

BUSHFIRE BULLETIN



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Cover photo by Gary Walker



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COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

We have for the second year in a row been blessed by a relatively mild fire season. Although long range forecasts made last September and October gave rise to speculation that below average rainfall might produce a potentially serious scenario, continued unstable weather produced some reasonable rains around 60 per cent of NSW, breaking the drought in some parts.

The remaining weeks of the current season may well produce some further fire activity and although there have been many fires throughout the State so far, with sadly some losses occurring, the absence of protracted severe weather has significantly diminished the potential.

A factor that ought not to be overlooked, of course, is the way in which our volunteer firefighters and staff respond quickly to any developing situation to ensure that there is an appropriate attack, invariably ensuring fire size and loss is kept to a minimum.

We extend our sympathies to those affected by the tragic fires in South Australia, which resulted in such tragic losses, and we extend our support to the firefighters who under extraordinarily difficult conditions rose as always, efficiently and committed, to the challenge.

There has been a deal of discussion in recent times within the media about the extent to which volunteers contribute to the direction and philosophies of the Service.

I want to reemphasise that volunteers are the principal players in our endeavours to provide the NSW community with a Rural Fire Service second to none. It is a fact that volunteers are represented on each of the decision-making and advisory forums and their input is not only highly regarded but also invariably acted upon.

I expect our staff to ensure high levels of consultation at the district level and to ensure that there are adequate means of communication between firefighters and staff and to this end there are clearly enunciated expectations to be met.

I acknowledge that there will be diverging opinion on the adequacy of involvement and representation in the decision making processes and we are not averse to reviewing these structures to ensure that representation of the views of volunteers is in keeping with reasonable expectations.

What is fundamental is the need for frank and forthright expression of views and issues so that RFS management can respond in a reasonable and timely way. Constructive dialogue is by far the best way of bringing to RFS management legitimate concerns and I not only invite, but also encourage, volunteers to bring issues to the table so that they might be constructively addressed.

Generalisations promoted as issues of concern through various indirect mediums make it very difficult to identify specific matters of concern, which are worthy of attention and invariably capable of resolution.

There are cohesive mechanisms available for the promotion of ideas and issues and operating within accepted principles and guidelines will invariably ensure that the very valuable opinions of our volunteer firefighters receive the acknowledgement and attention they deserve.

Phil Koperberg





1 GENERAL NEWS





BANGALEE SCOUT CAMP SECTION 44

On Wednesday 13 October 2004 at 1240hrs a triple zero call was received by Wollongong Comms for bush alight at the Bangalee Scout Camp in North Nowra. By 1500hrs crews had been in property protection and the fire was declared a Section 44 'bushfire emergency'.

The fire, burning on a 100 metre front in private property when crews first arrived, was fanned by very hot, dry, northwest winds and soon entered forest vegetation rapidly gaining intensity.

Access to the fast moving head under these conditions was impossible. Additional resources were mobilized for property protection at Gypsy Point Road where initial attack crews were also redeployed. The urban interface of North Nowra was only two kilometres away.

Other agencies were brought in to assist and aircraft were deployed early in the firefighting effort.

The fire crossed Gypsy Point Road at 1331hrs impacting on properties. The tactics employed at this stage were to undertake property protection due to excessive ember attack, radiant heat and fire conditions. An additional strike team was requested at 1348hrs to assist district crews.

Police advised they were supervising voluntary evacuations from the Coconut Drive area. The Nowra Showground was set up as an evacuation centre. Only 10 people registered, the rest opting to stay with their houses and assist firefighters. This was reported to have provided valuable local knowledge, assistance in combating the fire and reduced the impact from evacuations on supporting agencies.

The head of the fire ran quickly to the east being contained at a power easement to the rear of Coconut Drive properties and at Pitt Street, an urban perimeter road. An isolated house off a track in the Pitt Street area was destroyed during the run of fire.

The southern flank of the fire was contained at private property along Crams Road. A small number of spot overs to the south did occur but were contained with aggressive aerial bombing and ground attack. Property protection along Crams Road was also undertaken with the loss of a small number of storage sheds and plant.

The northern flank of the fire burned rapidly up slope to the rear of properties along Warrah Road with several structure and property losses occurring.

The southerly change at 1900 hrs that night was weaker than expected allowing direct attack firefighting to continue. A bulldozer was used to clean up a track on the northwest flank where a tactical backburn was employed to fully contain the fire.

Considering the extreme weather conditions the losses due to this fire were minimal. Individual property preparedness and quick action by volunteer firefighters, other agencies and the public meant damage was kept to a minimum.

FIRE FACTS

BRIGADES

Cambewarra, Illaroo Road, Kangaroo Valley, Beaumont, Shoalhaven Heads, Greenwell Point, Falls Creek, Culburra, Callala Bay, Tomerong, Huskisson, Erowal Bay, Sanctuary Point, Basin View, Wandandian, Sussex Inlet, Fishermans Paradise, Tabourie, Central Catering, Headquarters.

PERSONNEL

RFS 196
NPWS 20
NSWFB 80

AIRCRAFT

3

AGENCIES COMBAT

RFS / NPWS / NSWFB

SUPPORT

Police / Ambulance / DoCS / SES / Integral Energy / Shoalhaven Hospital / Council

HECTARES

235 Ha 230 private / 5 Crown

Story by Cameron Wade and Adam Rogers

Photos by HMAS Albatross



FIREFIGHTERS CONTAIN TABBIMOBLE BLAZE



At 0530 hours on Sunday 10 October 2004, a fire was reported in inaccessible bushland on private property in the vicinity of Minyumai Rd Tabbimoble, about 10 kilometres southeast of Woodburn.

Local crews were unable to access the fire, and with high to extreme weather predictions expected for the next four days, a Section 44 was declared at 1600 hours on Monday 11 October 2004, for the Richmond Valley Local Government Area.

Following the S44 declaration, 20 crews were deployed to the fire to establish and maintain containment lines along the southwestern edge through to the southeast. This strategy was successful and established containment lines were held, but strong winds caused a spotover that was quickly contained using heavy plant, ground crews and a helicopter.

Crews were kept busy in the northwest as the fire approached a property along the containment line. The property was not directly threatened and crews initiated backburning around the property to the west for protection. Heavy plant worked on the northwestern containment line for proposed overnight backburning.

Due to unfavourable weather conditions predicted for Tuesday, additional resources were deployed from the RFS Mid North Coast Team, Lower North Coast Team, Clarence Valley Zone and Kyogle district.

On Tuesday, crews focused on the consolidation of the western, southern and eastern containment lines with completion of the northern containment line at 1600 hours.

An additional eight units were deployed at 1630 hours to start backburning and mopping up from the northern trail that would secure the final containment line.

Four helicopters worked to slow the progress of the fire towards the northern containment line and strategies concentrated around the northern perimeter of the fire.

Overnight backburning was a success and the fire was now burning within containment lines.

A Total Fire Ban was declared for Wednesday 13 October due to very high wind predictions but crews managed to hold the fire within containment lines and there was no threat to property.

Crews continued to consolidate containment lines, mop up and black out and aerial incendiary work ensured the overnight backburn met up with the fire front in the northwestern section.

The fire continued to burn within containment lines on Thursday 14 October and three of the four

aircraft together with IMT personnel, were deployed to assist with the Tweed fire.

Out of area crews were stood down and local crews continued to black out, mop up and patrol the fire.

Local crews patrolled the northern and southern sectors on Friday and no fire activity was reported. At 1500 hours on Friday 15 October, the remaining helicopter and local crews were stood down.

The fire had burnt out a total of 1046 hectares of private property and 68 hectares of Bundjalung National Park, within a 15.8 kilometre perimeter.

At 1600 hours on Friday 15 October 2004, the section 44 declaration for Richmond Valley Local Government Area was revoked.

Story and photo by Rebel Talbert



FIRE FACTS

RESOURCES

- 158 Personnel
- 33 Light tankers
- 12 Heavy tankers
- 1 Bulk water
- 3 Heavy plant
- 4 Helicopters

AGENCIES INVOLVED

- NSW Rural Fire Service
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- NSW Police
- NSW State Emergency Service
- Salvation Army
- NSW Ambulance
- Richmond Valley Council

'Crews from Northern Rivers Team, Mid North Coast Team, Lower North Coast Team and Clarence Valley Zone worked hard to contain the fire 10 kilometres southeast of Woodburn'

CROPPA CREEK HOUSE FIRE

On 16 September 2004 a house was offered to the Moree and Narrabri Rural Fire Districts to use for structure fire practice.

The training evening started at 1800hrs with two tankers, nine personnel and a crew of Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) operators from Croppa Creek and Pallamallawa Rural Fire Brigades.

The house was set fire to three times to provide the CABA teams practice with offensive firefighting strategies, and provide the teams outside the house with the knowledge and experience of what is required of them when backing up CABA teams.

The CABA teams went in to practise containing a small fire such as a waste paper basket to a small section of one room and how to use ventilation techniques to assist them.

The next scenario was a fully involved room that they attacked to prevent fire extension to the remainder of the structure.

When the final fire was set it was interesting for the teams to see how a fire travels through a structure and how quickly the structure became fully involved.

It was a great opportunity for old and new members alike to brush up on their village fire fighting skills and see what actually happens from start to finish during a structure fire.

All crews said that it was great to be able to put into practise what they had learnt.

*Story by Michael Roper
Community Safety Officer
Namoï/Gwydir Team*





WARIALDA BUSH FIRE PROTECTION STRATEGY

The NSW Rural Fire Service Namoi Gwydir Team, Department of Lands, Northern Slopes Rural Lands Protection Board and Gwydir Shire Council have worked together to produce the Warialda Bush Fire Protection Strategy.

The strategy aims to reduce the risk to the properties neighbouring the bushland surrounding Warialda.

This collaborative approach to fire management planning is vital given the continuous bushland environment surrounding Warialda. The Cunningham Bush Fire Management Committee worked through the plan during a meeting with relevant agencies in December 2003. The committee fully supported the initiative as part of the local Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.

The strategy provides many opportunities for ongoing fire management such as:

- > Permanent firebreaks and a network of trails, which will be maintained on a regular basis either mechanically or by burning.
- > A coordinated approach by all agencies to provide the best outcome for the community

> A network of strategic fuel reduced zones surrounding the town which is intended to mitigate the impact of fire on the community and will prove to be invaluable should a bush fire occur.

> Opportunities to expand to include areas further from the town periphery and ability to be altered at any time to take into account any new development or changes to the township.

Hazard reduction works were complemented by education programs to teach Warialda residents the skills they need to help themselves prepare for the bushfire season and to be responsible for their own preparation and fuel management.

The hazard reduction burns were used as a training opportunity for local brigades. Crews came from all over the district to assist and to test themselves and equipment for the coming season.

At present almost 80 per cent of the planned hazard reductions for 2004 have been completed and only Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ) work is to be finished when conditions allow.

A display at the Warialda Show using Big and Little ED was used as a part of the Com Ed Strategy. Letterbox drops with information pamphlets from the RFS were conducted at the same time as putting out the notifications of intention to burn.

While doing the hazard reductions it was noted that there was some illegally dumped green waste from domestic gardens. This increased fuel loads and also assisted the spread of weeds into native bushland. A combined letterbox drop from the RFS and council was done to target this illegal practise.

Thanks goes to Pepperbox, Gragin, Stonefield, Whitlow and Warialda Rural Fire Brigades and NSW Fire Brigades for the effort that has been put in to achieve this goal and Yallaroi SES and the Warialda CWA for the catering for the crews.

*Story by Michael Roper
Community Safety Officer
Cunningham Zone*



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SECTION 44 FIRES

SECTION 44 FIRES, TWEED & BYRON RURAL FIRE DISTRICTS

At about 1615hrs Wednesday 13 October 2004 four Cudgen and Tweed Coast Brigade units were responded to a fire, reported to be burning around the Sliprails Road and Clothiers Creek Road, Tanglewood. With 32 degree temperatures, winds exceeding 25 kph from the northeast and a BKDI of 153, the fire moved quickly towards businesses and homes. By the end of the six day campaign, 388 firefighting personnel in 72 vehicles from the NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire Brigades and National Parks and Wildlife Service had worked on two fires that burnt out a total of 675 hectares.

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2004

The Captain of Cudgen Rural Fire Brigade directed crews to immediately start property protection and requested urgent backup. Four tankers were responded from Burringbar and Murwillumbah and a NSW Fire Brigades pumper was deployed from Kingscliff. Crews succeeded in saving a nursery and homes on Sliprails Road and worked to hold the fire at the top of Round Mountain.

Extreme weather conditions were predicted for the next day, with temperatures expected to reach 36 degrees, 22 percent humidity and winds exceeding 20 kph from the north-northeast.

Crews changed over just after midnight and firefighters worked overnight to hold the fire on top of the hill and to construct a containment line at the base of Round Mountain.

DAY 2 THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 2004

At 1030hrs the fire responded to a sudden increase in temperature, wind speed and drop in humidity and breached containment lines. The dry conditions supported a significant wildfire that headed towards rural properties and the towns of Cabarita and Hastings Point.

All available Tweed crews were deployed to assist and standby crews from Ballina, Byron and Lismore responded to the Sliprails fire. Four helicopters were dispatched and task forces from Clarence Valley and the Mid North Coast were deployed to assist. NSW Fire Brigades deployed a task force to work in the Bogangar and Cabarita areas.

Erratic weather conditions were being experienced on the fireground and the fire continued to spread towards Cabarita and Hastings Point. Firefighters worked hard in extreme conditions to protect over 15 properties in the Towners Road and Round Mountain Road area.

In October 2003, the NSW Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Tweed Council created Asset Protection Zones (APZ) behind homes in Cabarita. As the fire progressed towards Cabarita, firefighters backburned off the APZs into the main fire to protect homes.

The asset protection zone created in October 2003 by RFS, National Parks and Tweed Council behind Cabarita homes was used for backburning operations.



Crews worked to establish strong containment lines using Clothiers Creek Road in Alpha sector, APZs behind homes in Cabarita in Bravo and Charlie sectors, Round Mountain Road in Delta sector and bulldozers worked to join Sliprails Road and Towners Road in Echo and Foxtrot sectors.

At 1825hrs, a second fire broke out at Jones Road on the boundary of Tweed and Byron Shires. Byron and Ballina crews were re-deployed to this fire alongside Burringbar, Uki and Kunghur brigades and task forces from Mid North Coast and Clarence Valley.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire at Jones Road was a separate ignition to the peat fire had been smouldering north of Jones Road for the previous two months. The Jones Road 2 fire started on the southern side of Jones Road approximately 950 metres east of the Tweed Valley Way intersection at Yelgun.

With extreme weather conditions predicted for Friday, a Total Fire Ban declared for the Far North Coast of NSW, one class two bushfire and a second bushfire with the potential to impact on property, a recommendation for a section 44 declaration was made to the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Firefighting crews worked on both fires overnight in preparation for the expected extreme weather conditions the next day.

DAY 3 FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER 2004

In the early hours of Friday morning, the Jones Road 2 fire flared up and made a run towards the town of Ocean Shores. Firefighting crews worked hard with five helicopters to slow the fire and establishing containment lines to the west and south of the fire.

Containment strategies for the Sliprails fire were proceeding well but there were still concerns that containment lines would be breached with the predicted weather conditions. The fire had so far burnt out 375 hectares within a 13 kilometre perimeter.

At 1200hrs a section 44 'bushfire emergency' was declared for the Tweed and Byron Local Government Areas and Superintendent David Cook was appointed Incident Controller.

The Jones Road 2 fire continued to spread towards Ocean Shores and firefighters moved into the area as a precautionary measure. Ocean Shores Primary School was closed due to smoke but the fire did not threaten any properties in the area.

Crews worked to establish containment lines in the Alpha sector to the north, Delta sector to the west and Charlie sector to the south.

Initial containment strategies in Bravo sector were abandoned due to the potential of heavy machinery losses in peat bog areas of the Billinudgel Nature Reserve. Bulldozer crews began to prepare the Optus Trail, which links Ocean Shores to Jones Road at the east of the fire, for backburning operations.

The Bureau of Meteorology gave an extreme weather warning for late in the afternoon. Strong southerly winds meant firefighting crews were pulled out of danger areas and re-deployed ready for the effects of the change. The wind change had potential to threaten homes to the north of the Jones Road 2 fire and to breach the northern containment line of the Sliprails fire.

When the southerly change arrived on the far north coast of NSW, wind speeds had reduced significantly and had minimal effect on fire



RFSA OFFICE AND SHOP OPEN IN PENRITH

The RFSa has opened an office at 233 High Street Penrith which also includes the Association 'Online shop' business that will be expanded.

It will remain predominantly an Online Service, although due to limited space some popular items will be available over the counter.

The range of uniform items available is being increased so if an item that you want does not appear in the catalogue we should be able to supply it.

If you have any ideas for items you would like to see in the catalogue contact Terry and they will be considered.

Predominantly an Online Service, although some popular items will be available over the counter

The 'Travelling Shop' is another important part of the Association's activities. Manned by a dedicated band of volunteers who travel to events around different parts of the State. They are always looking for events and field days to visit with the 'Travelling Shop' and people to help them when it arrives. If you have any requests contact the RFSa office.

The Association is working on a number of member benefits and these should be released in the near future, along with membership cards for those members who have formally registered.

- > Why not register and have a voice in the Association? You can register on line through the Association website www.rfsa.org.au
- > If you do not have access to the internet please 'phone the office and ask for a form. Terry Rotterman is the shop manager and his contact details are:

Address:
233 High Street Penrith 2750

Phone: 02 47222122

Fax: 02 47222144

terry.rotterman@stateoffice.rfsa.org.au



behaviour. Calmer conditions gave crews the opportunity to begin backburning from the southern containment line of the Jones Road 2 fire and to deepen containment lines on the eastern and southern lines of the Sliprails fire.

Overnight crews continued to deepen lines on the Sliprails fire, which was now burning within containment lines and prepared to begin backburning in Alpha and Bravo sectors of Jones Road 2 fire.

DAY 4 SATURDAY 16 OCTOBER 2004

The Sliprails fire remained within containment lines overnight but a number of active pockets of fire remained in each sector. Crews continued blacking out and mopping up around the perimeter of the fire and the fire was declared at patrol status.

Firefighting crews were still working to control the Jones Road 2 fire. Backburning commenced along the eastern and northwestern containment lines and continued from Charlie sector to Delta sector on the southern edge. Out of area crews were stood down and local crews were scaled down overnight.

DAY 5 SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER 2004

The Sliprails fire remained at patrol status and crews continued to mop up in cooler conditions throughout the day. The fire burnt out a total of 375 hectares within a 13 kilometre perimeter.

Jones Road 2 was declared contained and crews worked to consolidate containment lines. At 1500hrs the fire was declared at patrol status. The fire burnt out a total of 300 hectares within a 9 kilometre perimeter.

DAY 6 MONDAY 18 OCTOBER 2004

Heavy rain had fallen on both firegrounds overnight and the Section 44 for Tweed and Byron Local Government Areas was revoked at 1200hrs.

FIRE FACTS

RFS DISTRICTS

Ballina District	Richmond Valley District
Byron District	Clarence Valley Zone
Tweed District	Bellingen District
Kyogle District	Coffs Harbour District
Lismore District	

RESOURCES UTILISED

388 Personnel	6 Pumpers
21 Category 1	10 Command vehicles
3 Category 2	5 Helicopters
6 Category 9	2 Bulk water
26 Category 7	5 Heavy plant

AGENCIES INVOLVED

NSW Rural Fire Service
 National Parks and Wildlife Service
 NSW Fire Brigades
 NSW Police
 State Emergency Service
 NSW Ambulance
 Tweed and Byron Shire Councils
 Department of Community Services
 Salvation Army

RESIDENTS SAY THANK YOU

Residents of Bogangar and Cabarita on the far north coast of NSW held a thank you party for the firefighters who worked to protect their homes from fire in October.

The event at Cabarita Beach raised about \$6000 for the RFS that will be used by local brigades for equipment.

*Story and photos by Rebel Talbert
Photos below by Maryn Wagstaff*





RFS RESPONDS TO AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MVA

On Friday 22 October 2004 Kariong Rural Fire Brigade received a callout to 'a truck in to the wall on the F3 Freeway leaking fuel'. What sounded like a relatively minor incident was in fact the largest accident in Australian history involving 34 vehicles, resulting in one death and involving the 200m stretch of the Moonee Moonee Bridge for 12 hours.

At 1732hrs the initial call came into Gosford fire control 'MVA single truck into the wall F3 freeway Southbound just north of the Moonee Moonee Bridge. Fuel leaking'. Kariong Pumper with a crew of six responded. The Officer in Charge (OIC) briefed the crew on spill containment and what to expect at such an incident.

As the Kariong truck rounded the corner where the crew could see the bridge a situation had unfolded that was beyond belief. A fully laden semi trailer heading north had careered through almost stationary traffic. The result was one car exploding and 33 others being tossed around on the bridge until the semi came to rest on top of a 4WD ute.

Kariong crew was faced with the largest MVA in Australian history. The crew leader immediately sent a two RED messages asking for assistance. In seeing a car alight the crew used the south bound lanes and immediately went to the burning vehicle.

The crew reacted instinctively under enormous pressure to perform. The high pressure reel was deployed by two of the crew while two others donned breathing apparatus. The OIC started to size up the situation and gave a

sitrep to Gosford after-hours Firecom.

Being sent to the scene were Kariong 1 (which was left behind due to the minor nature of the first call) Gosford 13 Bulk Water, The Bays 1, FC02, Pumper 341 (Kariong), Rescue 75 (Berowa) Hazmat from Central Coast, Pumper 228 (Berkley Vale), Pumper 304 (Gosford) plus numerous police and ambulance vehicles including ambulance rescue.

Kariong's view of the scene on arrival indicated at least three maybe four persons trapped. One ambulance was on scene for the initial southbound accident. This and the Kariong Pumper were the only emergency services on site for the larger accident.

The OIC of Kariong had a multitude of concerns. Firstly the car on fire - was there someone inside? The spread of fire - fuel was running freely down the bridge towards the other vehicles and this fuel was on fire. Other vehicles were or had the potential to catch on fire. Over 50 people were injured and most of these were walking around on the bridge in a dazed state.

The worst fears of the Kariong crew were realised when one of the crew spotted a body in the burning vehicle. The Pumper which carries under 2000 litres was running low on water. There is no water on the bridge (the creek below is almost 70 meters away). The bulk water carrier was still on its way. Action was taken to extinguish the vehicle fire and the OIC also coordinated crews to afford fire protection to

the trapped people in the other smashed cars.

The next truck to arrive was NSW Fire Brigades Pumper 341 from Kariong. Two other rescue officers from Sydney were traveling from Sydney to the North Coast in their service vehicle stopped to give Kariong RFS a hand, which was gratefully accepted. The bulk water carrier arrived and was able to fill the Kariong Pumper. At this stage the fire had been all but extinguished due to some very skillful firefighting by the Kariong RFS volunteers.

The Bays tanker arrived and assessed the situation at the northern end of the bridge where the semi had come to rest. They found a large fuel leak from the semi trailer's fuel tank, which was running into the creek below. The Bays crew of five immediately worked to contain the spill and successfully stopped the fuel flow. Hazmat officers praised their efforts later that evening.

The various fire crews now on scene worked with rescue crews to assist the victims. In total two were air lifted and seven transported by road. A further 30 or more were taken from the scene by bus.

Also attending the accident were FC0 1 from Gosford, Group 1,2, RFS Media Officer, Critical Incident Support Service personnel and the catering unit, which provide over 200 meals including some for stranded truck drivers on the freeway.



RFS and NSW Fire Brigades crews work on the biggest car accident in Australia's history.

Photo by Glenn Miller.



LANDFILL LIGHTS UP

One hundred and twenty firefighters worked to suppress a tip fire in Mangrove Mountain, Gosford Rural Fire District, which started on the evening of Thursday, 18 November 2004.

Kariong, Mangrove Mt, Matcham, Somersby and Wamberal rural fire brigades and a Group Captain responded to the call at 1959hrs to Hallards Rd.

The cause of the building materials, timber, concrete, soil and plastics being used as landfill at the tip igniting was unknown. The large fire was burning on both sides of the 20m-tip face and underground.

The bulk waste in sections at both ends of the 20m by 50m area was well alight and RFS firefighters wearing breathing apparatus were deployed. The Gosford RFS bulk water tanker was called into action with Gosford Council sending water carts to assist.

Tip contractors were called on to operate dozers to open up the waste and enable RFS crews to get water to the seat of the fire.

Crews worked overnight and throughout a particularly warm Friday. New crews came from Copacabana, Narara, The Bays, Brisbane Water, Empire Bay, Macmasters Beach, Pearl Beach and Patonga.

The Gosford catering brigade and Breathing Apparatus Support Unit were also mobilised to support firefighters.

Crews were concerned about a predicted southerly change causing burning material to cause spotfires in bushland. However the expected conditions did not eventuate.

The hard work of firefighters and benign weather in following days enabled firefighters to hand the tip over to operators.

*Photos by Gary Walker
firephotos.com.au*



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HEADQUARTERS MOBILISED

NEW EMERGENCY CENTRE MOBILISED

The Service's state-of-the-art Operations Centre at Homebush Bay was mobilised in October when three Section 44 'bushfire emergencies' threatened communities near Woodburn, Billinudgel, Cudgen and Nowra.

The move to the Service's new headquarters in Homebush Bay in September was timely, with the purpose-built centre strengthening strategic planning capabilities to support volunteers working on firegrounds in Richmond Valley, Shoalhaven and Tweed/Byron between 11 –18 October.

Record breaking temperatures exacerbated the problem of dealing with a number of Section 44s. In particular, extremely hot and dry weather conditions in the Greater Sydney area complicated matters.

Strategic, statewide planning was needed to resource fires and prepare in case fire also threatened the large urban interface areas of RFS Region East.

The new Major Incident Coordination (MIC) system was tested with the State Operations Coordinator and Strategic Overview Officer at State Operations assisting MIC teams established in Region East, Region North and Region South.

The MIC system provides local Incident Management Teams (IMTs) with a 'one-stop-shop' at the Region or State Operations for them to give and receive information, to request resources and keep the people of NSW informed about fire status.

The system improves communication flow and seeks to pre-empt resource requirements to ensure local firefighters and incident managers have the ground and air resources they need from outside their district.

It was a challenge to implement this system at the Rosehill 'warehouses' from where the RFS operated for 16 years.

By providing this improved, statewide, strategic support from the State Operations Centre at Homebush, local IMTs were able to concentrate on putting the fires out while State Operations sourced statewide resources.

The fires were managed locally, but State Operations helped local firefighters and incident managers gain precious time needed to organise resources from around NSW.



The first S44 was declared on 11 October in Richmond Valley for the Minyumai fire burning 10km south of Woodburn. The S44 was managed out of Richmond Valley Fire Control Centre in Yorklea.

The second S44 was declared on 13 October for Shoalhaven as a result of the Bangalee Fire. The IMT ran out of Shoalhaven Fire Control and an MIC was established at State Operations and transferred to Region South.

The third S44 was declared on 15 October for fires at Cabarita Beach and Ocean Shores with the IMT running from Tweed Fire Control Centre in Murwillumbah. An MIC was established at Region North to support these fires and the Minyumai operations.

During this time an MIC was established for Region East in case hot, dry, windy conditions sparked fires in highly populated areas.

A State Operations Coordinator and a Strategic Overview Officer were in place at State Operations – their role was to assess fire activity across the state and pre-emptively allocate resources and services to IMTs via the MICs.

In the Shoalhaven instance, State Operations was able to quickly assess the need for more firefighters and IMT staff and dispatched resources to assist. Two task forces, aircraft and two operational inspectors were sent.

Assessment of the operational management of the State Operations Centre showed that the MIC system was highly successful.

The new State Operations Centre design enables better communication flow and therefore better coordination of statewide resources to support firefighters

Some teething problems such as placement of internal and external personnel, allocation of phones, desks, data filing systems and data entry to track resources were identified.

Work is being undertaken to deal with these issues, in particular the development of a major incident database to support the MIC system.

The RFS successfully managed the difficult fire seasons of Christmas 2001 and 2002–2003 from Rosehill. The new headquarters enables the RFS to improve on those successes.

Other improvements between the Rosehill and Homebush Bay sites include:

- > Training facilities for RFS volunteers and staff
- > Dedicated briefing rooms for emergency incidents
- > Improved technology for displaying critical information (lightning, remote area weather stations)
- > Interactive plasma screens to display real-time mapping
- > Audio radio management system with digital capability

EMERGENCY RESPONSES UNAFFECTED BY GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY CHANGES

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) has proved its ability to adapt once again as local government boundary changes take effect.

New councils have been created in a number of areas across NSW by merging local government areas (LGA).

Initial concerns about how this would affect brigades and districts have generally given way as time proves the RFS's ability to respond to emergencies is not dictated by lines on maps.

Meetings with Captains, brigades, councils and communities are taking place to explain the changes, assess their affect, discuss issues and find solutions to problems. Volunteers are encouraged to contact their RFS staff if they have concerns.

In some areas, the RFS had already gone through the zoning or teaming process to create business efficiencies over a number of districts, so possible growing pains caused by bringing LGAs together had already been dealt with.

An example of a positive amalgamation for the RFS was the formation of the Clarence Valley Council, formerly four LGAs. Because the RFS had already formed the Clarence Valley Zone based on the same LGAs, the transition was fairly simple and generally welcomed by volunteers and staff.

In others, adjustments have been required and members are concerned about their new position. Some brigades have found themselves in newly created councils or moving to a neighbouring shire.

Because the RFS is now a truly statewide organisation, emergency responses should not be compromised by the change.

In some cases a brigade area has been split, the station is in one council while some of the members are in another and its area of responsibility may straddle the border.

That situation will not change how a brigade is called to an incident, with the closest available brigade dispatched, no matter what area they pay their rates in or receive their funding. If they require assistance they will be backed up by the appropriate support, as per local SOPs drafted using local knowledge.

For brigades doing cross border work the changes won't make a great deal of difference when responding – it may mean changing FireCom channel or adopting new local procedures putting some 'house rules' in fire cover provisions.

What may change is what Council and RFS staff the brigade is dealing with. In some cases this will disappoint members who have established long-standing relationships.

"The RFS is trying to make the transition for these brigades as seamless as possible by introducing them to their new districts," Chief Supt Ian Thomas, Manager of Region North said. Meetings are being held with affected Brigades to alleviate any perceived concerns.

A district with farm based tanker-trailer traditions could merge with more developed districts that have moved to tankers and formal incident control systems. While the change will be a culture shock for some members, it may also mean more rapid development of equipment and training.

New business plans are being produced, station and tanker programs are being assessed where areas have inherited or lost brigades and fire cover issues are being raised and resolved.

Head office staff are dealing with the policy and planning issues while regional and district staff are working closely with members and stakeholders to make the new boundaries work.

CRACKER OF A FIRE

RFS crews from Southern Tablelands Zone fought windy conditions to contain a fire ignited by a firecracker, which started in the Bookham area on 29 February 2004.

About 150 personnel worked with aerial support and bulldozers to control the fire that began at 1330hrs in the Bogolar Road area of Harden Shire.

Units from Bowning, Binalong, Jeir, Kangiara, Bango, Manton, Yass River, Murrumbateman, Mullion and Cavan Brigades attended the fire that burnt out 407 ha of farmland and scrub.

The fire that burnt over two days resulted in the loss of six cattle and 60 sheep.

*Photo courtesy of
Curtis Aviation*



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CONSULTATION ON NEXT GENERATION COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH SYSTEM (CAD)



Over the next few months the RFS Operational Planning and Development team will conduct a series of workshops with volunteer and salaried staff on the next generation Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

The consultation will help to develop the business requirements statement that will outline what the RFS wants the system to do and what characteristics are required.

NSW Fire Brigades have acted as the call receipt point for Triple Zero '000' fire related calls for more than ten years. NSW Fire Brigades uses a CAD system, which determines jurisdictional responsibility and either directly activates a NSW Fire Brigades resource or passes the information to an RFS call point. In some cases both agencies are responded to an incident as per Mutual Aid Agreements (MAA).

The current CAD technology is approaching the end of its useful life and the RFS is determining business needs in conjunction with NSW Fire Brigades, for the next generation CAD. NSW Fire Brigades are also working with the NSW State Emergency Service to understand if their needs can be met as well.

It is anticipated that the next generation CAD will be implemented around 2006, and at this stage there are no radical changes anticipated to the current system of call receipt and dispatch. It is important to remember that as a result of some recent surveys, changes to some of the RFS' existing work practices may be necessary in order to fulfill occupational health and safety and WorkCover obligations.

The Operational Planning and Development team has already met with Operations Officers, district/zone/team managers as well as the State Communication Committee, State Operations Committee and the RFSA. In the near future, the team will be attending volunteer forums as they happen, to ensure that the RFS achieves the widest possible consultation across all stakeholders.

Story by Rebel Talbert

Photo by Station Officer Warwick Richardson

'The RFS will provide input to the NSW Fire Brigades next generation Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD).'



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN TRAINING IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

- Constructing access tracks
- Operating dozers and graders in fire ground situations
- Undertaking site assessments

- Practical and theory training is available in these and **other modules** from the Conservation and Land Management training package with a bias towards fire prevention and control. Attendance is flexible to suit your needs and can be on a weekend basis.
- With further study these modules can lead to a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management.

CONTACT:

TAFE NSW Western Institute Orange
Campus
PO Box 1059, ORANGE NSW 2800
Phone: 02-6391 5787 or 6391 5777





NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
...for our community

A MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW SOUTH WALES, FROM THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Over the last few weeks there has been a deal of publicity suggesting, wrongly, that there are deep divisions within the ranks of Rural Fire Service members. These reports have raised a number of concerns, and, with the fire season upon us, the record needs to be set straight. The people of NSW can be confident that the RFS is once again ready to protect the community, as it has been for the last 100 years.

In the last ten years the world has changed dramatically, and with it the community's expectations of the RFS. Even our critics acknowledge that the RFS is a world leader in fire fighting. This has been achieved by hard work and some tough changes in the way we have done things - but these changes have been to improve safety both for our volunteers and for the communities they are protecting.

That is not to say that the changes have been easy, or that there is not still room for improvement. The Service listens to the voice of our volunteers and will always consider local issues, and encourage involvement in charting our future direction. Not everyone's expectations can, of course, be met.

That is why volunteers are represented on every decision making forum within the RFS; to name a few:

- More than 100 local bush fire management committees
- More than 50 Local Council/RFS liaison committees
- The state Corporate Executive Group
- The RFS Advisory Council
- The Bushfire Coordinating Committee
- Each of five State committees dealing with everything from operations to community education
- More than a 100 senior management groups

In all some 2000 volunteer firefighters are actively involved in the decision making processes that govern the direction of the RFS. Moreover, the volunteer representative body, the RFS Association, is one with which the Service works closely and constructively.

Local knowledge is a critical factor in both management and fire fighting and that is why the Service has insisted, for some years, that a local landholder or volunteer forms part of an Incident Management Team at major fires.

That is why the vast majority of sector and divisional commanders at fires are volunteers.

Recently the Service has been accused by some of having a bloated bureaucracy at the expense of equipment for our firefighters. More than 300 of our staff were inherited from local government when legislation to provide a more cohesive service was enacted in 2001. This legislation was a further consequence of a wide ranging and long running coronial inquiry.

The so-called head office 'bureaucrats', many of whom were or are volunteer firefighters in their other lives:

- Develop training programs so that volunteers are safer
- Design and order firefighting equipment for our rural fire brigades
- Gather and disseminate operational information for use by our volunteers on the fireground
- Arrange insurances so that our volunteers are well covered should they be injured or suffer loss
- Develop a legal framework to ensure that volunteer firefighters, acting good faith, are not held personally liable in this litigious climate
- Are world leaders in the design and supply of protective clothing for our firefighters
- Develop plans to ensure that assistance is quickly available to firefighters throughout NSW
- Make operational plans and develop contracts to ensure a vast array of aircraft stand ready to support volunteers on the ground
- Process workers compensation claims for volunteers to ensure minimal hardship should income be lost due to injury
- Provide counselling and Chaplaincy services to thousands of volunteers and their families
- Inspect and manage fire hazards on private lands on behalf of local government councils
- Assess and process development applications so that NSW will have safer communities in the future
- Develop and deliver community education programs to assist bushfire prone communities in protecting their homes and properties

- Investigate the cause and origin of fires and prepare reports for coroners and other inquiries

- Prepare bushfire prone maps on behalf of local government councils to enable sensible town planning for the future

- Work closely with other firefighting and land management agencies to ensure an effective regime of fuel management and coordinated firefighting

- Design, test and deliver fire tankers which are amongst the most suitable in the world

- Produce and distribute a variety of publications to help the community and firefighters appreciate the role of fire on the Australian landscape

- Work closely with the media to provide timely and accurate information on fire activity and ensure the work of our volunteers is acknowledged by the wider community

- Prepare and secure budgets to ensure there are funds available to buy equipment for our firefighters

The list is almost endless and the temptation to simply label them as 'pen pushers', should be resisted. **They may not put out fires, but they make the putting out of fires possible.** All Service members have a common goal - to protect the community from the threat of fire. When fires burn throughout NSW, our salaried members also work long hours in support of the firefighting effort.

There has been some growth in our head office and districts. This growth is as a consequence of the Service now doing things that local government used to do. Far from adding to the real cost, local government is now contributing a mere 13.3 per cent of the costs they used to incur. In our efforts to streamline some procedures, including hazard reduction carried out by all agencies, additional staff have been engaged. This again is being carried out on behalf of local government.

For many years the Commissioner and senior staff have spent most weekends visiting brigade members throughout NSW, some 250 visits or more in the last few years. The feedback from these visits is that the vast majority of our

volunteer members are proud to belong to the RFS and are keen to see a modern organisation continue to evolve.

This has to be achieved whilst preserving the core values and traditions that were the foundations of the Service over 100 years ago.

We live and work in a contemporary age, with contemporary expectations, and the change to a 21st century way of doing things has not come easily to some. But the benefits to the many are immeasurable.

As the Service has change we have seen the Government increase our budget from \$65.78 million in 1995 to \$134.18 million in 2004.

Over the last ten years \$233.5 million has been spent on providing our volunteers with 2500 new and refurbished fire tankers. Ten years ago a new tanker in the bush was a rarity, today it is common.

The changes made by the Service have clearly provided for a safer working environment for our members.

We recognise that some will not support the changes and directions of the RFS, which is to be expected as we comprise 69,375 people all with valued opinions. While people are encouraged to express their opinion within the Service this should be done in a constructive way in the appropriate forum, which includes bringing matters to the Commissioner's attention if needed.

We have a unified, progressive, world class Service that does its best for ALL its members and when called on, is ALWAYS there for the people of NSW. That is why hundreds of people continue to join the NSW RFS each year.

On average 75 people every week apply to become members of a rural fire brigade somewhere in NSW. If you are not a member, you will find joining a rewarding experience and you will make a real contribution to the safety of your neighbours and the wider community.

If you want to join the RFS you can find out more information through the RFS website at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au, or email volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au or contact your local fire control centre.

HOUSE DAMAGE INFORMATION ASSISTS PLANNING



A new type of investigation team is now attending firegrounds, providing more extensive research into structures lost in bush fire in order to develop strategies to prevent further losses.

Research into the loss or damage of built assets resulting from bush fire is an ongoing project carried out by firefighting authorities across Australia.

The RFS formally plays a part in the process, collecting data on structure losses. This has traditionally been completed in line with documented standards from Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC). The surveys look at why assets have been lost, what they are constructed of and why they were damaged.

Only a thin wedge of data has been collected in the past. Certainly, the Service knew the number of structures lost in a fire, but not necessarily what percentage those lost structures represented as a total of the fire impacted area, nor why that structure was lost and the adjacent one(s) were not.

To meet the needs of the Service's integrated fire management approach, additional data was required. An example is the in depth survey done during Shoalhaven's Section 44 in October.

THE PROCESS

Within 24 hours of a fire, once the area is safe, a team of two investigators is sent to an area where assets have been destroyed.

On 14 October Billy Tan and Kellie Newby from Headquarters Community Safety Directorate examined the site of the Shoalhaven Bangalee Scout Camp Fire to conduct an investigation.

The investigation included data on:

- > Construction type and materials
- > Distance of the asset from vegetation
- > Method of attack (ie. ember, radiant heat, direct fire)
- > Asset protection (ie. sprinkler system)
- > Level of preparedness (ie. hazard reduction works carried out)
- > Whether the occupant stayed to defend or evacuated
- > What happened to adjacent properties and
- > Whether an RFS brigade was present.

The results of this investigation and others like it will help the Service estimate trends and patterns in order to mitigate the impact of fire.

Photo by Phil Borchard. The reasons why this house in north Nowra survived the Bangalee fire will be investigated by the new survey team. Its asset protection zone is a major contributing factor.

It will also inform the sorts of material recommended for buildings located in fire-prone areas and confirm whether key Community Education messages were the right messages to publicise and where and when they were hitting the mark with these messages.

Collection of improved structure damage information will facilitate better understanding of why assets are lost to fire and will guide decision makers and planners in adopting best practice to minimise the impact of fire on our community.

The Service is striving to incorporate the base AFAC data with this additional information that will address some of the Service's specific concerns (such as provision of asset protection zone, maintenance and behavioural patterns).

This will allow the Service to target identified gaps. It will also ensure that an integrated approach to fire management incorporates lessons learnt for our operational management, community education, risk planning and auditing, fire mitigation and fire fighting responses. Nowhere is this more critical than during the fire season itself when the protection and loss of assets occurs.

RFS Fire Investigation Unit continues to establish the cause and origin of a fire. When ever a Section 44 is declared an investigation is undertaken. Investigation of the fire impact, however, is done by the Service's Community Hazard Management unit.



A structure lost in the Bangalee fire.

OPERATIONS



SCHEDULED TOTAL FIRE BAN EXEMPTIONS

The NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner, prior to the beginning of this fire season, approved changes to the standard list of exemptions that appear in the Government Gazette each time a Total Fire Ban is declared under Section 99 of the Rural Fires Act 1997.

The wording has been reviewed to be "simple English" and Schedules 1 Fire Fighting Activities, 6 Disposal of Waste/Putrescent Material, 7 Sugar Cane Harvesting, 12 Charcoal Production and 18 Any Other Fire Approved by the NSW RFS Commissioner are substantially the same.

Schedule 2 dealing with Emergency Operations by emergency services under the SERM Act, Schedule 10, dealing with Bee Hive Smokers, Schedule 15 exempting Gas, Oil and Steelworks Exhaust Stacks and Schedule 17 exempting the Olympic Cauldron have been added.

With privatisation and the increasing use of contractors, we have broadened Schedules 5 and 8, to include those contractors carrying out work on behalf of the Authorities.

Schedule 3 Fireworks, Schedule 4 Religious/Sacred Ceremonies, Schedule 9 Disposal of Diseased Animal Carcasses, Schedule 14 Urgent and Essential Building Construction and Demolition and Schedule 16 Hot Air Balloons have been added with a requirement to seek consent from the fire service having jurisdiction in the local district and to make it clear that organisers of such events must comply with any direction or additional condition that may be imposed by the local fire service, which may also include that the activity not go ahead.

Schedule 11 Food Preparation stated that gas or electric barbecues approved by Local Government Authorities on land approved by Local Government Authorities are exempt. This has been broadened to include gas or electric barbecues approved by National Parks and State Forests authorities on land approved by National Parks and State Forests.

Schedule 13 Mining Operations has been broadened to include all mining rather than being restrictive to coal mining.

For a full copy of the Scheduled Exemptions please refer to the Rural Fire Service website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au. Policies and Business/Procedures and Handbooks.



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

THE OFFICIAL TABARD

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

TABARDS AND BRASSARDS

Tabards and brassards were introduced into Australia by the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) as part of the Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) to clearly identify personnel carrying out key functions at an incident.

A tabard is worn by each functional area officer and those assisting wear a brassard.

All tabards and brassards, except the Aviation Tabards and Rural Fire Service Safety Vest, have been manufactured using Proban treated fabric, fire retardant reflective tape and Velcro so that they are safe for use on the fireground. The Aviation Tabards comply with the Standards for visibility and anti-static requirements for working on airfields and the Rural Fire Service Safety Vest complies with the Australian Standards for visibility for working on roads but should not be worn in the vicinity of a fire.

The use of the tabards and brassards for the various positions is generally self explanatory, however, the Fireground Incident Controller, Fireground Operations Officer and Rural Fire Service Commander Tabards were created for use with other Combat Agencies at Class 1 incidents where the two services are working together so that, under the Incident Control System, it is clear who is the Incident Controller and the Operations Officer. It also identifies the line Commander for each Service.

NO OTHER TABARDS OR BRASSARDS ARE TO BE WORN

Tabards and brassards are available through your District/Team/Zone Manager with the order form being located on the Intranet in Incident Management Procedures 6.12.02 for Incident Management Team Tabards and Brassards and 6.12.03 for Other Tabards.

Tabards and brassards are produced in the colours of the Incident Control System:

- > **White** for Incident Controller
- > **Red** for Operations
- > **Yellow** for Planning
- > **Blue** for Logistics
- > **Lime** green for Safety
- > **Grey** for Administrative positions



Incident Controller



Deputy Incident Controller



Safety Advisor



RFS Media Liaison



Operations Officer



Planning Officer



Logistics Officer



Community Liaison Officer



Divisional Commander



Sector Commander



Staging Area Coordinator



Management Support Officer



Air Operations Manager



Base Camp Coordinator



Security



Air Base Manager



Air Base Safety Advisor



Response Team Coordinator



NSW RFS Fireground Media Liaison



Aircraft Officer



Air Base Ground Crew



Strike Team Leader



NSW RFS Photographer



Media Escort

Apart from the tabards and brassards shown, NO other tabards and brassards shall be used.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE & BRASSARD CHART

OTHER TABARDS



Fire Investigation



House Loss Surveys & Research



Chaplain



Critical Incident Support Services



NSW RFS Safety Vest



RFS Liaison Officer



Breathing Apparatus Control Officer



Fireground Incident Controller
for Class 1 incidents where RFS is the primary combat agency



Fireground Operations Officer
for Class 1 incidents where NSWFB is the primary combat agency



RFS Commander
for joint agency operations

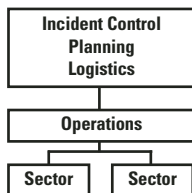
Incident Control System 1

SMALL INCIDENT (up to 5 appliances – 20 personnel)



All functions carried out by one officer at the incident

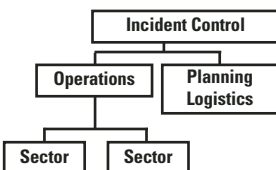
MEDIUM INCIDENT (5 to 10 appliances – 40 personnel)



These functions carried out by one officer located close to the incident liaising with other agencies (Police, NSWFB, Ambulance, Electricity Authority, etc)

Operations role delegated to a second officer at the incident

LARGE INCIDENT (10 to 20 appliances – 100 personnel)

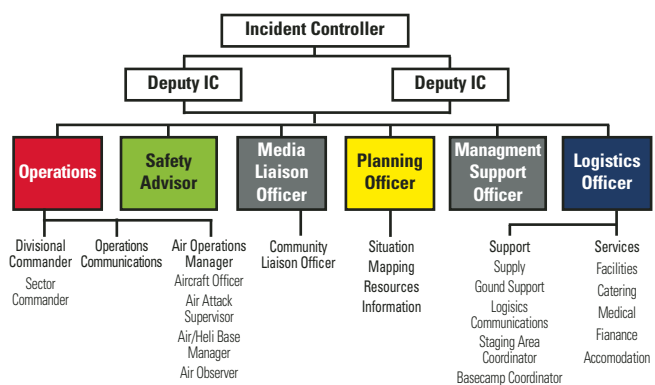


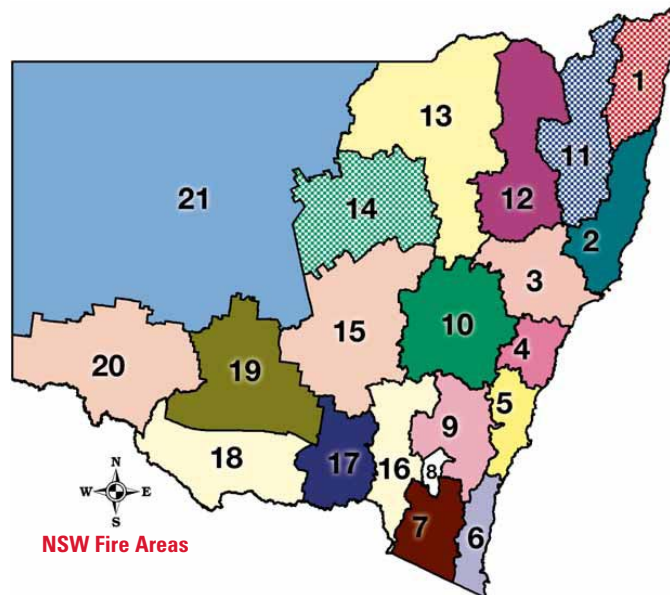
These functions carried out by three officers located at the Incident Control Centre liaising with other agencies. The Operations Officer may be at the incident

Sector Commanders at the incident

Incident Control System 2 (continued)

VERY LARGE INCIDENT





NSW Fire Areas

NSW Fire Areas Showing Local Government Areas

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Far North Coast
Ballina
Byron
Clarence Valley
Kyogle
Lismore
Richmond Valley
Tweed</p> <p>2. North Coast
Bellingen
Coffs Harbour
Gloucester
Great Lakes
Greater Taree
Hastings
Kempsey
Nambucca</p> <p>3. Greater Hunter
Cessnock
Dungog
Lake Macquarie
Maitland
Muswellbrook
Newcastle
Port Stephens
Singleton
Upper Hunter</p> | <p>4. Greater Sydney Region
All Sydney Metropolitan Councils Plus Gosford, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Wyong</p> <p>5. Illawarra/Shoalhaven
Kiama
Shellharbour
Shoalhaven
Wingecarribee
Wollondilly
Wollongong</p> <p>6. Far South Coast
Bega Valley
Eurobodalla</p> <p>7. Monaro/Alpine
Bombala
Cooma Manaro
Snowy River</p> <p>8. ACT
Australian Capital Territory</p> <p>9. Southern Ranges
Eastern Capital Regional City
Greater Argyle
Greater Queanbeyan City
Upper Lachlan
Yass Valley</p> | <p>10. Central Ranges
Bathurst Regional
Blayney
Cabonne
Cowra
Lithgow City
Mid Western Regional
Oberon
Orange
Wellington</p> <p>11. New England
Armidale Dumaresq
Glen Innes/Severn
Guyra
Tenterfield
Uralla
Walcha</p> <p>12. Northern Slopes
Gunnedah
Gwydir
Inverell
Liverpool Plains
Tamworth Regional</p> <p>13. North Western
Moree Plains
Narrabri
Walgett
Warumbungles</p> | <p>14. Upper Central West Plains
Bogan
Blayney
Coonamble
Gilgandra
Warren</p> <p>15. Lower Central West Plains
Bland
Dubbo
Forbes
Lachlan
Narromine
Parkes
Temora
Weddin</p> <p>16. Southern Slopes
Boorowa
Cootamundra
Gundagai
Harden
Tumbarumba
Tumut
Young</p> <p>17. Eastern Riverina
Albury City
Coolamon
Greater Hume
Junee
Lockhart
Wagga Wagga</p> | <p>18. Southern Riverina
Berrigan
Conargo
Corowa
Deniliquin
Jerilderie
Murray
Urana
Wakool</p> <p>19. Northern Riverina
Carrathool
Griffith
Hay
Leeton
Murrumbidgee
Narrandera</p> <p>20. South Western
Balranald
Wentworth</p> <p>21. Far Western
Bourke
Brewarrina
Broken Hill
Central Darling
Cobar
Unincorporated NSW</p> |
|---|--|--|---|---|

NSW FIRE AREAS

Following extensive consultation with key stakeholder groups, the NSW Rural Fire Service has established 20 new NSW Fire Areas to regulate declarations of Total Fire Bans and fire weather information.

These NSW Fire Areas were launched on Sunday 15 August 2004. A map of the NSW Fire Areas with details of Local Government Areas is printed above and is available on the RFS website.

Previously, total fire ban declarations were based on 17 NSW Weather Forecast Districts defined by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). The boundaries of these weather forecast districts were not based on local government areas (LGAs), and the result

was that five LGAs were in three weather forecast districts, and 28 LGAs were in two weather forecast districts. Clearly, this situation had to change.

The size of the BOM Weather Forecast Districts meant that Total Fire Bans were imposed over an entire district even though extreme fire weather was expected to be experienced in a discrete section of the district. This situation disadvantaged many farmers and land managers who were stymied in their use of fire and machinery during Total Fire Ban declarations and therefore could not carry out their normal business – even if their area was not suffering extreme fire weather.

For example, the Southern Tablelands weather fire district, which stretches from Goulburn to the Victorian border, can experience extreme fire weather in the north, whilst it is raining in the south. The Riverina weather forecast district experiences similar issues.

The new NSW Fire Areas will be beneficial for several reasons: they will align with local council areas so an LGA is in one NSW Fire Area only, not two or three. They will better reflect the topography, terrain and other local conditions. Accordingly, the new NSW Fire Areas will ensure that Total Fire Bans are not unnecessarily declared in surrounding areas, with differing local conditions.

The next phase of the rationalisation of Total Fire Ban Declarations currently being undertaken is an analysis of the criteria being used for the declaration of Total Fire Bans particularly in areas 18 Southern Riverina, 19 Northern Riverina, 20 South Western and 21 Far Western.

For Total Fire Ban information refer to the Rural Fire Service Internet Website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or ring **1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737)**

Chief Superintendent Alan Brinkworth
Manager Operations, Policy and Standards.





UPDATE

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

TANKER AND PUMP WORKSHOPS

Feedback on these workshops has been very positive, the latest taking place in Western Region at West Wyalong and Nyngan. Both experienced and less experienced tanker operators have endorsed the workshops and at least one District gives priority to those firefighters who have just received a new tanker, are about to take delivery of one, or are likely to provide training (formal or informal) on tanker operation to brigade members.

T-SHIRTS

Availability of T-shirts to provide comfort under PPE has been reviewed. Wool, cotton, proban-treated cotton were considered, before agreement on fine cotton being selected. These will be available on the catalogue in future.

CAT 1 HOSE WINDER

As the platform on Cat 1 tankers has become higher off the ground, winding in the hose has become increasingly difficult. New Cat 1s have an upgraded winding mechanism for ease of operation, as standard, and the catalogue now includes a "retro-fit kit" for those interested in making the change to older tankers. Cost is about \$400 per winder.

PLASTIC PARTS ON TANKER CABS

Many firefighters would be aware that late model truck cabs have a significant amount of plastic on the outside of the cab which may be distorted by radiant heat.

Circular 7/2003 and associated Technical Bulletin provided information on replacing damaged plastic body components with equivalent aluminium components.

The most significant plastic part from a safety viewpoint is the door handle backing. On new Isuzu tankers, this is removed and a modification installed to keep the door handle secure. If a Brigade/ District decides to remove the plastic door handle backing it can purchase an aluminium part as set out in Circular 7/2003, or follow-up with the truck supplier, Gilbert and Roach for the modification as a retrofit kit or have a local mechanic make up an equivalent.

It should be noted that Circular 7/2003 and the Technical Bulletin state that a risk assessment should be carried out before any action is taken.

CRACKS IN TANKER FOAM HOLDER

This is a recurring problem in some Cat 1 tankers so be aware of the potential and carry out repairs as soon as possible. Seek advice from Engineering Services if there is uncertainty about repair methods.

FAILURE OF PUMP ENGINE MUFFLER

There have been a number of failures of the muffler assembly and bushing on the Hatz engine, GAAM Pump Set, Model RFS70700SP. The problem may be a consequence of modifications to the engine mounting, and possibly the change from "north-south to east-west" mounting of the pump.

Contact Engineering Services if this problem has occurred as they are attempting to gauge the extent of the problem, and determine how best to address it.

ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTACT

First point of contact is the district office before contacting Engineering Services. The Administration Officer in Engineering Services (Tel 8845 3604), should be the first contact, and then the appropriate engineer.



The RFS has supplied the Solomon Islands with fire tankers as part of Australian assistance to the Solomons through the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The AFP contract includes rebuilding the Solomon Islands fire service through a sub-contract with NSW Fire Brigades. NSWFB asked the RFS to provide five new Category 1 tankers and two Category 9 strikers. NSWFB are providing training. The trucks left for Solomon Islands in mid November. Police look after all emergency services in the Solomon's hence the police markings.

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OPEN DAY SUCCESS



FIRST OF ITS KIND STATEWIDE CONSIDERED SUCCESS BY PARTICIPANTS

THIS YEAR WILL BE BETTER!

The Service held its first statewide open day on 9 October 2004 and the general view of those who took part was that it was a successful event.

The competition of a general election kept numbers down but nonetheless more than 250 brigades and hundreds of members of the public participated. Brigades took the opportunity to promote the 'Firewise' message, raise funds, have static displays, meet the local community, encourage recruitment of volunteers and generally raise community awareness of our Service.

Banners and other promotional material were supplied from Headquarters and the entire day and materials were sponsored by Chubb Fire.

The Open Day will become an annual feature for the Service and will be held on the second Saturday of October – the best Saturday closest to the traditional opening of the bush fire danger season – as the first Saturday is always a public holiday.

When planning events for next year all districts and brigades should bear in mind that there will be a Service-wide open day in October and adjust their own open day programs accordingly.

Typical of reactions were those received from Superintendent Allan Gillespie and Group Officer Mike Lowe both from the Lower Hunter Zone.

Mike has told Bushfire Bulletin that all brigades in his group opened their stations with varying results. Fingal Bay Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) 'had a blinder' not only with their own display but also the NPWS stall, food stall, clowns and fairy floss.

Salt Ash RFB had static displays, slide shows and a running video but nearby Tanilba Bay RFB had the banner torn down by vandals. Anna Bay RFB took their open day to the people and staged their display in the village shopping centre! Soldiers Point and Lemon Tree Passage RFBs found the short lead-time constraining but nonetheless opened their doors.

All brigades are determined to make the day bigger and better next year.

Zone Manager Allan Gillespie compiled this report on the Medowie RFB's colossal efforts.

Medowie, just north of Newcastle. From humble beginnings in the late 1970's, the Medowie Fair has become an icon for local events in the Port Stephens area and an excellent venue for the RFS to showcase its capabilities. Medowie Brigade Captain, Lou Casser recalls how the fair came to be.

"It was around 1978 and three members of our ladies auxiliary decided to organise a local fair as a fundraiser for the brigade. In the beginning it was a bit rough and ready, however, as the years went by the fair grew, and frankly so did the brigade coffers.

"It was about six or seven years ago that the brigade took the decision that the fair had become such a large event and such a good fundraiser that other community organisations should benefit from it. And so it was that the fair was handed over to the local Service Organisations to run, with the Medowie Rural Fire Brigade as one of the major participants."

This year the fair coincided with the very first RFS Statewide Open Day, and the Medowie Brigade was determined to make this year's display at the fair bigger and better than it had ever been. The brigade's ComEd facilitator, Mike Maskey, was responsible for organising the brigade events for the fair.

"We were determined to show the local community that the Medowie Rural Fire Brigade was equipped, trained, and stood ready to meet all their fire protection needs, so we arranged three large displays each with a different theme," Mike said.

Lower Hunter Zone Community Safety Officer, Inspector Tami Snowden was also involved in assisting with the fair and recalls how well the RFS displays were put together.

"The first display was primarily for the Medowie brigade and showcased their equipment and high level of training, the second display was our FireWise display and concentrated on community awareness issues and the third display was in fact a demonstration of village firefighting (VF) techniques.

"The VF demonstration was very spectacular and went off with faultless precision. Using the zone training teams portable "hot house" the brigade simulated a structure fire complete with heavy smoke and flames, from which a hapless casualty was rescued. Donning CABA and using two 38mm hose lines from a Cat 1 VF tanker, firefighters entered the building, vented the fire, and rescued the unconscious victim, all within a few minutes.

"The large crowd and the NBN News crew were all very impressed, as were we all with the coverage the event received on the evening news. Now the only problem for the Medowie Brigade will be, how to top this years efforts next year!"

Congratulations to all brigades that participated in our first Open Day. Let's make sure that this year's is bigger and better and in keeping with the professional role and image of the Service.



Story by Michael Watts
Photos by Tami Snowden

FIREFIGHTING SKILLS ON SHOW TO CHINESE FOREST MANAGERS

Sutherland Shire communities were in good hands in relation to firefighting, a senior Chinese fire commander told 80 NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers in October.

Mr Liu Zhitian, Director General of the Chinese State Forestry Administration (SFA) made the remarks after watching a two hour firefighting exercise conducted by RFS volunteers.

Mr Liu was the team leader for 20 Chinese land and fire managers who visited Australia to study firefighting methods and Australia's coordinated volunteer firefighting.

The Chinese delegation visited Victoria and the ACT before arriving in Sydney and went on to the Gold Coast where just days earlier properties were lost in a series of large bush blazes.

The October visit was the latest in a series of exchanges between the Chinese and RFS volunteer and salaried members through the RFS's business development program.

Mr Liu said he was impressed by RFS volunteers, particularly their discipline and organisational skills.

The exercise was held beside the Woronora River and into Jannali Reserve. It demonstrated the variety of equipment used by the RFS and the Incident Control System.



In a scenario replicating a real fire emergency, which occurred in January 1994, a bushfire broke out beside Jannali Reserve and quickly spread uphill towards homes.

A fireboat from the Woronora Rural Fire Brigade was first on scene, its officer in charge becoming the initial incident commander. The boat crew got to work with lines of 65mm and 38mm hoses drawing salt water from the Woronora River. The crew attacked the northern flank of the fire, chasing it uphill.

Additional resources were called with tankers from Menai, Illawong, Sandy Point, Loftus and Heathcote taking up positions on the southern flank and beside homes on the crest of the hill. Numerous lines of 38mm and 28mm hoses were at work to show the visitors RFS firefighting methods.

As more and more units were deployed the fire exercise was 'sectorised' and Group Captain Peter Evans became the incident controller. Some officers took command of sectors reporting to the Group Captain.

The final phase of the drill was to demonstrate the use of fire against fire with a mock backburn lit along the western side of Tudor Rd Jannali to allow it to merge against the wildfire head.

Knowing that sparks might cross Tudor Rd into unburnt country on the eastern side of the road, precautions were needed. Tankers from Loftus and Heathcote brigades travelled slowly along the eastern side of the road spraying compressed air generated foam from deck monitors to handlines high into trees and lower vegetation.

For a time the bushland took on the appearance of the Snowy Mountains in mid winter.

The tankers used were a pair of special 'go anywhere' freightliners developed by Sutherland. They carry 4,000 litres of water and 120 litres of foam concentrate. Sutherland volunteers were supported by Gosford RFS, which provided a bus to transport the delegation and Camden RFS's catering vehicle and crew.

With the exercise completed the delegation returned to the Woronora Rural Fire Brigade station where Mr Liu met volunteers.

Story and photo by Graham Davis

An Illawong firefighter protects homes while the Chinese delegation is briefed.

Peter Carter explains the exercise to Mr Liu Zhitian while his interpreter takes notes.



VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE – CHINESE FOREST FIRE MANAGEMENT

In 1980 I joined the Sutherland Headquarters Brigade as a wide eyed volunteer, never imagining in my wildest dreams that my involvement with this organisation would lead to anything else other than fighting bush fires in and around my district.

So imagine my disbelief when I was selected by the NSW Rural Fire Service to join three salaried officers and represent the Service as a volunteer in China. Well what can I say, I always thought that the RFS was well known and accepted as a leader in bush fire fighting in Australia, but this recent trip to China has certainly turned my head in respect of how we are seen internationally.

The People's Armed Forest Police, a division of the People's Liberation Army and primarily responsible for firefighting and fire prevention for the whole of China, hosted the trip. Whilst they are a military based organisation with over 50,000 personnel they operate in a very similar way to our organisation in NSW, just on a larger scale.

The trip was to visit and discuss forest fire management issues in a number of provinces in China as well as visiting a Forest Fire Training Academy in Beijing. I was extremely humbled by our treatment by our hosts and more importantly by the way that our Service is viewed by another country. Let me tell you, the Chinese Government sees us as one of the world leaders in forest fire management, not a small feat considering that unlike our Chinese colleagues we are a volunteer based organisation.

At the end of our trip, the Peoples Armed Forest Police advised us that they could see value in continuing a positive working relationship with our Service into the future. What this might entail will be subject to further discussions between both organisations and I am happy to say will have my input.

What did I get out of the trip? Well I am not sure how you put into words my feelings when we departed China for home, except to say that it

will forever be embedded in my mind and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity.

I was very fortunate in that my employer, Flextool (Aust) Pty Ltd, where I am employed as State Manager, was able to see the worth in my personal development in that they granted me holidays so I could participate in the trip.

In closing, let me say to you all that if you hear that there is a Chinese delegation about to descend on your district, give it all your support. You will find it interesting as well as satisfying knowing now that you have contributed in some small way to how we are regarded by our international colleagues. If you wish to know more about the trip then all you have to do is contact me through the Sutherland Fire Control Centre.

By Peter Evans

HISTORIC PUB DESTROYED BY FIRE

In the beautiful rolling green hills on top of the Great Dividing Range between Walcha and Tamworth lies the sleepy little village of Walcha Road. At about 0145hrs on the morning of Wednesday 10 November 2004, the publican of the local watering hole awoke to the sound of a smoke alarm. After checking the source of the smoke he evacuated the building called 000 (triple zero) from the only public phone in the village to raise the alarm.

At about 0148hrs the duty officer of the RFS New England Team responded Woolbrook 9 and upon arrival the crew found the beautiful historic pub well and truly involved in fire.

Over the next 40 minutes another seven brigades with nine tankers were on their way to the pub. After all, some RFS volunteers had a very good reason to try and save the pub; it was the only watering hole for many kilometres in any direction.

The Walcha NSW Fire Brigades pumper also responded and set to work in breathing apparatus to assist the RFS. A bulk water carrier was dispatched from Walcha Council to help supply water until a pump was set up on the local river, several hundred metres away.

Over the next four hours the crews put all their Village Firefighter training skills to good use and managed to confine the fire to about half of the building. The northern end of the structure was completely destroyed and the centre section suffered from extreme heat and smoke damage. The southern end of the pub suffered from very bad smoke and water damage but remained standing.

Normally we would all say 'let's get a new pub', but in this case it is not just a pub – it was an icon. Walcha Road Pub was over 140 years old and regarded as 'the pub'; the only place to go for a cool drink, fine meal and an insight into history. If only walls could talk!

Locals and visitors would regularly travel to Walcha Road Pub from Armidale, Walcha, Uralla and Tamworth just to say they had been there. As with all structure fires, this was a devastating event, but it left more than a hole in the ground, the loss of Walcha Road Pub has left a very big hole in the community and in many people's hearts.

**Story and photos by Trevor Lyons
Learning and Development Officer
RFS New England Team.**



HOW TO DEAL WITH RFS ISSUES

Use policy, standards and procedures documents to deal with RFS issues

If you need assistance to deal with an issue, there is probably a NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) policy, standard or procedure that can help you.

A range of policies, Standard Operating Procedures and Service Standards exist to help volunteers and staff with a definite, established course of action to carry out a function or a process across the RFS.

In most cases there will be a NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) policy, standard or procedure that can help you

They provide guidance on issues such as using breathing apparatus, fireground communication procedures, grievance processes, what powers officers have and brigade administration, to name just a few.

They are aimed at a consistent approach to situations RFS members have to deal with.

They can be downloaded from the RFS website, www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or are available through RFS district offices and assistance is also available from Volunteer Relations volunteer@rfs.nsw.gov.au. A list of Service Standards is available in index form to assist

POLICIES

Policies are written statements that relate to the administration and management of all salaried staff. They should be read in conjunction with the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 and the Public Service Handbookz.

SERVICE STANDARDS

Service Standards are written statements on the operation, management, co-ordination and control of the Service and apply to all members of the Service. They are issued by the Commissioner under section 13(1) of the Rural Fires Act 1997.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Standard Operating Procedures describe the actions to be followed in operational and other situations such as training. They detail the way Service Standards are to be applied. Operating procedures are linked to and form a part of a Service Standard.

HOW ARE THEY CREATED?

Each Executive Director of the Service is responsible to ensure that policies and standards are developed within their portfolio for matters where a consistent approach is necessary.

Once the need for a policy or standard is identified a working paper/draft policy is prepared, a working group including volunteer representatives may be formed if the matter is complex to create a draft, the draft is put to the Corporate Executive Group, the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council (which includes volunteer and salaried representatives) reviews the document and the final draft is signed off by the Commissioner.

IMPLEMENTATION

Just writing a policy or Service Standard doesn't mean it will be followed.

Significant new Service Standards and policies often require the development and implementation of training and communication process to assist in their deployment.

It is the responsibility of every member to find out what guidelines and procedures are in place when facing a matter of administration, management or operations.

The Service is responsible for ensuring compliance with policies, standards and procedures and undertakes a compliance and audit regularly.

The Service will be implementing a comprehensive auditing process in the near future to improve the level of compliance with Service Standards and policies.

A feedback mechanism has been established to allow members of the Service and members of the community to provide feedback on Service Standards or seek further information.

**All enquiries may be addressed to
pol&ss.feedback@rfs.nsw.gov.au**

STICKING UP FOR THE SERVICE THE HELENSBURGH WAY

A new car sticker has been distributed to Districts bearing a picture of a Cat 1 tanker and the words 'My other vehicle is a Fire Truck'.

The Service logo, stripes and tag line '...for our community' will add authenticity to this colourful way of promoting the Service and its image.

The sticker borrows on an idea from the Helensburgh Rural Fire Brigade and is produced with the full consent and cooperation of members of that Brigade.

Good on you Helensburgh!





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Polar Fleecy Jumper - Half zip front with 2 slant pockets at bottom	XS-3XL (N)avy only	\$42.50			
Polar Fleecy Jacket - Full zip front, Elasticated cuff, Draw cord waist	S-XXL (N)avy only	\$52.50			
Sloppy Joe - Super fleecy / Low pill with round neck & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-6XL (N)avy only (N)avy only	\$29.00 \$31.00			
Dress Jumper - 80/20 Wool/Polyester blend, Shoulder & Elbow Patches, Epaulettes, Pencil pockets & Australian made	S-XXL 3XL-5XL (N)avy only (N)avy only	\$85.00 \$87.00			
Beanie - Acrylic - One size fits all - Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (N)avy only	\$11.00			
Beanie - Fleecy - One size fits all - Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (N)avy only	\$13.50			
Cap - Baseball - Brushed cotton, Adjustable velcro, One size fits all, Embroidered RFS Logo	OSFA (N)avy only	1-24 \$8.50 / 25-99 \$8.00 / 100+ \$7.50			
Medium Kit Bag - Heavy duty nylon & zips, Base board, 3 external zipped pockets with shoulder & hand carry straps	L 50cm x H 30cm x W 20cm	\$35.00			
Large Kit Bag - Heavy duty nylon & zips, Base board, 5 external zipped pockets including "Wet" & Boot pockets with shoulder & hand carry straps	L 73cm x H 33cm x W 31cm	\$45.00			
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*Red on Gold badges are Proban backed

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RFS BOOSTS REMOTE FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) has put all of its remote area firefighting team (RAFT) personnel through health and fitness checks in a program to ensure all personnel are prepared for the increasing demands of that difficult and challenging form of firefighting.

RAFT personnel must be very fit, have above-average bushcraft skills and enjoy hard work in the company of a very few like-minded firefighters.

RAFT personnel must be skilled in “dry” firefighting techniques – tried and proven methods of bush fire control that don’t rely on large amounts of water and lack the backup normally provided by fire tankers and additional support personnel.

Remote firefighting involves strenuous physical activity over extended periods - meaning that personnel must be free of medical conditions that could be aggravated by the difficult work.

Each potential RAFT member must first complete a thorough medical examination and, once certified as suitably physically fit, complete a task-based assessment, known as the “arduous pack test”.

The “arduous pack test” involves walking 4.83 kilometres carrying a 20kg pack or a supplied 20kg weight vest in 45 minutes or less. At first glance it doesn’t sound difficult, but it is as it sounds – arduous and definitely not for the unfit!

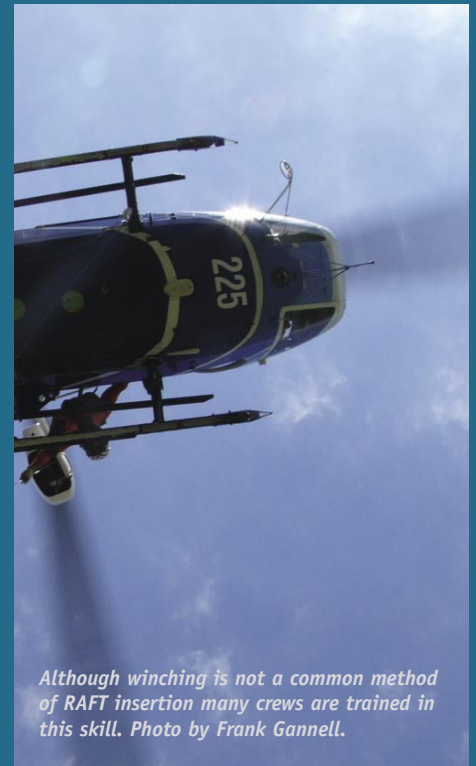
More than 150 RFS members have completed the rigorous training program. Arduous pack tests were conducted for RAFT personnel from Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Canobolas, Mudgee, Dubbo, Taree, Mulwaree, New England, Lake George, Lismore, Wollongong and Kiama Shellharbour.

The early deployment of RAFT personnel to firefighting operations in remote areas can help prevent large fires from developing, but the work is specialised and tough and the dangers are many.

Decisions to deploy RAFT are only made after a thorough risk assessment has been carried out and agreements reached between the incident controller and the RAFT leader.

A detailed analysis of current and predicted weather conditions, together with an analysis of current and predicted fire behaviour is then carried out. Details of proposed tasks are then discussed between the incident controller or delegate and the RAFT leader and a written plan is developed and used to brief all RAFT personnel

When decisions are made to begin firefighting in remote locations, access to and from the remote areas is often by driving to a point close to the fire then walking in, flying (via helicopter) or, in some instances, travelling by boat.



Although winching is not a common method of RAFT insertion many crews are trained in this skill. Photo by Frank Gannell.

In a very small number of cases RAFT personnel may be winched in to rugged and remote areas from a helicopter, but winching is viewed as a strategy of last resort and the preferred method, if helicopter deployment is needed, is to land in a suitable area close to the fire and then walk.

Because they often operate well away from vehicle support, RAFT personnel rely on each other, so teams are made up of people with a good mix of training. Good navigational skills are a must, as is the ability to carry often heavy equipment over long distances.

The team must be self-supporting, so all firefighting tools, fuel, drinking water, food and basic camping equipment must also be carried in. The general rule of thumb is that the team must be self-sufficient for the proposed duration of their task plus 24 hours

Recent changes to the prescribed makeup of remote teams require that each team will have, as a minimum:

- > A crew leader that is Crew Leader (CL) or Crew Leader Wildfire (CLW) qualified.
- > A deputy crew leader that is CL or CLW qualified.
- > Each team member must have completed “Work Safely Around Aircraft.”
- > At least two team members must be qualified in Senior First Aid.
- > If the use of chainsaws is required or anticipated, each team must have a person with an appropriate chainsaw qualification.

REVIEW FOCUS

Current and past members of Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMC), volunteer representatives in particular, are invited to take part in a review of BFMCs.

The review, being conducted by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, recognises the increasing pressure from communities for a more rigorous and consultative approach to bushfire planning.

This has placed greater demands on individual BFMCs. The review aims to look at BFMC processes, future needs, structure, management, administration, community representation, resourcing and functionality.

The first step in the review is canvassing BFMC members for comments. A survey questionnaire has been sent out. The BFCC wishes to encourage maximum participation.

The questionnaire phase is planned to finish in mid December. Workshops and focus groups are planned for early 2005 to gain further input.

The ideas you contribute will be much appreciated. If you have been a member of a BFMC and are interested in the review, please contact Review of BFMC Project Manager Ross Brown on 87415444.

For further details please see the RFS website www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

BUSHFIRE FIGHTER COURSE HELD IN WOOLSHED

NSW Rural Fire Service Gwydir District took the Bush Fire Fighter (BFF) course out to the members to offer encouragement for people to participate.

On 22 August 2004 three volunteer instructors and two fire control staff ventured off on a Sunday morning to Coreen Woolshed.

Through recognition of current competencies and prior learning the course was reduced to one day for long-standing active members.

The theory instruction took about eight hours with some practical also included. The trainees practised using trucks and other equipment for about three hours.

The theory assessment and completed project work will occur at a later date to give trainees time to go over what they have learned on the day.

The day was made a social event with a BBQ lunch supplied by fire control.

At the end of the day all participants said that they had learnt something useful to them and all course evaluation sheets came back with favourable comments.

*Story and photos by Michael Roper
Community Safety Officer
Namoi/ Gwydir Team*





PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IMPROVE SERVICE TO VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITIES

The need to provide the best service possible to RFS volunteers and the people of NSW has encouraged the Service to constantly improve its planning and management systems.

Increasingly stringent legislation, opportunities arising from new technology and increasing community demands for improved levels of service means the RFS's operating environment is becoming more complex.

Running a brigade is challenging in this environment. The old ways of planning and performing work are no longer able to meet the challenges posed by this environment. Like all organisations, the Service must find a way of balancing and retaining the good aspects of our working systems and culture and improve those areas that need attention.

Previous editions of the Bulletin have outlined some of the components of the Service's new planning and management system, most notably the:

- > Strategic Plan;
- > Service Delivery Model, and
- > Brigade Management Planning.

Whilst ongoing improvements are being made, these three components are now well established in the Service.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2005 – 2007 version of the Strategic Plan is now under development. The Service is using the results achieved over the past two years, together with the outcomes of the External Environmental Scan and Guided Self Assessment conducted in 2003 as part of the review.

This year a Volunteer Survey will be conducted. This will help the Service identify issues of concern and suggestions from volunteers, together with trends affecting volunteer availability, recruitment and retention. This information will help the Service review the Strategic Plan next year as well as inform a number of other projects.

SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

The Service Delivery Model is the business planning system used in Rural Fire Districts to plan and resource their activities over a one to three-year period. In 2003 an electronic system of the Service Delivery Model called e-SDM was introduced and all districts now use this application.

The e-SDM software uses the risk management standard as the basis for its process. The software is designed to automate many of the repeated tasks associated with the process thus easing workload. The information obtained can then be used for a number of planning and management purposes.

The theme of integration has been (and will continue to be) a key one for the Service Delivery Model. To date, we have integrated district:

- > Business planning
- > Standards of fire cover
- > Community education strategies,
- > Learning and development planning,
- > Service Agreement schedules,
- > OH&S risk assessment, and
- > Bids and estimates.

In 2004 further enhancements to e-SDM included incorporating facilities for:

- > Staff performance management and development planning, and
- > Reporting district Service Agreement performance.

BRIGADE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In 2003, the Service produced the Brigade Management Planning Guidelines. The guidelines are of course not compulsory for brigades, but are designed to assist executive and other members to better deal with the ever more complex process of running a brigade and allow them to focus more clearly on those activities that need to be done. The planning process is intended to be part of an ongoing management cycle.

The Brigade Management Planning Guidelines can be downloaded from the Service's internet site at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au. Go to the "Policies and Business" group and select "Procedures & Handbooks" from the menu.

STATION DESIGN

STATION DESIGN STANDARD CREATES TEMPLATE FOR FUTURE CONSTRUCTIONS

The RFS is currently developing a brigade station standard to provide a template for the construction of future stations

The Standard approach will allow the Service to reduce and in some cases eliminate the costs, time and effort it takes to develop designs to meet brigade requirements.

This approach will mean that the best elements of stations around the state are adopted in a range of template design options and that plans are available quickly. This frees volunteers and funding so they are not diverted from their major role, protecting the community from fire threat.

It is essential that all parties, in particular volunteers, have a say in these designs. The main aim is to ensure that brigades have functional and comfortable buildings to work from.

The Service wants to draw on the experience of volunteers when developing the new standards.

The Standard will ensure stations are fit for purpose and meet all relevant regulations, guidelines and building codes.

The standard features can then be replicated across the Service providing a corporate identity that all members can be proud of while providing a practical and functional area for volunteer activities. A key benefit of the standard is the use of modular design, so that elements can be configured to best fit the local need.

Volunteer input is essential to ensure the designs are right. In the coming months members of Service will be invited to comment on this issue, to ensure that the standard approach is the most appropriate solution.

Current volunteer representation on the project team has been through the Rural Fire Service Association. Volunteers will be further invited to provide input through the RFSA as well as through their local district office in a consultation process that will occur over coming months. Volunteers are encouraged to get involved through the RFSA or the local District/Zone manager.

connected

with the

community



TX6200



TX610



The TX6200 5 Watt handheld is not only a fully featured 40 channel UHF CB Transceiver, but it also incorporates a Wide Band Receiver capable of storing an extra 20 receive channels between 403 and 520 MHz. These extra channels can be included in the scan sequence of normal CB channels.

The GME Electrophone TX610 sets a new benchmark in compact 40 channel UHF Handheld Transceivers. Not only is the TX610 packed with features, its circuit design incorporates a super sensitive receiver with front end filtering and powerful 1 Watt output power. With twice the RF output compared to most compact handhelds, the TX610 is hard to beat in the performance arena.

**GME****Electrophone**

QUEANBEYAN SHOWGROUND ON FIRE

About 450 firefighters gathered from 10-12 September 2004 for the 16th RFS State Championships at Queanbeyan to display their emergency skills and compete against crews from around the State.

Two crews from the ACT and an Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) team joined 23 teams from NSW RFS. Major sponsors of the event were Gilbert & Roach Isuzu and GAAM Emergency Products.

Commissioner Phil Koperberg opened the Championships on Saturday morning and the Mayor of Queanbeyan welcomed firefighters. After a parade at the showground, volunteers armed with tankers, chainsaws and radio communications, tested their skills and equipment in simulated emergency situations.

Fake structures were set ablaze and obstacle courses constructed.

A highlight event was the realistic motor vehicle accident held away from the showground on Jerrabomberra Hill.

Crews responding to the MVA were surprised to find a fuel tanker (bulk water carrier) and car had collided with jet fuel leaking. The tanker driver wandered the road in a daze, the car contained a driver, passenger and baby.

As well as providing a realistic incident for the crews, this event particularly tested crew leader skills as they managed the incident.

The Rural Fire Driving event featured a "man-made" mountain in the middle of the field. Unable to see over the top, drivers were confronted with numerous obstacles and uneven surfaces once over the hill.

It can be cold in Queanbeyan at that time of year, and this year was no exception. All competitors received a commemorative "beanie" that became very useful over the two days. Some wet weather required a temporary halt to proceedings and a rapid rethink of events both for safety reasons and competitor well being.

While some events were truncated, every team was more than able to demonstrate their skills and ability.

The Junior events were scaled back, however each and every Junior team received a prize pack that more than compensated for the shortened program.

The Royal Australian Air Force displayed their airport fire tender when events concluded on Sunday. Its speed and manoeuvrability were impressive. The tender monitor can propel water about 50m while moving.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Crossweller and the Queanbeyan Mayor presented victorious teams with awards on Sunday.

Appreciation was given to the marshals, time keepers, caterers and supporters, as well as the competing teams, for their attendance and enthusiasm (particularly in wet and cold conditions on the Saturday).

The winner of the Senior event was Oakville Rural Fire Brigade (Hawkesbury) followed in second place by Ingleside (Warringah Pittwater) and in third place Forbes.

The winner of the Junior event was Oakville, second place to Llandilo and third place to Lachlan.

The RAAF won the visiting team competition. The ACT crews also performed well in the emergency

events with Rivers coming third in communication fireground procedures. The next State Championships will be held in Barooga, Berrigan Shire, in 2006.

SENIOR COMPETITION

EVENT	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Challenge	Oakville	Winmalee	Grafton
Light Tanker	Oakville	Stoney Creek	Ingleside
Rural Fire Driving	Ingleside	Oakville	RAAF
Old/New Equipment	Forbes	Grafton	Queanbeyan
Structural Fire	Winmalee	Forbes	Oakville
Equipment Failure	Winmalee	Oakville	Grafton
Chainsaws	Oakville	Dundee	StoneyCreek/Ingleside
Communication	Oakville	Ingleside	Rivers
Crew Leader	RAAF		

CADETS/JUNIOR COMPETITION

EVENT	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Handtool & Water	Tumut	St Pauls	Seahampton
Emergency	Alectown	Warringah	Oakville
Equipment Failure	Llandilo	Lachlan	Seahampton
Communication	Llandilo	Oakville	St Pauls
Tanker	Lachlan	St Pauls	Oakville
Crew Leader	Llandilo		

THE FUTURE OF VOLUNTEERS DEPENDS ON THE YOUTH OF TODAY

OAKVILLE JUNIORS

The eight junior members of the Oakville Rural Fire Brigade feel that RFS membership is not just a social activity for them, but an opportunity to assist the brigade and the community. This expresses the volunteer spirit of our junior members today.

Self-esteem, leadership, life experience, and recognition are not just words to these young future firefighters. When assisting senior members of the brigade in station duties during recent fire incidents they conducted themselves with pride and confidence when preparing meals and other duties assigned to them. At 14 and 15 years of age, being dressed in RFS yellows "is just the best feeling and it's great to belong".

When asked "what is it like to be a junior member of the RFS?" The Oakville juniors answer "it is an experience and an adventure."

The Oakville juniors have achieved more than just their dreams. In September this year they competed in the RFS State Championships and were overall winners of the junior's section. However, they were not just out to win, but to revel in the spirit of the Championships, that they had heard so much about from the senior members of the brigade. Running on their current success at the State Championships they competed in the St Pauls

Junior's Championships held in October and once again came first.

With true dedication, they trained every Tuesday night and Saturday for weeks on end to improve their skills as a team and to prepare for the events. Guidance and training was provided by the senior members from the Oakville brigade. The strong relationship between the members of the brigade will assist the juniors with their future in the RFS, as the junior members stated; they will always be with the Oakville brigade.

The Oakville Junior's meet every Tuesday night between 7.00pm and 9.30pm. New members are welcome.



Left to Right; Graham Gough, Kirsten Sandell, Katrina Vernon, Nichole Powe, Lewis Powe.



RFSA ACHIEVEMENTS

As President of the Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) I am often asked, "what has the Association achieved?" and "what has it done for me?"

As many members of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) are relatively new members I thought it timely that these questions were answered.

Firstly, it is worth reviewing our history; the Association was established from the Fire Control Officers Association (FCOA) that represented the views of the Fire Control Officers employed by Local Government Councils to the NSW Department of Bushfire Services. In 1996 a group of these Officers and a number of volunteers met to discuss the establishment of a state wide organisation which would represent all members of the Service, both salaried and volunteers. It was from these discussions that it was determined to disband the FCOA and to establish the RFSA as the peak representative body.

The objectives of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association Inc (RFSA) are to:

- > Provide a forum to consolidate and represent the views of all members of the RFS
- > Ensure the views of the members are taken into account in the decision making processes of the RFS
- > Act as a focal point assisting in the development of the RFS
- > Provide tangible benefits to all members of the Association

The RFSA is a bipartisan organisation and seeks consensus among all stakeholders of the RFS. It is not a union; the RFSA constitution prohibits involvement in activities that relate to industrial negotiations for RFS employees.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WERE IDENTIFIED TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RFSA.

These are that:

- > All members of the RFS be able to participate in policy development and selection of representatives
- > All regions of the State be fairly represented and that no single geographical region dominates
- > Unnecessary bureaucratic and administrative concerns be avoided.

Rather than limit participation to those who were members of a separate body it was decided, in keeping with the RFSA's founding principles, that the only requirement for RFSA membership was membership of the RFS. This allows every "deemed" member to be involved in the choice of representatives and the development of policy. However, the Association encourages all members to register their support of the organisation by completing the "Registration Form", which may be accessed on the RFSA website, www.rfsa.org.au

The structure of the RFSA is that the State Council determines policy and elects the State Executive. To ensure every region of NSW is represented fairly, each of the eight regions contributes four representatives (two salaried

and two volunteer) to the State Council; the 10 member, State Executive is open to any RFS member to nominate and the Executive has the responsibility of overseeing the operation of the Association on a day-to-day basis. Annual elections are conducted to determine the composition of the Council and Executive.

The questions, "What has the Association achieved?" and "What can the Association do for me?" may be simply answered when considering the following.

The Association represents all members through a series of RFSA branches and Regional Committees across NSW culminating in the State Council. The State Council is the ultimate policy-making body whose day-to-day functions are managed by the State Executive and implemented by the Executive Officer.

WHAT HAS THE ASSOCIATION ACHIEVED?

The RFSA has participated in and been instrumental in putting into place the following:

1. The views of members are represented at the highest level. The RFS highest-level policy advisory committee is the Corporate Executive Group comprising the RFS Executive Directors, Chief of Staff and the Commissioner, who chairs the Group. The RFSA President and Vice President sit on this committee, which is the only organisation invited to do so.
2. The Association was instrumental in establishing the five Standing Advisory Committees. These are Technical, Training, Communications, Community Safety and Operations. This means that both volunteers and salaried officers (comprising two salaried officers and two volunteers nominated by each of the Association's eight Regional Committees) have the opportunity to advise and comment on the development of the RFS policy and standards.
3. The Association has representatives on the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC), the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC) and the Rural Fire Service Advisory Committee (RFSAC). All of which have a direct impact on the strategic and policy direction of not only the RFS, but with other associate agencies.
4. The Association represents the views of members on all Working Groups and Steering Committees.
 - > These working parties include volunteer members and must ensure that the impact the project will have on all volunteers is considered.
 - > Any determinations are circulated as draft proposals as widely as possible to allow input into the final decision.

5. The RFSA was instrumental in having Service Standard (S.S 1.1.24) agree to provide legal representation to volunteers involved in Coronial Inquiries. Prior to this arrangement volunteers were required to provide their own legal representation.

6. The RFSA has established a benevolent fund, The Rural Fire Fighters Foundation, that provides assistance to the families of members killed or injured on duty.

7. The Association organises an Annual Conference, which provides an opportunity for all members to have direct access to the both the RFSA and RFS hierarchy and includes a number of eminent speakers and specialists in the field of fire fighting.

8. The Association represents the views of members in at Parliamentary Inquiries, and in the past has appeared before the Public Accounts Committee and provided advice to the Government in a number of policy areas.

The Association recognised that communicating our achievements with our members and communication generally across the State was an issue and in order to rectify this problem implemented the following initiatives:

- > Established a RFSA website www.rfsa.org.au to assist with communication and provide members with access to the latest developments within the RFS and the Association. Incorporated in the website
 - Hosted brigade web sites.
 - Hosted brigade email addresses.
 - Published a contact directory of Association representatives to allow contact between members.
- > Set up a system of email groups to allow discussion between members.
 - Allowed regions to display information that is pertinent to that region.
 - Allowed discussion and ideas exchange across the state between members with similar interests.
- > Produced a magazine 'Fires Edge' to allow brigade members to insert articles of interest.
- > Introduced fundraising initiatives to ensure that the Association had the necessary means to represent the members interests properly.
 - Call centre raffle.
 - Sponsorship in both money and in kind.
 - Online shop selling Service orientated articles to members.
 - Opened a shop front/office in Penrith.

WHAT CAN THE ASSOCIATION DO FOR ME?

The Association's representation on the numerous Committees and Working Groups influences the outcomes from those groups in relation to legislation, Service Standards and Policies.

The Association has engaged legal counsel to review the WorkCover legislation and benefits and its impact on members, particularly those members who are self-employed, student or self-funded retirees.

The State Council, through our delegates on the RFS Corporate Executive Group (CEG), was instrumental in ensuring that an audit of personal protective equipment throughout NSW was conducted to ascertain the requirements of all RFS members. Similarly, the brigade station audit was a direct

result of the RFSA seeking information in relation to the provision of stations and amenities across NSW.

The State Council has endorsed a proposal to support brigades through a grants scheme which will be conducted twice yearly whereby monies will be made available to brigades to assist in providing equipment not otherwise accessible.

The State Council have also investigated the possibility of providing Internet access and computers for every district to allow for better communication between members, the State Council and the RFS.

We are in the process of producing membership cards for all those members who have registered through the RFSA Website, the RFSA membership card is linked to a benefit program, which has been compiled to provide discounts on a range of items.

The Association has sponsored both salaried and volunteer members to AFAC leadership courses and instigated a professional development prize for one salaried and one volunteer member, which are presented at the yearly State Conference.

The Association has sought a "private ruling" from the Australian Taxation Office on an exemption from "Reportable Fringe Benefits Tax" for salaried officers, a process which took almost 12 months of negotiations.

Some of the Association's other achievements include:

- > Successfully lobbied and gained free entry passes into all NSW National Parks for all RFS firefighters.
- > Review of the Safe Working on Roads policy and the impact on volunteers and districts.

> Review of the distribution of personal protective equipment across NSW to ensure adequate levels are supplied.

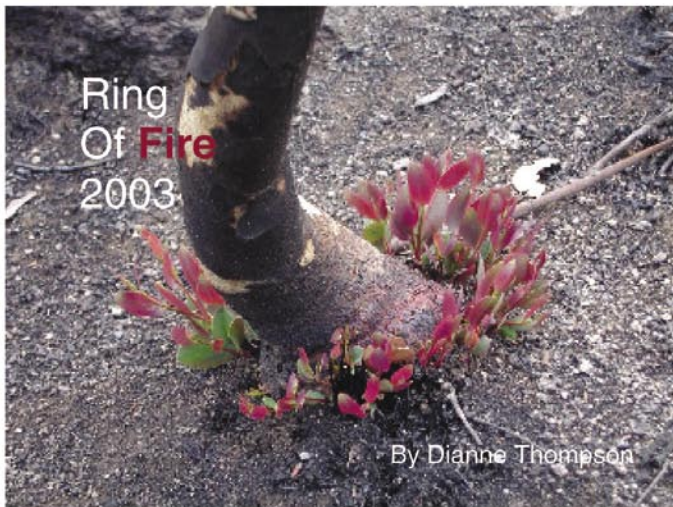
> Implementation of "Safe Food Handling" standards.

> Implementation of criminal names checks for new and transferring members.

...to mention just a few.

Finally, I would encourage you, if you have not already done so, to become involved in the Association by registering your interest and actively participate and promote your Association.

Steve Yorke
RFSA President



The book is a collection of landscape photos recording the change and regeneration triggered by the 2003 fires covering Weston Creek, the Cotter, Tidbinbilla and Namadgi & Kosciuszko National Parks.

Sandy Hollway, Chair, Bushfire Recovery Taskforce says: *In her book 'Ring of Fire 2003' Dianne Thompson has produced a book of extraordinary images. Her photographs are far more than a historical record of the fires of January 2003 in the ACT/Southern NSW region and its aftermath, they demonstrate the*

regeneration taking place in the natural environment.

Ring Of Fire 2003 is available at the following outlets:

CANBERRA: Most bookshops, Tidbinbilla, Namadgi Visitors Centres

SYDNEY: Gleebooks

SNOWY MOUNTAINS: Cooma, Jindabyne, Khancoban, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Yarrangobilly Information Centres, Travellers Rest, Monaro Books & Music, Cooma Percy's Newsagency, Telemark Newsagency Thredbo, Cabramurra Store, Adaminaby & Berridale PO

OTHER: Blue Mountains Heritage Centre (Katoomba), House of Good Books (Narooma), Eurobodalla Botanical Gardens (Bateman's Bay), Candelo Books (Bega),

MAIL ORDERS or further information see www.bajabout.com or contact Di Thompson at photos@bajabout.com

RRP \$38

RETRO FIT OF FOAM PROPORTIONER

This information may be of interest to operators of the RFS designed two-wheel and four-wheel drive pumpers that were built by West Trans (Cat 10/11) as well as those operating any other fire-fighting vehicles fitted with the Hale Products Foam Master 2.5V system.

1. HALE FOAM MASTER 2.5V FOAM PROPORTIONER PRODUCT FAULT

The manufacturer of this foam proportioning system has notified the RFS that there is a fault with this product system that may affect the reliability of operation. Consequently, Hale Products through their Australian agent GAAM Emergency Products have offered to retrofit the existing Foam Master 2.5V foam proportioners under warranty.

To assist with prioritising the proportioner retrofit over the next several months, any districts that have inoperable Foam Master 2.5V proportioners simply send in a fault report (there is no need to send in another fault report if one has been previously sent).

2. HALE FOAM MASTER 2.5V OPERATION

A reminder that the Foam Master 2.5V is not suitable for mixing Class B (i.e. AFFF or ATC) foams as it was designed for proportioning Class A (BFFF) foams only.

It has been reported that a number of brigades have tried mixing Class B foams with the Foam Master 2.5V fitted to their appliance. The chemical composition of the Class B concentrate over time not only degrades the rubber seals in the Foam Master unit, when Class A and B foam concentrates are mixed a gel forms that will plug the lines in the foam proportioner.

Class B foams should always be mixed using the inductor (AWG model 538Z4R) that was supplied with every RFS designed pumper built by West Trans.

If Class B foam has been mixed using the Foam Master 2.5V, flush the system with warm clean water as soon as possible. This can be done by operating the Foam Master system with a drum filled with warm water connected to the suction side of the proportioner. Continue flushing the system until only water is discharged from the delivery manifold.

Should the proportioner become plugged and cannot be cleared by flushing it with clean water, then it will require the attention a qualified technician. This work can be arranged by contacting GAAM Emergency Products ph 0408 424 994.

To ensure reliable operation of the Foam Master 2.5V fitted to your pumper:

- > Use the system to only mix Class A (BFFF) foam.
- > When operating the system always shift the control lever to the 'Prime' before selecting the 'Foam Proportion'.
- > Once a week, shift the control lever to the 'Prime' position, hold for approximately 90 seconds before shifting the lever back to the off position.
- > At least once a month, operate the system at a low percentage for a couple of minutes to ensure any stale foam is flushed through the proportioner. Also, inspect the filter on the inlet side and check all hose fittings for looseness of clamps and foam drum hose connectors. Tighten fittings and renew any failed 'O' rings on the suction hose connectors.
- > Ensure all pump operators read through the operating instructions provided in the "Operating and Service manual" that was supplied with each pumper that was built by West Trans.
- > Always, after operating any foam proportioner, ensure the pipe work (including cabin protection spray line and pump primer) is flushed with clean water.

Following these procedures will not only ensure reliable operation of the Foam Master and will ensure the manufacturer's warranty is not voided. In correct operation of this system will potentially result in not only costly repairs but also downtime on the foam proportioner.

3. CORRECTION TO CAT 10/11 OPERATING AND SERVICE MANUAL

Every department designed pumper built by West Trans was supplied with an Operating and Service Manual for the vehicle. Your attention is drawn to page A-8 of the manual, the note in bold toward the end of the section incorrectly implies that the Foam Master 2.5V proportioner is suitable for both Class A and B foam. Strike out this reference to Class B foam. Also note where the word 'draft' is written it should read 'draught'.

If your vehicle was not supplied with this manual contact your district office.

4. CAT 10/11 FOAM DRUM STORAGE BIN

It has been reported that some difficulty has been experienced with stowing drums of foam concentrate in the bin fitted to the Cat 10 and 11 Pumpers that were designed by the department and built by West Trans.

It is possible to lower the bin approximately 150 mm to enable the drums to be stowed more easily. Although this makes it easier to stow the drums of foam concentrate, expect an increase in the time taken to prime the foam system (an additional 20-30 seconds).

Should there be the requirement to undertake this modification, simply submit a fault report nominating the preferred option.

5. OPERATION OF FOAM INDUCTOR (AWG MODEL 538Z4R)

To operate the Class B foam inductor branch, couple it directly to an outlet on the delivery manifold of the pump. Although it is a 65 mm branch, it can be operated with a 38 mm hose line by simply coupling a 65/38 adaptor onto the outlet.

Connect no more than three lengths of 38 mm hose to the inductor. Connect a 230 litre/min branch to the end of the hose line (either a selectable flow fog branch or a 225 litre/minute medium expansion foam branch).

Dip the inductor pick-up hose into the drum of foam concentrate. Set the proportioning valve on the inductor to match the foam concentration (e.g. set to 6% for 6% AFFF) and run the pump to deliver the recommended operating pressure of the branch e.g. 1000 kPa at the pump for operating a 700 kPa fog branch (assuming zero elevation gain or loss).

6. CABA STOWAGE LOCKER

On the West Trans built pumpers, there have been some reports of the CABA sets rubbing against the roller shutter door. The solution is to tilt the CABA brackets back by packing the front of the bracket up 20 mm (earlier model pumpers may also require the CABA bracket to be modified). If this is a problem on your pumper, the vehicle may be returned by arrangement to West Trans for this modification. If this is not practical, the modification can be completed locally.

7. PUMP OPERATION

There have been couple of cases where damage has occurred to the main fire-fighting pump due to overheating and ingress of debris. Although the pumpers are fitted with a PTO driven pump, the fundamentals for pump operation still apply. Ensure that the strainer is always fitted to the suction line when draughting from static water sources and always ensure there is adequate supply of (debris free) water to the pump. Specific operating procedures are provided in the vehicles operating and service manual. Pump repairs are not only costly, but more importantly result in the vehicle being off line for several weeks.

Should further information or assistance be required on the above matters, do not hesitate to contact Engineering Services and ask for the Project Officer for the CAT 10/11 Project.

VOLUNTEER EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Service Standard 1.1.17

The Volunteer Relations unit has implemented the Volunteer Exit Questionnaire Service Standard 1.1.17 for volunteer members who choose to leave the Service.

The questionnaire provides an opportunity to enter suggestions regarding the ongoing improvement of the Service.

The information received will identify any trends or deficiencies and assist in the development of Standards and the continuous improvement of service delivery.

The questionnaire is purely voluntary and maybe completed anonymously. For further information and to access a copy of the Questionnaire please see your district office or www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Photo by Gary Walker



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