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OPERATION COOL BURN

STREAMLINED INCIDENT REPORTING

COMMISSIONER UPDATE TO ALL RURAL STAFF
Preparing for fire season

With the increase in vegetation growth over the past few wet seasons, the fuel load in some locations may create an increase in operational activity this fire season - so it’s crucial that First Officers and Brigades are proactive in undertaking a thorough review of operations prior to the start of the fire season.

I encourage all volunteers to take the time to examine your personal issue of PPE to ensure that all items still provide the required standard of protection for use in operational activities. Brigades should also maintain adequate stock levels of replacement goggles, gloves and respirators for members who may require urgent replacement of these items.

In addition to this, prior to the commencement of the fire season the First Officer should:

- Review the risks in the Brigade area paying particular attention to those areas of higher risk;
- Review the level of equipment held by the Brigade; and
- Complete the Pre-Season Fire Preparedness.

The Pre-Season Fire Preparedness Checklist, form RF101, outlines 18 tasks to be completed to measure the fire preparedness of Rural Fire Brigades. If you haven’t already, now is the time to download a copy from the Volunteer Portal, review your Brigade’s status, and see what tasks may need further attention.
Operation Cool Burn

The Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) has authorised a new Standing Order titled ‘Operation Cool Burn’, which provides clear guidelines for the bushfire mitigation season.

‘Operation Cool Burn’ will run from 17 May until 31 July, 2013, and focuses on ensuring preparedness within QFRS and within the community ahead of the 2013 bushfire season.

I know that many of you are busy formulating mitigation plans and strategies and are already proactively working with local landholders to reduce bushfire hazards across the state. I encourage you to read the article “Mitigation – vital to any brigade response”, included in this edition. Hazard mitigation doesn’t mean you have to conduct a burn - many different methods can be employed depending on the situation, or even a combination of methods. The key is collaboration and consultation with all parties involved.

If a hazard reduction burn is determined as the most appropriate method to reduce risk, consider this as an ideal opportunity for new members to learn practical skills and experience operational conditions. Not only does this keep training fresh and interesting, this controlled experience may give them the confidence they need to work as part of the team during a wildfire response.

A unified QFRS approach, together with our partners from state and local government agencies, related industry associations, and landowners/occupiers, will be pursued to enable the QFRS hazard mitigation mission objectives of:

- Enhanced firefighter safety;
- Reduced bushfire risk and impact;
- Proactive landowner/occupier and community engagement and resilience; and
- Informed operations prior to bushfire season.

Senior QFRS staff from across Queensland will be reporting at fortnightly teleconferences to discuss the progress of Operation Cool Burn. Each region will be reporting on the number of bushfire prone locations identified, the mitigation plans for each of these locations, the percentage of mitigation plans implemented, an overview of the engagement with local landholders, the number of community members receiving bushfire preparedness information, and internal communication regarding fire-prone areas.

I envisage that at the end of this mitigation period we will have a substantial reduction in areas at risk of bushfire, and communities that are well prepared for the 2013 fire season.

I encourage you all to have a look at Standing Order ‘Operation Cool Burn’ which is now available on the Volunteer Portal. I also recommend looking through Section 1.0 Research and Risk Modification, Managing Operations, in the Rural Fire Brigade Manual for information on environmental considerations, hazard reduction burn planning, and managing road and rail corridor fire risk. Don’t forget that your Area Office staff share the same goal of ensuring preparedness, and so are on hand to provide advice and assistance should you need it.

Neil Gallant  AFSM MiFireE BTeach
Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Update from the Commissioner’s Desk

National Volunteer Week

Volunteers across the country were acknowledged as part of National Volunteer Week held over 13 to 19 May. The theme this year was “Thanks a Million” and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise our hardworking Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers.

The RFS is made up of more than 35,000 volunteers, including approximately 12,300 volunteer firefighters; making it one of the largest volunteer organisations in Queensland.

Last year, RFS volunteers spent more than 355,000 hours attending emergency incidents and conducting hazard reduction burns. That equates to approximately 972 hours each day last year that RFS volunteers gave up of their time to serve their communities.

It’s important to also acknowledge the behind-the-scenes work that you perform away from the fireground and emergency response. These duties extend to community education, administration, and communication.

The efforts of RFS volunteers are indeed deserving of our thanks. On behalf of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS), I extend a sincere thank you for your commitment to the QFRS and for your dedication to community safety in your communities.

Lee Johnson  AFSM MiFireE
Commissioner
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Good training delivery is a balance between education and entertainment.

While we need to achieve our educational objectives, we also need to keep our members’ attention and keep them involved. A good instructor will keep this balance throughout each session and provide an environment where participants want to learn, do learn, and find the training enjoyable. Knowing our audience, our subject matter, and our own instructor skills can help us to keep our training courses entertaining.

As a First Officer, a Training Officer, or a Brigade Trainer in our brigades, the chances are that we’ve been around for a few years, will generally know our audience pretty well, and the reasons why we need to deliver the training. But the trick is to know what our members expect to get out of the training and why they are attending.

Sometimes our training sessions are mandatory, but mundane, which makes it difficult to keep it entertaining. Let’s face it, as critically important as a session on, say, workplace health and safety is (and my apologies to those who find this subject enthralling), I doubt too many of us look forward to a training session on this topic with a great deal of enthusiasm. Then throw in a hundred boring PowerPoint slides and a monotonous instructor reading them and we’ve got a perfect storm of boredom to turn people off training forever!

These mandatory or basic training sessions are generally the worst because our members are usually only there because they have to be, but the goal is still to keep the training interesting enough that people will start looking forward to training rather than just attending to get the tick off.

One way we can keep it interesting and entertaining is to set alight everything and have a big fire. This usually causes some excitement, but unfortunately it is not always practical. It is one way however, of keeping people interested and it can make training more enjoyable - not lighting a big fire as such, but by making the training more practical and realistic.

A practical and realistic approach to training can test our existing skills or provide opportunity to learn new ones. It is vitally important that consideration is given to making training sessions practical and realistic (with consideration for safety of course), because the more the training environment mimics real situations, the greater the likelihood our brains will recall the lesson through a process of pattern matching. Let’s get out there and get some mud on the tyres!

Practical, realistic, and repetitive training helps with the human brain’s ability to store and retrieve information. We become creatures of habit and we tend to perform as we are trained when under stress or in real-life situations. If possible, create realistic scenarios (either practical or theoretical) that can aid learning and also develop situational awareness in our people. These scenarios can simply be a re-enactment of a simple incident the brigade has attended, but add a “what if?” event to it. “What if?” something unusual happened at this incident – what can we learn if it then actually happens one day?

Doing “what if?” scenario training with our neighbouring brigades develops those necessary relationships at the same time as testing our equipment, our processes, and ourselves. Give it a go! But try to avoid those unrealistic “what if?” scenarios that merely serve to frustrate the participants and provide no learning opportunity. For example, avoid the “What if a space craft landed in the paddock on fire just as we were about to commence a back-burn?” Could it happen? Sure...ANYTHING can happen, but the likelihood is too remote to have a real training benefit.

Whether we apply this practical approach to our training, or whether we undertake a classroom based experience, we can still make sure our
training is enjoyable as well as a learning experience by considering how we deliver the training session.

One way is to think about what qualities make a good instructor. If we think back to a time when we were a participant in a training session with a good instructor, there will be qualities of that instructor that made the training enjoyable and helped us to learn. If we can identify the qualities that impressed us about other instructors then we can integrate those qualities into our own instructor bag of tricks.

During the training delivery, we need to gauge the reaction of the audience and adjust our instruction to fit the situation. Sometimes people may struggle with the content and at other times they grasp it very quickly. Being flexible in our approach will encourage learning and make our presentation more worthwhile. But we must also be consistent so at different sessions for the same topic the same information is getting through. It is a balancing act but it can be achieved.

Being an instructor doesn’t mean we know everything, but it is pretty helpful if we know our subject a bit better than those we are instructing. There is nothing worse than an instructor trying to bluff their way through an answer to a question just to be proved wrong by a student. So the learning is not only for the participants, learning is vital for the instructor as well. We need to do some research if we are not sure of the subject. People love colour and movement. A short video of a few minutes can explain something much better than a dozen slides, and it keeps people interested. It is also more likely to get a message across because people can see an event happening, and it takes the pressure off the instructor to keep talking and gives us a breather.

Use humour only when and where it is acceptable. What we think is our best joke may not be accepted in the same way by others. But if we know our audience well we can work out when to tell that funny story - if it contributes to the learning experience. Old war stories are usually an instructor’s downfall. A good old war story can make a valid point, but how many times have we been in a class when the instructor engaged in a self-promotion session and wanted to tell us all about their life? That can sometimes be more boring than the topic!

And finally, apply the “seven P’s of planning” process - Proper Prior Planning Prevents Pretty Poor Performance (or similar words). An instructor who does not show up prepared with a plan wastes everyone’s time. When we respect our participant’s time, then they will respect ours and will provide us with the opportunity to instruct. This does not have to be a formal lesson plan, but we need to know our plan of attack for the lesson’s success.

If we want to get the best out of our training and provide a positive environment for our trainees to learn, getting that balance between education and entertainment can make it worthwhile – and it could make those workplace health and safety training sessions a bit more enjoyable. Good luck.

Craig Smith
GtFireE
Executive Manager,
Rural Training & Development
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
What is the Operations Doctrine?

Operational response is one of the principle missions of any fire service. Although we endeavour to mitigate the frequency and the impact of certain events, emergency incidents are inevitable.

How we approach the incident, the delivery of our services at the incident, and the outcomes achieved at the incident, will impact to some degree on the people involved in the emergency, and the ability of the affected community and the environment to recover from the impact of the emergency situation.

To provide a standard and reliable approach, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) uses the Operations Doctrine to provide consistency for incident response and management. The Operations Doctrine provides guidance, information, and appropriate actions for all volunteer, part-time and career personnel in operational situations.

The success of operations is a shared responsibility of personnel at all levels to deliver the safest and most effective service to the community of Queensland. While the Operations Doctrine includes vast information on expectations and requirements, its application needs to be a judgement consideration because of the variable situations regularly encountered in the fire and emergency service environment.

The Operations Doctrine is not a stand-alone direction, but it exists alongside pre-incident planning, mitigation strategies, operational training, and our previous experiences to provide guidance to safely resolve any situation with the most effective and efficient use of our available resources.

By providing the guiding principles for a consistent approach to incident response, the Operations Doctrine ensures that all personnel can build trust. It builds trust with the community for us to be able to meet their needs, it builds trust between our stations and brigades to be able to rely upon each other when needed, and it builds trust in our ability to be capable and competent to respond to operational challenges.

Every emergency incident provides an opportunity to identify lessons to be learned, which is one of the catalysts for improvement of not only the Operations Doctrine, but other associated areas such as training, equipment, communications, and relationships within and outside QFRS.

The Operations Doctrine is designed to shape and educate, foster and encourage all members of the QFRS.

It is a flexible system where people’s experiences and lessons learned can determine a consistent way forward for operational response within the whole organisation. The Operations Doctrine supports and recognises our capabilities and provides the principle framework to understanding our commitment to the community, the environment, and our State.

More and more frequently, QFRS is operating to achieve shared outcomes. For success, we all need to know and understand why we do what we do and the implications of our actions. And understanding that in the bigger picture is paramount for every firefighter, whether they are in a brigade or on a station.

To obtain Incident Directives, Incident Action Guides, Fire Meters and Operational Guides; to understand the Incident Management System (IMS); and to provide feedback on operational improvement, the Operations Doctrine is your ready source of information. The Field Incident Guide (FIG) that many of us use on a regular basis is a ready reference of information from the Operations Doctrine.

To assist with operational decision-making and ensuring all crews remain safe, the Operations Doctrine can be obtained through the Volunteer Portal or from your Area Office. The Operations Doctrine is a guide to assist us all with emergency response operations and to improve the ability of all QFRS personnel to deliver high quality operational service to our communities.

Source: QFRS Operations Doctrine and Foundations of QFRS book
Implementing a Brigade Training Plan

The purpose of training is to equip people with sufficient skills, concepts, or attitudes they need to safely and effectively undertake their roles. These skills are then enhanced and developed through regular practice, exercise, and application to ensure that people can perform when required.

But before we can equip people with sufficient skills, we need to know what they already know so they can develop further, but, more importantly, what they don’t know so they can learn. The process of identifying the training gap and its related training need is called a Training Needs Analysis – often referred to simply as a TNA.

In Rural Fire Brigades, First Officers or the Brigade’s appointed Training Officer will know what skills the Brigade’s members should acquire to meet the risks the Brigade faces in their community. The development of training will then focus on addressing those needs, so the Brigade’s members can undertake their roles in their community effectively and safely.

Some of these training needs can be addressed at the Brigade level and some may be required to be addressed at the Area level. Either way, it is important that a plan is developed to ensure that outcomes can be achieved, Brigade personnel can be trained in the skills they need, and the Brigade’s risks can be addressed.

Implementing a training plan at your Brigade level can be a difficult task at the best of times, but with a structured approach you can identify your needs and have those needs addressed through the delivery of quality training, and produce quality Brigade members to support your community.

In the March 2013 edition of the Rural Fire Bulletin, an article referred to the Brigade Trainer Toolkit. Some elements of the Brigade Trainer Toolkit have recently been released on the Volunteer Portal in a section called “Trainer Space”, which is an open community that is the breeding ground for the development and enhancement of the Brigade Trainer Toolkit.

While the Brigade Trainer Toolkit is a suite of resources available to assist in the development of activities and/or training sessions at the local Brigade level, it does not provide an overall plan for Brigade training. The plan needs to be developed and can take any form, but to ensure successful outcomes the plan should take a simple what, who, why, when, where, how and anything else, format.

What: Skill acquisition - identify the training gap
Who: Target audience - the people who require the skill and the people to instruct

Why: TNA - will it address the Brigade’s needs and risks
When: Deadlines and frequency - timeframes are important
Where: Location - suitable training venues invoke positive learning outcomes
How: Method of delivery - what is suitable for participants
Anything Else: Additional materials – costs, resources, accommodation, meals

By developing a training plan, it ensures everyone knows what to expect and when to expect it, allowing people to organise themselves and their competing priorities in their work and family lives. By adopting the “Mud on the Tyres” philosophy, training for Rural Fire Brigades can be held at the Brigade, by Brigade members, and when it suits the Brigade.

A training plan can be developed to focus on specific issues to meet an identified need, such as foundation skills or road crash rescue, or they can be built to offer a variety of different activities to maintain the competency and proficiency of Brigade members.

A template for a simple Brigade training plan, if you wish to use it, is available on Trainer Space, or by contacting Rural Research and Training on 3635 2742. Alternatively, your Rural Fire Service Area Office staff can provide planning guidance for training at your Rural Fire Brigade.

Clinton Neumann
Acting Manager, Training Delivery
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Volunteer Community Educator Development Program

The Volunteer Community Educator Development Program (VCEDP) is designed to provide a simple, engaging, and informative program for Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) to develop the skills and knowledge required for their role in their Brigade.

The VCEDP is the result of engagement with a team of VCEs who participated in a pilot program in 2012. Their ongoing feedback and involvement has seen the development of a clustered program, consisting of two modules.

The Induction Module provides for the overview of the organisation, the VCE program, and interacting with the community. It is the minimum requirement of the VCE program and generally completed during the Induction workshop.

The Community Education Module outlines the process of identifying risks, developing and presenting education sessions, and evaluating performance. This module is an elective option and completion of this module awards the PUA31412 – Certificate III in Public Safety (Community Safety).

The VCEDP is an optional program designed to acknowledge the skills and efforts of VCEs in delivering important community safety messages on behalf of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service.

Further information regarding the Volunteer Community Educator Development Program can be obtained by contacting your regional Bushfire Safety Officer.

Clinton Neumann
Acting Manager, Training Delivery
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Volunteer Community Educator Development Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
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**Induction**

This module focuses on the foundation skills required to function effectively within the program and ensures the participant has the appropriate knowledge to fulfil their duties.

Accredited outcomes:
- PUACOM014B – Contribute to community safety
- PUATEA004D – Work effectively in a public safety organisation
- PUACOM002B – Provide service to clients
- PUACOM001C – Communicate in the workplace
- PUOHS001C – Follow defined occupational health and safety policies and procedures
- PUATEA001B – Work in a team

**Community Safety**

This module develops or formalises the knowledge in relation to community safety and include identifying community risk and developing or implementing strategies at a local level.

Accredited outcomes:
- PUACOM015B – Conduct community safety activities
- PUACOM005B – Foster a positive organisational image in the community
- PUACOM006B – Plan and conduct a public awareness program
- PUACOM011B – Develop community awareness networks
- PUACOM012B – Liaise with media at a local level
- BSBCMM401A – Make a presentation

Induction Module
RFS Day

Thank you to all of those who gave their time and efforts to the Rural Fire Service Day.

It was a great way to showcase and also celebrate the dedication and commitment given by the 35,000 men and women who undertake such fantastic, selfless work that contributes to a safer Queensland.

This year’s Rural Fire Service Day is the first celebration of its kind, as such, we would appreciate your feedback so that we can better prepare and support Rural Fire Service Day events in the future.

Feedback can be sent through to, Rural.Operations@dcs.qld.gov.au

Congratulations to the winning Brigades of the RFS Photo Competition.

1st
Flinders Peak RFB - Robyn Outen-Stott

2nd
Cedar Creek Wolffdene RFB - Karen Brierley

3rd
Kirknie RFB - Sheree Headley
The Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) now has over 330 Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs), and whilst the quantity of education being delivered continues to increase proportionate with this growing number, it is the quality of education they deliver that is most impressive. The support being provided to the VCE network through continued training and resourcing is paying dividends with the final product being skilled, competent, and confident volunteers utilising a raft of resources to deliver high quality education to their communities.

An example of this was at the recent 2013 Brookfield Show (Brisbane Region) where VCEs Petrina Hawkins, Darren Hawkins, Rowan Patterson, and Louise Mulkearns conducted three days of outstanding education and entertainment.

The team utilised resources including:
- Bushfire Simulator
- Kitchen Fire Simulator
- Little Squirt
- Training Trailer
- Digital TV
- Spyder Display Boards
- Blazer Suit
- Fire Fighter ‘Cut Out’
- ICT Caches
- VCE Marquee’s

Although the impressive quality of education being delivered across the state can be attributed to training and resourcing none of it would be possible without the inspirational passion and dedication of our VCE’s. With the implementation of ‘Operation Cool Burn’ the role of VCE’s has never been more important and the Rural Fire Service is committed to the continued support and evolution of our volunteers.

Gary McCormack
Acting Regional Manager, Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

As you would be aware, the Government has accepted the Malone Review in principle, subject to the outcomes of the Keelty Review. While a significant number of the recommendations are already being investigated by QFRS, the following recommendations have now been approved for implementation:

- From 1 July, Rural Operations and Rural Fire Service will be collectively renamed Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and will be led by a Deputy Commissioner. (Recommendation 7) Work has commenced on the Position Description for Deputy Commissioner and the selection process will be undertaken following delivery of the Keelty Review.
- Operation ‘Cool Burn’ has been implemented. This will assist in focusing staff, volunteers, media and landholders on the vital work of hazard mitigation and other pre-fire season activities. (Recommendation 47)

In addition to the above, a joint Working Group has been established which comprises both staff and volunteers from QFRS/RFSQ and EMQ/SES to address training recommendations. This Working Group will meet in the coming weeks and provide an initial report by 21 July 2013.

The specific recommendations tasked to this Working Group are:
- Combined training for volunteers (Recommendation 5)
- Mobile training team be established to deliver AIIMS (Recommendation 18)
- Coordinated training curriculum in conjunction with external Registered Training Organisations (Recommendations 29 & 30)
- Common recognition of volunteer training programs for RFSQ, SES and other volunteer organisations (Recommendations 33 & 34)

Whilst there will be a name change to Rural Fire Service Queensland, the Malone Review recommended that the colour of rural appliances and the existing rural logo remain unchanged.

The Malone Review was designed to deliver more support to volunteers and enhance the structure of the organisation. It is anticipated that I will be in a position to provide further information on additional recommendations in the future, following the release of the Keelty Review.

Regards
Lee Johnson
AFSM MIFireE
Commissioner
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

VCE’s Delivering Quality Education

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Gary McCormack
Acting Regional Manager, Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Cheaper Station Signs and Less Red-Tape for Criminal History Checks

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) is progressively reviewing the Rural Fire Brigade Manual (RFBM) to ensure that the information Brigades require is accurate and up-to-date.

Our key focus is on reducing red tape and streamlining processes so that Business Rules are a quick, easy reference for volunteers and staff alike.

It is this focus that has recently seen major changes to the Criminal History Checks and Station Signage business rules (copies included in this edition of the Bulletin).

The Criminal History Checks business rule (C1.5) has replaced a previous version (C1.2.1), and enhancements included removing the three month validity for CHCs, and eliminating the requirement for CHCs to be performed on:

• Existing volunteers who want to apply to become a member of another brigade;
• Volunteers nominating for intra-state and inter-state deployment;
• Volunteers becoming Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs); and
• Existing volunteers applying to become a Fire Warden or Deputy Fire Warden.

Additions to the business rule included:

• Requirements under the Code of Conduct which allow for the removal of CHCs being undertaken under certain circumstances;
• New Zealand CHC requirements (as required by the Queensland Government);
• Flow charts to clearly detail CHC processing requirements and timeframes; and
• Clarity on what happens when an applicant has a criminal history.

The Station Signage business rule (D5.1.5) has also been revamped to remove the requirement to order freestanding signs using a rolled steel frame. The manufacture and shipping costs for this type of frame were significantly higher than the alternative now offered of a basic rectangular steel frame, with savings of up to $1500 in many cases. The business rule now also includes more information about the ordering, delivery, installation, and payment process, and an updated order form (RF194).

In addition to these major changes, the following documents were released:

• Business Rule – B1.4.1 – Rural Fire Service Day
• Standing Order SO-Q-OM-4.25 – Aluminium Phosphide Canisters – Version 1.0
• Standing Order SO-Q-OM-3.34 – Operation Cool Burn 2013

Several other business rules are currently under review including:

• Brigade Appliance Insurance
• Hazard Reduction Programs
• Incident Reporting
• Radio Communications
• Volunteer Community Educators
• Reimbursement of Out of Pocket Expenses

All current versions of Business Rules are available on the Volunteer Portal.

Tell us what you think

To make sure that Manuals are easy to use and contain current information, the Rural Fire Service rely on your feedback to prompt potential changes and updates that may be required.

All volunteers and staff can submit feedback at any time using the Rural Feedback Form (available on the Volunteer Portal).

Sharon Davis
Rural Knowledge
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Membership Application Review

Rural Fire Service Queensland have commenced a review of the current Membership Application process for volunteers wishing to join the Rural Fire Service.

The key focus of this review is on streamlining the application process to reduce red tape for volunteers and reducing the duplication of information currently provided within the application form.

Consultation groups consisting of both volunteers and staff have been set up across the state where they will have input into the development of the Membership Application process.

Feedback is welcome from all volunteers and staff. To submit your feedback, please complete a Rural Feedback Form (available on the Volunteer Portal).

Kay Krinke
Acting Manager, Volunteer Support Services
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Safety
It’s up to YOU
........IT’S YOUR CHOICE.

Safety is simple – it’s about the CHOICES you make for your safety and wellbeing and that of your fellow volunteers.

In past Bulletins we have talked about correctly wearing PPE, attending training provided to increase skill levels and being aware of our surroundings, fatigue management, awareness of heat stress and how it may affect you, and undertaking formal and/or dynamic risk assessments.

However, unless you choose to use your skills and knowledge, wear correct PPE, take rest breaks, watch out for your mates, keep your distance from the fire, maintain situational awareness, and follow procedures and guidelines, then the consequences could be devastating. We all want to go home at the end of each activity in a safe and healthy condition. Bush firefighting is risky business, but it doesn’t have to be an unsafe workplace if we make the right CHOICES when undertaking operational and training activities.

Remember our safety initiative –

STOP ➤ take a moment to think of what could possibly go wrong with an activity.

THINK ➤ Safety First. (Remember – it’s your CHOICE.)

LOOK ➤ for hazards and consider potential risks and consequences.

DECIDE ➤ what controls do I need to put in place?

ACT ➤ perform the activity and remain vigilant to new and known hazards.

Remember – to enable us to protect the community we must first protect ourselves.

Make SAFETY your FIRST CHOICE.
Safety – it’s up to you!

Peta Bell
Senior Workplace Health and Safety Officer
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

NEW PRODUCT AVAILABLE:
» Calling Card

At the time of writing, a new product was in the final stages of development for use during this fire season. The calling card is an A6 sized card which can be used for a variety of purposes.

During times of operational activity, the card can be used during doorknocking by Volunteer Community Educators. It can be used to advise home owners of an upcoming community education session, or to bring landowners together to discuss mitigation strategies.

Once available, this Calling Card can be ordered via your Area Office, and will come in sets with multiple cards in a set. We will announce the availability of the cards via the Volunteer Portal.

If you have any feedback on how we can improve this product, please send us a Feedback Form (form RF182 on the Volunteer Portal).
We have permanent sections including:
- The Wardens Word,
- VIP (Volunteer Info profile), and
- DIDYANO

The Wardens Word is typically used to remind landholders and residents of permit requirements and their responsibilities.

For a more personal touch, the VIP segment introduces a brigade member each month and includes a photograph. It highlights their time with the brigade, achievements, work and other interests. We want our community to know that our brigade consists of many local walks of life, from tradies to office workers, business owners, students, staff from our local IGA, and even a pilot.

DIDYANO is a brief note at the end of each article intending to offer interesting facts or key messages we hope to get across.

We try to target a different demographic each month by alternating VIP members between male to female, and younger members to the ‘more experienced’ members.

While it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the article, we believe that engaging the community has raised awareness and we have received some positive feedback from locals. We hope it also promotes the benefits and opportunities of volunteering within the community.

If you are interested in trying something like this in your community and would like to view our past segments you can find them at dayborograpevine.com.au Just type ‘DDRFB Chatter’ in the search box.

Nadine Andersen
Dayboro & District Rural Fire Brigade
Brisbane Region

A range of new pull up banners and volunteer cut outs are now available to borrow from your Area Office. Banners are limited, so make sure you contact your Area Office well in advance of your event to make a booking.
Earlier this year we heard of the opportunity to collect the Blazer Movie trailer from Annerly Fire Station and see if we could give it new life. Was it beyond saving? We thought not.

Volunteer Community Educators collaborate

It could be rolled in to support Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) during incidents where community messaging and information sessions were required. It would support our VCEs and our Public Information Officers in providing timely information to our communities. Our brigades and volunteers could utilise it at major community education events and it would provide benefit to both our crews and our community.

Once we knew how it would be utilised we then invited the VCE team to provide input and ideas on just how they envisaged it to be. What did they need to support them in their role? What did the trailer need to provide to be a true community education support unit?

A working group was formed and the ideas started to flood in.

Many looked at the trailer and decided it was beyond repair. Many felt it was a project too big to even try to start. But then there were those that saw potential, the beauty in the rough.

Afternoons and evenings were spent stripping the internal contents out and bringing it back to a bare shell. We had a space and we could now plan the layout.

The concept was delivered to VCEs during Regional Workshops which is when it became their project. I recall sitting back and watching our people champion this idea.

It has remained that way to this very day, from the stripping of internal wires and cages to the raising of the roof, building of shelves and TV brackets, wiring and electrical design and engineering modifications – it has been driven by volunteers.

It was envisaged that it would become a community education support vehicle.
It was through collaboration and feedback that the design was developed. When complete there will be room for community members to sit down and complete a Bushfire Survival Plan. They will be able to view the current incident and receive up to date information. There is the capacity to charge mobile phones and notebooks. There will be an undercover area with live feed TV to incidents or local TV. Community education materials will be a plenty in the many storage areas. It will be a one stop shop for community education presentations. The community education support unit has the ability to roll in and be completely self sufficient.

The support given to the team in this project is overwhelming. To date over 100 hours have been volunteered to get it to its current state.

I will list each person individually as without their help this community education support unit would have never become a reality.

- Assistant Commissioner Neil Gallant – Rural Fire Service Queensland
- Assistant Commissioner Peter Beauchamp – South East Region
- Chief Superintendent Peter Varley – Rural Fire Service Queensland
- Superintendent Craig Smith - QCESA
- A/Superintendent Fergus Adrian – South East Region
- A/Superintendent Gary McCormack – Brisbane Region
- Station Officer Paul Simmonds – Woodridge Fire Station
- Station Officer / iZone Officer Paul Womersley – South East Region
- Senior Fire fighter Andrew Rose – Beenleigh Fire Station
- VCE Area Co ordinator Geoff Richardson – Tamborine Mountain RFB
- VCE Area Co ordinator Mark Doble – Birmam RFB
- VCE Area Co ordinator Sarah Martin – Tamborine RFB
- VCE Jarrod Windon – Rocky Point RFB
- VCE Sally Steward – Rocky Point RFB
- VCE Fabian Stangherlin – Greenbank RFB
- VCE Colin Howell – Woodhill RFB
- VCE Mitchell Rogers – Woodhill RFB
- Maria de Koning - Tamborine Mountain RFB
- Tamborine Mountain Rural Fire Brigade
- John Day Engineering
- Jotun Product Meadowbrook
- Enright Signs
- Bruce Saunders (electrician)
- Lindsay Latimer (electrician)
- Pac Fire Yatala
- Maria de Koning - Tamborine Mountain RFB
- Tamborine Mountain Rural Fire Brigade
- John Day Engineering
- Jotun Product Meadowbrook
- Enright Signs
- Bruce Saunders (electrician)
- Lindsay Latimer (electrician)
- Pac Fire Yatala

As this goes to print the support unit is almost complete with just the finishing touches to go.

I am proud and honoured to have worked with such a dedicated team for this end result. This unit will support our crews and it will support our communities. The power of belief, passion and commitment has bought this idea to reality.

Thank you very much to all involved.

Peta Miller-Rose
Acting Manager, Bushfire Safety
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
Skills & Drills Event
Dayboro Showgrounds

– 18 May, 2013

On Saturday 18 May, six Rural Fire Brigades from the Pine Rivers Group and the Dayboro Auxiliary Fire Brigade gathered at the Dayboro Showgrounds for a training exercise. No one really knew what to expect from the day; many people turned up to the event with pre-conceived ideas that it would be a “competition”.

So much preparation went into the day from the Incident Management team to ensure the success of the event. The aim of the event was to bring the brigades together to get to know each other. As our communities grow and change, we need to form good working relationships and develop new skills to protect these ever growing and changing communities.

In our area, rural brigades were formed by the local farmers, who would come together in the event of a fire. Sometimes these fires would last for days and even weeks, threatening people’s farms, livelihoods and homes. The men would walk off...
Throughout the year, many different organisations offer grants which Rural Fire Brigades are eligible to apply for. As we become aware of new opportunities they will be posted on the Volunteer Portal, as the application period may miss this edition of the Bulletin.

Be sure to check the Volunteer Portal regularly to see if there is a grant available that could help your brigade.
Emergency service volunteers devote 27 million minutes

More than 40,000 Queenslanders committed in excess of 27 million minutes of their time volunteering in emergency situations and disaster preparation activities last year.

Police and Community Safety Minister Jack Dempsey said National Volunteer Week (May 13-19) was the perfect time to recognise the efforts of our local heroes.

“Rural Fire Service (RFS) crews, SES volunteers, Local Ambulance Committee members and other emergency volunteers give their time and services to protect the lives and property of Queenslanders,” Mr Dempsey said.

“Recent weather events have highlighted the vital role volunteers play in our community whether it be lending their time and skills during flood recovery, providing food and shelter for those displaced or even just a shoulder to cry on.

“They are the real heroes of our community and during National Volunteer Week I encourage everyone to say ‘Thanks a Million’ to them.

“The Department of Community Safety recruits, trains and supports more than 40,000 volunteers in a wide range of roles and could not provide the outstanding front-line services it is renowned for without their dedication.”

Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers Ted Malone said more than 5,900 SES volunteers dedicated almost 100,000 hours helping the community, including nearly 20,000 hours in storm damage response, more than 15,000 hours in search operations and in excess of 3,000 hours in flood boat operations.

“There are more than 35,000 Rural Fire Service volunteers including almost 12,300 volunteer firefighters who committed in excess of 355,000 hours to hazard reduction burns and emergency incidents last year,” Mr Malone said.

“The Queensland Ambulance Service has approximately 1,750 volunteers. These include almost 250 first responders who provide lifesaving advanced first aid in remote areas while an ambulance vehicle is en route, and 1,400 volunteers on Local Ambulance Committee’s, which promote community participation and ambulance services awareness.

“I want to acknowledge and thank all of those individuals who are committed to the safety of Queenslanders.

“As well as recognising the tremendous work of volunteers, I would also encourage anyone who has considered becoming a volunteer to explore the options available.”

Volunteering Qld CEO Perry Hembury said National Volunteer Week was a time to celebrate the contribution of all Queensland’s 1.2 million volunteers.

“Volunteers come from all different ages, backgrounds and professions but are united in their efforts to help the causes they care about,” Mr Hembury said.

“No matter what phase of our lives we are in, there is a world of opportunity open to each of us through volunteering.”

Kedron Park celebrates Volunteer Week

Rural Fire Service Queensland staff from Head Office held a bake sale and raffle during Volunteer Week, to raise awareness and celebrate the work Rural Fire Service volunteers do. A number of staff brought in baked goods, and we also received a generous donation of a handmade, emergency services themed quilt. At the end of the week we had raised over $900, which went towards purchasing prizes for the Rural Fire Service Day photo competition.
Thanks again, Energex

Rural Fire Brigades in the Caboolture, Caloundra, and Ipswich areas are testing new equipment purchased through the renewal of the Energex sponsorship.

The 2012-13 sponsorship saw 56 brigades benefit from over 70 pieces of equipment, valued at over $75,000.

Brigades were invited to nominate to receive a range of equipment. A selection panel, composed of Rural Fire Service Queensland Area Directors, Director of the Rural Fire Service Queensland and Energex staff met to evaluate all nominations. The end result saw a wide range of brigades sharing in:

- 12 Portable Pumps
- 13 Generators
- 12 Lighting Plants
- 17 Chainsaws
- 20 GPS & Kestrel weather meter kits

Community Safety Minister Jack Dempsey along with Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers Ted Malone and Energex CEO Terry Effeney, presented the equipment at a series of events held at Bli Bli, Mount Mee, and Woodhill Rural Fire Brigade Stations.

“Energex's generous sponsorship builds on the Newman Government’s commitment to providing our frontline staff and volunteers with the best resourcing and equipment possible,” Mr Dempsey said.

Mr Malone said Energex had been a long-standing supporter of the Rural Fire Service.

“We see the difference their sponsorship makes on the frontline each day and on behalf of the Queensland Government, I thank them,” Mr Malone said.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Commissioner Lee Johnson said the brigades were asked to nominate what equipment they would like to receive.

“For example portable pumps can quickly refill appliances which is essential when fighting wildfires.

“Our Rural firefighters will use the specialist GPS equipment to gather mapping data, which can be used to plot fire lines, identify structures and possible fire containment lines.

“The Kestrel Weather Meter Kits will arm our brigades with essential weather readings such as current temperature, wind speed, and humidity, all of which can enable firefighters to predict the rate of fire spread and what areas the fire will impact.

“This equipment, provided through Energex's ongoing sponsorship, will help to ensure that rural crews are able to respond quickly and with the best data available.”
Why fill out a form when you can just talk to Firecom?

Incident Reporting Refined - Volunteers Provide the Solution

At the Volunteer Summit in 2012, the message from the volunteers was loud and clear “Reduce the amount of information collected on the RF14 forms and have Brigades provide the information to Firecom at the time of the incident instead”. Since then, a significant amount of investigation and consultation has occurred into the feasibility of actioning this request. This work has included scrutinising every aspect of the RF14 Incident Reporting forms which were several pages long and required some 50 fields of information to be filled in. In addition to this, there was a significant amount of time spent by Area Office administration staff following up on these forms, clarifying information, and entering the contents of the forms into the Operations Management System (OMS) so that it could be reported on accurately.

While at first there was some resistance to changing/removing the forms and the processes surrounding them, the Rural Fire Service Queensland has been pleasantly surprised by the support received within the organisation to find a solution that would be workable to Brigades, Area Office and Firecom staff alike.

With this support, the idea has become a reality. Effective immediately, Brigades will no longer need to complete an RF14 Incident Reporting form after attending an incident or a planned Hazard Reduction Burn. Instead, Firecom have agreed to collect a few extra pieces of key information when they speak with the Brigade over the phone or radio - such as:

- The type of action taken by the Brigade;
- The size of the area burnt (for landscape fires); and
- The name of the Officer-in-Charge of the incident.

By answering these questions at the time of the incident, or as soon as possible afterwards where radio contact

COMMAND, LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT
a grassroots guide

Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) in the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) are human functions. Regardless of policies, procedures or paperwork to provide guidance, excellent outcomes are achieved by people. The principles of CLM are a significant part of our doctrine.

QFRS is a community safety organisation relying on the skills and confidence of its staff and volunteers, at times operating under the most extreme conditions, to achieve performance excellence.

In such situations, people look to leadership for direction, security, and results. The advantage a CLM model provides is that it enables all-round effective leadership performance, whether the situation calls for a position of command, general leadership, or people management.

CLM – A Grass Roots Guide is a straightforward and practical handbook for all QFRS personnel, whether in fire stations or in fire brigades; whether full-time, part-time, or volunteer, that provides an explanation of CLM requirements based on the values and policies of the QFRS.

The key message is that leadership and people management under the banner of CLM applies to everyone, not just the formal leaders and supervisors.

A limited number of the CLM handbooks are available through your Area Office.

(source: CLM handbook)
medium appliances

The first of the medium appliances have completed Quality Assurance inspections and should have been delivered by the time you receive this publication.

The 2012-13 medium appliance build will feature a Hatz 2G40 silenced diesel engine which produces 21Hp at 3600rpm, and is close coupled to a GAAM 125 pump which will pump 600 litres per minute at 1180kpa.

This combination will provide lower noise emissions through the full range of operations without compromising performance.

is not viable, the need for submitting an RF14 Incident Reporting form becomes redundant.

Not only does this reduce the red-tape and time taken for Brigades to complete the forms, it also makes the process less onerous for the Area administration staff, who from now on will be able to access the Firecom information directly, verify it in OMS, and close the report.

Accurate and timely collection of information regarding Brigades’ attendance at incidents is of vital importance as it is used by Government to determine funding and to better represent the hard work that Brigades do. For many years, the number of incidents Rural Fire Brigades attend has been extremely under-represented due to the fact that completion of the RF14 forms has been such an onerous task both for the Brigade and for the Area Office.

This solution aims to greatly improve our data capture and reporting capabilities, and most importantly, more accurately demonstrate the essential service that Rural Fire Service volunteers provide to the Queensland community.

In order to implement this new process across the State and provide Brigades (particularly new volunteers) with guidance on how to communicate with Firecom during the course of an incident, ‘Radio Prompts’ stickers and poster have been developed. While some Brigades may already have something similar, these new stickers will be used as the standard across the State. The stickers can be placed inside Brigade vehicles or beside a radio, for example. In addition, an electronic copy is also available to download from the Volunteer Portal and the Rural Fire Service Queensland will provide other formats that will work best for volunteers. If you would like to obtain a sticker, or have an idea of a different format you’d like the ‘Radio Prompts’ in, please contact your Area Office.

Another idea from volunteers at the Summit (and from input received through the “Rural Knowledge” feedback system), indicated that many Brigades also wanted to provide a record of all volunteers who attend each incident (this detail is not usually recorded by Firecom). To capture this (and other information that Brigades may want to collect), a simple Additional Incident Information form has been developed. This new, optional form can be retained by the Brigade or sent to the Area Office, and will only ask for the following information –

- Names of Brigade Members who attended the incident; and
- Comments or Issues regarding the incident (Brigades can enter as much or as little as they wish).

Feedback from volunteers and staff is that this information is important for workplace health and safety issues, volunteer recognition and identifying significant issues within the Brigade area.

The Additional Incident Information form is available electronically on the Volunteer Portal and in hard copy through your Area Office.

It has been both enlightening and encouraging to implement such a positive change prompted by volunteer feedback, while working towards our ultimate goal in the future of achieving fully automated incident reporting.

The Rural Fire Service Queensland is keen to hear from volunteers and staff about these changes, and to gain your ideas on how to make incident reporting easier. To submit your feedback, please complete a Rural Feedback form (available on the Volunteer Portal).

Madonna Day
Executive Manager, Volunteering and Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

2012-13 Medium Appliances

The first of the medium appliances have completed Quality Assurance inspections and should have been delivered by the time you receive this publication.

The 2012-13 medium appliance build will feature a Hatz 2640 silenced diesel engine which produces 21Hp at 3600rpm, and is close coupled to a GAAM 125 pump which will pump 600 litres per minute at 1180kpa.

This combination will provide lower noise emissions through the full range of operations without compromising performance.

The dual cab appliances will have seating capacity for six crew members and features a 1500 litre water tank, while the single cab will seat two and have 1800 litres.

Brigades receiving new appliances should ensure that all members are familiar with the safe operation of the vehicle and equipment prior to being engaged in operational activities.

Robert Walker
Manager, Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au

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**Concept Slip On Unit**

12 Rural Fire Brigades throughout the state are trialling a ‘concept’ version of the current slip on unit, which has been developed to fit single or dual cab style-side ute, as well as tray top vehicles.

The new units will provide Brigades with options when selecting available vehicles to deploy slip on units for hazard reduction and mop up activities, without compromising the current water carrying capacity or pump performance.

The ‘concept’ slip on unit features a low profile, 500 litre rotomoulded polyethylene tank, which is moulded to compensate for the wheel arch intrusion in both dual and single cab style-side utes, without impeding on rear vision for the driver. The tank also uses a compliant ball baffle system to provide stability through all tank water levels, as well as an off centre filling point, positioned on the near side of the tank to provide easier access for tank filling.

The slip on unit has a manual hose reel, with 30 meters of 19 mm hose, and a Davey pump with a maximum delivery pressure of 600Kpa which can deliver 400 litres per minute at 200 kpa.

Please be aware that all slip on units are supplied with speed loaders, specifically engineered to facilitate the safe loading and unloading of the units. However, should manual loading be required, the tank must be emptied and a minimum of four people are required to handle the unit safely.

Robert Walker  
Manager, Operational Support  
Rural Fire Service Queensland  
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

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**New long sleeve work shirt**

After feedback from volunteers, Rural Fire Service has produced a new long sleeve work shirt. The need for these shirts was recognised after the 2010-11 severe weather events when volunteers were involved in clean-up activities.

The new work shirt is a non-fire rated, dark blue drill cotton shirt, with long sleeves, a collar, and two breast pockets with button down flaps. Similar to the green T-Shirts, ‘Rural Fire Service’ is screen printed across the back, and the RFS logo is screen printed above the left front pocket. The new long sleeve shirts don’t have epaulettes holders. These shirts are aimed at reducing sun exposure during outdoor activities.

The initial distribution of the work shirts has reached Area Offices, and will be targeted at active rural firefighters; however additional shirts for wider distribution will be sourced as funding becomes available. This year, due to financial constraints the long sleeve shirts will replace the green t-shirts. It is hoped that next year both shirts will be available.

Robert Walker  
Manager, Operational Support  
Rural Fire Service Queensland  
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service
A search on Google for “risk assessment” returned over 140 million results, and a search for “situational awareness” returned over 50 million. That’s a lot of information!

I often hear people say that undertaking a risk assessment is not something we do regularly; it is a complex and highly complicated process, and the amount of information that needs to be researched makes it a specialised area. As such, most people keep away from the idea of having to undertake a risk assessment when they engage in any activity – much to their detriment.

Only recently I was talking to a mate who had considered joining our local rural fire brigade. He was concerned that he did not think he was the type of person who could be a volunteer firefighter. He thought it was a high risk environment and he would be worried he might hurt himself or put someone else in danger.

I explained to him that our decision making and actions are based on the principles of risk management. We assess the risk and take actions that ensure safety is paramount. We do not put people in danger and our actions significantly reduce or even eliminate the potential for harm.

He was still a bit concerned that it seemed to be a dangerous activity and he would not know how to do any risk assessments, but said he would think about joining up while he was doing some bricklaying that day. I noticed he was wearing his steel-capped boots and I asked him why he was wearing them.

“I got out of bed this morning and, knowing I was doing some bricklaying, I had to choose between wearing my thongs or wearing my boots” he sarcastically responded. “But then common sense prevailed and I wore my boots. If I dropped a brick on my foot it wouldn’t hurt me.”

Common sense! I explained that he had just applied the principles of risk management and he had undertaken a dynamic risk assessment. He identified the hazard (bricklaying), he assessed the risk associated with the hazard (dropping a brick on his foot), he identified who was at risk (himself), and he effectively used available resources to eliminate, manage, or control the risk (he wore his steel-capped boots).

We all undertake risk assessments on a daily basis. It is not always in a complex or highly hazardous environment or in an emergency situation. But the principles remain the same, and if we are in a habit of consciously thinking through our situations, we can remain safe and bring any event to a successful resolution.

In our roles as operational volunteer firefighters, dynamic risk management is the process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks arising from operational factors and making decisions that balance risk costs with intervention benefits on the incident ground.

Firefighters at all levels use dynamic risk assessments for readiness, response, and recovery across a wide range of operations. It is vital that all firefighters are capable of conducting dynamic risk assessments in order to manage the risk inherent at operational incidents. This will allow all of us to operate to the highest possible standard of safety and efficiency.

Further information is available in Operational Guide 11 in the QFRS Operations Doctrine (available on the Volunteer Portal), or training in Dynamic Risk assessments can be provided by your Rural Fire Service Area Office staff.

Craig Smith GFFireE
Executive Manager, Rural Training and Development
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

These short video clips are full of information that will help home and landowners to prepare their home and family for bushfire season. They will assist in making the decision to stay or to leave, and will outline the steps to take as a result of the decision.

You will find a link to the clips on the homepage of the Rural Fire website at www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au. It’s a good idea to bookmark this page in your Favourites list to easily return at a later date.

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au
FireCare
the QFRS
counselling and support service

As we head in to the 2013 bushfire season, it is important to remember that counselling and support is available to Rural Fire Service volunteers and their immediate family (for Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) work related issues only).

FireCare is the QFRS staff counselling and support program. Its goal is to promote staff well-being by helping individual staff members deal with either work-related or personal problems.

What does FireCare provide?

Peer Support Program – a team of specially selected and trained co-workers to help staff cope with personal or work-related difficulties, known as Peer Support Officers (PSOs);

Confidential professional counselling – an independent service available to all staff at every level;

24-hour Telephone Crisis Counselling – freecall 1800 805 980 – a counsellor will return the call as soon as possible;

After a critical incident (as defined by Operations Doctrine Incident Directive (INCDIR) 13.1 – FireCare – Activation and Support), a local PSO is notified who will make an assessment (in consultation with the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) and crew) as to the need for an immediate response, to provide psychological care or one-on-one support. Various support options are available to staff who have been involved in a critical incident. FireCare provides an opportunity to discuss the effects of an event of high emotional impact individually or in a group support session, facilitated by a PSO and/or a professional counsellor;

Training – information and seminars on issues such as stress management, effective communication skills, critical incident response and management, and others;

Consultation to management on staff well-being; and

Critical Incident Response and Management including Disaster Response Teams – program of responses to critical incidents including education and resilience building, immediate and following support and ongoing monitoring and counselling.

What type of problems does FireCare address?

• Critical incident stress;
• Work issues such as conflict, stress, harassment and bullying etc;
• Emotional difficulties;
• Self-esteem issues;
• Home/Family/Relationship difficulties; and
• Communication difficulties.

What is Peer Support?

Peer Support is an integral part of the FireCare service.

Peer Support Officers are carefully selected on the basis of trust, integrity and a genuine interest in the health and well-being of fellow workers.

Peer Support Officers provide:
• One-on-one support;
• discuss support and self care with groups; and
• Referral to professional counselling if required.

What does counselling involve?

FireCare counsellors will discuss your concerns and their effect on your life and work. They are trained to help you deal effectively with the problem by examining a range of options. Support is provided in a caring, non-judgmental environment.

The counsellor may also refer you for further specialist assistance such as medical, psychological, drug and alcohol counselling.

Confidentiality

FireCare is completely confidential. Information may only be revealed:
• when documents are subpoenaed by a court;
• where the counsellor believes that someone’s life or safety is threatened; or
• with the client’s prior written consent.

If counselling is sought during work hours, suitable arrangements need to be made with your supervisor.

Cost

There is no cost to you for the first four (4) counselling sessions.

For further information on how FireCare may assist you, visit the Volunteer Portal to download a list of Peer Support Officers, or free call 1800 805 980 - 24 hours - 7 days a week.
Bushfire CRC Update

Did you know that you can find the latest news and research updates from the Bushfire CRC on the Volunteer Portal?

**Bushfire CRC Fire Note 109, Fire impact and risk evaluation**

This Fire Note details the proof of concept simulation system developed by the Risk assessment and decision making project; a collaborative project undertaken by Geoscience Australia, the Bureau of Meteorology, the University of Melbourne and CSIRO. The project is part of the Bushfire CRC research theme Understanding risk.

**Summary**

The Risk assessment and decision making project has developed a proof of concept simulation system with the aim of providing critical fire planning information to emergency services, government and the public. The Fire Impact and Risk Evaluation Decision Support Tool (FireDST) is an advanced software program that can be used to understand the potential impacts a bushfire may have on community assets, infrastructure and people. FireDST demonstrates the ability to predict the probabilities of both neighbourhood and house loss, as well as the potential health impacts of bushfire smoke and the areas that are likely to be affected by a bushfire.

**Fire Note 108, Predicting bushfire preparedness from bushfire expectations**

This Fire Note outlines research into community preparedness undertaken after the bushfires in the Perth Hills in February 2011.

The research is conducted as part of the Information processing under stress; community reactions project, under the Bushfire CRC research theme Communicating risk.

**Summary**

Fire agencies are seeking to understand if and how individuals and households prepare for a bushfire. They need to know if individuals and households prepare in different respects to an equal extent, and the factors that influence bushfire preparedness. This Fire Note examines the link between several potential predictors of why residents prepare for a bushfire and different types of bushfire preparedness activities.

**Fire Note 107, Promoting community bushfire preparedness**

This Fire Note is an update on the Effective risk communication project, part of the first phase of the Bushfire CRC (2003-2010).

**Summary**

Significant resources have been devoted to bushfire public education programs. However, people living in communities at risk of bushfire continue to demonstrate reluctance to adopt bushfire preparedness measures when these measures are communicated through passive, information-based approaches. Building on the findings from the Effective risk communication project, an action research program was developed around the Tasmania Fire Service’s Community Development Pilot. Findings from the pilot have facilitated the wider adoption and implementation of community engagement principals into broader Tasmania Fire Service community education programs.

Air Ops Quick Update

During the previous operational periods designated as “Yamba” and “Baker” the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Air Operations Unit facilitated and/or coordinated approximately 1700 hours of aircraft operations. These hours were spread across operational water bombing and fire spotting activities during “Operation Yamba”, and disaster management support / flood response during “Operation Baker”. This tasking saw up to 23 QFRS engaged aircraft (both National Aerial Firefighting Centre contracted and State registered “Call When Needed”) in the air at various times across Queensland in the support of ground crew operations.

With a view to the upcoming operational bushfire period and beyond, the team at the Air Operations Unit are firmly fixed on building on this important QFRS capability, whilst ensuring that the past lessons learnt are incorporated into the systems, policies, and practice that go to support an increasingly safer, more timely, efficient and effective air operations response, both in the air and on the ground.
Mitigation vital to any brigade response

With the wet season coming to a close around the state and the summer storms being a distant memory, now is the time for brigades to start looking at what the rain has brought to their patch and what risks will exist for the coming fire season.

Mitigation of bushfire risk can at times be a fickle business, with timing being the key to all operations. It is with this in mind that the importance is put on early season mitigation and hazard identification. Following the big wet season experienced in the south east of the state, many areas which previously had not been a hazard before may now be a hazard - in particular creek lines and rivers where flood debris has accumulated along the banks.

Brigades should now be identifying these areas of high risk by conducting inspections of their local response area, following this they should engage with the landholders who own the risk (remember who owns the fuel owns the fire) and in many areas this may be a government land management agency. If this is the case you will need to liaise with your Area Office who can put you in touch with the Department responsible for the land.

The key to successful mitigation is collaboration and consultation; if we all work together the task may not be that hard. In many cases to reduce the hazard in an area the risk needs to be mitigated across the landscape not just a single property - brigades may need to hold a public meeting or doorknock the area and get all the landholders together to discuss the options. Remember, mitigation doesn't have to mean a hazard reduction burn.

With an increasing focus in the community on maintaining the environmental aspects of a block of land, the need exists for brigades to conduct prescribed burning rather than hazard reduction burning. The basis of this starts with asking the landholder ‘what do you want to achieve by conducting a burn on this block?’ If the answer is to reduce the risk of a wildfire, then the best time to burn is now. A cold burn will reduce the fuel load, not just ensuring that the fire is easy to control and requires fewer resources, but it will also maintain the environmental aspects of the block.

If the objective is to reduce a weed or for pest control, then a hot burn would be more suited, but these are discussions we need to have with the landholder prior to striking the match. The other key component of any burn program is ensuring that a test burn is conducted prior to starting the main burn. This will help to ensure that the objective of the burn is achieved. The First Officer training program contains detailed information of these concepts and process for conducting prescribed burning.

As discussed earlier, mitigation doesn't mean you have to conduct a burn in the area - it might mean that many different methods of reducing the risk in that area are employed, or even a combination of these methods. For example, a fire break may be established using heavy machinery, however at times the cost of this can be limiting. Many brigades around the state have been experimenting with the use of chemicals to establish breaks in key areas. This has several advantages - it is a relatively cheap process, can be used across rough country, and the amount of erosion is limited as no earth is disturbed in the application of the chemical. Typically this has been achieved with the use of Round up and Grazon for samplings. Once the break has died off, if done early enough, a quick burn can be completed to remove the vegetation from the break, producing a workable fire break in any location. Many other mitigation methods may also be applied in an area, such as community education via the PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE. campaign, and slashing of long grass to reduce forward rate of spread of fire.

The key to all mitigation programs, no matter what methods are employed, is collaboration and consultation. Remember, the earlier you make a start and the more areas mitigated, the easy the fire season should be.

Tim Chittenden
Bushfire Safety Officer, Northern Region Rural Fire Service Queensland Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

chemical fire-breaks
cool-season burns
Congratulations to the volunteers who received the National Medals, National Emergency Medals, and Diligent and Ethical Service Medals ceremonies held during April and May in Rockhampton.

The National Emergency Medal is awarded to members of relevant organisations or individuals, who rendered sustained service during specified dates in specified places in response to nationally significant emergencies within Australia, such as the Victorian Bushfires 2009, Queensland Floods 2010-11, and Cyclone Yasi, or to other persons who rendered significant service in response to such emergencies that did not satisfy the minimum duration of service required to constitute sustained service.

The National Medal recognises long and diligent service in organisations that protect life and property, at some risk to their members. This medal is not solely a long-service medal; nominees must meet criteria as outlined in the National Medal Regulations 2011, in order to be eligible for this award.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Diligent and Ethical Service Medal has been instituted by the Commissioner, QFRS to recognise QFRS staff and volunteers who have distinguished themselves over a prolonged period of time, through commitment to ethical standards, diligence and integrity. This medal is not granted a ‘right’ by virtue of long service.

Do you know someone who could be eligible for an award? You can find more information about the awards and recognition available to Rural Fire Service volunteers on the Volunteer Portal.

**Request for submissions**

**Brigade Stories**

In the March 2013 edition we were pleased to publish an article submitted by Ian Melody, the First Officer of Saunders Beach RFB. This article was a fantastic story which highlighted the importance of training and the dangers of uncontrolled cane fires.

We would like to make this a regular section of the Bulletin, and would love to see and hear about what your brigade gets up to. Photos and stories from the fire ground, histories, lessons learnt, awards achieved, or key projects/initiatives that your brigade is undertaking – we’d love to hear from you.

Send your stories and photos to rural.operations@dcs.qld.gov.au and you might make the next edition of the Bulletin.
Crew Leaders Course in Mount Surprise

On the weekend of the 5, 6, and 7 April 2013 at Mount Surprise, the Far Northern Region hosted another successful Crew Leader Course for 12 volunteer firefighters from 11 Rural Brigades. The “live-in” course bought volunteers from the Cape to the Coast.

The practical scenarios were warmly received by participants and included fires from helicopter crashes, to inland train services being threatened by wildfire. The students were taught by instructors with over 150 years of combined fire experience.

Area Director Ian Atherton told Regional Manager Bruno Greimel after the training - “that was one of the best groups we have had. Isn’t it good to see so many young volunteers stepping up.” The average age was 41 and most participants had been to more than 50 fires each.

Neil Parker
Area Training and Support Officer, Innisfail
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Hazard Reduction Burns

Wherever residential, industrial or agricultural developments are located within or near bushland settings with natural vegetation, they are at risk of impact from bushfires. We call such areas the iZone. Fire can ignite in natural vegetation and spread rapidly from burning vegetation to nearby homes, farms or industrial areas and less commonly, fires can ignite within a structure or machinery and spread to neighbouring bushland.

Areas of natural vegetation are highly desirable places to live. What makes them so attractive, however, also makes them hazardous. Whilst vegetation is an amenity for residents, it is nothing more than a source of fuel for a fire.

Prevention and control of bushfires present many unique challenges. These challenges demand that communities take collective responsibility for the problem, and that we develop new attitudes towards fire. All members of the community need to cooperate to implement strategies that resolve fire problems in iZone areas. Effective community education is the key to preventing or minimizing the impact of bushfire in such areas. Carefully planned developments, supported by regular property maintenance have the best chance of surviving the destructive impacts of bushfire.

Community self reliance is fostered by active and on going education programs, especially immediately prior to the fire season.

Fuel management programs are one way to reduce fuel loadings and better protect property from the destructive impacts of bushfire. Whilst hazard reduction burning is the most commonly used method of reducing fuel, mechanical methods such as slashing hand clearing or ploughing may also be used and often these methods have the benefit of minimising the ecological impacts of hazard reduction operations.

Hazard reduction is the prescribed use of fire to reduce fuels across the broader landscape and this helps to reduce the intensity and size of fires thus aiding in their suppression. Therefore, hazard reduction burning is part of a strategic approach to reduce the risk of fire to life and property. While many species and communities of plants and animals have some tolerance to fire, fires occurring close together within a short time interval can produce a dramatic, adverse effect on bio diversity. The specific frequency of fire that will be detrimental to a species, population or ecological community will vary from place to place and needs to be closely considered when planning any hazard reduction burn.

All hazard reduction burns should have a concise objective, which is the desired outcome required to meet community needs and expectations, and bio diversity outcomes. The objective should consider all management issues including asset protection, pastoral production, maintenance of bio diversity and ecological processes, and structural vegetation changes. For further information on undertaking hazard reduction programs refer the Brigade Manual section A1.2.

Community awareness is an important component of fire management. Greater community awareness can assist in gaining support and assistance with fire management planning and implementation. Also, a greater understanding of the implications of fire in the landscape and a greater emphasis on community participation will ultimately foster better community resilience with the aim of helping shift community knowledge and attitudes and encourage people to change their behaviour. This knowledge and awareness would help community attitudes to include responsible use of fire, home preparation for the fire season, planting a native fire retarding garden, or getting involved with their local rural fire brigade.

Len Jeavons
AFSM
Lower Beechmont RFB
South East Region

len Jeavons AFSM
Lower Beechmont RFB
South East Region
Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund (central DGR fund)

As part of implementing the Commonwealth’s revised DGR processes, Secretaries/Treasurers of brigades that have advised participation in the central DGR fund recently received a copy of the below letter and form.

If your Brigade is already participating in this fund but has not yet completed this form, please complete with two signatures and forward by mail as directed, or scan and email to RuralOperations.Finance@dcs.qld.gov.au.

Dear Secretary

Confirmation of Brigade/Brigade Group banking details for return of donations

Your brigade/brigade group has advised that it will participate in the Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund (the central fund) to enable it to continue receiving donations that are tax deductible for the donor.

The Trustees of the central fund have asked each participating brigade/brigade group to formally confirm their banking details by returning the enclosed form signed by two authorised officers of the brigade/brigade group.

This will ensure the fund’s administrators can return deposited donations to the correct bank account. It will also ensure records held by the trust meet the internal control requirements of the Trustees and completed forms can be made available for review at the annual independent audit of the fund.

Please complete and mail the enclosed form to the address provided.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please call Deborah Baumann, Finance Officer, Rural Fire Service Queensland, (07) 3635 3169, or William Norfolk, Executive Manager Finance QFRS and QCS, (07) 3635 3061.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Gallant
Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund

Name of participating brigade/brigade group: ________________________

Brigade/Brigade Group bank account details (for the bank account the brigade/brigade group will use to receive tax deductible donations it has received on behalf of the central fund and deposited in the central fund’s bank account):

Bank: __________________________________________________________
Account name: __________________________________________________
Account number: ________________________________________________
BSB number: ___________________________________________________
Date: __________________________________________________________
Signed by: ______________________________________________________
Name: _________________________________________________________
Authorised role in brigade/brigade group: ___________________________

and

Name: _________________________________________________________
Authorised role in brigade/brigade group: ___________________________

Please mail the completed form to:

Trustees for the Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund
C/- Rural Fire Service Queensland, Mail Cluster 8.1 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service GPO Box 1425, Brisbane Queensland 4001
Email: RuralOperations.Finance@dcs.qld.gov.au

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au

Rural Fire Bulletin | July 2013 | 29
An exercise centered around an earthquake impacting Brisbane’s east has kept more than 400 emergency services personnel busy on Saturday 25 May, as they respond to mock crashes, rescues, and hazardous incidents.

‘Exercise Shake It’, a large-scale exercise at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy at Lytton, was testing response capabilities across a number of agencies.

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers joined staff from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS), Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), Redland City Council, the Red Cross and several other agencies to ‘respond’ to the earthquake scenario.

A number of scenarios were carried out simultaneously throughout the day to replicate what would happen in real time if this type of disaster occurred.

Scenarios included large multi-casualty incidents such as building collapses, road crash rescues, searches for missing people, live fire activities, and hazardous materials incidents.

By testing the capabilities of all agencies in this challenging but controlled environment, this exercise will greatly assist in identifying methods for enhancing multi-agency interactivity and response.
Emergency products you can rely on

GAAM Emergency Products is an exclusive distributor of Morning Pride’s Kore Kooler™ Rehab Chair – a highly effective solution to assist in preventing heat stress by being able to quickly lowering the body’s core temperature to within its safe range.

Heat stress is particularly prevalent among firefighters who are regularly exposed to extreme temperatures. The Kore Kooler™ Rehab Chair promotes cooling by conduction. The firefighter places their forearms into the chair’s arm water reservoirs for 10-20 minutes. Heat is dissipated from the forearms into the ambient temperature water. Cooled blood returns to the heart and is pumped through the body, reducing the body’s core temperature.

*All technical information obtained from manufacturer’s product brochure.

For more information:

p: 03 9464 8400  |  www.gaam.com.au  |  gaam@tycoint.com
## Area office contact details

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