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SPOTLIGHT: BUNGADOO FIRE BRIGADE

HISTORY OF THE SERVICE - VOLUME 1

OPERATION XAVIER WRAP UP
Commissioner’s Message

Operation Xavier 2013

Operation Xavier 2013 commenced on 1 August 2013 and was extended until 31 January 2014. At the time of writing, fires are continuing to burn around the state and the State Operations Centre has been activated to support the local operations.

By designating Operation Xavier as a set period, the Commissioner Queensland Fire and Emergency Services’ intent was to unify operations and bring the Service’s bushfire capability to a high level, allowing for rapid mobilisation and response with the aim of reducing the impact on the community, property, and the environment.

Unfortunately the long season has resulted in far too many injuries sustained by volunteers. Almost 70% of these relate to heat stress, dehydration, and trips and falls. Many of these are in our control when on the fire ground and could have been prevented. In your debrief sessions, training, and preparations for the next fire season, I strongly encourage you to revisit the training and awareness packages available on safety.

Remind yourself what amount of water or fluid is necessary for hydration during operational activities.

What are the symptoms of dehydration or heat stroke?

What is the fatigue management process in place by your brigade?

QFES

As you will read in this edition of the Bulletin, on 1 November 2013 the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, the Honourable Jack Dempsey MP, announced that the operational arm of Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) had officially integrated with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) establishing the new department of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

This has seen an update to the QFRS logo, which now reads as QFES; however there is no change to the RFSQ logo. Please be aware that the use of the QFES and RFSQ logo requires express written permission from the Department before use.
More equipment given to brigades in need

As announced in the November 2013 Bulletin, we are very pleased to again welcome Energex into the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) support family. For the fourth year, Energex are providing $75,000 to brigades who fall within their catchment area.

68 brigades nominated for over 140 pieces of equipment, and in early February a panel of staff from Energex and RFSQ will meet to determine who was successful in their nomination for equipment. The equipment will be handed over to successful Brigades through a number of official presentations across the Brisbane, South East, and North Coast Regions. Photos and details of the events can be found on the Volunteer Portal as they take place.

Christine Osborne
Acting Manager, Volunteer Recruitment and Marketing
Rural Fire Service Queensland – Head Office

Red and blue lights

We announced in the November 2013 Bulletin that red and blue flashing lights will be fitted to all rural fire brigade appliances, enhancing the visibility of appliances during operational activities and providing a safer working environment for appliance crews.

I would like to reiterate that there has not been a change to legislation covering road rule compliance. Although fitted with blue lights, a rural fire brigade vehicle is required to obey all of the normal road rules and comply with all traffic directions and signage. This presents no change to previous policies and procedures. If a rural fire brigade appliance contravenes road rules and signage, this is considered an illegal action and you can be fined.

If you would like to read more, a Standing Order (SO-Q-OM-3.37) was issued on 21 November 2013, and can be downloaded from the RFSQ Volunteer Portal. Additional information can be found in section 14(1)(b) of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010.

Powerlink support Brigades

Powerlink has worked closely with Rural Fire Service Queensland South West Region staff to finalise an agreement to supply four slip-on fire fighting units to several brigades in the North West Surat Basin area.

The units were delivered during January to Kiah, Sollow, and Bartons Creek Rural Fire Brigades.
A message from the Commissioner QFES

On 1 November 2013 the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, the Honourable Jack Dempsy MP, announced that the operational arm of Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) had officially integrated with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) establishing the new department of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

I am very pleased to take on the role of the Commissioner of QFES, and to advise you that the new structure will include a separate stream for Rural Fire and State Emergency Services volunteers. This stream will be led by a Deputy Commissioner, and will focus on improving support for volunteers. Establishing an area of the organisation which supports emergency service volunteers, while maintaining the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) as an integral part of the overall emergency service delivery in Queensland, recognises the unique identity and needs of our volunteers.

Although there have been many changes in recent months, it is exciting to realise there are many opportunities as we move forward. We will have an increased capacity for front line service delivery and strive to build safer communities through disaster response and community resilience in the face of the extreme weather events that Queensland endures. In everything we do we will focus first on enhancing risk reduction and readiness, but when required we will deliver world-class response services.

The integration of EMQ and QFRS provides us with a unique opportunity to build our own future and leverage our knowledge, experience and diversity to enhance our services and extend our best practice standards. We will incorporate a broadened volunteering role, which will improve support for volunteers and provide efficiencies and increase capabilities.

The formation of QFES was one of the recommendations made by former Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty, as a result of his Police and Community Safety Review (PACSR), which considered the overall needs for service delivery across all emergency services into the future.

Prior to the release of the PACSR Report, Assistant Minister for Emergency Volunteers, Mr Ted Malone MP was tasked with providing options regarding the functions, structure, leadership and funding of the RFSQ. Extensive recommendations were made as a result of both of these reviews, and a large body of work is now being undertaken to implement these.

To progress this work I have established the QFES Transition Team to work through both the Malone and PACSR recommendations in consultation with stakeholders and other agencies. A Malone Review Working group has also been established which is led by Mr Malone and will include the Cairns peninsula Area Director, Rural Fire Service Queensland, Inspector Bryan Cifuentes and other members of the Malone Review Committee.

I want to assure you there will be no reduction to staffing levels of the RFSQ or to the number of RFSQ Area Offices. There are also no plans for the RFSQ to shift from the current focus on rural Queensland. It is also recognised that the RFSQ and Queensland Police Service (QPS) boundaries reflect two different businesses with different service delivery requirements and there is no intention to align these.

I am pleased to say however, that there will be a range of benefits for volunteers and brigades and many of these outcomes are already being seen. Some of these include:

- Fully funded essential firefighting equipment for rural fire brigades, for equipment that was previously co-funded.
- Appliance replacements provided at no cost to brigades. These items previously required a contribution of up to $20,000 from brigades.
- The continued provision of no cost, personal protective clothing, communications equipment, station construction grants, training and insurance.
- The fitting of RFSQ vehicles with red and blue flashing lights, enhancing the safety of RFSQ volunteers.
It is essential to me that information and engagement takes place at all levels across the organisation and for this to occur, I am committed to ensuring our workforce, volunteers and stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to get involved during this process.

The creation of the QFES Transition Information Site on the Volunteer Portal provides all volunteers with an avenue to access up-to-date information, seek further advice and support and access full copies of both the Malone and PACSR reports. This site is updated on a regular basis to ensure you remain informed on our progress. To access the Volunteer Portal please go to www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au and click on the ‘Connect to Volunteer Portal’ link under Current Volunteers. If you are unable to access the Volunteer Portal please contact your Area Office staff who will be able to assist you.

I would like to invite all volunteers to get involved in this process. You can submit your suggestions or ideas by emailing QFES-Transition@dcs.qld.gov.au.

All volunteers have an important role within our community and the recommendations provide us with the opportunity to future-proof our state’s emergency services. As always, your dedication and service is greatly appreciated and I am reassured that we are all working towards a more cohesive approach to emergency and disaster management for all Queenslanders.

Regards

Lee A Johnson AFSM MiFireE
Commissioner
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Brigade Classification Review

Rural Fire Brigades across the state are divided into five classifications based on the level of risk within their area and their capacity to respond.

The classifications are:

» **iZone**
  - Brigade area contains a considerable quantity of medium or high bushfire prone vegetation with considerable rural residential development or township.
  - Capable of responding within seven minutes of receiving notification of an incident.
  - Brigade has a well-equipped station and frequently assists neighbouring brigades.

» **Village**
  - Brigade area contains a small amount of medium to high bushfire prone vegetation with interspersed rural residential areas.
  - Primarily rural properties.
  - Capable of responding with fifteen minutes of receiving notification of an incident.
  - Brigade resources are often complemented with private equipment.

» **Rural**
  - Significant number of rural producing properties with insignificant amounts of bushfire prone areas.
  - The brigade may have one fire appliance which is supported by slip-on-units.

» **Primary Producer**
  - Land use within the brigade area is mainly primary producer and does not contain a settlement or any rural residential area.
  - The brigade relies mainly on property based equipment.

» **Special Service Delivery Brigade**
  - The brigade provides a specific service to meet community need. E.g. Industry brigades.

The Area Director, in conjunction with brigades, is responsible for ensuring a review is undertaken on a regular basis, particularly in regards to the changing risk within the brigade area and its capacity to respond.

The review is undertaken to outline the different service delivery expectations of the brigade and to assist Rural Fire Service Queensland in determining the resourcing, administration, and support required for each brigade.

Should your brigade wish to have a classification review completed, please discuss this further with your Area Director.

**Inspector Neil Kelso**
Acting Project Officer
Rural Fire Service Queensland
SPOTLIGHT ON:
Bungadoo Rural Fire Brigade

The members of the Bungadoo Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) are a dedicated group of like-minded people who are passionate about what they can do for the community. The newly elected Executive Committee are constantly striving to improve operations within the Brigade. Their motto is ‘Onward and Upward!’

Bungadoo RFB was formed on 26 September, 1987 and currently has 24 members. The Brigade is classified as an iZone Brigade and is located east of Gin Gin covering 61 square kilometres, and is bordered by the Gin Gin, Wallaville, Childers, Givelda, and Bullyard Rural Fire Brigades.

2007 saw the Brigade acquire an area to build a fire shed to house their 51 and 81 appliances and other fire fighting equipment, as well as establish themselves within the community. In 2011 the Brigade received a grant to purchase a demountable building to use as a Training and Meeting area.

Like a lot of Brigades, Bungadoo is constantly working on increasing their membership as a lot of their current members work away. They have tried to combat this by holding Open Days at the shed and undertaking letter box drops to educate their community.

In 2011, flooding collapsed one of the main bridges in the area. Repairs had not long been completed prior to the January 2013 flood event. While the new bridge remained intact this time, the community was once again isolated.
with some members of the Bungadoo RFB heavily impacted by the devastation caused. However, like a true team all the members were there for each other and whatever outlying areas could be reached.

Bungadoo has been able to undertake quite a few hazard reduction burns in their area as well as neighbouring brigade areas this year. The experience that was gained for some of the newer members certainly put them in good stead when the 2013 Fire Season began. Like many other Brigades, the Bungadoo members clocked many hours on the fire ground this season, and it was a tribute to the camaraderie of the Brigade that the smiles rarely left their faces regardless of how tired, hot and busy they were.

In 2014 the Brigade is hoping to increase their membership, continue educating the community in PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE. as well as continue to expand their current members knowledge and skill set with training and fire ground experience.

Nicole Stewart
Brigade Training and Support Officer
Rural Fire Service Queensland - Bundaberg

Membership Application Review

Rural Fire Service Queensland is continuing with the review of the membership application process for volunteers wishing to join a Rural Fire Brigade.

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. It has involved redesigning the application form to be more applicant friendly by reducing the information collected and allowing for ease of completion, reviewing all associated business rules, and a review of internal procedures to ensure streamlined and timely processing of applications.

Consultation groups consisting of both volunteers and staff have been set up across the state where they have had input into the development of the Membership Application process. It is intended that the new membership application kit will be released at the 2014 Volunteer Summit to be held in May.

Feedback is welcome from all volunteers and staff. To submit your feedback go to the Volunteer Portal and complete a Rural Feedback Form.

Kay Krinke
Acting Manager, Brigade Governance and Compliance
Rural Knowledge
Rural Fire Service Queensland – Head Office

Our social media pages have a new name

Do you follow us on facebook or twitter? If so, you may have noticed we’ve changed our name.

FIND US AT:

- http://www.facebook.com/QldFireandRescueService
- https://twitter.com/QldFes
They say to improve and go forward into the future you must first celebrate and appreciate the past.

This article is the first in a series which will explore the history of the Rural Fire Service Queensland, remind us of our roots, how far we have come, and how much further we can go. Many of these excerpts come from the book, *From Beaters to Bambi Buckets: A history of the volunteer Queensland Rural Fires organisation 1927-1990 and beyond* by Don and Daphne Greenhalgh.

**The Logo**

The Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) logo you see today was approved in April 1979 by the then Minister for Mines, Energy and Police. An approach was made to various professional design consultants for submission of concepts for the logo. This is a quote from the submission by the successful company:

“The upper band of the logo designates the foliage that is the base of any bushfire. Whether it is interpreted as mountains and plains, or as grasses and trees, is not relevant. The important theme is that it represents foliage. The triangle designates fire that threatens the landscape. The universal symbol for fire is a triangle depicting fuel, oxygen, and ignition. Red is the logical colour to represent fire. The colours red and green contrast strongly. This is representative of the threat that fire is in the bush.”

**The Calendar**

The annual RFSQ Calendar was first introduced in 1954, and since then has been greeted enthusiastically. Using a different theme each year, every calendar is dedicated to the 35,000 men and women who make up the RFSQ.

In 2008 we met brigades in their home towns, doing something a little different (who wants to go on the Giant Drop?). In 2009 we celebrated 60 years of the Rural Fire Service. In 2010 we looked at all the different ways we help communities. In 2011 we showcased the geographic diversity of brigades and the differing local conditions. In 2012 we met 13 volunteers and heard about what they do in their job. In 2013 we met the younger generation and we heard what the RFSQ means to them. And in 2014 we looked at the RFSQ from your perspective, featuring photos taken by you, the volunteers.

We look forward to producing the RFSQ calendar for many years to come.
The First One Hundred Brigades

This list has been reproduced from the 1960/61 Annual Report of the Rural Fires Board, at which time 658 brigades were registered. Most of these brigades are still providing excellent service to their communities, whilst some will have been merged with other brigades, and some absorbed into urban brigade areas.

1. Glasshouse Mountains
2. Lagoon Pocket
3. Dagon
4. Byfields
5. Kandanga
6. Amamoor
7. Caboolture
8. Thangool
9. Langshaw
10. Gordonbrook
11. Dangore
12. Wooroolin
13. Wamuran Basin
14. Nindi Gully
15. Greymare
16. Wamuran
17. Evelyn
18. Wellshot-Portland
19. West Burleigh
20. Morven North
21. Malboona
22. Wyandra
23. Wyangarie No. 1
24. McKinlay Shire
25. Pie Creek
26. Granada
27. Bimerah
28. Cunnamulla
29. Valetta
30. Neila North
31. Wakefield
32. Ernestina
33. Ducklo
34. Mungailala
35. Langlo Crossing
36. Cooladdi
37. Strathlea
38. Eudo
39. Balkan States
40. North Ilfracombe
41. East Darr
42. Apsley
43. Warrambool
44. Leeson
45. Middle Creek
46. Ironpot
47. Galipoli
48. Luckham
49. Tooogoolawah
50. Sandy Ridges
51. Bollon
52. Adavale
53. No details available
54. Summit
55. Cedar Vale
56. Barabon
57. Gin Gin
58. Cooinglah
59. Acheron Creek
60. Marmor
61. Alton Downs
62. Bracewell
63. Calliope
64. Butlerville
65. Machine Creek
66. Ambrose
67. East End
68. Ridgelsands
69. Veteran
70. Banana
71. Raglan
72. Baralaba
73. Tartulla
74. Jambin
75. Willawa
76. Moura
77. Valentine Plains
78. Olio
79. Wardsdale
80. Kunioon & Hodgleigh
81. Beechal Creek
82. Nebine
83. No details available
84. Mount Murchison
85. Brooloo
86. Dalma
87. Dixalea
88. Wattlebank
89. Jardine
90. Morella
91. Bouldercombe
92. Warna-Wokingham
93. Bukali
94. Rossmoya
95. Dululu
96. East Springsure
97. Mothar Mountain
98. Chatsworth
99. Orange Creek
100. Kybong

Christine Osborne
Acting Manager, Volunteer Recruitment and Marketing
Rural Fire Service
Queensland – Head Office
Bushfire CRC Update and launch of the new Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC

In December last year, the new $130 million Bushfire & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC) was officially launched by the Minister for Justice, the Hon Michael Keenan at Parliament House, Canberra. The Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC, which began to operate on 1 July 2013 will bring together all of Australasia’s fire and emergency service authorities as well as the nation’s leading experts across a wide range of scientific fields to explore the causes, consequences and mitigation of bushfires and other natural disasters.

The new Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC will not only build on the research conducted by the previous Bushfire CRC, which has been operating since 2003, but expand its research program to facilitate a better understanding and management of other natural disasters, such as severe storms, cyclones, tsunamis and earthquakes. Bushfire research will, as with the previous CRC, remain a main research focus of the new CRC.

The research program structure of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC includes three major themes of work.

- Economics, policy and decision-making
- Resilient people, infrastructure and institutions, and
- Bushfire and Natural Hazard Risks

The three themes and their associated projects are strongly inter-connected and combined represent a significant step forward towards the next generation of tools, knowledge and capability to manage bushfire and other natural hazards and risks.

The BNHCRC will also continue to showcase its research as a major partner of the next AFAC Conference, held in Wellington, New Zealand in September 2014.

While website development of the new Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC is still in progress there is already a considerable amount of information available at www.bnhcrc.com.au. You can also follow the Bushfire CRC on Twitter (@bnhcrc) and Facebook to get the latest news and updates.

Post fire field research in New South Wales following the October bushfires.

As the old Bushfire CRC completes its current program of research and the new BNHCRC is laying the foundations of their new research agenda the recent bushfires in New South Wales in October 2013 facilitated a joint research venture into the social, environmental and economic impacts of bushfires.

This research, carried out at the request of the NSW Rural Fire Service was a joint undertaking by researchers of the old Bushfire CRC and the newly formed Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC. The project was designed to conduct community-based research in the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands in NSW, following the bushfires in October 2013. Its findings will add to the data collected earlier in 2013 in other areas of NSW and with data collected after the Black Saturday Bushfires, the Perth Hills and Lake Clifton fires in Western Australia in 2011 and the Tasmanian bushfires early 2013 will greatly improve our understanding of the social, environmental and economic impacts of bushfires.

**Inspector Bruno Greimel** BAppSc (Hon) BSc (Env)
Manager, Environmental Fire Research & Training
Rural Fire Service Queensland - Head Office

**Ebook first for fire safety**

The Bushfire CRC has produced an ebook for parents on how to talk to children about bushfire preparation and safety.

The ebook, *Making a bushfire plan? Involve your kids!* is based on the PhD research of Briony Towers from RMIT University, which has been presented in many research and industry forums in recent years. The ebook is designed as an interactive PDF that can be read on a computer or any tablet device, as well as printed.

The ebook is available to download from the Bushfire CRC website.
Training Transition Workstream

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) have convened several workstreams to provide a way forward for implementation of the outcomes of the Keelty Review and the recommendations of the Malone Review into Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ).

The Training Transition Workstream is chaired by myself as Acting Assistant Commissioner, Community Safety and Training, Andrew Short and includes representation from staff and volunteers of RFSQ, SES, Disaster Management Services and QFES.

The initial focus of the Training Transition Workstream was to analyse the findings and recommendations to fully understand the intent and the purpose, and develop solutions to address those recommendations. In reviewing a number of the findings and recommendations, it has become apparent that more work than anticipated should be undertaken to make our future organisation even greater with a specific focus on the work effort, needs and desires of our vast number of committed volunteers.

The input of knowledge and information from our volunteers to the Training Transition Workstream has enabled a more thorough understanding of the tasks ahead. Members of the Training Workstream are dedicated trainers who understand the importance of training and the need to tailor training to the diverse and varied roles and expectations of our volunteers.

Membership of the Training Transition Workstream is continuing, with more RFSQ and SES volunteers becoming involved as the process evolves.

Further RFSQ and SES meetings to test and progress potential solutions to identified issues will occur throughout Queensland in the coming months.

Feedback is encouraged and can be submitted through the QFES Transition email address - QFES-Transition@dcs.qld.gov.au. A brief video message of the role of the Training Transition Workstream is available for viewing on VolsOnline.

Andrew Short
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Community Safety and Training
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Rural Fire Brigade Manual Update

With each edition of the Bulletin we will provide you with a summary of updates and changes made to Rural Fire Brigade Manual Business Rules and any new, updated or deleted State Standing Orders, Safety Bulletins and Incident Directives:

Major changes

A new business rule has been released and is included in this edition of the Bulletin for you to add to your Brigade Manual. This business rule is:

- **D9.1 - Rural Fire Brigade Groups** – complete review and re-release of this Business Rule, which was removed some years ago.

The following business rules have recently undergone major changes and are also included in this edition of the Bulletin for you to replace in your Brigade Manual:

- **D3.7.2 - Station Grants** – incorporated changes relating to the increased grant amount from $10,000 to up to 25% of construction costs (capped at $25,000).
- **D5.1.2 - Station Construction** – incorporated changes relating to the increased grant amount from $10,000 to up to 25% of construction costs (capped at $25,000).
- **D4.3 – Self-Insurance Claims** - The following changes have been made to this business rule:
  - Information rolled up from business rules RFBM D4.4 - Insurance of Privately Owned Vehicles and RFBM D4.5 - Insurance of Private Equipment (other than vehicles), which has now been deleted;
  - Updated process flow charts and endorsement/approval requirements.

The following Standing Orders have been uploaded to the Volunteer Portal:

- SO-Q-OM 3.37 Rural Fire Service Queensland Vehicles – Red and Blue Flashing Lights
- SO-Q-OM 3.36 Operation Claudette 2013-14
Bike 4 Burns 2014

14-20 May 2014

QLD FIRE FIGHTERS RAISING FUNDS FOR BURNS RESEARCH

ROMA → SURAT → ST GEORGE → GOONDIWINDI → INGLEWOOD → PITTSWORTH → GATTON → BRISBANE

835KM IN 7 DAYS

For more information please contact Karen Perry:
Karen.Perry@dcq.qld.gov.au or 0439 669 156

Children's Hospital Foundation
working wonders for sick kids
May 16 will see 200 Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) volunteers from across Queensland descend on Twin Waters for a weekend of workshops, presentations, and socialisation.

The 2014 event will break with tradition, and this time will hold separate streams for operational and support personnel. Volunteers have been allocated in to the most relevant group to their position in their brigade, and they will then cycle through three streams. At any one time there will be six sessions in progress, twice the amount held in previous years!

We want to make sure everyone gets the most out of this excellent opportunity to exchange feedback and ideas, so and each stream will workshop either a new concept, or brainstorm improvements to an existing issue. The outcomes of each stream will then be considered by the project leader and may be implemented in the near future.

The popular trade show will be on again from 2pm on Friday 16, and exhibitors so far include:

- All Hoses and Valves
- Alpha First Aid
- Big Red Truck (BRT)
- Crommelins Machinery
- GAAM
- Hatz Diesel
- Protector Alsafe
- RFBAQ
- Stewart & Heaton
- Tankworks

As well as trades supported by RFSQ and QFES staff, including:

- Air Operations
- Finance
- FireCare
- GIS
- Operations
- Recruitment, Marketing, and Promotions
- Training

For those who were unable to make it due to other commitments, you will be able to catch up on the key parts of the weekend through a special edition Bulletin in July. Presentations and handouts will also be made available on the Volunteer Portal from Monday 19 May.

Christine Osborne
Acting Manager, Volunteer Recruitment and Marketing
Rural Fire Service Queensland – Head Office
An update from the Strategic Working Groups

Operations

The role of this Working Group is to provide advice and recommendations on policy and procedures relating to the support and resources provided to volunteers of the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ).

This Working Group is now the forum for rural appliance design and build.

The Working Group has the ability to implement changes to policy and procedure or provide advice and recommendations to the Strategy and Governance Steering Committee, chaired by the Assistant Commissioner RFSQ, depending on the nature of the recommendation.

The Group is made up of the following members:

- Peter Varley, Director Operations RFSQ – Chair of meetings
- Rob Walker, Manager Operational Support – Kedron RFSQ
- Tony Hazell, Area Director - Townsville RFSQ
- Robert Downey, Area Training & Support Officer – Charters Towers RFSQ
- Fabian Stangherlin, Volunteer - iZone Brigade RFSQ
- Paul James, Volunteer - Village Brigade RFSQ
- Wayne Krogh, Volunteer - Rural Brigade RFSQ
- Owen Thompson, Volunteer - Primary Producer Brigade RFSQ
- Brian Needham, Representative - Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland
- Ian Pike, Representative - Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland
- Cyrel Wright, Health and Safety Officer – Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA)

Since its inception the Operations Strategic Working Group have discussed and implemented a number of initiatives including:

- Change of colour of yellow crew leader helmets to white
- Extension to life span of appliances from 20 to 30 years (if requested)
- Removal of criminal history checks for members going on deployment or changing brigades
- Change in design of station signage to reduce cost and provide options for purchase
- Introduction of long sleeve cotton shirts with pockets for volunteers
- Review and reinstatement of the Group Rules

The last meeting of the Operations Strategic Working Group on 27 November 2013 discussed:

- Locker door design – trial gull wing style doors
- Fitting of GPS units (in dash if available) to appliances before delivery to brigades
- Use of high pressure pumps (trial on first Iveco Daily)
- PTO drive for appliance pumps
- Medium appliance upgrade to 7 tonne for new builds
- A policy on All Terrain Vehicles
- A procedure for Working in Road and Rail Corridors

The Working Group will meet again on 13 March 2014. The volunteer members will be seeking opinions and feedback from their colleagues and having members from all the classes of brigades gives us a good range of input from the differing brigade environments across the state.

Peter Varley
Acting Chief Superintendent
Director Operations
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Volunteering and Support

The Volunteering and Support Strategic Working Group provides advice and recommendations for the non-operational aspects of RFSQ. The Group is made up of the following members:

- Madonna Day, Executive Manager, Volunteering and Support, RFSQ – Chair of meetings
- Ken Beasley, Regional Manager, Northern and Far Northern Regions, RFSQ
- Tony Johnstone, Area Director, Bundaberg, currently acting Regional Manager, South East and South West Regions, RFSQ
- Christine Osborne, Acting Manager, Volunteer Recruitment and Marketing, RFSQ
- Kay Krinke, Acting Manager, Volunteer Support Services
- Kay McCormack, Bushfire Safety Officer, currently acting Regional Manager, Brisbane Region, RFSQ
- Cyrel Wright, Senior Workplace Health and Safety Officer
- Nellie Barron, Charter Towers RFB – RFBAQ Representative
- Warren Kelly, Black River & district RFB – RFBAQ Representative
- Helen Jakeman, Landsborough – Volunteer Representative
- Darren Tisher, Rupertswood RFB – Volunteer Representative
- Matt Finch, Crows Nest RFB – Volunteer Representative
- Judith Loxton – Mt Alford RFB – Volunteer Representative
The following issues and initiatives have been discussed, reviewed and implemented since the inception of this Working Group:

• Review of Volunteer Membership Application Process
• Review of Volunteer Operational Rural Firefighter Task Analysis and Volunteer Medical and Physical Assessment
• Australian Taxation Office ruling – Deductible Gift Recipient and Charitable Institutions Status of Brigades
• Review of Brigade and Group Management Rules
• Review of Incident & Hazard Reduction Burn Reporting Improvements
• Review of Volunteer Portal
• Instigation of Rural Fire Service Day
• Review of Honours and Awards

The last meeting of the Volunteering and Support Working Group on 28 November 2013 discussed:

• Smartphone Apps used by other agencies and other apps developed by volunteers
• Brigade Secretary information – possible Handbook or information on volunteer portal
• Volunteer identification – photo ID etc
• Ideas for the Volunteer Summit, May 2014
• Better use of current systems – ie Operations Management System and the RFSQ Centralised Operational Reporting Environment.

The next meeting will be held in March 2014.

Madonna Day
Executive Manager Volunteer Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Training

The RFSQ Training Strategic Working Group met in December 2013 with the next meeting planned for April 2014.

The purpose of the Rural Training Strategic Working Group is to provide advice and recommendations to the Strategy and Governance Steering Committee on policies and procedures relating to the support and resources provided to the volunteers of RFSQ.

The Group is made up of the following members:

• Craig Smith, Manager, Rural Research and Training RFSQ – Chair of meetings
• Marilyn King, Representative - Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland
• Geoff Wrigley, Representative - Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland
• Peter Baron, Volunteer – iZone Brigade RFSQ
• Graham Thompson, Volunteer – iZone Brigade RFSQ
• Wesley Bruce, Volunteer – iZone Brigade RFSQ
• Corey Armstrong, SES Volunteer
• John Moy, SES Volunteer
• Clinton Neumann, Acting Manager Training Delivery – Whyte Island RFSQ
• Ben White, Executive Manager, Education and Training Services - PSBA
• Roger Bird, Acting Director, School of Fire and Rescue Service Training - QFES
• Peter Hollier, Regional Manager – North Coast Region RFSQ

At the latest meeting of the Group the items that were discussed for improvements in the development and delivery of training to Emergency Service volunteers included:

• A review of the Volunteer Learning and Development Framework to ensure flexible and practical training programs to meet the diversity of local brigade risks and needs.
• Practical training opportunities to meet volunteer needs - when, where, and how it suits the volunteer.
• Further development and education of RFSQ staff to support the training needs of volunteers.
• The development and support of volunteer trainers where required.
• Support for the delivery of First Aid training.

These items will be a focus of the Rural Training team to positively support volunteer training in 2014.

Craig Smith GFireE
Superintendent
Executive Manager
Rural Training and Development
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Feedback

All volunteers have the opportunity to provide feedback to RFSQ year round via the Feedback Form (RF182). This form can be downloaded from the Volunteer Portal, or you can take a copy from your Rural Fire Brigade Manual.

The form caters for feedback on a variety of topics – business rules, operations, admin processes, training, appliances, equipment, and so on. Or you can submit new ideas and or suggestions to be considered by the Strategic Working Groups.

Each feedback form is logged on an official register before being passed on to the relevant or appropriate staff member for review. When it comes time for Business Rules or products to be updated, the Feedback register is consulted to collate all relevant feedback on that topic. If something isn’t working out in the field but RFSQ hasn’t been advised through this process, we don’t know that it needs fixing.
Bushfire Planning

New state-wide Bushfire Hazard Area maps have been prepared to support implementation of a single State Planning Policy released by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. These new maps replace bushfire risk maps, modeled by the Rural Fire Service Queensland, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in 2008.


Succession planning in Rangewood RFB

The dynamics of Rangewood RFB have changed significantly over the last 3 years with the Brigade’s membership increasing from 28 members and 3 appliances to 72 members 3 appliances and 4 support vehicles. Coinciding with this change, we have seen a number of our older, more experienced members retire or move away to be replaced with a large number of new members, especially in the 20 to 35 year old age bracket, who are eager to learn and participate.

Due to our incident response level, community participation, and the operational cost of running the Brigade, we now manage the Brigade with the same standards that a small business would use to ensure its financial viability.

The Brigade’s Management Team meets at least every 3 months and consists of 12 members: a Chairman, 6 Brigade Officers, a Treasurer, a Brigade Training Officer and 3 Firefighters. Each of the 6 Brigade Officers are responsible for a specific role, including Community & Corporate Engagement, Operational Support Working Group, Local Fire Management Group, Mitigation Officer, Equipment Officer and Communications Officer. These officers are supported in their roles by other members of the Brigade to fulfill these tasks.

The Brigade places a heavy emphasis on member training with 6 trainers in the Brigade delivering training from skills and drills and through the VLDF from FMS training up to Brigade Officer Courses each year. We use the Crew Leader and Brigade Officer course to strengthen our members’ knowledge of the local area, which assists them to develop Local Area Plans for specific areas in our Brigade Area.

With the increase in membership numbers, communication is vital to ensure that everyone is informed of what is happening. We use both our Brigade group email system and the Brigade Facebook page to make sure all current and relevant information is passed on to our members in a timely manner. We also use the Townsville Area RFS Facebook page for information on other activities or notices from the Service. The Brigade’s Facebook page has been the first point of contact for many of our new members.

The recent increase in membership requires constant engagement with our volunteers in order to keep them interested and involved. Feedback received via our monthly meetings and training sessions influences the structure of the training we deliver, the community activities that we are involved in, and the team activities that we conduct, to continue to increase the Brigade’s capability.

Jim Besgrove
First Officer - Secretary
Rangewood Rural Fire Brigade
OziExplorer licenses for Rural Fire Brigades

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) unit has purchased enough licenses for OziExplorer to enable any brigade who wants the technology to have access to it at no cost.

The OziExplorer component of the Brigade Mapping Toolset allows you to create mapping solutions to suit your brigade’s needs. For more information about this useful tool, please visit the Map Shop page on the Volunteer Portal.

Rural brigades are allocated one software license. Additional licenses are at the discretion of the Area Director, in conjunction with the Manager, GIS Unit. (Please note that one software license can be installed on a PC and a laptop concurrently, as per the OziExplorer conditions of use).

If your brigade would like to request a software license, please contact your Area Office.

Important note: Once an OziExplorer license has been allocated to a volunteer they are personally liable for the conditions of use attached to the software. If OziExplorer learns of the distribution of the software code to other parties, the volunteer who is associated with the initial allocation can be held liable. You must not distribute the software code outside of the brigade, and the software is only for official brigade use.

This software purchase was initiated to fulfil the recommendation outlined in the Malone Review into the Rural Fire Service.

Malone Review Recommendation 51: That the Rural Fire Service Queensland upgrades its subscription to technology for the Brigade Mapping Toolset to make it available to all Brigades who want it.

This recommendation was supported by the Police and Community Safety Review (PACSR).

Supported: The Review team recommend the adoption of such systems must be considered in the overall context of current ITC capability and should be progressed in accord with the desire to ensure that systems implemented are interoperable with others in use and/or integrate to provide better information when and where it is required. For instance, information collated for the Brigade mapping toolset should be available through the ‘TOM’ system for use at District and State level to better assist in planning to assist local brigades.
RFSQ Day 2014

Has your brigade registered to participate in RFSQ Day on 7 June?

Registration is easy.

Visit [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YFP5RBQ](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YFP5RBQ) and fill in the survey, or if you’d prefer you can fill out form RF190 (available on the Volunteer Portal), or contact your Area Office.

Please RSVP by 1 April!

This will ensure your brigade is listed on the RFSQ Day locations map on the website. We’ll also contact your local council to advise them of your event.

Orders are now open!

To order educational, marketing, and promotional material for your event please download and complete form RF193 from the Volunteer Portal and submit it either via email to rfsq@qfes.qld.gov.au, or to your Area Office. Please provide a street address and contact phone number for delivery.

Orders will be processed from 1 April, but you can submit orders prior to this time.

The cut off for orders is Sunday 25 May, as orders received after this date can’t be guaranteed to arrive in time for the event. We suggest you order early to guarantee both stock and delivery time.

Prizes!

Brigades who participate have the opportunity to win great prizes!

We will once again hold a photography competition and pick the three best photos which capture what your brigade does for your community.

Entries can be emailed to rfsq@qfes.qld.gov.au and if you’re on Instagram you can also tag your photos with #RFSQday (remember: if your profile is private, we won’t be able to see your tagged photos).

Christine Osborne
Acting Manager, Volunteer Recruitment and Marketing
Rural Fire Service Queensland – Head Office
Situational Awareness

Another fire season has come and gone. Once again Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) volunteers were presented with a testing and long season that unfortunately resulted in far too many injuries being sustained by dedicated volunteers.

Many of them serious, such as fractures, dislocations, and torn ligaments. For the period of Operation Xavier that commenced on 1 August 2013 to the time of writing this article, there have been 68 personal injury incidents reported by RFSQ volunteers. The main contributing factors point to a lack of situational awareness and the decisions made by individuals at the time.

In the previous Workplace Health and Safety article in the Bulletin the topic was “Choices”. The message being, make the right choice or decision and you will control your own destiny in relation to your personal safety. Maintaining your situational awareness was mentioned and I would like to once again emphasise the importance of knowing and understanding your physical surroundings.

The following is a breakdown of the main mechanisms that contributed to RFSQ volunteers sustaining injuries during the current fire season:

1. **Slips, Trips and Falls**
   - 22 reported injuries under this category, with the contributing factors being working in rough and uneven terrain, and limited visibility due to operating at night.

2. **Heat stress/dehydration**
   - 15 occasions where volunteers had to be removed from the fire ground and receive medical treatment due to the effects heat stress and dehydration.

3. **Getting into and out of vehicles**
   - 7 injuries were sustained by volunteers getting into or out of vehicles with the main contributing factors being stepping onto uneven ground, or in a hole when getting out of the vehicle, or slipping getting in or out of the vehicle.

4. **Operating a chainsaw**
   - 4 injuries were sustained when using a chainsaw, with the key risk being limbs falling during the tree felling process.

RFSQ can’t prevent an individual falling down a creek bank or culvert, nor can QFES control how much water you drink, food you eat, or rest you take. RFSQ can provide training and awareness and advise you of the rough terrain and potential obstacles you may encounter, but it is your choice where you walk and where you put your feet. QFES can provide water, food, sheltered rest areas, and make you aware of the signs of heat stress and fatigue, and the need to remain hydrated, and take rest breaks, but you will be the first to recognise the symptoms of heat stress or fatigue and the need to take a rest.

The four categories listed above total 70% of all the injuries sustained for the fire season. All the incidents that resulted in injury were within the control of the individual. Our brigade training and awareness covers the risks associated with the four categories. Make these statistics a discussion topic around your brigade during your fire season debrief and also again prior to the 2014 fire season.

You may have contributed to the injury statistics this fire season. Make it a personal goal that you and no members of your brigade contribute to the injury statistics for the 2014 fire season.

There is the old saying from my childhood and it is probably still around today “Look before you leap”. It’s your choice.

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

Cyrel Wright
Senior Workplace Health and Safety Officer
With the Finance Officials’ Meeting in Cairns (September 2014) and more than 4000 international delegates expected to attend the G20 Leaders’ Summit in Brisbane (November 2014), a secure and interoperable communications network is required to host police, fire and ambulance, as well as Commonwealth law enforcement agencies and international security forces.

**The GWN**

The Government Wireless Network (GWN) is a new UHF integrated digital wireless network which will improve communications, safety and security for Queensland’s public safety agencies.

The network will deliver enhanced digital radio voice and narrowband data communications for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) and Queensland Police Service (QPS).

The GWN will bring the public safety agencies onto the same radio communications platform and frequency group, and provide the ability to communicate between multiple agencies. Importantly, the new technology will improve the personal safety of police, firefighters, ambulance paramedics and patient transport officers.

**Motorola APX6000 XE Portable Radio**

The Motorola APX6000 XE is the next generation of ruggedly reliable performers that give you the advanced features such as noise cancelling, duress, texting, status messaging and GPS location racking in a small, P25 Phase 2 equipped portable radio.

The Motorola APX6000 XE Portable Radio has been designed specifically for Firefighters using personal protective clothing (PPC) in hostile environments.

The Government Wireless Network will be implemented in stages, according to service areas:

- stage 1—Brisbane and Gold Coast, to support the November 2014 G20 event
- stage 2—Cairns, to support the September 2014 G20 event
- stage 3—the rest of South East Queensland, in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

And will also be compatible with existing agency analogue networks, so state-wide service can continue during the rollout.

Advice regarding the Cairns implementation is that a number of selected Urban appliances will be fitted with GWN equipment for the duration of the G20 meeting and revert to normal communications equipment after the meeting.

Brigades located in areas covered by the GWN in stage 1 will be provided with further details to enable the transition to the network.

**GWN Pilot Program**

The GWN pilot program is coming up in February 2014 and lots of preparation work is already under way. The pilot program will allow the QFES GWN Unit to analyse radio functionality to determine if the GWN radios are fit-for-purpose. As you know, having the right equipment for the right job can make a real difference.
GWN Fit out for 2 QFES Vehicles

Shortly the first QFES vehicles will undergo the first GWN radios installation which will used for a Commissioner’s inspection and user testing. The 2 vehicles to receive the GWN fit out will be a Medium Pumper and an ERV (Ford Territory). We are very excited to see how these radios fit into our vehicles and perform in the GWN Pilot Program.

GWN Training modules for G20

The QFES is currently working closely with the G20 Operations Group to support preparations for the event. Part of this work is developing the GWN Training modules for the G20 events in Brisbane and Cairns in 2014. So far, work is slowly progressing and we expect to have this completed by March 2014.

Concept of Operations

This body of work is a mammoth task in itself. With the introduction of a new digital environment being the GWN, and the enhanced functionality of a digital radio network, we expect that some terminology and existing operational practices for FireCom officers and frontline firefighters may change.

The GWN Unit is working closely with the GWN Technical Advisors from Mingara to develop a future ‘Concept of Operations’ for QFES and ensure that we capitalise on the enhancements and features of the GWN and the improved safety features it offers.

2014 GWN Outlook

2014 will be a big year for the GWN. The fruits of 18 months of hard work will be witnessed as the GWN comes to life.

This year you will see:

**JANUARY**
- 2 QFES Vehicles receive GWN Fit outs
- QFES SEQ Fleet mapping commences
- 2 x QFES Concept of Operations workshops
- Design of GWN Training Packages

**February**
- GWN Pilot Network completed (12 Sites)
- QFES GWN Unit conducts UATs
- QFES GWN Concept of Operations draft due

**March**
- GWN G20 Facility Acceptance
- Delivery of QFES GWN train-the-trainer for G20
- QFES G20 Vehicles receive GWN Fit outs

**April**
- GWN Operational UATs

**June**
- GWN G20 Commercial Acceptance
- SEQ GWN Integration completed

**September**
- G20 Finance Summit (Cairns)

**November**
- G20 Summit (Brisbane)

**December**
- GWN Role Out to Gold Coast commences


GWN Service Area (SEQ)

Our email addresses have changed

Please update your records - staff and general email addresses have been updated in line with the new Department names, and now end in ‘@qfes.qld.gov.au’ or ‘@psba.qld.gov.au’. You will find an updated list of Area Office emails on the back of this Bulletin.
Fire Season wrap up: Operation Xavier 2013

At the time of printing, North Coast and Central Regions were still heavily committed to containing active bushfires and were unable to provide a wrap up on their (continuing) fire season. We will bring these wrap ups to you in the next edition of the Bulletin.

Brisbane Region

Operation Xavier started moderately across the region as a result of intermittent wet weather however momentum quickly increased as conditions transformed with a few dynamic ‘Severe’ Fire Danger Rating (FDR) days and consequent Wildfire Alert Level (WAL) 3 periods experienced throughout the season. Overall the season despite being protracted provided an average amount of fire activity with ‘High to Very High’ FDR’s and WAL 2 periods prevalent.

The regions brigades responded to several protracted incidents throughout Xavier including areas such as Rocksberg, Stoney Creek, Mount Kilcoy, Ningi, Beachmere and Neurum.

The operational season sustained well into the New Year culminating with a 14 day campaign fire on North Stradbroke Island and as always our highly skilled volunteer workforce performed their duties with dedication, diligence and humility. Below are the comments received at Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) Head Office from some extremely impressed and grateful community members of North Stradbroke Island:

“We live at Dunwich and want to say how much admiration we have for the men and women of your service who are over here fighting the Stradbroke Island fires. We live across the road from the Moreton Bay Research Station where the men and women are staying (for a short period of time each day anyway) and we see how exhausted they look at the end of each shift. Then they get back up and do it all again - and again and again. The conditions they are working in over here are horrendous. We want to thank each and every one of them for their enormous efforts in saving our island.”

The incredible efforts of our volunteers would not be maximised without the dedicated and proficient management provided by RFSQ staff therefore it would be remiss of me not to highlight and thank the team at Caboolture Area Office for their continued commitment in supporting our volunteers.

Congratulations to all the RFSQ volunteers and staff of Brisbane Region for collaboratively executing a very successful Operation Xavier period.

Gary McCormack
Acting Superintendent
Regional Manager Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Far Northern Region

Far Northern Region has had a below average fire season due to decreased fuel loads from a dryer than normal wet season, with no follow up rain and a prolonged dry spell which still continues in western parts.

2011 and 2012 had shown average to above average rainfall which provided substantial grass growth (fuel loads) which in turn provided an average fire season for those years.

Operation Cool Burn, an initiative rising from the Malone review, saw brigades and volunteers more active throughout the region promoting hazard mitigation and conducting strategic burns to protect their communities. There has been a dramatic increase, from 84 hazard mitigation burns carried out with brigade involvement in 2012 fire season, to 176 in the 2013 fire season. This does not reflect the hazard reduction burns carried out by other land management agencies.

This year our first mitigation burns occurred mid-May in the western areas where conditions were favourable for landowners and land management agencies to carry out large scale environmental and hazard mitigation burns as per approved plans/fire permits.

The conditions in grazing areas western areas of the region have been unsuitable for hazard reduction burning due to drought conditions. Landholders are attempting to conserve any viable pasture for fodder. Alternative mitigation strategies, such as maintaining and widening fire control lines were instigated to mitigate risks.

With prolonged dry conditions the conditions have been still favourable for prescribed burning until early January along the coastal strip. Through this operational period we were averaging about 120 reported wildfires per month. The largest fire being 120,000 hectares, between Irvinebank and Mt Garnet which occurred in September. We have also had major fires at Princess Hills (30,000 hectares) and Mount Molloy (12,000 hectares), Whitewater - Forty Mile Scrub (18,000 hectares) and Walsh River (30,000 hectares).

Matthew Eckhardt
Acting Bushfire Safety Officer Far Northern Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Northern Region

The 2013/14 Bushfire Season in Northern Region can be described as normal, although extended into January 2014 which is unusual in the tropical north.

The potential of the 2013 Bushfire Season was evident to all land managers and the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) at the end of April, which is the end of the traditional wet season. The total rainfall received across the region was below average in coastal districts and well below average in the western districts. The pattern of rainfall is a key factor in the corresponding growth and volume of grasslands in the various environs across the region.

By mid-2013, the majority of the western districts were in a drought situation that has only deepened as we move into 2014. Consequently, bushfire activity was less prominent as the fuel loads were significantly reduced due to the drought conditions. The bushfires that did occur were managed and controlled by a combination of landholders, RFSQ staff, primary producer brigades, land management agencies, and local authorities.

The impact on the community and the environment was significantly reduced because of the amount of coordinated early season hazard reduction burning conducted by private landholders and responsible local and state government agencies. Operation Cool Burn 2013 facilitated a more focused PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE. approach which coordinated the efforts and resources of the QFES with partner agencies to ensure strategic hazard reduction was conducted before August. The timely use and release of a structured media campaign to advise landholders to prepare their properties delivered a measurable improvement that contributed to a reduced impact from the bushfire season. Statistically the region recorded a 25% increase in the number of hazard reduction burns conducted this season.

South West

By mid-year the majority of South West region (367399 square kilometres) was in drought situation that has only deepened as we move into 2014. Consequently bushfire activity was less prominent in some areas as the fuel loads are significantly reduced because of the drought conditions. The bushfires that did occur were managed and controlled by a combination of landholders, RFSQ staff and primary producer brigades, land management agencies, and local authorities. The quick and timely response of Rural Fire Brigades has ensured that fires where brought under control quickly.

Accurate timely intelligence has assisted firefighters to develop appropriate strategies to fight fires. During the season, South West Region used a number of air observer’s aircraft to gather intelligence on fires across the Region. Volunteers and staff mapped fires and spoke to crews on the ground; the intelligence assisted a number of stakeholders. In the Roma Area the staff produced maps from each day’s flights and emailed them to landholders. Accurate mapping and early detection enabled volunteers, landholders, and other stakeholders to monitor large fires. The air observers spotted a numbers fire that no one knew about and once RFSQ provided the landholder information about the fire the landholder took appropriate action to control it.

This season saw a number of brigades travel across the region to help each other and I wish to personally thank these brigades for their efforts and support. Our local brigades were also supported by brigades and staff from Brisbane and South East Region. Several fires in the southern part of the region grow in intensity, and to ensure local crews were supported, several strike teams where brought into the region to assist.

Staff that support volunteers and stakeholders on the ground is one of the keys to a successful operation, so I wish to acknowledge the great work of Col Neal (Area Director and acting Regional Manager for South West Region). Col was a valuable asset and will be missed by RFSQ volunteers and staff. Col has left Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to pursue other interest in the private sector. Col may not be part of the organisation but he is still a fire practitioner in the Region. Barry Heilbron will fill the Area Directors role in Toowoomba in the interim.

Tony Johnstone
Acting Superintendent
Regional Manager South East and South West Regions
South East

As one of several staff who has been responsible for supporting over 3500 volunteer fire-fighters in 7 groups and 88 brigades that cover 11 445 square kilometres, I wish to personally thank all the volunteers for their support and commitment. Statically speaking, the season has been quieter compared to others. During the year, volunteers participated in a number of exercises: specialty training, events, and intra and inter Region deployments. Continual training has ensured that a number of communities have remained safe this fires season.

The impact on the community and the environment was significantly reduced as a result of the amount of coordinated early season hazard reduction burning conducted by brigades, stations, private landholders, and responsible local and state government agencies. Operation Cool Burn 2013 provided a more focused approach that coordinated the efforts and resources of QFES and its partners, to ensure strategic hazard reduction was conducted before significant wildfires occurred.

Community safety across the Region has been enhanced thanks Volunteer Community Educators and brigades. Volunteers have attended over 300 events where they have promoted the benefits of hazard mitigation and being prepared for disasters. Community Education is one of many strategies used by the brigades in South East Region to make their community even safer.

Volunteers and staff across the Region have used their skills to support others across the Region and state. We have had volunteers run Public Information Officer (PIO) training sessions, we have deployed volunteers and resources several times this season, and the Region has provided Public Information Officers, Volunteer Community Educators, Air Observers, Air Base Managers, and strike teams on a regular basis.

Just after Christmas the Region assisted Brisbane Region with the North Stradbroke Island Fire. During January we had several teams deployed to South West to assist with fires around Millmerran and Warwick. One team also assisted with fires in New South Wales as part of the cross boarder liaison. The last team to be deployed to South West was instrumental in breaking the drought, as everywhere they went, wet weather would follow, and this was much appreciated by all.

What can volunteers in South East look forward to in the being of 2014? The Ipswich staff have arranged a comprehensive training plan - please have a look on the Volunteer Portal. If you believe there is something else that could be delivered please let the staff know and we will see what can be done to accommodate you.

The Regional staff are looking at running a number of specialty courses, such as Air observer, Air Base Manager, Fire Weather One, and Public Information Officer. These are just a few of the specialists courses being investigated which are part of a strategy to ensure sustainability and succession planning occurs for specialist roles.

Remember, not everyone can be trained in everything, so we need to share the load and work together. As the old adage goes, many hands make light work, and this is true for volunteers, brigades, and stations in South East.

To all, thanks for your dedication and support that you show to your community, and I wish to thank your families and your employers for the support they give you, so you can make your community a safer place, well done to all.

Tony Johnstone
Acting Superintendent
Regional Manager South East and South West Regions
DOUG VEACH
Overall Volunteer of the Year

Doug Veach, 1st Officer of Bondoola RFB (Rural Fire Brigade) and Administration Officer of the Keppel Group, has been an invaluable, long standing member of the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ). Doug’s leadership and natural ability to defuse any situation is an asset to all. Doug has been involved heavily in training within Bondoola and other brigades. Doug assists in training the Certificate II school program. Doug actively partakes in all firefighting activities, regularly forming part of strike teams for out of area operations.

CAMERON TREZISE
Far Northern

Cameron has shown outstanding leadership in the performance of duties throughout 2012 and 2013 as 1st Officer of Millstream South RFB, which is ten kilometres south of Ravenshoe in North Queensland. Cameron attended/organised over 30 fires during the last 12 months and is always the first person to assist other brigades ‘in need’, at all hours. He annually organises a multi-agency Incident Management Exercise with live fire. This years’ exercise during Operation Cool Burn involved 60 people from five organisations.

TERRENCE TAYLOR
Northern

Terrence Taylor is a member of Burketown RFB. Two years ago after a season in which numerous unplanned fires occurred in the areas of Doomadgee and Burketown, Terrence approached the Charters Towers and Cloncurry Area Office seeking support to initiate an education program. The aim is to educate the indigenous youth of the area as to the dangers to people, property, and the environment from unplanned late season fires, and the benefit of early season traditional burning. The success of this program can be measured by the reduction in the incidence of bushfire arson within the Doomadgee and Burketown communities by approximately 90 per cent.

CHRIS BEHM
North Coast

Chris Behm is the 1st Officer of Stuart River RFB. He has excelled in providing CLM for volunteers in the Kingaroy/Nanango area. Chris’ ability to set up Command and Control at all incidents (fire and flood) is evident in the structure he set ups in the field. Chris responds on average to 80 fire calls per year, 30 hazard reductions, and 5 community education sessions.

DAMIEN COOKE
South West

Damien Cooke has been a member of Jondaryan RFB since 2003 and since joining commits 100 per cent to his roles with the brigade, and is willing to assist at any community event to promote fire safety, and further develop skills for all volunteers, not just his brigade or group. He is a great role model to young members.

GEOFF RICHARDSON
South East

Geoff Richardson is a Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) Area Coordinator from Tamborine Mountain RFB and also an active volunteer firefighter. Geoff has been a member of the VCE program since he decided that maybe he just couldn’t go to as many fires as he used to, and he has a committed passion for preparing his community. Geoff has been an integral driving force in the growth of the VCE program in South East region, and has sat on many review meetings as we planned to take our program to the next level.

MARK SELLIN
Brisbane Region

Mark Sellin joined the Ocean View RFB in 2002 and became 1st Officer in 2008, a position he holds to this date. Mark continually displays a high level of community spirit and demonstrates exemplary leadership qualities in performing his duties as 1st Officer. Mark is highly respected within his brigade and community peers for his skill level as a leader and an operational firefighter.
Volunteer Community Educator Development Program released

The Volunteer Community Educator Development Program (VCEDP) is an elective training program to enable the Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) to undertake professional development in the field of community education. Participants who satisfactorily complete all required tasks within the Volunteer Community Educator Development Program will be awarded a Certificate III in Public Safety (Community Safety).

The program consists of several learning components that allow the individuals to work through the program in a self-paced manner, within the specified timeframes.

The program has a nominal duration of two years. The actual duration of the program will depend on the allocation of training periods for the individual learning modules; the amount of time the participant contributes to the program, and their desire to complete all learning modules within the program.

This program, as with all educational programs, is subject to continuous improvement and therefore is subject to on-going changes.

If you are a VCE looking to develop skills in delivering safety messages to the community, contact your Bushfire Safety Officer for more information about enrolment.

Smoko with Crispy

The VolsOnline webpage available through the Volunteer Portal is a valuable source of information for our volunteers. In VolsOnline, you can access training information, keep up to date with changes and improvements to training programs, provide feedback to the training team and seek answers to any questions you may have regarding training.

A recent addition to the VolsOnline site is the “Smoko with Crispy” initiative.

Smoko with Crispy is a series of brief snippets of information that is designed to generate interest in a number of training topics. The series is brief so you may read one or two during “smoko” which may stimulate some further thought on training and development issues.

Please go to our VolsOnline site to view the “Smoko with Crispy” series and other training information. We also encourage you to provide feedback on further initiatives that will benefit volunteer training.

Craig Smith GFireE
Superintendent
Executive Manager
Rural Training and Development
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Update

2012-13 Annual Information Statements (AIS)
Following the ACNC making available a bulk AIS lodgement spreadsheet to charities coordinating entities like the RFSQ, staff have now lodged a bulk 2012-13 AIS on behalf of every Queensland brigade registered with the ACNC.

Bulk lodgement of the AIS will now be possible in all future years on behalf of brigades registered with the ACNC, eliminating the need for individual brigades to lodge their own AIS.

ACNC Registration / Deregistration
A proposal to proceed with the bulk deregistration of all ACNC registered Queensland rural fire brigades prior to June 2013 was not proceeded with due to continued uncertainty regarding whether or not volunteer rural fire brigades are regarded as charities and therefore need to be registered with the ACNC.

Further meetings between the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), the ACNC, and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) are planned to progress understandings on the role and nature of volunteer rural fire brigades, which are hoped to clarify current uncertainties.

Consideration is being given to proceeding with the bulk deregistration of Primary Producer Brigades that do not have brigade bank accounts on the assumption that a group of primary producers that comprise most Primary Producer Brigades, do not constitute a charity, particularly when they don’t even require a brigade bank account to operate.

It is hoped the ACNC will make available spread sheets in the future that will facilitate the bulk registration, or deregistration and possibly the bulk updating of brigade information in circumstances such as brigade amalgamations, name changes and disbandment.

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

Kay Krinke
Acting Manager, Brigade Governance and Compliance
Rural Knowledge
Rural Fire Service Queensland – Head Office

Code of Conduct
As an RFSQ volunteer it is important to remember that you must engage appropriately and seek to promote public confidence in the integrity of the RFSQ.

We must always endeavour to:
• Be honest, fair, and respectful in every dealing, and be unprejudiced, unbiased, and just.
• Contribute to outcomes that benefit the people of Queensland.
• Respect the government and its institutions, and uphold the law.
• Take responsible actions and decisions that can be explained and easily understood.

As RFSQ volunteers you make a difference to the lives of Queenslanders and in return the people of Queensland ask for, and deserve, our best efforts in meeting our professional duty and upholding the Code of Conduct.

You can access a copy of the full Code of Conduct on the RFSQ Volunteer Portal.

For further advice about the Code of Conduct you can contact your local Area Director or the Manager Volunteer Support Services on 3635 3814.

Kay Krinke
Acting Manager, Brigade Governance and Compliance
Rural Knowledge
Rural Fire Service Queensland – Head Office
A team of Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) volunteers from South East Region are preparing to show their international counterparts how it’s done when they travel to Los Angeles for the World Firefighters Games (WFG) in August this year.

Hours and hours of fundraising, topped with their own personal funds, will see 11 volunteers from Coomera Valley and Clagiraba Rural Fire Brigades (RFB) compete in nine gruelling days specifically designed to raise the international profile of the fantastic work emergency services personnel do, as well as celebrate the global firefighting community.

The WFG 2014 are open to full-time, auxiliary, and volunteer firefighters, as well as aviation, military, paramedics, ambulance service personnel, plus the administration behind these agencies, and any direct family members of participants from their agencies.

Activities range from water based (think deep sea or freshwater angling, kayaking, surfing, and swimming), indoor (tug-o-war and arm wrestling should be an interesting view), outdoor (track and field, marathon, and paintball, to name a few), and fire based (such as WFG amazing race, disaster challenge, and toughest firefighter alive).
The first World Firefighters Games were held in Auckland, New Zealand in 1990, launching a biennial celebration that unites full time career Firefighters, part time and volunteer Firefighters; Wildland firefighters; Fire Chiefs; Emergency Service workers; Ambulance personnel; Paramedics; Military and Aviation Firefighters, Petro-chemical Firefighters, Support services personnel - along with their direct family members. Since the Games started over a quarter of a million competitors from around the world have taken part.

The second Games were in Las Vegas in 1992 when 14,000 responders converged on Vegas to have a great 10 days of sport and fun, since that time other global cities have hosted the Games including Sydney, Paris, Hong Kong and Liverpool.

The original philosophy of the Games was of an event created by Firefighters, for Firefighters and that underpinning philosophy carries through to the Games today. The culture of sport and activities in the responder community is well established but no other event has the scale, diversity, and inclusivity of the World Firefighter Games.

Some of the most popular long-standing events include the Toughest Firefighter Alive, Firehouse Cook-off and the family fun event the Bucket Brigade – there really is an event for anyone and everyone!

The fantastic support of Los Angeles City, reflects the support of many other cities from across the world over the years, and the Games are grateful that LA are as excited as we are about welcoming so many responders and their families to this fantastic city with so much to see and do.

Stradbroke Island Fires

December 29th 2013 started out as any other hot and humid day in Queensland. Storms are a natural occurrence and on that day it was no different. Right up until a lightning strike was reported to start a fire on Stradbroke Island.

The days that followed would see crews from our Rural, Auxiliary, and Urban stations joining crews from SES, Queensland Parks and Wildlife (QPWS), Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Redland City Council and Sibelco Mining to combat and contain this fire and keep our communities safe and informed at all times. This was a multi-agency response that also included Stradbroke Ferries, Straddie Camping, Energex, Queensland Police Service (QPS), SEQ Water and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. The work carried out by the Quadamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation was also vital for strategic decisions relating to the fire response.

Strike teams were deployed from Brisbane, South East, and North Coast Regions to support fire fighting operations. Deployments also included our Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) who were involved in the Incident Management Team (IMT) and community messaging. A huge thank you to all involved and congratulations on a job very well done.

Many of our volunteers are unsure of what is involved with deployment and may have reservations. We have asked a few of our volunteers that attended the Stradbroke Island fires or those who were involved in the Air Operations support at Archerfield to share their own personal thoughts on deployment and what it means to them. Why they do it and what would they like to share with fellow volunteers. Here’s what they wrote:

Karen Dore – Air Base Operator
BIRNAM RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Being deployed as Air Base Operators gives you confidence in your duties. There are challenges and situations you just wouldn’t experience elsewhere, but knowing that we have 100 per cent support all the time and someone to mentor you and help you grow is priceless. Being able to help others gives you such a positive sense of achievement.

Once you have been on your first deployment you overcome your nerves and fears. You realise that you are a part of a team and part of the fire family. We have support from our Area and Regional staff, the pilots, and most importantly our family and friends. Deployment has helped me develop into a better firefighter.

Lee Cody – Firefighter
WASP CREEK RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

I can honestly say that the North Stradbroke Island fire was a true “multi-agency” effort, and one that I was proud to be a part of. Getting the chance to work with local Auxiliary crews, urban fire fighters, as well as the QPWS, SES, Redland City Council, SEQ Water, and QPS, was an experience I won’t soon forget.

From the moment we drove off the barge where we were greeted by locals taking photos of the cavalry arriving, to catching up with some old friendly faces, to having a cold beer together after some long hot days filled with back burning, smoke, and some very soft sand underfoot.
The North Stradbroke Island deployment was a daunting, yet rewarding, few days. If you ever get the chance to go on such a deployment, these sorts of experiences really do make it all worthwhile.

Nigel Kemp - First Officer
BlI BlI & Districts Rural Fire Brigade

I recently had the opportunity to lead a strike team to Stradbroke Island from 3 January to 5 January - what a great team of all ages, what an experience.

As First Officer I would highly recommend to any member that they accept any offer presented to join a deployment/strike team. It is a learning curve that can rarely be copied at brigade level.

Being part of a deployment team is a rewarding and exhilarating experience. The opportunity to bond and work with other firefighters and agencies is fulfilling. Deployment assists you in expanding your fire knowledge and developing your teamwork skills. Belonging to a rural fire brigade can become a passion and a deployment/strike team experience really fuels that passion.

Karen Studdert – Firefighter
Coomera Valley Rural Fire Brigade

Stradbroke was my first deployment since I began with the fire service in 2010. It was rather daunting heading over there not knowing what to expect, but I had a fantastic team to work with. Not only from the Gold Coast group but others as well. I was so proud of all that we had done whilst over there. I was secretly hoping we’d miss the ferry home so we could stay and do more, though.

Petrina Hawkins – VCE Area Co-ordinator
Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade

I was asked to attend the Stradbroke Island fires in my VCE Area Co-ordinator role. I attended with fellow VCE Melissa Webb. It was great to be able to work with other volunteers from other regions and be able to keep the community at ease.

We were supplied with vital information to be able to share with the community and we went off to spread the word. The community was concerned about the loss of life for animals and how much vegetation had been destroyed. Through our briefings we were able to allay their fears and bring them up to speed with the current situation.

The camaraderie at this incident was incredible. To be able to catch up with all arms of our service and share stories and experiences really gave us a sense of achievement. If you get the chance to go on deployment, remember there will always be support and there will be someone to guide you through. I highly recommend it – it will be an opportunity of a lifetime.

Jonathan Moore – Regional Co-ordinator South
Department of Natural Resources and Mines

I would like to pass on my thanks and congratulations to your officers from the Rural Fire Service for their help and great work. It was quickly obvious that within the rural units were officers that were dedicated, capable, and very professional in both their attitude and application. It was a great pleasure to be working with crews that understood fire in the landscape and bushfires in general. Especially when all those officers are primarily volunteers giving up their own personal time, away from their families, and taking leave from their normal every day jobs.

Sometimes your officers had to work in difficult conditions and sometimes even dangerous situations; in front of fire fronts, behind houses, and amongst industrial sites, in the middle of the bush amongst traditional owner occupied areas, kilometres away from roads in dense bush. Each time your officers showed their worth, experience, talent, and drive to complete the tasks in front of them even when they were impossible. It is always a pleasure to work with people that know what to do, how to do it and when, especially in difficult conditions such as we faced on North Stradbroke Island. The changing weather conditions, the difficult terrain and a fire that refused to behave was all dealt with by your officers and they should be proud of their efforts.

State Land Management would like to thank the Rural Fire Service for its help and greatly appreciated assistance during the difficult and dangerous fire on North Stradbroke Island. It was a pleasure to work with such professional crews.

Peta Miller-Rose
Acting Inspector
Manager Bushfire Safety
Rural Fire Service Queensland – South East Region
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