Rural Fire Service Queensland

Rural Fire Bulletin
November 2013

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KEELTY REVIEW

100% APPLIANCE FUNDING

BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK
As many of you are aware, earlier in the year recommendations were made by the Malone Review into improving Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ). More recently, former Australian Federal Police (AFP) Commissioner Mick Keelty recommended sweeping reforms for police and emergency services.

The key recommendations of the Keelty review relating to the Department of Community Safety include:

- Transferring the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to Queensland Health.
- Transferring Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.
- Revamping the Department of Community Safety and renaming it Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).
- Creating a new position of Inspector General, Emergency Management to ensure emergency and disaster responses are better co-ordinated.
- Merging the agencies' business support functions such as Finance, Human Resources, Information Management, Procurement and Legal Services and repositioning remaining QAS and QCS administrative streams with their new departments.

More information regarding the Keelty review is provided later in this edition of the Bulletin.

With these reviews complete, many of you may be asking what happens now. I am pleased to say that the QFES Steering Committee Terms of Reference are now finalised. A meeting was held on Monday 16 September with the initial membership, however it has since been identified that the membership needs to be broadened to include representatives from other agencies in the portfolio (e.g. Queensland Police Service, Portfolio Business) and other Government agencies (e.g. Department of Premier and Cabinet). Initial membership of the Committee is as follows:

- Commissioner (Chair), Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS)
- Deputy Commissioner, QFRS
- Assistant Commissioner Brisbane Region, QFRS
- Assistant Commissioner Rural Fire Service Queensland, RFSQ
- Executive Director Emergency Management Queensland, EMQ
- Executive Director Operations Business and Strategy Directorate, QFRS
- Director, SES Support Services, EMQ
- Commissioner's Staff Officer, QFRS
- Manager, SIOPP Unit (Secretariat)
Further representation from within our agency and other Government agencies is still being identified.

To date the QFES Transition Team has been designing and structuring the program of work which needs to be done. A total of 117 recommendations have been allocated to QFES to work through.

The Transition Committee will meet weekly and the Commissioner Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has advised all members of the committee that work is to progress as quickly as possible. The Commissioner is committed to being open and transparent with his communication to all staff and volunteers throughout the transition.

To encourage everyone to get involved an email address has been established which will give you the opportunity to have your say and be part of the transition process. All feedback, suggestions and ideas should be submitted to QFES-Transition@dcq.qld.gov.au. The transition team will endeavour to provide responses as soon as possible and all ideas will be considered.

One of the changes we will see with the implementation of the QFES is a closer working relationship with the other emergency services, in particular SES. With Cyclone and Flood season almost upon us, this will perhaps be our first opportunity to demonstrate the combined response of QFES.

I am proud to say that RFSQ volunteers have always worked closely with Emergency Management Queensland and SES volunteers in response to disasters such as flood and cyclones, and the changes to the structure of the department will only enhance what I believe is an already excellent working relationship. Further information on the implementation of both the Malone and Keelty review recommendations will be communicated to you through staff, the Volunteer Portal, and the Bulletin magazine as the information becomes available.

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

Continued support from Energex

It is with great pleasure that we can announce the continued sponsorship provided by Energex to Rural Fire Service Queensland. Energex has provided sponsorship, in the form of $75,000 of approved equipment, to rural fire brigades for the past three years and have now signed on for a fourth.

This valuable sponsorship is available in the form of various pieces of equipment which brigades in the Caboolture, Caloundra, and Ipswich areas are eligible to apply for. First Officers and Secretaries of eligible brigades have received a nomination form with this edition of the Bulletin. If you didn’t receive yours, you can download a copy from the Volunteer Portal.

As part of this year’s sponsorship agreement, we are pleased to offer brigades the opportunity to receive:

- Portable Pump
- Automated External Defibrillator
- Lay flat hose
- Nav Man
- Garmin GPS (hand held)
- Reversing camera
- Waeco Portable Fridge
- Kestrels
- Basic Level 1 Command and Control Kit
  - Pelican case (Similar to a TAC C)
  - Kestrel
  - TAC A - A4 size folder
  - Tabard (Incident Controller / Crew Leader)
  - Clip Board - to attach paperwork
  - Small digital clock
  - Administration equipment - white board marker, pens, pencil, LED Lantern
  - Large Fire danger meters
- Portable Residual Current Device
- Stihl Backpack Blower

To express your interest, please complete the nomination form and return it by folding as shown, for endorsement by 24 January, 2014.

Christine Osborne  Volunteer Recruitment Officer
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Community education hits the road

It was the events that followed Ex Tropical Cyclone Oswald that got a few of us thinking - “How else could we support our community?”

Four months of hard slog, and over 1000 volunteer hours later, and the Volunteer Community Education Unit is here.

This unit was always going to be about supporting our team, about supporting our communities, and about having an impact.

We wanted the unit to turn heads, and it certainly does that.

Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) Area Coordinator Geoff Richardson from Tamborine Mountain Rural Fire Brigade was the driving force behind the concept and the roll out. With a team of like-minded volunteer, auxiliary, and permanent fire fighters, the committee planned the build from beginning to end. The trailer is dedicated to Geoff and his wife Leigh.

The concept is to support communities during and after incidents. It is completely self-sufficient with generator supply, low voltage LED lighting, 2 x LED TV screens with internet accessibility and free to air range. It includes a fridge, microwave, and universal phone charging units to be able to charge any mobile phone on the market. There is low voltage LED lighting around the entire exterior of the trailer to support evening activations also. A free standing three metre roll out awning will shelter community members when they are watching a presentation.

The internal walls of the trailer are insulated and lined with white panels. All of the internal walls can be used as a white board and certainly will come in handy when it is activated in to the field.

The planned use of the trailer is to support our crews in the field with community messaging and community information sessions. When a team of VCEs is activated to support operations, the trailer will roll in and play a vital support role. A member of the community can sit in comfort inside the trailer and complete a Bushfire Survival Plan or a home evacuation plan.

This trailer is proof that a committed team can achieve what many would deem impossible. It has been my pleasure to work with so many community minded people and I am proud to present the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Volunteer Community Education Unit.

Peta Miller-Rose
Acting Inspector, Bushfire Safety Officer
South East Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Praise for the Certificate II in Public Safety

29th July, 2013.

Dear Neil

Re:Certificate 2 Public Safety, Fire fighting Operations

My name is Sherryl Kuhn and all my children have attended Kilcoy High School. My youngest son Larsen, a year 12 student, has been fortunate enough to be studying a Certificate 2 Public Safety, Fire fighting Operations through the Kilcoy High School.

I have witnessed firsthand the positive outcomes this course has had on my son Larsen. Since commencing this course he has become a member of the Mount Kilcoy-Sandy Creek Rural Fire Brigade and he attends the monthly meetings at the brigade in his own time. He has attended a fire fighting exercise day in Brisbane where a bus was taken to Brisbane at no expense to us as a family. Larsen thoroughly enjoyed this day. He informed us everyone was so helpful and friendly on the day and the food was great (a very important thing to any growing boy). Larsen also volunteered his time in several events including under 8s day and was lucky enough to appear in the paper reading a book to the children the importance of safety. He has also assisted on the open day at the Mount Kilcoy-Sandy Creek station. After this event I have received several positive comments from new community members who did not know the importance of the rural fire service in a small community. I was also told Larsen’s assistance on the day was informative and he took his role seriously. Through these activities it has given Larsen the confidence to volunteer to assist at the Primary school sports day recently. In all, I believe this course has given the courage to my son to become a volunteer within the community now and into the future. It has also given all the students studying this course a chance to make adult decisions whilst still at school.

I would like to congratulate your team of workers who assist the students. Firstly, Graham King for his time he takes within his role to coordinate and teach students something he is so passionate about. I am sure it’s a labour of love. Also Andrew Chessum, who is Larsen’s mentor, who goes out of his way to assist Larsen with any needs he has. This is the first time in Larsen’s 12 years at school where he has had a mentor outside his immediate teachers and it is refreshing to have Andrew as such friendly one. He has made contact with me on several occasions to see how Larsen is going and whether he is enjoying the course and he reports back positive stories. I must also make mention of Geoff Robins for his role in encouraging Larsen in the first place to do the course. Geoff is unable to assist at present as he has other work commitments. Above all I would like to thank you, Neil [Kelso], for making it possible for the Kilcoy team to achieve these positive outcomes. I wish you well on a job well done where all key role players work well above their call of duty.

I am the Administrator of the Kilcoy Library and through this position I have been happy to speak the praise of the course, trainers, and the Kilcoy High School.

As you can appreciate, Larsen is busy at school as he studies 6 OP subjects and works a part time job at Woodford and helps us on our small farm where we run cattle and grow grapes, but he priorities his time to do the “Firies” as he enjoys it so much.

I thank you for your time and the difference your course has done for a bunch of country kids in the town of Kilcoy.

Kindest Regards

Sherryl Kuhn
Irvinebank Exercise

On Saturday, 20 July and Sunday, 21 July, Irvinebank Rural Fire Brigade hosted a major interagency exercise. It was an outstanding success thanks largely to the 55 firefighters and 10 support persons from nine Tableland Rural Fire Brigades; two Tablelands Regional Council fire crews; and two Department of Environment and Resource Management crews.

A major component of the exercise was to burn 300 hectares as a hazard reduction burn, reducing the hazard and protecting the community from wildfire. The area was split into three sectors and managed by incident management teams based at the Irvinebank shed.

Over the two days, three separate Incident Management Teams were formed from approximately 19 volunteers with all functional roles being mentored. This allowed officers from all brigades to train in the various functions, better enabling them to have an understanding of the larger incident fire management and be better prepared when they are required to step up in an unwanted event. Everyone performed admirably in the roles they took on.

The fire consumed approximately ninety five percent of the available fuel. Flame heights averaged one metre with no scorch - which is pretty amazing in this steep country. This showed the importance of early burning to reduce fuel loads where it is possible. The exercise also showed what can be achieved when fire control lines are maintained in good condition.

There were no injuries to anyone throughout the two day event; except the pretend exercise, where two of the volunteers decided to use stage makeup to fake a very nasty burn to the hand and forearm, as well as a bad sprain and bruising to the ankle. A call was put through to the Incident Control Centre that sent three people to the scene. One of the unfortunate firefighters took these injuries for real and he ran to the local hotel to get ice for the ankle and glad wrap to seal and protect the burn. When he returned puffing and panting, completely out of breath, he realised that the injuries were fake and only part of the exercise. He was forgiven immediately for calling the participants in this rouse quite obscene names, becoming quite a hero for his concern for his fellow firefighters.

Catering was organised thanks to the Salvos and Irvinebank Progress Association and all meals were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. A big thank you to both of these excellent organisations for their support and excellent cuisine.

The exercise was also covered by Channel 7 who were present for a few hours and gave a very good report on the local news broadcast.

The exercise was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants and all outcomes were achieved, including the testing of Innisfail Area’s new portable repeaters. Thank you to all the participants especially the management committee and officers of the Tablelands Lakes Rural Fire Brigade Group who were tasked with the planning and running of the exercise to meet the objectives set by Rural Fire Service Queensland Innisfail staff.

Ian Atherton
Area Director Innisfail
Rural Fire Service Queensland
The skies may have been overcast, but nothing could dampen the spirits of over 50 firefighters as they converged on the Kilcoy showgrounds for Operation Icebreaker. This training exercise brought local Rural and Auxiliary brigades together to enable familiarisation with appliances from different stations. Should a major disaster occur firefighters need to have the ability to operate all equipment. The emergency urban rescue tender from Caboolture was also on site to display the resources available.

Four ‘fun’ events were run on the day requiring firefighters to use ingenuity and creativity to solve problems. All participants demonstrated skills and drills when planning their attack. Negotiating a barrel around an obstacle course, filling a container with water when confronted with insufficient hose, using case one and case three to knock down lustre cones, and attacking multiple fires made for plenty of fast action.

Incident Controller Ian Swadling from Villeneuve Rural Fire Brigade kept the day running smoothly. He rotated the teams on the appliances ensuring all were on a steep learning curve. Teams participating included: Villeneuve, Hazeldean, Mt Kilcoy, Bellthorpe, Delaneys Creek, Wamuran, and Samsonvale Rural Fire Brigades, Kilcoy and Woodford Auxiliaries, Caboolture Area Staff, and the Burpengary Commander (Northern Command).

Following all the adrenalin and energy burning, appetites were satisfied with a hearty barbecue. Thanks to Lukes IGA, Kilcoy, for donating food for the lunch.

The planning committee were very positive about the outcomes of the day. This is the second consecutive year they have run such an event, there are already plans underway to make next year bigger and better!

**Brenda King**
Auxiliary Support Officer
Queensland’s improving weather services

From October 2013, the Bureau of Meteorology is upgrading its forecasts and warnings services in Queensland.

A total of 67 locations across Queensland will get weather forecasts for seven days from early October. The forecasts will be presented as a combination of text and graphics. Regional Queensland will now have access to the type of detailed forecasts previously provided for four of the Southeast Coast district locations.

During 2014, services will expand further to include map based graphical forecasts and the capability to generate a forecast for any location, including the coastal waters zones. The recently-launched MetEye™ will be a doorway to maps of temperature, rainfall, winds and weather all designed to make weather-based decision-making easier. In addition, rainfall information including forecast probabilities of rain and average rainfall amounts will be issued for major centres across Queensland.

Changes to the Public Weather Forecast services

The new Queensland public weather forecast product suite will include:

- **State forecast**: The state forecast will continue to be provided for four days plus an outlook for the next three days.
- **District forecast**: The four day district forecast for the 15 districts will contain detailed information on weather, temperature, and winds. The wind speeds will be given with actual values in km/h instead of categories as light, moderate, etc., fire danger, and UV Alert will be included for the current day.
- **Metro forecast**: Seven day fully worded forecasts will be provided for Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, and Gold Coast. In addition, rainfall probability and rainfall amount will also be included for the current day and the next day for Brisbane, Maroochydore, and Surfers Paradise. Some of the metropolitan suburbs of Brisbane, Gold Coast, and Sunshine Coast will also receive their own seven day forecast précis.
- **Town forecast**: Seven day fully worded forecasts will be provided for 23 locations across the state twice a day. These locations include Weipa, Charters Towers, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Emerald, Longreach, Mount Isa, Birdsville, Charleville, Roma, Toowoomba, Goondiwindi, Maryborough, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Ipswich. Wind speed and wind variations will be described in more detail and in km/h, along with the maximum and minimum temperature ranges which will be particularly beneficial to the fire authorities for controlled burning and for farming communities for crop spraying, crop dusting, etc.
- **Précis forecast**: An extra 44 locations across the state will receive seven day précis forecast and a four day worded forecast for their regional area. These locations include Thursday Island, Palmerville, Coen, Burketown, Normanton, Kowanyama, Doomadgee, Georgetown, Cooktown, Innisfail, Atherton, Mareeba, Ayr, Ingham, Bowen, Moranbah, Biloela, Winton, Barcaldine, Thargomindah, Cunnamulla, Stanthorpe, Gayndah, Dalby, Kingaroy, St George, Warwick, Beaudesert, Gatton, Redcliffe, and Logan Central.

For more information, visit the Bureau of Meteorology website at www.bom.gov.au
Professional team work at Pratten Bony Mountain

On the night of 12 June, both Rural and Urban Operations were responded to the towns of Pratten and Bony Mountain to assist in emergency response and recovery efforts, following a storm cell that moved through the area. While the storm activity was wider spread, a destructive specific storm cell was experienced through this particular area, causing structural damage to homes and a community building. The path of destruction was only a few hundred metres wide, but never the less caused significant damage to those communities.

As the on-call senior officer for the region and due to the reports being received at Firecom South-West, I decided to inspect the area and offer any support needed to the crews on the ground. On my arrival at the Pratten command site I witnessed an extremely professional operation which had been setup utilising both Rural Fire Service volunteers and urban staff - many people working as one team to deliver our services to their local communities.

Several houses had been affected at Pratten, with at least three now unliveable. Two members of the community had to be treated by the Queensland Ambulance Service and there was wide spread damage to the electricity network with many power lines down in the area. Bony Mountain had also suffered structural damage, First Officer Mal Stacey (Gladfield/Maryvale RFB) and crew had set up a portable repeater site to improve communications, and other crews were inspecting the damage to houses and offering assistance to the community where needed.

While there were other emergency services on site - SES, Ergon, Southern Downs Regional Council etc. - I was particularly impressed by the efforts and team cohesion of all personnel throughout the incident and wish to pass on my appreciation to every staff member involved. While it is difficult to single out people for their efforts during the event I would like to recognise two QFRS staff members in particular. Lieutenant Chris Gilchrist, as the QFRS Fire Commander, performed his duties both professionally and effectively and First Officer Mark Paroz of the Pratten/Bony Mountain Rural Fire Brigade. Not only did Mark’s home sustain significant damage during the storm but he and his crew were one of the first responders to their communities call for assistance.

Again, the QFRS team effort saw our professional services delivered to these communities in a timely and seamless manner and I am sure the people of these areas appreciated the good work performed. A job well done considering the circumstances.

Chief Supt. Lindsay Hackett
Director - Regional Operations
South Western Region
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Meet some of the volunteers on the Volunteering and Support Strategic Working Group

Darren Tisher
Volunteer Community Educator & Fifth Officer, Rupertswood Rural Fire Brigade

I’ve been a member for five years, and when I can I also volunteer as a fire and rescue marshal for the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport at local motor sport events.

I enjoy volunteering with my Brigade because I can help out my community, while building friendships with other firefighters.

I’ve worked on many hazard reduction burns, and helped in times of need including going on two deployments after the floods.

Being part of this working group means I can help reduce red tape and let other volunteers do what they joined for - helping the community.

I hope to be in the RFSQ for many years to come, and one day I hope to work with RFSQ or Queensland Fire and Emergency Services full time.

Helen Jakeman
Secretary and Support Member, Landsborough Rural Fire Brigade

I became a member when our brigade reformed 22 years ago, to be a support to my husband. He has been an active firefighter and has held officer positions, including First Officer, for the last 20 years. Over the years I have also volunteered with the local sports and recreation club, the local kindy, and the Glasshouse Scout Group.

I enjoy volunteering with my brigade because I meet many different people who also volunteer their time, and I especially love the friendships that I have formed within my brigade.

Even though I am not an active firefighter, I feel that my contribution has been to fully support our members in any way I can whether it is with fund raising, publicity, being available at large fire incidents to help with meals, radio communication, and most importantly promote our brigade within our community.

I felt honoured and excited to be asked to be on this working group, as I feel this is a small way for volunteers at a brigade level to have a say and hopefully help reduce some of the red tape that has crept into being a volunteer with RFSQ.

RFSQ has already progressed so much from when I first became a member, and I would like to see that personnel with RFSQ continue to listen to the volunteers at brigade level. Most importantly we need to promote and encourage younger members of our communities to become volunteers and join a local brigade as they are our future.
Southern Australia
Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2013-14

DEFINITION

Fire potential: The chance of a fire or number of fires occurring of such size, complexity, or other impact that requires resources (from both a pre-emptive management and suppression capability) beyond the area in which it or they originate. Fire potential depends on many factors including weather and climate, fuel abundance and availability, recent fire history, and firefighting resources available in an area.

Queensland has a long fire season which traditionally commences around July in the Cape York Peninsula and Gulf Country, and progresses to the central inland and coastal areas south to the New South Wales (NSW) border during spring and into summer. In the West and South West of the state, the fire season can begin as early as August and extend well into February. However, timeframes can vary significantly from year to year, as they are largely dependent on long-term climate, short-term weather conditions, and available fuel loads.

This season, the combination of Queensland’s climate and seasonal trends has created vast variations in vegetation growth and fuel conditions. Northern Australia wet season rainfall was well above average for the southern coastal areas. In contrast, large areas of the Lower Gulf of Carpentaria, far western and southern Queensland received well below average rainfall during the same period. Over the winter months, rainfall remained near to below average for most of the state, with the majority of South Western, Central West and North West Queensland now under drought declaration. The grassland areas across the state have moderate to abundant fuel loads with a less continuous fuel bed than in previous years. This is due to a combination of large scale fires, rainfall deficiencies, and stocking rates.

As a result of milder temperatures this winter, grassland curing in the eastern areas is slightly lower than this time last year. In the North, Far West, and South West of the state grasslands are fully cured. Despite large scale fires in the northern and western areas of Queensland during the last fire season, there are still vast areas with moderate to abundant grassland fuels and low stock levels that could experience large scale, fast running grass fires.

An above normal fire potential has been assessed for areas between Dalby and Warwick, south to the NSW border and west to Goondiwindi. The area to the west between Wallumbilla and Dulacca, south to St George and an area extending from the Sunshine Coast Hinterland into the western areas of the Wide Bay Burnett region are also assessed as above normal fire potential.

A full copy of the Southern Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2013-2014 is available on the Volunteer Portal.

Inspector Bruno Greimel BApplSc (Hon) BSc (Env)
Manager, Environmental Fire Research & Training
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Streamlined Reporting Well Received

A great deal of positive feedback has been received following the removal of the necessity for brigades to complete the RF14 Incident Report forms. As previously communicated, brigade reporting has been significantly streamlined, with the support of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Fire Communication (Firecom) Centre Officers. You can now verbally provide information regarding attendance at incidents and hazard reduction burns to Firecom Officers, who record the information in QFES reporting systems.

Whilst most appreciate the reduced burden of having to complete the form, some brigades told us that they are keen to keep track of the events they attend. Completed incident reports can be obtained from the Operations Management System (OMS) upon request from your Area Office.

The amended Business Rules and supporting tools are now finalised. They are available via the Volunteer Portal and are also included with each Secretary’s edition of this Bulletin.

A snapshot of the new process for this reporting is:

- At the time of the incident or hazard reduction burn, all attending crews communicate, wherever possible, with Firecom as per standard radio procedures.
- The information is captured by Firecom in ESCAD and automatically transferred to OMS. Area staff then complete the incident report.
- The Firecom incident number can be requested from Firecom for future reference.

Business Rule D1.5 – Incident and Hazard Reduction Burn Reporting clarifies a number of queries received regarding this improved process:

- In an incident where both urban and rural personnel are in attendance, the urban Officer-in-Charge is responsible for completing the incident report, except where a rural call-sign is recorded in ESCAD as first in attendance at a vegetation fire.
- The ideal time to provide incident information is during the course of an incident. Where this is not possible brigades can contact Firecom by phone after the incident.
- During busy times, when Firecom may not have the capacity to answer all phones calls, leave a message with information about the incident.

Feedback also indicated that volunteers and staff alike were concerned that important additional information about the incident would no longer be reported. This information can be recorded by brigades using the RFSQ Additional Incident Information Form (Form No. OBM 082). The Form can be used to provide extra information not initially provided to Firecom, such as:

- The names of volunteers in attendance.
- Issues about the incident that brigades may want recorded or the Area Office needs to be aware of or take action on.

The full value of the work undertaken by volunteers has not always been accurately reflected in government reporting. This streamlined process is aimed at showcasing the true breadth and depth of operational services provided to the Queensland community by volunteers.

Your feedback is crucial to continually improving procedures such as this. Feedback can be provided by volunteers and staff via the Rural Feedback Form available on the Volunteer Portal.

Madonna Day
Executive Manager Volunteer Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Rural Knowledge update

OTHER MAJOR BRIGADE MANUAL CHANGES

Other business rules that have recently undergone major changes include:

- **C3.1 - Coordinate Honours and Awards** – this business rule previously provided information only on National Medals. It has now been revised to cover all honours and awards applicable to Rural Fire Service volunteers, including the inclusion of the QFRS Honours and Awards Guidelines as an appendix.
- **D3.7 – Brigade Grants** – this business rule includes information on revised grant application processes and includes step-by-step processes for applying for grants through the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation website as an appendix.
- **D5.2 - Appliances** – From 1 July 2013 (and applicable from the 2013/14 appliance build forward), approval has been given for the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to fully fund the purchase price of light and medium rural fire fighting appliances (excluding the ongoing maintenance and fuelling of appliances). This business rule has been revised to reflect this significant change.

MINOR BRIGADE MANUAL CHANGES

The following business rule has had recent minor updates:

- **C6.2 - Reimbursement of Out-of-Pocket Expenses** - Minor updates have been made to this business rule and the associated Form CSO 075 - Out of Pocket Expenses Volunteer Reimbursement Form (previously RF175) relating to the inclusion of Peer Referral Liaison Officer and Volunteer Community Educator roles.
The annual Rural Fire Service Day is on once again after a successful event in 2013.

The event is held on the first Saturday in June, which falls on 7 June in 2014.

We have received a lot of feedback from brigades who participated in the 2013 event, and we will be working to implement as much of this as possible.

This year we have streamlined the registration and ordering processes by using an online form. To register, please visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YFP5R8Q (this link is also found on the Volunteer Portal).

Registrants will be notified via email when the marketing and promotional order form is available to access.

What is RFS day?

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) Day is a state-wide open day that gives your brigade an opportunity to meet with your community.

The RFS Day aims to increase community awareness of the role of the Rural Fire Service Queensland. You can use the day to provide fire education, recruit new members, fundraise, and/or show the diversity of roles your brigade takes on. The choice is yours.

While there are many advantages to participating in this state-wide event, participation is not compulsory.

What could we do?

The state-wide RFS day is an ideal opportunity for a range of activities. For example:

- Community education
- Recruitment
- Awareness
- Fundraising.

Think of ways to attract your community to your event. A lot of the time ways to attract people to your event double as fundraising opportunities. Consider:

- A sausage sizzle
- A trash and treasure / garage sale
- A raffle
- A bake sale
- Face painting for the kids.

Location is key!

Some brigades who participated in the 2013 event found more success came from setting up a stall outside local stores like IGA, Bunnings, Mitre 10, etc. This meant that people who were out doing some shopping saw the brigade and stopped by for a chat. This is a great opportunity to ‘catch’ passers-by and give them some information on being bushfire prepared.
QFRS in support of aviation

With fire season 2013/14 now established, the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has again contracted a number of aerial firefighting resources under the federally funded National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) arrangements.

These aircraft, which include the formidable waterbombing capability of two Bell 214B helicopters, accompanied by the versatile twin engine Air Attack, observation or mapping Platform capability of the AS 355 Aerospatiale "Squirrel" helicopter, are now positioned at the Archerfield airport and available for dispatch until 15 December, 2013.

The NAFC arrangement also affords the benefit of the selection of a ‘partial availability’ aircraft which can be requested as ‘fit for purpose’ for either fire or disaster management response across the future term of the contract period. This availability will enhance the QFES response to extreme emergency events where specific aerial resource may be requested. It will also complement the existing Air Operations Unit ‘Call When Needed’ arrangement, and ensure that the most appropriate resources are accessed and responded in a timely manner.

On another note, the Air Operations Unit has been active in liaising with Emergency Management Queensland in identifying the requirements necessary to further develop and build a disaster management aviation capability. It has been recognised that the QFES aviation capability has a foundation of qualified staff, processes, and equipment that can enable the delivery of a deployable aviation capability in support of disaster management.

The support of volunteer rural firefighters trained in airbase support and management is integral to sustaining this capability into the future.

Insp. Wayne Bates
Manager, Air Operations Unit
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Why I’m safe at work

I’m passionate about community safety and that’s why I volunteer for the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ).

I’ve been volunteering since 1985 helping others to prepare act survive in bushfire season.

I’m safe at work because it’s important to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Volunteering for RFSQ matters to me and being safe at work means I can continue to make a difference in our community.

Lou Rankin
Office Manager
Emergency Services to work closer after Keelty Review

Police and Emergency Services in Queensland are set to work closer and respond more effectively during disasters under sweeping reforms recommended by former Australian Federal Police (AFP) Commissioner Mick Keelty.

Shortly after being elected, the Newman Government commissioned Mr Keelty, one of the world’s most respected emergency professionals, to undertake a comprehensive review into the Police and Community Safety portfolio.

Key recommendations of his review include:

• Transferring the Queensland Ambulance Service to Queensland Health.
• Transferring Queensland Corrective Services to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.
• Revamping the Department of Community Safety and renaming it Department of Fire and Emergency Services.
• Creating a new position of Inspector General, Emergency Management to ensure emergency and disaster responses are better co-ordinated.
• Merging the agencies’ business support functions such as Finance, Human Resources, Information Management, Procurement and Legal Services and repositioning remaining QAS and QCS administration streams with their new departments.
• No longer using frontline police to operate mobile speed camera vans and undertake wide load escorts to ensure better focus on core law enforcement duties.
• A major overhaul of how the Queensland Police Service uses and adopts new technology.

Findings of the review included:

Transferring Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to Queensland Health

Around 85 per cent of QAS tasks are directly linked to Queensland Health.

Ambulance ramping has reduced dramatically and ambulance turnaround times in South East Queensland have been cut by around 12 minutes. Code 1 emergency response times in South East Queensland are also down significantly.

More interconnecting work needs to be done to give the Queensland community better pre-hospital ambulance care therefore the QAS will retain its own identity, Commissioner and rank structure and will report to the Director General of Health to ensure the priority of both organisations – the health of Queenslanders – remains unified.

QAS is expected to join Queensland Health on 1 October 2013. The majority of QAS head office staff will remain located where they currently are.

Transferring Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) to Justice and Attorney-General

Queensland is the only state in which corrections is part of a predominately emergency services-based department. This has been an uncomfortable fit as it does not provide an emergency response.

The majority of work undertaken by QCS is directly aligned with the Department of Justice and Attorney General (JAG) therefore QCS will become part of JAG as it is in most other Australian States. As with QAS, QCS will retain its Commissioner and rank structure.

In addition, other legal arms including the Prostitution Licensing Authority and Parole Board will make their transition to JAG.

QCS is expected to join JAG later this year. The majority of QCS staff will remain located in their current office location in the short-term.

Revamping the Department of Community Safety (DCS)

The positions of Director General DCS, Deputy Director General DCS and Assistant Director General DCS are being restructured and staff are helping the transition to the new arrangement.

As part of this change a large part of Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) will be integrated with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) to form a new department named Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES).

Agencies under EMQ such as the State Emergency Service (SES) will retain their branding and majority of rank structures.

The new department will be headed by the current Fire Commissioner Lee Johnson and will include a dedicated Deputy Commissioner Rural Fire and State Emergency Service to manage volunteers and Deputy Commissioner Operations to manage the urban fire stream and emergency management.

This change will see a more cohesive approach to emergency and disaster management rather than the previous model of many different agencies working in silos during large-scale incidents.

Enhancing the Queensland Police Service

As the operational structure of the QPS has recently undergone a significant restructure, the operational side of policing in Queensland will remain relatively unchanged.

However, Mr Keelty has identified many other aspects of the business side of policing that require overhauling to bring them in line with other jurisdictions.
Findings highlight that previous governments have taken their eye off the ball when it comes to police Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

This has left the QPS lagging behind interstate and international jurisdictions in terms of mobile data systems or accessing police computer systems remotely. Additionally, many QPS business support ICT systems have been identified in needing an overhaul. The government will seek further advice about these changes including costs.

Also identified were a number of internal management and cultural changes required and will be addressed by an independent recommendation implementation team.

The Keelty review has also recommended that frontline police officers no longer be used to operate mobile speed camera vans or undertake wide load escort duties. These duties are carried out by civilians in many Australian jurisdictions.

The review also recommends that prisoners in police watch-houses be managed by Corrections staff where appropriate to ensure a seamless transition from prisons to watch-houses and back again. This will also enable police to return to on-road operational duties.

**New Inspector General Emergency Management**

To ensure Queensland remains prepared for future disasters and emergencies, the review has recommended the position of Inspector General, Emergency Management be created.

This position will be responsible for setting standards, auditing and monitoring of performance regarding the preparedness and management of disasters and emergencies.

The Inspector General will also work continuously with the Police and Fire and Emergency Services portfolio, government departments and other stakeholders to ensure the closest of working relationships are formed and maintained to enable the best possible whole-of-government and whole-of-community response to emergencies and disasters.

**Portfolio Business overhaul**

Mr Keelty has recommended DFES and QPS business support functions be merged to service both operational arms of the portfolio as they have very similar Finance, Human Resources, Information Management, Procurement and Legal Services requirements.

This function will be led by the Chief Executive Officer Portfolio Business, who in the interim will be the current DG of DCS Kelvin Anderson, and will allow both Commissioners to concentrate on the operational side of the agencies.

The creation of the Portfolio Business provides a significant opportunity to deliver more innovative business support outcomes for QPS and DFES and eliminate duplication and waste.

The focus of this review is not about job losses. The focus is to ensure a more streamlined approach to delivering public safety outcomes, which will benefit all Queenslanders.

Staff will predominately remain located in their current office location in the short term.

Preliminary work on Portfolio Business will commence immediately and is expected to be fully operational by March 2014.

**Implementation Team**

To ensure the accepted recommendations from the Keelty Review are implemented as quickly and seamlessly as possible an implementation team has been formed.

The team consists of skilled change management, administrative and operational professionals who will begin implementing recommendations immediately.

**Group Rules**

The section relating to Group Rules was removed some years ago from the Rural Fire Brigade Manual (RFBM). Since then, a number of working groups made up of volunteer firefighters, First Officers, Group Officers, and Rural Fire Service Queensland staff have provided input to review the structure and function of a Group. New Group Rules are being written and when complete will be restored to the Rural Fire Brigade Manual under a separate section.

Some of the main points in the new Group Rules are:

- The brigades who make up the Group will make decisions by way of a representative vote.
- Operationally, a Group Officer may take charge of an incident at the request of a First Officer.
- A Group may acquire vehicles to support Rural Fire Brigade operations, but these vehicles cannot be firefighting vehicles.
- Group Grants will be restored for administration purposes.

The Group Rules will be restored to the RFBM by as soon as possible and should be released by the end of 2013.

Peter Varley
Acting Chief Superintendent
Director Operations
Rural Fire Service Queensland

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Peter Varley
Acting Chief Superintendent
Director Operations
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Volunteers training volunteers

Chainsaw level 1

Following consultation with volunteers and staff from around the state, it was identified that as an all hazard emergency response agency there is an increasing demand for nationally accredited chainsaw training for emergency services volunteers.

As a result, the Rural Training Team consulted with Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), and has now developed a training package, along with a training cache including chainsaws and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This will facilitate an effective, flexible, and cost efficient delivery of training to emergency service volunteers throughout Queensland.

When developing the program, we identified the expertise, practical experience, and local credibility that many of our volunteers already hold in operating and maintaining chainsaws. To achieve accessible, quality training for you, we looked at how we could use the ‘locals educating locals’ and ‘volunteers training volunteers’ approach.

Traditionally, funding was made available for brigades to engage external trainers to deliver training; however 10-15 participants were required to make it cost effective to run a two day weekend course. This was proving more and more difficult for many volunteers to achieve, due to balancing work and family commitments.

I had the privilege of rolling out the training concept and cache to volunteers and staff at Farmfest, which was recently held in the South West Region. With the input and feedback of many volunteers from across the state, we put the finishing touches to the program before embarking on the ‘Train the Trainer’ state road show.

Expressions of Interest were sought from each region to provide up to ten suitable trainers and/or content knowledge experts from across their region to be trained to deliver this concept. As content knowledge experts, no training qualification was required and this gave us the ability to provide the high level of knowledge and skill within the training team.

Five trainers from Central Region completed a weekend workshop in Eungella (west of Mackay) in August to become our first successful trainers in Level 1 Chainsaw &
Maintenance. Another eleven volunteers were subsequently trained the following weekend in Townsville for a two day ‘Train the Trainer’ program.

The five trainers from Central Region are experienced trainers and assessors from their work field; however two of the crew were new to Chainsaw Training.

During the weekend, an experienced Stihl representative was present and made the training more realistic by presenting all attendees with actual samples of differing saw chains, fact sheets, booklets, and video clips as well as exhibiting different tools and equipment, explaining the actual training kit in full.

Testimonials:

“The trainers, Stephen Gardiner and Wesley Bruce, made the training enjoyable and interactive and obtainable for all genders with no chance of becoming bored. The practical component was beneficial, realistic, and relevant in the way the assessment was undertaken in respect to the emergency services volunteer’s duties”.
- Gael Hardsman (Cawarral Rural Fire Brigade)

“As new trainers, we were enthusiastic at the prospect that this training has the flexibility to be delivered either in a weekend block or over several nights with a one day practical. As well as the opportunity to train more trainers and then deliver this training at Brigade meetings, or Brigade training level. With fire season now upon us and the difficulties faced with possible flare-ups from fallen trees, to have more firefighters available to cut and remove the danger will overall reduce the workload for rural firefighter”.
- John McDonald (Cawarral Rural Fire Brigade)

As I continue to roll this training out to all Regions, it is inspiring to witness the commitment and dedication of our trainers and volunteers to professional development and providing a world class all hazard emergency response to your community and the communities of others.

I encourage interested volunteers with a need for accredited chainsaw training to contact your Area Office for more information.

The Rural Training Team welcomes feedback, and can be contacted on (07) 3635 2742 or through VolsOnline.

Stephen Gardiner
A/Training Resource Officer
Rural Training and Development
Rural Fire Service Queensland
What do you normally do on a long weekend? Make the most of not having to go to work for three days, spend time with friends and family, or go camping and enjoy Australia’s natural beauty?

Well that is what over 40 volunteers and staff did over the Queen’s Birthday Long Weekend (8, 9, and 10 June, 2013). Townsville Area Staff and brigade members from Rangewood, Stone River, Toobanna, Seymour, Bambaroo, and Bluewater Rural Fire Brigades (RFB) packed swags, camper trailers, and appliances, and travelled to Mount Fox to spend quality time with their “fire family” to participate in Townsville Areas Major Exercise for 2013 known as Mount Fox Control.

Mount Fox Control tested brigades capability to deploy to a remote area, and tested the Area’s capability in Incident Management Team (IMT) establishment and functionality. The IMT assigned and tasked appliances to undertake hazard reduction burns around the Mount Fox RFB area, as well as the establishment and functionality of a base camp.

The weekend commenced with brigades departing from their brigade areas in the early hours of the morning of Saturday 8 June, and arriving at the Mount Fox Cricket Grounds around mid-morning. The brigades established their sleeping arrangements and made themselves familiar with the base camp set up and facilities (including toilets and hot showers) at the Cricket Grounds before enjoying lunch. The brigades were then briefed and the IMT deployed crews to various locations around the Mount Fox RFB area to undertake hazard reduction burns in high risk areas. During these hazard reduction burns, various training assessments took place – ranging from VFM170 Firefighter Minimum Skills (FMS) assessments to the VFO520 Mitigation Planning and Management assessment from the First Officer Program. Familiarisation training of IMT operations from FUNIT 342 AllMS Intermediate, VCL 300 Crew Leader, and VBO400 Brigade Officer was also undertaken.

Unfortunately Mother Nature was not kind and rained all week in lead up to the exercise, thus minimising the anticipated successfulness of the burning. However the Townsville Area Training team had prepared back up training in case of such a situation. After a night of socialising, Sunday saw a day filled of training sessions which up skilled all the candidates who attended the exercise. Various group sessions were
facilitated to capture the different experience levels within the volunteers. The candidates chose sessions from VFA230 Electrical Safety, VFA205 Firefighter Communications, Appliance familiarisation, Radio operations, Portable Repeater Establishment, and GPS training. Monday involved packing up the IMT and base camp, and returning to home.

All volunteers involved in the exercise provided positive feedback. The Townsville Area Office Staff were able to observe strengths within the members involved in the exercise which can be further developed in the future, as well as areas that additional focus needs to be devoted, including equipment deficits.

Townsville Area Office would like to thank everyone involved in the weekend, as it was a very successful and enjoyable event not only for team building and testing of various operational capabilities but also minimising the fire risk within the a high risk area of the Mount Fox community.

Helaine Clerk
Acting Area Training and Support Officer - Townsville
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Brigade Stories
We would like to make this a regular section of the Bulletin, so we’d 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 rfsq@dc.qld.gov.au and you might make the next edition of the Bulletin.
Eastern Downs 91

After last fire season, several things were identified by our Group. One was the need for the best 91 unit configuration we could manage, as these units have seen wide usage throughout the Region and have come to be heavily relied upon.

Mal Stacey from Gladfield Maryvale Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) and me started the adventure of first finding a body builder we had confidence in. We finally settled on CSM at Warwick, which ended up being a very good decision. Their build quality and finish has impressed some very hard judges.

After working on 91 units a fair bit, both of us had some good ideas on what we needed if we were to embark on this project, and end up with an improved version of the original design.

The first thing we were looking for was a unit that is dust and water proof. The seals and build design has delivered both.

We were also looking to have designated work areas. Anyone who has operated one of these units will agree that it is very hard to guide operations when you have people wanting to look at maps, or just chat. As you can see from our design, we have an operations pod with defined boundaries.

Next, we wanted a mapping / planning area where maps could be produced, and Incident Action Plans could be prepared. As you can see, there is a separate mapping area at the rear of the vehicle.

We also wanted to be able to work without sun or rain hindering operation of the unit. Between the gullwing doors, and the roll out shade shelter, we have achieved that outcome.

We also wished to maximise the use of available space, and be able to have a place for everything, and everything in its place.

Mal and I had many discussions about the design format, before settling on this final design. This is in no way the perfect unit, but it fulfils our criteria, and it is extremely workable. It is still very much a work in progress, as I work out best positions for different items, and sort out a few minor teething problems.

Mal Stacey did the internal fitout, which has been done very professionally.

As far as goodies in the unit, we have a satellite phone, dual microphone VHF and UHF radios, a cross patch radio, handheld VHF and UHF radios, portable VHF repeater, phone, internet and email capability, A3 printer, laptop with designated email address, and access to the Total Operational Mapping system.

We used to have Bluetooth in both the front and rear, but found the phone in the rear was sometimes too close to the radios to be practical. To overcome this, we now have a Bluetooth headset in the rear so the operator can walk away to talk on the phone if necessary. We have everything working off a 12 volt power supply, but have 240 volt capability with a 2kv generator, and sufficient power points to charge radios, and use computers and the printer at the same time. We also carry enough sustenance to feed us through the first 24 hours.

There are many little features built into this unit that would take far more space to explain than I have been allowed.

For anyone wishing to build something similar, starting with a cab/ chassis, your total cost if you paid for EVERY piece of gear, would be approx. $50,000 to duplicate this drop on body. Luckily, Rural Fire Service Queensland is very supportive of these projects.

Mike Perrin
Anduramba RFB

Enquiries:
Mike Perrin
First Officer
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pervon@westnet.com.au

Mal Stacey
First Officer
Gladfield Maryvale RFB
info@staceys.com.au
Fit for Task

The role of a volunteer firefighter has become more diverse and dynamic with each passing year. Responding to storm, flood, cyclone, and other emergencies and disasters is becoming an increasing part of the role of a rural firefighter. We train for firefighting, however currently there is very little in place for preparing us for the ever increasing role of disaster and emergency recovery activities.

As a group and as individuals, are we suitably prepared, skilled, and physically capable of performing the roles expected during a natural disaster situation? When we volunteer for disaster recovery, do we fully understand the tasks expected to be performed, and the physical and emotional load that this type of activity places on an individual?

When volunteering for deployment and in particular, volunteering for deployment to a disaster area, the following should be considered:

- Am I physically fit enough to perform heavy physical work for long periods each day?
- Do I have the ability to work for long periods in a physically and emotionally challenging environment?
- Do I have any health conditions that may inhibit my ability to undertake heavy physical activities in hot and humid conditions?
- Am I being treated for a current medical condition? E.g. Taking a course of antibiotics.
- What is the impact on family obligations and commitments, particularly if my return is delayed?
- Am I comfortable to live and sleep in a communal situation, in temporary relocatable style accommodation, with both male and female volunteers?

If you have concerns about any of the above questions you probably should not be nominating for deployment.

A review of the previous 18 months Rural Fire Service Queensland injuries has revealed that slips, trips, and falls remain the highest ranked mechanism of injury to volunteers. The statistics also revealed that individuals, and in particular women over 50 years of age, are at a much higher risk of suffering a fracture or other serious muscular skeletal injury from a fall than those under 50 years of age. This risk of serious injury should be taken into consideration when allocating human resources to firefighting tasks in rough and difficult terrain as the likelihood of suffering a fracture or serious injury due to a fall increases significantly as we get older.

Harassment and Bullying

Unfortunately harassment and bullying is an ongoing issue in our society. In 2004, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General issued a Code of Practice for the prevention of workplace harassment. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) also has a policy and procedures for preventing and managing harassment and bullying in the workplace. There is also the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct that provides guidelines on how we should conduct ourselves while providing services to the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all volunteers of what constitutes Bullying and Harassment (B&H) and our obligations in relation to B&H as directed by the QFES policy.

“A person is subject to workplace harassment if the person is subject to repeated behaviour, other than behaviour amounting to sexual harassment, by a person, including a person’s employer or a co-worker or a group of co-workers of that person that:

a) is unwelcome and unsolicited; and
b) the person considers to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and
c) a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, humiliating or threatening.

Employees or volunteers, who witness bullying and harassment of another person, have a responsibility to report this type of behaviour. Any employee or volunteer who is concerned about possible bullying and harassment should raise their concerns initially with their line manager, or alternatively another manager or senior executive.”

The behaviour must be repeated and meet all three of the above criteria to be determined as B&H. As an example, an isolated or occasional disagreement or argument where voices are raised would not necessarily constitute B&H. If the behaviour was repeated, unwelcome, and involved constantly criticising, belittling, teasing, humiliating, intimidating, or undermining work performance there is a strong possibility that this would meet the B&H criteria. If you witness this type of behaviour you have an obligation to report it as per the QFES policy.

Look after your mates.

Always remember – To enable us to
protect the community we must first
protect ourselves.

Cyrel Wright
Senior Workplace Health and Safety Officer
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Earlier this year, the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service Chief Fire Officer, Steve Rothwell, approached Rural Fire Service Queensland with an aim to bring the Volunteer Community Educator Role (VCE) to their service.

As you may be aware, the role of the VCE was developed by Steve Rothwell in conjunction with Peta Miller-Rose, then Brigade Training and Support Officer for Ipswich Area, in early 2009. The role was embraced by brigades state-wide, and four years later there are over 350 volunteers taking on the position.

Observing the success from Darwin, Steve invited Peta Miller-Rose to present the role to Fire and Rescue staff over two days, including volunteers and Brigade Captains. The group workshoped the role, and put plans in place to promote and roll it out to Volunteer Fire Brigades in March, 2014.

Thank you to Steve Rothwell for the invitation and hospitality in Darwin.

Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service recognise Rural Fire Service Queensland excellence

The Commissioner has approved the full funding of the purchase price of rural fire brigade appliances as of 1 July 2013. The full funding applies to the purchase price only and is not related to ongoing maintenance and fuelling of appliances.

This approval will mean that rural fire brigades will no longer have to contribute to the replacement cost of a fire fighting appliance.

When a brigade appliance is due for replacement a new appliance will be delivered to the brigade and the replaced appliance will be sold by a state-wide tender process managed by the Engineering Services Command. The present process of applying for a new appliance remains the same. The Assessment for Appliance form is to be reviewed and simplified to improve the process.

This will apply to the appliance build for 2013/14 so any brigades who have been invoiced for appliances from the 2012/13 build will still have to pay that invoice. The 2013/14 build is 30 Medium and 10 Light appliances. The Mediums will be a mix of dual and single cabs as requested. The Lights will be 7 x dual cab Ford Rangers with 500 litre slip on units and 3 x Iveco Daily cab chassis with an 800 litre water tank capacity. All Lights will be able to be driven on a C class license.

This is a major step forward in supporting rural fire brigade volunteers to continue protecting and serving the communities of Queensland.

Acting Chief Superintendent
Peter Varley
Director of Operations
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Western Shelter Training

Plans exist to enable the deployment of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) / Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) resources within the state if required. QFES has significant physical and human resources spread strategically across the state.

In late 2010, a proposal was put forward to establish a QFES / RFSQ logistic base. The facility and resources were sourced and established to enhance the capabilities of current resources. The Greenbank Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) has been instrumental in developing the remote base cache infrastructure.

The cache of equipment, which includes two large Western Shelter tents, two small Western Shelters, basic internal lighting, and sleeping infrastructure to accommodate 30 people, is now ready for deployment.

The equipment cache has been developed as a minimum set of requirements, backed up by commonly available hire equipment to be sourced from the host area on activation. The equipment has also been chosen to be compatible with Special Operations caches and other AFAC agencies equipment, so as to improve operational capabilities.

A number of volunteer members from Greenbank RFB became skilled in erecting and managing the Western Shelters over the last 12 months.

These keen, enthusiastic individuals wished to pass on their skills so others can be empowered. On Saturday 21 September, 2013, 35 volunteers from across South East Region got together to with the skilled operators from Greenbank RFB.

The volunteers who attended the day received information on how to clean, maintain, store, pack, and erect the Western Shelters system. Participants had had several opportunities to erect the shelters in different configurations.

Over 50 people now have the skills and willingness to teach others. These volunteers may be part of a small team that would help erect the resource if deployed.

The RFSQ Western Shelter system is a resource that complements current resources, whether they are, state, region, area and brigade/station resources. The shelters can be used as a standard alone camp or control centre, with appropriate additional local resources, such as toilets, showers and Incident Management Caches.

Tony Johnstone
Acting Regional Manager
South East Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland

WANTED
Individual Rural Fire Brigade cloth patches and old insignia

I am trying to find out what different non uniform issue cloth patches and metal badges are used around the state during all years of the Rural Fire Service.

This will include all social club, cloth brigade name patches, and any other insignia items particular to the individual brigade.

This will be added to an insignia collection that will preserve the historical value of the rural brigades throughout the entire state.

If your brigade is able to assist with this project could you please email Peter.Derges@dcs.qld.gov.au
Fire Behaviour Analyst

The Fire Behaviour Analyst (FBA) role in the State Operations Centre (SOC) was initiated as part of Operation Zephyr in the 2012 Fire Season.

Since 2011, a small number of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) rural and urban personnel, including one volunteer, have completed the FBA course. These personnel are currently working towards gaining qualification through a rigorous process of post-course assessments.

The role of FBA has become increasingly essential to QFES bushfire management strategies and operations. It is planned that over the next few years, qualified FBAs, by practising their fire behaviour analysis skills during fire seasons, will continue to develop the ability to mentor and qualify future FBA trainees.

The FBA role has been highlighted in a number of public inquiries into recent major fires which have identified the need to provide suitably qualified personnel for the purposes of risk assessment, the development of suppression strategies, and particularly for timely public warnings.

A number of opportunities need to be progressed to assist our currently trained personnel to gain the FBA qualification. A key issue is to ensure that they have access to attend actual bushfire events, planned burns, or realistic scenarios to practice their skills.

The role of FBA includes:
- Preparation of fire spread predictions for going bushfires.
- Identification of human, economic, and environmental assets that could possibly be affected by a bushfire.
- Input into suppression strategy options, including back burning for going wildfires, and analysis of the likelihood and consequences of various impact scenarios.
- Analysis and recommendations about firefighter safety issues related to fire behaviour and fire weather.
- Collation of fire behaviour and weather observations that may be used in training and further fire behaviour model development.

As well as during fire situations, the role of the fire behaviour specialist may expand in the future to include:
- Development of site specific burning prescriptions to achieve the management and burn objectives given the area to be burnt and the weather conditions forecast on the day.
- Development of ignition pattern and method prescriptions for a burn on the day of the burn. Monitoring the progress of a burn and advice on variations in tactics if needed.
- Collection of fire behaviour information for testing and improvement of models and burning prescriptions.
- Identification of safety issues related to firefighters conducting fire operations.
- Input into the development of fire management plans so as to get the best value for money out of fire protection works including fuel management, location of strategic fuel breaks, frequency of fire, and type of fire application.
Leadership

The Command Leadership Management (CLM) initiative adopted by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) has been highlighted in previous Bulletin articles, and it is also available in the excellent publication “CLM – A Grass Roots Guide” which was advertised in the last edition and available from your Area Office.

An aspect of the CLM model that must be present at all times and through all levels of the organisation is the principle of leadership. Leadership is not rank dependent and is exercised even in the absence of command authority.

The definition of leadership varies from person to person and organisation to organisation, and it means different things to different people. But the main concept of leadership is about influencing others to willingly undertake tasks to achieve a goal.

That is, leadership is about people, and it is about empowering people to achieve outcomes. Leadership and followership exist in partnership and go hand-in-hand to achieve mutually acceptable success.

At all levels, those who lead must be aware of what they are doing and accept responsibility for their actions, as these influence and impact on other people and on their welfare and safety.

Leaders display initiative and are aware of the impact of their decisions on others. Hence, judgement, resolution, and confidence are qualities of effective leadership and the application of core personal and organisational values.

Leaders will never compromise on values, and they will act in a moral and ethical manner to ensure the building of trust, respect, and commitment within their teams.

A moral sense of right from wrong will ensure leadership supports the development of a strong, healthy culture within the organisation.

The written principles of leadership can be found in many publications, but they should be enacted on a daily basis so they become part of the leader’s character. These principles are summarised below:

1. Be proficient – know your stuff as people trust leaders who are proficient.
2. Know yourself and seek improvement – beyond technical competence, a leader must have character.
3. Lead by example – display the traits you expect in others by being a role model.
4. Seek and accept responsibilities – seize the initiative and do what you know and believe to be the right thing.
5. Know your followers and promote their welfare – showing care and concern will be rewarded by trust and respect.
6. Provide direction – give clear, concise direction and provide opportunity for people to achieve the intent.
7. Develop the leadership potential of others – delegate and support to develop future leaders.
8. Make sound and timely decisions – act when necessary to make the right decisions for the right reasons.
9. Train followers as a team and challenge their abilities – people must have confidence in their leader’s ability, and their own.
10. Keep people informed – of the mission, the changing situation, and the overall picture. This will instil confidence, trust and support for the leader.

If you would like more information on the principles of leadership, please contact Rural Training through VolsOnline.

Craig Smith
Executive Manager, Rural Research and Training
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Sunshine Coast Combined Groups Field Day

Sunday July 14 saw 42 rural fire appliances, five rural fire support vehicles, and 151 volunteers from 22 Sunshine Coast brigades converge early morning at Beerwah. A sea of yellow on Steve Irwin Way. People were asking, “What’s going on?”

The four regional groups were again holding their annual July field day. Alternating each year from the north end, with Noosa and Maroochy North, to the southern end, with Maroochy South and Caloundra. This year, Caloundra and Maroochy South organised a ‘realistic’ exercise based at the Beerwah Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) station and utilising areas within HQ Plantations forestry at Beerwah.

With the Caloundra Group’s VHF 5 repeater established on Mt Mellum to provide communications, the IMT scrambled to organise the four groups arriving half hour apart into one or two strike teams within each group. Soon each strike team leader was briefed and then tasked to one of four exercises out in the surrounding forestry areas.

The collar tank exercise held much interest with many new recruits commenting, “Never seen one of these before!”

With two tanks from local brigades, the area tanker, plus two more borrowed from Air Operations, there were plenty of opportunities for crews to go through the unpack, partial fill, drain, and the sometimes tricky restowing procedure - they always seem to expand after use!

Then it was time to redeploy to practice case 4 at various water points from creeks and holes around the vast forestry area. The water holes were selected to challenge - as some...
were more like ‘bog holes’ as one team’s vehicle found out! Or maybe it was your team’s turn to dig out the GPS and get deployed to follow the list of coordinates on the briefing sheet. This task being to travel around and report back to the Incident Management Team (IMT) about where you were and what was there, without losing any of your team trucks.

The fourth and final exercise was a small hazard reduction burn either in a small one acre pine block or the grass verge on Roys Road. This involved more than just getting the fire lighter out. Crews had to do weather readings, estimate fuel loads and curing, estimate the rate of spread, and then light up a patch and compare to what they had assumed.

The IMT were all ‘rookies’ with Group Officers acting as mentors if advice was needed. Their job was to task the five strike teams to one of the exercises, rotate them though the staging area for morning tea, and get everyone back on time for lunch. The mentors tried confusing them with made up small incidents and reports, but that was nothing with having to deal with real incidents of bogged units and attending to Channel 7 and 9 media teams wanting interviews and footage.

The wrap up after lunch consisted of a thanks to Beerwah RFB for their station facilities, Landsborough support members for the catering, and HQ Plantations for use of forestry areas. Then followed a T-Card raffle draw for the swag of items donated by Area Office and the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland, so many crews went home with something for their efforts.

Thanks to all brigades and crews who attended. We are sure everyone had a great day and the annual exercise is a great opener to the fire season, blowing the cobwebs out of both the equipment and the volunteers and ensuring we are all ready for action.

Peter Pamment, Caloundra Group Officer
Hamish Murdoch, Maroochy South Group Officer
Brigades’ status as charities and their ACNC reporting requirements

As many of you will know, just prior to the ACNC commencing operations in September 2012, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) automatically registered all previously Public Benevolent Institution (PBI – a form of charity) endorsed rural fire brigades in Australia with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as Charitable Institutions (CI – another form of charity) in August 2012. In Queensland this meant that some 520 of the 1,500 brigades were automatically registered.

Official registration records maintenance and annual reporting obligations of entities registered with the ACNC are similar to, although somewhat less onerous than those required of a registered company.

Given these changes, Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) has been seeking advice regarding the necessity for brigades to register as a charity with the ACNC.

RFSQ has been involved in consultation with the ACNC, alongside other Australian rural fire services, regarding rural fire brigades’ status as charities. Fire agencies are seeking advice on the following issues:

• whether or not ACNC registration of rural fire brigades is required;
• if so, how this might be achieved with minimal administrative impact on brigades;
• the nature of any annual reporting that would most likely be required; and
• if annual reporting is required, whether the ACNC will accept bulk reporting (undertaken by RFSQ on behalf of brigades) in some cases.

The issues being discussed are still not resolved nationally at the time of publication of this article.

At this stage, the proposal to seek bulk deregistration of Queensland rural fire brigades registered with the ACNC, as advised in a letter to brigades in April this year, is on hold.

Due to the complex nature of these issues and that RFSQ is seeking further advice, the status of registered brigades remains unchanged, unless an individual brigade has commenced action to seek deregistration.

With the issue yet to be resolved at a national level, our 520 brigades currently registered with the ACNC will have until 31 December 2013 to lodge their Annual Information Statements (AIS) for the 2012-13 year, and will be obliged to also lodge AIS for the 2013-14 year after 30 June 2014.

Unfortunately, this is a Commonwealth legislated obligation for all ACNC register entities and is unavoidable at this stage.

The RFSQ is exploring two possible options for assisting brigades to satisfy this obligation:

• Early discussions with staff at the ACNC have suggested that it may be possible for RFSQ to prepare and lodge a single AIS that would cover the reporting requirements of every ACNC registered brigade for the 2012-13 year.
• Alternatively, if this option is not acceptable to the ACNC, RFSQ will seek to prepare an AIS template which contains all of the information common to Queensland rural fire brigades. This could then be made available to registered brigades which would then only need to complete brigade specific information and then mail the completed AIS to the ACNC.

Further information will be communicated to brigades and RFSQ staff in due course.

Please direct any enquiries to:

Deborah Baumann
Finance Officer
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Phone: 3635 3619

William Norfolk
Executive Manager, Finance
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Phone: 3635 3061

Red and Blue light-bars

To address safety concerns regarding the visibility of Rural Fire Service appliances, red and blue flashing lights will be fitted to all rural fire brigade appliances.

The blue light upgrade is to enhance the visibility of appliances during operational activities and provide a safer working environment for appliance crews.

Although fitted with blue lights, rural fire brigade vehicles are not emergency response vehicles and are still required to obey all of the normal road rules and comply with all traffic directions and signage.

The implementation of blue lights for rural appliance will commence immediately with the current 2013-14 build of ten single and five dual cab medium appliances as well as seven light appliances.

The retrofitting of existing appliances will be progressively rolled out over the current financial year with kits being provided to Brigades at no cost for upgrading of their existing lights.

Further details of the roll out will be released to the respective Area Offices as confirmation of availability is provided by the suppliers and delivery is arranged.
Toowoomba Range Tour

The Toowoomba Range between Cambooya and Crows Nest has long been recognised by many individuals as an area of significant bushfire risk. The risk however does not necessarily apply equally along the whole escarpment, and in fact the escarpment contains areas of low, medium, and extreme bushfire risk. Past large scale fire activity has demonstrated the risk to both communities at the bottom and at the top of the Range.

Continuing development all across the Range area means that the risk is not static, and may increase or decrease in line with the location and style of development.

On 24 August, a bus full of enthusiastic brigade members, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service staff, and local council staff, toured the Range. As we went from brigade area to brigade area, a brigade representative talked about commonly occurring fire, historical fires, as well as tactics and strategies their brigade had used to combat the fires. The day was about sharing ideas on how we could all improve.

Brigade members from the South West Region met the bus at strategic locations and provided information on their local area. Things such as water points, access, hazard reductions, and timings were discussed regularly throughout the trip. We were fortunate enough to be able to view one of South West’s new command pods - members were impressed with its design.

All those that attended the day believed the trip was most beneficial, and everyone took things away from the day.

Tony Johnstone
Acting Regional Manager
South East Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
**New station for The Caves Rural Fire Brigade**

A new rural fire station valued at more than $120,000 has been officially opened at The Caves.

Police and Community Safety Minister Jack Dempsey said the new facility would provide an excellent base for the brigade’s 42 members.

“The new station will be a big improvement for The Caves Rural Fire Brigade, with the old facility having been constructed in the 1930s,” Mr Dempsey said.

“It will provide storage for vehicles as well as facilities for training, communications and incident control capabilities.

“I would like to recognise the hard work of brigade members as well as local businesses and individuals for their assistance in building this new station.”

Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers Ted Malone attended the station’s official opening and also handed over three vehicles to the Bondoola, Cawarral and Captain Creek brigades.

“At a cost of more than $150,000 these vehicles will no doubt make life on the frontline easier for our crews,” Mr Malone said.

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of regional Queensland and providing adequate resources to them is a top priority of the Newman Government.

“Whether it’s giving up a Saturday afternoon to man an education stand at the local fete, passing on a weekend barbeque to conduct a hazard reduction burn or leaving an empty place at the family dinner table for training’s sake, the commitment shown by our volunteers to the service is greatly appreciated.”

Member for Keppel Bruce Young said the opening of the new brigade was an achievement the entire community could be proud of.

“The construction of this new facility has presented plenty of challenges and I would like to thank everyone in the community for their donations and assistance,” Mr Young said.

“The Caves Rural Fire Brigade is very active in supporting its community, neighbours, region and State and it is great to see their support has been returned when they needed it most.”

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**Volunteer Summit coming again in 2014**

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) volunteers will once again have the opportunity to further their organisational knowledge and contribute to the planning and goals of the organisation through the 2014 Volunteer Summit.

Assistant Commissioner Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) Neil Gallant said he was extremely pleased to be able to announce that the biennial event will once again take place on the Sunshine Coast. The 2014 event will be held from Friday, 16 May, until Sunday 18 May.

“This will be the fourth Summit held by RFSQ. They have shown to be extremely effective providing essential two-way communication between volunteers and the organisation,” he said.

“RFSQ staff are now in the early stages of planning the event and I look forward to providing you with more details as they come to hand.

One of the changes to the 2014 event is that the attendees will be primarily made up of volunteers from Rural, iZone and Village brigades as the organisation is looking to hold a separate Primary Producer Brigade event in 2015. The goal of this separate event is to be able to meet the specific needs of this group of brigades, and once again, more information will be made available to you in the coming months.

To ensure as many brigades as possible are represented at the event, only one volunteer per brigade will be accepted to attend the summit.

We ask that you discuss possible nominees with your brigade to ensure a suitable candidate is nominated. It would be great to see a variety of volunteers attend the event including operational fire-fighters, support members, Fire Wardens and VCEs. It would also be beneficial to have a demographically diverse group attend the event.

Once you have determined your brigade nominee, please complete the enclosed form and post them back by folding and taping the sides as indicated. Nominations are required to be returned by 17 January, 2014. All nominations will be forwarded to the relevant area office for endorsement by the Area Director and Regional Manager.
The Queensland Fire & Rescue Service (QFRS), North Coast Region, conducted a meeting at the Mt Perry Community Hall on 30 August, 2013.

Identified community leaders within the North Burnett and Bundaberg Regional Council areas met for the purpose of discussing the fire season, the identification of potential fire risks, and how QFRS will support local fire suppression activities.

Key community leaders were identified with the support of the North Burnett and Bundaberg Regional Councils, in collaboration with land management agencies and Agforce.

This initiative was developed from the ongoing progression of the key learning’s following the fires of 2009-2010. This engagement of key community leaders was identified as an opportunity to workshop specifically the community’s areas of wildfire potential, and the activities that have been implemented over the last three years since the 2009-2010 fires. A mapping exercise was undertaken to capture areas of concern so that Operations Plans could reflect the on-ground identified potential.

The interaction and communication between all involved was very positive, with a number of common areas of concern identified and worked through on the day.

Access to resources, local involvement in Incident Management Teams, Code 8 to the landholder and rural fire brigade officer, ramping up of support to local Incident Management arrangements, and the significance of road side mitigation were just a few of the outcomes achieved on the day.

Relationships and communications were two areas all attendees identified as requiring ongoing commitment to minimise future concerns - A challenge was presented to the identified community leaders to take to their individual community areas, the importance of engaging with our brigades, and our engagement with the landholders. Equally, having an identified link into individual communities, who have the contacts and knowledge of the local environment for future involvement at the Incident Management interface, will be invaluable.

I commend this initiative to you as hard work but very worthwhile.

Peter Hollier
Regional Manager
North Coast Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
### Area office contact details

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