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# BUSHFIREbulletin

THE JOURNAL OF THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE  VOL 30 No.02 // 2007



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

# FOREWORD



The onset of winter is traditionally the time for brigades to turn their focus away from bushfire operations and devote time and effort to upgrading skills through increased training.

Brigades also become heavily involved in winter fire and home safety programs. We are a professional Service and the confidence we have in making that statement lies in the high level of individual training undertaken by volunteers and salaried staff to improve skills and competencies.

It is not by chance that the Service invests heavily in its people to ensure that the community receives the levels of service that it has the right to expect from an emergency service.

Many of the issues relating to winter fire and home safety programs were addressed at the recent Australasian Education and Fire Awareness Conference held in Newcastle and attended by 450 delegates most of whom were Service members. My thanks go to all who, through their efforts, made the Conference a resounding success. As a result of some excellent presentations and discussions we have been set some significant challenges in the field of community education.

This year, in association with NSW Fire Brigades, we will be running a new state-wide winter fire safety awareness campaign on TV. The intent is to raise people's awareness of where the danger spots are in homes and how best to reduce the risk of fire.

A series of very successful regional exercises has also been a precursor to winter and I hope that you will take the time to read the articles about them – they paint a very good picture of our efforts to continuously improve our operational skills and capabilities.

Finally, I draw your attention to a new initiative. Previously there has been confusion about what approvals are needed to light different kinds of fires such as cooking fires, stubble burns and hazard reduction burns. To help land owners wanting to burn and RFS volunteers and staff providing advice to the community, we have produced a new brochure - 'Before you light that fire'. It is easy to read, can be found on the RFS Website, [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au), and explains the different types of approvals that might apply, when people might need them, and where to go to get them. There is also a simple poster version available as a centrefold in this edition of the Bulletin.

I commend this issue of the Bulletin to all our readers.

Rob Rogers, AFSM  
A/Commissioner

OUR  
VALUES  
UNDERPIN  
ALL OUR  
ACTIONS

# INCIDENTS

## STRUCTURE FIRE – 14 APRIL, 2007 – WARRINGAH/PITTWATER DISTRICT

Story and photos by Sean McLoughlin, Deputy Group Captain, Warringah/Pittwater District

At 1240 hrs on Saturday 14 April, Warringah/Pittwater (WP) RFS District responded to a sighting of thick black smoke coming from the Terrey Hills/Duffys Forest area. The smoke sighting was confirmed en-route (via 000) to be a shed alight, on Kinka Road at Duffys Forest. Arriving brigades located a 45m x 15m corrugated iron shed 75 per cent alight.

### Gas cylinders exposed

Terrey Hills Brigade (Pumper & 1A) took up control on the southern side of the shed. After initial assessment, they immediately protected the two LP gas cylinders being exposed to immense heat using a line of 38mm and started containment of the fire defensively.

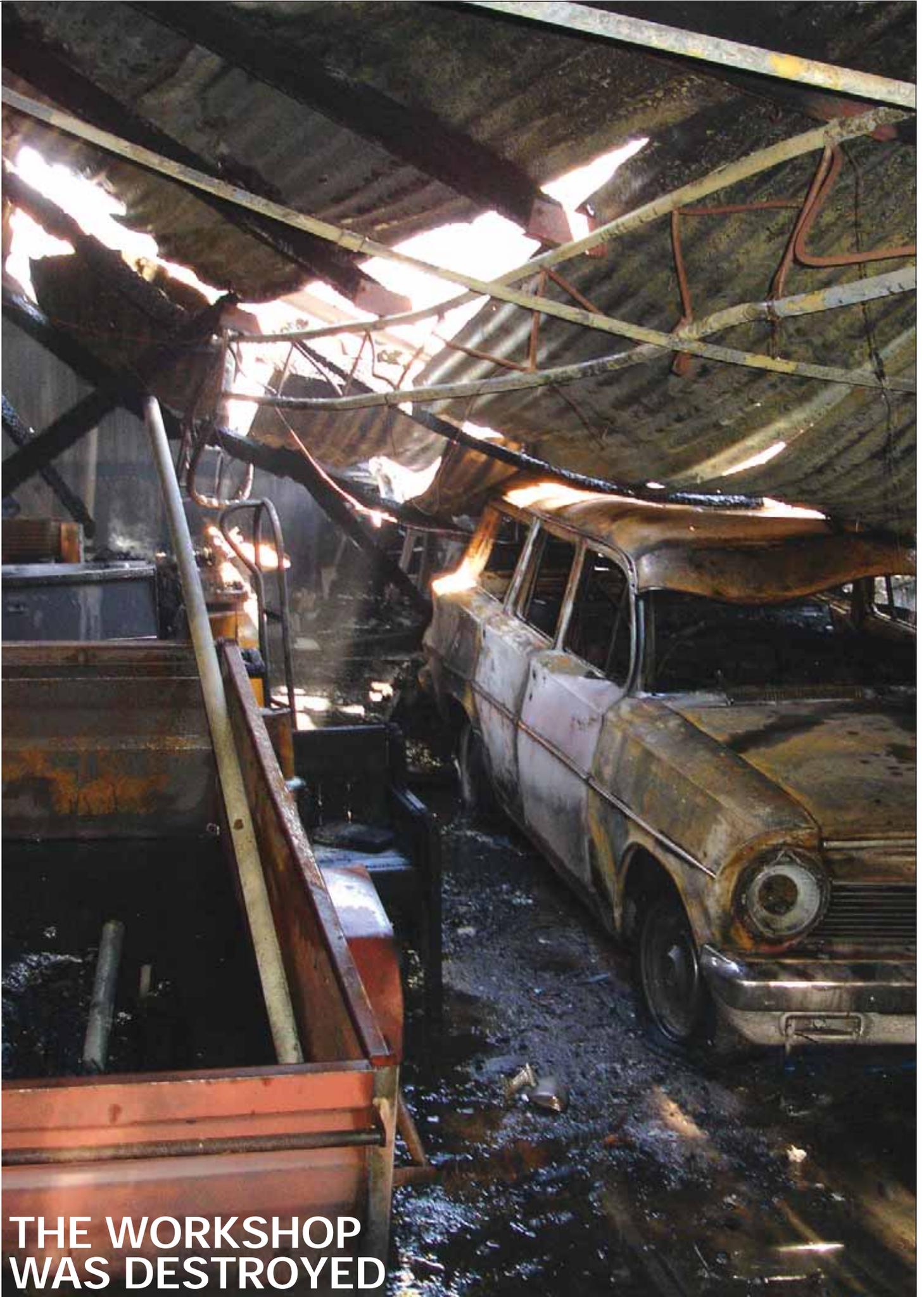
### FIRE WAS STARTING TO TAKE HOLD IN THE OFFICE/AMENITIES AREA WITH THICK BLACK SMOKE AND FIRE ENTERING THE AREA

Duffys Forest Brigade took up control on the northern side of the shed and immediately deployed two lines of 38mm hose. It was noticed that the neighbouring office/warehouse, was under extreme risk of becoming involved with fire. The fire was starting to take hold in the office/amenities area with thick black smoke and fire entering the area.

### No occupants in building

Bystanders confirmed that no persons/livestock were known to be within the building. Duffys RFB committed a BA team for internal offensive firefighting and other Duffys' crews commenced defensive firefighting to contain the fire.





**THE WORKSHOP  
WAS DESTROYED**



## Running dry

Within ten minutes of RFS arriving on scene, brigades were fast running out of water, due to the limited supply available from street hydrants. As such, numerous resources from WP RFS District were responded to ensure the water availability was maintained in the first 40 minutes after arriving on scene.

## NUMEROUS SMALL EXPLOSIONS OCCURRED WITHIN THE BUILDING

BA Teams (three x RFS/two x NSWFB) continued to contain the fire to the areas already burning. Numerous small explosions occurred within the building with numerous paint tins and other material igniting. Duffys RFB BA team, facing extreme heat and flames, offensively contained the fire internally preventing fire damage to 20 per cent of the building's office area.

## Fire brought under control

By 1340 hrs, the fire was being brought under control with additional tankers/crews being released once available water was used. By 1515 hrs, three RFS Cat 1s, one Cat 9 and one RFS pumper from Terrey Hills



RFB remained on scene and continued to mop-up until 1700 hrs.

During the course of the fire, one RFS member was conveyed to hospital with a suspected spider bite. NSW Police Force and WP RFS Fire Investigation also attended. Terrey Hills RFB continued to patrol the fire with some small flare ups occurring during the evening and the following day.

Damage is predicted at: 20 per cent Residence/50 per cent Workshop (Totally destroyed), 30 per cent Office/Warehouse (heavily smoke/fire damaged).



## TUMUT FIRE – LONG PLAIN COMPLEX

Story by Media Officer Cameron Wade  
All photos by Alf Stein

In early February 2007 lightning storms were common around the Snowy Mountains. The vegetation was extremely dry and any lightning strike invariably became a fire that required attention. On the evening of 2 January, lightning lit two fires either side of Long Plain Road, a dirt track that comes off the Snowy Mountains Highway between Talbingo and Kiandra. The road winds through the snow grass region of Yarrangobilly.

### Section 44 declared

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) firefighters were quickly on scene and had soon all but contained the fire to the north of the road (Rules Point fire). However, the southern fire (Peak Back Ridge fire) proved a little more difficult as it made its way into rugged terrain with snow gum forest and scrub. A Section 44 was declared and an Incident Management Team (IMT) was set up in the National Parks office in Tumut, about one hours drive north of the fire.



### THE WEATHER FORECAST WAS FOR CONTINUING DRY AND WARM CONDITIONS

Strategies were put in place to try and contain the fire before it reached the Murrumbidgee River and Tantangra Reservoir. Initial strategies to use the Reservoir, river and Snowy Mountains Highway, were revised due to drought

conditions in the area which meant the reservoir and river were extremely low. The weather forecast was for continuing dry and warm conditions.

Despite the fire still being 10km from the nearest private property and over 20km from town, it was decided to disseminate information early rather than waiting to see if the fire would take a run.

### Residents in the area informed

Residents of Adaminaby and rural properties in the Yaouk Valley were informed of the fire by Cooma Rural Fire District. Information was also disseminated to the Brindabella and Goobarrandra communities to the north, as smoke drift began to affect these areas.

### AT ONE STAGE THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS HIGHWAY WAS ALSO CLOSED FOR 24 HOURS WHILE BACK-BURNING WAS CARRIED OUT OFF THE ROAD

#### IMT making headway

At Tumut the IMT was working very well. Crews were brought in from surrounding districts to assist in the firefighting effort. Over 200 firefighters from NPWS, RFS, NSWFB, ACT Fire Service and Forests NSW worked together in an effort to contain the fire. Aircraft and RAFT teams also played a large role due to inaccessible terrain. Fire crews on the ground were assisted by four fixed wing aircraft, ten helicopters, plus a Sky Crane ('Delilah') and eleven heavy plant.

#### Spot overs cause delays

There were several spot overs during the week with a strike team from Shoalhaven being cut-off for several hours at one point. The isolated crew sat and waited for the fire to pass before being able to drive out of the relatively safe area near the river. At one stage the Snowy Mountains Highway was also closed for 24 hours while back burning was carried out off the road.

In the end weather conditions became more subdued and fire activity decreased. On 11 February, winds turned and became predominantly easterly which blew most of the fire back on itself. The fire crossed Tantangra Reservoir and the Murrumbidgee River, but was stopped short of private properties in the Yaouk Valley. Over 18000 ha of National Park was burnt out; however, there was no significant damage to private property.





## TUMUT (BILLO ROAD) SECTION 44 – 10-18 DECEMBER 2006

Story by Matthew Schroder and Bryan Royal,  
Forests NSW  
Photos by Matthew Pope

### Sunday 10 December

**B**etween the late hours of Saturday 9 December and early hours of Sunday 10 December, a vehicle was set alight on an internal road of the Buccleuch Group of softwood plantations about 100 metres from the Billaloolo Road picnic area, 20 km north-east of Tumut.

A call was placed to triple zero by a passing motorist at 0857 hrs and initial attack crews arrived on scene at 0920 hrs.

### EIGHT TANKERS, FOUR AIRCRAFT AND FOUR EARTHMOVING PLANT WERE DEPLOYED TO TRY AND CONTAIN THE FIRE

Throughout the morning and into the afternoon the fire continued to spread in an easterly and southerly direction requiring the tasking of further resources. At 1300 hrs, eight tankers, four aircraft and four earthmoving plant were deployed to try and contain the fire at Cotterills and Rosettes Roads.

This was unsuccessful and it spotted into an adjacent plantation and was unable to be contained by crews.

A northeast wind change at 2000 hrs pushed the uncontained southern edge of the fire in a southerly direction.

### Monday 11 December

The fire continued to move south on Monday 11 December as the weather warmed and wind strengthened. Resources, including aerial bombers, were deployed to the front of the fire as part of a direct attack and consolidation strategy.

### ALL CREWS WERE ISSUED WITH A SAFETY ALERT FOR AN EXPECTED WEST-SOUTH-WEST WIND CHANGE EXPECTED

The change arrived early at 1300 hrs with gusts of up to 31km/h. Following the wind change the fire took a five hour run with spotting ahead of the main front.

This run put private property in the Tumorrana and Wee Jasper areas under threat and at 1900 hrs the Wee Jasper/ Tumut Shire Road was closed and the need for possible property protection later that evening was identified.

By Monday night an estimated 9000 ha had been burnt with a three kilometre section of the front between Cockatoo and Mitchells Roads uncontained within the plantation.

### Tuesday 12 December

The west, southeast, southwest and southern areas of the fire proved difficult for crews to control on Tuesday 12 December with concerns held that the fire could extend into private property on two fronts. Crews focused on the protection of a number of structures on Ballard's property off McDonalds Road however a combination of aerial waterbombing and ground resources managed to control the fire once it reached the edge of the plantation.

The fire had burnt out 9700 ha by Tuesday night.

### Wednesday 13 December

The fire containment strategy limited spread on Wednesday 13 December with heavy use of waterbombing aircraft including a Sky Crane. These aircraft were supported by firefighting and heavy plant units on the ground.

Fire activity continued in the west, southwest and southern areas, including Ballard's property.

### HOUSE TO HOUSE VISITS WERE MADE AND SEVEN FAMILIES DECIDED TO LEAVE

A contingency plan for the relocation of Argalong and Goobarragandra residents was formed in light of the predicted fire path. A community meeting was called at Lacmalac



Hall at 1800 hrs incorporating residents of Bombowlee and Mundongo. Residents were given the option to pre-emptively relocate to Tumut High School which was set up as the emergency relocation centre. House to house visits were made and seven families decided to leave.

Over 10300 ha was burnt by the end of Wednesday.

### Thursday 14 December

Throughout the night major strategies were implemented to widen all containment lines and burn out the fire to the earth breaks constructed. This work was reported as complete by 0745 hrs.

Work continued to strengthen, deepen and black out containment lines while widening bare earth breaks.

The predicted wind increase did not arrive until 1745 hrs while strong winds did not last for more than two hours. Spot overs were frequent during the wind increase but were contained quickly and as a result the fire did not advance. The burnt area totalled 11500 ha.

### Friday 15 December

Weather conditions on Friday 15 December remained stable and allowed crews to consolidate containment lines and continue blacking out. The fire remained within containment lines at 11500 ha.

### Saturday 16 December

The Billo Road Fire remained stable at 11500 ha throughout Saturday 16 December however late in the evening a new fire, named the Common Trail fire, was detected. Initial attack was conducted by tankers and earth moving equipment with aerial support not possible overnight.

### Sunday 17 December

The Common Trail fire continued to be driven by the terrain and dry conditions during Sunday 17 December; however, helicopters were able to be redeployed from the Billo Road fire. Containment lines were constructed and backburning operations carried out which limited the fire to 80 ha.

### Monday 18 December

With the Common Trail fire successfully contained overnight both fires reached patrol status and out of area crews were released.



## GOOBANG (CUREMBENYA) SECTION 44 - FEBRUARY 2007

Story by Brad van Wely,  
Operations Officer Brett Bowden and  
Incident Controller David Hoadley  
Photos by Sean Bremner

In February this year, over 100 RFS and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) firefighters and personnel converged on Goobang National Park and surrounding areas, northeast of Parkes, after a lightning strike triggered a fire in terrain that proved difficult to access. Flames twice the height of the tall eucalypts which dominate the area were reported.

This kept local crews from East Parkes, Red Hill and Bocobra Brigades very busy, and eventually required assistance from other Brigades across the Mid Lachlan Valley Team & Canobolas Zone. The fire resulted in part of the Park being closed for the duration of the incident.

### FLAMES TWICE THE HEIGHT OF THE TALL EUCALYPTS WERE REPORTED

#### Friday 9 February

At 1422 hrs on Friday 9 February, 2007, Mid Lachlan Valley Team FCC dispatched a unit from the East Parkes Brigade after receiving a call to a smoke sighting from South Goobang, situated between Parkes and Manildra.

Backburning operations were commenced that evening in an effort to contain the fire using existing constructed fire breaks. Unfortunately rain and high humidity hampered this operation and resulted in a patchy depth of containment.

East and west divisions were established as the fire spread southwest through heavy timber areas and steep terrain towards farm land and properties.

Dozer and fire retardant lines were set up and four aircraft worked in the north to slow the fire.

### FALLING TREES AND DROUGHT CONDITIONS CREATED HAZARDS FOR CREWS

Graders were also used to clear a number of fire trails in the south to make them more accessible for firefighters, and a backburn at Crokers Trail was put in place. Falling trees and drought conditions created hazards for crews working in the area.

Crews patrolled the western and southern flanks and extinguished spot overs as they ignited in grassland.

Backburns were put in place to the north at



Golden Creek Trail and across to Top Valley but burnt slowly due to light rain.

#### Saturday 10 February

At 0900 hrs on day two of the fire (10 February) a section 44 was declared with crews ordered to cease backburning operations immediately.

Crews from the Canobolas Zone and Mid Lachlan Valley Team successfully contained six new breakouts throughout the afternoon as additional aircraft were requested to assist with operations.

By the end of the day more than 80

firefighters, five heavy plant and ten water bombing aircraft were working to control both fires which had already burnt out over 600 ha in the north and 900 ha in the south.

#### Sunday 11 February

The objectives for Sunday were to consolidate western containment lines, contain the fire to Crokers Range Trail in the east and join the north and south fires if possible, despite expected southeasterly winds.

Approximately seven aircraft and fifteen appliances were initially deployed, however, these resources were added to as the day progressed with the arrival of the Sky Crane



'Shenia' and a number of additional tanker crews. Water from Lake Endeavour was tanked to Parkes airport in a 40,000 litre bulk carrier to service all aircraft water bombing the fire and also to boost limited local water supplies in the region. In addition, six 18,000 litre bouywall dams were strategically set up in various division sectors and at the airport to reinforce water supplies as the northwestern end of the fire made a run under strong winds and re-entered Goobang National Park, to the north of the Curumbenya trail.

At 1354 hrs the fire breached the southern containment line, at one stage threatening the closure of Orange road, Parkes.

However, no road closure was required as aircraft and ground crews managed to halt the southern progress of the fire during the afternoon.

Fire breached northwest containment lines at Curembenya Trail and fire activity and smoke hazard hampered aviation support. Fall back lines were then established through Back Creek and Top Valley sectors.

Conditions at the southern end of the fire eased overnight and the majority of crews patrolling the area were released to assist with operations in the north as light rain began to fall.

## Monday 12 February

The northern edge of the fire around Back Creek Trail became the focus of containment operations on Monday 12 February as the majority of crews attempted to hold the fire at the trail while patrolling for spot overs due to the close proximity of a number of private properties.

West 25 Strike Team arrived and a portable repeater was established to assist communications in the north of the fire area. The fire was then divided into three Divisions - North, South and East.

Planning was established for the construction of an eastwest containment line close to the fire edge in the northwestern sectors to halt any further fire spread to the north.

## Tuesday 13 February

### A NUMBER OF SMALL SPOT OVERS IN THE NORTHWEST KEPT CREWS BUSY THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT

East 133 and East 134 Strike Teams arrived to commence work. A number of small spot overs in the northwest kept crews busy throughout the night.

However, 24 hours of well planned containment strategies proved successful by Tuesday 13 February when 90 per cent of the fire, predominantly in the east, south and most of the western part sectors, was officially contained.

Crews also used the favourable conditions to complete final containment lines around the northwest area and backburn unburnt pockets of vegetation between containment lines and the main fire.

## Wednesday 14 February

Over 250 ha of unburnt country on the eastern side of the fire (west of Bocobra) burnt on Wednesday 14 February with the assistance of over 2,100 aerial incendiaries to complete the eastern containment strategy. To the north, containment lines were completed with bulldozers working on the flanks of the fire to construct the final line as six days of intense firefighting

operations began to be scaled back.

Strike teams were gradually stood down over the following 72 hours once the majority of the mop up work had been completed throughout the various sectors of the fire, and at 1600 hrs on Thursday 15 February the fire was officially contained. A little more than 24 hours later the fire was downgraded to patrol status following some rainfall across the fireground. The remaining out of area crews returned home leaving local RFS brigades and NPWS personnel to monitor the fireground.

At 1800 hrs on Wednesday 21 February the section 44 declaration was revoked with over 6,500 ha of land in and around the eastern edge of the National Park burnt out, forcing the NPWS to close a large section of the Park near Parkes due to hazards.

### Brigades involved:

#### Canobolas Zone

Red Hill, Cumnock, Bocobra, Mandagery, Manildra, Gumble, Garra, Yeoval, Murga, Orange, Orange-Molong Rd, Molong, Millthorpe, North West, Lucknow, Mullion Creek, Cheesemans Creek, Springside, Cudal

#### Mid Lachlan Valley Team

East Parkes, Forbes Central, Parkes HQ, Weddin HQ, Alectown, Coobang, Cookamidgera, North West Parkes, Peak Hill, Lachlan Support, Tichborne, Gunningbland

#### West 25 S/Team

North West Team Warren Service1, Grawin 2, Nyngan 9

Bland Temora Team Barmedman 1, FCO2

South West Slopes Zone Young 1

Barwon Darling Zone Enngonia 7

#### Orana Team

Mt Arthur 2, Morigrigny 2, Boothenba 7, Minor 2, Timbregongie 2, Guerie 2

#### East 133 S/Team

Wollondilly Buxton 7

Cumberland Zone Orchard Hills 7

Illawarra Albion Park 1, Calderwood 7B, Group 3, Group 6

McCarthur Zone Lynwood Park 1

#### East 134 S/Team

Chifley Zone Gurnang 1, Raglan 1, Bathurst HQ1

#### East 135 S/Team

Blue Mountains Hazelbrook 1, HeadQuarters 1

Gosford Narara 1B

Lakes Team Comms Bus, Group Central, Seahampton 1, Dora Creek 1



## SNOWY RIVER / SOUTHERN TUMBARUMBA SECTION 44 11-28 JANUARY 2007

By Matthew Schroder  
Photos by Rob Beattie, Nimmtabel Brigade

Unlike the fire events of 2003, the January 2007 fires in the Snowy did not experience prolonged periods of extreme fire weather. However, all agencies in NSW along the Victorian border were at heightened awareness in light of the 51 ignitions in the alpine areas of Victoria. The NSW and Victorian Alps had experienced one of the worst snowfalls on record followed by a dry spring, and were experiencing significant drought leading up to the 2006/2007 bushfire season.

### Canada and USA called in

On 12 January lightning storms passed through the region and started fires in the Tom Groggin

and Southern Monaro areas as well as on the Cottage Creek property near the Myalla and Bobundara Nature Reserves. This would eventuate in a large scale firefighting effort of international proportions with firefighters from Canada and the USA joining local crews.

### Friday 12 January

At approximately 1200 hrs a lightning storm moved through from the west bringing minimal rainfall. The storm ignited two fires, one in Victoria on the lower slopes of Hermit Mountain (Hermit Mountain fire) and the other in NSW on the eastern side of the Murray River (Tom Groggin fire). At the same time another fire was detected at Bobundara (Bobundara fire), the cause of which is unknown.

### THE STORM IGNITED TWO FIRES, ONE IN VICTORIA AND THE OTHER IN NSW

Brigades from the local area responded to the Bobundara fire which, combined with

very strong northwesterly winds, had the potential to immediately threaten grazing properties, houses, sheds, stock and fences.

A Jet Ranger helicopter and fire retardant plane were sourced to assist the ground crews.

Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT) and a bulldozer were deployed to the Tom Groggin fire to construct a fire break, however strong winds caused the fire to jump the bulldozer and rake-hoe lines.

### AT 2130 HRS THE SECTION 44 DECLARATION WAS MADE FOR THE SNOWY RIVER SHIRE AND SOUTHERN PART OF TUMBARUMBA SHIRE

Resources were stretched across Victoria and it was agreed that under the Border Fire Agreement NSW would assist in suppressing the fire. During the afternoon a load of fire retardant was dropped onto the fire.

At 2130 hrs the section 44 declaration was made for the Snowy River Shire and Southern part of Tumbarumba Shire.

### Saturday 13 January

RAFT and bulldozer crews were supported by water bombing helicopters as they attempted to establish containment lines around the Tom Groggin fire. This operation proved successful by late afternoon.

Fixed wing aircraft operating out of Khancoban and Jindabyne worked on applying a heavily concentrated retardant to the Hermit Mountain fire, however the fire was able to burn through parts of this line.

Backburning operations were completed in the late evening to bring the Bobundara fire under containment.

### Sunday 14 January

Helicopters continued to waterbomb the Hermit Mountain fire as it moved down towards the Murray River and Little Hermit Creek. Despite these operations to slow the spread of the fire, it crossed Little Hermit Creek in the afternoon.

Crews continued to mop up the Tom Groggin and Bobundara fires.

### Monday 15 January

The Hermit Mountain fire continued to grow in size, reaching 800 ha. Firefighting efforts managed to contain it along the Murray River however an early evening backburn was unable to contain the fire in the northwest corner. It crossed Hermit Creek and moved towards Blue Gum Trail.

The IMT decided to close the airbases at both Khancoban and Jindabyne and relocate them to the Snowy Mountains Airport at Cooma.



## Tuesday 16 January

Aerial incendiary operations commenced to try and prevent the Hermit Mountain fire from crossing the Murray River.

### Thredbo under threat

This was unsuccessful and at approximately 1545 hrs the fire, driven by strong and erratic winds, spotted over the Murray River in a number of places. The fire was now in NSW and had the potential to threaten the village of Thredbo.

RFS and NPWS crews were deployed to provide property protection overnight at Tom Groggin Station. The Divisional Commander at Tom Groggin reported back at midnight that the temperature was still 32 degrees.

### AIR ATTACK SUPERVISORS REPORTED BACK THAT A CONVECTION COLUMN HAD DEVELOPED OVER THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE FIRE CAUSING SPOTFIRES

## Wednesday 17 January

Very hot conditions throughout the night enabled the Hermit Mountain fire to spread further into NSW and towards the Tom Groggin station in Victoria, overrunning the Tom Groggin fire.

At 0945 hrs Air Attack Supervisors reported back that a convection column had developed over the southeast corner of the fire causing spotfires.

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was enacted and the decision was made to relocate all visitors from Thredbo and surrounding areas, such as the Alpine Way, Kosciuszko National Park and walking tracks on the main range.

Polair was called in to check for visitors in the backcountry areas and campers along the Alpine Way were asked to leave the park.

### A 1800 PUBLIC INFORMATION PHONE NUMBER WAS ESTABLISHED AND ANSWERED 24 HOURS A DAY

The Public Information Unit was established in Jindabyne to assist with keeping the community informed. A 1800 public information phone number was established and answered 24 hours a day, along with the production of regular community bulletins.

## Thursday 18 January

The Hermit Mountain fire had now burnt out 2130 ha in NSW and 1686 ha in Victoria.

Throughout the night 11mm of rain fell on

the fireground, and with the prediction of deteriorating weather over the weekend it was decided to undertake a direct attack on the eastern and northern flanks of the fire. RAFT crews were supported by water bombing aircraft as they undertook the direct attack.

## Friday 19 January

Concerns were still held that the fire may make a run to the east and so a Strategic Planning Unit was established at the Cooma Fire Control Centre.

The unit's role was to plan major fall back lines and resource requirements should the fire take this run.

## Saturday 20 January

In an effort to reduce the likelihood of the fire escaping from behind containment lines near Tom Groggin Station a significant air attack operation was carried out. A combined RFS and ACT RFS Strike Team was deployed to the Tom Groggin Station in anticipation of spotting around properties, picnic and camping areas, and the Alpine Way between Tom Groggin and Leatherbarrel Creek.

### A COMBINED RFS AND ACT RFS STRIKE TEAM WAS DEPLOYED TO THE TOM GROGGIN STATION

## Sunday 21 January

Strong winds throughout the night prompted the need for an urgent backburn to be carried out in the Stoney Creek Sector, however at 0900 hrs the forecast rain started to fall and quickly extinguished the running edges of the fire.

Thredbo was reopened at 1100 hrs following a meeting between the EOC and IMT.

### FORECAST RAIN STARTED TO FALL AND QUICKLY EXTINGUISHED THE RUNNING EDGES OF THE FIRE

### Seven days of hard yakka

Over the next seven days RAFT crews from Australia and overseas worked hard to establish and consolidate containment lines, in some places working through three metre high regrowth from the 2003 bushfires.

RAFT crews worked on cutting numerous helipads on both sides of the border and were assisted by water bombing helicopters and fixed wing aircraft in suppressing the fire.

At 0900 hrs the section 44 Declaration was revoked upon recommendation from the Tumbarumba and Snowy River Bushfire Management Committee.



**Statistics:**

**Days under Section 44:** 17

**Agencies Involved:**

- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- NSW Fire Brigade
- NSW Police
- NSW Ambulance Service
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Country Fire Authority
- Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Parks Victoria
- Snowy River Shire Council
- Tumbarumba Shire Council
- Cooma Monaro Shire Council

**Personnel:**

**Tom Groggin / Hermit Mountain**

- NPWS - 185
- RFS - 14
- NSWFB - 12
- ACT RFS - 6

**Bobundara**

- RFS - 65
- NPWS - 1 (Air Attack Supervisor)

**Aircraft:**

	NSW	Victoria
Heavy Helicopter	2	1
Medium Helicopter	7	3
Light Helicopter	5	2
Fixed Wing Bomber	4	0
Fixed Wing	1	0
Reconnaissance		

**Area Burnt:**

Fire	Hectares Burnt
Tom Groggin	20
Hermit Mountain	5048
Bobundara	3022
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8090</b>



**MACARTHUR CREWS CALLED TO FLOODING**

By Matthew Schroder

At approximately 1510 hrs on 28 February 2007 Macarthur Zone were informed of a call to reports of flooding near Broughton College. Menangle Park, Varroville, Lynwood Park, Narellan and Kentlyn Rural Fire Brigades were dispatched to the incident to assist the State Emergency Service (SES).

Group Officer Brett Turner was the first emergency services member on scene and started to assess the situation. His Sitrep informed FireComm that cars had been swept across the opening of a drainage pipe causing flooding. He requested further assistance as he commenced work on the 15 cars that were trapped, four of which were submerged.

Group Officer Turner was soon joined by Edinglassie RFB Deputy Captain Scott Franks

(Muswellbrook District), and the pair worked together to rescue persons stranded by the rising waters.

RFS tankers began to arrive soon after and pumping operations commenced to try and remove the large body of water. Other crews set about working to remove the cars that had been swept across the pipe.

Group Officer Turner, Deputy Captain Scott, and the other RFS volunteers worked with the assistance of Council heavy plant to remove the cars one at a time.

Once the final two cars were removed the water began to flow again and the waters eventually subsided. Rain was so heavy that in a gauge close to the incident 85mm was recorded to have fallen in a 15 minute period.

A stop was put through at 0900 hrs the next morning and in total 20 RFS volunteers worked on the incident.



# CORPORATE NEWS

## A SKIRL OF PIPES AND SWING OF THE KILT – MEET THE RFS PIPES AND DRUMS

### Why do we have a Band?

Over a period of time, all the emergency services in NSW have “acquired” a band. The NSW Police, NSW Fire Brigades, Ambulance Service and State Emergency Service all have bands of “their own”. Most of these bands are not actually a part of the service that they represent, but are contracted to play at various engagements as necessary.

Following discussions with the Commissioner, the proposal to ‘adopt’ a band was approved and the RFS Band was underway.

### What is the Band?

The **RFS Pipes and Drums** consists of members of the Ingleburn RSL Club Pipes & Drums. The Band has been together for over thirty years, and (for those in the know) is a Grade 4 band which performs at a variety of engagements and competitions around NSW and interstate.

### THE YOUNGEST CURRENT PLAYER IS 16 YEARS OLD, WHILE THE OLDEST IS 70+ YEARS

The Band is not unlike a brigade. It is made up of men and women who come together for a common objective (often at their own expense!). The youngest current player is 16 years old, while the oldest is 70+ years.

### Are the members RFS employees/volunteers?

The Band has a couple of members who are members of the RFS (one staff and one volunteer), however, the majority are not RFS members.



### How is the Band funded?

To establish a band from scratch would be prohibitively expensive when the costs of uniforms, instruments etc. are taken into account. To engage the Ingleburn Band incurred a relatively small expense for some uniform items (shirts, ties and cap badge). The RFS also supplied some additional shirts. The rest of the Band's equipment and uniforms are owned and paid for by the Ingleburn RSL Club Band.

The Band receives small donations to perform at various functions. There are also ongoing discussions with some RFS suppliers who have indicated an interest in sponsoring the Band by way of additional uniform items and the like.

### What does the Band do?

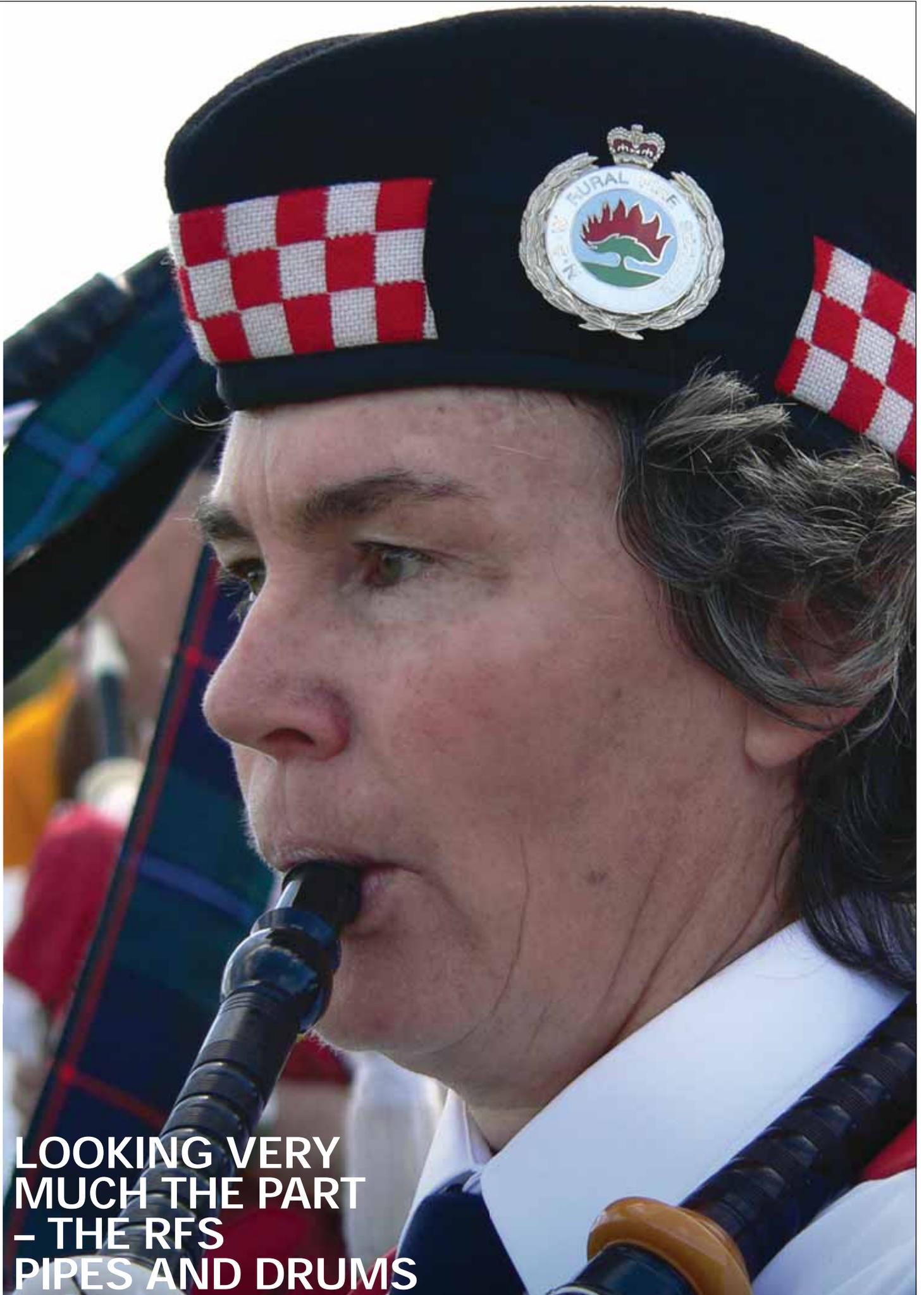
The Band is available to play at a variety of functions. Its inaugural RFS appearance was

at the State Championships at Barooga in September. It is anticipated that it will play at the Volunteer Memorial Day Service in Sydney later in the year.

The Band, or part of it, as required, is available (subject to other engagements and availability of members) for any RFS functions or other activities in which the RFS participates. This might include awards ceremonies, station openings, street parades, Service funerals etc.

### Is it available to Districts?

The Band is available to Districts but, due to the volunteer nature of the band and the logistical problems caused by distance, District appearance opportunities may be limited. Any District interested in engaging the Band should contact Superintendent Richard Petch, Protocol Team Coordinator.



**LOOKING VERY  
MUCH THE PART  
– THE RFS  
PIPES AND DRUMS**



## Can anyone join?

## IF THERE ARE ANY RFS MEMBERS OUT THERE WHO ARE ALREADY PIPERS OR DRUMMERS, RICHARD PETCH WOULD BE PLEASED TO HEAR FROM YOU

As with any like-minded organisation, there is a need for Band members to train together. New members are welcome, but the need for regular band practice means that potential members should be located within a reasonable distance of the Band's base at Ingleburn (a suburb of Campbelltown). If there are any RFS members out there who are already pipers or drummers, Richard Petch would be pleased to hear from you.

## Who are the Pipe Major / Drum Major?

The Band has its own rank structure different to that of the RFS. As most Band members are not members of the Service it has been agreed to retain that independent structure. The Band is led by Drum Major Michael Donachie (usually out front with the mace, but does play bass drum occasionally) and Pipe Major Beverley Nixon. They are supported by a Pipe Sergeant and Pipe Corporal, and a Drum Sergeant and Drum Corporal. The roles of these positions are similar to brigade Captain, Senior Deputy Captain and Deputy Captain.

## Who has responsibility for the Band?

The Director, Media and Public Affairs has overall responsibility for the Band but its day-to-day activities are overseen by Richard Petch and Superintendent Richard Cotterill, who is also a Band member.

## THE RFS FLAG – FUNERALS AND FOLDING – DOING THE RIGHT THING

Flags and flag-like objects have been with us since the dawn of civilisation. They have been a source of pride and joy and a rallying point leading to acts of great courage and sacrifice.

A nation's flag is an emblem which represents its people, its history and its ideals. There are other flags besides national ones. New South Wales and all of the other States and Territories each have their own distinctive flag. So does the RFS.

Our flag is the symbol of all that the Service represents and should be treated with the utmost dignity and care. It should fly from every brigade station, indicating the Service's presence in the heart of the community that we are committed to serve and protect. Until now there haven't been any published Service guidelines on flying our flag alone, in combination with other flags – national and state – or on the correct procedures for handling and folding the flag.

There are an increasing number of questions being raised as to the proper protocols to be followed in handling the Service flag at funerals and as to the correct method of folding the flag. This article addresses these issues. Both the Commonwealth and State governments have published booklets covering all aspects of flag protocols and the contents of the publications are basically the same.

The Service is bound by the rules for the flying of flags as set out in the NSW Government booklet 'Emblem Book of the State of New South Wales – Showing the

Flag'. This can be downloaded from the Government website - [www.premiers.nsw.gov.au](http://www.premiers.nsw.gov.au)

The Commonwealth Government's booklet 'Australian Flags' can also be obtained free of charge from any Federal Member of Parliament or Senator.

Ideally, and where possible, the flag should be raised at 0800 hrs and lowered at sunset. Flags should be dried before storing and repaired or replaced when torn or faded.

The diagrams below will assist with the proper folding of the Service's flag.

## Correct use of the Service flag at funerals

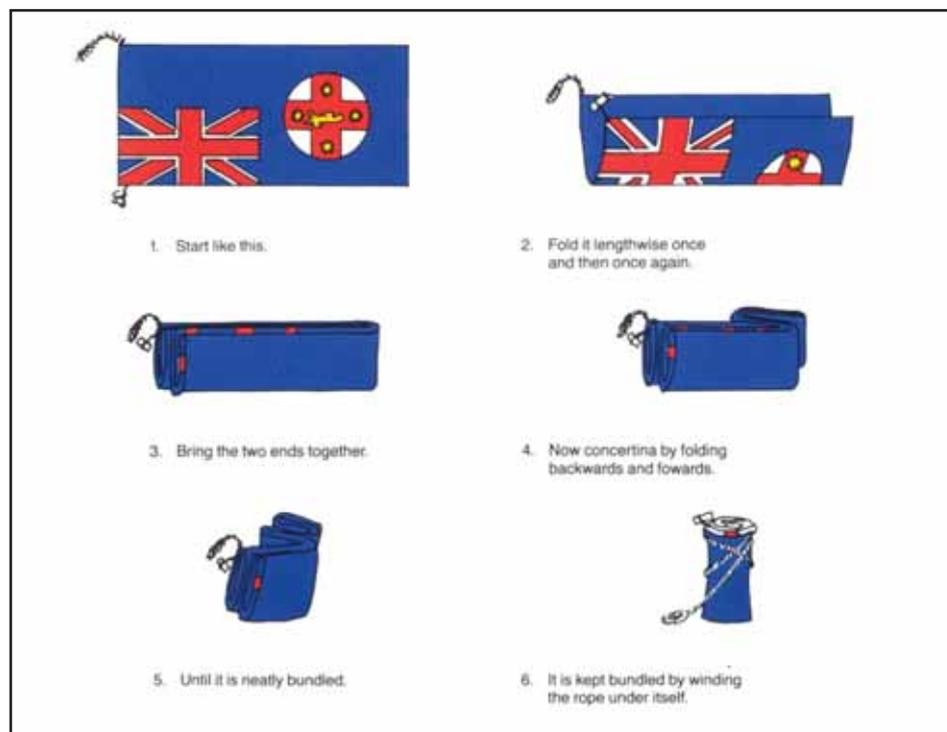
The flag can be used to cover the coffin of any Service member at their funeral. The upper left quarter (or canton) should be draped over the 'left shoulder' of the coffin to represent the heart.

The flag should be removed before the coffin is lowered into the ground or after the service at a crematorium. The flag should then be folded – as shown – before being handed to the appropriate family representative.

Under no circumstances should the flag be folded using the triangular method used by the Americans when folding the flag of the United States of America.

For further information contact Michael Watts 8741 5478 or [michael.watts@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:michael.watts@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

\* Extracts from the NSW Government's publication 'Emblem Book of the State of New South Wales – Showing the Flag' reproduced by kind permission of the Premier's Department.





## COMMUNITY EDUCATION CONFERENCE - A BIG SUCCESS

The annual Australasian Education & Fire Awareness Conference was held this year on 17-19 May at the Newcastle Civic Centre. The Conference, now in its eleventh year, has been hosted by the City of Newcastle two years in a row.

### A diverse range of speakers and topics

### THE CONFERENCE TOPICS INTRODUCED A GOOD MIX OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION, CURRENT RESEARCH, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

Building on the success of last year's Conference, this year's programme continued to provide a diverse range of speakers and topics, presenting best practice from a number of different agencies from Australia and New Zealand.

The Conference topics introduced a good mix of strategic direction, current research, and community engagement programmes. The topics explored specifically tailored programmes and included engagements with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, a juvenile fire setter programme, working together with farming communities, evaluating community needs, engaging teens, and engaging communities during suppression operations.

### A debate to finish off

The Conference concluded with a debate exploring the important issues surrounding 'prepare, stay and defend, or leave early' strategies, and the implications for fire and other emergency services. Arguing the affirmative was Paul Baxter (New Zealand Fire Service), Judy Newton (Queensland Fire & Rescue Service) and Simon Heemstra (RFS), while the negative team consisted of Barry Hamilton (Doppler Consulting), Fiona Dunstan (Country Fire Service) and Virginia Dixon (ACT Rural Fire Service).

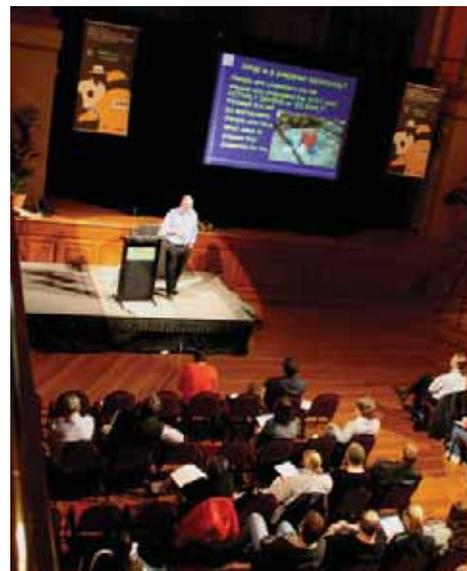
### Sharing experiences and concerns

Volunteers and staff who attended the Conference agreed that the forum was a great way to come together to share experiences and mutual concerns about their work, while meeting face-to-face the people they deal with across the state, over the phone and by email, during the year.

### Thanks for participating

The Director of Community Safety would like to thank the following for their participation in this year's Conference - principal partner of the event, Country Energy, major sponsor NSW Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA), and NRMA and Duracell, both of whom supported the event's opening dinner.

The Conference Committee once again demonstrated their professionalism and expertise under pressure, and their work, as always, was greatly appreciated.





## INTRODUCING OUR NEW MINISTER - THE HONOURABLE NATHAN REES, MP

On 2 April, 2007, The Honourable Nathan Rees was appointed the Minister for Emergency Services and Water Utilities.

### The early days

Nathan Rees spent his younger years in Western Sydney, and attended Northmead High until year 12, after which he completed an apprenticeship with Parramatta Council as a greenkeeper. Soon after, he began university, taking with him the knowledge and experience he had gathered while working for the Council.

### HE BECAME THE UNION DELEGATE FOR THE DEPOT, AND THE SECRETARY

The lessons Minister Rees learnt while at Council were formalised when he became the union delegate for the depot, and the secretary for what was then known as the Municipal and Shire Employees Union (MEU). During this time, he was also the Secretary of the Granville sub-branch. It was this experience that inspired him to do the work that he now does today.

“My activity in the union exposed me to arguments and experiences, wins and losses, dreams and shattered dreams, that cemented my commitment to the [community of NSW]”, said Minister Rees during his inaugural speech.

“Starting in 1975 my eyes were opened to those key elements of our social fabric: fairness, justice, accountability, a fair go, and that Jack is as good as his master.”

### WHAT WAS LACKING WAS FACE TO FACE INTERACTION

It's these ideals that Mr Rees hopes to bring to his work representing the NSW Rural Fire Service. While campaigning in his local area of Toongabbie, Mr Rees found that what was lacking was face to face interaction – his constituents wanted less emails, faxes and text messages, and more visits, more mobile offices, more contact, more engagement and more conversation. And Mr Rees is more than happy to give this to them.

### MINISTER REES IS EXTREMELY PASSIONATE ABOUT THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN BOTH RURAL AREAS AND THE URBAN INTERFACE

Minister Rees met RFS volunteers from across the state at the 2007 Royal Easter Show. He attended numerous Awards Ceremonies, brigade events and tanker handovers. He also visited one of the first hazard reduction burns of the season. Minister Rees is extremely passionate about the role of volunteers in both rural areas and the urban interface, and looks forward to learning more about the Rural Fire Service while continuing his visits around the state.

**From top:** The Hon Barbara Perry, Member for Auburn, The Hon Linda Burnie, Minister for Volunteering and The Hon Nathan Rees, Minister for Emergency Services, with volunteers during National Volunteers Week, 14-20 May

The Hon Nathan Rees visiting the RFS stand at this year's Royal Easter Show





## DEPLOYMENT OF FIREZONE REPLACEMENT

You may have heard that there have been some changes to Firezone. However, these changes won't affect your incident reporting and brigades should still call 1800 679 700 for all related enquiries.

## RED FLEET IS THE FIRST APPLICATION TO BE IMPLEMENTED AS PART OF THE STAGED REPLACEMENT OF FIREZONE WITH A MORE USER-FRIENDLY APPLICATION

The changes relate to one module of Firezone used to manage category 1-20 operational vehicles. This has been replaced with a new, ready-to-use program called Red Fleet.

Red Fleet is the first application to be implemented as part of the staged replacement of Firezone with a more user-friendly application.

## VEHICLE ADDITIONS AND OTHER CHANGES MADE IN RED FLEET WILL BE COPIED TO RMS RESOURCES

The data contained in Red Fleet will be extracted from Firezone, meaning brigades won't need to re-enter any information but will be required to review and update vehicle details to ensure the accuracy of the data.

Vehicle additions and other changes made in Red Fleet will be copied to RMS resources; therefore FIRS will always see an accurate list of all vehicles.

There are no other changes to Firezone, meaning the people, inventory, training and FIRS sections are all still operational.



## RFS PROVIDES CAREER 'INFORMATION FORUMS' FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Service, in partnership with the RFSA is conducting 'Information Forums' for volunteers who may be considering a career in the Service.

The two-day forums are being held in each Region between June and August and will contain a range of information volunteers need to be aware of from what the Service does, to how best apply for a job and much more in between.

### The Forum dates are:

- Region West (Dubbo) 16 & 17 June
- Region South (Wagga Wagga) 30 June & 1 July
- Region North (Armidale) 14 & 15 July
- Region East at HQ (Homebush) 25 & 26 August

## Program Overview

Day one will consist of general sectional and structure overviews in information sessions delivered by Directors / Managers from key sections including the four main functional areas of operations, community safety, learning and development and business management. Information will also be provided on temporary employment, traineeships, expressions of interest (EOI's), learning and development options and qualification expectations.

## THE RFS HAS MANAGED THE NOMINATION PROCESS AS NUMBERS WERE LIMITED, WITH APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL MERITS

Day two will consist of information on the recruitment processes including two short training sessions on how to write a job application and interview techniques.

The RFSA has managed the nomination process as numbers were limited, with applications considered on their individual merits.

Important information presented at the forums will be available on MyRFS, and in the next edition of the Bushfire Bulletin.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUNTEER SURVEY

The Strategic Development Directorate and Volunteer Relations Unit would like your views on a number of issues to ensure that they are considered in the development of the 2008-2010 NSW Rural Fire Service Strategic Plan. Data collected from this survey will assist in the development of a series of volunteer-related programs within the Volunteer Relations Unit and will also significantly assist in the development of a wide range of Service initiatives over the next few years.

The objectives of the survey include capturing a snapshot of some of the issues that the RFS currently faces, and highlighting opportunities and challenges for the RFS in the future. This will allow recommendations to the Service of priority areas for consideration in future planning.

The survey will be undertaken by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre Volunteerism Project at La Trobe University in Melbourne. The research is funded jointly by RFS and the Bushfire CRC.

A report will be sent by the Bushfire CRC at La Trobe to the RFS. This report will have no information which identifies any individual. The findings from the survey may also be presented at conferences or in research journals, but again no identifying material will be published.

The findings will be an invaluable source of information for many RFS planning processes and it is hoped that you will choose to participate by completing the survey.

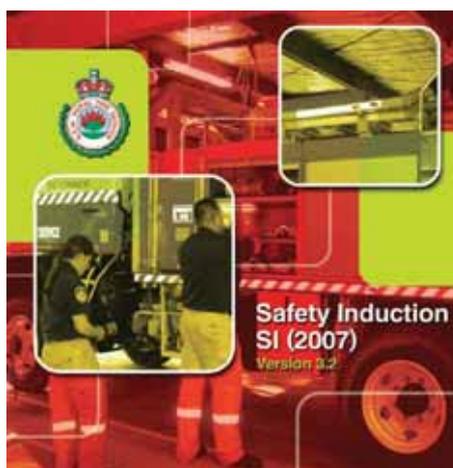
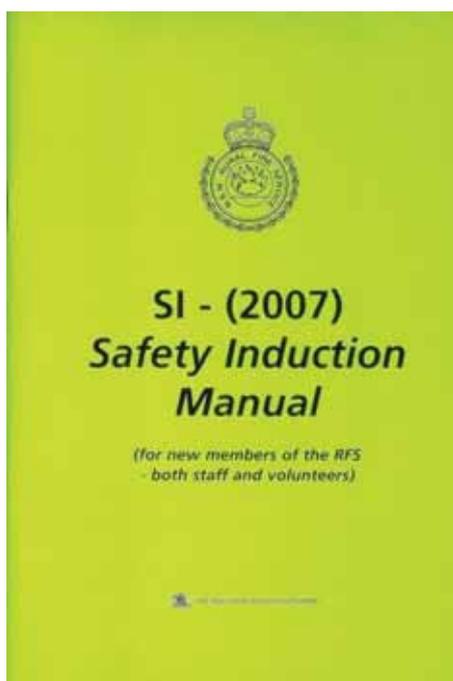
The survey has been included in this issue of the Bushfire Bulletin. The same survey can also be completed online by a secure link to La Trobe University accessed at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) and [www.MyRFS.nsw.gov.au](http://www.MyRFS.nsw.gov.au).

Please let other NSW RFS Volunteers know about the online survey and encourage them to complete it.

The survey is anonymous and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary.

If you have any questions you can contact Martin Surrey (RFS) on 8741 5555, or Jim McLennan at La Trobe on (03) 9479 2420. If you have concerns about the survey which Martin or Jim cannot satisfy you about, you may contact the Human Ethics Committee, La Trobe University, Victoria, 3086, (03) 9479 1443, email [humanethics@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@latrobe.edu.au).

The date for surveys to be returned 'Reply Paid' to La Trobe University is 31 August 2007.



## THE SAFETY INDUCTION MANUAL AND CD ARE OUT NOW!

### What are they?

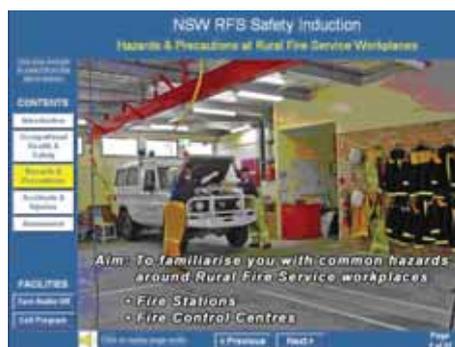
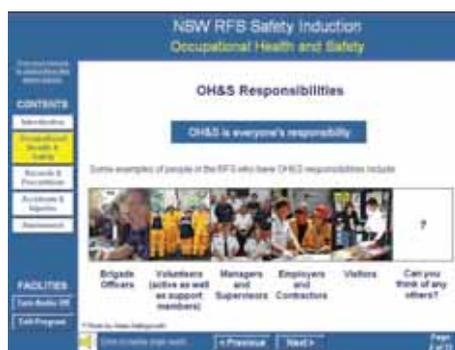
An introduction to OH&S in the RFS.

The main purpose of the training package is to familiarise new members of the RFS of hazards at their fire station, fire control centre or office.

### Who is the training for?

The training is suitable both for new volunteers and employees of the RFS. It's also suitable for anyone who wants to brush up on OH&S.

For **volunteers**, the training is meant to provide enough general 'around the station' safety information until they attend their initial Bush Firefighter (BF), Bush Fire Support (BFS) or Bush Firefighter Grassland (BFG) course, which might sometimes be several months after they join. (Note, *Safety Induction (SI)* is all about safety around fire



stations and offices, not about fireground safety (covered in BF/BFS/BFG)).

For **staff**, it is the RFS's basic safety induction program, typical of those given in most workplaces. (Note: A safety induction program is a mandatory requirement for new staff members).

### What is involved in the training?

The CD is self-directed, contains audio and visuals, and covers topics such as:

- OH&S policies and procedures in the RFS
- Recognising common hazards around the fire station or fire control centre
- Information about compensation and rehabilitation in case of accidents or injuries

There is an assessment at the end of the CD presentation, made up of general theory questions.

Once the assessment is complete, the learners can print off their results and completion acknowledgement. The new member is required to get their supervisor (in the case of volunteers, their Brigade Captain or Training Officer) to complete a four point checklist to verify that they are able to operate safely in their workplace.

## THERE IS AN ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF THE CD PRESENTATION

The checklist also ensures that the supervisor has provided the new member with health and safety information specific to their workplace.



### What is the difference between the Manual and the CD?

They contain essentially the same information. The Manual and CD provide alternative forms of training; the Manual presents the material in text format, while the CD presents the material in audio-visual format. On some topics, the Manual provides more in-depth information.

## ONCE ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ASSESSMENT ARE COMPLETE, THE NEW MEMBER CAN GET A SAFETY INDUCTION (SI) CERTIFICATE

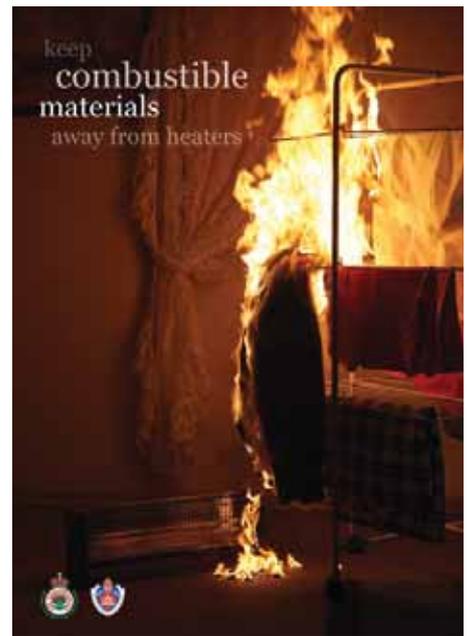
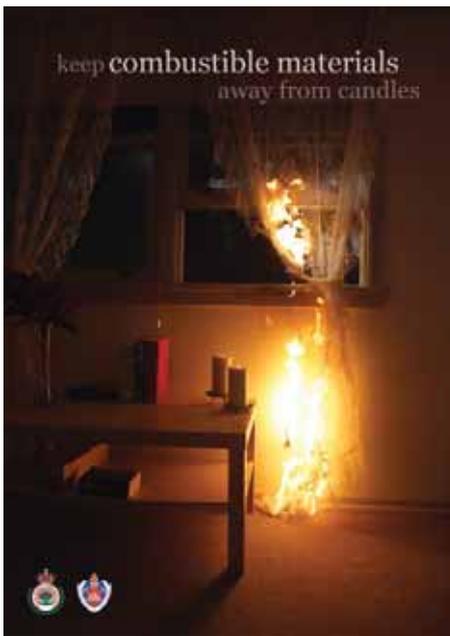
### What do I get at the end of the training?

Once all the requirements of the assessment are complete, the new member can get a Safety Induction (SI) Certificate. Follow the instructions on the Manual and CD on how to obtain this certificate.

### Where can I get a copy of the Manual and CD?

They are available now from:

- your local District/Team/Zone Office
- the Head Office library
- Learning & Development Systems at Head Office
- a PDF version of the Manual is available from MyRFS ([www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au)) and the RFS Intranet.



## WE DON'T WANT TO VISIT YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

A disused house at Central Mangrove, near Gosford, was inundated with over 40 RFS and NSW Fire Brigades' personnel recently, but thankfully no lives or personal property were lost.

### New winter fire safety campaign

The joint fire services project is part of a new winter fire safety campaign designed to make people think about fire dangers in the home in the colder months.

During the winter of 2006, 19 people died as a result of house fires in rural and urban NSW.

This worrying statistic prompted the innovative advertising campaign which began appearing on televisions and radios around the State in mid-June.

The campaign relies on 'consequence of action' as motivation to reduce preventable fire accidents in the home.

### A RANGE OF COMMON SCENARIOS, WHICH CAN HAVE DIRE CONSEQUENCES

The series of 30-second television commercials depict a range of common scenarios, which can have dire consequences. The scenarios include: putting clothes too close to electric heaters, overloading electrical power points, smoking in bed and the dangers of leaving an electric blanket on.

### REINFORCING FIRE SAFETY AROUND THE HOME

Print advertisements featuring crucial images from the television shoot, along



with simple messages reinforcing fire safety around the home, will also run in various publications across NSW.

### DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY THE RFS MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS UNIT

The campaign was directed and produced by the RFS Media and Public Affairs Unit and featured brigades from Kariong, Kellyville, Narara, Somersby, plus Gosford RFS Catering and NSW Fire Brigades from Umina. All crews played a key role in the development and filming of the television commercial.

The television commercials conclude with the tagline 'Don't let this happen to you' – a key message it is hoped all NSW households will adopt this winter.





## HQ WORKS WITH GROUP OFFICERS TO IMPROVE SERVICE STANDARDS

By Mark Croweller  
Executive Director Strategic Development

As part of the Service Standards review, Strategic Development has been working with a number of Group Officers from across the State to improve the Service Standard for the appointment of Field and Group Officers. Previously, there were two Service Standards - one for Field (Brigade) Officers and one for Group Officers. It became obvious that it would be more efficient to simplify both Standards and integrate them into one.

The Service Standard now provides a series of guidelines for Group Officers that may be used by Districts / Zones and Teams (D/T/Z) when developing an election process and determining some of the duties that a typical Group Officer might perform.

### IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT IT WOULD BE MORE EFFICIENT TO SIMPLIFY BOTH STANDARDS AND INTEGRATE THEM INTO ONE

Unlike Standard Operating Procedures, guidelines are not mandatory. They are provided as a means of outlining points of consideration with a view of providing both a level of consistency and providing sufficient flexibility to allow D/T/Zs to develop their local

procedures in response to their local needs.

### A RECENT ANALYSIS OF THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE MEMBERSHIP DATA INDICATED THAT OVER 64 PER CENT OF OUR GROUP OFFICERS ARE AGED 51 YEARS OR OLDER

A further Guideline entitled "Establishing a Retired Group Officer Program" is a new initiative currently being developed, and is aimed towards contributing to providing a viable volunteer Rural Fire Service well into the future. A recent analysis of the RFS membership data indicated that over 64 per cent of our Group Officers are aged 51 years or older, over 22 per cent are aged 61 years or older, and the average age of a Group Officer is 58 years.

### IT WAS FOUND THAT MANY OFFICERS ACCEPT THE NEED FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF OFFICERS TO START FILTERING THROUGH

In speaking with many Group Officers across the State, it was found that many Officers accept the need for the next generation of officers to start filtering through. However, they preferred to remain in their positions for as long as possible due to a feeling that there is nothing meaningful to move on to.



Clearly these members are extremely valuable in terms of their knowledge and experience and we would do well to provide a way in which, subject to certain requirements, they could continue to contribute beyond their roles as Group Officers.

This may include such roles as:

- Acting as liaison officers to other agencies
- Assisting in providing welfare to firefighters
- Being an offsider to out of area crews/ Commanders
- Being an offsider to existing Group Officers to assist with Divisional Commanders etc.
- Acting as a mentors to existing Group Officers
- Assisting in training and Community Education
- Fulfilling IMT roles so as to allow current Group Officers to be Divisional Commanders.
- Assisting with the day-to-day management of fire control centres
- Undertaking the Safety Officer role

These are just some of the suggestions that have come forward from the Group Officers assisting with the review. Other issues to be addressed while developing the Draft Guideline may include:

- What criteria needs to be met for consideration of retired status
- How many people would be interested
- How membership is defined
- How officers would be kept up to date with latest trends/knowledge
- How the role is defined and who defines it
- If they have the power of other officers
- How rank is recognised
- If they would have voting rights
- How long the appointment would apply
- If they would sit on SMT

It is our intention to develop a Draft Guideline for broad organisational discussion in the coming weeks and to that end, we would welcome any further comments or suggestions on this project. In the meantime, the revised Service Standard and Guidelines have been released for the standard three month consultation period and are available from your District Office.

Comments and feedback can be sent to [feedback.pol&ss@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:feedback.pol&ss@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

## SPOTFIRE!



## HOT INVESTMENTS IN WALGETT

Story by Superintendent Mark Ryan

The North West Team Duty Officer received a call at 0045 hrs on 25 April 2007 (Anzac Day) to assist the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) with smoke issuing from the National Australia Bank in Fox St Walgett.

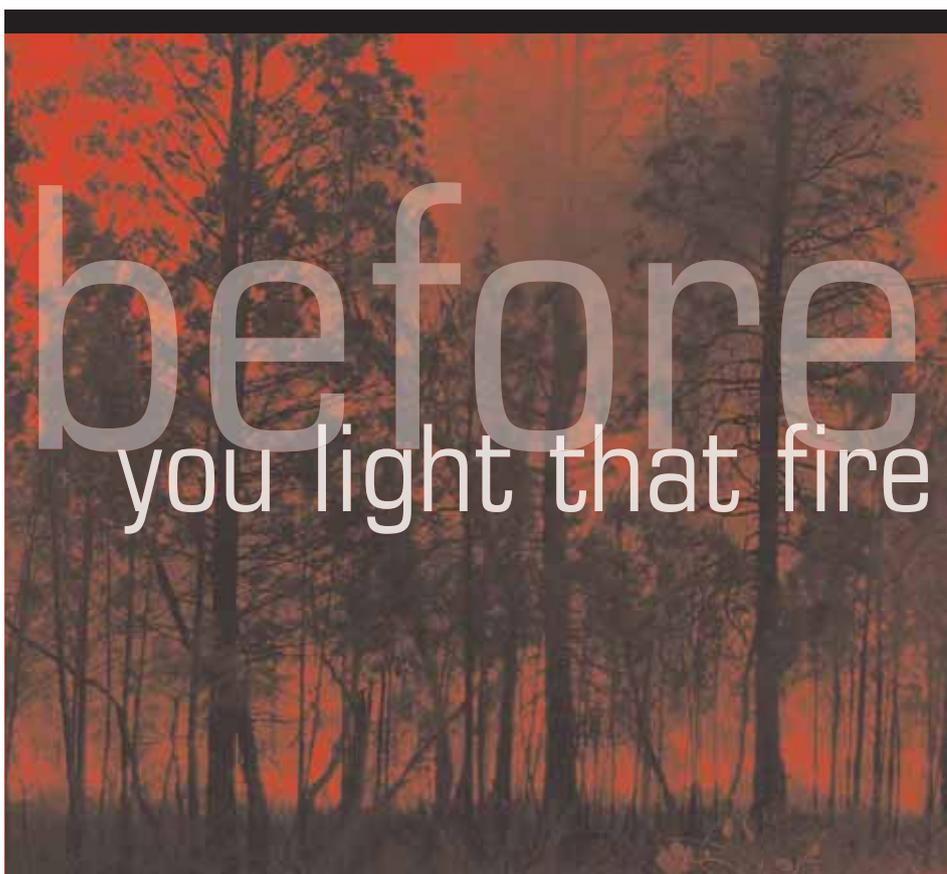
### Situation assessed

Walgett HQ 1 and 7 responded at 0055 hrs and arrived to find fire in the roof of the 80-year-old building. The Captain of Walgett HQ, Lindsay Magann, set up unified command with the NSWFB Pumper crew and began assessment of the situation.

At 0105 hrs it was clear that the fire had progressed through the roof, and additional resources were requested from NSWFB and the RFS to protect exposures. At 0115 hrs, Lightning Ridge 1, a NSWFB Tanker from Lightning Ridge and the on call officer FCO 1 were responded to the incident.

### Exposures threatened

When the roof collapsed crews worked hard to protect exposures on each side of the incident and the fire was contained to the building of origin, which was completely destroyed. NSW Police and Ambulance along with Walgett Shire attended the scene and the multi agency response worked extremely well.



In the past there has been some confusion about what approvals are needed to light different kinds of fires such as cooking fires, stubble burns and hazard reduction burns.

To help assist land owners wanting to burn and RFS volunteers and staff providing advice to the community, the Rural Fire Service has produced 'Before you light that fire'.

This easy-to-read brochure can be located on the RFS Website and explains the different types of approvals that might apply, when people might need them, and where to go to get them.

There is also a simple poster version available as a centrefold to this edition of the Bushfire Bulletin.

Turn to page 29 to read more about 'Before You Light That Fire'.

# GENERAL NEWS



Kevin McNeilly meets the Hon Nathan Rees

## RFS GOES FOR GOLD AT THE 2007 EASTER SHOW

There wasn't a giant pumpkin or alpaca in sight, but the NSW Rural Fire Service Stand still managed to win a gold medal at this year's Royal Easter Show.

### Preparation pays off

The RFS took out the 'Around the Ground' category, which includes all outdoor exhibits at the show, and was the culmination of nine months preparation by the RFS involving over 230 volunteers and 80 staff from across the State.

### THE MINISTER CONGRATULATED VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF FOR WINNING THE PRESTIGIOUS GOLD MEDAL

The Honourable Nathan Rees, Minister for Emergency Services, who visited the stand

during the show, congratulated volunteers and staff for winning the prestigious Gold Medal.

"It is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the volunteers and staff of the RFS that the Service has again taken out this significant Award," he said. "The exhibit is designed to inform the general public on a wide range of fire safety matters and promote the work the RFS does everyday throughout the year."

### IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE TO HIGHLIGHT FIRE SAFETY WITH RESIDENTS OF NSW

"It is extremely important that we continue to highlight fire safety with residents of NSW and this exhibition is a vital part of the State's commitment to promoting the safe use of fire."

The interactive exhibition promoted fire safety and bushfire awareness, and

included information on smoke alarms, leaving early during bushfires, and Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT). The stand also featured RFS related computer games and colouring in tables for the kids.

Volunteers from across the State had a hand in manning the stand, enjoying both the experience of talking to the public and the chance to nab some showbags for their families.

We spoke to Kevin McNeilly from Surf Beach and Tralee Snape from Central Tilba Brigades about their experiences at the 2007 Easter Show.

#### BB: What is your role within the Brigade?

KM: Senior Deputy – Community Safety Assistant.

TS: Deputy Captain.

#### BB: How long have you been a member of the RFS:

KM: I've been a member of the RFS now for 40 years.

TS: 17 years for me.

#### BB: How many times have you volunteered at the Easter Show for the RFS stand?

KM: Twice – once at Moore Park many moons ago, and this year at Olympic Park.

TS: This is my first time!

#### BB: How was it different to what you expected?

KM: I think the Royal Easter Show at Olympic Park lacks a lot of the atmosphere of what I call the "real show" that was previously held at Moore Park. It has become too commercialised and too much razzamatazz.



**A BEHIND THE  
SCENES LOOK  
AT THE RFS -  
THE 2007 ROYAL  
EASTER SHOW**



TS: I had no idea of what to expect, really, other than standing around and talking to the public.

**BB: Kevin, how has it changed over the years?**

KM: There is much more modern technology now – for example, computer games for the kids, DVD footage, etc.

**BB: What specific message do you try to get out when manning the RFS stand?**

KM: This year we focused on home evacuation plans and whether to leave early or stay and defend your home during a bushfire.

TS: I tried to let the public know that we (the volunteers) are a team no matter where we come from, and that when we are together we work as one.

**BB: What was your favourite part of manning the 2007 RFS stand?**

KM: The contact with the public – especially the children who nag mum and dad about home fire safety.

TS: I think my favourite part was meeting the Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers and the new Minister Mr Rees - they were both very interested in where we were from and what our area was like in



regards to the drought and what effect it had on our region.

**BB: Will you do it again?**

KM: If I'm invited, I'd love to.

TS: I'd definitely like to do it again.

**BB: Finally, what Showbag did you pick up from the show, if any?**

KM: A Pepsi Bag that came in a backpack, and a Cadbury bag for my chocaholic wife.

TS: I went a bit crazy – I had a friend with me, and I think we bought them all!

Thank you to all the volunteers that helped out the Easter Show this year – we hope you enjoyed it as much as the staff did!

## IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS - FAR WEST TEAM

Story by Inspector Robyn Martin  
Operations Officer, Far West Team

On 19 March 2007, the Central Darling Senior Management Committee held its quarterly meeting in Wilcannia. Group Captain Rick Howard was a notable absence from the meeting although he had earlier indicated that he would be there. Later that day, we received a call from Rick, explaining that he had been assisting with the transport of a young man with spinal injuries.

### Living in isolation

Rick lives in an extremely isolated part of the state, northwest of Wilcannia, where summer storms can cause normally dry creeks to become raging torrents in a short time. Emergency services and medical assistance can be hundreds of kilometres away and the local RFS volunteers are often called upon to assist in all types of emergencies.

We asked Rick to write down the events of that day, as his story really illustrates the wonderful resilience, community spirit and dedication that we see time and time again at even our most remote brigades.

#### This is what he wrote...

Recently an incident occurred on a neighbouring property which caused me to ponder the roles of RFS volunteers and equipment in the Far West.

### A motorbike accident

On 19 March 2007 my wife was informed by one of our neighbours that the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) was responding to a motorbike accident on an adjoining property. She called me on the UHF radio as I was out checking conditions after having good rain. I returned home, picked up the Wilcannia Cat 9 that I use as a group vehicle and left to lend a hand. Surprisingly the RFDS plane was already on the ground when I arrived next door; their response time from Broken Hill was only 25 mins.

### Suspected spinal injuries

I was informed by my neighbour's wife that there was a 20-year-old male victim with suspected spinal injuries about 20 kms away on an adjoining station and I was 10 – 15 mins behind the main rescue party of two tray top 4WDs. One of those vehicles became bogged and was recovered by the second, delaying the rescue but allowing me to catch up a bit. The unfamiliar area and unknown destination required me to follow fresh tracks left by the two leading vehicles, which were thankfully easy after rain in the area.

Good UHF communications allowed the RFDS doctor to speak to the person waiting with the patient prior to our arrival to ascertain patient status and assure both



of our imminent arrival. I had caught up with the lead vehicles by the time they arrived at the scene and assisted with initial stabilization of the patient.

### Assessment at the scene

Present were three other 4WD vehicles, three RFDS staff, three local land holders and the patient's father. While the doctor worked on the patient, we moved his motorbike out of the wet creek bed where the accident had occurred and walked the tracks to assess how it had happened. From the initial assessment we ascertained that the victim had been riding along the creek bed when he had hit a patch of very wet, perforated sand. The front wheel caught in the sand and threw him over the handle bars, causing him to land on the side of his head and right shoulder. No indication of excess speed or reckless riding was observed - only a lack of experience in the conditions and (given the unspectacular accident, but serious injuries), incredibly bad luck.

### NO INDICATION OF EXCESS SPEED OR RECKLESS RIDING WAS OBSERVED

### On return to the air strip

RFDS had assessed and medicated the patient for pain and we helped in the delicate task of maneuvering him onto the spinal stretcher. He was then loaded onto a tray top ute and we left the scene in convoy. Extreme care was needed in returning to the air strip on unformed roads and through several wet gum creeks, given the severity of the patient's injuries. Going out was easy as we could charge the wet patches in the creeks but the vehicle carrying the patient could not. As the lead vehicle I was able to tyre roll some wet patches of sand and waited on the creek crossing exits to ease the patient vehicle through with a snatch strap when needed. Once through the last creek crossing the pilot and I went ahead to prepare the aircraft.

On arrival the patient was rapidly transferred to the plane and along with his father departed at approximately 1800 hrs for the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

### THE YOUNG MAN HAS SUFFERED SERIOUS AND PERMANENT SPINAL INJURIES

A week on, and after speaking to friends of the patient, the initial symptoms he presented with, of no feeling or movement below the neck have continued and it appears the young man has suffered serious and permanent spinal injuries. Given time and help hopefully this may improve and I wish him and his family the best.

### Lessons to be learnt

On reflection, there are a couple of lessons to be learnt from the incident. Firstly, given our remote location and lack of RFS personnel, our dedicated firefighting units will undoubtedly be called in to assist in rescues or other emergencies. Given the right equipment, this will help make the worst of situations more manageable and may also help us on the fireground when our turn comes. Secondly, to the volunteers, make the most of any available training or lessons learnt while away at fires, as this experience will become invaluable when something happens to a friend, family member or one of our own.

And finally, to the Royal Flying Doctor Service personnel, your conduct and professionalism at the incident proves that the worst of injuries, with the worst of conditions make the best of your profession rise to the top. You deserve every bit of the respect and support that you get from our outback community.

Rick Howard  
Group Captain, Wilcannia Rural Fire Brigade



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# before you light that fire

## INTRODUCTION

**F**ire can be a useful tool for reducing bush fire hazards, removing rubbish or conducting agricultural activities.

The inappropriate use of fire however, can endanger lives, property and the environment.

Various approvals may therefore be required before you light a fire. These approvals contain conditions that seek to minimise possible adverse impacts.

The following information will help you work out which approvals you need before you light your fire.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) can provide you with the following approvals (or advise you who to contact):

1. Fire Permit for fire safety; and/or
2. Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate for bush fire hazard reduction works.

Other government authorities may provide you with other environmental approvals.

## 1. FIRE PERMITS

A fire permit is a **fire safety approval** authorised under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*.

Your local fire authority can assist you with any enquiries regarding fire permits. They will be either your local:

- RFS Fire Control Centre, or
- NSW Fire Brigade Station.

You can also learn more about fire permits by visiting the RFS website at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) (then go to fire restrictions, and safe burning).

## When do I need a fire permit?

**If in doubt, contact your local fire authority to determine if a fire permit is required.**

You will need to obtain a fire permit for most fires carried out in the open during the Bush Fire Danger Period. The **Bush Fire Danger Period** is normally from October 1st to March 31st but may vary in some localities. For example, fire permits are required all year round in some council areas (e.g. Kiama and Shellharbour) or may commence and end either earlier or later in other parts of the State.

You will also need a fire permit (regardless of the time of year) if the proposed fire is likely to **endanger a building**.

Fire permits are not required for fires that are lit for the purpose of **heating or cooking**.

However you must ensure that:

- the fire is in a permanently constructed fire place and/or it is at a site with at least two metres cleared of all combustible materials;
- a responsible person is in attendance at all times; and
- the fire is completely extinguished before leaving.

## How do I obtain a fire permit?

To obtain a fire permit contact your local fire authority. If required, your local fire authority will arrange an inspection by a Permit Issuing Officer.

**If an environmental approval is required (see below), you must have this approval prior to requesting a fire permit.** This will ensure that conditions on the fire permit are consistent with the conditions of the environmental approval.

You must read the conditions on the fire permit carefully and abide by those conditions. These conditions include (but are not limited to) the following. You must have the fire permit with you when you conduct your burn. A fire permit is valid for the period specified on the permit. When burning off **you must give 24 hours notice** of the intended location, purpose and time of the burn to:

- the occupiers (or owners if vacant) of all adjacent properties – including properties separated by a road or waterway; and
- your local fire authority.

## When is my fire permit not valid?

Even if you have a fire permit, burning may not be allowed at certain times. A fire permit will be suspended or cancelled:

- on days of 'Very High Fire Danger' or 'Extreme Fire Danger';
- when conditions on the fire permit cannot be met e.g. on a declared No Burn Day;
- when directed by an authorised officer; or
- during a Total Fire Ban.

**Total Fire Bans** are declared on days where the predicted weather conditions would make it dangerous to light a fire. **No Burn Days** are declared when the potential for smoke pollution is very high. No Burn Days are most common in the Greater Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas. These will be announced in the media, or you can check the following:

- **Total Fire Ban** – Call the NSW RFS on 1800 654 443 or go to [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au).
- **No Burn Day** – Call the Environment Line on 131 555 or go to [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au).



# Before you light that fire

**Bush Fire  
Hazard Reduction**



**Agricultural  
Practice**



**Other Purposes**  
excluding heating or cooking



**Heating  
and Cooking**



**Do you need an environmental approval?**

Obtain a Bush Fire Hazard  
Reduction Certificate  
(or other environmental  
approval, if required)

Obtain relevant  
environmental and / or  
open burning approval  
if required

No environmental  
approval required

# Volunteer Survey 2007

We would like your views on a number of issues to ensure that they are considered when developing the NSW Rural Fire Service's Strategic Plan (2008-2010) and other planning documents and specific projects. This questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. It is for **all NSW RFS volunteers**.

**All information will be kept strictly confidential.**

**This questionnaire does NOT go back to the NSW Rural Fire Service, and is processed at La Trobe University in Melbourne. No identifying information will be contained in the report prepared by La Trobe University for the NSW RFS.**

Please fill out the questionnaire, fold it up to form a reply paid package and return it by **31 August 2007**. Alternatively, please complete online at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or [www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myrfs.nsw.gov.au).

1. Are you? Please tick one.  Male  Female What year were you born?

2. Were you born in Australia? Please tick one.  Yes  No Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Please tick one.  Yes  No  
 If you were born overseas, in which country were you born? ..... What year did you arrive in Australia?

3. Which RFS Region are you in? Please tick one.  North  South  East  West  
 Which District, Zone or Team are you a member of? .....

4. Roughly, for what years have you been a volunteer fire fighter in NSW? (eg: 1983-1990, then 1995-present day) .....

5a. What functions do you perform in the RFS? Tick **all** that you perform Tick **one** to show your **main** role

Function	Tick all that you perform	Tick one to show your main role
Firefighter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brigade support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5b. What formal positions do you currently hold? Tick **all** that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Group Captain
<input type="checkbox"/> Captain
<input type="checkbox"/> Brigade Deputy Captain
<input type="checkbox"/> President
<input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretary
<input type="checkbox"/> Member
<input type="checkbox"/> Other .....

6. How does being a member of the RFS benefit you? For each of the following please tick a box to show how much you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As an RFS volunteer I can contribute to protecting the members of my community	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Being an RFS volunteer adds to my career options	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Being an RFS volunteer allows me to learn new things and apply new skills	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Being an RFS volunteer makes me feel I am a valued member of the community	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Being an RFS volunteer allows me to help others instead of dwelling on my own concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My friends place a high value on me being an RFS volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Being an RFS volunteer broadens my networks in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Being an RFS volunteer helps meet my sense of obligation to my community	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other: Please specify .....					

7. On average, how many hours per month would you spend on each of the following types of activity for the Service?

Activity	0	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-20	21-40	Greater than 40
Responding to fires & other incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Training, studying & assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Equipment and station maintenance & cleaning	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Administration, preparing for meetings, attending meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Organising & participating in HR burns	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Organising & participating in fund raising activities	<input type="checkbox"/>						
General organising and liaising on behalf of the RFS, District, Zone or Team	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Other: Please specify .....							

8. Is your brigade currently in a Zone or Team? Please tick one.  Yes  No  Don't Know If no, move to Question 9.

If yes; have any of the following changed since you were Zoned or Teamed? Please tick to show how much better or worse.

	Much Better	Somewhat Better	No Change	Somewhat Worse	Much Worse	Don't Know
Accessibility to communicate with management	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Accessibility to communicate with the FCO	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Management's understanding of your needs	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Your understanding of management's concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Management's record in meeting your needs	<input type="checkbox"/>					

How important was Zoning or Teaming in causing those changes? Please tick one.  Very Important  Somewhat Important  Made No Difference  Don't Know

Have you noticed any other changes resulting from Zoning or Teaming? .....

9. **What is the quality of the relationship you or your Brigade have with the RFS staff?** *Please tick to indicate how much you agree or disagree.*

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
RFS staff ensure that resources are distributed fairly between brigades	<input type="checkbox"/>				
RFS staff always treat volunteers with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>				
RFS staff consult my brigade before making major decisions that affect it	<input type="checkbox"/>				
RFS staff have a helpful approach	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other comments about your interactions with RFS staff: .....					

10a. **For the past few years the RFS has tried to include volunteers in all Incident Management Teams.** *Please tick to show how much you agree with the following statements.*

	Very True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
Volunteers have been used in their local area on IMTs. This has helped to ensure that the IMTs have made better use of local knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10b. **When volunteers have been used on IMTs away from their local area, their inclusion has:**

	Very True	Somewhat True	Not True	Don't Know
...helped the IMTs to make better use of volunteer front-line personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...improved the information flow between the IMT and volunteer front-line personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...improved the IMT's understanding of the capabilities of volunteer front-line personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...improved the IMT's welfare arrangements for front-line personnel (catering, accommodation etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...reduced the amount of time IMT's have left volunteer front-line personnel sitting idle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...improved the timeliness of shift changeovers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your comments: .....				

11. **How much has each of the following limited your current participation in RFS activities?** *Please tick to show how important each type of pressure is.*

	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Not At All	Don't Know	Not Applicable
Increased time commitments required by the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The increased complexity of RFS activities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The perceived bureaucratic nature of the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Business, farm or work commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Increased commitments caused by drought	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Health problems	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Increased or ongoing demands of training or assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Fear of legal action arising from RFS activities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Internal Brigade politics	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Awkwardness of leaving my workmates or employees at work while attending call outs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Lack of resources provided by the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Increased workload from the RFS falling on me due to declining membership	<input type="checkbox"/>				
A change in employment (eg. new responsibilities or going from full time to casual or AWA)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Losing interest in the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The out-of-pocket expenses of membership (e.g. petrol, phone calls, Internet time)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Domestic duties	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Parenting and family activities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I'm finding some incidents increasingly too distressing to attend	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other limits: .....					

12. **Why do you remain a volunteer with the RFS?** *For each of the following please tick to show how much you agree or disagree.*

	Not Applicable	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There's no-one in the community to take my place	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I have many friends in the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>					
My partner is in the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I enjoy most aspects of being in the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I think the RFS has an important function to perform	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I hope to become an officer in the brigade one day	<input type="checkbox"/>					
It is an important part of my community life	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I enjoy the responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>					
To protect my home and assets	<input type="checkbox"/>					
I have someone to look after the children when I am called out	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Other benefits: .....						

13. **How much easier would each of the following make it for you as a volunteer?** *For each of the following please tick to show how much easier it would be.*

	Much Easier	A Bit Easier	Not Easier	Don't Know	Not Applicable
RFS activities took less of my time	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The atmosphere in the brigade was more harmonious	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I could catch-up with training or assessments at neighbouring brigades or online if I miss a session	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My employer had a better awareness and understanding of the RFS and the role of volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
My own or my family's specific requirements are better catered for	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I didn't have to worry about leaving my property or family unprotected when I turn out with the RFS	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other: <i>Please describe</i> .....					

14. **Do you think that the organisation would benefit from education, training, information regarding bullying, harassment and discrimination?** *Please tick one.*

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	<input type="checkbox"/>				

<b>15. Would mentoring (one-on-one guidance by a more experienced member) make it easier for you to volunteer with the RFS?</b> For each of the following please tick to show how much mentoring would help.	<b>Much Easier</b>	<b>Somewhat Easier</b>	<b>Not Easier</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Would a mentoring program help new recruits get through the first 12 months with the RFS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would a culture of mentoring help volunteers in all roles and at all levels in the RFS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Please describe .....				

<b>16. Would the theory side of RFS training be easier for you if it was supplied to your home in one of the following formats?</b> For each of the following please tick one.	<b>Much Easier</b>	<b>Somewhat Easier</b>	<b>No Help</b>
Printed training notes posted to your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multimedia training notes (PowerPoint or Flash presentations) supplied on CD-ROM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multimedia training notes (PowerPoint or Flash presentations) downloadable from the Internet, MyRFS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>17. What do you believe deters other people from volunteering with the RFS?</b> For each of the following please tick one.	<b>Major Deterrent</b>	<b>Minor Deterrent</b>	<b>Not a Deterrent</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
People are becoming busier at work, business or farming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People are giving more priority to leisure activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient understanding of what is involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People are hearing that the RFS is taking up more time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People think it is too dangerous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People think there are too many rules and procedures / paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The fact that you don't get paid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People from other cultures don't feel comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People think it is too much of a "boy's club"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial hardship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not fit enough	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Please specify .....				

<b>18. What is your employment status?</b> Please tick all that apply:	<input type="checkbox"/> Business / Farm owner with employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/> Student
	<input type="checkbox"/> Business / Farm owner without employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Part time employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Duties	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired
<b>What hours do you work?</b> e.g. 9-5, rotating shifts .....	How many hours per week on average? ..... hrs/wk			

<b>19. If you are currently employed:</b> If self employed go to Question 20.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Do you and your employer have a clear understanding about when you can take time off to attend RFS callouts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would it be helpful if the RFS supplied a sample agreement between you and your employer about taking time off work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roughly, what percentage of callouts that occur during your working hours do you attend? .....	.....%		
What are the main limitations on you turning out during work hours? .....			
What would make it easier for you to turn out during work hours? .....			
If you take time off work to respond with the RFS, what kind of leave do you take? <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Holiday Leave</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Unpaid Leave</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergency Services Leave</b>			

<b>20. If you are self-employed or a business or farm owner:</b> Roughly, what percentage of callouts that occur during your business hours do you attend? .....	.....%
What are the main limitations on you turning out during business hours? .....	

<b>21. Do you know about the MyRFS website?</b> Please tick one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Are you a registered User?</b> Please tick one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>If you use MyRFS, how often do you use it?</b> Please tick one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Never		
<b>How happy are you with it?</b> Please tick one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Happy <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Happy <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Unhappy <input type="checkbox"/> Very Unhappy		
<b>If you don't use MyRFS, why not?</b> Tick all that apply.	<input type="checkbox"/> I rarely or never use a computer <input type="checkbox"/> I use a computer but don't have Internet access <input type="checkbox"/> I have Internet access but it is too difficult to register for a MyRFS username <input type="checkbox"/> I know about MyRFS but I don't see the value		
What changes or additional features would you like to see in MyRFS? .....			

<b>22. Are you aware of the "Volunteer to Career" project,</b> which is aimed at assisting RFS volunteers in gaining the qualifications needed for career staff positions? Please tick Yes or No.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How interested are you in joining the RFS career staff? Please tick one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Interested <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Interested <input type="checkbox"/> Not Interested
How interested are you in completing training that would qualify you for a career with the RFS? Please tick one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Interested <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Interested <input type="checkbox"/> Not Interested

<b>23. How important do you think the following values are for the RFS?</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>How important do you think the following values are for the RFS?</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Our people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Ethos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professionalism (in what we do)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Co operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honesty, integrity and trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diversity (in membership)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compassion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Please specify .....							

# PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

*(Required if completed by an RFS volunteer less than 18 years of age.)*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (the parent, guardian) agree that my child may participate in completing this volunteer survey and that any research data collected for this study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify my child in any way.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to survey participant: (Father, Mother, Guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

FOLD HERE FIRST



Jim McLennan  
Bushfire CRC  
School of Psychological Sciences

Delivery Address:  
1 Kingsbury Drive  
BUNDOORA VIC 3083

No stamp required  
if posted in Australia



La Trobe University  
Reply Paid 66611  
BUNDOORA VIC 3083

FOLD HERE SECOND

## Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Please fold and stick the questionnaire to form  
a reply-paid package and post it to La Trobe University.

If you have any questions or concerns about this Survey, please contact the Project Manager, Jim McLennan:

Bushfire CRC Volunteerism Project • School of Psychological Sciences • La Trobe University • Bundoora, 3083  
Email: [j.mclennan@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:j.mclennan@latrobe.edu.au) • Phone (03) 9479 2420 • Fax (03) 9479 5008

# Do you need a fire permit?

If bush fire danger period or burn could endanger a building  
**Fire permit required**

If not bush fire danger period or burn will not endanger a building  
**Fire permit not required**

Ensure relevant safety conditions found at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) are addressed

**Who do you notify?**

**Before burning, you MUST provide 24 hours notice to all adjoining landowner / occupiers and your local fire authority**

No notice required before burning

**No burning is permitted on TOTAL FIRE BAN or NO BURN DAYS**

For further information contact your local RFS Brigade, Fire Control Centre, nearest NSW Fire Brigades station or call the RFS Information Line 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737). Alternatively go to [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) and visit the 'Safe Burning' section.

## 2. BUSH FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION CERTIFICATES

Landholders are legally required to prevent a fire escaping on or from their land under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. Bush fire hazard reduction work involves reducing fuel loads (shrubby vegetation, leaf litter and twigs) to make it easier to control wildfires and protect assets such as homes and major structures. Burning is commonly used to do this but in some areas it may be possible and safer to achieve the desired outcomes by methods such as mowing, slashing or hand clearing. For more information on alternate methods see the RFS document *Standards for Asset Protection Zones*.

A Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate provides an environmental approval for bush fire hazard reduction works. If a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate is issued, no other form of environmental approval is required. A Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate is issued free of charge by the RFS, and is valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue. Application forms are available from your local RFS Fire Control Centre or at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) (then go to *Hazard Reduction*). See the RFS document *Application Instructions for a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate* for further details.

A Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate cannot be issued for some highly significant environmental areas such as certain wetlands, rainforests or critical habitats. If a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate cannot be issued for your proposed works then an alternate environmental approval may be required. More information is provided below.

*Note: Your local council may be the Certificate issuing authority in some cases. The RFS can advise you where this is the case.*

## 3. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS

*Note: If you have been issued with a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate then the following section does not apply to you.*

If the fire is not being lit for bush fire hazard reduction (or a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate cannot be issued) then you may need some other type/s of environmental

approval. The information below is only a guide and it is the responsibility of the landholder to determine whether all the necessary approvals have been obtained. The following 2 types of approvals should be considered.

### Vegetation Clearing Approvals

If you are burning standing native vegetation then you are likely to require an environmental approval to clear that vegetation.

If you are mechanically clearing vegetation and intend to pile burn (or windrow burn) the material then an environmental approval may be required for the mechanical clearing of the vegetation as well as burning the pile.

Contact your local council and/or Catchment Management Authority (CMA) in the first instance to determine whether your proposed clearing and/or burn requires an environmental approval. Further information on vegetation clearance may be obtained at [www.nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au).

Also note that where mechanical clearing and/or burning of native vegetation may have an impact of threatened species, populations, endangered ecological communities or their habitat, an approval from the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) may also be required.

### Approval for Open Burning – Smoke Management

In many council areas, backyard burning and other open burning is prohibited except with an approval from either the local council or DECC. There is also a Statewide ban on burning of certain items such as tyres, coated wire, paint/solvent containers and treated timber. These measures seek to reduce the impact of smoke on the community and to reduce overall local and regional air pollution.

Contact your local council in the first instance to enquire about an *Approval for Open Burning*. For further information call the DECC Environment Line on 131 555 or visit the DECC website at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au) then **Search** for “*Regulation of Open Burning in NSW*”.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

The following documents are available from your local Fire Control Centre and from the NSW RFS website at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au):

- *Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Application Form*;
- *Application Instructions for a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate*;
- *Standards for Low Intensity Hazard Reduction Burning*;
- *Standards for Asset Protection Zones*;
- *Standards for Pile Burning*;
- *Standards for Windrow Burning (Plantations)*;

If you require any further information please contact:

- Rural Fire Service – See [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) for your nearest RFS Fire Control Centre
- NSW Fire Brigade – See [www.nswfb.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nswfb.nsw.gov.au) for your nearest NSWFB Fire Station

or telephone the NSW RFS Enquiry Line on 1800 679 737.

Produced by the NSW Rural Fire Service, Locked Mail Bag 17, GRANVILLE, NSW 2142

(in consultation with the NSW Fire Brigades and the Department of Environment and Climate Change).

## CHECKLIST

**Before you light that fire,** make sure you have:

- Gained environmental approval (if required)
- Been issued a Fire Permit (if required)
- Notified all adjoining landowners/occupiers and your local fire authority
- Notified your local Council (if required)
- Checked for Total Fire Ban or No Burn Days

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## LITHGOW RELAY FOR LIFE

Story by Annette Baker

**O**n Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 March Lithgow District volunteers and staff took to the track at the Lithgow Showground to raise money for cancer research.

Lithgow Communications, Marrangaroo and Wallerawang volunteers joined Superintendent Tom Shirt and Administration Officer Annette Baker in raising vital funds for this very worthy cause. After many laps and sore feet, \$20,000 was raised.

### LINE DANCING, A BOOT CAMP DEMONSTRATION, LIVE BAND AND SCOTTISH BAGPIPES WERE ON SHOW

The relay kicked off at 4pm with the Survivors and Carers walk and concluded on Sunday at 10am. Various entertainments such as line dancing, a boot camp demonstration, live band and Scottish bagpipes were on show to help the walkers remain motivated throughout the night.

A massage tent was also provided which was well utilised for everyone's aches and pains.

### A SILENT LAP WAS TAKEN FOR QUIET REFLECTION

#### Candlelight ceremony

At sunset, a candlelight ceremony of hope took place with candles being placed around the track in remembrance of loved ones lost, accompanied by a short ceremony. At the conclusion of the ceremony a silent lap was taken for quiet reflection.

#### Blue skies and sunshine

Much to the pleasure of everyone involved the bad weather held off for both days, with the only rain coming down late Sunday afternoon well after the event had finished.

#### Many thanks

Lithgow District RFS staff would like to thank all those who took part in the event, including the Hartley Brigade volunteers

who joined the Hartley Progress Association team.

### Come along next year!

The RFS is looking to become involved in this event again next year and would like to encourage even more volunteers to become involved in this worthy event.



## LIGHTNING RIDGE VOLUNTEERS DAY

Story by Superintendent Mark Ryan

Lightning Ridge and Region Transcultural Community Inc and Neighbourhood Centre recently invited Lightning Ridge HQ Brigade along with other organisations to celebrate the good work done by volunteers in the community.

### Picnic in the park

A picnic day at Lions Park was held on Sunday 6 May, 2007, to celebrate the occasion. The whole community was invited to recognise the contribution that volunteers make in the community.

### Free sausage sizzle

While volunteers enjoyed a free sausage sizzle, Mission Australia were on site making pet rocks with the kids.

## LIGHTNING RIDGE BRIGADE HAD HOSES OUT FOR THE KIDS TO PLAY WITH

Members of the Lightning Ridge Brigade had hoses out for the kids to play with. They also promoted the role of the RFS within the local community, and assisted residents with fire safety tips throughout the afternoon.

## A VERY ACTIVE HEADQUARTERS BRIGADE WHO IS LESS THAN TWO YEARS OLD

"This event is well deserved by a very active HQ Brigade which is less than two years old [and] I continue to thank the communities in Lightning Ridge for their support of the Brigade," Superintendent Mark Ryan, Team Manager - North West said.



## COMMEMORATION PLAQUE FOR TERREY HILLS BRIGADE

Story by Bill Holmes

Photos by Kevin Duff, Terrey Hills

Following approval by Warringah Council, a Bronze Plaque recessed into a stone plinth was installed in the Frank Beckman Reserve at Terrey Hills earlier this year.

### Equipment Shed built in 1955

The Plaque commemorates the first equipment shed built by members of the Terrey Hills Volunteer Bushfire Brigade in 1955 and was in use to house equipment, the "Blitz" fire tanker and to hold brigade meetings until December 1967.

## FIRST EQUIPMENT SHED BUILT BY MEMBERS OF THE TERREY HILLS VOLUNTEER BUSHFIRE BRIGADE IN 1955

### A joint venture

The Plaque was a joint venture between the Terrey Hills Progress Association and the Terrey Hills Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade.

The Brigade wishes to thank the Association's President Mr Frank Beckman and Secretary Mrs Pat Mullins, for their work in gaining approval to install the Plaque.

Special thanks also go to Mr Chris Bennetts from 'Ishi Buki' Sandstone Sculpture at Ingleside who supplied the stone, recessed the Plaque and carried out the installation as a donation to the Brigade.



## PANTS ON FIRE! TEACHES KIDS VALUABLE LESSONS

**M**arian Street theatre, in conjunction with the RFS, recently held a production of the play 'Pants on Fire!'.

## CHILDREN ARE OFTEN SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILY, WHICH MAY CAUSE THEM TO PANIC

The play, which helps children learn life-saving fire safety lessons, uses audience participation to familiarise children with the concept of fire and make them more comfortable in the case of an emergency. In a house or bushfire, children are often separated from their family, which may cause them to panic or, if they feel guilty about the fire, hide, placing themselves in grave danger.

The play, written by Terry Ryan, also gives children the practical techniques to deal with such a situation.

In 'Pants on Fire!', two city children played by Jessica Blaxland Ashby and Jeremy Page, move to the Blue Mountains where their parents become volunteer firefighters.

## THEY LEARN WHAT ITS LIKE TO BE CAUGHT IN A BUSHFIRE

When a fire breaks out they learn what its like to be caught in a bushfire and with the assistance of the audience avert a disastrous situation.

## Fire truck arrives at theatre

Children at Marian Street Theatre's special school holiday production of Pants on Fire! had an extra special treat in April when a fire truck arrived at the theatre.

The RFS truck parked outside the theatre for several hours on the first day of the season.

Picture courtesy of John Appleyard - North Shore Times

**Left to Right:** Actors Jeremy Page, Anthony Hunt, firefighter Helmut Maartin (Warringah Pittwater HQ), Group Officer Neil Morrison (Warringah Pittwater), Actor Jessica Blaxland Ashby.



## HORNSBY COMMUNITY NURSERY & ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION DAY

**H**ornsby Council recently promoted its community nursery and environmental workshops to the public at the Pennant Hills Nursery Open Day. The open days are held regularly and allow all residents to visit the facility to learn new ways to help the local environment.

Information on removing bushfire hazards around the home and requirements for building in a bushfire prone area were two of the topics promoted by the Hornsby RFS FireWise Team on the day.

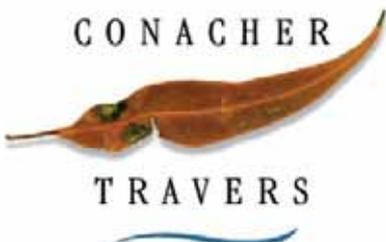
## THE OPEN DAYS ARE HELD REGULARLY AND ALLOW ALL RESIDENTS TO VISIT THE FACILITY

## Valuable information available

Information on recycling, composting, weeds, water tanks and water conservation, worm farms and habitat gardens was also available for the public to discuss with Hornsby Council employees.

Hornsby Residents discuss preparing their property with Scott Jones at the Nursery Open Day. Photo by Colin Manton

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The team accepts the award for winning the 600 gallon Pump Suction event.

**Left to right:** Phil Moore, Amery Thompson, Kendall Thompson and John Clason with NSW Fire Brigades Assistant Commissioner Graham Dewsnap.



## MOONBI-KOOTINGAL REPRESENT AT FIRE BRIGADES' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Story by Graham Thompson

Over the weekend of 5-6 May, a team of volunteer firefighters from the Moonbi-Kootingal Rural Fire Brigade attended the NSW Fire Brigades' Firefighters Championships, Region North, conducted at Dorrigo.

### Introducing the team

The team, consisting of John Clason, Phil Moore, Amery Thompson and Kendall Thompson have participated as an invitation team at Championships held at Bourke, Swansea, Unanderra and Muswellbrook over the past two years and have seen their performances steadily improve in the 12 events staged during the two days.

At Dorrigo the team recorded creditable times and placings, including two fourths and two

fifths, but left it until the very last event to really shine. In the 600 gallon pump suction event, earlier teams had set the benchmark at 19.4 seconds to attach a suction hose to the tanker, prime the pump, run out two hoses and strike the targets. As the last team to compete, the RFS crew brought the house down with a blistering run of 17.6 seconds, the first time they had ever won an event. As the announcer said, "It was worth waiting the whole weekend to see a run like that." The win placed them 5th overall for the weekend, out of 14 teams - a very satisfying result.

### A pat on the back

As the only Rural Fire Service team competing against NSW Fire Brigades' teams, they have received great support and encouragement from both the competitors and the organisers of the Championships, as well as from local RFS management in Tamworth, and are now regarded as 'regulars' around the state. They see the competition as challenging and great fun but also as an opportunity to learn about the equipment and methods used by the 'town' brigades. This has enabled the attendees to more usefully co-operate at incidents where both agencies attend.

This means that local residents of Moonbi, Kootingal and surrounding areas can definitely be assured that, when it comes to protecting their property from fire, the local Brigade has the right men for the job!

## SPOTFIRE!



## ACETYLENE CYLINDER RUPTURES AT POWER STATION

Firefighters from Bulga and Whittingham Brigades and a Group South Officer were confronted with a rare scenario just after 0900 hrs on 23 April when a cylinder containing acetylene located close to a rack of over 30 mixed cylinders caught fire at the Redbank Power Station near Singleton.

### RFS quick to respond

RFS personnel were on hand quickly to ensure the burst cylinder didn't damage any of the other fully laden cylinders in the workshop and placed the exploded cylinder in water to cool off once the contents had expired.

It is believed a worker in the engineering department was preparing to use the cylinder for a welding job when the head of the tank ruptured, burning the victim's face and upper body. Fearing he had suffered respiratory damage, the worker was transported to hospital by air.

Local gas representatives will test the cylinder to identify the exact cause of the potentially serious incident.

## RFS EVENTS FROM MARCH / APRIL / MAY

### MARCH

#### March 10

- Grawin/Glengarry Station Opening and Long Service Awards
- Presentation of medal to Ian Clarke, Bourke RFB

#### March 15

- Beaumont Brigade Tanker Handover
- Helensburgh Tanker Handover

#### March 16-18

- Region North Exercises

#### March 17

- Lake Macquarie 10th Anniversary

#### March 31

- Captains meeting and Medals Ceremony

### APRIL

#### April 2

- Wantabadgery Station Opening and Tanker Handover
- Walbundrie Station Opening and National Medals and Long Service Awards
- Eurongilly Station Opening

#### April 13-15

- Region West Exercises

#### April 14

- Charmhaven/Arizona Station Opening and 50th Anniversary celebrations

#### April 27-29

- Region South Exercises

#### April 28

- Sancrox/Thrumster Station Extension Opening
- Blue Mountains National Medals and Long Service Awards
- Medowie Station Extension Opening

### MAY

#### May 2

- Warringah/Pittwater National Medals and Long Service Awards

#### May 4

- St Florian's Day awards

#### May 5

- Wingecarribee Tanker Handover

#### May 12

- Maragle and Tumba Tanker Handover

#### May 14-18

- National Volunteer Week

#### May 15

- Minister visit to HQ for Volunteer Week

#### May 16-17

- Community Safety Directorate Conference

#### May 17-19

- Australasian Education and Fire Awareness Conference 2007

#### May 26

- Warringah 50th Anniversary

Sancrox station opening



Wantabadgery station opening and tanker handover





## LONG SERVICE AWARDS – WALGETT

Story by Superintendent Mark Ryan

On 10 March, 2007 Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers visited Walgett to award a number of Long Service Awards to Walgett RFD members. The event was well attended with many years of Service being recognised.

The members who received awards were:

<b>Ian Sanderson</b>	(Allawah Brigade) - 50 Year Long Service
<b>Harold Phelps</b>	(Rowena Brigade) - 50 Year Long Service
<b>Brian Shearer</b>	(Rowena Brigade) - 35 Year Long Service
<b>Brian Kable</b>	(Collarenebri Brigade) - 15 Year Long Service
<b>Jasen Ramien</b>	(Collarenebri Brigade) - 15 Year Long Service
<b>Peter Williams</b>	(Collarenebri Brigade) - 15 Year Long Service

"It is extremely impressive to see the brigades in the Walgett Shire performing so well in such difficult circumstances with much of the Shire still in drought," said Superintendent Mark Ryan, Team Manager.

**Left to right:** Brian Shearer, Patricia Wilcox (accepting on behalf of her father, Ian Sanderson), Harold Phelps, Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers, Jasen Ramien, Paul Williams



## AUSTRALIA DAY MEDALS – 11 MAY

On 11 May, in a Ceremony at Government House, Sydney, seven members of the Service were invested with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM). The AFSM is awarded for distinguished service by members of Australian Fire Services.

Recipients included staff members Kam Baker, Mick Beltran and Trevor Anderson, and volunteers Don Luscombe, Leslie Stewart, Ron (John) Ashton and John Harvey.

**Left to right:** Trevor Anderson, Mick Beltran, Acting Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, Don Luscombe, Leslie Stewart



### ST FLORIAN'S DAY AWARDS

On 4 May, NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers and staff from around the State were presented with special commendations and awards for outstanding

acts of valour, bravery and service by RFS Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers.

The annual awards were presented at RFS Headquarters in Homebush to mark St Florian's Day, named for the Patron Saint of firefighters.

### A NUMBER OF CITATIONS FOR INVALUABLE SERVICE

Among the awards were presentations to two RFS members for acts of bravery and a number of citations for invaluable service by some of the organisation's longest serving volunteers.

Recipients included Ian Clarke, Ray Elsey, Billy Tan, Bill Reid, Greg Standen, Dean Symons, Glenda Anthes, Rosemary Page, Michael Batty, Frank Vincent, Roy Pinch, and the staff of Region West.

"On behalf of the NSW community I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for the endless hours of time these recipients, who are located as far a field as Shoalhaven and Bourke, have dedicated to protecting their fellow residents and promoting the fire safety message," said Acting Commissioner Rogers.

The RFS Awards Committee apologises for inaccurately naming William Reid as an Inspector in the Brief and subsequent programme.



### WARRINGAH/PITTWATER VOLUNTEERS HONOURED

NSW RFS Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers presented Medals to more than 40 Warringah Pittwater volunteers at a ceremony at Warringah Council Chambers on 2 May, honouring the dedication and commitment they continue to provide to their communities.

### TIRELESS HARD WORK AT MAJOR FIRE CAMPAIGNS

Acting Commissioner Rob Rogers said RFS volunteers were to be awarded with National Medals and Long Service Awards in recognition of their tireless hard work at major fire campaigns including the Snowy Mountains, Blue Mountains and more recently in the Ku-ring-gai National Park.



It was a special night for Terrey Hills Brigade member Jack Mullins who received a 50-year Long Service Award.

Attending the Ceremony was Mr. Mullins' son, Greg Mullins, Commissioner NSW Fire Brigades.

National Medals recognising diligent service for 25 consecutive years were also awarded to Robert Barton and Jeffery Herbert of Ingleside Brigade and Paul Kirk from Duffy's Forest Brigade.

## LAGUNA – READY TO RESPOND, WITH DRABC!

Story by Glenn O'Rourke  
Laguna Rural Fire Brigade  
Hunter

**L**aguna Rural Fire Brigade serves the community of Laguna and Wollombi Valley located in the lower Hunter and is over 30 minutes by road from local emergency services. Therefore, Laguna RFB provides a critical first line of emergency response to the community and the many tourists and visitors to the area in the case of fire, motor vehicle accidents and other life threatening incidents.

### Brigade well equipped to provide first aid

To meet this challenge, Laguna Rural Fire Brigade seeks to maintain a high level of training. A number of the Brigade members are qualified senior first aiders and thanks to the generosity of the local community through fundraising and specialist equipment donations, the Brigade is also equipped with two Oxy Viva sets and other specialist equipment.

### Advanced resuscitation training

In order to stay certified and up-to-date with latest techniques, 15 members of the Brigade recently undertook an advanced resuscitation training program at the Brigade's April monthly training session. The session was run by Phil James, a Brigade member and qualified St Johns training officer.

The training session provided Brigade members with an update on the latest in the administration of advanced resuscitation and automated heart defibrillation techniques. Comprising of a combination of theory and practical exercises, Brigade participants were tested with a variety of 'life threatening' casualty scenarios. Each simulated emergency response required not only the correct application of the DRABC first aid procedures (see chart below), but effective leadership and great teamwork to aid the casualty.

Brigade participants said the session was highly valuable and key to ensuring Laguna RFB continues to provide a high level of emergency response to the local community.

#### Casualty First Aid Action Plan

Danger – Assess situation for danger  
Response – Assess level of consciousness  
Airway – Clear the airways  
Breathing – Check for breathing  
Circulation – Check for a pulse



# SPOTFIRE!

## LIGHTNING STRIKE KEEPS FIREFIGHTERS BUSY NEAR ALBURY

Crews from the RFS and NPWS were called to a fire, originating from a lightning strike, in Woomargama National Park, northeast of Albury, at 1330 hrs on 11 February.

The fire ran aggressively during the first few hours in a northwesterly direction, crossing Jergyle Road.

## OVER 500 HA OF THE NATIONAL PARK HAD BEEN BURNT

By nightfall over 500 ha of the National Park had been burnt despite the best efforts of over 60 RFS and NPWS personnel who undertook direct attack strategies across the afternoon to slow the forward rate of spread, with the assistance of seven helicopter and four fixed wing aircraft. A number of tankers were also brought in to assist with asset protection in the area with Fernadale Pine Plantation and several communities including: Fernadale, Triple Ponds, Westal and Reddalls Valley in the line of the fire.

## Extra resources and personnel called in

Over 100 firefighting personnel from the RFS and NPWS were brought in under the direction of over 30 personnel in the Incident Management Team (IMT) as the fire spread toward the western region of the park. Around 17 RFS tankers, over 20 NPWS strikers, ten helicopters and fixed wing aircraft and a number of bulldozers and graders were deployed at the peak of the fire, along with several Remote Area Firefighting Teams (RAFT).

New containment lines created by bulldozers at the head of the fire to the west, plus the use of retardant by crews working in difficult terrain proved to be a key factor in containing the fire by 15 February.

## Mop up continues for a week

Crews continued to mop up and extinguish spotfires for the next week with the assistance of several aircraft, which were also utilised to patrol the area for lightning strikes due to numerous thunderstorms in the area.

By the time the fire was eventually declared out on 27 February, over 2700 ha had been burnt within Woomargama National Park.

No homes, nor the nearby pine plantation, were affected by the fire due to the efficient work of all the agencies involved.

Photos courtesy of NPWS



# SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS



**OFFICER IN PROFILE**  
**FRANK VINCENT**  
**GROUP CAPTAIN**  
**BLUE MOUNTAINS**  
**YEARS IN SERVICE: 39**

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

When I moved to the Blue Mountains my neighbour told me that I was now living so close to the bush it would be in my best interests to join the local bush fire brigade - in fact, it was almost an instruction!

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

I joined the Mount Victoria Brigade in 1968, and was elected Deputy Captain in 1971, Senior Deputy Captain in 1974, Captain in 1976, Deputy Group Officer in 1985, and was then promoted to my present position as Group Officer West Sector in 1995.

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

**RECEIVING THE NATIONAL MEDAL AND 35 YEAR CLASP WERE TWO OF THE BEST**

There have been so many memorable moments in my years with the Service, but I think that receiving the National Medal and 35 year Clasp were two of the best. This year I was also honoured with the Commissioner's Commendation.

#### **What has been your worst fire?**

The one that stays in my mind is the 1977 fire in the Mountains. This was a worst case scenario where the fire which was being driven by southwesterly winds, severely impacted on ridgeline development within the mid mountain towns of Bullaburra, Lawson, Hazelbrook and Woodford.

I remember the frustration of having to standby and watch multiple houses burning down and not having enough fire tankers to deal with the situation.

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

The equipment: better communication systems, modern vehicles and in particular personal protective equipment and member safety. It's a far cry from the days of the old Blitzes to today's \$240,000 tankers.

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

There is no doubt the strangest thing I have ever experienced was when some years back we were struggling to control a fire when it started snowing!

#### **What is the farthest place your Group Officer role has taken you? And what did you do there?**

Rapid Response Groups to fires at Grafton and Hay and the Nyngan floods. While in Grafton, I was in charge of a Strike Team made up of composite crewing.

#### **What role do you see Group Officers performing in the future? Will it change?**

I think Group Officers play a very demanding role, and in the immediate years to come will experience much more severe fires bought on by climate change.

#### **Which do you prefer and why: Rake Hoe or Brush Hook?**

The rake hoe as it is much better suited as a universal tool, whereby one can dig, rake and knock down vegetation.

#### **Any final thoughts or comments?**

##### **Just a little story:**

A few years ago we were evacuating people from their homes and there was this one bloke with two wooden legs who refused to leave.

The moral to the story is that his house was saved but he was burnt to the ground!



**GROUP CAPTAIN  
FRANK VINCENT  
WITH PARTNER  
CHRISTINE**

# TRAINING

*"I consider the business of a fireman a regular profession requiring previous study and training as other professions do; and I am convinced that where study and training are omitted, and men are pitch forked into the practical work without preparation, the fire department will never be capable of dealing satisfactorily with great emergencies."*

-- Sir Eyre Massey Shaw,  
Chief of the London Fire Brigade, 1873

In 2007, RFS Learning & Development Systems is releasing some new and revised training courses for all volunteers, most notably revisions to the Crew Leader (CL) and Village Firefighter (VF) courses. This article will cover some of the new terminology and concepts which are being included in these training courses, and the changes to how post-course work has been set up.

Firstly, both the courses will be dated as 2005, eg "CLW (2005)" although they are being released in 2007. This is because the courses comply with the RFS' Learning & Assessment Strategies defined in 2005 – it doesn't indicate the year the manuals and workbooks were produced.

## Terminology:

The newest part of the VF and CL courses is in the terminology related to defensive bush firefighting in the bush/urban interface. The new terms are:

- Line defence
- Ember defence
- Backstop defence

These terms relate to actions and strategies which you have probably used already. They are not radical new approaches, we have simply given names to existing techniques. You will find these terms in the Interface Firefighting sections of the 2005 VF and CL. They mean:

- Line defence – used when fire conditions are suitable for direct attack, but limited resources prevent you carrying out that offensive strategy. Hose lines are deployed and the fire is knocked down where possible to protect property, with other pockets of fire allowed to burn around properties.
- Ember defence – crews protect property from ember attack, for

example by wetting down roofs, closing windows and doors, and extinguishing spot fires caused by embers before they develop. Crews don't attack the approaching main fire, but protect people and property from it as it passes.

- Backstop defence – used when the fire is too intense for other strategies to be used. Crews take shelter away from the fire front until it passes, then return to the impacted area and extinguish developing fires wherever safely possible.

You can find detailed descriptions and pictures of these actions in the new CL (2005) manual, and you can start using them in Brigade drills immediately. Have crews "respond" to a nearby property (with the owner's permission!), and deploy their vehicle and equipment for one of the above methods of defensive firefighting. For example, for ember defence, have the crews identify parts of the house at risk from ember attack, and take steps to reduce that risk. This may include wetting down the roof, sealing gaps under doors, identifying their own refuge areas, etc. You can combine this with the development of a Pre-Incident Plan for that property or area!

The new CLV and VF both include new sections on support of Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) crews at village fires, so that Crew Leaders have a greater appreciation of how to use CABA crews (whether RFS or not) and how to ensure their safety. VF personnel can then better assist with setting up equipment for offensive structural firefighting and supporting CABA operators in their work.

Finally, CL (2005) complements the new Communications training package COM (2005) and existing Comms SOPs, regarding how Crew Leaders and Brigade Officers should manage fireground communication networks.

## Crew Leader Modules

While the Crew Leader course still contains three modules, there has been a change in name:

- Crew Leader Wildfire (CLW) – enables the learner to lead a single appliance crew at a wildfire incident

- Crew Leader Village (CLV) - enables the learner to lead a single appliance crew at a village incident
- Crew Leader Supervision (CLS) – enables the learner to be an Incident Controller at a small incident (up to five appliances), a Strike Team or Task Force Leader, and a small Sector Commander and Staging Area Officer.

The main change is that Crew Leader Safety/ICS has been renamed to Crew Leader Supervision. This is because the safety aspect of the old course has been incorporated into Advanced Firefighter training recently, and the new CL has a greater emphasis on leadership and crew supervision.

Finally, the CLS course has been revised to more explicitly and completely cover the roles which brigade officers are required to perform, from being Incident Controller of a small incident, to leading a Strike Team or a small Sector at a larger fire.

## Post-Course Work

Post-course work in the previous Crew Leader course recommended about 20 hours of supervised practice for each module, and did not specify what form that practice was to take. In the new CL course, we have specified the post-course activities that trainees need to complete, but have removed the requirement for a minimum number of hours.

Instead, you now simply work through the activities in the workbook (which include running a drill, supervising simulated responses to various fires, preparing a Pre-Incident Plan, etc) until your supervisor deems that you have completed them satisfactorily. This may take some people four or five hours, it may take others 20-25 hours. You're then ready to be assessed.

VF (2005) will also involve post-course work, but as VF is a basic firefighting course, compared to CL being a supervisory level course, the VF post-course work will mostly take the form of drills and equipment use, where the trainee will participate in a crew responding to various simulated incidents.



# VOLUNTEERS AT THE COPACABANA TRAINING EXERCISE

## REGIONAL EXERCISES PHOTO GALLERY

March and April saw the mobilisation of the largest number of volunteers since the end of the Bushfire Danger Period. Over 1000 were deployed to bush, car and structure fires as the 2007 Regional Exercises got underway.

Participants descended on Glen Innes in

Region North, Wellington in Region West and Gundagai in Region South for the annual events.

Volunteers were tested on a full range of skills that they are required to use in the field as well as receiving updates on advancements in equipment and the direction of the service.

### REGION NORTH 2007 CHAMPIONSHIP LANE – CHAMPS

By Captain Danny Kerr, Jeff Smith and Dean Gillett.

#### Glenn Innes scores a hat-trick

2007 made it three years on the trot for Glen Innes Rural Fire Brigade as the home team again took out the coveted 'Best Crew' award in Championship Lane. Captain Danny Kerr, Jeff Smith and Dean Gillett share their experiences of the Region North Exercise 2007.

During the Region North Exercise 2004 the Brigade identified that the skills learnt through participation in staged scenarios required a greater level of solid, meaningful and regular training to maintain a fully dependable and functioning brigade.

#### A THREE MONTH OUTLINE OF TRAINING EVENTS IS PREPARED

And so it began, a regular training program was established consistent with the needs of the Brigade and the community we serve. A three month outline of training events is prepared to ensure all brigade members are aware that the time they are giving is being put to valuable use.

#### Hard training pays off

And has the training paid off? You bet it has! The Glen Innes Brigade's success over the past three years (Winners Best Crew 2005, 2006, 2007) and participation in the State Championships in Barooga 2006 (First in Chainsaw and Team Challenge Event) is a testament to the Brigade's hard work and dedication.

#### Fierce competition

With over 400 crew members from across Region North taking part in the exercise this year's competition was always going to be fierce. Our skills were put to the test in appliance pumping, portable pumps, knap-sack use, extinguishing of fat fires, faulty equipment identification, rake hoeing, driving skills and teamwork.

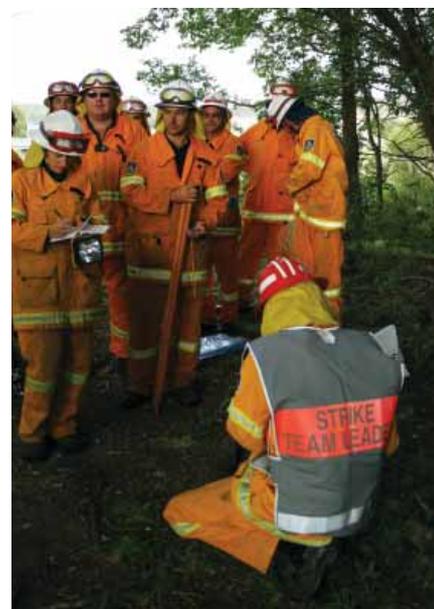
These exercises allowed for an excellent opportunity for all brigade members to participate in prepared scenarios. The comradeship and friendships established through these exercises are held in high esteem by members of the Brigade.

#### Training - an opportunity to improve skills

Regular training is well established within the Brigade and surrounding brigades are always welcome to join us on the first and third Mondays of each month. Our Brigade is fully dedicated to seeing that new and 'not-so-new' members view training as an opportunity to improve skills and knowledge no matter what their level of experience.

The Glen Innes Brigade would like to thank all those involved in the organisation and running of Region North Exercises 2007 and we look forward to defending the Championship Lane Trophy next year!





## EXPERIENCED CREW AND STRIKE TEAM LEADER, DAVID JONES DECIDED TO TAKE ON THE HEFTY ROLE OF DIVISIONAL COMMANDER AT THIS YEAR'S REGION WEST EXERCISE

### REGION WEST EXERCISE

By David Jones, Divisional Commander

**H**aving attended the previous two exercises as a crew leader and strike team leader I was looking forward to this exercise in the role of Divisional Commander.

Luckily for me I was teamed up with another Divisional Commander of many years, Bob Shiel. Bob and I had recently worked together at the Packhams Way section 44 and I felt I could still learn a lot from him (which I did).

#### Plans are made

The four "DivComs" got together early Friday night and having decided that the Exercise needed a navigation component, developed a pattern of allocating strike teams to different scenarios. While the plan was good, we were to find a number of challenges in implementing it and keeping to time!

#### CONFUSION REIGNED SUPREME AS WE TRIED TO COORDINATE WHO WAS GOING WHERE

Saturday was the day of reckoning and we started with a number of problems. A strike team leader was missing (we never found him or her), strike team names were similar and confusion reigned supreme as we tried to coordinate who was going where. Just like a normal fire situation!

Once sorted out, we needed to be flexible and had to juggle teams all day to make it happen. By Saturday night we were fairly close to our target of eight scenarios completed by eight strike teams. After dinner and another briefing it was time to adjourn for some much desired refreshments.

Sunday was bright and sunny and after briefing all the strike team leaders we got off to a good start. With a little coaxing we got all the teams through the scenarios and to lunch on time.

Paul Whiteley and Mark Ryan provided great mentoring and at times some much needed guidance (however I think they were a little unsure what we were doing at times) and the communications crews were great. We certainly applied the pressure with requests and radio traffic.

A great weekend seemed to be had by all – there were plenty of grins and banter as well as some serious learning.

For those who haven't been to a regional exercise you need to do it!





## RAIN DIDN'T DAMPEN SPIRITS IN THE SOUTH

By Matthew Schroder

Not even the predicted rain could dampen the spirits of the Region South volunteers as they drove into the Gundagai Showground to commence the 2007 Region South Exercise.

Heavy rain throughout Friday night and Saturday morning forced the Incident Management Team (IMT) to quickly implement contingency plans.

### LOSS OF POWER, DISCOVERED BY THE CATERING CREW

Added to this task was the loss of power, discovered by the catering crew as they attempted to start preparing breakfast at 0400 hrs.

### Scenarios reworked

Scenarios were reworked, moved around and replaced to accommodate for the rain, with the addition of a MyRFS scenario that ran volunteers through the current and upcoming features of the volunteer-specific website.

Crews were briefed on the new arrangements and also asked to take care when driving around the showground, not only to preserve the grounds but for the safety of everybody in the wet conditions.

### CHILLY FIREFIGHTERS COULD ALWAYS BE SEEN HUDDLING AROUND THE HEATING FIRES

As crews moved between the scenarios, many now based in and around the grandstand area, a few chilly firefighters could always be seen huddling around the heating fires trying to stay warm.

Participants of the exercise were given a few unique opportunities as they progressed through the scenarios, such as learning how to command waterbombing aircraft and using flares to mark targets. In one scenario volunteers were able to sit down with Region South Operations Officer

Superintendent Ken Hall and discuss their brigade, the region and direction of the service.

### Rainfall to finish off

A great weekend was had by all and ended as it began with the much needed rain falling on the showground and smiles all round.







## MYRFS AT THE REGIONAL EXERCISES

Story by the MyRFS team

**M**yRFS again made an appearance at the Regional Exercises this year with a bigger and better setup than ever before.

First stop was Region North, and beautiful Glen Innes. Although it was the eighth Regional Exercise for the area, it was only the second for MyRFS, and the volunteers seemed amazed by how much the site had grown in just one year.

They were also pleasantly surprised by the free water bottles, hats and beanies the team were giving out for sign-ups and on-camera comments about the site.

### THE TEAM SPENT TWO DAYS TALKING TO USERS ABOUT THE FEATURES THEY WERE ENJOYING

Next up was Region West, held at Burrendong Dam, where the team spent two days talking to users about present and future features of the site.

### Filming of the scenarios

The MyRFS team filmed all of the scenarios - interviewing volunteers and scenario marshals about learning outcomes, as well as what they expected from, and had achieved, over the weekend. These messages (as well as footage from the other two exercises) are now available for volunteers on the site.

The videos are a great way for those unable to attend the exercises to see what they're all about - as well as providing those who were there with great memories of the weekend.

Last, but not least for this year, were the Region South exercises held at Gundagai, where we made both a wee fan (see right) and the Dog on the Tuckerbox honorary members of MyRFS.

### VOLUNTEERS VISITED SECTOR ZULU TO LEARN ABOUT LOGGING ON TO THE SITE

#### MyRFS - A training scenario

Due to early (and much appreciated!) rainfall in the Region, MyRFS was this year also turned into a training scenario. Over two days, volunteers visited Sector Zulu to learn about logging on to the site's existing features, such as brigade and personal information, and upcoming developments, including training information and course nominations.

Staff from the Geographic Information Systems unit were also on hand to answer questions about the upcoming live weather functions that will soon feature on the volunteer website.

For more pictures and video of the Regional Exercises, log on to [www.MyRFS.nsw.gov.au](http://www.MyRFS.nsw.gov.au)

### Can't remember your login?

Signed on previously, want to see what's new on the site, but can't remember your details? Simply click on the 'Forgotten your login details?' link, and we'll have you logged on in no time!

MyRFS also has a dedicated support line to help you with any enquiries, any time. Simply call **1300 269 MyRFS** (1300 269 737) to speak with an operator.



## CORRECTIONS

### Blue Mountains fires

Thank you to all the RFS firefighters who attended the Blue Mountains fires in November/December 2006 and were not mentioned in the last edition of the Bushfire Bulletin.

### Aircraft Recognition

In the middle-page spread on 'Aviation Operations and Aircraft Recognition' (Issue 1, 2007) the Turbine Dromader uses Jet A1 fuel not AVGAS as listed.

A description of the Kaman K-Max in the same section should have read that the single engine helicopter uses Jet A1 fuel at a rate of 223 litres per hour and not 23 litres as listed.

## SPOTFIRE!

### SAW MILL FIRE BURNS CLOSE TO HOME FOR PENROSE BRIGADE

Frank Davenport, Deputy Captain, Penrose RFB

RFS members from the Penrose Brigade, west of Bundanoon, didn't have far to go when a large fire broke out at a pine mill located directly across the road from their Station on 22 March at 1231 hrs. The Brigade's Cat 1 and Cat 7 appliances were on the scene within three minutes as were four of the mill's workers who also serve in the local Brigade.

A 12 metre high industrial steel sawdust hopper containing up to 200 cubic metres of burning sawdust was alight when crews arrived. The heat of the fire posed serious danger to the structure of the hopper and surrounding mill stockpiles as crews attempted to direct water into the top of the bin and onto the external structure using two 38mm hoses until they could gain better access to use firefighting foam.

Without the aid of town water (Penrose has a population of only 250), the mill's 4,000 litre Bedford Cat 1 tanker, was used to transfer water from two 80,000 litre water storage tanks on-site to the Penrose Cat 1 via closed relaying. This prevented disconnection of hoses on the main fire fighting appliance. The fire was completely extinguished at approximately 1900 hrs and the structure was supervised until the next morning when the all clear was given on the fire.

The Penrose Captain would like to acknowledge the professionalism and team work displayed by the crew that attended the incident. The incident highlighted to the experienced and newer crew members alike, the importance of training and familiarisation exercises carried out on training nights. Unfortunately a young mill worker was killed while another was hospitalised with burns to his body following the incident, which is currently being investigated.



A Penrose Brigade tanker at the scene

Why did the chicken cross the road?



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# FOR THE KIDS



In the last Bushfire Bulletin we asked you to send us your bushfire related artwork. We have received some terrific responses, including this great picture of a helicopter from Ethan Garrett.

For the next edition, cut out and use the fire escape plan on the following pages, then tell us what steps you included in your home fire escape plan and how the first practise run went.

Write to the Editor at  
Locked Mail Bag 17  
Granville NSW 2142.

**The best submission  
will win a special  
RFS prize pack!**

**FIREWISE** Fact

Smoke Alarms save lives!

Install smoke alarms now. Remind mum and dad to replace batteries once a year and test your smoke alarm once a month!

# FIREWISE<sup>TM</sup> Fact

On 1 May 2006, the law changed, requiring all homes to have smoke alarms.

**Home Fire Safety – Keeping our families safe during the winter months.**

## Smoke Alarms!

A smoke alarm is a warning device which is designed to detect smoke in the early stages of a fire. An alarm will sound when smoke is detected inside the building, prompting people inside to find the safest way out. Remember, when you are asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep – but an alarm will wake you up!

## Home Fire Escape Plan

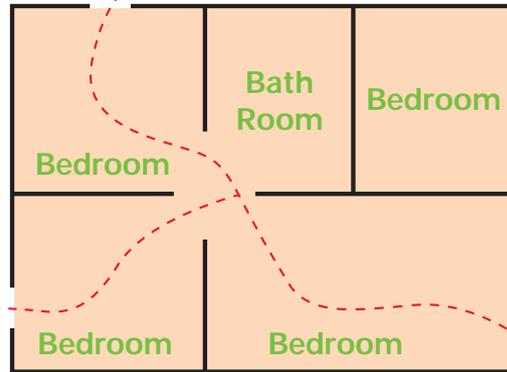
- Know two safe ways out of every room.
- Draw your escape plan on paper and discuss your escape plan with your family. Remember to consider the special needs of children, the elderly or impaired when developing your escape plan.
- If you live in an apartment building, learn and practise your building's evacuation plan. If you hear the fire alarm leave immediately. Use the stairs and not the lift.
- As you escape make sure you close internal doors behind you (to stop the fire spreading) and keep low (under the smoke).
- Decide on a safe outside meeting place. For example, near the letterbox.
- Make sure that your windows and doors can open quickly (if and when required).
- Practise your escape plan regularly with all of your family and test the smoke alarms.
- If there is a fire in your home, do not wait. Every second counts. Escape immediately and then call triple zero ('000') from a neighbour's home.
- Once you are out, stay out. Never go back inside a burning building.



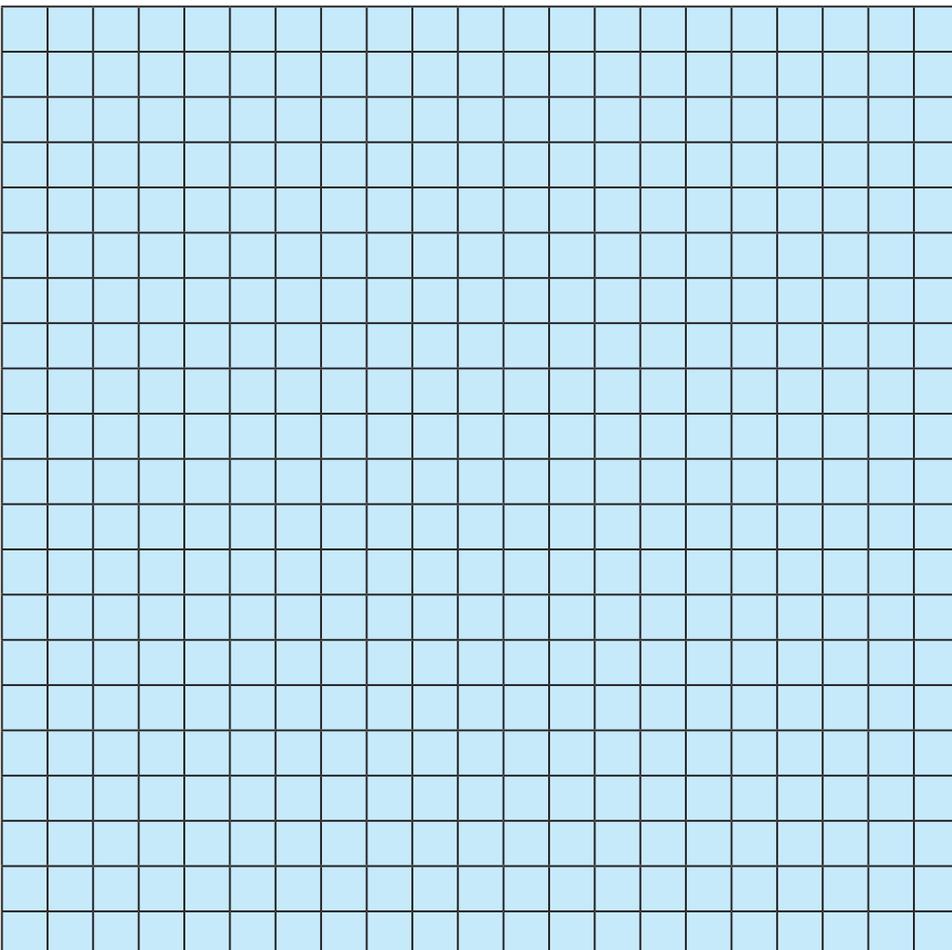
# TWO WAYS OUT – HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

## INSTALL A SMOKE ALARM

- Test two ways out of every room
- Decide an outside meeting place
- Practise your Home Fire Escape Plan regularly
- Draw your escape plan in the grid below



## PROTECT YOUR FAMILY: PLAN TO GET OUT ALIVE



## SPOTFIRE!



### TOXIC BATTERY FUMES KEEP CREWS BUSY

**R**FS crews from three stations attended a shed fire at 0800 hrs on Friday 27 April, 2007, north of Bathurst, which is believed to have started from an electrical fault with several solar batteries.

Toxic fumes from the burning batteries, which were used to operate a generator unit in the 5m x 5m shed, required the local breathing apparatus (BA) team from Eglinton to be responded in support of crews from Turondale and Duramana once a perimeter was set up.

A nearby tank housing 80 litres of diesel was kept cool by with hose streams to prevent any further damage as the shed was well alight when crews arrived.

#### Shed totally destroyed

Once BA crews arrived, a direct attack was undertaken. The shed was totally destroyed with over \$40,000 worth of damage to the solar and generator system.

The owner of the building expressed his gratitude to the RFS for containing the fire, especially due to the remote location and difficult terrain encountered by the three brigades on the property.

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NSW Rural Fire Service

# RFS OPEN DAY!

**Saturday 15 September 2007**

For more information on **Open Day 2007**  
visit MyRFS, the public website or call  
Claire Poignand on 02 8741 5479

**Start your planning for OPEN DAY  
in your community now!**

Open Day information kits will be available  
on **MyRFS** and at your district office early July.

...for our community



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