stop bushfire arson

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Content

QFFS takes breaches seriously during total Fire Bans 4
Volunteer Bushfire Investigators 5
The Fuel Reduction Burning Debate - Part 1 6
Construction of buildings in bushfire prone areas (AS 3959-2009) 7
Grassland Curing Project 7
RFS Youth Update 8-9
Bushfire CRC Extension – new directions in bushfire research 10
Expanding Spatial Technologies 11
Radio Communications 12
Appliance Update 13-14
Volunteer Community Educator Co-ordinator 15
Review of the Permit to Light Fire and Fire Warden role 16-17
Flexible Learning 18-19
Fire Danger Rating Signs for Queensland Communities 20
Neighbourhood Safer Places Update 20
QFRS Training Awards 2010 21
Olga Wilson Firefighters Trust 22
Sponsorship Update 23-25
Gracemere Rural Fire Brigade 26
Diligent and Ethical Service Medal Presentation 26
New Reporting Form RF14C 27
New Standing Order – Fitness for Duty: Alcohol and Other Drugs 29
Air Operations 30
On 9 February next year we mark the second anniversary of the Black Saturday fires that claimed 173 lives and devastated numerous Victorian communities. This tragic occurrence challenged the paradigm in which Australian fire agencies and the general public operate and live within as related to bushfire preparedness, response and recovery. The Royal Commission, established just one week after the fires, scrutinised and deliberated over these aspects for the 18 months that they sat. Over this period, the Royal Commission produced two interim reports and one final report that in total produced a multitude of findings and a large number of recommendations.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) has implemented the majority of the recommendations contained within the interim report with our main focus being on the introduction of the new fire danger ratings, the PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE. (PAS) campaign and the National Framework for community messaging. Within Queensland, two significant strategies have been introduced to assist us manage and rollout these new concepts. The first being the introduction of seven Mitigation and Education Officers (MEOs) to the staff structure of QFRS whilst the other has been very much a key driver in delivering community education messages locally by our Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs). The MEOs essentially have a two pronged role in which they not only support our VCEs but they also work strategically to identify and coordinate fuel reduction campaigns with land holders be they Government or private. The likelihood of a very mild fire season this year has not dampened the enthusiasm of our MEOs or VCEs, this lull in activity allowing them to promote the key PAS messages further. I am pleased to acknowledge that we now have over 200 VCEs across the State and they have taken on their role with purpose, pride and dedication.

Our focus, following the release of the final report is to examine the Commission’s 67 recommendations for applicability to Queensland noting that a number are Victorian centric relating to organisational or State specifics that have little or no bearing on Queensland. Broadly speaking, the main focus of the final report was to examine bushfire safety, incident management, response and planning, and land/fuel management. An across (Qld) Government Interdepartmental Committee was established by our Department (Dept of Community Safety) with membership from Police, Dept’s of Environment and Resource Management, Education, Transport and Main Roads, Premier and Cabinet, etc. Our charter is to review the recommendations, the basis to them and how they could relate to Queensland, presenting our deliberations to Government for their information, endorsement and implementation.

Until next time, be safe and take care.

Steve Rothwell AFSM
Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

At the time of writing this, I am drawn to think of the region of extremes we live within, for at this time we have just experienced major flooding across most of the Eastern States, earthquakes in New Zealand and the threat of locust and mice plagues within Queensland and NSW. At this time of year we usually see most agencies positioning themselves for the start of the fire season whereas this season it appears that our focus will be on almost everything but fire.
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service takes breaches seriously during total Fire Bans

During the fire season last year it was reported that numerous non permitted burns escaped and became uncontrolled wildfires. Many of these non permitted burns and wildfires came to the attention of fire investigators and where evidence was able to be substantiated, fines or court action was instigated.

One example was a landholder from the North Coast region who was recently prosecuted through the Magistrates Court for burning off during a Fire Ban in November 2009. The individual involved was fined $500 for undertaking this activity even though the individual claimed he was unaware of the total fire ban at the time.

This should serve as a timely reminder that with the introduction of the declared Fire Danger Period there is a requirement to obtain a permit to burn for fires less then 2m in any direction.

Rural Brigade Officers should be aware of the differences between a declared Fire Danger Period and a total fire ban being:

**Fire Danger Period**

A Fire Danger Period can be declared by the QFRS Commissioner during parts of the year when conditions make the control and management of fires difficult and communities are at increased risk of bushfire. During a Fire Danger Period there are some changes to the requirements for issue of a permit and to those fires that may be exempt. A declared Fire Danger Period is advised through local media and on the Rural Fire Service (RFS) website [www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au](http://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au)

**Fire Emergencies (Local Fire Bans)**

If there is a high fire danger in part or all of the State, the QFRS Commissioner may issue a local Fire Ban restricting certain fires in all or part of the State.

When a local Fire Ban is issued, no fires may be lit other than those specifically referred to in the Fire Ban Notice and in the circumstances described in the Fire Ban Notice.

The declaration of a State of Fire Emergency imposes similar or increased restrictions and prohibitions on lighting fires to a Local Fire Ban; however this period carries significantly increased penalties.

Local Fire Bans and a State of Fire Emergency are advised through local media, on the RFS website at [www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au](http://www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au) and on the Fire Ban Information Line on 1800 020 440.

Rural Brigade Officers are strongly encouraged to report any activities that breach the imposed legislation to your firecomm in the first instance and your Area Director Rural Operations for investigation.
Volunteer Bushfire Investigators

BUSHFIRE ARSON IS A PROBLEM WHICH AFFECTS ALL AUSTRALIANS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE WHO RESIDE IN RURAL AND I-ZONE AREAS.

The devastation which can occur affects whole communities and recovery is never quick or easy. To increase our capability in bushfire arson prevention and bushfire investigation, QFRS is increasing its capability to investigate the cause of bush fires by increasing the number of qualified QFRS fire investigators across the State. Each QFRS region now has several qualified bushfire investigators available to investigate the cause of a bushfire. Selected Rural Operations Officers will also receive advanced wildfire investigation skills as a new National course becomes available.

This capacity will further be boosted through the introduction of Volunteer Bushfire Investigators. A number of Volunteers will soon be trained as bushfire investigators to strengthen our existing network of qualified investigators across Queensland. Volunteer Bushfire Investigators will undergo a 5 day training program that specialises in detecting the origin and cause of a bushfire. In addition to the extra training these volunteers also make a commitment to maintaining their competency through investigating fires or by attending refresher training.

The Volunteer Bushfire Investigator will work as part of the QFRS fire investigators network and conduct and assist in bushfire cause determination when requested. They also have a vital role in raising community awareness amongst other volunteers and the community on bushfire arson issues and as such helping to better protect community lives and assets. The volunteers we are looking for are those who have a good knowledge of fire behaviour and are committed to reducing the occurrences and impacts of bushfire arson in their area and have successfully completed the Crew Leader Program. Considerable work has been put into finalising the Volunteer Bushfire Scene Investigator roles with a target of recruiting 30 positions by June 2011. A nomination process will be launched for the position in the coming month and further information will follow through the Volunteer Portal and Area Offices. If you think that profile fits you and you wish to apply to become a Volunteer Bushfire Investigator check the details on the Volunteer Portal or contact your Area Office.

Rural Operations Senior Officers will also undertake training which will provide the skills and authorisation to issue on the spot infringement notices for breaches under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, such as the unauthorised lighting of fires or a breach of fire permit conditions.

PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE.

Are You Bushfire Prepared?

The PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE. (PAS) message is being widely disseminated throughout Queensland communities using a range of promotional materials, radio and TV advertisements, newspaper articles and community presentations facilitated by our Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs).

Although the weather patterns across the State have not been conducive for bushfires, VCE’s have been actively working within their local communities spreading the PAS messages. Initial research has shown promising results and people are becoming familiar with contemporary terminology including:

- Bushfire Survival Plan
- Neighbourhood Safer Place
- Fire Danger Rating
- Fire Danger Period

The VCE network is constantly expanding across the State, and the subsequent increased opportunity for Queensland Fire and Rescue Service engagement with local communities, PAS will continue to spread and become an accepted household message in Queensland. If you would like to learn more about PAS or becoming a VCE visit the Volunteer Portal or the Rural Fire website, alternatively contact your regional Mitigation Education Officer (MEO).
The Fuel Reduction Burning Debate – PART 1

Over the years, the practice of Fuel Reduction Burning (FRB), has created much discussion amongst fire managers and scientists. Then came Victoria's catastrophic Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009. These fires and the Royal Commission established to investigate the events moved the FRB debate more into the public domain, creating regular headlines in major newspapers and television stations around the country. The recent discussions on climate change and carbon emissions further exacerbated already heated debates on the management of bushfires, fire causes and FRB. The following article is the start of a series which explores the arguments of the more recent discussions around the FRB debate.

A brief history

Prescribed burning in Australia has a long history which started with Indigenous Australians deliberately using fire to survive in this harsh environment. Then came the European colonisation where ‘firestick farming’ (the clearing of land using fire) was common practice, particularly in the early days of settlement. A rapid growth in townships and growing rural communities brought on a shift in the attitudes of government and communities towards use of fire and the management of bushfires in general. The establishment of the Forestry Department in the early 1900’s introduced the practice of creating firebreaks. Although initially created primarily for timber protection, they inadvertently went some way to protect property. However, what they did not do is address the problem of fuel build-up. The results were some devastating bushfires, such as the 1961 Dwellingup fires in Western Australia that burnt 1.8M hectares of land and destroyed 160 buildings.

To try to deal with high fuel loads, broad scale prescribed burning was used from the 1950s until the early 1980’s. By the mid1980s there was growing concern from some conservation movements of the effect of broad scale burning on biodiversity. Since that time, there has been increased community acceptance that Australia’s biodiversity assets amount to more than scenic amenity and their values need to be protected by effective fire management.

The FRB Debate

Prescribed burning to reduce fuel levels while at the same time conserving biodiversity is a balancing act and fuel reduction burning strategies in many areas are a trade-off between protecting biodiversity and reducing fuel loads. This started to create significant debate between fire managers, scientists and the conservation movement. Over time the FRB debate seems to have developed more and more along ideological grounds where those concerned about the environmental effects of too-frequent fires questioned the motives of those, intent on widespread and frequent hazard reduction burning.

Decades of research in Australia and fire management practices have shown that fuel reduction burning, under the right conditions, is the only practical and efficient way to control high-intensity forest fires. To quote one of many similar statements published: “Without prescribed burning to manage the build-up of flammable vegetation, other strategies to reduce the impacts of wildfires – such as detection and suppression – will be less effective or will fail (Dr Neil Burrows, Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia).

As effective as FRB may be in reducing fuel, it’s effectiveness in limiting bushfire damage can be highly variable and is dependent on a wide range of factors. These include the number of years since the area was last burnt, the size of the burn area and its configuration and the degree of fuel reduction achieved. Other contributing factors are land tenure (privately or State managed lands), the bushfire preparedness of the landowners and the prevailing weather conditions that drive the bushfire and its consequent intensity. Considering all these factors it becomes apparent that FRB, as claimed by some, is not the magic bullet that guarantees the protection of life and property during bushfires.

Nevertheless, there is plenty of documented evidence that FRB does have a range of benefits. This includes communities that are located in close proximity to recently fuel reduced forests which have a better chance of emerging unscathed from bushfire than communities adjacent to unburnt forests that have heavy fuel accumulations. Secondly, bushfires passing through fuel reduced forests will have lower environmental impacts causing less damage to soil, water and wildlife compared to high intensity fires burning in heavy fuel accumulations. And finally, it is generally easier and safer to conduct fire-fighting operations in fuel reduced forests than in forests with a heavy fuel accumulation.

All these factors support the argument that FRB is a valuable risk mitigation tool and not designed to totally eliminate the risks posed by bushfires to people and property, as claimed by some. In the March 2011 issue of the Rural Fire Bulletin we’ll further explore issues around the FRB discussion, especially in relation to severe fire events.
In February 2009 Victoria endured Australia’s worst ever natural disaster, with the devastating bushfires claiming 173 lives and destroying more than 2000 properties.

The Victorian Government took immediate action to rebuild and better protect communities in the wake of the devastating bushfires. Despite the establishment of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission it was necessary to take immediate action to give certainty to people rebuilding in bushfire-prone areas and to lay out a clear framework for new homes including alterations and additions.

To ensure certainty the Australian Standard for the construction of buildings in bushfire prone areas AS 3959-1999 was reviewed and re-issued as AS 3959-2009 in March 2009.

The AS3959-2009 specifies requirements for the construction of buildings to improve their survivability to bushfire attack from burning embers, radiant heat and flame contact and combinations of those three impacts. Applying the new construction standards will increase the level of protection for the house however the dynamic and unpredictable nature of bush fires means that there are no guarantees of survivability.

Improved construction standards achieved as a result of the application of AS3959-2009 will not by themselves provide all the necessary protection from bushfire. Property owners, residents and local governments working with firefighting agencies need to apply a higher level of planning, building location, mitigation and landscaping to reduce their risk. Also the wider community and individuals must play their part by accepting their responsibility for a level of planning and preparation that respects the bush fire risk in their area.

Grassland Curing Project

In 2004 the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) commenced a project using remote sensing and satellite images to determine grassland curing and produce a curing index for all grasslands throughout Australia and New Zealand.

QFRS Rural Operations staff and volunteers have been part of the project from the early stages, including the latest pilot trial to test the new grassland curing system.

This commenced in July 2009 and was scheduled to run throughout the 2009–10 fire season. During the pilot trial period, CRC researchers have been working with Rural Operations and other Australian fire and land management agencies to refine the system so that it meets the expectations of end users.

For more information on the grassland curing project please visit www.bushfirecrc.com.au.

(check Program A: Safe Prevention, Preparation and Suppression. (A1.4 – Improved Methods for Assessment and Prediction of Grassland Curing).)
**Griffith Volunteer Experience Fair**

In August 2010 Rural Operations staff attended the Griffith Volunteer Experience Fair held on the Gold Coast. The Fair was designed to showcase a range of volunteer organisations to both domestic and international students.

Brigade Training and Support Officer, Clinton Neumann, from Ipswich attended the event to provide advice and a wealth of knowledge about the Rural Fire Service to potential volunteers.

We received strong interest and enquiries from students regarding volunteer opportunities in RFS and how they can become active volunteers. To date, the South East region has welcomed a number of these students into their brigades.

Universities and Career Expos are a fantastic way to promote and recruit volunteers within the youth demographic. Make contact with your local Universities, TAFE colleges and other education institutions to promote volunteer roles within RFS.

**Australian Agricultural College**

A strong partnership has been developed between the Australian Agricultural College (ACC) Emerald campus and QFRS Rural Operations Emerald/Barcaldine area to promote Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteer opportunities amongst students of ACC.

In 2008 Rural Operations conducted their first recruitment drive to encourage young students of ACC to become volunteers for the RFS. This was extremely successful with 11 students taking up the challenge to complete their Firefighter Minimum Skills (FMS) training. The training provided students with practical experience through hazard reduction burning of stacks and paddocks as well as call outs to assist the RFBs.

During 2010 there was an increase in volunteer’s numbers with 15 students from ACC joining the RFS. These students completed their FMS training and have been involved with helping their local communities with hazard reduction burns. Not only have these young volunteers been actively involved in assisting their communities but they also participated in the Central Region Rural Fire Fighter games in May 2010. Rural Operations will continue to sustain the partnership developed with ACC Emerald campus and encourage more youth volunteers to join the RFS.

**Northern Youth Summit 2011**

In early 2010 Rural Operations conducted a Youth Summit in South East Queensland to survey young volunteers on their experiences as volunteer firefighters. Rural Operations is currently planning for a Northern Youth Summit to be held in Townsville, February 2011.

The demographic which Rural Operations has identified as a recruitment issue and are youth aged between 16 to 25 years which they will target through this project. A small but select working group was formed to determine a contemporary approach to researching and analysing the motivation of this age group to take up volunteering. They also explored what environmental factors are required to retain interest and subsequent longer term involvement as volunteers within the RFB structure.

The format and agenda for the summit will be contemporary, engaging and attractive to the target group. This will be achieved through multiple interactive sessions and the use of multi-media and technologies to enable participants to provide feedback to the facilitators on the various mediums that this age group find appealing. The findings from the summit will then be utilised to devise strategies to improve recruitment and retention of volunteers within the Rural Fire Service.

An update on the outcomes of the Northern Youth Summit will be detailed in the Rural Fire Bulletin, March 2011 edition.
Kilcoy Students Graduate

Nine students from Kilcoy State High School were presented with their Certificate II Public Safety Firefighting Operations at the school's recent awards night. The students were extremely proud receiving their certificates as they had worked extremely hard throughout the year in both theoretical and practical aspects of the program.

The program was piloted in Kilcoy this year and following its success will be run out across the State in 2011. Brigade Training and Support Officer, Graham King said he was very proud of the students and their commitment to the outcomes of the program. Each student has been actively involved in their local Rural Fire Brigades, and now are brigade members.

Mr King stated the students have certainly gained competencies in many aspects from their participation in this program. Not only have they developed important skills and learned specific knowledge associated with firefighting, they have developed communication skills and proficiencies for working in a team. The growth of each individual student is certainly a wonderful achievement.

A partnership has been formed between QFRS Rural Operations and the Department of Education and Training to enable students to complete this Certificate as part of their senior studies. Students who graduated will now have an additional four points banked in their learning accounts to contribute towards their Queensland Certificate of Education.

The recently graduated students have indicated they gained so much from working with their local brigades and will definitely continue their membership and training with their local brigades. This influx of younger volunteers into the Rural Fire Service is a great accomplishment.

If you are interested in this initiative please make contact with your local Area Office.

Warwick Youth Group

Toowoomba Brigade Training and Support Officer John Welke recognised that there is difficulty in retaining youth volunteer members in the Rural Fire Service (RFS).

To assist with addressing this issue in the South West region, the Warwick Rural Fire Brigade Group is currently focusing on youth recruitment and retention. It was identified that youth volunteers felt there was no progression for them within the RFS and that they weren’t valued brigade members. To develop a stronger sense of belonging for the youth volunteers the Warwick Group introduced a youth group.

The youth group is made up of 21 volunteers between the age of 16 and 25 within their respective group boundary. Membership to the youth group is rapidly increasing. Within the youth group, members take on roles such as Group Leader, Group Administrator and Group Activity Coordinator with a representative from both the Warwick Group and Rural Operations in attendance to oversee activities.

The youth group is a subset of the Group and not an individual entity, this allows for input and guidance from the overriding Group. The objective of the youth group is to reinforce teamwork and provide both social and training opportunities to our youth brigade members. There is also a view to providing personal development within the Group through introducing the Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting operations) course and developing leadership skills.

Since the formation of the Warwick Group youth group many other Groups have taken an interest in the concept. Stanthorpe Group has recently developed a youth group and Cambooya RFB is looking at a youth group in the near future.
Bushfire CRC Extension – new directions in bushfire research

The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) has been operating since 2003 when the Australian Government showed its support for fire services and land management agencies by establishing the first nationally coordinated centre for bushfire research under its CRC Program.

Following the Victorian Black Saturday bushfires of February 2009 the CRC was given a three year extension of funding to the extent of $15 million from the Australian Government to examine national issues arising from the Black Saturday fires and to examine issues arising from the recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission. This has led to the development of a new research program for the Bushfire CRC with the main research programs concentrated on issues around Understanding Risks, Communicating Risks and Managing the Threat.

Understanding Risks – This program has been developed to gain an understanding of the underlying risk exposure of the community and community values. The program aims to provide a better framework to understand how the risk is manifested and how communities respond, prepare and mitigate the risk in the context of a broader collective framework.

Communicating Risk – This program focuses on the communication of risk and threat, how warnings and information are best communicated and which communications media should be used. Another research focus will be examining the role of community education in relation to community warnings.

Managing the Threat – This program concentrates on issues where the risk has translated into a direct threat. One of the main concentration areas will be to examine extreme events, such as the Black Saturday Bushfires in Victoria as the parameters around these incidents, due to their irregularity, are not well understood.

This new research focus builds on the outputs of the past seven years of Bushfire CRC research to give fire managers and the community better information on preparedness, response and management of severe bushfires.

The CRC research program is scheduled to run until 2013 and QFRS Rural Operations will continue to work closely with CRC researchers and partner agencies to bring relevant research outcomes into our organisation. If you would like to read more about the new CRC research program check out the Bushfire CRC website at www.bushfirecrc.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Project Elements</th>
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</table>
| Understanding Risk | Community Expectations | • Land-use planning  
• Policy inconsistencies  
• Shared responsibility and community safety model  
• Sector change driven by inquiries |
| Risk Assessment and Decision-Making | | • Quantifying risk (triple bottom line)  
• National landscape fire values  
• Infrastructure exposure  
• Interface impact  
• Community health  
• Risk simulation |
| Fuels and Risk Planning in the Interface | | • How are the environmental attributes the community values maintained?  
• Understanding of hazardous fuels  
• What level of fuel reduction is effective?  
• The social construct of the risk in the interface |
| Communicating Risk | Effective Communication | • Segmentation for safety communication  
• The messages  
• How to communicate |
| Human Behaviour Under Stress | | • How to stay safe before, during and after an emergency  
• Psychological evaluation of the construct of risk  
• External influences on individual and community behaviour  
• Evaluation of human behaviour under stress |
| Managing the Threat | Incident Co-ordination | • Co-ordination, control and communication above the IMT  
• Situational awareness  
• Fire behaviour and meteorology under extreme conditions |
| Fire in the Landscape | | • Environmental impacts of prescribed and wild fire  
• Emissions management  
• Water security |
| Suppression, Surge Capacity and OH & S | | • Effectiveness of various suppression resources  
• Surge capacity: ensuring the availability of the right people at the right time  
• Interaction of psychological and physiological responses when managing extreme events |
Expanding Spatial Technologies

Rural Operations staff and volunteers have developed the Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) Mapping Toolset document to provide brigades with information regarding mapping and spatial technologies. It contains detailed operating instructions for the Department’s preferred GPS model and the OziExplorer mapping software, along with information regarding the principles of cartography, spatial data, projections and coordinate systems.

The Toolset document is intended to be a guide for understanding and using maps, spatial data and the technology that is available to capture, manage and utilise spatial data captured during emergency mitigation and response. The Toolset document is available for download via the Volunteer Portal.

In an effort to encourage brigades to utilise their GPS devices and share the operational data they capture in their brigade area, Rural Operations has purchased a number of licenses of the OziExplorer mapping software. This software will allow brigades to conduct the following:

- Download operational data from their GPS devices
- View and edit the data on a laptop
- Print maps showing the operational features they have captured
- Share data with other brigades.

Brigades will also be able to send their data to the QFRS GIS Unit who will integrate this information into a central spatial database. Data will be stored in a secure geodatabase as a historical record of events and provide a valuable tool for lessons learnt and mitigating against future bushfire events.

As a result of positive feedback from a recent Technology Awareness day, Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations decided to offer similar Technology Awareness days in a number of areas across Queensland. The day will provide QFRS staff and volunteers with the opportunity to see how the information contained in the Toolset document can be utilised during an actual event. Technologies discussed and demonstrated will include: OziExplorer mapping software, GPS devices, air operations and communications. The training will also include hands on GPS and OziExplorer software training.

As part of this program, a mobile training resource for OziExplorer has been developed to include a training cache of six laptop computers with OziExplorer software. This resource will provide Rural Operations staff and brigade members the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the software and to understand how spatial information can be further used by volunteers and their brigades.

Rural Operations purchased over 200 licenses of the OziExplorer mapping software for distribution to selected RFBs across the State. These licenses will be supplied to brigades at no cost. Rural Operations Area Directors will be responsible for allocating the software licenses to individual brigades. Please contact your Area office if you are a brigade member who is keen to explore how the OziExplorer mapping software can expand the ways in which your brigade uses maps and spatial information.

Keep your eyes peeled for the opportunity to receive more information and training on the exciting technologies available to volunteers.
Radio Communications

Over the past four years Rural Operations has been replacing old radios and ensuring every brigade meets the minimum requirement for radio communications. This process was based on brigade’s receiving the following:

- 2 VHF portables per appliance
- Replace all 100ch VHF mobiles
- Dual fit appliances with VHF and UHF mobiles
- Replace all 100ch VHF portables
- 1 UHF portable per brigade for Izone brigades.

The funding for this five year project was through the 2006 Election Commitment Safeguarding Cyclone Communities whereby significant additional funds have been allocated annually to the Rural Communications Project. Over the past 4 years of the project the following has been supplied to brigades:

- 1511 VHF portable radios
- 280 UHF portable radios
- 614 VHF mobiles
- 79 UHF mobiles
- 25 base radios
- 6 portable repeaters.

Each Area Office completed an audit of the requirements for each brigade under their control at the start of the project and have been placing orders each year to ensure brigades are fully resourced by the completion of the project. To date we have spent just over $3 million on radio communication equipment.

Reprogramming

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Bushfire Strategy has a sub-committee managing interagency radio communications. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Qld Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and Forest Plantations Queensland Pty Ltd (FPQ) are the three organisations who have communication infrastructure that all agencies can use in the VHF mid-band frequency. Over the years the requirements of all agencies to expand their individual networks has seen the VHF program grow. In 2004 we undertook a VHF reprogram of all radios. This being version 3.0 of the VHF radio program which has served us well.

Collaborative working relationships with these organisations and the need to share funding for repeater establishment has seen us expand the network even more. A 1000 channel VHF program has now been designed to capture the entire VHF infrastructure across the state. This now will allow any agency to use any of these channels. It is important to know what the radio communication plan is for your area. Remember that some of the parks and forestry channels are used for everyday work. The use of these channels by QFRS is for wildfire management.

The reprogramming of all QFRS VHF radios commenced in August 2010. Other agencies have also commenced this task and it is planned to have this state-wide multi agency project completed by the end of October 2010.

The make up of the new version 5.0 VHF 1000 channel radio program is listed below.

QLD All Agencies Band Plan—1 July 2010

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<th>Channel</th>
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<tr>
<td>000–099</td>
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<td>QPWS Tech use</td>
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<tr>
<td>900–999</td>
<td>FPQ Tech use</td>
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In August 2010, the South West region was the first to be presented with a new FSR700 Isuzu Rural Tanker. The remaining five tankers built in 2010 have been allocated to Far North, Northern, North Coast, Central and South Eastern regions.

The tankers are a single cab/chassis fitted with a 6000 litre aluminium water tank on the centre of the rear body module, and features the following:

- A Subaru DY42 diesel motor with a Robin twin stage pump including a manually controlled priming device located at the rear of the chassis
- A QuikCorp RFR-w2 QuikReel mounted on the rear nearside of the body tray
- Purpose built equipment lockers in the rear body module to house the required service delivery equipment which include: suction hose, delivery hose and a 12 000 litre portable dam
- A stock of consumables including Personal Protective Equipment items, as well as replacement equipment such as nozzles, drip torches and adaptors.

Rural Tanker

As part of the 2009 Election Commitment “Support Our Heroes” $7.34M has been allocated over four years to the Rural Fire Service for the provision of 14 new rural tankers as well as the retro-fitting of fire curtains and diesel pump-sets to the existing fleet to improve operational capacity.

Rural Appliance 01 will act as a ‘mother ship’ at large wildfire incidents possibly being set up at a convenient location with suitable access for the rural units. This tanker in conjunction with the 91 units now distributed throughout the South West region will increase the firefighting capabilities of the rural brigades.

This unit is presently housed in the Warwick group area at the Freestone Rural Fire Brigade station. Training is being conducted in the Warwick area to assist rural volunteers with the driving, use and maintenance of the new Tanker. It is envisaged that the Tanker will visit all areas of the South West region for training purposes and we encourage all rural volunteers to participate where possible.
The NPS300 DPD is designed to reduce diesel emissions into the atmosphere by filtering the exhaust gases and burning off (regeneration) excess soot which has accumulated. This cleaning process occurs frequently and automatically whilst driving and is recognisable by an indicator on the instrument panel glowing green. When this light is activated you should continue driving and after 20-30 minutes the cleaning process will be complete and the green light will go out.

However, there are circumstances such as extended idling and frequent stop and go driving which may lower the DPD temperature not allowing the automatic regeneration to occur. If this happens, an amber caution light on the instrument panel may flash slowly to indicate that the filter is partially clogged. In this case, you are required to park the appliance in a safe area, leave the motor running and press the DPD switch. The manual regeneration will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. If this manual regeneration is not completed and the vehicle continues to be operated the DPD will continue to accumulate particulate matter and become further clogged.

When the amber indicator light is flashing quickly, it means that the DPD filter is severely clogged and you are urged to park the vehicle in a safe position and commence the full manual regeneration process. A warning light is located on the pump control panel to indicate that the engine requires a manual regeneration.

NOTE
Brigade members must undertake DPD training as soon as practical after receiving their new appliance to ensure they have a thorough understanding of the DPD system and correct operation.

Isuzu Medium Appliances – Diesel Particulate Diffuser

The current Isuzu truck range, including the NPS300 model used for the current medium appliance uses a diesel particulate diffuser (DPD) system to meet the required emission standards.

While Isuzu currently uses a DPD system to control exhaust emissions, from 01 January 2011, the introduction of new more demanding emission requirements under Australian Design Rule 80/03 will require all new trucks sold in Australia to adopt DPD or similar methods of emission control.

CAUTION
If you ignore the quickly flashing amber indicator and continue to operate the vehicle without performing a manual regeneration, the check engine lamp will illuminate and the system will reduce engine horsepower by approximately 30%. The pumper will then have to be returned to an authorised Isuzu dealer for repair.
I’m Roger Daley, Volunteer Community Educator Co-ordinator based at Narangba Rural Fire Brigade (RFB).

Prior to the development of the Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) role I volunteered as a bucket brigade member, collecting donations at local events and increasing community awareness of the Rural Fire Service. The bucket brigade provided exposure to the public in a non-operational environment and I have always found the community to be extremely respectful and supportive of rural firefighters. Often I was asked questions from the public in regards to the roles performed by the volunteers and how they could become involved as a volunteer within their local community.

I have had extensive experience working closely with the local community to deliver the Bushfire Prepared Communities program, now superseded by Prepare Act Survive (PAS), therefore the arrival of the VCE role was a natural extension of the role I had previously chosen to fill within my community. I have taken on the VCE role in an official capacity and look forward to working with Urban and Auxiliary firefighters to deliver bushfire education within schools that reside in the interface zone.

I already visit brigades outside my immediate community as an Area Trainer and have developed ties and relationships with VCEs in my neighbouring brigades. I work closely with our Mitigation & Education Officer, Gary McCormack, to deliver community education to community groups and other RFBs. I take every opportunity to spread the PAS message and promote the role of VCE to other volunteers. We aim to create an interwoven network of VCEs covering our area, to allow us to have a QFRS presence at functions or events in our local community to provide advice and community education.

I will continue to be an integral part of the VCE team and believe that, “A better educated community is a safer community”.
Review of the Permit to Light Fire and Fire Warden role

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) control the use of fire through the Permit to Light Fire system and the Fire Warden role, which requires that a permit be obtained before lighting a fire. The system that exists in Queensland has successfully managed the responsible use of fire for over half a century, much of this success owed to the work of our volunteer Fire Wardens.

A review of the Permit to Light Fire system and the role of the Fire Warden has been under way to ensure that the role remains contemporary and the Permit to Light Fire system is effective in the management of fire in the landscape, by the QFRS.

Changes that have been implemented

Each Rural Operations Area Director now fill the role of chief Fire Warden for each Chief Fire Warden district within their Rural Operations area including those urban fire service delivery areas. This change ensures the management of Fire Warden positions and the operation of the Permit to Light Fire system utilises rural expertise and knowledge based on a real understanding of local conditions and the community.

A Fire Danger Period has been declared

The QFRS Commissioner declared in August 2010, a notification of a Fire Danger Period from 30 August 2010 to 2 January 2011. During the fire danger period any fire less than 2m in size required the issue of a permit. Due to the continuing favourable conditions and the low level of fire activity the Fire Danger Period was cancelled by the Commissioner effective from 22nd October 2010. Now that the fire danger period has ceased an evaluation will be undertaken as to its effectiveness and to identify any issues that need to be considered prior to any future declaration.

What work still needs to be done?

Administrative Classes for the Issue of Fire Permits

Fire is used legitimately in Queensland for many purposes, by many people. The understanding of fire behaviour and the competence in managing fire is as varied as the individuals involved.

Because of the changes to rural communities, land management practices, and the loss of experience, the 'one size fits all' approach to the Permit to Light Fire system is no longer effective or efficient for Fire Wardens or the community.

The increasing challenges posed by the need to ensure community safety, the social expectations and the perceptions of fire, requires QFRS and all users of fire to demonstrate a responsible and justifiable use of fire in the landscape.

To achieve a balanced management of the Permit to Light Fire system the application and issue of fire permits in the future will utilise a Permit classification System, a brief description of each of the four classes follows:

Class A: Urban areas

Restricting the use of fire in urban footprint areas to situations where fire is absolutely necessary.

Class B: Rural urban interface

Rural urban interface areas where fire is used mainly, though not exclusively, for hazard mitigation. Aimed at reducing the impacts of inappropriate and inexperienced fire use.

Class C: Rural production

Rural production land where the use of fire is managed by the rural producer as an integral part of the primary production system. For primary producers who earn their living from the land it would be business as usual, with no significant changes envisaged to how people currently apply for and receive a Permit.

Class D: Industry Permits

Permits that cover situations such as rail track grinding, meat smoking, fire extinguisher training and a range of other industrial activities. These Permits are issued by the Rural Operations Area Directors.
Consultation Meetings

A number of meetings will be conducted across the State in November 2010 to liaise with Fire Wardens, brigade members, Rural Operations staff, landholders, land management agencies and representative bodies. Meetings will be held at Mareeba, Bowen, Emerald, Roma, Gayndah, Woodford and Logan. Attendance at these workshops will be by invitation.

Work that needs to be completed to finalise the review

Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations is working to ensure that any matters requiring legislative change resulting from the review of the Permit to Light Fire system and the role of the Fire Warden are included in the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 legislative review.

Other matters that will improve operation of the Permit to Light Fire system and the role of both the Fire Warden and the Rural Operations Area Directors are also being addressed. This includes improved administrative processes for appointments, permits applications, management of permit books and simplified reporting.

At the conclusion of the Fire Warden Review workshops, Rural Operations will then make the necessary changes to the administrative process that support the Fire Warden role and to redesign permit books. Work will be completed in the first quarter of 2011 to ensure readiness prior to the fire season.
The Flexible Learning for Volunteers team is currently working on a brand new state-of-the-art online learning platform for volunteers. Called Volunteers onLine, or VoLs for short, this system will be accessed via the Volunteer Portal and will provide greater flexibility for volunteers to choose what best suits their lifestyle and learning style.

Keep an eye out in the latest news section of the Volunteer Portal for its release.

STOP THE PRESS: Rural Fire Service Volunteers are going online.

The Flexible Learning for Volunteers team is currently working on a brand new state-of-the-art online learning platform for volunteers. Called Volunteers onLine, or VoLs for short, this system will be accessed via the Volunteer Portal and will provide greater flexibility for volunteers to choose what best suits their lifestyle and learning style.

Keep an eye out in the latest news section of the Volunteer Portal for its release.
Have you seen what’s new in the Training Toolbox?

The Flexible Learning for Volunteers team continues to develop and release new and exciting learning products. For those of you who are regular users of the Training Toolbox you will see we have released a brand new series of learning bytes. Series III consists of four new clips which cover Burnover Safety and Survival, Compound and Pressure Gauges, Recruitment and Workplace Health & Safety principles.

We have also developed two brand new interactive simulations. These animated interactive simulations are a great way to practice the steps involved in using a piece of equipment and will be particularly useful for new volunteers or those who would like to refresh their knowledge and skills. The first simulation is the standpipe and the second is the drip torch. You will also notice we have introduced a new 3D animated avatar presenter for the simulation series, called ‘Felicity’.

I would encourage you to give the new simulations a go as soon as they are available and post any comments through the feedback link on the Volunteer Portal homepage.
Fire Danger Rating Signs for Queensland Communities

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) is currently in the process of installing over 100 new Fire Danger Rating Signs into bushfire risk communities across the State. The Department of Transport and Main Roads is supporting QFRS by installing signs free of charge in high visibility locations on road corridors which are under their control.

The signs represent the new National Standard for Fire Danger Ratings including the introduction of “Severe and Catastrophic”. Rural Operations Area Office staff are working with their local Rural Fire Brigades to establish an agreement for maintaining the signs on the current rating once installed.

Neighbourhood Safer Places Update

The Queensland Fire & Rescue Service in conjunction with local governments across the State now has 50 identified Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs).

Remember a NSP is:

A local open space or building where people may gather, as a last resort, to seek shelter from a bushfire as part of a contingency plan when:

A Bushfire Survival Plan (BSP) has failed.

The extent of the fire means people cannot protect their home and their home cannot protect them.

The fire has escalated to an ‘extreme’ or ‘catastrophic’ level and voluntary evacuation is the safest option.

A register of NSP locations by local government area can be found on the Rural Fire Service (RFS) website (www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au) and the community is being informed that if there is not an NSP currently identified within their area, to continually monitor the site for updates.

The RFS website is packed with a whole range of new bushfire education information including NSPs. If you are asked to provide information and require assistance please contact your Area Office or Regional Mitigation and Education Officer for support. Don’t forget our Volunteer Community Educators are now well established within each Region and available to provide support with community education activities.
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Training Awards 2010

The QFRS Training Awards provide an opportunity to recognise the outstanding commitment and achievements of individual trainers and assessors who strive for excellence, best practice and innovation within our industry. Nominations were plentiful and the quality of the nominated trainers was strong making the judging an extremely challenging process reflecting the quality of trainers across the state.

Winners were presented with their awards at the recently conducted National Emergency Management Training Officers Conference held in Brisbane. Rural Winners were:

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<td>Graham King</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Volunteer</td>
<td>Peter Baron</td>
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Congratulations must go to all nominees for their outstanding contribution to improving the skills and knowledge of all associated with QFRS.
QFRS embarked down the path of Zero Harm some years ago where fireground safety is integral to this overarching philosophy. To further promote safety on the fireground, Rural Operations submitted a sponsorship proposal to the Olga Wilson Firefighters Trust. The Olga Wilson Foundation was established in 1997 where Olga bequeathed funds in her Will to benefit firefighters and their families. Our submission focussed across the strategy of providing Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) and/or first aid kits to Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs). The use of an AED in the first few seconds after cardiac arrest has been proven to be highly effective in saving lives. During a cardiac arrest, a patient’s chances are tripled if early defibrillation is used and can assist the heart to regain a normal rhythm.

In August 2010, the Olga Wilson Trustees approved our sponsorship proposal and allocated $100,000 towards our sponsorship proposal.

Brigades are able to nominate to receive the equipment. During the nomination stage, it is important that brigades are aware their nomination to receive an AED or AED and First Aid Kit must be endorsed by their Area Director and Regional Manager, with the final decision being made by the Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations.

The following conditions apply if your brigade wishes to complete the nomination form for AEDs and First Aid Kits provided through the grant:

- RFBs can apply for either an AED or an AED and First Aid Kit pack
- Only brigades with an appliance will be eligible to apply
- Brigades are only eligible to apply for one AED and First Aid Kit
- Brigades who already have an AED will not be eligible to apply
- Brigades must agree to the safety and training requirements prior to being endorsed to receive an AED.

All brigades that have been endorsed by their Area Directors and Regional Managers will be prioritised by the Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations with brigade requests approved, to the total value of $100 000, based on their priority listing.

Please complete the included nomination form and return to your Area Office by Tuesday 1 February 2011. Nominations forms will also be available on the Volunteer Portal.

As an organisation we are grateful for the generosity of Ms Olga Wilson and take this opportunity to thank the Trustees for their support and endorsement towards this very important initiative.
Reliance Petroleum Handovers

A further nine brigades have received slip-on units through the Reliance Petroleum partnership since its launch in April this year. A total of twenty brigades will receive slip-on units through this program which is in its second year.

Handover events took place in Roma, Bowen, Richmond and Isisford, for the following brigades: Baffle Creek, Crowman, Upper Dawson, Euri Creek West, Longford Creek, Mount Aberdeen, Esmeralda, Neleh and South Barcoo.

Each handover was attended by the brigade members, local Area Director, and a Reliance Petroleum representative.

Innisfail Area Director Ian Atherton, who managed the Richmond handover, said that the events were not just about the new equipment.

“The slip-on handover was a great opportunity to acknowledge the great work of our volunteers,” he said.

Barcaldine / Emerald Area Director Larry Lewis agreed that the program yielded a number of positive results.

“Officers of the South Barcoo and Neleh Brigades are grateful of the Reliance Petroleum partnership and QFRS Rural Operations for the supply of speed loader units,” said Mr Lewis.

“This specialised equipment will be valuable when our brigades attend to lightning strikes in the open grasslands and will be an important item of plant to provide protection on the fire ground for operators of heavy machinery.”

Reliance Petroleum General Manager for Sales and Operations Bruce Jones said their strong presence in regional and remote areas allows them an understanding of the importance of Rural Fire Brigades.

“The Rural Fire Service is a vital part of rural Queensland,” he said.

Mr Jones stated that Reliance has a strong commitment to the rural communities in which we operate and the QFRS sponsorship is their way of supporting local rural communities in Queensland.
The group, which covers Springfield Lakes North west to Kingaroy, west to Cunnamulla/Charleville and south west to Inverell and Guyra, won a statewide competition run by Coca-Cola Amatil. Part of their prize was a generous $19K to donate to a cause of the IGA group’s choice.

IGA Retail Consultant Shane Smith said that the stores voted unanimously for the Rural Fire Service.

“We’re pleased to be able to show our support for rural fire volunteers through this initiative,” Mr Smith said.

In addition to the donation, Mr Smith organised for the IGAs in the area to invite their local Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs) along to the stores to host fundraising BBQs, with the IGA providing all the meat and necessary supplies.

The BBQs took place on the weekend of the 25 September, and a number of volunteers from Brigades in the South West and South East regions dusted off their BBQs and made their way down to their local IGA.

A total of 24 brigades participated in the BBQ's raising over $8000. Pittsworth RFB raised the most funds, collecting $718 on the day.

“I think it was a great way for our stores to demonstrate their support of the local Brigades, and it also allowed the public a chance to show their appreciation of rural fire volunteers,” Mr Smith said.

IGA are keen to continue their support of the RFS and have invited RFB’s in the area to liaise directly with their local IGAs should they wish to arrange future fundraising BBQ’s.

Rural Operations Regional Manager, South West, Wayne Waltisbuhl said that the BBQs were a good opportunity for volunteers to spread the fire safety message.
Brigade members from across South East Queensland came together at the ENERGEX Community Arena at the RNA Showgrounds on 11 July to celebrate the launch of the 2010 ENERGEX grants program.

ENERGEX provided $75K worth of equipment as part of their partnership with the RFS.

Brigades were invited to apply for a range of approved items including chainsaws and Personal Protective Equipment, portable radio kits, first aid kits and defibrillators.

Twenty-three brigades shared in the equipment, with every brigade that applied receiving at least one of the items that they nominated for.

Minister Neil Roberts and QFRS Commissioner Lee Johnson were joined by the ENERGEX CEO and Chairman to present the first of the equipment to brigade members from the Dayboro, Coochin Creek, Kandanga and Beechmont Brigades.

Dayboro and District RFB Secretary Alwyn Weston said that the equipment they received would improve their ability to respond to any number of situations.

“The new chainsaw will be handy for clearing fallen trees and logs, while the generator could be used at incident sites in the field,” said Mr Weston.

ENERGEX CEO Terry Effeney said that ENERGEX had a unique relationship with rural firefighters allowing them a strong understanding of the importance of rural fire volunteers.

“The firefighters do a magnificent job working alongside local councils and property owners in protecting their local communities,” said Mr Effeney.

“Hopefully the equipment from the new grants program will make that job just that little bit easier.”

On 14 October 2010 IGA Queensland General Manager Peter Love, along with Coca-Cola Amatil State Account Manager Rob Parfumi, presented $19K to the Rural Fire Brigades in the catchment area.

Rural Operations will distribute the funds to the RFB’s within this catchment area whereby they can nominate to receive a Garmin GPS for their brigade. Information will be forwarded directly to the brigades in this catchment area for them to participate in this fantastic initiative of receiving a free Garmin GPS.
Gracemere Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) celebrates a rich heritage with over 54 years of service. Located in Rockhampton, the brigade plays a significant role in the local community by controlling bushfires and educating the ever-increasing number of landholders on being bushfire prepared.

As far back as their origins, the Gracemere RFB would monitor steam trains which were once the primary cause of fires in their region. To protect their community, they would fight fires with fire beaters and knapsacks. Today the area has changed significantly, the brigade now has two appliances as well as a number of trailer units. With the growing number of acreage landholders the focus has now shifted to community education in fire prevention and control due to the growing urban fringe.

2009 was an intense fire season for the brigade and tested both the agility and commitment of the brigade’s 22 members. The brigade helped fight numerous wildfires and members came out of the season with improved skills in firefighting and a greater experience with wildfires.

Whilst the brigade is primarily focussed on protecting the community from bushfires, they are also well known for their contribution in other community events. It is not unusual to find the members playing at charity golf days, selling tickets, handing out brochures or liaising at community events.

As the years have progressed Gracemere RFB has expanded its horizons and is focussed on building positive working relationships with neighbouring brigades. Gracemere RFB now co-hosts a Christmas celebration with Bouldercombe RFB where they invite other brigades in the area to come and play the inaugural ‘Out of the Ashes’ cricket match.

The members pride themselves on the community spirit and sense of belonging within the brigade and look forward to many years of service ahead of them. Strong family associations have been forged and mothers and fathers are still bringing their sons and daughters to join Gracemere RFB and become a part of the brigade’s story.

Diligent and Ethical Service Medal Presentation

On 28 August 2010, Assistant Commissioner Rural Operations had great pleasure in presenting Diligent and Ethical Service Medals to several members of the Mt Walker and Warrill View Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs).

The Diligent and Ethical Service Medal was instituted by the QFRS Commissioner to recognise and encourage diligent and ethical service by QFRS members.

The Medal was awarded to these members for their consistent commitment to the community. They have carried out their role as a volunteer firefighters/Fire Wardens and support members with honesty and integrity.

Special mention was given to Mr Ian Harson who has given 50 years of service as a volunteer firefighter and Fire Warden to the QFRS.

Ian has a lifetime association with Warrill View RFB which was formed in the early 1950’s with Ian’s father being the First Officer, Chairman and Fire Warden.

Ian joined the brigade in 1958 and took over the duties of First Officer and Fire Warden when his father retired in 1978. During his time with the brigade Ian has attended and fought many fires in and around his local area as well as assisting brigades in other locations. As a Fire Warden, Ian continues to provide a valuable service and ensures that the community uses fire in a responsible manner.

Ian’s involvement with other agencies within the community enabled the Warrill View RFB to obtain their first fire appliance from Thiess who then fitted it out at no cost to the brigade. He was also instrumental in obtaining suitable land for the brigade’s fire station and also secured grants to fund the construction of the station.

The organisation and the community generally can never repay the debt owed to our volunteer firefighters and Fire Wardens in providing an efficient and effective fire protection service. The contribution from the following medal recipients is extremely valuable and has contributed to creating a safer community.

Diligent and Ethical Service Medal recipients were Ian Harson 50 Years of Service (YOS), Kevin Baills 41 YOS, Norm Kerle 41 YOS, Kevin Murphy 41 YOS, Ann Baills 32 YOS, Noel Smith 32 YOS, Robin Stokes 32 YOS, Marie Murphy 32 YOS Barry Lobegeiger 34 YOS, Elmslie Hinrichsen 27 YOS, Heather Wehl 27 YOS, Peter Wehl 27 YOS, Andrew Murphy 20 YOS.
New Reporting Form RF14C

Rural Operations developed a reporting tool specifically designed to gather information from permitted fire activities which were attended by brigades. The original RF14A form often resulted in brigades gathering more information than required to complete the report for a hazard reduction burn they had undertaken.

The new form, known as RF14C, contains only information boxes that are related to the hazard reduction activity. For successful completion of the report the following details only are required:

- Where the activity took place (address, or, lot and plan number, or, latitude/longitude);
- When the activity took place (date and time of arrival and return to service);
- The area burnt (in hectares);
- Who attended (brigades/appliances and people); and
- Who is submitting the report (name/position).

The new RF14A forms sent to you recently, are now only to be utilised for capturing of information relating to the brigades attendance at an actual bushfire incident and not for capturing information on mitigation work undertaken by the brigade.

Each time your brigade completes an RF14C and sends it to Area Office, your Area Office staff will enter this information into the QFRS Operations Management System (OMS). This information is vital in capturing the important work performed by Rural Fire Service members in providing essential mitigation activities across the state and assists Rural Operations with submissions for funding and support.

RF14C forms will be available in hard copies which will be posted out to brigade First Officers and available electronically on the Volunteer Portal under your Area page. The electronic forms can be saved or printed for your records and emailed to your Area Office through the Volunteer Portal by clicking on the ‘submit’ tab located on the bottom right hand corner of the form. The Volunteer Portal also contains an instruction sheet with detailed steps on completing the form.

Brigades who work through their Regional FireCom to notify them of the location and start/finish time of the fire will be able to obtain a FireCom Incident Number. This number further reduces the information required on the form as the ‘where and when’ will already be on the incident report. Brigades should notify FireCom by radio or telephone when conducting a hazard reduction burn and ask for the Incident Number.
Equipment Catalogue

The new equipment catalogue has been distributed to Brigade Secretaries and First Officers.

This catalogue has been designed to combine the previous price list and picture catalogue into one document. The catalogue has been divided into colour coded sections to identify different equipment groups that may be ordered by brigades.

Since the distribution of the equipment catalogue, further updates have been mailed to the Brigade Secretaries and the First Officers. Please ensure the labels are placed in the equipment catalogue to ensure you are ordering the correct equipment.

We hope this catalogue assists brigades with equipment orders and is a useful resource. As we are constantly aiming for continued improvement, we have included a feedback form in the equipment catalogue and encourage you to provide us with any feedback, ideas and suggestions.
New Standing Order—Fitness for Duty: Alcohol and Other Drugs

A Standing Order for Fitness for Duty: Alcohol and Other Drugs has been endorsed by the QFRS Commissioner.

This Standing Order documents how the QFRS intends to meet its departmental commitment and legislative obligations with regard to alcohol and other drugs within its workplaces, and should be read in conjunction with the QFRS Procedure for the Management of Alcohol and Other Drugs.

The Procedure for the Management of Alcohol and Other Drugs outlines the steps to be undertaken for individuals taking medication; breaches of the alcohol and other drugs policy and legislation; suspected impairment of Fire Services Officers; transportation from the workplace; and returning to work after being stood down.

The Standing Order and Procedure can be located on the Volunteer Portal, or at request from your Area Office.

QFRS has developed posters, pamphlets and two awareness computer CD packages (one for Supervisors and one for volunteer firefighters) to assist all persons to understand their obligations and support the requirements of the Standing Order.

The training packages will be sent out to all First Officers with this bulletin. We ask that all First Officers complete the supervisors CD, and then conduct a training session utilising the second CD with their brigade volunteers.

At the conclusion of your relevant training sessions, you will be asked to complete a short assessment. Once this assessment has been completed, you will need to print out the assessment and forward to your relevant Area Office.

Queensland Rural Fire Service 2011 Volunteer Calendar

Queensland Rural Fire Service 2011 Volunteer Calendar focuses on the diversity amongst our Rural Fire Brigades. The calendar highlights the versatility of the Rural Fire Service volunteers and the environments in which they perform their volunteer duties. We hope you enjoy the 2011 Calendar!
2010 Volunteer Summit DVD

QFRS Multimedia has produced a DVD which contains memories from the 2010 RFS Volunteer Summit including speeches which took place at the Volunteer Summit. Area Offices have received a number of copies which are available for loan by volunteers. Please contact your local area office to obtain a copy of this DVD, we hope you enjoy!

Why do rural fire fighters replace their hose reels with our brand more than any other?

Simple:
- 28 years experience in hose reels
- Experienced staff with fire industry knowledge
- A reputation for providing quality products
- Exceptional customer service and backup
- Reels designed and built to suit you, the user... both in function and budget

So...
- If you are after the best quality hose reel
- One that is guaranteed to perform
- One that is tough and reliable
- From a company that values customer service

...give the reel experts a call today. 1800 645 688 quikcorpfire.com
Contact Details for Area Offices

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<th>Phone</th>
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<td>(07) 4190 4839</td>
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