

# BUSHFIRE

## BULLETIN



### IN THIS ISSUE



03

SHOALHAVEN'S  
EMERGENCIES



06

MESSAGE FROM  
THE MINISTER



10

CESSNOCK  
CLUSTER S44



15

STRATEGIC PLAN  
2003 - 2005



21

FIREFIGHTERS TO  
THE RESCUE







# RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Tait Electronics Australia Pty Ltd  
PO Box 878  
Virginia, Queensland, 4014  
Phone: 1 300 304 344  
Fax: 1800 988 288

## In the heat of the moment ...

You rely on your mates ... and reliable, hassle-free communications.

That's why the superior Tait Orca 5000 portables are a vital part of the way you deal with fire incidents.

Not only rugged and easy to use, the Tait Orca 5000 can keep your crew in contact with one another and the fire controller at all times.



TAIT ORCA 5000 PORTABLES FOR SAFE AND SOUND  
RADIO COMMUNICATIONS ...  
ALL THE TIME

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

Cover photo by Sean Davey

## CONTENTS

- 03 Shoalhaven's Emergencies
- 05 Nova 96.9 FM Firefighter
- 06 Training in Grassland Areas
- 06 Message from the Minister
- 08 Australian Fire Service Medals
- 09 Galston's Hazardous Materials Incident
- 10 Cessnock Cluster
- 12 Remembering Lost Volunteers
- 13 A Long 2002-3 Fire Season
- 15 Strategic Plan for 2003 - 2005
- 16 Use and Misuse of Our Logo
- 16 Camden Tragedy
- 16 Terrey Hills - 60 Years of Service
- 17 Fire Investigation Update
- 19 The Jacaranda Festival
- 19 Biker's Back Rural Fire Brigades
- 20 Thank You's from the Children
- 20 The Service's New Look
- 21 Our Firefighters to the Rescue
- 22 Crash Landing at Pennith
- 23 Dehydration Chart
- 24 Building in a Bushfire Prone Area
- 25 Breaking Down the Barriers
- 26 Zone and Team Managers Appointed
- 26 A Place to Relax
- 26 Auslan Instructors Course
- 27 The Manual
- 27 Memories of Black Christmas



## COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD

Firstly, I would like to place on record my admiration and gratitude for the remarkable efforts of all Service members during the past fire season.

In one of the longest fire conducive periods in a long time, our volunteer firefighters travelled extensively throughout NSW. They often endured inconvenience and discomfort to provide support to their colleagues in fire threatened areas.

During these long campaigns, brigade members have, from time to time, questioned issues of deployment and resourcing. Despite the best of intentions, in an arena of rapidly changing circumstances it is often the case that things don't always quite go according to plan. That is why it is vitally important to have issues such as these thoroughly vented in post-fire debriefings.

We are fully committed to ensuring the smooth conduct of operations with the welfare and safety of firefighters being paramount. Nonetheless, we accept that there is always room for improvement.

One of the most common issues raised, particularly in country NSW, relates to the perceived lack of appreciation and utilisation of local knowledge. This is despite the fact that Incident Management Teams (IMTs) are required to have a local brigade member or landholder on the IMT and this requirement will be reinforced with Incident Controllers.

I have recently asked that a further measure to ensure local input of an appropriate order be taken. A program will shortly be available to interested volunteers to gain the necessary skills and competencies to fill the various key roles on IMTs. Once districts have suitably qualified volunteers who are prepared to participate in key IMT roles it will be a further requirement that they are engaged on the teams.

In a similar vein, the Service will continue to do everything it can to encourage public land managers to enhance cooperation between local landholders and brigades in the formulation of fire management plans for publicly owned estates.

In recent weeks there has been a deal of concern expressed over a variety of issues, not the least being the issue of local involvement. While I am anxious to ensure that all such issues receive a proper hearing, it is nevertheless important to point out the Incident Controllers are, in the majority of cases, local people who have been nominated by Bush Fire Management Committees for appointment. This is particularly so in the case of S44 incidents.

It is also a fact that Bush Fire Management Committees are required to have as one of their number, a local volunteer firefighter to ensure that planning arrangements benefit from the views, knowledge and experience of the local brigade membership. It is important that our members recognise and take advantage of this provision.

The Service's role is both changing and expanding and I have always placed great store on the benefit of volunteer input into the formulation of policy and operations. If the Service needs to further refine this process I will be happy to explore ways of doing so. However, I do urge brigade members who have issues to pursue them vigorously through the normal processes. In the first instance this should be with District staff, with resort to other levels if required.

With the advent of winter and spring, the Service will operationally focus on hazard reduction and do so in close concert with other agencies particularly bearing in mind our increased responsibilities under recently enacted legislation.

Brigade members, and indeed firefighters from across the board, have every reason to be proud of their efforts during the last season. While we regret deeply the loss of life and property, we must also acknowledge that there were many occasions on which the prevailing conditions simply overwhelmed our collective capacity. We will watch with interest the process of inquiry now in place and, as is always the case, benefit from lessons learnt.

Phil Koperberg







## TOUGA - SHOALHAVEN'S SECOND MAJOR FIRE EMERGENCY IN TWELVE MONTHS

During the Christmas Fires of 2001 Shoalhaven District suffered its fair share of the bushfire destruction. The Hylands fire burnt out 83,836 hectares and had a perimeter of 338 kilometres. Many would say that was the Shoalhaven's 'big fire' for the next 4 or 5 years, and we can rest. Nothing would be further from the truth.

On 8 November 2002, a fire started in gorge country to the west of Nowra near a property called Tolwong. The first report of the fire was made to Tallaganda Fire Control and its location was described as South of Tolwong property on the road to the Touga property.

So came about the Touga fire. For 42 days firefighters from all over NSW were once again dealing with major fire activity in the largest eastern seaboard district.

### 8 NOVEMBER

The Fire started around midday in the Tolwong area of the Morton National Park. Due to the number of fire trucks driving through the area in the ensuing days point of origin evidence was difficult to assess. The RFS Fire Investigation Unit narrowed the origin down to a 20 metre circle of dry grass off the side of the trail that runs between Tolwong property and Touga property (15 km south). Two NPWS rangers working in the area noticed two vehicles drive up the trail towards Tolwong property and an hour later back down. Tolwong property had no visitors that day.

Initially 10 units and 40 firefighters from Shoalhaven District took the minimum two hour journey to the fire front but access to the fire was restricted by the rugged topography. The fire had spread under the influence of a westerly breeze towards and into the Ettrema Gorge. A Section 44 was declared

### 9 NOVEMBER

Nearly 180 campers were evacuated from Coolendel. Police and SES door-knocked residents of Burrier and Budgong, campers at Grady's riverside retreat were put on standby. The fire made little progress but was still burning out of control in the Ettrema Gorge. Strategies were put in place to work on the northern edge that was expanding towards Billy Bullous and Tallowal. Residents of Wingello were made aware of the situation although there was no major threat at that stage to that community.

### 10 NOVEMBER

The Touga Fire remained on the floor of the Ettrema Gorge. Helicopters were dispatched to the fire in an attempt to water-bomb the edges and establish containment. The gorge was so steep and water so sparse that the lighter helicopters were unable to lift water out of the gorge. An Eriksson Air-Crane was the only aircraft able to lift water out of the gorge. However, down wash and the steep terrain meant that water-bombing started to spread the fire rather than contain it.

### 11 NOVEMBER

The Touga Fire had burnt approximately 6000 ha. It was not contained but posed no threat to property or assets. With the fire's potential to spread, the Section 44 was extended to take in parts of Mulwaree and Tallaganda Districts. Fifty personnel

worked on the Mulwaree section of the fire and 60 RFS, NPWS and State Forests personnel were working in Shoalhaven District.

During the next few days a number of burning trees on the edge of the gorge fell and rolled the 400 metre or more to the bottom starting numerous new fires. Then the weather on the 19th turned bad.

### 19 NOVEMBER

The Touga Fire had reached its 12th day and continued to challenge the expertise of firefighters. By the end of this day over 22,500 ha had been burnt out. Under the influence of strong gusty winds the fire stretched southwest toward Touga and northeast to the Shoalhaven River. A spotfire occurred over the river at a place called Horse Shoe Bend. Good work by the Mulwaree Remote Area Firefighting Team contained the spot over and the river held as the northern containment line. Weather conditions over the next three days were not any better.

### 24 NOVEMBER

The fire had been extremely active to the south. Crews including out of area task forces were protecting property at Touga, Burlee and Coolumburra. Tallaganda crews looked after properties around Douglas Paddock. A staging area was set up at Douglas Paddock to try to reduce the travelling time for fire trucks. The Touga Fire was into its 17th day and broke containment lines near the Ettrema fire trail. It threatened rural and residential properties in the Sassafras area. The fire had now burnt out 35,000 ha and had a fire edge extending over 213 kms. Over 180 personnel continued to work on the blaze with 25 RFS units, 10 NPWS, three dozers, one Air-Crane and eight other helicopters.

### 25 NOVEMBER

The total area burnt out reached 38500 ha. Another fire started at Whiting Beach in Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay and was contained quickly by Booderee NPWS staff and Wreck Bay Rural Fire Brigade personnel. The Touga Fire jumped the Braidwood Road. This was the planned Southern containment line. The south side of Braidwood Road

was also an area that had been burnt out less than 12 months earlier by the Hyland wild fire. The Touga fire just kept burning right through the previously burnt country. The population of Nerriga were put on alert. Sassafras was still in danger.

### 26 NOVEMBER

Fire impacted on properties around Sassafras and Douglas Paddock. Over 100 personnel were in attendance. A number of task forces from Wagga Wagga, Tumut and Tumbarumba had arrived and were immediately put to work. Total area burnt out by Touga Fire reached 50,000 ha, with 126km of burning edge remaining. The wind was tending to change direction and forecast to become West NW in a week's time.

### 29 NOVEMBER

It rained. Good rainfall curtails fire and fire fighting activity, however, only 5mm is recorded in Yalwal. Riverina task forces return home, however Yarrollumla brigades remain. In 22 days the fire has burnt out 53,000 ha. The fire was about to take one last run and this run would be the worst.

### 4 DECEMBER

Strong westerly winds forced the northern end of the fire to run to the east. In the way were Danjera Dam, Yawal and eventually Nowra. The fire jumped the Danjera dam and destroyed a number of houses and sheds in the area. Over 62,000 ha. A new fire at Shoalhaven Heads began. Kiama and Wollongong units were tasked to this fire.

For the next four days the conditions caused erratic fire behaviour just a few kilometres from Nowra. There was still activity in the south near Sassafras but the focus had moved to the population west of Nowra and HMAS Albatross.

Total area burnt out by Touga Fire reached 50,000 ha



## 1 GENERAL NEWS





**8 DECEMBER**

The Touga fire spotted ahead a number of kilometres to the east and directly impacted on homes in South Nowra and the Naval Base at HMAS Albatross. In South Nowra alone over 45 appliances fought the fire house by house. Task forces from each Agency were kept together. This strategy of keeping fire trucks in groups and moving groups to different streets was part of the reason houses

were saved. There were certainly many close calls. Reports of furniture alight on verandahs and fire destroying many outbuildings were constantly coming into Shoalhaven Fire Control.

**9 DECEMBER**

After a massive firefighting effort and easing weather conditions the Touga fire was brought under control on the property lines that bounded

the bushland that had been burnt out. It was not until 20 December that the last crew packed up and returned to station.

**Total Area burnt 69,060 hectares. Shoalhaven had experience two major fire events within 12 months.**

*Story and photos reprinted with the kind permission of South Coast Register*

**NOVA 96.9 FM – “FIREFIGHTER FOR A DAY”**

Sydney’s Nova 96.9 FM Radio Station recently ran a competition for listeners to do their dream job for a day.

We figured that it was the perfect opportunity to tell people that you can have your dream job and keep your regular job as well – you just volunteer in the RFS!

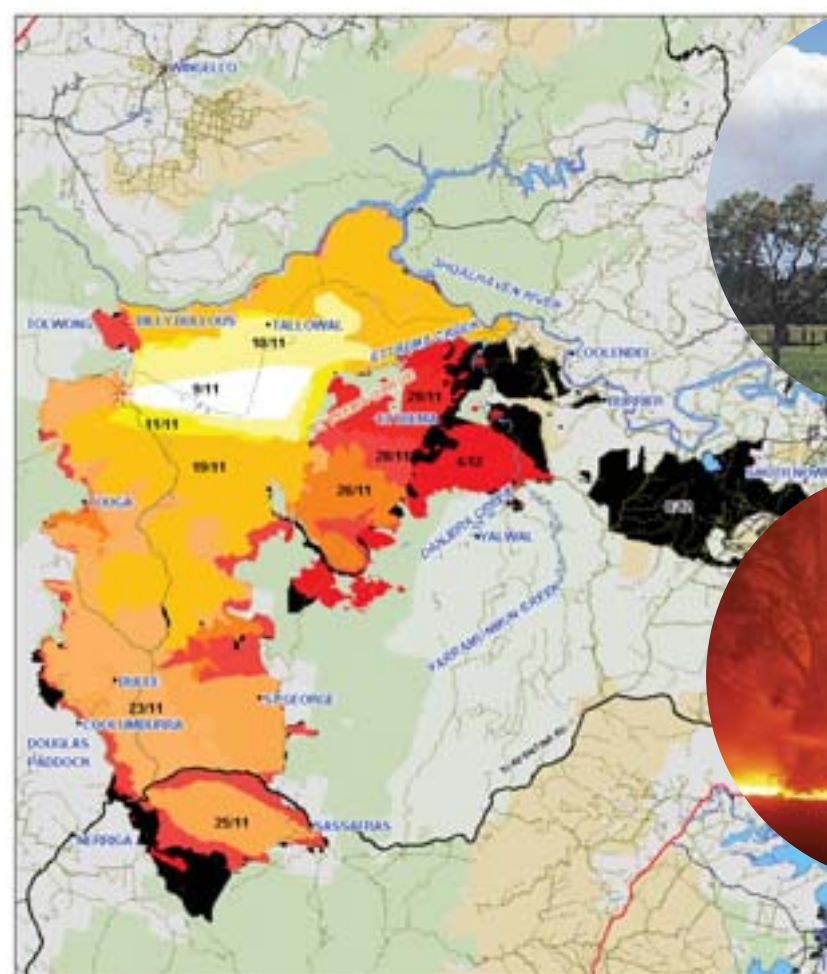
Dean, the lucky winner of the promotion, was taken through the State Operations Centre and shown how we co-ordinate major fires across the State, before been taken to the Blacktown District to be shown how to put the “wet stuff on the red stuff”.

After a quick training session Dean was taken out to do hydrant inspections by the members of Blacktown District’s Plumpton Brigade. This was followed by some basic hose drills, before getting stuck into the firefighting!

Dean learnt to attack a car fire, then was taken through a two-line gas fog attack before being sent into a hot fire cell in breathing apparatus.

A very tired, but very happy, radio contestant ended the day by vowing to join his local brigade!

*Story and photos by John Winter*



<p><b>NSW Rural Fire Service Shoalhaven Touga Fire Progression</b></p>	<p><b>Plot Information</b></p> <p>Date: Insert Date Time: Insert Time</p>	<p><b>Map Details:</b></p> <p>Base Data: State Vector Map Projection: AOD66 Z55 Print Date: 12/03/03 Print Time: 17:00</p>	<p><b>Disclaimer</b></p> <p><small>This report is for information only and does not constitute a guarantee. The information contained herein is for general information only. The information is not intended to be used for any purpose other than that for which it is provided. The information is not intended to be used for any purpose other than that for which it is provided. The information is not intended to be used for any purpose other than that for which it is provided.</small></p>
	<p><b>Fire Statistics:</b></p> <p>Burnt: 69,060 ha Area: 493.3 km</p>	<p><b>Scale 1:250,000</b></p>	<p><b>Produced by the NSW RFS GIS SERVICES UNIT</b></p>
	<p>Proposed: Insert Area: Insert Perimeter: Insert</p>		

**Exelgard**

**"Supporting Australian Fire Brigades for over 12 years"**

Exelgard Fire Protection      Phone: (02) 96499133  
 Unit 2/44 Boorea Street      Fax: (02) 96498403  
 Lidcombe NSW 2141      www.exelgard.com.au





# GRASSLAND AREAS

The rural property or farming brigades in New South Wales can generally be described as having members who join for life. These brigades have on their books a large percentage of the community as active members while most others in the area actively support the brigade in some way. They have a low number of call outs each year, typically around two to five grass fires.

In addition to out of control fires, members gain experience in their every day working life while using fire as a tool on their farms. Usually brigade members have attended fires as an ordinary active member for ten to twenty years before they are elected as a Deputy Captain. The brigade captain, once elected will often hold that position for the remainder of his working life.

In the past fires in these districts were suppressed by the farm-based units that are necessary to the running of the farms. This was often known as the "mosquito fleet" as it swarmed at the first puff of smoke and seldom allowed a small fire to enlarge. Their ability to deal with large intense fires, however, was limited.

More modern, purpose built and engineered equipment is now being supplied to these Districts. Along with the better equipment grassland

brigades have had to learn to cope with less equipment as the old farm-based units (the Mosquito Fleet) are phased out. This phasing out has been partly due to safety considerations. Many of the old paddock bashers that were being used were not maintained to the same standard as registered vehicles. They often had no tail-lights and little in the way of brakes. Since the implementation of inspections for unregistered units, the number of farm based units available to leave the farm to fight fires has been reduced.

To fill the gap left by the loss of these farm-based units, fire fighting appliances now have to travel greater distances to attend fires in their own and neighbouring districts. Many units are now being deployed across the state to assist at section 44 fires. The larger units have also allowed greater fire fighting power to offset the dwindling population available for fire fighting in some country areas.

Most people in grassland districts know their brigade area very well. Brigade officers, in the past, did not often have to use maps to describe a location. This is now changing as more units are going further from home to fight fires and locations are not as well known.

All of this has meant that a statewide standard of knowledge or competence is needed to allow everyone at a bush fire to work cohesively and efficiently together. To achieve this standard many experienced local officers will often need a little training to allow them to keep up with the changes.

**The CLG course has been introduced at six locations around the state over the last two training seasons**

There has been a resistance from these life long members to formal training. It has been seen to be questionable as to the appropriateness of training for people who have learnt it already from experience. Although the principles of recognition of prior learning (RPL) and Recognition of current competence (RCC) have been available for implementation in these cases, the actual delivery of missing components of this competence has been difficult.

*Continued on Page 7*



## \$750,000 CONNECT NSW GRANT

In response to bushfire threat on the urban interface, the NSW Government has initiated a \$750,000 Bush Fire Risk Management Information System.

The System will improve hazard identification to allow the RFS and landholders to manage bush fire risk more effectively.

Compliance with new legislative obligations and improved standards for hazard reduction management will also be facilitated by the System.

The new Bush Fire Risk Management Information System will handle:

- > Requests to carry out hazard reduction
- > Requests for and monitoring of fire permits
- > Monitoring of development applications
- > Requests for and monitoring of Bush Fire Hazard Reduction certificates
- > Hazard reduction complaint lodgement and tracking
- > Integration of spatial data with hazard reduction and fire permit tracking

*Continued from Page 6*

For this purpose the Crew Leader Grassland CLG course was developed to cover the Crew Leader training that is required for grassland fire officers. The course is broken up into 16 topics plus a comprehensive tabletop exercise. Most topics are designed to become a stand alone "mini" course to be used to develop overall competence.

The major thrust of this course is to bring the competence of existing brigade officers up to a standard level. To achieve this, the officers are assessed to ascertain their current skills. Any missing skills, identified in this way can then be presented at a training session. At that training session the relevant topics from the CLG Manual are delivered to complete the competency requirements. This training is usually completed in two days, and in some cases a single day. The exercise at the end of the training session provides some of the direct evidence regarding competence in bush fire behaviour, bush fire suppression, the incident control system (ICS) and mapping skills.

The fire behaviour topic looks at the variables that affect the rate of spread of a fire under high to extreme fire danger periods. It also examines how to identify and predict these conditions.

The fire suppression topic concentrates on local fire fighting methods and the different approach to safe fire fighting that is required when comparing grass and forest fire fighting. It develops the team work approach that is essential to efficient suppression. Local pre-planned response and suppression procedures are examined and discussed.

The topic on the incident control system (ICS) provides an overview of the system and examines how the captain and deputies fit into the process of delegation that is one of the basic tenets of ICS.

The mapping segment for officers in grassland brigades concentrates on such aspects as grid references, risk identification, water points and basic map marking for situation reports.

In conjunction with this course a pocket book has been produced for crew leaders in grassland areas. This pocket book reinforces the content of the course and provides prompts and useful information that is relevant to grass fire fighting.

### Local instructors delivered CLG courses to participants from 33 districts

CLG is an internal RFS qualification, and there is no equivalent national recognition for it. This means, however that national standards of assessment do not apply, enabling all Fire Control Officers (whether or not they are qualified assessors), to certify when officers are competent in CLG.

The CLG course has been introduced at six locations around the state over the last two training seasons. Local instructors delivered these CLG courses to participants from 33 districts.

As there is no direct equivalent to CLG in the national training modules a locally issued certificate applies to CLG. The CLG workbook, the Crew Leader Grassland Pocket Guide and copies of the certificate can be obtained in the normal way via a request from the Fire Control Officer to the regional L&D officer.

*Story and photos by Jack Apps*



## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



It is a great honour to have been appointed Minister responsible for the Rural Fire Service - the largest, and in my opinion, the best rural fire service in the world.

As the new Minister for Emergency Services, I would like to thank all of you and your vital role in protecting our community and the environment.

As a country MP and a member of the Neurea and Mount Arthur Rural Fire Brigades, both based in the Wellington District in Central West NSW, I am fully supportive of the RFS, and will continue to ensure brigades and their members are backed up with the first class equipment and resources needed to do the job.

I would like to take this opportunity to commit myself to carrying forward the Carr Government's support for the Service and its people.

I look forward to getting out into the country on a regular basis, and meeting up with many of you, and passing on the gratitude of the Government and the broader community, whom you all serve so well.

Yours faithfully

**HON TONY KELLY MP**  
Minister for Emergency Services

### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

#### Sessional Committees:

Library Committee: 1997-.  
House Committee: 1999-.

#### Standing Committees:

Standing Committee on State Department: 1997- (Chair 1997-).  
General Purpose Standing Committee No.2: 1997-99.  
Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics: 1997-.  
General Purpose Standing Committee No.1 (Deputy Chair 1999-).

#### Statutory Committees:

Committee on the office of the Ombudsman and police Integrity Commission: 1997-99.

### PARTY ACTIVITY

#### Secretary/Treasurer to:

ALP Branch, Wellington, 1997-1999.  
State Electorate Council, Orange, 1980-97.  
Federal Electorate Council, Parkes, 1985-91 and Federal Electorate Council, Gwydir, 1993-97.  
Vice President of the ALP NSW Rural Policy Committee 1992-99.  
Member of Country Labor Advisory Committee 1997-.  
Deputy Chair of NSW Caucus 1999-.  
President and Convenor of NSW Parliamentary Group of Country Labor.

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

**Deputy Chairman** of Advance Energy 1996-97: 1996-97.

**Deputy Chairman** Sydney Market Authority (Flemington and Haymarket): 1995-97.

**Member**> Orana Regional Development Board: 1979-95.

**Chairman** Orana Regional Development Board: (State Body): 1982-93

**Chairman**> Orana Regional Development Organisation (Commonwealth Body): 1995-97.

**Member**> NSW Gas Board Advisory Board on gas matters to NSW Energy Authority and Minister for Energy): 1979-84.

**Member**> Council of Mitchell College, Bathurst (Governing body of College - now Charles Sturt University): 1980-82

**Delegate**> All Party Study Tour to United States of America (Sixth Australian Delegation, led by the Hon Peter Staples, to study Federal, State and Local Government systems in that country): 1987.

**Member**> NSW Parliament - Legislation Council: 1987-88.

**Member**> Minister for Local Government and Water Resources Caucus Advisory Committee: 1987-88.

**Member**> Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Advisory Committee (Advisory body for Government of NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the Commonwealth on salinity and land degradation in the Murray-Darling Basin): 1988-90.



## AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDALS - JANUARY 2003

In January 2003 eight members of the RFS were awarded Australian Fire Service Medals (AFSM) for their exemplary leadership, dedication, commitment and promotion of the Service.

In 1988 the AFSM was established to recognise distinguished service by members of Australian fire services.

The responsible Ministers in the Commonwealth, States and Territories make recommendations for the medals to the Governor-General for approval. Only one award is ever made to an individual and recipients are entitled to use the post-nominal letters "AFSM".



For their Leadership,  
Dedication, Commitment and  
Promotion of the Service

### ADRIAN CAREY

Zone Manager, Southern Tablelands

Adrian Carey, Zone Manager at Southern Tablelands and volunteer in the Wee Jasper Rural Fire Brigade, has been recognised for his dedication to the Service in the establishment of the Yass Fire Control Centre and tanker fleet.

Adrian has also been recognised for his efforts in assisting the restructure of the Service and the separation from Local Government in 2001, and has been active in promoting the formation of zoning.

Adrian has been a member of the Wee Jasper Rural Fire Brigade for many years and held the position of Captain for approximately 16 years.

### SUPERINTENDENT RAYMOND COLLYER

Fire Control Officer, Lismore

Superintendent Raymond (Ray) Collyer, Fire Control Officer Lismore, has been awarded an AFSM for his outstanding commitment to community education and leadership. He is well recognised within his district for his approachable nature and willingness to assist firefighters regardless of rank.

Ray has been an active member of the RFS since 1974 and has held positions of foundation member, President and Captain of the Wardell Brigade.

### ARTHUR ELLEDGE

Deputy Group Officer, Lismore

Arthur Elledge, Deputy Group Officer Lismore, received his AFSM for his skills as an instructor and his ability to motivate students. He is recognised throughout the Service for his pro-active construction and maintenance of training props and his innovative training style. Arthur has been a member for more than 15 years.

### THOMAS MANNING

Senior Group Captain, Narrandera

Thomas (Tom) Manning has been a dedicated member of the Service for more than 50 years. In 1950 Tom joined the Barellan Rural Fire Brigade and transferred to the Brobenah Rural Fire Brigade in 1975 where he served as Captain for 22 years until he was appointed Senior Group Captain for Narrandera.

Tom has represented the needs of the Service and his fellow volunteers in his other positions as member of the Bushfire Advisory Committee of Narrandera Council, Director and Chairman of the Rural Lands Protection Board, Narrandera District, and Director of the Barellan Ex-Serviceman's Club and member of the Barellan Show Committee.

### SUPERINTENDENT PETER KINKEAD

Fire Control Officer, Singleton

Peter Kinkead joined the Service in 1971 and has held positions of Deputy Captain, Treasurer and President of the Winmalee Brigade. In 1987 Peter was appointed Fire Control Officer in Singleton and has held that position for 15 years.

As Fire Control Officer, Peter has modernised the District's training and equipment. Through negotiations with Singleton Council, Peter has increased the budget for the District from \$100,000 to more than \$1,000,000.

### RUSSELL TAYLOR

Manager - Community Education, Rosehill

Russell Taylor has been a member of the Service for many years and has served as Captain of the Dangar Island Rural Fire Brigade for 16 years. He is also Manager of Community Education of the Service and it is for his perseverance and dedication in his professional capacity that he has been awarded an AFSM. Russell's strong leadership and commitment to promoting the ideals of the Service has seen a significant increase in community acceptance of fire safety and prevention.

### BRIAN MILLER

Group Captain, Yanco/Waroon

Brian Miller has made an extraordinary commitment to the Service over the past 31 years. He is currently Group Captain for the Eastern Group of Brigades in the Leeton District in addition to being a Regional Bush Fire Instructor and Captain of Yanco/Waroon Brigade.

In 1992, Brian received an award for bravery from the Royal Humane Society after he personally saved two farmers and two policemen from death during the Brobenah Hills Fire of 14 February 1991. He has also received numerous awards from the Australia Day Council for his service to the community.

### PETER GREAVES

Group Captain, Hastings

Peter Greaves has been an active member of the Service since 1961 and has served in several brigades in the Cessnock, Port Stephens, Scone and Hastings Rural Fire Districts (RFD). When Peter relocated to the Hastings RFD where he played an integral role in forming the Telegraph Point Rural Fire Brigade and has since held the positions of foundation member, Deputy Captain and Captain.

Peter has been active in promoting training in the Hastings RFD as a qualified instructor and assessor and member of the district training committee.

In 1994 he was appointed as Group Captain and in 1996 was invited to join the State Critical Incident Support Service as a peer supporter. Peter still holds both positions in addition to facilitating RFS community education programs.

## GALSTON'S HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

On the 13 November last year Volunteer firefighters from Hornsby and Baulkham Hills Districts played a pivotal role in a fairly unique Hazardous Materials incident. What originated as a call to Structure Fire involving chemicals ended up in a 4 hour long callout and a very worthwhile multi agency learning experience.



Rowan Dollar and Jason Taylor

**1431 HOURS WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER**  
Galston and Arcadia Rural Fire Brigades as well as Baulkham Hills District crews were responded to a report of a structure fire involving chemicals in Knights Road, Galston.

**1438 HOURS - MOBILE**  
Galston 1B responds to incident. Crew of 4 including 2 CABA operators.

**1443 HOURS - ONSCENE**  
Crews arrive at a large wholesale nursery in Galston. A strong smell of chlorine was in the air. The scene was approached by crews with some trepidation as it was known, due to the nature of the business there, that a large quantity of chemicals were stored on site. The wind was with crews as it blew any fumes away from the only entrance to the property. The entrance to the property is also on the high side of the land which was fortunate.

Once on scene fire fighters were faced with a pool chemical storage area underneath a residential house that had been burnt by fire, which was now out. As a result of the fire, storage plastic containers for chlorine, hydrochloric acid and other

pool/garden chemicals including herbicides had been destroyed. This had resulted in fairly large quantities, for a residential property at least, of this chemical cocktail spilling into water leaking from the pool plumbing into an enclosed area underneath the house. Water from the heat affected pool plumbing was leaking into the area and the risk of significant environmental impact or further fire was significant.

Due to the obvious hazardous nature of the incident, and also as per SOPs, "Galston Control" requested the attendance of NSWFB HAZMAT crews.

Whilst awaiting HAZMAT arrival, crew from Galston brigade, wearing CABA and keeping out of the contaminated water, entered the storage area, ensured the fire was out and stemmed the flow of water from the pool plumbing to minimise further damage from leakage. NSW ambulance was also called to assist one of the nursery men who was having breathing difficulties. A lungful of Chlorine gas will do that! He was placed on Oxy-viva whilst waiting for the ambulance.

### 1520 HOURS - HAZMAT ARRIVES.

After approximately half an hour of keeping bystanders out of the way, HAZMAT arrived. Crews breathed a collective sigh of relief. Not that it was, in the scheme of things, a particularly large spill however it was well beyond the abilities of the 'ordinary' fire fighters there to dispose of the chemicals and muck.

The HAZMAT Station Officer had a meeting with Galston's OIC and Arcadia OIC and ascertained what they were dealing with. After a quick peek into the store room from a safe distance two of the HAZMAT crew suited up into the protective 'spill suits'. This is a fairly long process. Imagine, wearing structure gear with CABA then having to put a plastic suit on top of all that. Additionally then having to put on rubber boots then having your partner seal you up. All of this is to be achieved without tearing the suit. The author can vouch as to how difficult putting boots on whilst sitting down wearing CABA is! The reverse procedure is not much easier, either.

Once "suited and booted" the HAZMAT crew entered the storage area and commenced removing the damaged drums of chemicals. These were placed into 200 litre sealable plastic drums for later removal.

Once the area was made safe HAZMAT retired from the store room and the decontaminating process began.

Galston crew, again wearing CABA, assisted with decontaminating the HAZMAT crews. With the spill suits being made from fairly thin plastic and also containing a real human, washing down someone who is wearing one with a 38mm hose is a fairly careful and precise exercise, approached with some trepidation by both the 'washer' and the 'washee' for obvious reasons! The entire suit including gloves and the soles of boots must be perfectly clean. The whole operation must have looked fairly curious, if not humorous, to bystanders. Picture if you will, a man-shaped blue plastic suit standing on one leg waving his arms for balance while



someone else is spraying him with water all while he is turning circles in the middle of the lawn!

To be perfectly honest, when the HAZMAT crews arrived the RFS crews thought that the job was over for them. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Galston crews were now asked to finish decontaminating the area. This meant that two CABA operators had to suit up and prepare to enter the contaminated area. The job, as explained in some detail by the HAZMAT S.O, was a two part process. Firstly, the area inside the storage room had to be washed down with copious quantities of water. All of the chlorine, by now resembling small polystyrene balls, had to be washed outside and diluted. Secondly, all the burnt and twisted buckets, piping and other materials had to be washed down as well and all the little balls of chlorine removed. The waste water was left in one 200 Litre container and the rest of the material, now cleaned, was placed into a second container ready for removal by a hazardous waste contractor. A slow, tedious and wet procedure.

HAZMAT arrived. Crews breathed a collection sigh of relief

When a low air warning sounded on one of the CABA units the operator left the contaminated area for a "hot change". This is usually simply a matter of an assistant swapping air cylinders, empty for full, whilst the operator is still wearing all the other CABA equipment. For those who are not familiar with CABA sets the cylinder is held in place with a small bracket around the wheel valve and a strap held in place by a butterfly type clamp. It is a simple operation that usually takes less than a minute with no training for the assistant required and the trickiest part of the operation ensuring that the operator doesn't over balance and fall face first into the ground. On this occasion however the butterfly clamp decided to not co-operate. After some ten minutes of both RFS and NSWFB trying to get the old cylinder off the team was successful. So much for a "hot change"! To add insult to injury, the clamp then would not do up around the new cylinder. A new CABA set was put on and the rest of the decontamination process went without a hitch.

### 1720 HOURS - RETURNING TO STATION

Once the area was deemed safe, Galston and HAZMAT crews packed up all the gear and ensured that the storage containers were secure.

### 1728 HOURS - IN STATION

Three hours after the initial call Galston had returned to station. CABA gear was cleaned and placed operationally ready on the truck and structure gear was taken home to be cleaned. For days afterwards the station had a faint smell of Chlorine in it.

**SPHAG SORB**  
ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIC ABSORBENT

SPHAG SORB AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

*"A Natural Versatile Product for a Cleaner Safer Environment"*

**SPHAG SORB**

The Most Effective Cleanup Solution, Encapsulating Hydrocarbons, Organic Chemicals on Contact.

- Non-leaching
- Non-abrasive Nontoxic
- Hydrophobic Absorbent

Meets EPA Standards for Disposal in Landfill

**USED BY:**  
NSW Fire Brigades & Hazmat, The NSW Rural Fire Service, S.E.S, Local Councils and RTA - Contract 292B

**PROUDLY SUPPORTING N.S.W RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

SPHAG SORB AUSTRALIA PTY LTD  
PO Box 7 JESMOND NSW 2299  
P: 02495 12927 F: 02495 50729 M: 0438 512 927  
sphagsorb.com.au



## CESSNOCK CLUSTER REVOLUTIONISES FIRE MANAGEMENT

Many fire crises remain in our memories when we think of the 2002/03 bushfire season. One crisis that has revolutionised the way fires are managed was the Cessnock Cluster Section 44.

The Cessnock Cluster S.44 was unique due to the huge number of fires involved and as the first cluster of class three fires. The declaration spanned six Rural Fire Districts (RFDs) and lasted almost two months from 21 October 2002 until 12 December 2002.

One hundred and seventy-one individual fires impacted upon the Cessnock, Gosford, Hawkesbury, Maitland, Singleton and Wyong RFDs during the declaration. Each of these areas are extremely vulnerable to wildfire and the fires affecting them were intense and widespread, resulting in huge logistical and resourcing challenges for their respective Incident Management Teams (IMTs). To address these challenges, allocation and coordination of resources was centralised and based at the Cessnock Fire Control Centre. Assistant Commissioner Rob Rogers assumed the mammoth task of coordinating the resourcing, planning, operations and logistics of all fires in the Cluster as Incident Controller.

"The idea behind the Cluster was that there would be no wasted resources as they would be allocated on a daily basis to cater to changing fire activity. It allowed for out of area crews, particularly the CFA (Country Fire Authority, Victoria) and CFS (Country Fire Service, South Australia), to be kept busy and mobilised," reflects Rob Rogers.

During the Cluster, new fires started regularly and some were extinguished within several hours, on the other hand the Bala Range fire, the main fire in the Cluster, lasted 77 days.

Lightning storms along the Bala Range in Yengo National Park on 5 October 2002 are believed to have ignited a fire that would lead to weeks of challenging fire suppression operations. At the

time, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Central Coast/Hunter Range regional staff managed four remote fires from their Bulga office.

With more than 120 km between each fire, a number of NPWS specialist RAFT crews were deployed in an effort to access the fires and extinguish them. RAFT (Remote Area Fire Teams) are specially trained firefighters, deployed to remote, inaccessible terrain to carry out firefighting duties by direct attack. These firefighters are flown in by helicopter and are either winched down to the fireground, or exit the helicopter whilst it is hovering above a rock shelf.

NPWS crews worked to contain the fire at Bala Range and by midday 8 October 2002 predicted it would be contained within two hours. Severe fire weather conditions affected the fireground, plummeting relative humidity to below ten percent, increasing the temperature and bringing strong winds. Many of the helicopters and RAFTs were forced from the fireground. This marked the turning point of the Bala Range fire.

Fire conditions deteriorated so severely on this day that one section of the fireground supported wildfire on three occasions. The fire raged through previously burnt shrub layers and returned to the crown layer some time later.

With numerous fires affecting areas across NSW and the Bala Range fire increasing in size and moving towards the Higher McDonald and St Albans areas, the Bala Range fire was declared a S.44 on 10 October 2002. The IMT was moved from Bulga and established at Hawkesbury Fire Control Centre with Superintendent Karen Hodges as Incident Controller and RFS crews assuming a leading role in the mitigation of the fire.

Fire activity varied greatly for the duration of the declaration, at times crews were tasked to mop up and patrol and at other times to intensive property protection. One of the most active days was 19 October 2002 when several new fires

impacted upon property near Abernethy and resulted in the death of an elderly man, trapped in his car and the destruction of several houses near Cessnock.

Fire regularly threatened property in many areas in the Cluster at Abernethy, Borree, Cessnock, Little Borree, Coolawine, Lake St Clair, Little Wallabadah, Mangrove Mountain, Melon Creek, Milbrodale, Mount Royal, Mount View, Narara, Stokes Estate, Wallabadah, Weeney Creek and many remote rural residential properties.

Access to the fireground proved to be a major challenge. Crews having to report to the Cluster Incident Control Centre often had to travel up to three hours each way to and from operations.

The fires in the Cluster affected a total of 31,863.37 hectares of national park, State forest and private land. Twenty-five firefighters sustained reportable injuries such as heat exhaustion and St John first aid volunteers treated approximately 121 firefighters for minor injuries such as eye irritation and minor burns.

As the first Cluster Section 44, ground crews and IMT staff learnt a great deal about how to improve the coordination of multiple fires across Local Government boundaries. Whilst there were initial teething problems with the structure, most of the Incident Controllers and Deputy Incident Controllers agreed that the Cluster was a great idea and, with a bit of fine-tuning, could herald a new era in bushfire mitigation.

*Thanks to Rob Rogers, Andrew Veitch, Karen Veitch, Karen Hodges, Olivia Greentree, Paul Jones, Christine Purdie, Stephen Marsh, Arthur Owens and Barry Pont.*

*Story by Zoë Townsend*

### CESSNOCK CLUSTER S44 QUOTES

**"I will always admire the crews for their determination to maintain containment lines in the middle of nowhere. They held the fire when others betted they wouldn't."**

**"Some of the terrain was so rough that the crews would get sick on the way there in the tankers."**

Superintendent Karen Hodges, Incident and Deputy Incident Controller, commenting on the remote locations of fires

**"We were stressed to the max. This was probably the first time that every active firefighter in Singleton has had a run since the 1994 fires."**

Superintendent Andrew Veitch, Incident and Deputy Incident Controller

**"It was 64 days of pure hell."**

Tom Bagnet commenting on his involvement in the Cluster as Incident Controller and Deputy Incident Controller

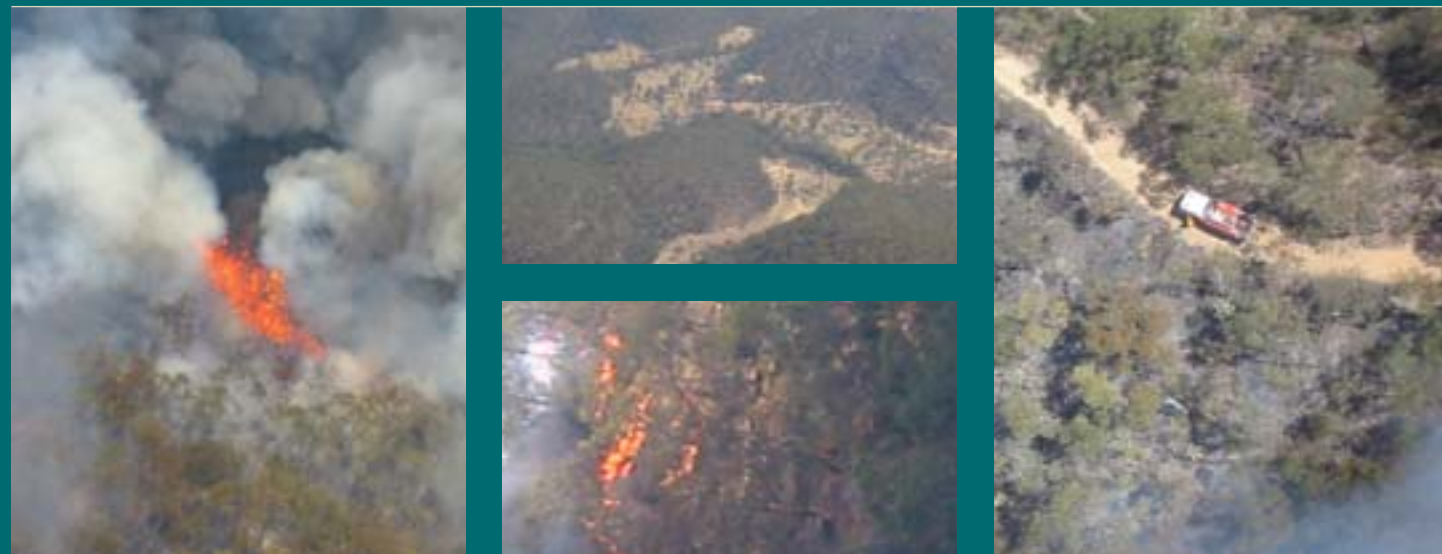


**"Within 15 minutes of being appointed Incident Controller, I had two fires impacting upon property and within an hour a fatality, 7 houses and numerous other buildings destroyed."**

Rob Rogers, Cluster Incident Controller

**"The effort put in by RFS brigades was outstanding and second to none."**

the Cessnock Cluster was unique due to the huge number of fires involved and as the first cluster of class 3 fires





CONACHER  
TRAVERS

Specialists in  
**BUSHFIRE & ECOLOGY**  
Survey, Assessment & Management

Ph: 02 43721 244  
Fax: 02 4372 1244  
E-mail [bushfire@conachertravers.com.au](mailto:bushfire@conachertravers.com.au)





On Monday 21 October 2002, two days after the Alcan and Racecourse fires took their run, the Geographical Information System (GIS) team arrived at Cessnock Fire Control to establish the mapping service for the fires in the Cessnock Cluster Section 44.

Once the team of three GIS contractors arrived with a set of topographical and scale maps they set about locating available data on the existing GIS system; such as land ownership details, building locations and aerial photographs of the firegrounds.

Two GIS officers worked in the Incident Management Team (IMT) and one worked in a helicopter to fly over the edges of the fires to get highly accurate data fires including photographs and videos of the fire activity. This data was used to generate maps and other products to indicate where the fire was, what it looked like and what it was doing.

A wide range of maps was produced for different groups within the Service. Statewide maps were produced for State Operations to give a general indication of the fire locations across the State. Localised maps were produced for each individual fire within the Cluster using standard Incident Control symbols for use by incident control, planning and operations personnel. Aviation required similar products that also included latitudinal and longitudinal references, and smaller A3 versions of maps were given to ground crews and pilots to be used in specific operations.

GIS worked from 5am till 2am each day from 21 October 2002 until it rained and produced maps daily to accurately locate the fire edge and where property was threatened.

Network connection proved to be a huge challenge for GIS who resolved to install their own server and printers, and even then it could take more than three hours to download a line-scan file from the RFS K-drive.

"It was a hard slog. There were many people from many agencies working in the GIS function, and without them it just wouldn't have happened." Steve Wilkes, GIS Contractor.

Story and photos by Zoé Townsend

## MOVING SERVICE REMEMBERS VOLUNTEERS LOST AT GRAYS POINT

Improvements to equipment and technology resulted from the deaths of three RFS volunteers at Grays Point 20 years ago, attendees at a memorial service heard on 11 January.

Heathcote Rural Fire Brigade Captain Keith Campbell, Deputy Captain Tom Bielecke and firefighter Greg Moon died on 9 January 1983 when a bushfire trapped their tanker as it swept up Anana Hill in the Royal National Park.

"They didn't die in vain," said former Sutherland Rural Fire District Fire Control Officer (FCO), Superintendent Brian Parry, in a eulogy remembering the lost firefighters and their six injured colleagues.

"As a consequence of their deaths dual cabin fire tankers had been developed which provide refuge," said Supt Parry, who is currently Shoalhaven FCO.

Personal protective clothing and communications equipment had been improved and satellite vehicle tracking is now used.

A Heathcote Rural Fire Brigade tanker provided the backdrop to the moving service held outside Grays Point School.

About 200 people, many wearing RFS yellows, attended the service conducted by Sutherland acting FCO Superintendent John Wood, RFS chaplain Captain Ron Anderson and Sutherland Shire Mayor Phil Blight.

Key wreath layers were Keith Campbell's daughter, Senior Deputy Captain Sharon Campbell, and Deputy Captain Jim Fowler who both survived the fire.

One minute's silence was followed by a lone piper's rendition of Amazing Grace.

Visitors were then invited to travel by four-wheel-drive to Anana Hill to place a wreath flower on a brass plaque marking the place the firefighters died.

**"As a consequence of their deaths dual cabin fire tankers had been developed which provide refuge," said Superintendent Parry,**

The deaths of the firefighters were subject to a 255 day long coroner's inquest, which produced 113 recommendations. Actions resulting from these recommendations have improved the safety standards of firefighters in NSW.



Senior Deputy Captain Sharon Campbell lays a wreath in remembrance of her father and his two companions who lost their lives 20 years ago.



# A LONG 2002-3 FIRE SEASON



Drought lengthened the recent fire season, which developed into a protracted campaign spanning nine months and included 151 consecutive days of section 44 declarations from October to February.

After long and arduous months of firefighting, statistics show less destruction and damage of property compared to the 2001-2002 season, however, twice as much land was burned.

Comparisons are difficult as the two seasons were completely different in nature.

The 2001-2002 season focused on three weeks of intense urban interface firefighting with thousands of homes threatened.

Months of rural firefighting occurred in 2002-2003, often in rugged inaccessible terrain, with hundreds of homes potentially affected, but millions of hectares directly threatened.

Drought contributed to extending the season, with the first incident occurring in Richmond River in July and the last Section 44 revoked on 24 February 2003.

Fire destroyed 84 homes since 8 October 2002, compared with 109 during the 2001-2002 season. The majority of homes were destroyed in the Baulkham Hills, Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Section 44s in December 2002 when 35 were lost to fire. Sutherland lost ten and nine were lost in both Cessnock and the Clarence Valley.

Another 28 residential homes were damaged during this season, with 40 affected by fire last year.

Nearly 750,000 ha was burned in 2001-2002, the majority in the three weeks between 24 December 2001 and 16 January 2002.

About 1.465 million ha, with a 10,340 km perimeter, was burned this year in fires that stretched from the Queensland border to the Victorian border.

Huge swathes of country burned, particularly in the northern tablelands, north west slopes, mid north coast, Hunter, southern tablelands, south coast and southern tablelands.

Due to the extended season, the 461 RFS task forces assembled throughout the operational period played an even more essential role.

Sixty-one section 44s were declared since 27 September 2002 until the declaration covering Kosciuszko National Park was revoked on 24 February 2003.

"This has been a record breaking season in terms of length and resources used," RFS Commissioner Phil Koperberg said.

"The protracted season has been a real challenge for RFS volunteers and incident management team members from all agencies. They have proven their skills and commitment in extraordinary circumstances and I commend and thank them for their hard work.

"Not only was the fire season long, it was widespread. Many thousands of volunteers rallied from all over the state throughout the season.

"Out of area crews supported local brigades under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

"While all Australian states experienced severe weather and significant fire seasons, NSW had the most protracted season."

## FACT BOX

### 2002-2003 FIRE SEASON

11,081 personnel involved in task forces

53 multiagency task forces deployed on one day at height of activity

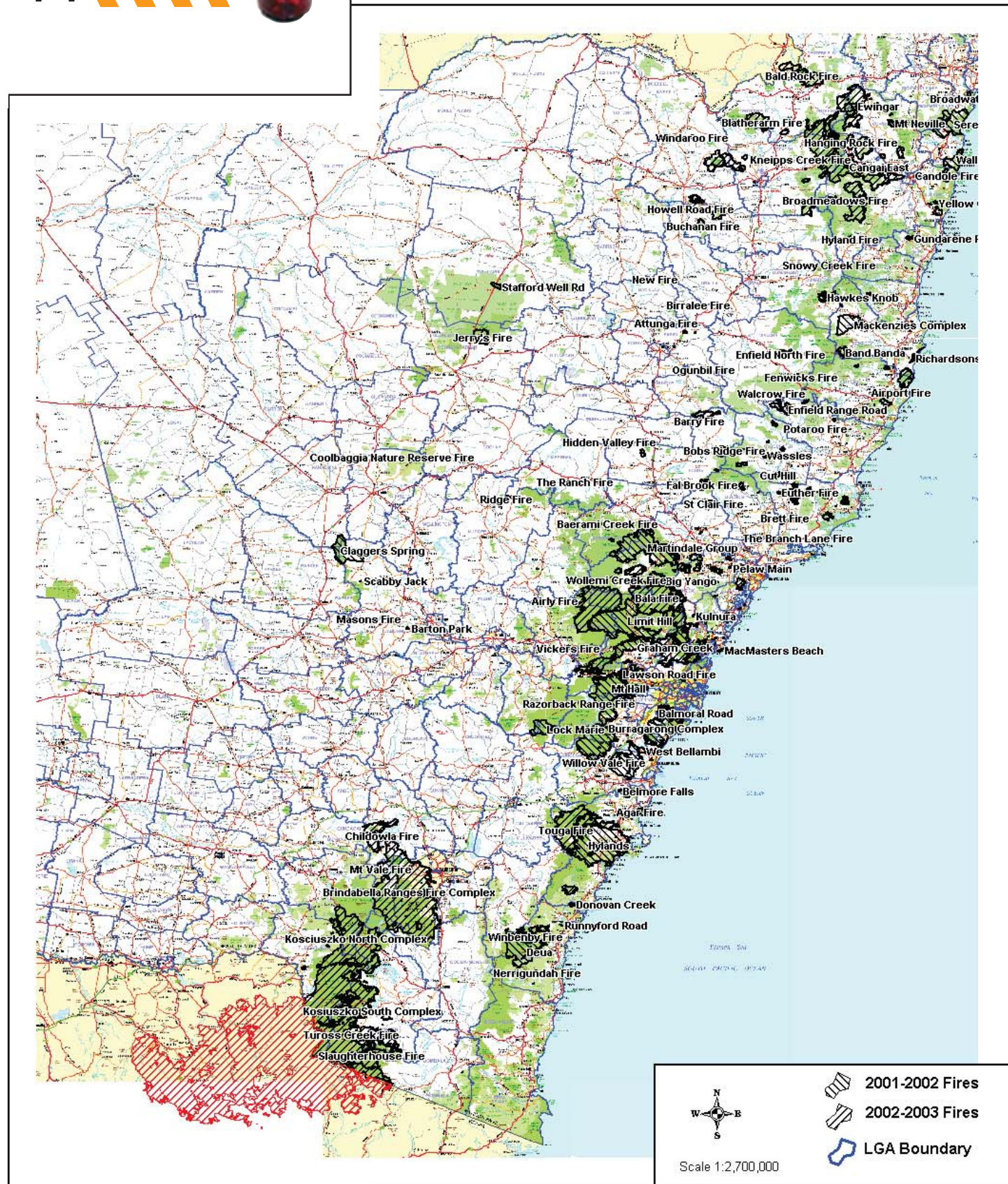
103 aircraft deployed on one day at height of activity

2421 notifiable incidents

102,423 firefighter days expended on notifiable incidents

22,783 brigade attendances at Firezone incidents





**Plot Information**

Date: 24/02/2003  
Time: 1715 hrs

Fire Area	Fire Perimeter
2001-2002 Total: 744,012.76 ha	2001-2002 Total: 4,223.28 km
2002-2003 Total: NSW 1,464,446 ha ACT 156,500 ha VIC 1,054,000 ha	2002-2003 Total: NSW 10,336.40 km ACT 362 km VIC 2,907 km

**Disclaimer**

Data supplied by various Stakeholders under ANZLIC<sup>1</sup> Guidelines. The information contained herein has been provided in good faith. Particular effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness. The Stakeholders take no responsibility for errors or omissions nor any loss or damage that may result from the use of the information.  
<sup>1</sup>Australia New Zealand Land Information Council.

Produced by the NSWRFSS GIS SERVICES UNIT



NSW Rural Fire Service

NSW State Coverage  
2001/2 - 2002/3

Fire Locations



# NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE - STRATEGIC PLAN 2003 - 2005

**THE NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE, STRATEGIC PLAN 2003 - 2005 HAS BEEN RELEASED FOR IMPLEMENTATION.**

Like most organisations, the RFS needs a clear road map to help plan our activities over the medium to long-term. The Strategic Plan is designed to help provide this direction. The Service's staff and volunteers, along with the community we serve need to have a clear understanding of:

- > The mission of the RFS and our vision for the future
- > The way we will conduct our activities
- > The programs and actions we will implement to achieve our desired outcomes
- > The relative priorities accorded to each program or action
- > The way we will measure our success
- > Who is responsible

The structure of the Strategic Plan cascades from a broad statement of the Service's overall direction all the way down to specific actions designed to show how we will achieve our targets.

The information contained in the Strategic Plan links into other RFS planning and management systems such as:

- > Implementing the District Service Delivery Model and Region/Head Office business planning
- > Developing and implementing new policies and systems
- > Ensuring the effective allocation of equipment and resources
- > Establishing/Allocating tasks to appropriate personnel

The diagram below shows how the major components of the Service's planning and management systems link to each other.

**MAIN INITIATIVES FOR 2003 - 2005**

There is a wide range of outcomes detailed in the Strategic Plan, these are a few:

- > Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational management
- > Provide a fostered learning environment for all Service personnel
- > Promote community awareness and support for the Service
- > Minimise the likelihood and severity of fires through the further implementation of community-based prevention and mitigation campaigns
- > Support the delivery of the Service's business and operational outcomes
- > Improve the Service's decision-making through the use of information systems and technology
- > Improve the operational effectiveness of Brigades by developing, deploying and maintaining appropriate fire-fighting equipment

**INVOLVEMENT**

Ultimately, all RFS personnel, both salaried and volunteers, will be influenced by the contents of the Strategic Plan. The Business Plans arising from the Strategic Plan will increasingly guide salaried staff in their day-to-day work. Those Brigades using the Brigade Planning Guidelines are also likely to refer to the Strategic Plan for information. In addition, volunteer members of Service Delivery Model Planning Teams will certainly be guided by its contents.

It is also planned to consult a broader audience in the preparation of future versions of the Strategic Plan and thus there is likely to be an opportunity for involvement in most areas of the state.

**FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The Strategic Plan has a 3-year outlook, but will be reviewed annually. This will ensure the Service maintains a long-term view of future trends while addressing more immediate developments and needs.

Along with other RFS systems such as the Service Delivery Model, Service Level Agreements etc, the Strategic Plan will become more closely integrated with other components of our management and planning processes. In particular, there will be an increasing use of technology to conduct our business as well as a greater emphasis on monitoring and managing performance.

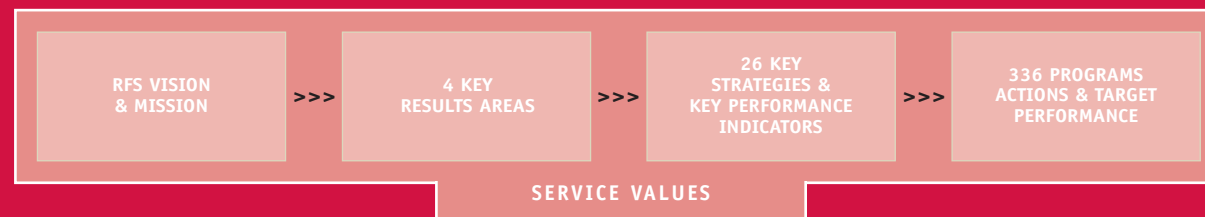
The NSW Rural Fire Service Strategic plan has a 3 year outlook, but reviewed annually

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

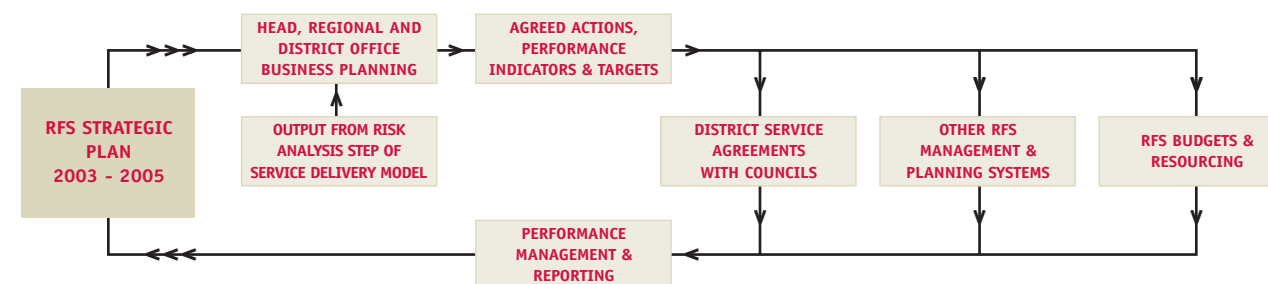
A summarised version of the Strategic Plan will soon be widely distributed throughout the Service. For those who wish to read the detailed version of the Strategic Plan, each District Office has a copy or you can download your own copy from the Service's web page if you desire.

Further information can also be obtained from the Corporate Planning and Performance Section of Head Office or by email at [SDM@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SDM@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

## 2003 - 2005 STRATEGIC PLAN STRUCTURE



## RFS BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING STRUCTURE







# UPDATE

## OUR LOGO – USE AND MISUSE

When the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, became law it was accompanied by a Regulation that included a little known section dealing with the use of apparel, emblems and insignia.

For the first time in our history the Commissioner was given full control of the use of our logo. The Regulation makes it illegal for anyone to use the logo without the prior approval of the Commissioner that can be conditional or unconditional.

What this means is that any person, brigade or other organisation wishing to use the Service's logo on any T-shirt, polo-shirt, cap, mug, pen, calendar, or any other article of clothing, or promotional item, name badge, promotional patches and the like, must first submit a sample, or concept drawing of that item to Corporate Communications for approval. Use without that approval is a breach of the law.

Our logo is our image. It is a valuable asset. It enables us to be recognised and identified as a professional Service. Its misuse can do untold damage to both our image and our credibility. We must do all we can to ensure that it is only used on items and in circumstances that will promote a positive and professional image of the Service.

It is for this reason that we have taken steps to have numerous products bearing the logo removed from sale and we shall continue to carry out spot checks on manufacturers and any other organisations or individuals found to be using the logo. This will ensure quality and protect Service members from poor product.

Commercial organisations using the logo will do so under the terms of a licence with the Service.

**If you wish to use the logo for ANY purpose you should contact Corporate Communications at Head Office on 9684 4411 or [media@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:media@rfs.nsw.gov.au)**



### CORONIAL INQUIRY UPDATE

Several Coronial Inquiries have now been held around the State on the 2001/2002 Christmas Fires. Inquiries have been heard on the Claggers Springs, Hylands, Appin Road, The Oaks, Thirlmere Lakes fires with the Pennant Hills Park fire yet to be completed. On the 19 March 2003, the Coroner will commence the Inquiry into the Blue Mountains Fires (Mt Hall, Lawson Road, Grandview, Blue Pool, Mitchells Pass) and on the 25 March 2003, the Inquiry into the Hawkesbury fires (Grahams Creek, Limit Hill and Vale of Avoca) will be heard.

### FIRE ACTIVITY BRINGS ON STRIKE FORCE TRONTO

As some of you might not be aware, the Coroner had re-activated the NSW Police Service's Strike Force Tronto taskforce. This Unit has been working closely with Police attached to Tronto and the Forensic Services Group in co-ordinating the investigation of 370 fires across the current fire season. To streamline the process and ensure availability of RFS, 12 RFS Staff Investigators were seconded to assist in investigations across the State - Neil Ray (Camden), Ken Hepplewhite (Pt Stephens), Frank Overton (Gosford), Bob Wilcox (Ballina), Janine Rudder (Pristine Waters), Stuart Watts (Maclean), Scott Conlan (Lockhart/Urana), Joe Knox (Wagga Wagga), Steve Walker (Wentworth), Elan Palmer (Warren/Bogan) and Ken Lucas (Dubbo). These personnel were assisted by other investigators, who included both salaried members and volunteers.

### FI STATISTICS

The team have now undertaken approximately 365 investigations, which have included 12 structural fires. These investigations have included more complex investigations such as the ACT, Kosciusko NP and Baulkham Hills Complex fires. Of the 365 fires investigated this season, the following statistics were recovered:

> Deliberate Ignitions	(224)	61.3%
> Burning Activity	(25)	6.8%
> Campfire/BBQ	(8)	2.1%
> Electrical/Power Lines	(19)	5.2%
> Lightning	(62)	16.9%
> Machinery/Equipment	(10)	2.7%
> Spotfires/Re-ignitions	(9)	2.7%
> Undetermined	(8)	2.3%
> Investigators have undertaken 2,543 hours		

### CRIMINAL CHARGES

Since Tronto has re-formed, 15 people have been charged with illegally lighting fires with several more charges pending. Many of these were as a direct result of RFS Investigators involvement in the process.

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The Fire Investigation Unit has received several calls inquiring as to asking what legislation the Police charge persons illegally lighting fires under. Aside from the *Rural Fires Act 1997*, Division 7, Section 100 the other relevant legislation is the Crimes Act 1900 No:40, Section 203E which states:

- 1. A person:**
  - > who intentionally causes a fire, and
  - > who is reckless as to the spread of the fire to vegetation on any public land or on land belonging to another, is guilty of an offence. Maximum penalty: imprisonment for 14 years.
- 2. For the purposes of this section, recklessness may also be established by proof of intention.**
- 3. A person is not criminally responsible for an offence against this section if:**
  - > the person is a firefighter or acting under the direction of a firefighter, and the person caused the fire in the course of bushfire fighting or hazard reduction operations.

## CAMDEN TRAGEDY



On 7 February 2003 a twin-engine King Air aircraft crashed into a paddock north of the runway near Camden Airport.

The aircraft was severely damaged and burst into flames. The two people on board suffered severe burns and were transported to hospital where one died and the other remained in a serious condition.

RFS volunteers from the Camden/Campbelltown Rural Fire District attended the scene along with Fire Brigades and local residents.



## TERREY HILLS RURAL FIRE BRIGADE - 60 YEARS OF SERVICE

For the past 60 years the members of the Terrey Hills Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade have been serving the State of New South Wales. The Brigade, previously known as The Terrey Hills Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, was formed at a meeting held in the local primary school on 12 December 1942 after 25 locals decided they required an organised team to protect the community. The Brigade was supplied with a couple of burners (drip torches), some scrub hooks, a few knapsacks, portable siren and additional petrol coupons because of the war rations.



Since then the Brigade has attended local and statewide responses to incidents including bush fires, structure fires, storm damage, floods, motor vehicle accidents, tip fires, search and rescue calls, and animal rescue. It now proudly boasts a fully equipped vehicle fleet of a Category 1 Bush Firefighting Tanker, a Category 11 Property Protection Pumper and a Toyota Personnel Carrier.

The Brigade prides itself with one of, if not, the fastest response times of any Rural Fire Brigade within the State. With the assistance of a core members living locally, a paging system, and an ex-wartime air raid call-out siren the Brigade continually responds within 3 minutes of a call, well within the Service Level Requirement. Members carry out training each weekend, attend a monthly training night and further their skills in District based training courses covering all facets of firefighting and associated activities.

Apart from emergency responses the members are continually involved in local community activities with visits to local schools, the Scouting Groups fetes, accompanying Santa at Christmas and sporting groups.

*Story by Zoé Townsend*

## Coroner re-activates the NSW Police Service's Strike Force Tronto taskforce

The Unit was in a much stronger position this fire season in providing expertise to investigate fires very shortly after being reported. This allowed for more accurate and relevant information to be gathered and resulted in more efficient use of investigators' time. This has stood our Service in high regard with Police investigating what were difficult fire scenes and sincere appreciation goes to the District/Regional Managers in allowing all Fire Investigation Personnel to be released to investigate the large number of fires experienced over the current season.

### FEDERAL POLICE AGREEMENT

The Commissioner has signed off on an agreement with the Australian Federal Police for the Fire Investigation Unit to provide Investigators to assist the AFP in scene examination of the fires originating in the ACT. This is the first request "outside NSW" where our Service have been requested to assist in fire investigation.







# Guess who's using the HATZ diesel engine ?

**“There can be no compromise when reliability is most needed”**



Firefighting demands total reliability and that's why Hatz diesel engines have been installed in over 2000 firefighting units around Australia.

Your farming operation needs total reliability too. That's why Hatz engines are produced to give the highest standards of operational safety even under the most severe climatic conditions.

From the small diesel lightweight engine range to the heavy duty aircooled Silent Pack series, your sure to find there s a model to suit your farming application.

## HATZ AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

ACN 002 693 423

Telephone: (02) 9743 8288 or Fax (02) 9743 8000

email: engines@hatz.com.au

### For local sales, service and spare parts ring

Albury (02) 6021 2030 Bega (02) 6492 1977 Berrigan (03) 5885 2382 Bomaderry (02) 4421 5451 Bourke (02) 6872 2766 Broken Hill (08) 8087 2628 Casino (02) 6662 3005 Coffs Harbour (02) 6652 5121 Corowa (02) 6033 1844 Cowra (02) 6342 4488 Deniliquin (03) 5881 3677 Dorriggo (02) 6657 2588 Dubbo (02) 6882 1396 Finley (03) 5883 1077 Forbes (02) 6652 3211 Gloucester (02) 6558 1510 Grafton (02) 6642 2880 Griffith (02) 6962 3766 Gunnedah (02) 6742 1648 Hay (02) 6993 1217 Laidley (07) 5466 4313 Lismore (02) 6621 3412 Macksville (02) 6568 2344 Maitland (02) 4932 3200 Moama (03) 5482 4588 Moree (02) 6752 1045 Mudgee (02) 6372 2022 Muswellbrook (02) 6543 1055 Narooma (02) 4476 4129 Orange (02) 6362 9949 Port Macquarie (02) 6581 0744 Queanbeyan (02) 6297 8486 Robertson (02) 4885 1209 Sydney (02) 9675 3444 Tamworth (02) 6765 7600 Tamworth (02) 6762 0606 Taree (02) 6552 2133 Tenterfield (02) 6736 1566 Tocumwal (03) 5874 2101 Wagga South (02) 6925 2999 Wagga Wagga (02) 6921 3242 Warren (02) 6847 4164 Wauchope (02) 6585 1655



## COMMUNITY SAFETY

# THE JACARANDA FESTIVAL

North Coast Brigade Copmanhurst undertakes regular Community Education activities during the year

One of the highlights of which is their participation in Grafton's annual Jacaranda Festival TAFE Markets and Street Parade. Joining forces with the local SES, in which most are also active members have a busy time at the markets sharing their experiences and answering a great variety of questions from visitors to their display.

Following their day at the recent markets, members pictured above, were all fired up for the evening street parade during which they received a terrific welcome from the huge crowd assembled in Grafton's Prince Street.

Left to right: Dave Fischer, Wendy Hay, Sue Fischer, Wendy Kearns (SES) and Roy Ford.

Front: Tom Hay, Jodie Marshall, Shiralee Robinson, Crystal Stephens and Scott Stephens.



## BIKERS BACK RURAL FIRE BRIGADES

On Sunday 2 February 2002, a group of almost 100 bikers left Sydney and invaded Lithgow. It was not a case of 'lock up your daughters' and the town welcomed the huge influx of bikers of the inaugural 'Bike Biz Biker Back the Rural Fire Brigades' motorcycle ride to raise money for the Lithgow Rural Fire District.

The event was organised by the BOAB motorcycle club and Bike Biz Yamaha of Parramatta. Many motorcycle clubs took part in the ride including the Star Club of NSW, TRIBE and ISRA motorcycle clubs.

Organiser, Ray Robinson said "the ride today is to support the many volunteers who give their time and sadly at times their lives to make the pristine bushland countryside that we as motorcyclists travel through, in our escape from the cities and the hectic pace, remain safe. We often take for granted the time and huge sacrifices that our RFS volunteers make. This is our way of saying thanks and we do realise the effort that each of you make."

Almost \$1,000 was raised when a bucket was taken around the group after a barbecue lunch, supplied by Bike Biz in Queen Elizabeth Park, Fire Control Officer, Lithgow Rural Fire District.

The money was presented to Superintendent Jeff Oliver (Lithgow RFS) at the lunch stop.

Ray Robinson further said "this is the first of an annual event and I hope that motorcycle riders all over Australia will jump on the bandwagon next year and hold similar runs in support of the RFS."

*If anyone wants any information on holding a similar event next year, please contact Ray on email rob1ray@bigpond or mobile telephone 0438 227 678.*





## THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AT WESTMEAD

Dear NSW Rural Fire Service,

Just a note to thank the members and supporters of the NSW Rural Fire Service for their kind and very generous donation of Christmas gifts for the children at The Children's Hospital Westmead.

Gifts like these help to out a smile on the faces of the children who are unable to join their families at home for Christmas Day and instead spend the day here with a visit from Santa and his helpers!!

Once again, thank you for your support. It is much appreciated.

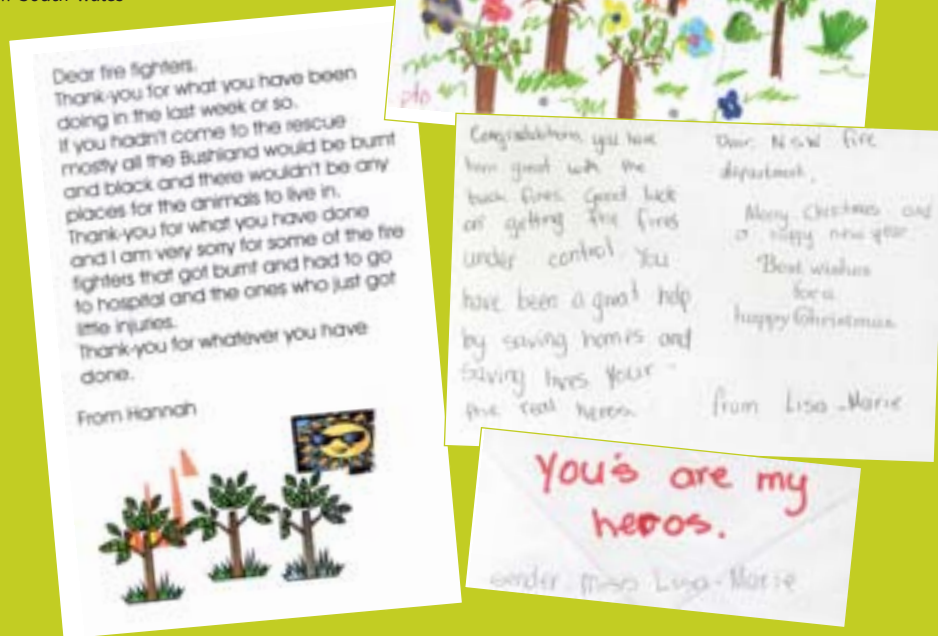
Much love



**Gilly Paxton**  
**Manager**  
**Public Relations**  
**The Children's Hospital at Westmead**

## "YOU'S ARE MY HEROES"

Letters and drawings from the Children of New South Wales



## OUR FIREFIGHTERS TO THE RESCUE

Although not widely published the train crash at Waterfall in the early hours of Friday 1 February was a major incident for the NSW Rural Fire Service. Besides being one of the first emergency services on scene the Service played a major role in the rescue of over 40 survivors and supported the other emergency services in operations that went for three days.

NSW Rural Fire Service firefighters from Sutherland and Wollongong Districts played vital roles in the treatment, comfort, fire protection, rescue and removal to hospital of over 40 survivors of February's Waterfall train crash.

The emergency, which saw seven people die and at least 41 injured, put Sutherland District Disaster Management Plan to the test...and it didn't fail.

Coming in for great credit was the six-man Sutherland RFS Fire Prevention Crew which was out of its station in 60 seconds and in two all-wheel-drive vehicles was on the scene of the accident, four kilometres south of Waterfall, in ten minutes.

They were joined minutes later by two heavy four-wheel-drive appliances from the Waterfall RFS Brigade and later by tankers of the Helensburgh, Stanwell Park, Otford and Heathcote Brigades which had driven up the tracks from the south.

There was even more commitment from Sutherland when it was realised that only four-wheel-drive personnel carriers were capable of getting through the bush, down a very steep gravel slope, across the rails and on to the casualty clearing area near the wreckage.

A call went out to brigades across the shire to respond and nine PCs were soon in use shuttling the passengers to a road where two-wheel-drive ambulances and two rescue helicopters waited.

Acting Fire Control Officer for Sutherland, Superintendent John Wood, was at his home when at about 7.30 am he received a call, stemming from a "triple 0" report, that there was a train derailed at Waterfall.

"I knew our team of District Field Officers (once known as the Fire Prevention Crew) were starting work at that time so I put a call through the Fire Control Centre at Heathcote asking them to respond," Supt. Wood said.

Although paid fire prevention workers the six are also volunteer members of brigades in the shire, some have officer rank and up to 25 years experience.

As well as dispatching the Crew, Supt. Wood activated the pagers of the Waterfall Brigade which soon had two heavy appliances and a PC rolling from its station.

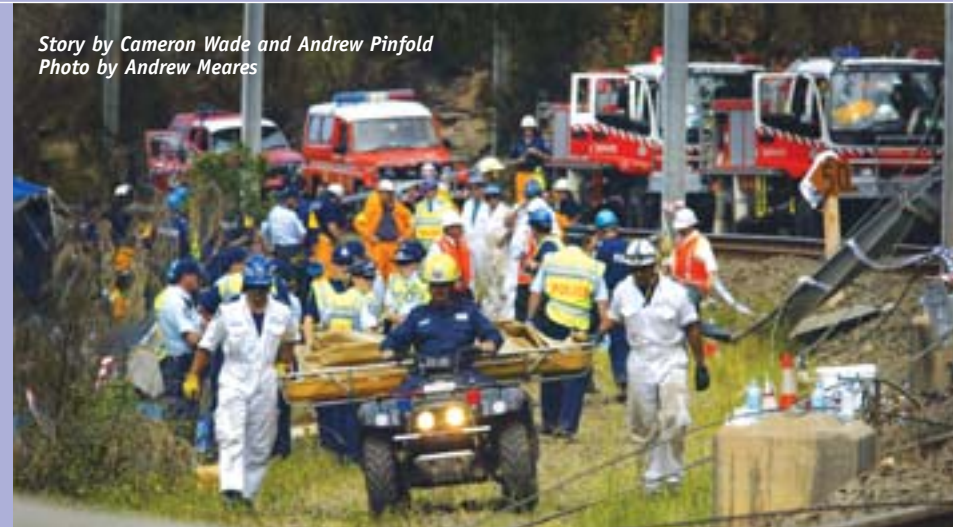
The field team's members, using their intimate knowledge of the area, went to the Cawley Fire Trail, identified the scene of the accident, a cutting four kilometres south of the Waterfall platform, and immediately identified another track closer to the tragedy.

Firefighters were joined by three ambulance officers and some police. One of the ambulance officers was Acting Superintendent Keith Williams who is also Group Three for the Sutherland Rural Fire Service. He was the initial ambulance commander.

Meanwhile Waterfall crew had found a spot where radio and cellphone communications worked and had put through an urgent message "require immediate assistance including Rescue and Multiple Ambulances."

Sutherland FC02 responded with his men and women and the limited other emergency personnel by 7.50 am.

FC02 became the RFS commander.



Story by Cameron Wade and Andrew Pinfold  
 Photo by Andrew Mearns

Discussions took place between the RFS Commander, Ambulance Commander and Police Commander and it was agreed that the RFS do an initial assessment and report back to the Ambulance commander.

The disaster scene was described as follows by Sutherland FC02 "What was so significant was that there were no sounds. There were no passengers about...and at that stage few emergency people. I walked beside carriages four and three..they were on their sides.. not knowing how many people were inside them. When I got to carriages two and one I walked beside them and the wall of the cliff. Their sides had been torn away. The damage between two and one was the worst. I counted four deceased. Many injured were still in their seats.

At the time the overhead wires were down. We didn't know if they were still alive.

We also didn't know if the train would catch alight so a tanker was positioned at the top of the cliff and a line of 38mm run out."

FC02 gave his assessment of the situation and more assistance was called for. Wollongong brigades, and Helensburgh were responded to the scene.

Firefighters from Waterfall and Heathcote climbed into one of the torn open carriages and began comforting the injured while others worked outside the carriage handing up equipment.

The ladder from Heathcote 7Alpha was used to climb on to the carriages while our hooligan tools were used to prise away metal and fittings and smash open some of the window to allow cool air into the carriages.

Firefighters along with the ambulance officers and police also began removing objects which were trapping people.

The Ambulance commander realised that to get the injured away from the train, up the very steep incline and into road ambulances and the Westpac and Careflight helicopters, he would need a fleet of "go anywhere" personnel carriers. He knew where to get them...each of Sutherland and Wollongong's Brigades has such a vehicle.

Within minutes nine were responding to the scene from all points.

For the next three hours RFS PCs carried passengers from the side of the tracks, up the 200 metre long cliff and on to a railway road to waiting two-wheel-drive ambulances.

The last passenger was taken off the disaster scene at about 11.20 am. In all RFS PCs took more than 40 passengers to the ambulances.

The role of the RFS did not end with the final patient transfer. A Sutherland RFS vehicle was used to take the Deputy NSW Coroner, to the scene. Other PCs took in equipment and other personnel from all agencies to the train wreck. The tankers from Wollongong RFS were driven along the tracks from the south to help with rescue and provide additional fire protection.

A crew from the National Parks and Wildlife Service cut an emergency helipad.

Back at the Sutherland Fire Control in Wilson Parade, Heathcote, the Shire's disaster plan had been activated. By 8.00 am the Emergency Operations Centre was filled with multi agency emergency co-ordinators. There was great co-operation and the plan went very smoothly.

The RFS quickly realised that firefighters involved in the succour and rescue of victims might need some critical incident support, and moved quickly to activate CISS.

Because Ron Anderson, the RFS's Senior Chaplain was working in the Jindabyne fire scene (Ron arrived at 3.00 pm) former RFS Chaplain, Colonel Don Woodland took his place talking with firefighters. He was supported by Paul Scott, a senior CISS debriefer from Rosehill and two peer debriefers.

RFS volunteers and paid staff continued working throughout the day.

The last appliance returned to station at 11.20 pm and the network's last radio transmission was at 1.15 am.

In all more than 50 RFS personnel, 25 from each district, were involved in the first four hours of the emergency. The RFS involvement continued for a further two days as the damaged carriages were transported and downed stanchions and wires cut and removed.

Because cutting equipment was in use and showers of sparks produced the RFS provided extensive fire protection.

Over the three days a total of 150 RFS personnel, 80 from Wollongong and 70 from Sutherland were involved in the incident.

"All firefighters, particularly the District Field Officers, did a magnificent job on what was a sad day," Superintendent Wood said later.

## SERVICE'S NEW LOOK

RFS Corporate Communications has released the new look and major upgrade to the Service's web page.

New features include substantial improvements to the user interface. Extensive new information has been added and will continue to be expanded. The information provided on the new site is focused towards what we believe the general public and our members are most likely to need.

The front page shows a summary of what is new on the site at any time, alerting you to news and events the moment you log on.

Importantly, we have implemented a new email (NewsFlash) system that will sort out the recent problems we have had with 3rd party email providers. This will ensure that NewsFlashes will be sent much more often, giving you more comprehensive updates. To receive these simply click on the "Join The RFS Mailing List" button. You can then self-manage your account at any time by clicking on "User Login".

A new Fire Danger Map showing the current fire danger rating in each of the weather districts is available, as is a new area that will carry detailed reports of major incidents, updated on an ongoing basis (please note, there are no major incidents at this present time).

The Projects and Initiatives area contains a variety of different topics which represent recent developments and initiatives within the Service. We recommend that you stop by this section from time to time.



In the Volunteering section, to help make it easier for people to join the Service, you will see a new feature that allows you to enter your town or suburb name and points you to your nearest Fire Control Centre and an on-line membership inquiry form is available for new members.

There is also a comprehensive Bush Fire Hazard complaint system in the Policies and Business area.

The site is, of course, an evolving product and new features and content will be added regularly.

Please make sure you visit the site at <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au>

Story by John Winter



## CRASH LANDING AT PENRITH



On 15 February 2003 a Robin R-2160 crashed into a CSIRO paddock on Elizabeth Drive near Liverpool.

The pilot was having difficulty and tried to land on a dirt road but did not see a brown gate in the way and crashed into it.



The RFS assumed the worst and responded with five heavy tankers and two Group Officers

When the call came through there was no indication of the type of aircraft and number of people on board. RFS assumed the worst and responded with five heavy tankers and two Group Officers.



There were no casualties, however there might have been a bit of claustrophobia with the amount of people with volunteers from Cumberland, Regentville, Orchard Hills, Erskine Park, Hoxton Park and Luddenham.



## DEHYDRATION CONCERNS

In recent operations a number of firefighters as well as aviation specialists and support personnel have been treated for dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stress due to high temperatures, low humidity and fatigue.

As our firefighters become weary with the prolonged fire campaign, the incidence of minor injuries and exhaustion are becoming more prolific. It is therefore incumbent on all levels of management including crew leaders to ensure that all firefighters are having adequate rest and are drinking an adequate amount of fluid. It should be noted that caffeinated drinks and alcohol consumed after a long or hard shift on the fireground can be a contributing factor to dehydration, so moderation should be observed.

Guidelines produced in relation to recommended fluid intake, indicate that for front line firefighters at least one litre of fluid should be taken every hour

It is recommended that the fluid intake be bottled water as this obviates the problem of supply of contaminated water. It should also be noted that, on the fireground, "sports drinks" must not be used in lieu of water. Sports drinks are meant to supplement your intake of water, not replace it and as outlined in the detachable chart (right), it is recommended that a ratio of 1 sports drink to 10 equivalent amounts of water may be taken.

Guidelines produced in relation to recommended fluid intake, indicate that for front line fire fighters at least one litre of fluid should be taken every hour. This is a guide only and in some instances more fluids may need to be ingested, in direct relation to an individuals physical characteristics.

The detachable chart is a good indicator of how "hydrated" a person may be. It is based on a simple self analysis of the colour of your urine. This is to be distributed to all fire fighting personnel within your District.

Dehydration is not something that is easily recognisable, so prevention is better than cure. Many professional athletes indicate that when they reach a point of feeling thirsty, it is already too late, so maintaining a regular intake of fluid is extremely important.

Nothing can replace clean drinking water, it is important that enough water be provided on all Rural Fire Service vehicles, to accommodate the needs of all crew members, for a period of 24 hours.

Chief Superintendent Alan Brinkworth  
AFSM, FRICS, AAIQS, ACIARB  
Manager State Operations

# HOW DEHYDRATED ARE YOU?

**DARK YELLOW**

**Urine colour dark yellow**

- > Highly dehydrated.
- > Go drink a large bottle of water immediately!!!

**BRIGHT YELLOW**

**Urine colour bright yellow**

- > You are still seriously dehydrated.
- > Drinking more now will make you feel alot better.

**YELLOW**

**Urine colour yellow**

- > Moderatley dehydrated.
- > You lose fluid on a regular basis throughout the day. Drink more water to get hydrated.

**LIGHT YELLOW**

**Urine colour light yellow**

- > Almost there.
- > get some more water into your system. Stay hydrated and healthy!

**CLEAR**

**Urine colour clear**

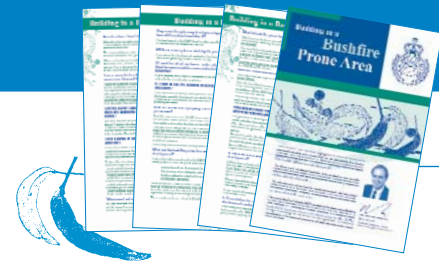
- > Great job.
- > Now don't let yourself get dehydrated. Drink at least 8-12 large glasses of water throughout the day.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Caffeinated drinks and alcohol dehydrate – limit your consumption. You can have a sport drink to supplement electrolytes. They should be taken at the ratio of 1 sports drink to 10 equivalents of water. As a guide, for frontline firefighting, one litre of fluid should be taken every hour.

Endorsed by the Ambulance Service of NSW





## BUILDING IN A BUSHFIRE PRONE AREA

### If the land on which I want to build a house is in a bushfire prone area, will I be able to develop the land as I had proposed?

The guidelines in Planning for Bushfire Protection - 2001 require certain protective measures to render a building less susceptible to damage or destruction from bushfires.

If the sitting and nature of the building being proposed does not meet the minimum requirements as contained in the guidelines, councils need to refer the application to the NSW Rural Fire Service for advice.

Clearly, it is not the intention of the new measures to prevent the development of land in bush fire prone locations. However, in order to provide adequate protection from bushfires, it may be necessary to modify the style, construction material or sitting of a building.

Any modification required to ensure a structure meets the necessary standards will be the subject of negotiation between the developer and the relevant authorities.

### Is the NSW Rural Fire Service the ultimate consent authority for residential development?

Infill development such as the construction of a single residential dwelling amongst existing structures will only need to be referred to the NSW Rural Fire Service if the planning criteria are not met. The NSW Rural Fire Service will provide advice to local councils about the measures that might be taken to render the development acceptable. Councils remain as the consent authorities for these types of developments.

Where integrated development such as large residential estates and other facilities such as aged care, schools and hospitals are intended, the NSW Rural Fire Service is required to provide a Bush Fire Safety Authority.

In any event, all proponents of development have the right of appeal to the NSW Land and Environment Court.

### Is it mandatory for someone to include an assessment of the bushfire risk in a development application?

While it may be a requirement of individual councils it is not a requirement for every application. Your local council and the NSW Rural Fire Service will provide you with information and guidelines relating to your particular property and what measures need to be taken to enable your development to proceed.

### Will these new requirements delay the processing of development applications?

Even where the development application has been referred to the NSW Rural Fire Service, the Service will generally process it within 14 days.

### If I want to extend my house, make external modifications or sub-divide the block to accommodate a new residential dwelling, how will the new provisions affect me?

If your property falls within a designated bush fire prone area, such proposals will generally be subject to the new planning provisions.

### If I want to sell my existing dwelling, will its sale be affected by the new legislation?

There will be no restriction placed upon the sale or purchase of a property; however, the Section 149 Certificate issued by the council may identify the property as being in a bush fire prone area. As a consequence, future alterations, renovations or additions to the property will be subject to the new planning provisions.

### How do I know that a property I am interested in developing is in a bushfire prone area?

Bushfire prone areas are identified on a map prepared by each local council in collaboration with the NSW Rural Fire Service. These maps are developed by analysing factors such as vegetation type, patterns of existing development and other relevant considerations.

The area that is designated as "bushfire prone" also includes a buffer zone that extends beyond areas that may be directly affected by a bushfire to account for factors such as ember-attack and radiant heat exposure that may cause those properties to be indirectly affected by bushfires. However, no development further than 100 metres from the bushland interface requires any specific bushfire protection measures.

These maps will be available for inspection at your local council offices.

### What are the bushfire protection requirements that need to be addressed in a development?

Factors that will be considered by the NSW Rural Fire Service when providing advice to councils on developments in bush fire prone areas will include:

- > access to and from the property for evacuation and firefighting
- > provision of an adequate water supply for firefighting
- > building setbacks, including the provision of "Asset Protection Zones", and
- > construction standards.

Asset Protection Zones provide a buffer around residential properties by requiring that bushfire fuels be progressively reduced as they get closer to the dwelling. Asset Protection Zones are therefore made up of sections described as inner and outer protection areas. These areas allow significant flexibility in the design and construction standards that might apply.

These requirements are set out in full within Planning for Bushfire Protection 2001.

### I own a parcel of land that I want to subdivide. How does the new legislation affect me?

If the land is within a bush fire prone area and is being subdivided for residential (including rural residential) purposes, the development is classed as integrated development and must be referred to the NSW Rural Fire Service for assessment. The NSW Rural Fire Service will assess the proposal against the performance criteria of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2001.

Design of the development should also consider the following points:

- > provide refuges for evacuation
- > avoid isolated developments
- > subdivision patterns with good access
- > expand subdivisions from existing developments
- > avoid ridge tops and steep slopes
- > ensure the provision of water for firefighting
- > include adequate asset protection zones within property boundaries
- > use level ground where possible
- > locate habitable building near access/egress points
- > locate services underground

### Where can I get more information?

You can download a copy of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2001 at the NSW Rural Fire Service website ([www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)) or can be purchased from Planning NSW if you do not have access to the Internet. You may contact your local NSW Rural Fire Service office or local council for further assistance.

## BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

Barriers that once created conflict and misunderstanding between the RFS and the NSW Fire Brigade are being broken with new training courses. The new courses, designed by the RFS and NSWFB training departments, teach all new full-time NSWFB recruits how the RFS works and how to work with volunteers.

Inspector Damian Eggleston, Deputy Fire Control Officer Hornsby has conducted all five, two-hour classes since they started in October 2002. The 100 professional firefighters have learnt about the corporate and operational structure of the RFS,

ranking and helmet colour, Fire Control Officer and Brigade Captain duties.

"The courses are doing a great job to demystify the RFS. We're trying to break down some barriers because both organisations work toward the same goal and work best together with understanding and respect for each other," said Inspector Eggleston.



Inspector Damian Eggleston, Deputy Fire Control Officer Hornsby has conducted all five, two-hour classes since they started in October 2002







## ZONE AND TEAM MANAGERS APPOINTED

The appointment in April of over 30 Zone and Team Managers was the latest milestone reached in the ongoing improvement of rural fire district management.

Salaried NSW Rural Fire Service staff were appointed to 16 Zone Manager and 16 Team Manager positions through an internal process based on merit.

Zone Managers are the leading officer in rural fire districts that have formed zones by officially linking with neighbouring districts to share resources such as firefighting personnel, salaried staff, facilities, plant and equipment.

Team Managers are the leading officers in a team of rural fire districts that have been grouped together at a staff level only. Staff are consolidated with other districts, however, the district has not committed to formal zone arrangements to share resources with surrounding districts.

Whether brigades fall into districts that are zoned or teamed, volunteers still have a RFS officer dedicated to their district who continues to be their first point of contact.

Zoning and staff consolidation are occurring to streamline service delivery and minimise duplication of tasks.

Staff consolidation benefits brigades by maintaining the presence of salaried staff in their district and improving the service they provide to volunteers and the community while reducing inefficiencies caused by duplicating roles across districts.

For example, the administrative burden currently placed on volunteers, particularly in the area of operations, will be reduced as salaried staff will be shared across districts to fulfil administrative roles.

Apart from sharing salaried staff, zoning provides a greater number of benefits for brigades by sharing other resources across borders.

Zoning is largely about finding efficiencies in management systems and processes, staff, specialist resources and funding.

As a result, the efficiencies and effectiveness of zoning flows on to volunteers through better levels

and standards of specialist equipment, better co-ordination of resources, limiting time wastage, higher levels of inter-district co-ordination, greater control over large scale bushfire incidents and an overall improvement in the ability to deliver services to local communities.

### OPERATIONAL

A larger pool of local firefighting resources and senior officers can be accessed to combat and manage large-scale incidents and minimise requests for outside resources. Greater interaction between the districts means local control is achieved across the zone, no matter where the incident occurs.

### LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Expertise and facilities will be shared to ensure high training standards are achieved and maintained. An example of an inefficiency possible without zoning is three adjoining districts with three training coordinators, three hot fire training facilities and three training centres.

### FINANCIAL

More money for equipment and training will be available through savings made by reducing duplication. The average cost of a control centre is now around \$500,000. Under the existing structure, three of these could be built when in reality only one is needed. The resulting cost saving would be \$1 million. This funding could be better used to equip and train volunteers.

### HAZARD REDUCTION

Recognising that volunteers' time is important, a greater commitment to resource utilisation in carrying out hazard reduction programs will allow brigades to concentrate on what they do best - mitigate and suppress fires. The development of hazard reduction programs across zones will ensure this. For example, a fuel reduction assessment across three districts identifying that some areas receive higher rainfall than other areas, would enable resources to be used more effectively by diverting resources to achieve those parts of the program that have been identified as ready for treatment while those other areas are considered unsuitable.

*Story by Meeka Bailey*

## A PLACE TO RELAX

### NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE LIBRARY - A PLACE TO RELAX, READ, RESEARCH AND LEARN.

#### The RFS Library - what resources will you find there?

- > More than 3000 publications and reports
- > 600+ videos
- > Training resources (OTEN, AFAC, NSWRF, etc)
- > Media clippings, press releases and transcripts related to Rural Fire Service back to 1991
- > Photos
- > Journals

#### What subjects are covered?

- > All fire-related information - prescribed burning, fire safety education, firefighting, etc
- > Environmental planning and management
- > Safety, health and welfare
- > Legal services
- > Management
- > Emergency services
- > Other relevant subjects

#### What services does the library provide?

- > **Research assistance** - ask the librarian to help you track down the most useful information for your project or report
- > **Loans** - books and videos may be borrowed by members of the Rural Fire Service, or used in the library
- > **Current awareness** - new books and journals are on display for a short period and then available for loan
- > **Equipment and facilities** - for study and viewing videos. There are desks, computers, photocopier, and a TV/video

#### Who can visit the library?

All members of the NSW Rural Fire Service are welcome to visit the library for browsing and study.

The library is also open to members of the public by arrangement with the librarian.

#### Where is the library located?

The library is located at the Rosehill offices of the Rural Fire Service, 175-179 James Ruse Drive, Rosehill. The library occupies the ground floor of Unit 9.

Visitors are required to go first to Reception, Unit 3, to sign in and obtain a Visitors Pass.

#### How to arrange a visit:

**Contact** - The Librarian, Barbara Glass, on **8845 3625**, or by email: [barbara.glass@rfs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:barbara.glass@rfs.nsw.gov.au)

#### Hours of opening:

Monday to Friday - 9am - 4.30pm  
Saturdays by arrangement.

#### Brigade visits:

If you would like to organise a brigade visit to the library on a Saturday, or one evening during the week, please contact Barbara to discuss.

# THE MANUAL

## TO ASSIST IN EFFECTIVELY MANAGING BRIGADES

The Rural Fire Service has embarked on a new project entitled the Brigade Administration Manual. The Manual will be designed to assist salaried and volunteer officers to effectively manage their brigades.

The Manual will consist of easy to follow references to existing documentation and services provided by the RFS. Assistance with finance, business management, SOP and service standards will dominate the Manual.

A guide to the service structure will provide a reference for sourcing information and support to the issues, which arise within your brigade, as all Head Office Management groups will be contributing to the Manual.

Updates on progress will be posted on the RFS web page with plenty of opportunities for volunteer input.

**If you have any questions regarding the Manual please contact Volunteer relations on 8845 3743.**



## MEMORIES OF BLACK CHRISTMAS

The lengthy 2002-2003 fire season brought back memories of Black Christmas for many volunteers who took part in task forces in 2001-2002. As fire affected northern Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Shoalhaven last December, Kelly Mackellar's thoughts flew back to Christmas 2001.

"I was watching the national news and began thinking back to last Christmas Day (2001). I remember my step mum said "if you need to go, just ring me".

On that note, I rang our brigade duty officer to let him know that if a crew was to go away to help fight the fires, both Justin, my husband, and I were right to go.

On Boxing Day we got the phone call. A crew was to go and Justin was on it. He had to be at the station by 10.30am. I began packing for him, as well as chasing up other members to see if they could spare a few days.

At 10am I rang fire control to find out if they wanted me to keep chasing members - I was asked to stop ringing around, organise a baby sitter and pack my bags. I was going as well.

I called my step mum to collect the kids.

This was my first time on an away team. Justin was making sure I had everything I needed to keep me safe on the fireground.

We reported at 10.30am for a briefing by the Fire Control Officer and load gear onto the fire trucks. We were finally told we were heading to

Nowra in the Shoalhaven.

After bidding family and friends farewell we headed off in two fire trucks and a 4WD patrol with 12 members.

My first words to my Captain were "What the hell have we got ourselves in for?" He replied "I don't know".

On arrival at the fireground you forget your fears and you put forward what you have learned over past years to put out fires.

Our three day tour turned into five days. But I learned a lot and I made a lot of friends.

That was over a year ago, and as I watched the news last December, I felt tears creep down my face as I thought "I should be there helping, not sitting here doing nothing".

You just can't explain how it feels to someone who hasn't been in a situation like Justin and I.

"It hurts when all we can do is watch and can't help. It's something you don't forget easily, especially for me as it was my first time away and my first experience as a Deputy Captain".

**Kelly MacKellar**  
Formerly Griffith Rural Fire Brigade  
now Weethalle Rural Fire Brigade.



## AUSLAN INSTRUCTORS COURSE AT COFFS

### AUSLAN INSTRUCTORS COURSE Coffs Harbour 5-8 August 2002

The RFS recently conducted a small groups instructor course with the Coffs Coast Deaf Community. The entire course was taught with



RFS trainer, Ron Collingridge and an Auslan sign language interpreter.

Aimed at people wishing to instruct in Auslan to hearing-impaired students, the course used examples of fire behaviour and firefighting techniques to facilitate training.

Although the aim of the course was to teach people to train small groups more effectively, the course has inspired the development of fire safety training programs for hearing impaired students.

"The course was a great example of how the RFS helps the community in a variety of ways not normally associated with firefighting." said Ron Collingridge.



Rural Fire Service Approved

# ANCILLARY AND LEISURE APPAREL

Embroidered Garment	Price	Qty.	Colour	Size	Cost
Dress V Neck Jumper <small>with Epaulettes, Shoulder &amp; Elbow patches + pen pocket</small>	\$85.00		Navy		
Fully Fashioned V Neck Jumper	\$62.00		Navy		
Polo Shirt - Lemon(L), Navy(N), White(W)	\$29.00				
T-Shirt - White(W), Navy(N)	\$18.00				
Sloppy Joe	\$29.00		Navy		
SPECIAL! 12 or more garments, Brigade name embroidered under logo for FREE!					
<b>AVAILABLE SIZES</b>	S M L XL XXL 3XL - 6XL 90 95 100 105 110 115 - 130 (Add \$2 per garment)	For large orders please add clearly printed lists as required			
Brushed Cotton Cap <small>(25+ Caps \$8.00 ea., 100+ Caps \$7.50 ea.)</small>	\$8.50		Navy		
Large Kit Bag <small>Individual/Brigade names (printed on separate sheets)</small>	\$45.00 plus \$8.00		Navy	Length 93cm Height 33cm Width 31cm	
Medium Kit Bag <small>Individual/Brigade names (printed on separate sheets)</small>	\$35.00 plus \$8.00		Navy	Length 50cm Height 30cm Width 20cm	
<b>Plus postage &amp; packing per address (Includes badges if part of order)</b>					<b>6.60</b>

The above is not our complete range - See website

Total \$

## EMBROIDERED BADGES

Name Badges or Brigade Badges

Size 3.0cm x 9.0cm (approx.)

Gold badges now Proban backed

Actual size



Note: Red on Navy background badges are also available.

**PRICES** Note: No "Minimum" order

1 to 99 Badges (Any) \$3.30 each

100 plus Badges (Any) \$3.00 each

Please print Name or Brigade	Colour			Qty.	Cost
	White on Navy	Red on Gold	Red on Navy		
eg. JIM LEWIS					
<b>(For larger orders please attach clearly printed lists)</b>					<b>Plus postage &amp; packing per address \$4.00</b>

Payment can be made by cheque, money order, Bankcard, Visa or Mastercard.

**Fax Credit Card orders accepted.**

Total cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ including postage & packaging. Allow 28 days for delivery.

Total \$

(Please ✓)

Card No: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques - Please make payable to Blue Mountains D.M.P. Enterprises Pty. Ltd.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print name & address clearly

All Council orders accepted



Please send all orders to  
Blue Mountains  
D.M.P. Enterprises Pty. Ltd.  
27 Byrne St.,  
Lapstone NSW 2773  
ABN 44 092 928 919



Phone: (02) 4739 8619  
Fax: (02) 4739 5417  
www.local.com.au/dmp



## BUSHFIRE BULLETIN ADVERTISING RATES AND SPECIFICATIONS



ADVERTISING RATES per issue (includes GST)

1/6page	1/3page	1/2page	Full Page	Inside Cover
Casual rate Full colour				
475	675	850	1275	1800
12 month Contract Full colour				
400	550	680	1000	1400

DISTRIBUTION

Publishing run 33,000 copies

CONTACT

Advertising Sales:

Nichole Ingram nichole.ingram@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Telephone: (02)9684 4411 Facsimile: (02)9638 4671



ANNUAL PUBLISHING

- AUTUMN
- WINTER
- SPRING
- SUMMER

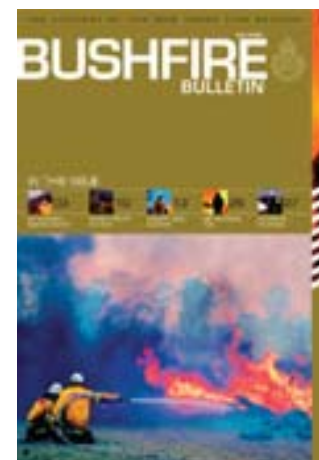
WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE A COPY OF  
THE BUSHFIRE BULLETIN  
DIRECT TO YOUR HOME?

Name.....

Address.....

CUT OUT AND MAIL TO:

Bushfire Bulletin  
NSW Rural Fire Service  
Reply Paid 67059  
Granville, NSW, 2142  
(No stamp required)







**BUSHFIRE BULLETIN  
VOL25#01**

**PUBLISHER** NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE  
**EDITORIAL TEAM** JOHN WINTER, NICHOLE INGRAM,  
MICHAEL WATTS, MEEKA BAILY, ZOE TOWNSEND  
**PRODUCTION AND ADVERTISING COORDINATOR**  
NICHOLE INGRAM

UNIT 3 175-179  
JAMES RUSE DRIVE  
ROSEHILL NSW, 2142  
LOCKED BAG MAIL BAG 17  
GRANVILLE NSW 2142  
**TELEPHONE** (02) 9684 4411  
**FACSIMILE** (02) 6938 4671