Assistant Commissioner’s Message

The recent flooding of numerous Queensland communities has once again proven how adaptive and responsive Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers are in assisting not only their own, but others in need. Many stories of Rural Fire Brigades attending a range of incidents and assisting impacted communities have emerged, and whether their contribution was sand bagging, clean up or general welfare, it certainly was appreciated. This contribution to the flood affected areas along with previous contributions to issues such as the horse flu and last year’s cane smut outbreak, once again prove the versatility and community commitment that RFS volunteers have. Well done to all those involved.

This calendar year will be an exciting time for us all with many new initiatives programmed to roll out and although some may question the improvements branding them as ‘change for change sake,’ this couldn’t be further from the truth. These programs are designed to improve the way we support volunteers with major campaigns such as the Volunteer Recruitment package and an improved Learning and Development Framework being at the forefront. The L&D framework aligns to the new brigade classifications and membership types which also provides for an improved rank and insignia arrangement. These updates along with the introduction of criminal history check prior to acceptance and registration as a volunteer are highlighted within this edition.

One major initiative this year will see an inaugural Volunteer Conference being held on the 12th and 13th April and staged at Surfair on the North Coast. Over 150 volunteers, representing over 135 Rural Fire Brigades, will attend this two day conference where they will have the opportunity to listen to both QFRS Rural Operations staff and external speakers present a range of business, research, operational and training themes. The interest shown in this conference has been outstanding, with far more nominations received than places available however, we are hoping to host day delegates from nearby locations to cater for more attendees. We also intend to capture the speaker sessions on DVD, which will be made available to brigades along with a special edition Bulletin magazine dedicated entirely to the conference. The RFBAQ is partnering us on this venture and we are confident this conference will be an outstanding success.

Our structure will soon be enhanced with an additional six Brigade Training and Support Officers (BTSOs) coming on board. These new positions will compliment the existing eleven BTSO roles which were introduced as part of the 2006 Rural Operations Enhancement Package. These new BTSOs should hopefully commence in April and will undergo a four week recruit program before venturing to their allocated locations. The new BTSOs will be placed in Cairns, Townsville, Caloundra, Caboolture, Toowoomba and Maryborough.

In closing, I would like to recognise and congratulate all the recipients of the Australia Day honours awards. In particular I would like to acknowledge two individuals; Inspector Tony Johnstone (Bundaberg) and Mr Edward Kirk, who is a member of the Ban Ban RFB and a local Fire Warden. Tony was awarded the inaugural Department of Emergency Services ‘ZeroHarm’ Award for his commitment to WH&S and for promoting the ‘all injuries are preventable’ concept throughout his local area and the RFS in general. Edward was the recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) for his long serving commitment to the RFS and the development of aerial fire reconnaissance within his local area. Edward is also the recipient of an OAM (2003) for his work within the cattle industry, local government and the community.

Steve Rothwell AFSM
Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Advice for people trapped in their cars during a bushfire has been updated with a groundbreaking study into what happens to a vehicle caught in the middle of a firestorm.

The research initiated by NSW Rural Fire Service and conducted by Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre with CSIRO scientists, sought to determine the maximum heat load that a vehicle could face while remaining a safe haven for its occupants, both in terms of the air temperature and the air quality inside the vehicle.

The study of burnovers in civilian passenger vehicles was conducted in January 2007 at the NSW Rural Fire Service Hot Fire Training Facility in Mogo, on the New South Wales south-coast. Seven used cars were subjected to burnover conditions with a gas flame front simulator. The two-wheel-drive sedans, which ranged in size, age and make, were donated by the NRMA.

Each car was fully instrumented with sensors to monitor for air toxics and heat levels at many points inside the vehicle including above and below the window height, front and rear seats and, above and beneath a woollen blanket. Comparisons were made between having the air conditioner on or off, and by facing the car forwards, side-on or backing to the flames.

The research made several key observations:

- Using a woollen blanket for shelter in either the front or rear foot-well of a vehicle is the most effective strategy to reduce exposure to both toxic gases and high temperatures.
- Operating an air conditioning system in recirculation mode reduces temperature exposure in all but extreme conditions and may add to your comfort in the very early stages of exposure. However, air conditioning, whether on or off, will not increase your chances of survival.
- Facing the front of the car towards the approaching fire was better than side or rear orientation.
- Direct flame contact from either the passing fire front or from burning ground fuels makes the vehicle almost immediately untenable for occupants.
- Testing under a wide range of conditions (slow/fast burn, front/rear/side orientation, etc) found that the rise in air toxics inside the vehicle was the main reason the car became unsuitable for its occupants.
- Thermoplastic body parts and the structural design features of different vehicles contributed to the varied performance of cars in burnover conditions with the more recent models performing worst.
- There was no significant involvement of the cars fuel systems in any of the experiments. (None of the cars tested had plastic fuel tanks.)

Lead researcher Justin Leonard, from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, said the range of temperatures inside the vehicles was considerable.

“Some tests recorded peak temperatures up around 300°C in parts of the cabin but at the same time down low under the woolen blanket the temperature was around 40 to 50 degrees, which is quite survivable. Even when blankets were not used sheltering below the window level in the front and rear foot wells was the best strategy.”

Mr Leonard said the smoke and toxic gases inside the melting cars was often more significant than the heat.

“Many cars are lined with PVC materials and when that is heated above 220°C, it may release hydrogen chloride gas, before it ignites. That is a severe irritant and this could cause people to panic and get out of the vehicle.”

The Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC), the peak body for the fire and emergency services, has used this research to refine its guidance for people in vehicles during bushfires.

These guidelines were previously based on evidence gleaned from tragedies from the fireground, the observations of emergency service workers and from limited tests on vehicles in the 1960s.

The guidelines were sound but there remained uncertainties on some factors including the construction and materials of modern vehicles and the influence of protective actions taken by occupants. (For example, having the air conditioning on or off, the orientation of the car to the fire front, seeking protection under woolen blankets, or seeking refuge in various parts of the car’s interior.)

The Chief Executive Officer of AFAC, Naomi Brown, said this research provided a better understanding of what happened to vehicles in bushfire conditions. Fire agencies and emergency services would use this research as a basis for their community safety campaigns.

“It is with extreme caution that people should be given advice about taking refuge in their vehicle in a bushfire. This research shows that sheltering inside a vehicle is a high risk strategy and that it is highly unlikely that a person will survive in all but the mildest circumstances.”

“Whilst sheltering inside a vehicle offers a slightly higher chance of survival than being caught in the open, the current policy of preparing your home, and deciding early whether you stay or go, is a much safer option. It is essential that all people likely to be exposed to bushfire risk realise this.”
In 2006 Rural Operations began the process of developing a new recruitment campaign by holding a recruitment and retention workshop with the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ), volunteers, the Bushfire CRC and Emergency Management Queensland. This workshop was a result of requests from brigades for assistance with recruiting and retaining new volunteers. One of the major points that came from the workshop was the agreement that blanket recruitment across the state was not effective and that brigades required assistance running targeted recruitment campaigns at a local level. Another important factor in the decision to proceed with the development of a new recruitment campaign was the following statistics:

- Age Profile – Average age of a Rural Fire Service Volunteer is 49 years old.
- 22% of Rural Fire Service volunteers are female.
- On average, Rural Fire Service volunteers remain with the organisation for seven years.
- Turnover rate is approximately 3,800 volunteers per year. Although the RFS loses approximately the same amount of volunteers as it recruits on a yearly basis, recruitment and loss is not consistent around the state, so while some Areas have no trouble recruiting and have strong retention, other Areas are losing high numbers of volunteers with limited recruitment.

The goal of the new Volunteer Recruitment Campaign is to provide brigades with the resources they require to run their own recruitment campaign. As each brigade has different requirements and different resources available, the aim is for brigades to be able to tailor a campaign to suit their needs. The new information offers brigades four types of recruitment campaigns to choose from, depending on what their recruitment needs are (e.g. quantity of new volunteers, type of volunteer, skills required etc). It also shows brigades how to take into account their community, recruitment history and resources in order to best select the campaign that will suit their needs.

The new material is broken down into five booklets:

- **Booklet 1**
  Booklet 1 helps brigades gain a better understanding of their current situation, in order to help them better determine what campaign will be right for them. It does this by discussing topics such as:
  - Brigade Profile
  - Community Profile
  - Recruitment History
  - Recruitment Needs
  It then gives an overview of the four recruitment campaigns provided. These are:
  - Blanket Campaign
  - Headhunt Campaign
  - Position Vacant Campaign
  - Public Relations Campaign

- **Booklet 2 – Blanket Campaign**
  The aim of the blanket campaign is to cover the entire community with your recruitment message over a set period of time. It is recommended a blanket campaign run for four to six weeks, with the recruitment message being reinforced using a wide variety of tools, such as posters, brochures, banners etc. The blanket campaign is not selective in its target audience. Its primary aim is to get as many prospective volunteers as possible to contact the brigade, which then provides the opportunity to invite them to the ‘next step’. The Blanket campaign focuses on “quantity”.

- **Booklet 3 – Headhunt Campaign**
  The aim of the headhunt campaign is to provide a more individual and personalised approach to recruitment. The campaign begins with the brigade team identifying specific people in their community who they would like as part of the brigade and who they feel would make a positive contribution to the team. It is important that all team members agree and understand the reasons each person has been nominated. Following this an event is designed. Once the event is established, all nominees are invited to attend this event, either through a letterbox drop invitation or a personal invitation. The aim of the event is to introduce attendees to the idea of volunteering and the importance of the brigade, while at the same time emphasising the reasons they were selected. This campaign should be considered when you are not after large numbers, rather specific types of people for the brigade.

- **Booklet 4 – Position Vacant**
  The aim of the position vacant campaign is to target groups within the community that hold the skills required to fill a specific position within the brigade. The first step is to clearly identify the skills required to fill the ‘vacant position’. These skills are then used to identify specific target groups by their possession of those skills. From there, a list of employers, special interest groups and other organisations whose employees or members might have the required skills is put together and contacted to see if recruitment can be run through the workplace/club. This can include brigade members giving lunchtime sessions, poster placement or brochure distribution asking interested parties to contact the brigade where they will be invited to the ‘next step’. This campaign should be used for brigades who are only looking to fill a small number or even just one position, yet the position requires very specific skills.

- **Booklet 5 – Public Relations**
  The aim of the public relations campaign is to turn the everyday activities of the brigade into public relations activities with a recruitment focus. Unlike the other campaigns, this approach is more long-term focused with the goal of progressively overhauling the memberships activities over time.
Supporting Material

As part of the recruitment kit, each campaign booklet outlines what resources are required and assists with ideas for placement and distribution. To sit with this, an entirely new suite of material, including a DVD, has been developed. The tag line for all promotional material is ‘You Can’. All of the supporting material allows a space for brigades to add their personal contact details, again assisting with the local recruitment.

Before developing the resources, Rural Operations were able to consider the research undertaken by the Bushfire CRC in other states on the motivations of volunteers. Because of this research the target groups for the recruitment material have been broken down into three categories:

- Under 35’s
- Women 35+
- Men 35+

What the research found was that the ‘Community Safety’ and ‘Community Benefit’ motivations were high for all target groups however, ‘Self Benefit’ motivations were much higher among the under 35 group, so we have tried to adapt messages to cover all groups.
Recruitment Case Study
How to adapt the new recruitment material to suit your needs and resources

With the recent release of the new recruitment material, one of the first opportunities to put it to the test came in Mt Isa at the end of 2007.

The Charters Towers Area Office had the opportunity to use the new material as part of its recruitment activities for the new Mt Isa brigade, and has provided us with a great example of the success of the material, the diversity of the campaigns and the ability to use the material to specifically target who you need.

The Charters Towers Area Office went with the concept of a Blanket Campaign in the sense that they were not being specific in who they targeted, the goal was to engage as many potential volunteers as possible. Their campaign however, is a great example of how the campaigns provided in the recruitment kit can be tailored to suit individual needs and resources.

Generally with a blanket campaign, it is recommended a variety of resources be used over a wide geographical area, to attract as many volunteers as possible. Due to time restrictions and the staff resources required to do this, the campaign was held within a small location over a short period of time.

The office, using the new resources, set up a display in the K-Mart Arcade Building in Mt Isa over a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The display included the new posters, brochures and cards, as well as the new recruitment DVD playing on a loop. The stand was continually manned by Rural Operations staff.

Although the team from Charters Towers were primarily looking for numbers, they were secondarily targeting females, as many of the residents of Mt Isa work in the mines and they saw an opportunity for the females who move to the area with their partners, to get involved.

Over the course of the three days, there was significant interest in the stand with a large percentage of the enquiries coming from females. All up, 22 people showed enough interest to register their details. Of the 22, nine were female.

As a follow-up to the display, the Area Office held a meeting (next step event) at the fire station on the Wednesday night, which was attended by nine people, two of which were women.

The recruitment undertaken at Mt Isa is a good example of taking one of the campaigns provided and adjusting it to suit your resources. One of the key points of these campaigns is also about selecting the appropriate resources for your target audience. Resources are available for you to target specific groups, and resource selection is one way to do this, resource placement is another great option.

There are many ways these campaigns can be tailored specifically for your brigade and what you require. For further information or to get a copy of the recruitment kit, please contact your local Area Office.

New BTSO Positions

Rural Operations received approval from the Commissioner and Director General to appoint another six Brigade Training and Support Officers. This endorsement supports the direction and training requirements of QFRS Rural Operations in support of our RFS volunteers. The new positions will be based at Cairns, Caloundra, Caboolture, Townsville, Toowoomba and Maryborough. There is also a current BTSO Vacancy in Bundaberg.

The positions were advertised in January.

Research helping us get to know RFS volunteers

Volunteers are a crucial part of the QFRS Rural Operations and the University of Queensland (UQ) is helping us better understand the experiences of our volunteers.

As part of her PhD project at UQ, researcher Meg Hooper will be conducting a study over the next few months that is interested in the experiences of volunteers in the workplace. A pilot study is currently underway with a larger study to come.

All volunteers are invited to participate in the larger study which is expected to run through March/April 2008. Look out for details on how to participate through RFS communications – coming soon.
What's New News Update

Volunteer Conference

As many volunteers will now be aware, the first QFRS Rural Operations Volunteer Conference is set to take place at Surfair, Marcoola Beach on the Sunshine Coast from Friday 11 April 08 to Sunday 13 April 08.

Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations Steve Rothwell said the Volunteer Conference will bring 150 volunteers from around the state together for two days of information sessions and presentations on the latest changes, projects, research, equipment and administrative information on QFRS Rural Operations.

“As an organisation with approximately 36 000 volunteers, effective and timely communication with our volunteers has always been a challenge.” Assistant Commissioner Rothwell said.

“However, this conference offers us the opportunity to not only update volunteers the latest information, but it will provide us with the opportunity for strong two-way communication and with the opportunity for volunteers to meet and get to know QFRS Rural Operations staff and each other.

Unfortunately we had to limit the number of volunteers able to attend however, to ensure that more than just the 150 volunteers attending the conference benefit, we selected the attending volunteers partly on their ability to be able to take the information they have gathered back to their Area’s and Brigades.

“We will be providing attendees with supporting documentation to be able to assist them to do this, we will also be developing a DVD which will be distributed to Area Offices, and producing a Special Edition Bulletin magazine, which will be sent to First Officers and Secretaries for distribution to brigades.” Assistant Commissioner Rothwell said.

“I look forward to be able to share the successes of our first Volunteer Conference with you in the near future.”

Implementing Criminal History Checks for the Rural Fire Service

In early 2008, the process of undertaking Criminal History Checks on Rural Fire Service volunteers will begin. We are currently the only volunteer fire service in Australia, and the only volunteer service within Department of Emergency Services, who does not undertake checks for new members.

Although the process of undertaking Criminal History Checks on new volunteers does add an extra step in the recruitment process, there are many benefits to the service by introducing them. Completing Criminal History Checks on volunteers will help remove suspicion and media interest when a fire occurs, provide confidence to brigades when appointing a new member and importantly, align us with other volunteer services around the country.

There has been extensive consultation with the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland regarding the introduction of Criminal History Checks and the process for completing them, and at the moment we are working on the new application process to ensure the shortest possible timeframe for approval as well as the system for reviewing adverse reports. Some of the details of the criminal history checks will be as follows:

- All new volunteers will need to undergo a criminal history check.
- Existing volunteers will not need to undergo a criminal history check unless:
  - They transfer to a new brigade.
  - They wish to nominate for the deployment register.
  - If they are under 18, they will be required to undergo the check when they turn 18.
  - They are likely to work with children through their interaction with cadets or through any brigade activity. Current Child Protection legislation does not require the vast majority of Rural Fire Service volunteers to be issued with Blue Cards. The only exception applies to volunteers involved in programs that primarily relate to dealing directly with children, such as the “Adopt a Firefighter” program.

A new process and appropriate forms for those people under 18 years of age wishing to join a rural fire brigade have also been developed. By law a person under 18 years of age requires parental consent before joining. The new membership application forms and accompanying information will be distributed to brigades shortly. From the date all new volunteers, and those listed above, will require a Criminal History Check to be undertaken prior to them being able to be involved in any activity with the brigade.
## News Update

### New Brigade Categories and Volunteers Roles for the Rural Fire Service

Since 1999 Rural Operations has utilised a model of classifying brigades based on measured risk. Risk, in the context of fire, is a measure of how likely it is that a fire will occur and the consequences in terms of death, injury, property loss and environmental damage should fire occur.

Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations Steve Rothwell said Rural Operations, in consultation with the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ), have now developed a new system which supports a focus on the main function that the brigade carries out.

"The new system is about the type of service brigades provide to the community, not about the various levels of different kinds of risks within their operating environment."

Assistant Commissioner Rothwell said.

"It makes it much easier to determine the type of training required for each role within each brigade functional type and the specific resourcing requirements to provide an acceptable level of service."

The new brigade functions (categories) are:

- **Primary Producer Brigade:**
  
  A Rural Fire Service brigade consisting of owner/occupiers engaged in primary production who share a responsibility for the management of fire using property based equipment. Operates with limited contact with, or support from, QFRS.

- **Rural Brigades:**
  
  The brigade area is predominantly rural producing land with possibly some low-density rural residential development. The risk is mainly from bush and grass fires, with a high level of utilisation of property-based equipment for fire management. Contains little or no government infrastructure and the community centre, if it exists within the brigade area, has less than 10 buildings.

- **Village Brigades:**
  
  The brigade area has a community centre with greater than 10 buildings and other Government infrastructure (e.g. school, council depots, recycling centres etc). Often located in remote areas with little or no assistance available from other rural fire, urban or auxiliary brigades.

- **iZone Brigades:**
  
  A high-density rural residential brigade, usually with a well-developed commercial centre. The brigade may contain significant areas of bushland but the predominant risk is to life, property and infrastructure. Activities of the brigade are principally within the operational policy and procedures of QFRS.

- **Special Brigades:**
  
  A brigade that operates with a service delivery model specific to individual community or service requirements. Examples of this type of brigade includes indigenous brigades, combined auxiliary/rural brigades, mining brigades, CABA brigades etc.

### Rural Fire Service Volunteer Charter

The RFS Volunteer Charter is an agreement between the State of Queensland, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) and the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) on behalf of Rural Fire Service Volunteers. It ensures that the State of Queensland and the QFRS will commit to consultation with volunteers about matters that reasonably could be expected to affect Volunteers. It is proposed that the Charter will be co-signed by the Minister, Director-General, Commissioner and President RFBAQ at the 2008 QFRS Rural Operations Volunteer Conference at Marcoola Beach on Saturday 12 April 2008.
New Membership Categories for the Rural Fire Service

After consultation and endorsement from the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland, the new volunteer roles associated with the various membership categories within the Rural Fire Service have also been finalised.

A new Volunteer Learning and Development Framework is being developed to provide training and recognition for the skills and knowledge considered appropriate for each volunteer role. This framework will connect the range of existing and yet to be developed courses to the training programs for Officers, Firefighters, Fire Wardens and Support Members as well as members of Primary Producer Brigades.

Under the Volunteer Learning and Development Framework it will be necessary to complete the appropriate role training program to attain the rank and receive the appropriate epaulette.

Details of the Volunteer Learning and Development Framework will be released in April at the Rural Fire Service Volunteer Conference.
Greater Alarms Response System – GARS

The introduction of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Operations Doctrine has provided a solid foundation of operational procedures for QFRS personnel that attend an ever growing and diverse range of incidents.

Effective response to emergency incidents must include:

A rapid dispatch of resources

An appropriate weight of attack for the type of emergency

Notification of the relevant offices and authorities

Appropriate capabilities and equipment to safely resolve the emergency

An appropriate level of incident management relevant to the type and size of the emergency and the resources committed.

QFRS is now adopting a new system of response resource mobilisation known as the Greater Alarms Response System or GARS.

GARS is a proven system of response that has worked for many years for fire services overseas and also interstate. GARS will bring a structured and coordinated mobilisation of resources that is designed to match an escalating incident with front line firefighting resources, specialist support and appropriate levels of incident management.

The QFRS approach to GARS will introduce two models to accommodate and be flexible to the needs of South East Queensland and Regional Queensland.

The introduction and effective use of GARS will enhance the operational performance of QFRS and provides a number of benefits to the organisation’s response including:

The structured system can facilitate resources from one region to be sent to a neighbouring region for a large protracted incident. For example, a large incident in the South East Region that is designated at a certain alarm level may initiate early activation of specialist resources from Brisbane Region.

GARS will cater for inter-regional needs using a model that uses state-side resources, rather than a regional-centric perspective.

The provision of an automatic response of an appropriately sized Incident Management Team (IMT) to support the Incident Controller.

Supporting the concept of an appropriate sized “weight of attack” with specialised support vehicles at IMT.

Allowing the Incident Controller to simplify the requesting of all the appropriate support mechanisms and resources.
Brigade Manual

With last year’s redevelopment of the Brigade Manual, you will have noticed that there were several items that were listed as new information or changed information. In the coming editions we will include these items in the Bulletin to ensure all brigades are aware of important changes that will affect their brigades.

If you would like to make any comments or suggestions regarding the Brigade Manual you can do so by completing and submitting the Rural Fire Brigade Manual Change Form which is included in your Manual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C4.6 Termination of Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What I Need to Know</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are numerous reasons for termination of a Rural Fire Brigade membership. They can be categorised under:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voluntary termination</td>
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<tr>
<td>involuntary termination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary termination can occur when a member:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaves the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is unable to perform this/her agreed functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is unwilling to continue as a member of the brigade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary termination can occur when:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a member dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the member consistently fails to attend brigade activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does not meet the behaviour stipulated in the DES Code of Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the member demonstrates characteristics which impact negatively on the brigade or its ability to carry out its duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A brigade has the right to rescind the membership of a person and this determination is usually made by the management committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The management committee has a responsibility to ensure that the member has an opportunity to present his/her case before a decision is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How I do it</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voluntary Resignation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may resign from the brigade at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make your resignation in writing to the First Officer by completing the attached Member Resignation Form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The secretary then amends brigade membership records accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The secretary then forwards the resignation form to the Area Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit Interview and Peer Support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a brigade management committee member, offer resigning members the opportunity to explain their reasons for leaving the brigade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brigade</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek any feedback they may have for improving the brigade and the way it operates to serve the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where resignation results from critical incident stress or any work related stressful situation, offer members the opportunity to receive support through the QFRS peer support system. Refer to Counselling &amp; Support Services – Peer Support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notification of Deceased Members</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secretary notifies the Area Office when a member of the brigade dies or suffers a permanent disability that precludes him/her from performing as a brigade member in any capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involuntary Resignation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a member is considered for involuntary resignation, ensure that the following steps are taken:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the brigade member is alerted to the issue and given the opportunity to respond to/explain the allegation, using mutually acceptable third party support if desired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the member is given the opportunity to remedy the situation/behaviour within a designated timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the member is informed of his/her rights including the right to appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should the member fail to remedy the situation/behaviour, the brigade management committee convenes to consider the case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The committee assembles the relevant information and refers it, together with a recommendation, to the Area Director, Rural Operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reference Materials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Reference Manual - Business Rule: D4.2.4 Manage Legal Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Fire Brigade Manual – D7.23 Legal Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Fire Brigade Manual – D7.27 Brigade Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Resignation Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
News Update

From the Manager, Operational Support

Rural Operations is currently in the process of introducing PPE specifically designed to fit female fire fighters. Stewart and Heaton, the current suppliers of PPE, will be displaying the new female wildland clothing at the 2008 QFRS Rural Operations Volunteer Conference in April, and hopefully will be able to supply the garments in the near future.
Draft Sizing Chart for Female Members

The following sizes have been developed, with the assistance of one or more of the manufacturers, to ensure that personal protective clothing for female members is fit for purpose and is gender specific.

Finished Garment Measurements for the Pants are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>TO FIT WAIST</th>
<th>INSIDE LEG</th>
<th>SEAT / HIP</th>
<th>BACK RISE</th>
<th>FRONT RISE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>75-80</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>85-90</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>90-95</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>100-105</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>42.5</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>105-110</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
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</table>

A tolerance of -0cm to +2cm is the allowable deviation from the specification. All measurements are in CM.

Finished Garment Measurements for the Coat are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>TO FIT CHEST</th>
<th>ACTUAL CHEST</th>
<th>INSIDE SLEEVE</th>
<th>WIDTH BOTTOM</th>
<th>BACK LENGTH</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>75-80</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>110</td>
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<td>115-120</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A tolerance of -0cm to +2cm is the allowable deviation from the specification. All measurements are in CM.
News Update

The newly designed “floppy hats” and existing QFRS caps have now been ordered and should be available to Area Offices for distribution by late April.

Rural Operations will also supply personal issue kit bags to volunteers who have completed FM1, as well as volunteers who have nominated for the deployment register. We are currently in the process of selecting a suitable bag, and orders will be placed once this process has been finalised.

You may recall, from the previous edition of the Bulletin, that an evaluation of the Type 1 wildland firefighting boot has been undertaken, with the feedback on the trial boot being positive from all of those involved. Currently the tender process for the supply of QFRS firefighting boots has not been finalised however, when the successful supplier is decided on, we can progress the transition to the upgraded boot.

Recently there have been a number of complaints regarding the fit of the elastic sided boot, particularly slippage at the heel area with the feeling that the boot might slip off. I have contacted the manufacturer in relation to this issue and would be interested to hear from brigade members who have had similar experiences with the fit of these boots. If you have any feedback please email rjwalker@emergency.qld.gov.au.

Appliances

The 07-08 appliance allocation process has been finalised with a total of 21 medium appliances, 16 light appliances and 1 heavy appliance being constructed this financial year. In February 2008 the appliance allocation process for the 08-09 financial year will commence and the 09-10 allocation should also be finalised this calendar year.

Our aim is to establish a three year projection of appliance allocations so that ample time is given for brigades to arrange their finances and to ensure that adequate funding for future appliance build programs.

I am pleased to announce that the members of the Rural Appliance and Technology Committee have been approved by the Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations, and will consist of representatives from Rural Operations, Urban Operational Engineering Services, WPH&S and the RFBAQ. The establishment of this committee will now allow the design stage for the new medium appliance to commence and incorporate some innovative and technically advanced features into the new appliance.

 Queensland Transport has undertaken to establish a state wide policy regarding the use of Rural Fire Brigade vehicles for the specific purpose of license testing for brigade members. I have advised the Transport Department of the conditions regarding the exemption from registration under the Fire and Rescue Act 1990, and they have accepted my memorandum which supports the use of these vehicles for the purpose of license testing for Brigade members.

It may be a timely reminder that provisions under the Fire and Rescue Act 1990 allow unregistered vehicles which are being used by Rural Fire Brigades to be operated on a road under certain circumstances, and that all of the criteria must be complied with for this legislation to apply. All Brigades should be familiar with the following section of the Act which provides this exemption.

Below is an excerpt from the Fire and Rescue Act 1990

Use of equipment on roads while unregistered

(i) The provisions of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 that prohibit the use on a road of an unregistered vehicle unless the use is authorised by a permit under that Act do not apply in respect of a vehicle used on a road where—

(a) it is being used by a rural fire brigade or an emergency service unit to carry persons or equipment for the purpose of preventing, controlling or extinguishing a fire or for training purposes or is being used for any other purpose authorised in writing by the commissioner; and

(b) it bears a clear identification as a vehicle of a rural fire brigade or an emergency service unit; and

(c) there is in force a contract of insurance providing an indemnity, such as is prescribed by the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, section 23(1)(17) in respect of injury caused by, through or in connection with the vehicle. (2) For subsection (1)(a), training purposes in relation to an emergency service unit only includes training for the purposes of fire fighting or fire prevention.
Training in Action

In the last edition of the Bulletin, there was an article on the Winfield and Yandaran Rural Fire Brigades attending Road Crash Awareness Training.

In a great example of training in action, Rural Fire Service member Jenni Woods (who was pictured undertaking the training in the previous article) was able to put what she learnt into action when she came across a Motor Vehicle Accident not long after having undertaken the RCR sessions.

Because of what she had learnt as part of the training session, she knew to check the scene for dangers, isolate the vehicles and conduct primary and secondary searches. As per her training, she then waited for incoming services, who were extremely impressed when she informed them of the action she had taken.

Another great example of training in action came when the South Kolan Rural Fire Brigade responded to assist in a house fire call.

First Officer Ross Jensen said the incident ran extremely smoothly, partly due to the fact that the Brigade had previously completed the “Respond to Isolated and Remote Structures Fire” training.

When the brigade responded to the house fire call, South Kolan 51 and 412a arrived simultaneously, tapped the hydrant and were set up by the time the urban crews arrived. Throughout the incident, South Kolan 51 transferred water to 412a continually, and the team also assisted on the hose lines.

Bundaberg Station Officer David Gear commented on the great support role the Rural Fire Brigade played.

Volunteer Leaders Program

In December I had the privilege of attending the Volunteer Leaders Program conducted by the Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC). This program is sponsored by Bunnings Warehouse and Dulux and is held in Manly NSW at the Australian Institute of Police Management.

The program’s focus is on leadership issues among volunteer organisations such as Rural Fire Brigades and SES Units. Many issues were covered throughout the five day program and provided a greater insight into different leadership styles and possibilities.

Participants were in attendance from New Zealand and all States and Territories of Australia, which provided for great networking and increased learning opportunities both through classroom interaction and during evening “social activities”. The opportunity to talk to and compare notes with people from other organisations from across the country was a great learning and personal development process.

If given the opportunity to attend this program, I strongly recommended to everyone in a leadership role within their Brigade to seize the opportunity as it is very worth while.

Brett Bain
Coomera Valley RFB
Southeast Region
Safety is a core value of the Department of Emergency Services and is enshrined in everything we do in the Rural Fire Service. In 2007 the department launched its Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2007-2010, which aims to keep safety uppermost in everyone’s minds and use risk management in everything we do.

“ZEROharm – all injuries are preventable” has been established as the ultimate goal of the strategy. ZEROharm is based on the belief that workplace injuries and illnesses are preventable, and ensures that everyday, all employees, volunteers and contractors return home to their families and loved ones, free of injury and illness.

This year, the department launched the inaugural ZEROharm – Excellence in Safety Leadership Award as part of the Australia Day award process. The award is a way of recognising both staff and volunteers’ contributions to achieving a positive safety culture where our ultimate goal is ZEROharm.

Nominations were required to meet specific criteria which addressed one or more of the objectives of the WH&S Strategy which are:

- Eliminate workplace hazards and injuries;
- Build workplace health and safety leadership and workforce capability;
- Drive a ZEROharm WH&S Performance Culture;
- Establish effective WH&S Governance.

The assessment panel looked for nominations which went above and beyond in terms of promoting and encouraging a positive WH&S culture. Nominations were received from many varied areas across the whole department. We are pleased to report that the first award has been won by Inspector Tony Johnstone, Area Director, Rural Operations, Bundaberg Area.

We are also pleased to report Carole Flintham, Secretary Bouldercombe Rural Fire Brigade, received a highly commended certificate in this category.

Inspector Johnstone was nominated by Superintendent Peter Hollier, Regional Manager, Rural Operations, North Coast region for his outstanding work on the development of a Volunteer Rural Brigade Safety information pack. In particular Tony was commended for his provision of information on hazardous materials management in brigade facilities. The safety pack provides volunteers with a single point of reference for current information on prevention of injury in the workplace, and the actions required should an accident or near miss occur.

As well as this, Tony regularly demonstrates a risk assessment approach in everything he does with the RFBs in his area. As part of his nomination, Superintendent Hollier related some examples.

“Inspector Johnstone applied sound risk assessment principles recently in the Woodgate Level 1 Fire. During this time as incident controller, he actively applied these principles to both suppression and containment strategies.” Superintendent Hollier said.

“He has as also been very effective in identifying potential risks to volunteers from fatigue related issues. He established a catering and welfare arrangement in the Area that saw a high and consistent level of sustenance for volunteers, ensuring their personal wellbeing was met.”

Tony paid tribute to the work and commitment that the volunteers and staff have to improving the workplace health and safety of all volunteers in Bundaberg and explained his approach to WH&S.

“Risk assessments are part of our everyday life, from making that morning cuppa to driving or taking public transport to work.” Tony said.

“I have been involved with workplace health and safety for over 18 years and as a farmer, I was concerned about the impact that it would have on my livelihood. At that time, I attended several workshops, forums and asked questions of those who had experience in workplace health and safety industry.

“I implemented WH&S procedures on my own farm - at the end of the day I wanted to go home the same way that I turned up and I didn’t want to tell a workers’ family that their partner father or mother had been injured, or worse killed”

Outside of work Tony enjoys bee keeping.

“Bees can be rewarding” he says, “yet they can be as hazardous as fire fighting or jumping out of a plane, especially if you have an allergic reaction to being stung like I do. So why do I do it? I enjoy a challenge and it’s rewarding. I always ensure I apply the same risk management approach to my hobbies as I do to my work.

“I wear the correct Personal Protective clothing and I make sure I use safe practices, such as not making loud noises or dropping the hive box. I ensure that my PPC is clean and free from smells that agitates bees.”

When asked about the challenges he sees in achieving ZEROharm in our volunteer environment Tony said the challenge for Rural Operations and Rural Brigades is for us to all ensure WH&S compliments our activities.

“We all need to ensure that processes are not too complicated, turning us away from what we do. Inherently we work in emergency situations, so simple processes and constantly recognising risks in all situations can make sure that we return to our loved ones in the same way as when we started out.”
Carole Flintham was nominated by Superintendent John Fisher, Regional Manager Rural Operations Central Region, for her significant work in establishing a regular program of station inspections at Bouldercombe RFB. Carole has ensured that all members are aware of their responsibilities for workplace health and safety through regular training and discussion at brigade events and meetings.

Carole has taken the lead in establishing a positive safety culture through identifying potential hazards and encouraging brigade members to do the same. She has established a sign-in procedure which identifies visitors to the brigade station and has ensured that all members and visitors have access to information on a regular basis.

There is a display area within the station that has all current information available for members thereby ensuring that all members are kept up to date.

As a volunteer for the RFS, she has achieved a significant knowledge about WH&S in a short period of time and her passion and drive for the members of the Bouldercombe RFB is inspiring. Her efforts have been rewarded particularly given her involvement in this process as a volunteer and valued member of her local community.

Carole paid tribute to the members of the brigade who have embraced these initiatives and taken on the challenge of improving safety in their patch.

Congratulations to both of these worthy recipients. We are very proud of their achievements in contributing to a safer workplace for everyone. We can also take their lead in becoming safety champions in everything we do. It doesn't matter what your role is in the brigade or on staff - we all have a role to play in making our working environment safer for all.

Safety Around Powerlines

We were saddened to hear of the passing of one of our Fire Wardens, Greg Eising from Miles District. Greg was fatally injured as a result of his vehicle coming into contact with overhead power lines. Our deepest sympathies go out to the Eising family.

This article is a timely reminder for us all, of the need to exercise extreme caution around powerlines. Powerlines must be respected and anyone using equipment or machinery near them has to be vigilant at all times.

Those living in rural communities would be aware of the Single Wire Earth Return (SWER) lines. SWER systems are used extensively to supply less densely populated rural areas. Their simple design allows for an efficient and practical way to service isolated farms, small country towns and some isolated communities. With this design comes long spans of conductor which at times can be very hard to see and may stretch for tens or even hundreds of kilometres, visiting a number of termination points.

At each termination point, such as that found on rural properties, current flows from the line through the primary coil of a step-down transformer, to earth through an earth stake. From the earth stake, the current eventually finds its way back to the main step-down transformer at the head of the line, completing the circuit. The diagram below illustrates this system.

The danger of breaking an earth return circuit while the system is energised must be emphasised to all persons working near a SWER system. One side of the break remains connected to the high voltage and full phase voltage e.g. 19.1kV will move across the break.

Staff in Rural Operations have recently met with Community Safety representatives at Ergon Energy and we will be sharing some of their safety material with you in weeks to come. For instance, their “Look up and Live” program is an example of the need to be constantly aware of your surroundings. Ergon has produced a number of fact sheets that are readily available to the general public. The following is an example of one of these.
**Safety Matters**

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**Look up and Live**

*Always take care when operating around overhead powerlines.*

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**Working safely when operating machinery around electricity**

**Is your machinery at risk of contacting overhead powerlines?**

Machinery, either by design or while being operated for its intended purpose, can encounter safety exclusion zones applicable to powerlines. Powerline heights can vary, so always visually inspect the area for powerlines before commencing any work activity or passing near or under them.

Examples of machinery operation include, but are not restricted to: a tip truck tipping a load, a crane operating at a building site, a concrete pumping concrete, a backhoe, or dozer moving earth.

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**Important safety tips**

- Ensure workers have been suitably trained and are competent to perform the work being carried out.
- Know the location of overhead and underground powerlines at the worksite.
- Ensure exclusion zone safety clearances are maintained.
- Assign a safety observer to each work team.
- Carry out measurements well away from overhead powerlines when determining the height of machinery or equipment in both slowed and working positions.
- Lower all machinery to the transport position when relocating every time.

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**Exclusion zones**

Workers and their equipment should not approach overhead powerlines any closer than the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voltage</th>
<th>Exclusion Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerlines with voltages up to 10kV</td>
<td>3m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 10kV and 33kV</td>
<td>6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 33kV</td>
<td>9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. low-voltage and high-voltage distribution and sub-transmission lines, usually on poles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. transmission lines on either poles or towers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. transmission lines usually on towers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these are the minimum exclusion zone clearances required, you can reduce the likelihood of mistakes by operating machinery well clear of powerlines.

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**Consider underground electricity cables**

Electricity cables can also be located underground. Prior to performing work, confirm if any underground cables present a risk.

Plans and maps may help to identify underground cables, however the depth of underground cables can vary from site to site, even on the same property.

**Dial 1100** before you dig. "Dial before you dig" is an Australia-wide telephone service advising the location of some Ergon Energy and other underground cables on work sites and properties.

Never move a cable without express permission from the responsible Authority.

Look out for warning signs such as orange strips, conduits, concrete slabs, orange tape, and/or soft sand as these may indicate the presence of underground cables when digging.

**Practice safe work habits**

- Be aware of electrical Safety Legislation relating to working around powerlines. Obtain a copy of the "Code of Practice for Working near Exposed Live Parts" and ensure workers are familiar with the relevant sections for work being undertaken.
- Identify all electrical hazards, assess the risks, establish control measures, and review these control measures periodically. Control measures may include, but may not be restricted to:
  - Appropriate signage at least 8 to 10 metres either side of powerlines.
  - Visual indicators such as flag markers fitted to the powerlines (contact us for advice).
  - Ground barriers, where appropriate.
  - Informing workers of required work practices.
- Ensure operators are aware of the height of their machinery in both slowed and working positions.

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**More information**

Our Community Safety Team is available to discuss any questions relating to electrical safety. Call 1300 736 349.

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**As we’ve discussed before, it is important to follow a basic risk management process before starting any job in any situation:**

- Look at the site and identify risks.
- Assess the risk of injuring yourself or other workers.
- Use appropriate control measures.

Typically dangerous situations in working around overhead powerlines include touching or striking an overhead line while:

- moving or rearranging irrigation pipes
- driving machinery with tall metal attachments
- operating grain augers or elevating work platforms (such as cherry pickers)

Remember to always think ZEROharm in everything you do.

Our thanks go to Ergon Energy for their assistance in compiling this article.

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**Customer Service**

13 10 46
7.00am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday

**Faults only**

13 22 96
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Life-Threatening Emergencies only**

000 or 13 16 70
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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*This fact sheet is available from your Area Office or by visiting ergon.com.au*
The Last Australia Day Ceremony for the City of Thuringowa

On the 26 January 2008 the City of Thuringowa held its last Australia Day Function at the Riverway Arts & Recreation Centre. Three members of both the Rural Fire Service and the Thuringowa Group were awarded Citizens Awards, presented by Mayor Les Tyrrell and Federal Member for Herbert, Peter Lindsay. The award recipients were Beeby Oldman, Gloria Poulsen and Bob Roberson.

The call was put out to the Thuringowa Group to attend and be part of this important event. Approximately 20 personnel from the local brigades and Rural Operations attended the event setting up a static display with the Training Trailer, THUR61 and TOO41. As usual we were well received by the attending patrons of the event, and we got to speak with lots of wet children who came out of the pool in droves to find out what we were all about.

We say goodbye to the current Thuringowa Council Administration in March 2008 and look forward to supporting the newly elected Council Team and the greater community as has always been our commitment. Our thanks must go to the Thuringowa City Council for their continued support of the local brigades and their members over the years. We do not doubt that this will continue with the new incoming Council Team that will be elected during the amalgamation process.

Out with the Old and in with the New

On 8 November 2007 the Honourable Neil Roberts Minister for Emergency Services handed over the keys for Stoney Batter Brigades new appliance to 1st Officer Brian Needham and Secretary Geoff Needham, at the Official opening of the Babinda Ambulance Station, Far North Queensland.

Stoney Batter RFB, situated near the township of Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tablelands, covers approximately 1500 hectares containing dry steep and inaccessible slopes of open eucalypt forest, grassed paddocks for grazing livestock, a large and very valuable timber plantation and 1200 dwellings. With the brigade membership of 26 active and support members they provide hazard reduction, community education and fire suppression services in their area plus support other brigades in the Ravenshoe district and beyond when required.

The new appliance will replace the 28 year old Land Cruiser which, although useful, is no longer sufficient to meet the Brigades increased requirements. The brigade received funding for the appliance of $17,460 with a grant from the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland.
Bushfire Prepared Communities at Tara

On the evening of the 30th January 2008, a Bushfire Prepared Communities presentation was conducted at the Bennett Rural Fire Shed in the Northern Tara area.

The evening was an outstanding success with 44 adults and 12 children attending. The new Wildfire Simulator was also demonstrated as a finale to the presentation, and created a great deal of interest and discussion. The presentation was followed by a barbeque which allowed those attending to ask questions of the QFRS Rural and Urban staff who were on hand.

It was very pleasing to receive the positive feedback and thanks from those attending. It was also encouraging to hear of some of the ensuing plans attendees proposed to undertake to improve the fire readiness of their properties.

The QFRS staff attending would like to express their appreciation to the members of the Bennett Brigade for their efforts in making the evening a great success.

2007 Firefighter’s Memorial

John Boyd, Chairman Wamuran RFB represented Rural Fire Service as a flag bearer at the Firefighter’s Memorial last year at St Brigid’s Church at Red Hill. The memorial service included tolling a fire bell for each of the 46 firefighters who have lost their lives on duty in Queensland since 1877. Of the 46, 16 were Rural Fire Service volunteer firefighters.

Palmwoods School Visit

At the end of 2007 the Palmwoods Rural Fire Brigade and staff from the Caloundra Area Office visited the Palmwoods State School to support the Grade 5 class in their project work relating to Bushfire Awareness and the monitoring of the Fire Danger Sign.

Each morning they gather information relating to the weather conditions, fuel curing and relative humidity etc and collate this information and calculate the fire danger rating for the day. Their teacher inputs this information onto their specially created website and they change the Fire Danger Sign daily according to their findings. This is all done in conjunction with the Brigade. Their websites are www.palmwoods.asn.au, http://www.palmwoodss.eq.edu.au/home/pfire1, so take a look.
Our Volunteers Our Brigades

Opening of Beechmont Rural Fire Brigade Station

On Saturday 1 December 2007, the Minister for Emergency Services, The Honourable Neil Roberts officially opened the new Beechmont Rural Fire Brigade station.

The brigade has worked tirelessly over an extended period to ensure the facility is of the highest standard and is a valuable asset to the community of Beechmont.

During the official ceremony, Master of Ceremonies’, brigade Chairperson David Murphy, thanked the many members of the brigade who had committed their time and effort to ensuring the brigade had adequate facilities to take it into the future and provide the service that the community deserved.

The large gathering of brigade, family, and community members were entertained by the beautiful sounds of the Beechmont State School Choir, who were very proud to be part of the ceremony. The school can also be justifiably proud of the children.

Area Director Rural Operations Craig Smith said it was very enjoyable to see how the various sections of the community came together for the one event and they had enormous pride in each others achievements.

“This asset that the brigade has worked so hard to obtain will be beneficial to the whole community, and it stands the brigade in good stead to continue their great efforts well into the future.” Craig said.

The ceremony was also attended by the Federal Member for Forde, Mr Brett Raguse, Councilor Virginia West from the Beaudesert Shire Council, Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations Steve Rothwell, Regional Manager Rural Operations Steve Crouch, Group Officer Beaudesert Group Karen Mason, Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland representative Jeff King, staff from the Ipswich Area Office of Rural Operations and members of the Beechmont Community.
Maidenwell RFB update

Located not far from the Bunya Mountains and Nanango, the Maidenwell Rural Fire Brigade has 30 volunteers ready to attend any fire situation. They have one light attack and two medium attack vehicles and very soon they will be expanding their facility in the form of a new radio room and support facilities.

Work is expected to start in early 2008, and is hoped all is in place before this year’s dry spell when wild fires become more relevant during the drier winter months leading into Spring. Over the years the brigade has been operating, they have attended many fires and are always ready to assist other brigades where needed. The Maidenwell brigade keeps up with the latest trends in fire fighting techniques and train regularly with other Rural Fire Brigades.

In the same area lies the Maidenwell Astronomical Observatory which opened its doors to the public and tourism in August 2004. Since then the observatory has supported the brigade in the form of raffling a big telescope each year with ticket sales going through the roof. This raffle item has proven to be a very good form of fundraising, so much so, visitors are always asking when the next raffle will be! When the observatory was being built, they installed two extra large water tanks on their premises for the brigade’s sole use in a fire emergency.

Maidenwell RFB is under the experienced and watchful eye of First Officer David Stewart (aka ‘Bushy’) who maintains a quiet and pleasant demeanour within the brigade during its training, and a cool head during an emergency. The Second Officer is Bob Stewart, who also has many years experience in rural fires, from his earlier years in Northern NSW RFB’s.

While the small township of Maidenwell enjoys the serenity of country life, this brigade is always ready when they are needed in a fire call out.

James Barclay
Maidenwell RFB.

Full Scale House Burn

ATSO Phil Williams and A/BTSO Dion Skinner incorporated a full scale house burn into the Crew Leader Incident Controller Course primarily aimed at Rural Fire Brigade Officers, as a follow up to Respond to Isolated and Remote Structure Fire training.

The house was donated by Terry Cleary from the Gayndah Rural Fire Brigade.
Joint HRB and Exercise in Caboolture Area

On the 27th of October 2007 Rural Brigades from Caboolture Group conducted a hazard reduction burn of 300 hectares of bushland at Telstra’s Ningi site. The burn was conducted as a joint exercise involving urban and rural resources.

Rural Fire Brigades from Elimbah, Toorbul, Donnybrook, Mount Mee, Narangba, Wamuran and Meldale attended. Urban resources came from Caboolture and Kemp Place Fire Stations and included a communications vehicle, a Yankee (urban light attack), a ladder platform, a water tanker and 2 urban pumpers. Air Operations supplied a Helitack water bomber for the day. A representative from Plantations Queensland also attended.

IZone Officer Gary McCormack, from Brisbane Region, acted as Incident Controller of the joint rural / urban I.M.T. The day was a great success with everyone working together to achieve a positive result. The target of reducing fuel loadings by 70% was exceeded after a slow start due to higher than expected humidity.

Acting Area Director Rural Operations Caboolture Area Peter Varley said more joint exercises involving hazard reduction burns were planned for the future. He praised the efforts and professionalism of everyone involved and thanked all the agencies involved for their cooperation and support.
S Bend Rural Fire Brigade

S Bend Rural Fire Brigade would like to thank Newmont Pajingo, who donated $18,500 to the Brigade for the purchase of the new appliance pictured above.

On the truck from the back: Geoff Small, Jim Kleinschmidt (in cap) Pam Coan, Terry Coan
On ground from the left: Jane Newton, Daryll Mulgrue (From the S Bend RFB), Fiona Lowe and Bill Baird (Newmont Pajingo Community Liaison Officers) Francois Hardie (General Manager Operations, Newmont Pajingo) and Neil Newton (S Bend RFB 1st Officer)

Caboolture Charity Bowls Day

Rural Fire Brigades from the Caboolture Area (Brisbane Region) got together on the 25th of November for a barefoot bowls day to raise money for the Burns, Trauma and Critical Care Research Centre at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital.

The Caboolture Sports Club kindly donated the use of their facilities for the day which included bowling greens, cooking equipment and bowls. A team from the Bribie Island Police Station represented QPS on the day. Money was raised from raffles, donations and food sales amounting to $1560.00. Local business donated prizes and the Caboolture Sports Club donated a signed South Sydney NRL jersey which will be auctioned at a function at the Versace Hotel on the Gold Coast.

Acting Area Director Peter Varley was MC for the day and said the organising committee had done a great job making the event a success. A good time was had by all who attended. It is now planned to make this an annual fundraising event.
Maraka Procession 2007

In October 2007 Bambaroo and Toobanna Rural Fire Brigades displayed their fire appliance (Bambaroo 41) and Training Trailer when participating in the local annual festive celebration – Maraka. While the volunteers of Abergowrie, Bambaroo and Toobanna had some fun operating the appliance, trailer and knapsacks, it was also an effective way to demonstrate to the public how our fire fighting resources are used.

First Rural Fire Care Peer Support Officers

Helaine Clerk (Bambaroo Brigade, Townsville) and Nelly Baron (S Bend Brigade, Charters Towers) have been successfully inducted as two of the first five rural Peer Support Officers for Fire Care.

Fire Care is a service that is provided to all Queensland Firefighters allowing them to talk to a peer support officer (who is fellow firefighter) about the stresses of being a firefighter or the problems they are experiencing in life. Peer Support Officers undertake a week long training course at Surfair on the Sunshine Coast where they are taught about the Roles of a Peer Support Officer, how Fire Care operates and about Critical Incident Stress Management. All five volunteers are now back in their regions and are ready to assist their fellow firefighters.
Regional Updates

Brisbane Region

The current extremes of the weather across the continent are highlighted by the activities of Regional and Area staff in the recent months. ATSO Richard Lohse was deployed to South Australia during December to assist with the control and containment of fires on Kangaroo Island. Richard was deployed initially in the IMT and then to on ground co-ordination.

In January I was deployed to Central Queensland to assist EMQ with the incident management of flooding in Emerald and surrounding areas. At its peak the Nogoa River was four metres over the spillway of the Fairburn dam which was impounding in excess of 350 000 mega litres of water.

Congratulations are due to the volunteers from the Caboolture area who were recognised for their contribution through Australia Day Awards. Those recognised were Graham Smith and Crystal Peters. Graham is the Caboolture Group Officer and First Officer of the Narangba Brigade. Graham has been a driving force in the Caboolture Group and worked tirelessly to progress the development of the Narangba command vehicle.

Crystal has been a tireless member of the Stoney Creek brigade and well deserves the recognition given to her. Crystal’s effort at providing nourishment at incidents and at other Group and brigade activities is well received by an appreciative clientele. Well done and well deserved to Graham and Crystal and to all recipients of the awards.

ATSO Eric Lanham and ATSO Richard Lohse are completing the establishment of the Area Training programme which will provide the basis of the future training delivery in the Area. I commend both Officers and the group and brigade trainers who have embraced the concept and are now working to provide the opportunities for the brigade members to attain their required competencies.

Peter Varley remains as the A/Area Director and has continued to forge ahead with operational and administrative changes to improve the effectiveness of Area management and to provide the highest level of support to the groups and brigades.

The position of Area Director Caboolture has now been advertised and after the completion of the selection process a permanent AD will be appointed to that position.

The A/Area Director has been working with Local Government representatives to ensure the rural fire levy collection is considered as part of the Local Authority amalgamations. The aim is to ensure that community benefits that result from the collection are recognised and continued under the new management.

The current prevailing weather conditions will reduce the number and size of any brigade incidents until the latter part of the year. I urge all volunteers to make the most of the opportunities that this brings. Firstly take the opportunity to spend time with your family and enjoy some well earned time out, secondly take advantage of the training opportunities that will be available to improve your personal and operational skills.

Superintendent Bernard Trembath
Regional Manager Rural Operations
Brisbane Region.

Northern Region

“It’s going to be an early and big wet season” was a prediction of the Hinchinbrook cane farmers back in June 2007. It appears they were right. Early storms in the north west and significant rain toward the coast has been a feature since the last Bulletin. Many areas have received above average rainfall so far, and it hasn’t stopped yet. The rains have changed the focus of volunteers across the region. In the west it has provided the opportunity to safely burn off rank grass, whilst on the coast it has turned attentions to planning, training and preparations for next season.

Of course the rains don't stop all events that our volunteers respond to. Even with heavy rain falling, a fire onboard a prawn trawler at Karumba required some innovative thinking and cooperation between the Karumba and Normanton Brigades, port managers and the Emergency Response Team from Zinifex Mines. The fire took hold mid afternoon on a Friday whilst the trawler was alongside the wharf undergoing some maintenance. The vessel was quickly evacuated. Port managers protected exposures by moving other vessels, whilst brigade members commenced containment of the fire.

Charters Towers Area BTSO, Tony Stroud was in Karumba to deliver a training session to the brigade. Tony assumed control of the fire and organised for the Zinifex Mines Emergency Response Team to assist using their skills in breathing apparatus and structural firefighting to extinguish the fire. Once the fire was extinguished, Normanton Brigade members remained on scene to monitor the fire during the night. The scene was declared safe early the next day and handed back to the port managers. The challenges faced, and the level of cooperation has lead to a much closer partnership between Zinifex Mines and the local rural fire brigades.

Staffing of the Regional and Area Offices has had some further change. The position of Regional Manager Rural Operations for the Northern Region has been filled with the permanent appointment of Steve Barber from February 15. Steve has an extensive fire service career at middle and senior management with terms in Learning and Development (District Officer – TFS), Operations (District Officer - TFS Hobart Southern) and in Queensland as the Operational Preparedness project officer in FNR, the IZone Officer and of late, acting as AD Rural Ops Cairns and Regional Manager FNR. Steve possess a range of qualifications such as a Grad Cert in Applied Management, Advanced Diploma in Firefighting Management, Workplace Training & Assessment, Forestry Fire Management, Air Attack Supervisor and is a National Instructor in AIIMS. The staff and volunteers of Northern Region welcome Steve to the position and look forward to working under his direction.

Over the past six months the Area Director position in Townsville has been ably managed by Barry Heilbron and Brian Dale, two very experienced Area Training and Support Officers. Their work within the Area has provided the opportunity for Brian and Barry to expand their horizons whilst also bringing new ideas to the volunteers and staff of Townsville.
Central Region

The extensive rain experienced across Central Region, from Airlie Beach out to Emerald and then further to Longreach and the Barcoo has been a mixed blessing. It certainly has put an end to the fire season but has also brought new roles for Rural Brigades and Rural Operations staff.

Many Rural Brigades have been involved in local flood responses, for example Gemfields RFB assisted with motor vehicle and flood rescue as the township was cut off from outside assistance. 10 crews from Keppel Group, and Port Curtis Group volunteered to assist cleanup in the Emerald area after the floods in January but were not required as the locals dealt with the cleanup themselves.

With the end of the festive season and New Year the training for rural brigades is firing up again. An intensive program of fire fighter minimum skills training, crew leader and AIIMS training enthusiastically being taken up by brigades.

In 2008 we are planning to run some local group exercises to reinforce the skills that have been acquired through training, culminating with a major exercise in Mount Larcom in the first week in May.

In the Australia Day Awards, Central Region was delighted to have Carole Flintham recognised for her outstanding work in introducing the WH&S Zero Harm program into the Bouldercombe brigade. In doing this she has demonstrated the example of the implementation of the important program at brigade level. Ian Birbeck from Agnes Water RFB was recognised by QFRS for his outstanding efforts in improving the radio communication program in the Miriam Vale area. Alan Johnson ATSO Emerald was recognised for his efforts in supporting and training the Woorabinda RFB members, and for developing a dynamic and effective training network in this diverse community.

Not wishing to look a gift horse in the mouth, but the Central western country has responded to the rains incredibly well and has some fantastic grass growth across land that has been drought affected in the last 10 years. While this is great news for pastoralists it will provide ample opportunity for hazard reduction burning in the coming fire season and no doubt present a challenge on those hot and dry days for rural brigades in the central region.

Superintendent John Fisher
Regional Manager Rural Operations
Central Region
North Coast Region

The wet weather has certainly dampened the fire season this year, which has allowed plenty of time to prepare early for next fire season, and catch up on housekeeping and maintenance.

I would like to pass on my congratulations to Bundaberg Area Director Tony Johnstone, who was the inaugural winner of the ZeroHarm Excellence in Safety Leadership Award with the Australia Day Awards this year. Tony has embraced the ZeroHarm initiative, and he and his staff have actively promoted this through Bundaberg Area.

Maryborough Area Brigades have been incorporating promotion of community safety, and spreading the Prepare Stay and Defend or Go Early message within their communities and through combined brigade activities.

On Sunday 18 December 2007 the Poona Rural Fire Brigade hosted the Poona Golden Bell Trophy event. This challenge is held annually at the Poona Firies Family Fun Day between brigades from surrounding areas.

The Poona Golden Bell Trophy/Challenge was instigated in 2006 and is an initiative of the Poona Rural Fire Brigade to promote community awareness and develop teamwork between the brigades. Brigades from Maryborough, Hervey Bay and Woocoo Shires attended and competed in this trophy event.

The challenge commences with the ringing of The Bell. All participants dress in full PPE turnout gear and run to their respective brigade appliance. The appliance travels 100 metres with lights and sirens on. The crew disembarks and a volunteer runs out the hose to a length of 30 metres and attaches the branch. The objective at this point is to get ‘water on’ and knock over a chair with a jet of water. The teams then ‘make up’, which means rolling up the hoses and re-stowing the equipment. The first team back to the appliance is the winner. The Golden Bell Trophy was won by Poona Rural Fire Brigade, a great victory for the host team.

One of a number of Australia Day celebrations held across the region this year was co-ordinated by the Tiaro Group and held in Gundiah on Australia Day. The Tiaro Group consists of 13 brigades from within the Shire.

Activities on the day included provision of information to the community on fire permits and property protection, face painting for the children, and hose drill demonstrations for the entertainment of the public.

Rural Operations Maryborough supported the event with the Regional Training Trailer, providing an audio visual display on fire safety and volunteer recruitment.

Staff also utilised the wildfire simulator, to provide a demonstration to the public and brigade members on fire behaviour and strategies to protect their properties.

On Saturday 26 October 2007, the North Maroochy Group from the Caloundra area conducted a group exercise. The North Maroochy Group consists of nine brigades from within the Shire.

This was a hazard reduction of some 300 hectares at the Malibu farms behind Coolum on the Sunshine Coast. The exercise was extremely well run with a full IMT and with all brigades in the group participating. Staff from the Caloundra Area Office attended along with 52 firefighters, 18 appliances, and 10 personnel in the IMT.

The objective was not only Hazard Reduction but to also kill off a large amount of groundsel in the area. This exercise also tested the Group’s capability of managing a large scale wildfire. All objectives were met to make the exercise a very successful day.

Steve Barber
Acting Regional Manager
North Coast Region

A firefighter in action
Good rainfall has been recorded across the region during late December and January providing an end to the fire season and relief for many brigades on the tablelands that were kept busy with numerous fires and escaped hazard reduction burns late in the season. Croydon RFB was involved in assisting a HAZMAT team from Cairns when a major chlorine leak occurred at the towns water supply depot. In a gesture very much appreciated by the Officer in Charge, the brigade kindly offered the use of their appliance to assist the urban team with water supply and fire protection.

Training and support to brigade members continues to be a priority, with staff dedicating many hours and weekend work to achieving goals set in our training plans. Two more Crew Leader courses were held with a further three courses, including one on Horn Island to assist our island brigades, scheduled in the next few months. To assist with the delivery of FM-1 training and specialist subjects, Cairns Peninsula Area now has eight more accredited volunteer trainers and we welcome Lee Crimmins, Barry Keal, Grant Philp, Joe Torrisi, Mick Blackman, John Kenna, Elizah Wasaga, Rodney Bertei and Frank Fegatalli to the Far Northern training team.

Training is not just restricted to volunteers. All regional operational staff have just completed a Work Health and Safety Officers course in Cairns to ensure we are complying with legislation and providing a safe working practices in Rural Operations.

In an effort to enhance service delivery to the western parts of Innisfail Area, Area Director Ian Atherton has implemented an initiative where all operational staff have regular scheduled tours of the western brigades. Training, stocktakes and brigade support are offered and brigades and Fire Wardens are encouraged to make contact with Ian and his team to arrange for a visit for their next scheduled trip out of Innisfail.

Thanks to some hard work by brigade members and with support from grants and the RFBAQ, the region has taken delivery of two new medium appliances. Stoney Batter and Wats Bakerville are now the proud owners of new medium appliances, significantly improving our response capability and support into developing rural areas.

Local Action Plans (LAP’s) have been developed for the communities of Narcotic Creek and Koah. These plans will assist in reducing the impact of wild fires on these communities. The LAPs have been developed by Rural and Urban Fire Officers in conjunction with residents of these communities. Thanks to BTSO Brett Weston for his work in developing these plans to assist in determining a range of strategies to be implemented to improve community safety and operational effectiveness.

Following on from the success of Julatten RFB at the Regional Championships, West Cape RFB has nominated to participate in the Far Northern Road Crash Rescue Challenge. West Cape brigade with support from Rio Tinto Mines Rescue Service provide emergency response to the remote roads and parts of the town of Weipa on the Cape. The brigade is training hard and has welcomed the offers of support from urban firefighters in the region to prepare for the event.

To assist with operation of Incident Management Teams, urban and rural Officers completed a 16 hour Incident Management Systems course held at Cairns. The Admin Officers are valuable contributors to our operations and support to the fireground and it was good to see the enthusiasm displayed in ensuring the correct forms and processes were used to make the IMS exercise operate effectively. Some sources believe the course tested the instructors as much as the participants with all the girls keeping the instructors on their toes.

Congratulations to Steve Birch, 1st officer Kuranda Myola Rural Fire Brigade, on receiving an Australia Day medallion. Steve provides assistance to the Cairns Peninsula Area office as a volunteer and casual trainer and received his award for “successful implementation of training and increasing fire safety awareness to several indigenous brigades on the islands of the Torres Strait throughout 2007.”

In recognition of his fire management skills, Innisfail ATSO Brendan Ridgwell was sent to Kangaroo Island South Australia, with the QFRS contingent to assist with the bushfires. ATSO Brendan Ridgwell is currently acting as AD for Charters Towers and Cloncurry for a period of three months. To support EMQ with the Air Operations at Emerald and Clermont Floods, Cairns Peninsula BTSO Brett Weston and I travelled to Clermont to manage air operations for supply of fodder and equipment to farmers and stock isolated with the floods.

In staff movements, thank you to Inspector Tony Hazell for his time in the region as Acting Area Director Cairns Peninsula and in particular his efforts in helping to establish a regional training plan with the ATSOs and BTSOs. Bryan Cifuentes has returned from his 12 months leave of absence on 5 February 2008 and we welcome Bryan back from his sabbatical and look forward to him bringing all his skills and knowledge to keep developing Rural Operations in the region and supporting our volunteers.

Superintendent Ian Thomas
Regional Manager Rural Operations
Far Northern Region
South West Region Update

The Christmas/New Year holiday period has been and gone (hope you all had a great one) and some staff have settled into the New Year well and truly by now. Others have the fortunate situation of taking annual recreation leave at this time and are due back shortly. South West Region had the following staff on leave and this has allowed others to act in the higher position. Staff on leave were Chris Artiemiew, ATSO Roma, Mike Smith, ADRO Miles/Roma and Wayne Waltisbuhl, Regional Manager, South West.

Col Neal, BTSO Roma, was relieving as the ATSO Roma while Chris was relieving Mike Smith and then on leave. The Regional Managers position has been filled by myself (Bruce Ehrlich) and Brian Cook, ATSO Toowoomba, has been doing the ADRO Toowoomba position. Alan Beaver was employed for four weeks to assist with training and support during this period.

During December the fires on Kangaroo Island South Australia had considerable press and Wayne Waltisbuhl and Chris Artiemiew went as part of a Queensland Incident Management Team to provide relief for the southern firefighters. From all reports the Queensland Incident Management Team did a great job in identifying the large number of resources on the ground and showed how far advanced our AIIMS/IMS training has progressed.

The drought still continues in parts of the South West Region in spite of the big rains from Roma west. The eastern Darling Downs has only received persistent showers and very little in the water supply dams. The big rains over the Warrego River catchments caused some severe flooding in the area in and around Charleville and Rural Brigades assisted in the emergency response and clean-up. Nick Swadling from the Charleville South brigade and his members did a great job and worked tirelessly to support the emergency response teams.

The new VHF repeater in the Amiens area of Stanthorpe is up and running to provide coverage in a previously black spot area for Rural Operations. This repeater complements the other three in the border ranges area of Warwick and Stanthorpe for fireground operations.

Training for the region has focused on Fire Management 1 over this period as most brigades have had a break over this holiday period (low fire danger). Planning is well under way for four regional Crew Leader courses to be held at Leslie Dam before June. Nominations for these courses have been well received and the first two are full with five participants from Miles Area and seven from Toowoomba Area. Also planned is a five day AIIMS-IMS course for staff and volunteers in April/May to help fix a problem of a lack of trained IMT staff. 24 places on this course are available with at least half being made available to volunteers. Staff that currently have this accreditation have been upgrading their skills in Operations Officer, Planning Officer, and Logistics Officer courses being run at Regional Training Anzac Ave. Toowoomba.

Acting Superintendent Bruce Ehrlich
Acting Regional Manager Rural Operations
South West Region

Australia Day celebrations this year were an auspicious occasion for the South West Region. Six of our volunteers and one staff member received awards at various celebrations around the South West.

I would like to congratulate the following staff and volunteers who were awarded Australia Day Medallions:

- Mal Stacey, 1st Officer of Gladfield Maryvale Rural Fire Brigade and Group Officer for Warwick Group, received the award for dedication to his brigade and group.
- Mike Heinemann and Melinda Windsor, both from Bennett Rural Fire Brigade near Tara, received their award for their dedication to training and their brigade.
- Brian Cook, Area Training and Support Officer from Toowoomba, received his award for his dedication and commitment towards the successful management of training in the Toowoomba Area.
- Adrian Chamberlain, 1st Officer of Gowrie Little Plains Rural Fire Brigade, received a life time achievement award for his dedication to the community from the Rosalie Shire Council.
- Mrs Lenore Gray from Kyeen Rural Fire Brigade near Surat received the Citizen of the Year award from the Warroo Shire Council.
- Mrs Margaret Munday of Stirling Rural Fire Brigade near Roma received the same from the Bungil Shire Council.

Congratulations to you all.

Michael Heinemann and Melinda Windsor receiving their award from the Attorney General, The Honourable Kerry Shine and Mr Gary Taylor, acting Executive Director, Business Support Services.
Regional Updates

Mal Stacey and Brian Cook showing their medallions and Adrian Chamberlain show his Life time achievement award.

South Eastern Region

Another year gone and hopefully all enjoyed the festive season and wet weather that offered us all some relief over the past few months. Areas of South Eastern Region experienced extremely heavy rain, which produced more heart break for some, while other areas would love the rain to continue to complete the run off into the catchments.

Although fire activity is currently quiet, we should not become complacent in preparing for the future. Opportunities exist for all brigades to identify areas of concern and implement plans to either alleviate the risk or prepare plans on how best to address future emergency issues within their brigade areas. Congratulations to the Groups in the western areas of the region for their proactive work in meeting with all QFRS personnel to discuss how to better address future involvement within their areas. Now is also the ideal time to be meeting and developing networks with the Fire Wardens in all areas. Preparation for all facets of fire control will better equip us for any fire seasons which may lie ahead. The Ipswich Area Office will be able to assist any brigade wishing to develop LAP’S (Local Action Plans) or any other community safety activity in which brigades wish to participate.

Coomera Valley Officer, Brett Bain, recently attended the AFAC Volunteer Leadership Program conducted at AIPM Sydney and spoke highly of the experience gained and networks built during this program. I urge all brigade members who desire to enhance their leadership skills to nominate for attendance at this course. Information for this course can be obtained by contacting the Area Office. The upcoming Volunteers Conference to be conducted in the North Coast Region also offers the opportunity for Volunteers to view and discuss future developmental plans for QFRS Rural Operations.

Finally let’s hope the season remains good and all keep safe.

Steve Crouch
Regional Manager
South Eastern Region
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