REGIONAL GAMES WERE CONDUCTED**

The Gazoo Band was formed in the early nineties when the Regional Games were conducted and Jindera RFB was often

a highlight. When the competition was taken to a state level the Gazoo band also accompanied the brigade and trumpeted their continued success.

It seemed only fitting then for the opening of the shed extensions at Jindera, presentation of tankers and medals, that the Gazoo band should again be a feature.

**The presentations continue**

Following Jindera, A/C Rogers also opened stations and presented medals at Burrumbuttock and Walla Walla RFBs.

Walla Walla has one of the oldest working fire engines in the state, a 1923 Garford, and this was paraded on the day.

Walla Walla RFB Captain John Jacob has restored this brilliant piece of machinery and keeps it in top condition.

At Burrumbuttock a commemorative memorial plaque for member Mick Beezley, who died tragically while on the way to an incident, was presented to the brigade.

Above: The Jindera Gazoo Band performed at the Jindera brigade station extension opening, tanker and medal presentations. Band Master Wayne Coulthard is pictured with members.

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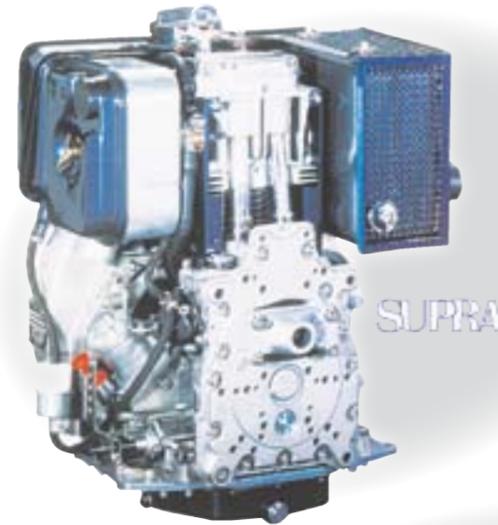
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# TRAINING

## RUNNING AN ARRIVAL DRILL

In the last edition of the Bushfire Bulletin we examined how brigades can determine their training needs, and get some ideas on which drills they would benefit from practicing. In this issue we will look at how to plan and run a drill.

### Peak performance under pressure

Drills give crew members practice in combining specific tasks run in a specific way. This enables us to develop automatic skills when we need to perform those tasks under pressure, such as at a large fire. We can then operate almost on auto-pilot, for tasks such as laying a hose or shipping a standpipe. That means we can maintain our situational awareness and active vigilance for hazards, rather than focussing exclusively on the task at hand.

## DRILLS SHOULD BE RUN IN A REALISTIC WAY. CREWS SHOULD USE THE SAME TRUCKS AND EQUIPMENT THEY TYPICALLY USE WHEN ATTENDING A FIRE

Drills should be run in a realistic way. Crews should use the same trucks and equipment they typically use when attending a fire call. Let's look at the example of an arrival/deployment drill.

The aim is to practice the steps to take when you arrive at a going fire, including deployment of attack lines, establishing a water supply, and support activities. These tasks are common to most fire calls.

### Skills come before drills

Before running a drill, crew members' skills must be up to scratch. For an arrival drill, members must be able to:

- Don PPE correctly
- Locate equipment on the truck and know which equipment to use for a given task
- Be able to bowl hoses well
- Work with other crew members to ensure all tasks are done
- Ship a standpipe, and/or set up the pump for drafting.

### On the day...

Show the crew the area in which they will be drilling. Identify any safety issues, such as uneven ground, possible vehicle traffic, etc. Gain permission to use the area and to run a drill, if needed. You can use barrier tape to identify areas to be considered "alight."

The OIC (or whoever is supervising the drill) should break the steps down for the crew. For example, "We are going to practice laying hoses as if we were arriving at a bushfire threatening properties. We'll need to bowl hoses, find a hydrant and ship a standpipe, and get a supply line into the truck. Do you have any questions?" Have the crew seated in the truck as if en route to a call.

### THE OIC SHOULD GIVE CLEAR ORDERS, ASSIGNING OBJECTIVES TO CREW MEMBERS

The OIC should give clear orders, assigning objectives to the crew members:

"Lay two lines of two lengths of 38mm hose and knock down the fire. Andrew and Sarah on one line, Tony and Mark on the other one; John, you are pump operator. When the lines are out get water supply set up. Do you all understand what you are to do? ..... Go!"

The OIC has assigned tasks to people, but has not been too specific. Which locker to get the hoses from, how and where to bowl a hose, or which nozzle to use has not been specified. Knowing these things is part of basic skills training which is covered in Bush Firefighter and Village Firefighter and should be practiced regularly.

While the crew gets to work, the OIC can practice calling in a Sitrep to FIRECOM, establishing CONTROL.

### Practice makes perfect

Run the drill a few times, and you will notice the crew getting faster and more confident each time – even if they're veterans. Once the crew is performing well, the above drill can be run with added contingency skill requirements, such as replacing a burst hose length, or one line of three lengths instead of two, for example.

### Adhering to training standards

It is important to note that the deployment of two lines of two lengths of 38mm hose in this drill is a training standard, designed to enable the crew to perform multiple tasks effectively and simultaneously. It is not necessarily the required action to take at every job. The OIC's size-up includes deciding what action to take for any given fire.

Next issue we will look at running drills with more than one truck and crew.



## SHIPPING A STAND PIPE AND/OR SETTING UP A PUMP FOR DRAFTING ARE ESSENTIAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR AN ARRIVAL DRILL

**Top:** Emergency Services Minister Tony Kelly, Commissioner Phil Koperberg and Penrith MP Karyn Paluzzano with new RFS cadets at the launch of the extended 2006/7 RFS Secondary School Cadets program. Photo by Belinda Landry



## NEW CADETS PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The popular RFS Secondary Schools Cadets program will expand this year to include at least 17 high schools around the state at a cost of \$100,000.

The program is one of several RFS initiatives aimed at teenagers and allows students in Years 9 and 10 to learn basic firefighting and fire safety skills, as well as be introduced to the Service's ideals of dedication and team work.

### Minister and Commissioner attend launch

An official launch of the 2006/7 Secondary Schools Cadets Program was held on May 15 at Nepean High School in Penrith by the Minister for Emergency Services, Tony Kelly, and RFS Commissioner Phil Koperberg,

"In addition, to the five initial schools, a further twelve schools have agreed to run the programme this year, bringing the total number of participating schools to 17," the Minister said.

"There are several more schools considering the programme, and we expect that following this launch many more will want to join in this great initiative."

### THE KELSO HIGH GROUP CONTINUED TO PARTICIPATE EVEN AFTER THEIR SCHOOL BURNED DOWN

Five schools took part in the trial 10 week program in 2005 - Bingara Central School, Parkes High School, Kelso High School, Forbes High School and Moree High School. The Kelso High group continued to participate even after their school burned down with the loss of all their equipment.

All five schools will be offering the programme in Term Three again this year.

**Centre:** Nepean High School students collect their protective equipment, ready to learn life and firefighting skills through the RFS cadet program. Photo by Belinda Landry



The new schools will include:

- Nepean High School
- Penrith High School
- Guyra Central School
- Weddin High School
- Peak Hill High School
- Kandos High School
- Mudgee High School
- Gulgong High School
- Dunedoo Central School
- Orange Catholic School
- Lithgow High School
- Portland Central School

"Each of the cadets taking part in this innovative, stimulating and challenging programme will receive training in the areas fire awareness, leadership, fire science, personal development and accident prevention in the work place," the Minister said.

"It also encourages the cadets to formulate goals to create strategies to enhance life long physical activity – so important to young people today."

### 20 hours of training

RFS Cadet training is generally held once per week during the third term, typically as an alternative sport option. This will provide about 20 hours of the 75 hours students need to undertake yearly.

Each cadet programme will be supported by the RFS and, once they have successfully completed the course students will be issued with a Certificate of Attendance. If students decide that they would like to join the RFS then the majority of their basic training will have been completed.

## MYRFS TESTED AT REGIONAL EXERCISES

By Belinda Landry

During March and April, the MyRFS team headed to the Regional Exercises in order to showcase the RFS volunteer website and encourage volunteers to register.

Laden with MyRFS mouse pads to hand out to new and existing members of the site, the team found themselves inundated with sign-ups, feedback, and questions about the site.

### First stop, Glen Innes

The first stop was Glen Innes, for the Region North Exercises held on 17 to 19 March. MyRFS was well received by the region, with many people showing interest in upcoming features such as brigade and district maps, hazard reduction information and permit information.

The next weekend (23 -25 March) saw the team heading out to Wellington, where the Region West exercise was held at Burrendong Dam. The response out west was fantastic, with many volunteers telling the team they had already signed up to the Service, and contributing valuable feedback.

Over the two weekends, more than 200 users signed up to the site, each going in the running to win one of two Canon laser printers for their brigades. Drawn on 30 March, the winners were Christine Fennesy of Mt Mitchell RFB (Region North) and Karen Thurtell of Woodstock RFB (Region West).

On 27 April the MyRFS team travelled south to Gundagai for the final exercise.

Over the weekend, close to 70 new users signed up to MyRFS, making it one of the most successful exercises yet. The team also collated over three pages of feedback from volunteers, which will be used to inform the site's development.

Some of these suggestions included layout and design ideas, such as making the feedback link more visible, putting it in a more conspicuous location, navigation suggestions, news and calendar proposals, and event and mapping ideas.

The feedback gathered also gave the MyRFS team a greater understanding of what users were hoping to achieve when using the site.

At the end of the weekend, Joseph Carmody was announced the winner of the MyRFS entry drawer, winning the Canon Laser Printer for Adelong RFB.



## RFS CHECKS OUT SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S STRUCTURAL FIRE TRAINING

Story by RFS Media Officer Cameron Wade

Recently a contingent of RFS personnel visited the South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) State Training Centre in Brukunga, outside Adelaide, to participate in a Compartment Fire Behaviour Instructor training course.

The RFS' Learning & Development (L&D) Systems section is constantly researching and re-evaluating firefighting training methods and content for RFS volunteers. L&D Systems is also focussed on the continuing professional development of the Service's instructors and assessors, as well as its L&D Officers in Districts, Teams and Zones.

The aim of this approach is to increase L&D Officers' skills and their ability to introduce the latest firefighting techniques and training methods to their local instructors, in order to deliver the best possible training to RFS members. To this end, a team of L&D Officers from around the state, and Headquarters, spent a week in Brukunga improving their understanding of compartment fire behaviour, and qualifying in the skills required to combat this type of structural fire.

### A training centre that has it all

The CFS Training Centre is superbly outfitted, with pollution-free hot fire cells, a large gas-fired training pad with mocked up semi-trailers and other props for Village Firefighter-style training, a multi-storey hot fire and rescue training building, reticulated water, and a large CABA training facility. It is a residential facility with full-time training staff on site, catering for both volunteer and full-time firefighters from firefighting agencies across Australia.

Compartment fire behaviour deals with fires occurring in rooms or compartments where ventilation is limited or non-existent. Such situations are typically found in fires



involving houses and similar structures. Specific fire science knowledge and firefighting techniques are required to deal with them safely and effectively. Effective compartment firefighting requires a good deal of practice and coordination between crew members, including those inside and outside the building.

### THE EXPERIENCE HAS PROVEN TO BE VALUABLE, NOT ONLY IN IMPROVING THE SKILLS OF THE RFS'S L&D OFFICERS AND INSTRUCTORS, BUT ALSO IN ASSESSING THE VALUE OF A SOPHISTICATED HOT FIRE TRAINING FACILITY.

This visit occurred under the Memorandum of Understanding between the RFS and CFS, and is one of several occasions where members of the two services are participating in each others' training, as L&D Systems continues to create programs for the professional development of all members of the RFS.

**Top:** The RFS team receiving a debrief on CFS training facility at Brukunga. Photo by Dan Meijer.



# REGIONAL EXERCISES PHOTO GALLERY

**RFS exercises in Regions North, South, East and West assisted to prepare around 1000 firefighting, communications, catering, incident management and support personnel for the upcoming fire season. The following 8 pages highlights the key events of the exercises that took place at each Region.**

## STATE OF ORIGIN - REGION SOUTH STYLE

By Media Assistant Matthew Schroder  
Photos by RFS Media Officer Rebel Talbert

Volunteers were put to the test at the third annual Region South Exercise, held at Gundagai on 28-30 April.

A range of scenarios were held to help the more than 300 participating volunteers to develop their skills

## THE EVENT HAD MULTIPLE STAGES CONTAINING DIFFERENT SCENARIOS FIREFIGHTERS WOULD BE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER WHEN CALLED TO AN INCIDENT

One of these was a field day style event where teams were pitted against one another in a race to the finish. The event had multiple stages containing different scenarios firefighters would be likely to encounter when called to an incident.

Stage one involved extinguishing a small stove fire with a fire blanket. Speed was essential here as each stage had to be completed before moving on to the next.

Rake-hoeing was next in line. A 44 gallon drum was set up to represent a tree and fuel in the form of straw was placed around the drum. The object was to clear the drum of fuel.

### A cruel confrontation

A cruel task awaited teams in the next stage with a 44 gallon drum cut in half, fuel poured in and set alight. Nothing strenuous, until organisers armed contestants with only a knapsack. Team members worked hard and fast to extinguish this fire, with many exhausted afterwards.

Team work came into play with pumps and pumping. Teams had to ship a stand pipe and pump water to fill a buoywall. Once this was done the rest of the team were able to start setting up a portable pump to transfer some water into a drum.

Once the drum was full, two team members were allowed to set up a ladder against a large cattle trailer, while the remainder of the team moved the portable pump to the drum.

Hose lines were set up and the ladder crew became the nozzle crew, knocking down targets on the other side.

### Fiery origin clash

Pride came into play when the ACT and NSW Rural Fire Services went head to head, representing their respective organisations in a State of Origin style clash.

Both teams were neck and neck right to the finish, with the ACT experiencing a pump failure at the last stage. Teams recognised the friendly atmosphere of the competition, bonding after the event.



## MOCK BURN OVER SURPRISES CREWS – REGION WEST EXERCISE

Story and photos by  
RFS Media Officer Cameron Wade

**B**ungendore State Recreation area was once again the venue for the Region West Exercise. For the second time crews from all over the west of the state drove for hours, in some cases over 12, to participate in the events and experience the camaraderie which is such an important part of the RFS.

### Surprise, surprise!

Once again Country Energy, NSW Fire Brigades, SES and VRA assisted in providing invaluable training and information to volunteers. The annual events such as truck maintenance, fire investigation, aviation support and pumping were all enthusiastically attended. A surprise event, however, was not on the list and took all crews by surprise.

### A scene of chaos

A mock burn over was staged in between two listed events. As crews travelled between pumps and fire investigation they were approached by a young boy with burns and injuries over his arms and face. He led the crew to a scene of chaos.

### A FIRE TRUCK HAD RUN OVER A CREW MEMBER AND THE FIRE HAD OVER RUN THE REST OF THE CREW

A fire truck had run over a crew member and the fire had over run the rest of the crew. Injuries included third degree burns, broken limbs, shock and dehydration.

### Full makeup and fake blood

The injured crew were all teenagers from the Yetadhinnakkal corrective services facility, Brewarrina. The eight boys and a minder repeated the acting scenario again and again complete with full makeup and fake blood.

St John Ambulance assisted with setting up the scenario ensuring the injuries were realistic. Officers from St John also assessed the RFS volunteers who came across the incident and critiqued the actions of the brigades after the scenario was stopped.



### A worthwhile exercise

After each burn over scenario the brigades involved all commented on how worthwhile such an exercise was. The element of surprise assisted in creating realism and the reactions of those involved meant that decisions had to be made on the spot.

### AT THE END OF THE REGION WEST EXERCISE ALL BRIGADES AGREED THAT IT WAS AN EXTREMELY WORTHWHILE EVENT

At the end of the Region West exercise all brigades agreed that it was an extremely worthwhile event. Even those that travelled for many hours felt it was worth every bit for the experience and training they received. Even a crew from Sydney (Illawong) who joined in found the whole experience beneficial and commented on how great it was to work with crews from the west.

Next year's Region West exercise is open to any brigades from the region and for more information contact your local district /team or zone office.



## 480 FIREFIGHTERS GATHER IN GLEN INNES REGION NORTH

Story and photos by RFS Media Officer Meeka Bailey

This year's Region North Exercise in Glen Innes involved about 470 RFS members from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 March.

With a program packed with learning opportunities, the event also provided a scenario to encourage team building. Crews tested their ability to respond to a simulated train and vehicle accident, bush and structure fires, gained insight into working safely with aircraft and practiced a range of emergency skills.

### Up the creek...

The next task moved most teams well outside their comfort zones. Trying to build a raft from PVC pipe, rope and containers sturdy enough to keep a crew member high and dry challenged the lateral thinking of most teams.

## MOST OF THOSE TASKED WITH CROSSING THE CREEK ENDED UP SATURATED

Most of those tasked with crossing the creek ended up saturated, but teams learned how to think and act as a group to tackle a problem.

### Powerful lessons

Another new scenario was the Country Energy power lines event. Crews responded to a North Power worker trapped with power lines down in thvicinity.

Brigades had to deal with the incident without instruction, dealing with fire caused by the lines and rescuing the worker. They then received a debrief on how to enter the area safely and use of water around high voltage power lines.

A 30 minute safety video and theory session followed. All crews commented on how valuable this scenario was.

### Another kind of RAFT

Another interesting event was the Remote Area Firefighting Team (RAFT) exercise. A crew of firefighters equipped with food and equipment to survive overnight in an isolated area assembled at the showground.

## THE CREW WERE AIRLIFTED FROM BASE CAMP TO A LOCAL PROPERTY

The crew were airlifted from base camp to a local property where they practiced their firefighting and bushcraft skills. The RAFT's overnight remote camping experience included hiking and trail construction.

Once again the catering crews of Region North proved their skills by providing around 1000 meals, and coping with incredibly early starts to ensure all participants were fuelled up for a strenuous but fun weekend.



## REGION EAST - APPIN IN TRAINING DEBUT

Story and photos by  
RFS Media Officer Cameron Wade

Region East held its first regional exercise on the weekend of 31 June 2006.

Seventeen of the region's 19 Districts/Teams/Zones attended with each represented by one brigade. The event was held at the Cataract Scout Camp near Appin in Wollondilly District.

Baulkham Hills, Blue Mountains, Cumberland, Gosford, Great Lakes, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Illawarra, Lake Macquarie, Lower Hunter, Macarthur, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Sutherland, Wingecarribee, Wollondilly and Wyong all attended.

### Cadets join in

On Sunday three cadet teams from Cumberland, Hawkesbury and Warringah/ Pittwater also joined in.

## PARTICIPANTS UNDERTOOK SCENARIO BASED EXERCISES

The 120 or so participants undertook scenario based exercises such as motor vehicle accident (MVA), structure fire (defensive), emergency drill, pumps and pumping and trail work.

The organisers from Region East were pleasantly surprised with the amount of people who attended especially considering the camping area overnight got down to very low temperatures.

Next year it is hoped that more teams will join in and that this type of exercise will continue to strengthen the bonds between brigades in Region East.



## INCIDENT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS AND EXERCISES

### IMW and IMX - what are they?

Major incidents require special consideration. It is normal for them to be managed by an Incident Management Team (IMT). The key positions on an IMT are Incident Controller, Operations Officer, Planning Officer, Logistics Officer and Public Liaison Officer.

### How can you train for these important roles?

The training offered to people who wish to carry out these roles is varied. But an RFS learning and development initiative assists in bringing IMT specialists together in Incident Management Workshops (IMW) and Incident Management Exercises (IMX).

An IMW is a workshop run by Regional Operations and Learning and Development staff. Each year each RFS Region runs an IMW. This may be followed by an IMX.

In most cases other agencies are invited to attend IMW's or IMX's. This could be to assist in creating a realistic incident management exercise or other agency staff may need to be assessed so they can fill the roles in an IMT.

## MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE RFS TRAINING INFORMATION BOOKLET

RFS staff and volunteers can participate and become qualified in IMT positions. More information can be found in the RFS Training Information Booklet released at the beginning of each year or by contacting your district/team /zone or region L&D officer.

### Region West

Region west was the first region to run an IMW/IMX this year. The event was held in Cobar during the first week of May. The IMX scenario was a bushfire in the Mudgee area and was played out over three days and two nights. The incident required a large number of out of area resources and multiple aircraft.

### 40 people converge on Cobar

Cobar Fire Control Centre was transformed into a very busy IMT with eight hour shifts in place to rotate the participants. RFS was the only agency involved with staff from the region role playing other agencies and council creating a very realistic exercise.



Geographic Information System (GIS) support was also in place adding to the realism. In total, 40 people participated in the exercise.

### Region North

The Serendipity fire was reproduced to give NPWS and RFS personnel a challenging exercise during the Region North IMX held at Lismore in May. The activation cell set-up a range of scenarios to really test participants, from the closure of all major transport routes and house losses to unexploded ordnance, machinery breakdowns and rare frog species on potential containment lines.

### THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH DIFFERENT AGENCY'S RESOURCES WAS WELCOMED

A special IMW was held for NPWS staff to attend earlier in the month, and this meant a large Parks presence during the exercise itself. The opportunity to learn more about each different agency's resources, firefighting capabilities, planning and management skills was welcomed. Do doubt the teamwork that resulted will help

when these incident managers meet again at a real incident.

### Region East

Wingecarribee Fire Control Centre in Mittagong was the venue for the Region East IMX and the IMW was held in the Mittagong RSL. The exercise started on the Friday afternoon (2 June) with three consecutive shifts until 10pm then another three shifts on the Saturday.

### Four agencies take part

There were staff and volunteers from RFS and members of NSW Fire Brigades, NPWS and Forests NSW. The fire scenario was a local incident and was based on actual previous fire history. Even though the temperatures outside dropped to 2 degrees and it was raining most of the time all the participants got into the spirit of the exercise and the realism was maintained for the two day event.

### Region South

The exercise for region south will be held in Bega in September this year. Region South run the IMW separately from the IMX. The exercise this year will include RFS staff and volunteers as well as other agencies including the ACT Fire Service. The scenario will be based on a local incident and will run over three days.

**From top:** The Lismore day shift come together for a team briefing during the Region North IMX. Photo by Bryan Daly

Incident Controller Supt. Steve Davis, NSWFB Zone Commander South 7, considers strategies during the Region East IMX at Mittagong. Photo by Cameron Wade

## BREATHING APPARATUS TRAINING AT CESSNOCK



Woronora Rural Fire Brigade ran a Breathing Apparatus training event at Cessnock hot fire training ground on 17 - 18 June. Photos by Chris Maw, Heathcote Headquarters RFB Captain

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# RFS OPEN DAY

## RFS OPEN DAY SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2006

Brigades are gearing up for the 2006 RFS Open Day, and brand new resources to assist them are about to be distributed.

### Promotional Give Aways

This year, to provide Brigades with greater support, RFS Media & Public Affairs has secured a larger budget than in previous years.

In keeping with this year's theme: "Education, imagination, at your rural fire station...bring your family to RFS Open Day!" we have a host of promotional give aways.

### RFS TATTOOS, RUBBER TANKER KEY RINGS, FLASHING TANKER BADGES AND STICKERS

Some of these include RFS tattoos, rubber tanker key rings, flashing tanker badges, and stickers.

To get these resources, just make sure you register that you are participating in Open Day through your district office. The resources will be sent from RFS Headquarters to District Offices, and then on to you.

### Sign up now! Register for Open Day

As Open Day is fast approaching, Brigades are asked to register their participation with their districts. A spread sheet to be filled out by districts will provide everyone with information to help promote Open Day.

Information such as your Brigade name, the address of where you are holding your open day, the Council area you are in and the times you will be open, will be displayed on the RFS website, MyRFS and in local media.

This means people will be able to find you easily on the day. This information will also be



Open Day Banner Glenhaven.  
Photo by Matt Schroder



used for the allocation of resources such as banners, posters and other promotional tools.

### Where do I have my Open Day?

A Brigade station is a great first option for hosting RFS Open Day as it shows the community exactly where you are, and all your equipment is at hand.

### TO OBTAIN GREATER VISIBILITY AND EXPOSURE, YOUR BRIGADE COULD HOLD ITS OPEN DAY AT A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT VENUES

However, many Brigades are not located on a main thoroughfare or are not easily accessible to the public. To obtain greater visibility and exposure, your Brigade could hold its Open Day at a variety of different venues. Just some of these are; your Fire Control Centre, local council, or at a local shopping centre.

If you are in an isolated area, another option is to be thorough with your local promotion of Open Day. Consider letterbox drops, articles in community newsletters and posters in places where people gather.

### Media

To assist with promotion, a full media kit will be available for districts and brigades to use



to get coverage in their local newspapers, radio and television. The kit contains media release templates, photos for distribution, backgrounders on the RFS, fire safety and Open Day.

To assist with broadcast promotion, Community Service Announcements went into production in July to develop a television commercial and radio ads.

### Open Day assistance

For any assistance or questions for Open Day contact your District office, or RFS Events Coordinator Claire Poignand on:

Ph: 02 8741 5479  
Mb: 0428 264 222  
Fax: 97370171  
Email: [claire.poignand@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:claire.poignand@rfs.nsw.gov.au)  
Email: [events@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:events@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

**From top left to right:** A tour of the Coffs Harbour Fire Control Centre and Headquarters RFB entertained families from the local Ex-Services Sports Touring & Classic Car Club on 4 June. Terri Marstaeller, Captain of Coffs Harbour Headquarters RFB, shows Matt Corner what it's like to be on the end of hose with full water pressure.

A film and photo shoot to get images for the Open Day television commercial, posters and media kit was held at Rouse Hill RFB station in July.

Images from 2005 RFS Open Day  
Clarence Town RFB. Photo by Di Bennett.  
Gilgandra RFB. Photo by Steve O'Callaghan.  
Deadman's Creek, Gulgong

# DONATIONS

## BUNNINGS AND DULUX FUND LEADERSHIP TRAINING



"I walked away from the week long course with new inspiration as well as many new friends in emergency management across Australia. I feel that I was extremely lucky to have been able to attend this program."

### Generous support

Since 2003 Dulux has donated \$5 from every can of Wash and Wear 101 or Weathershield paint purchased from Bunnings Warehouses in NSW to the RFS and NSW Fire Brigades for volunteers' fire safety training.

This has formed part of an ongoing national campaign being coordinated through the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC). Since its launch in 2003 more than \$600,000 has been raised.

### Investing in new technology

In 2003, \$60,000 was invested in volunteer firefighter training and \$136,000 was directed toward Global Positioning System units for all fire services.

In 2004, \$200,000 was invested nationally on training a special group of future leaders and in 2005 a further \$200,000 was allocated for the same purpose.

The 2006 campaign aims to raise a further \$250,000 per year for the next three years.

### Support for initiative

At the campaign launch, Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers addressed the many people who came to see the display and reaffirmed the RFS' support for the Dulux/Bunnings initiative and stressed the importance of investment in training for volunteers.

Also in attendance was State Emergency Service (SES) Operations Director, Dieter Gescke and members of the local SES unit.

**Top:** Shanes Park RFB Captain Daniel Busch at the launch of the next Dulux/Bunnings fundraising campaign.

The Bunnings Warehouses/Dulux fundraising program has provided leadership skills to 15 RFS volunteers.

Shanes Park Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) Captain, Daniel Busch, is one of the RFS volunteers who have completed the Leadership Program at the Australian Institute of Police Management through Bunnings' sponsorship.

### Enhanced skills

Daniel gave a brief outline of the program and the way it has developed his personal and professional skills at the launch of the 2006 fundraising campaign on 3 January 2006. "The program enhanced my managerial and people handling skills, as well giving me new ideas in relation to operational management of volunteers," Daniel said.

**"I WALKED AWAY WITH NEW INSPIRATION AS WELL AS MANY NEW FRIENDS"**

## WATER DONATED

RFS members were given 85 pallets of bottled drinking water by a Sydney business after witnessing the hard work and professionalism of firefighters over the 2005/06 fire season.

## WATTLE SPRINGS DONATED THE WATER TO FIREFIGHTERS FROM THE HAWKESBURY REGION AFTER THEY WORKED HARD OVER THE NEW YEAR PERIOD

### The drinks are on us

Ross Bernie, CEO of the bottled water company Wattle Springs, donated the water to firefighters from the Hawkesbury region after they worked hard over the New Year period to control fires in Hawkesbury and on the north coast.

### One good turn...

Hawkesbury firefighters shared the water with their counterparts in Macarthur, Warringah, Cumberland, Illawarra, Wyong, Baulkham Hills and the Blue Mountains, to say thank you for their assistance with fires in the Hawkesbury area on New Years Day.

John Peters from Western Freight in Blacktown donated his time and equipment to deliver the water to firefighters across Sydney, and his generosity is also greatly appreciated.



Overall, how appealing did you find this edition?

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

Comments: .....

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