Bushfire Prevention and Preparedness

Australia experiences a range of large scale and devastating natural disasters, including catastrophic bushfires. Bushfires are one of the world’s most dangerous natural phenomena and were responsible for the deaths of 552 Australians in the twentieth century, and a further 200 from 2000. On average, $80-100 million of insurable damage is caused by bushfires each year in Australia. In addition approximately $1.2 billion is spent each year on managing bushfires. This estimated cost does not include the time and effort expended by 300 000 volunteer firefighters engaged across the country.

Queensland’s disaster management arrangements require both local and state government agencies to take responsibility for managing the threat of disasters, including the threat of bushfires. The responsibility for managing disasters in Queensland is a ‘shared responsibility’ that extends beyond government agencies to include individual landholders, communities, non-government organisations (NGO) and private organisations. To be effective, shared responsibilities across levels of government, private organisations, community groups and individuals necessitates a mature level of coordination and leadership.

As many of you may be aware, a Performance audit on Bushfire Prevention and Preparedness was recently undertaken by the Queensland Audit Office (QAO). A wide program of reform relating to bushfire prevention and preparedness has been undertaken in recent times, and it was noted by the QAO, that Queensland can respond to, prevent and prepare for bushfires better now than five years ago.

I am pleased to say that significant improvements have been made to the effectiveness of the bushfire response provided by brigades, and there has been a strong focus on informing the community and equipping it to take appropriate action in an emergency.
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has also been working toward improved tools to plan for bushfire mitigation and greater engagement with land owners to encourage bushfire mitigation activity on their land. These improvements include:

- Establishment of Area Fire Management Groups (AFMG) across Queensland.
- Consolidation of planning. The Area Fire Management Plan, developed by the AFMG, is the centrepiece of fire management planning. This plan encompasses prevention, preparedness, response and recovery and may be accompanied by locality specific fire management plans and mitigation plans of land management agencies and significant individual landholders.
- Placement of Bushfire Safety Officers (BSO) across the state.
- Greatly enhanced risk mapping capability, including much more accurate vegetation mapping.

The introduction of additional improvements directly related to mitigation are under development and I look forward to providing you with more information on these as they are finalised.

Area Offices

It was extremely pleasing to be advised late last year, that approval had been given for the creation of three new Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) Area Offices.

A large amount of work has already been undertaken in the development of these new offices. I am able to advise you all that the new Area Offices will be the South Coast Area Office, Burnett Area Office and the Gladstone Area Office. At the time of writing this, a location for the South Coast Area Office had been finalised, with it to be located at Mudgeeraba. The facility is currently the location of the Gold Coast Group, and will continue to be a shared facility once occupied by the new area staff. To correspond with the changes occurring in this region, the decision has been made to re-name the existing Ipswich Area Office to West Moreton Area Office.

Work on obtaining a suitable location in the Burnett and Gladstone areas continues, and I hope to be able to bring you further updates on this in the coming months. Each Area Office will be staffed by an Area Director, Area Training and Support Officer (ATSO) and Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO) and an Administration Officer. The South Coast and Burnett Offices will also have BSOS.

Further updates on the Area Offices will be published on the Volunteer Portal as they become available.

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

Primary Producer Brigade Summits

As a follow on to the 2014 state-wide Volunteer Summit, Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) will be hosting three Primary Producer Brigade (PPB) Summits in 2015.

The role and activities undertaken by PPBs varies significantly to other brigade types and it’s essential that as an organisation the RFSQ understands and supports these specific needs.

In order to get a clearer picture and gain substantial, face-to-face feedback from members of PPBs, Summits will be held in Cairns, Barcaldine, and Roma or Charleville in the coming months.

RFSQ staff have had preliminary meetings with volunteers in these areas and planning for these events is well underway. We look forward to bringing you information on the outcomes of these summits in future months.

If you are a member of a PPB and would like more details on these events, please contact your Area Office.
Incident Report

Incidents where RFSQ has been the primary responder by Type, 1 July 2014 – 31 December 2014

- Landscape Fires: 2,319
- Permitted Burns Attended: 1,387
- Other Incidents: 241
- Other Fires: 90
- Structural Fires: 18
- Vehicle Fires: 16
- Other False Calls and Good Intent Calls: 12
- Rescues and Medical Emergencies: 11
- Mobile Property Crashes: 10
- Hazardous Condition: 9

Incidents and Permitted Burns (RFSQ Primary Response) by Area
1 July - 31 December 2014

- Roma: 25
- Mackay: 82
- Barcaldine and Emerald: 96
- Charters Towers and Cloncurry: 111
- Innisfail: 171
- Cairns Peninsula: 242
- Caboolture: 312
- Bundaberg: 347
- Toowoomba: 437
- Rockhampton: 465
- Maryborough: 470
- Ipswich: 489
- Caloundra: 542
- Rural Fire Bulletin April 2015
www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au
Incidents attended by Rural Brigades by Type, 1 July 2014 – 31 December 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident Type</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Fires</td>
<td>2,837</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permitted Burns Attended</td>
<td>1,444</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Incidents</td>
<td>270</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle Fires</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Property Crashes</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Fires</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Fires</td>
<td>109</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other False Calls and Good Intent Calls</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Condition</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescues and Medical Emergencies</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incidents and Permitted Burns Attended by Rural Brigades by Area
1 July - 31 December 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caloundra</td>
<td>575</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryborough</td>
<td>568</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>408</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toowoomba</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caboolture</td>
<td>389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bundaberg</td>
<td>276</td>
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<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cairns Peninsula</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingham</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charters Towers And Cloncurry</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au
When this Bulletin hits mailboxes, the first Rural Fire Service Week will be just two short months away!

If your Brigade is participating – have you let your Area Office know by completing the registration form (CSO 078)?

We need this information as soon as possible so that we can put your information on the website (www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au), as well as let our Media team and your Local Government agency know.

Have you completed the order form (CSO 079) to get your community education and promotional resources?

Items will be sent approximately two to four weeks prior to the start of RFS Week. Orders will be filled on a first come, first served basis, and as such we cannot guarantee that late orders can be provided in full.

Don’t forget that editable, electronic versions of the promotional postcard and flyer are available to download from the Volunteer Portal. You will also find a Microsoft Word template to allow you to print your details directly on to the flyer.

Queensland Rail 150

15 January 2015 marked the beginning of an epic relay of road support by Rural Appliances on the North and South-bound Journey of Queensland Rail Celebrating its 150 Years “Rail 150 Steam Train”.

A number of our Volunteers had the opportunity to get a first-hand look inside this magnificent locomotive affectionately known as “Bety”.

A familiar sight for passengers throughout Bety’s entire journey, is her rural companions travelling in the distance, ensuring a rapid response for any potential fire mitigation.

Volunteer Community Educators and brigade members did a fine job of engaging and educating the community about bushfire safety during a morning of which celebrations were held at Bety’s place of birth, Maryborough.

Thank you to all volunteers who participated in the Rail 150 journey.

Kahu Helleur
A/Brigade Training and Support Officer
Maryborough Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Formation of the North Stradbroke Island RFB

In December 2013 and January 2014, large bushfires impacted the community of North Stradbroke Island (NSI) with the latter fires running over a two week period. The multi-agency response to the fires included Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), Redland City Council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, State Emergency Service, and Queensland Police Service.

In February 2014, an open forum, multi-agency debrief was conducted at the Cleveland Community Centre and the issue of forming a NSI Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) was raised for discussion. NSI community members in attendance were provided with information on the process required to form a RFB.

On 26 July an open public meeting was convened with over 80 local residents in attendance. Following candid discussions a unanimous vote was carried to apply for the formation of a RFB on NSI. An ensuing letter was sent to the Commissioner QFES who officially approved formation of the North Stradbroke Island Rural Fire Brigade.

To assist the brigade in becoming operational, Brisbane Region Fire and Rescue has provided much appreciated assistance with the donation of a second-hand Light Attack Appliance and will continue the support by paying all future fuel and vehicle maintenance expenses.

On 13 December 2014, the inaugural NSI RFB meeting was conducted and with the professional guidance of Caboolture Area Office staff, has now commenced the relevant processes in preparing to acquire full operational capability.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts provided by our Caboolture Area Staff and the logistical support of the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland (RFBAQ) in bringing the formation of the NSI RFB to fruition. I am certain that the continued growth and development of the NSI RFB will complement the existing fire, emergency service and land management agencies of North Stradbroke Island.

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

Brisbane Storm Response

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers again answered to the challenge of serving the community, this time in response to the severe weather event that devastated parts of Brisbane on Thursday, 27 November 2014, resulting in 2,770 Requests for Assistance (RFAs).

60 RFSQ volunteer firefighters, in 18 appliances from across the Brisbane Region, rapidly reported to Kedron Park Headquarters in the immediate aftermath of the impacting storm, where they were divided into strike teams and deployed into the night.

With Brisbane SES Unit receiving more than 1,000 RFAs within the first couple of hours after impact, it was clear resources were needed to be pulled from across Queensland to assist with the response. SES volunteers came from far and wide, with personnel assisting from South East Region, South West Region, North Coast Region, and Central Region, bringing together a total of approximately 220 volunteers per day.

With varied jobs being thrown their way, ground crews performed a range of emergency activities, including chainsaw operations, the clearing of debris from roadways, glass clean up, window covering, and community welfare checks. The teams worked in arduous conditions with limited intelligence in the immediate aftermath, utilising experience and common-sense to skilfully and industriously support the collective Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) rapid response effort.

Thank you to the hundreds of RFSQ and SES volunteers and staff involved.

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

Why did we do it?

Over 40,000 emergency services volunteers provide vital services to their communities and contribute significantly to outcomes across the Police, Fire and Emergency Service portfolio.

The Police, Fire and Emergency Service portfolio agencies wanted to better understand volunteers’ current levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the volunteering experience, and how the support provided by agencies to volunteers could be further enhanced.

The Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) developed the 2014 Emergency Services Volunteer Survey to provide volunteers with the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with aspects of the volunteering experience and identify areas for improvement.

What did we do?

The PSBA engaged an external survey provider, Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS), to administer the survey. Volunteers in the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), State Emergency Service (SES), Queensland Police Service Volunteers in Policing (QPS ViP), and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Scientific Branch were invited to have their say about their volunteering experiences.

We tried to market the survey as widely as possible, including through organisation newsletters, posters and flyers distributed to regions, and social media. Some volunteers were able to complete the online survey through a unique link provided via email, while all other volunteers could access an open link to a dedicated website.

The survey ran from 21 July to 18 August 2014, and we received a total of 1,438 from all volunteer agencies. This included 1,113 RFSQ volunteers, 245 from the SES, 53 from ViPs, and seven from QFES Scientific Branch.
What were the results?

Arguably the most positive results from this survey was that almost four in five (78%) RFSQ volunteers were satisfied overall with their experience, and almost nine in ten (89%) intended to continue volunteering.

We also learnt about the factors that motivated volunteers, including wanting to give back to the community, help people, make a difference, and learn something new.

Satisfaction with various aspects of the volunteering experience ranged from 41% (out-of-pocket expenses) to 79% (teamwork and initial training). Importantly, we also asked those volunteers who were dissatisfied to identify why this was the case. This survey provided valuable feedback and identified a range of areas for possible improvement, such as:

- Creating a more positive climate of teamwork between volunteers and paid employees;
- Improving supervisors’ skills for managing staff;
- Improving leadership group’s responsiveness to issues raised by staff, and more timely and relevant communication;
- Improving access to the equipment and vehicles required for volunteer work;
- More frequent and timely distribution of information;
- Reducing unnecessary paperwork;
- Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses; and
- Improving effectiveness of trainers.

Who completed the survey?

Word of mouth was the primary driver of awareness of volunteer opportunities (73%).

A wish to “give back”, make a difference and help people were the key motivations for volunteering.

Almost all (89%) volunteers intend to continue volunteering.
Due to my background of working for land management agencies in Queensland and the Northern Territory, the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), and Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), I was seconded late last year to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Program Management Office to manage the Area Fire Management Group Project (AFMG), a new initiative brought about partially as a result of the Police and Community Safety Review (PACSR), Malone Review, and a report tabled by the Queensland Audit Office.

While Fire Management Groups have been active in all RFSQ regions for some time, it was noted that there is quite a bit of difference in how they operated throughout the state. Although there is no intention of having a ‘one size fits all’ solution, it was identified that the existing Terms of Reference, Area Fire Management Plan format, and other associated templates needed to be revisited and shared across the state. Ensuring Rural Fire Brigades and Fire Wardens are included in FMGs is another important part of the project.

One main focus is recognising the importance FMGs play, not only in response to bushfires, but also in mitigating the bushfire hazards prior to the fire season. Too often we hear the comment “we sure dodged a bullet this fire season”, so the emphasis of FMGs is taking the bullets out of the gun, and working with the main stakeholders to get strategic hazard reduction burning and other mitigation strategies in place at the local level.

So far, two pilot project areas (RFSQ Maryborough and RFSQ Toowoomba) are being used to assess ways for AFMGs to improve the interoperability with the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements at the Local Government level, and address the bushfire risk to local communities using the P-P-R-R (Prevention; Preparedness; Response; and Recovery) model. This will be achieved by:

1. Identifying bushfire hazard and risk to the community (People; Property and the Environment).
2. Mitigating against the effects of bushfires to Queensland communities.
3. Increasing multi-agency response to protect Queensland communities from bushfires.

Preparing and reviewing Fire Management Plans that can be linked from the local level to state wide plans.

Assisting this process will be another initiative which is developing a new bushfire risk mapping system, the Risk Evaluation and Disaster Information portal (the redi-PORTAL).

The portal was developed by the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) Queensland Natural Disaster Risk Register Project for the QFES, and was funded by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments through the Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP). The redi-PORTAL will be available to members of the groups and is currently being trialled before becoming fully operational later this year.

As part of my research I am attending FMG meetings in a variety of locations to gather information and document how current FMGs operate. This includes any plans and follow-up actions that arise from each group. I am also meeting and consulting with key state and local stakeholder groups to ensure the project direction meets stakeholder needs.

An integral part of the project was a recent workshop held with RFSQ Regional Managers and Area Directors. This proved to be a great opportunity to share the methods that are already being used by RFSQ staff to run efficient FMGs, and to document how we can improve the operation of FMGs throughout Queensland.

To date, the project has been very positively received by all stakeholders, and all parties agree that a consistent approach is required on how FMGs operate throughout the state, and how FMG plans are formulated and acted upon. This will also facilitate the reporting of FMG activities to Area, Region, and State committees.

The project is due to conclude in April 2015; however the work to improve the operational capability of FMGs will be ongoing.

Chris Artiemiew
Project Manager, Fire Management Groups
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

“One main focus is recognising the importance FMGs play...”
One Stop Shop for Brigade Grants

It is now easier than ever to find relevant, up-to-date information on the range of grants that are available to Rural Fire Brigades by referring to the latest business rule – Brigade Grants (D3.7).

With a focus on reducing red tape and streamlining processes so that Rural Fire Brigade Manual business rules are a quick, easy reference for volunteers and staff alike, the grants business rules have been combined so that there is now one point of truth.

The Brigade Grants business rule (D3.7) now incorporates information from D3.7.1 – RFBAQ Inc. Grants and D3.7.2 – Station Grants (which have subsequently been deleted). There is also a new section about Group Administration Grants.

There are grants available to Rural Fire Brigades through the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR), the Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland Inc. (RFBAQ), and directly through the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

The Gambling and Community Benefit Fund grants (through OLGR) have specific funding rounds. The closing dates are 28 February, 31 May, 31 August, and 30 November annually (however Brigades must submit applications to their local Area Office for endorsement and forwarding to QFES State Office at least two weeks before the funding round closing dates). In addition, it is worth noting that a new application form and new guidelines are released six weeks before each round (so previous application forms cannot be resubmitted).

Applications for the following grants can be submitted anytime throughout the year:
- Rural Fire Brigade Association of Queensland Grants (RFBAQ)
- Fire Station Construction Grant (QFES)
- Group Administration Grant (QFES)

Please refer to the business rule for further information about the application, review and approval process for each grant and contact your RFSQ area office in the first instance with further questions or if you require assistance at any time throughout the application process.

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

Tell us what you think

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

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

Rural Knowledge
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Changes to the Distribution List

As you are aware, the Rural Fire Bulletin magazine (the Bulletin) is the official newsletter of the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ). As of mid-2014, it is published three times a year in April, August, and December. Over 14,000 hard copies are mailed to each Brigade Secretary, First Officer, Fire Warden, Volunteer Community Educator, and volunteers who have completed Firefighter Minimum Skills (FMS).

As of the December 2014 edition, the distribution list was condensed so that only one copy of the Bulletin is sent per household. Therefore households with multiple volunteers in the above categories will only receive one copy.

At this time this is a manual process, so there may be the odd occasion where an extra copy is sent to a household. If this occurs, please pass the copy on to a member of your Brigade who does not usually receive it.

A new distribution list is downloaded from the Operations Management System (OMS) for each mail out to ensure we have the most up to date postal details for each volunteer. If your details have changed, please complete the reply paid form within this Bulletin so we can update our records.

Due to the manual filtering required, we are unable to process ‘unsubscriptions’ and remove volunteers from the distribution list. If you receive a copy of the Bulletin and do not want it, please pass it on to another member in your Brigade or give it to your local Library.

The Bulletin is available via the Volunteer Portal and Rural Fire Service Queensland website. For more information, please refer to Rural Fire Brigade Manual Business Rule D7.1 Rural Fire Bulletin.
The Bush Fire Brigade (now Rural Fire Brigade) is the community’s own weapon for fighting wildfires and reducing hazards around and within their areas. Development of the concept and the legislation necessary to give it legitimacy goes back three quarters of a century in Queensland and twice as long again in other parts of Australia and the rest of the world.

Dick Healy’s idea of getting people to do something for nothing reaches its peak at the level of the Fire Warden and the brigade. Here you have people helping to keep their communities safe, largely at their own cost. Most would not accept payment even if the money was available to recompense them.

No account of rural fire brigades could be complete without a tribute to the Brigade Secretary.

You need to have a good Secretary, a good First Officer and a good Fire Warden - they were the three blokes. I always maintained that with a good Secretary you have a good brigade. He keeps his finger on the pulse and knows what is going on. He keeps them properly informed. I firmly believe that the ladies make the best Secretaries. I always found that, if you have a lady Secretary you have a really good brigade.

(Graham Phillips)

From 1960 to 1975 there are no records and I think the Brigade disbanded until 1975, when it was reformed on the initiative of Inspector Fred Collins. The first meeting was on 11/03/75 and the Brigade gazetted on 24/05/75. H. Holzhauser was appointed as Fire Warden. There was no record of Secretary’s names after the first Secretary in 1954.

I (Peter Porter) was nominated as Secretary in 1975 and have continued in that capacity to this day.

The Officers of our Brigade have not changed much since 1974. Most of us elected then still serve the Brigade today. The members who have served from the reformation of the Brigade are the Holzhauser family as Fire Wardens, Peter Porter as Secretary and Officers Keith Scott and Vic Solis.

(Argoon Bush Fire Brigade History, Peter Porter, 21 April 1998)

When the brigade was mooted, I was interested and I went along to the inaugural meeting of it. That was on 12th April 1973 at a public meeting. It was called by the then Deputy Chairman of the Shire, Councillor Ron Johnson. There were about thirty people who attended the public meeting where the brigade was formed and Mr Llew Kessler was elected First Officer and I was elected Secretary. I have been Secretary ever since. Maybe because nobody else is mug enough to take it on.
I have got the original registration form of the brigade here. Pam Millican brought it up one time when she visited us. It has got Norm Scott’s signature on it. (Bill Woods, Cambooya Rural Fire Brigade)

It goes without saying that, without the volunteers, there would have been no brigades.

There was no one worried about the Rural Fires or the volunteers. When you become a Member of Parliament you realise very quickly that if you haven’t got volunteers the country won’t run. You can’t afford to pay everybody to do the sort of things you want done and the sort of things they want done. So you have to rely on volunteers. I always looked on the basis that if you spent a few bob on the volunteers you got ten times more of a return out of it. (Tom Burns, Minister for Emergency Services, Consumer Affairs and Deputy Premier)

Volunteers are a special sort of people aren’t they? They have got to be handled well. They could say, ‘Stuff you. I don’t like the way you are talking to me. I am going home.’ Or ‘You are not doing it right. I am going home.’ You can’t order them. You have got to encourage them.

Even in a Rural Fire Brigade you have got to ask people to do things, rather than command them to do things. It is really good if you discuss the way you are going to do a burn with the people with you, rather than say, ‘We will do it this way.’ (Don Greenhalgh)

The motivation of the people varied. In many of the traditional rural areas, I guess it is not really correct to portray some of those people as volunteers because they are only volunteers in the sense that they do what they do without somebody forcing them to do it. It is really a matter of self-interest in a lot of those areas because, if they don’t do it, nobody else is going to do it. It is their property that is under threat.

You can argue the semantics of it but what we now call Class 2 and Class 3 brigades tend to be more community service oriented if you like, and people contribute their time and whatever for a whole variety of different reasons - that volunteer culture where people are prepared to spend a considerable amount of their own time and in many cases a lot of their own money to make that system work. (Dave Luxton)

If we want something or want to know something, particularly in this district, if it is Fire Awareness Week or whatever - we call on our volunteer brigades to help out with a variety of things. It probably doesn’t happen in other parts of Queensland. They get dragged into King George Square for displays. There is always some thing or another we are calling on brigades for. When we get overseas visitors who want to look at a brigade or brigades, they come to this district. We get a lot of them. (Glen Mills)

We will not enter into the debate about which brigade actually started up first because we would probably be in trouble in no time at all. All we can go on are the official registrations by the Board. There is no doubt about the winner here because, in the early days, the Brigade was gazetted in the Government Gazette and issued with a certificate of registration.

We put our first brigade on the map 12 months after we started, 13 June 1949, at Glasshouse Mountains. The whole family was interested in the brigade and they were sort of on their own until we came back next year. (Dick Healy)

The Glasshouse Brigade was formed by the United Fruitgrowers Cooperative Association of Glasshouse Mountains.

On December 7th 1948, the Association Secretary, W. Forster wrote to the Secretary of the Rural Fires Board advising him that a Bush Fire Brigade had been formed at a meeting on December 6th.
The inaugural First Officer was Charles Thomas Pratt Gardner and he was also appointed Fire Warden, a post he held for at least 12 years.


Lagoon Pocket Rural Fire Brigade was the second to be registered and the following is an extract from their very early hand-written minute book.

Minutes of meeting held at Long Flat Hall 6th June 1950.

Present - Messrs Kernke (2) Anderson, Beattie, Heather, Weaver, Morton, King, Shultz and Collins.

As Mr R.J. Claffey had left the district, Mr A. Heather was nominated in his place as 3rd District Officer.

Moved by Les Kernke, Seconded Mr Weaver that the Secretary write to the Secretary of the Rural Fires Board asking him would he support our application to the PMG for the extension of telephones to the McIntosh area of our Brigade.

Also to cancel the names of J. Johnson, L Hewitt and P.J. Claffey from our roll as they have left the district.

Five new members have joined our Brigade. A. Babin, J. Cullen, M. Shultz, J.C. King and J.A. King. The meeting then closed.

W.J. Beattie. Secretary

Kandanga Brigade (No.5) was formed on 6th August 1949. The following passage gives an insight into the way most brigades operated in the early days.

Equipment issued to the brigade when it was formed consisted of two knapsacks.

Over the years meetings were held regularly and landholders used their own equipment when needed.

It was not until the early 1990’s that a bank account was opened with a donation from local produce agents R. & K. Worth. The Brigade members then began fund raising and door knocking locals. (K. English, Secretary, Kandanga Rural Fire Brigade).

As mentioned earlier, Greymare Brigade was registered as No. 15 after forming on 19 May 1947. It was interesting to note that the brigade was to be financed by ‘a levy of one pound ($2) for the first 1000 acres and one shilling (10 cents) for each 100 acres thereafter for the 1947/48 year.’ (Greymare and District, Part II, 20th April 1996, compiled by Gerard Walsh)

The 1000th Brigade was a milestone.

Finally we got to Brigade 999 and we had to get some sort of publicity out of Brigade 1000. Now by strange coincidence and I am not going to accept any responsibility for it, but by a strange coincidence Brigade number 1000 was formed in Kumbia which was right in the middle of our Minister’s District. So he was able to wave a fairly well due flag for our development. It took 21 years to form Brigade 1000. (Dick Healy)

The Childers Brigade was unique in Australia.

Australia’s only fully self-governed fire unit run entirely by local volunteers is the very unique Childers Fire Brigade which will celebrate later this year a historical milestone of 50 years in operation.

Formed by a band of Childers citizens in 1940, they constructed their original fire station in September 1941. The decision was made to be self-governing under the eyes of the Isis Shire Council. This meant that the Brigade would not receive Government funding in any way and all volunteers would be non-paid firemen which is a unique concept in Australia today. (The Rural Guardian April 1991, page 3).

As the Childers Volunteer Fire Brigade, our members were engaged in all areas of firefighting and road accident rescue. Upon joining the Queensland Fire Service in 1996, the Brigade split into Childers Urban and Childers Rural Fire Brigade. (Barbara Tawns, History Convenor for the Secretary, Childers Rural Fire Brigade.)

Rural Brigades were formed in many of the Aboriginal towns across the north of the State and in Torres Strait.
Hopevale was the only one that I formed in my time. We could not get to the others by conventional vehicle. Yarrabah which is not on the Cape - that is just east of Cairns - I formed Yarrabah. We got them an old unit from Cairns when we took over there, and got them a bit of equipment which Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs paid for.

Hopevale was Mission run at that stage with the involvement with outside rural people and they were doing a little bit of rural venture too. They had grazing on the reserve so they were a little bit better there with fire control. They virtually never had any equipment other than manual equipment. (Bob Bell)

A good example of indigenous brigades specifically are Horn Island and Bamaga. Bamaga have got a brand new fire truck, built a brand new shed up there and are doing training and have got the uniforms. This is the blue uniforms I might add. Blue uniforms as well as the overalls and all the gear, and take it very seriously.

Hopevale had piped water mains installed through the town. Hopevale had the old pillar hydrants. I think that a few of them got backed over with four wheel drives and things like that I suppose. They have come on too now. They have actually got themselves a second hand fire truck. They have got an ex urban one there and they have also applied to get a small light attack one there at Hopevale.

They have actually just received a grant of about sixty five thousand dollars from the Government to build a joint Emergency Service Building there. They are really going ahead there at Hopevale. (Bryan Cifuentes)

The idea of the Group system of mutual support, based on the brigades in a Shire, in retrospect, seems to have been a long time coming.

Groups were not really thought of in the mid-1980’s and I had always felt that it was crazy that we had seven brigades in Pine Rivers and they varied from Samford which even in those days was a big brigade, to Dayboro which was very largely what we call a cocky brigade - not disparagingly but to really define what they do. It is people using their own equipment to go and fight fires. Anyway that was one end of the scale to Samford at the other and in between we had all good brigades.

So what we decided to do was to talk to one another and find out what equipment we had, how we could work together and what our individual capabilities were and even just to know who was who. When you are talking to Joe so and so from say up on Ocean View, which is I suppose thirty kilometres away from Samford, which probably isn’t far if you are talking about some of the Shires, but a fair way in our Shire. If you are talking to him you know who he is and what he is about and he knows you and what you are.

Pine Rivers Shire Council was good to us. They helped us out. They held the meetings in their offices initially and one of the councillors was the Secretary. They supported us and made sure that it went along well. It is very much more organised now. It is organised on the same basis as all the other groups across Queensland.

Probably in some areas they will never have groups. I think Cook Shire has about a hundred and something different firefighting organisations because Cook Shire is about half of north Queensland. (Don Greenhalgh)

We had big fires north of Brisbane and at Beerburrum at the time (1994). The biggest fires I think we have had for a long time. We had introduced into the Fire Service the Group Structure based on the Local Governments and brigades deciding to get together and we introduced Incident Command Systems. This was a system for joint brigade operations.

We had introduced that into the Gold Coast area - South East Queensland - Allan Gillespie’s area. During the fires down there it worked like clockwork. We hadn’t introduced it up here. We were just about to when the fires came. It showed. The difference between control in the two areas showed. I often wonder if we had been able to accelerate that Incident Command process by twelve months and introduce it up here so it was working, so brigades could operate in a more orderly fashion, whether those Brigades which suffered injuries would have been put in that position. (Bob Barchard)
During the 2014 Fire Season (July to December), the Air Operations Unit (AOU) deployed aircraft on 112 occasions. The deployments included water bombing operations, transport to or from road crash rescue operations, observation and detection flights, community demonstration days, and operational unit training.

The bombing operations commenced earlier than in previous years with a number of operations being undertaken in early July. This saw effective use of the “Call When Needed” aircraft that were placed on standby at Archerfield in anticipation of escalating fire events. This proved to be an effective method throughout the season with aircraft being engaged early in many situations to support the hard work of ground crews to prevent fires escalating.

The fire season started with a joint exercise with South East Region in the Beaudesert area as well as a number of pre-season briefings around the regions. The commencement of the Rotary Wing bombing contract was marked with a media launch at Archerfield.

This season also saw the inclusion of a full time Air Observer rostered at Archerfield Airbase in support of the Air Attack Supervisor. This created additional capability inside the cockpit and provided information via the use of Collector and M-View to Ground crews, Regional Operations Centres, the State Operations Centre and others.

For the first time, 2014 saw the inclusion of a 12 week fixed wing bombing contract under the National Aerial Firefighting Centre arrangements. This allowed for the unit to place two AT 802 Air Tractors and a Cessna 210 Air Attack Platform on standby for rapid deployment within the state as required.

This season saw four regions elevate the wildfire alert level to “WAL 4” from 14 to 16 November. This saw the implementation of “Rapid Initial Attack Aircraft” protocols, which saw fixed and rotary wing aircraft deployed ahead of, or in direct support of, ground based firefighting crews.

This allowed for an increased weight of initial attack in order to prevent fires to escalate under “WAL 4” conditions. This was effective in achieving the objectives and with further refinement this will become an effective response procedure in the future.

The unit also provided support in the first response recovery after the Brisbane Storm event with an aircraft being deployed at first light to conduct aerial reconnaissance over Brisbane.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Air Operations provided professional and extremely effective support, intelligence and direction to ground crews from...
QFES, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and many Regional Councils from across Queensland during the 2014 season.

Training was conducted at “Glenfern” at Kilcoy for Certificate II in Public Safety students from Kilcoy State High School on 8 October 2014. This also included approx 60 volunteers from RSFQ Brisbane Region attending in support of the students.

During the 2014 season, AOU trained State Emergency Services (SES) personnel from Northern, Central, North Coast, South West, and North Coast regions. During the South West Region Weir River Campaign fire, SES personnel were used extensively as Airbase Operators at Meandarra and Inglewood.

Bombing Interaction

Using Google Globe / Earth, AOU has been able to combine the data sets from Collector, Phoenix, and Point Location data to provide post operational analysis to better understand the way aircraft are used in fire activities. The combined overlay map, where available, has allowed the Unit to review the usage and better define awareness and other training packages to address concerns raised during post operations reviews.

Using the data collected from the aircraft as well as potential rate of spread and fire impact data provided by the Predictive Services Unit (PSU) using the Phoenix program, the AOU is able to conduct analysis and look at actual and potential impact of a fire. Using the Bonogin fire in South East Region as an example, the strong work of the ground crews supported by the early activation of the aircraft prevented this fire from escalating. Whilst this fire only directly impacted 506 homes and businesses within the area (this was mainly smoke impact), the Phoenix fire modelling provided by the PSU for this fire showed that this fire had the potential to impact on approximately 3890 residents and businesses. This included a likely heavy smoke impact on the Gold Coast International Airport.

Andrew Marnie
Acting Manager
Air Operations Unit
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Statistics

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www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au
Rural Fire Bulletin April 2015 17
The Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) is fast approaching a steep increase in the number of replacement appliances in order to meet the fleet profile age of 20 years, with some future years having 102 and 91 replacement appliances per annum.

We have submitted a proposal to Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) to average the build program over the next five years to flatten the spike in replacement costs and ensure funding is adequate to support the number of new appliances needed to replace the older fleet.

In addition to this increase in production of new appliances, there will also be a greater option of appliance types and configurations for Brigades when selecting replacement appliances.

These new options are a result of discussions, feedback, and suggestions from individual volunteers and this feedback has seen engineered changes introduced to the fleet.

The introduction of the Iveco Daily in both Light and Medium appliances as well as the shortened version of the single and dual cab Isuzu will add versatility to the fleet and a greater selection range to better cater for varying Brigade needs.

The new fleet design will see the water pump relocated to the front of the appliance tray to allow the water tank to move further to the rear and redistribute the weight over the rear axle.

This modification allows for greater manoeuvrability of the Isuzu single and dual cab appliances by reducing the overall length of the appliance while also reducing the exit or departure angle to 34 degrees.

The introduction of multi pumps also provides the flexibility to select either high pressure or normal pressure pump performance via a multi drive pump set featuring a High pressure Burtolini pump delivering (70L/min @ 4000Kpa) and normal pressure GAAM Mk125 pump delivering (600L/min @ 1200Kpa).

The multi pump is normally driven by a Hatz 2G40 Electric start Diesel engine, however there will also be an option for a Power Take Off (PTO) drive from the appliance engine which will also allow pump and roll capability.

Currently there is only one Isuzu dual cab appliance set up with the PTO drive and this appliance will be evaluated by a Brigade for prior to additional PTO appliances being constructed.

The table below indicates the range of appliance selections and options. Descriptions of the specifications of all appliances can be viewed on Volunteer Portal.

Rob Walker
Manager, Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland
In November 2010 the Rural Fire Bulletin published an article advising volunteers of the introduction of new exhaust filters on Isuzu medium appliances to comply with new Australian emission laws.

The Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) appliance fleet currently comprises of 130 Isuzu appliances which have a Diesel Particulate Diffuser (DPD) as part of the standard filtered exhaust system. This filter is designed to comply with the Federal emissions standards by trapping unburnt carbon particulates, and then burning off the accumulated deposits prior to release into the atmosphere. This regeneration process also generates higher than normal temperatures within the exhaust system during activation, however, these temperatures are not considered sufficient to ignite dry vegetation and the only potential source of ignition may come from the actual exhaust gases.

In order to allay fears of potential exhaust gas fires, all RFSQ constructed appliances have been fitted with vertical exhaust stacks to redirect the exhaust gas from exiting beneath the tray to existing above the cabin.

To date there have been no reports of vegetation igniting caused the DPD or DPF exhaust emissions systems as all safety precautions are in place to prevent this occurrence.

Rob Walker
Manager, Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland

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**Diesel Particulate Diffuser /Filter Safety Questions**

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Rob Walker
Manager, Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland

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**RFSQ APPLIANCE OPTIONS**

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<th>Crew</th>
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The Brisbane Region has recently seen several of our highly valued volunteers honoured with a range of deserved awards. On 22 November 2014, the region’s volunteers conducted a combined Group celebration evening. The night had a dual purpose, being a Christmas Party and second annual ‘Caboolture Area Volunteer of the Year’ presentation event.

The ‘Caboolture Area Volunteer of the Year’ award is quite unique as it is a peer voted honour that was created by Caboolture Group Officer, Wayne Summersford. Competition between nominations for the annual award were very tight, with the eventual winner being Glenn Bell from the Dayboro and District Rural Fire Brigade (RFB), which is in the Pine Rivers Group.

The night was very special for several reasons including a presentation being conducted to officially name the ‘Greg Kelly Annex’, which is an extension of the Caboolture Group Shed. Greg was a highly respected, dedicated and much loved volunteer at the Wamuran RFB who tragically lost a long battle with illness in 2013. All in attendance had a great night and were even treated to a visit by Santa Claus himself who handed out gifts to all the children and a few lucky adults as well.

On 15 December 2014, Lee Tapper was honoured as the ‘Commissioner’s Rural Fire Service Queensland Volunteer of the Year’. Lee exemplifies the spirit of volunteering and reliably participates in a wide range of activities in support of the Dayboro and District RFB, her local community, and the greater Brisbane Region. Lee devotedly and diligently performs the roles of Firefighter, Brigade Secretary, and Volunteer Community Educator. Lee is a highly respected volunteer and a very deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

Six volunteers and one staff member from the region were very proud recipients of Australia Day Achievement Awards. The awards were presented by Acting Commissioner Katarina Carroll at the Kedron Auditorium on 22 January 2015. The deserving award winners were:

- Craig Henderson – exceptional effort in operational response to the North Stradbroke Island fires of January 2014.
- Steven Brittingham - exceptional effort in operational response to the North Stradbroke Island fires of January 2014.
- Wayne Summersford – outstanding achievement in the delivery of Group Officer duties, including the implementation of a peer elected ‘Volunteer of the Year Award’.
- Alan Wells – outstanding achievement in the delivery of First Officer duties within the Samford RFB.
- Fred Peters - outstanding achievement in the delivery of First Officer duties within the Stoney Creek RFB.
- Crystal Peters - outstanding achievement in community support including Volunteer Community Educator activities.
- Graham King – outstanding commitment in the delivery of volunteer training.

It is always tremendously gratifying to see our volunteers acknowledged for their exceptional contributions. To receive a prestigious award is undoubtedly very special, however I can assure you that the efforts of our entire volunteer workforce are not delivered unnoticed. On behalf of the Brisbane Region RFSQ staff I would like to congratulate our extremely deserving award winners and applaud the continued dedication and passion continually displayed by all of the regions volunteers.

Gary McCormack
Acting Superintendent
Regional Manager, Brisbane
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Have you changed your details lately?

To keep our records up to date and to ensure you receive future information, such as copies of the Bulletin, please complete your new contact details below.

If you aren’t sure what we have on file, please complete the form and we will make sure your record is up to date.

Fold along the lines (on the reverse side of this page), tape as indicated, and post to return it to us.

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Delivery Address:
GPO Box 1425
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Rural Fire Service Queensland
Administration
Reply Paid 1425
BRISBANE QLD 4001
The Predictive Services Unit sits within the portfolio of the Deputy Commissioner, Operational Capability & Performance, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and provides specialist fire prediction services to the QFES for use in both operational and mitigation roles. As part of the Predictive Services Unit (PSU), Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) has a representative imbedded within the unit on six month rotation.

While the RFSQ staff member is working in the PSU they are focused on providing training and operational support to volunteers and staff of QFES so that they are as prepared as possible for the operational period. Along with providing support to their fellow Fire Behaviour Analyst (FBAN) trainees, the RFSQ representative is rotated through the unit to gain their qualification within that period.

The FBAN trainees have affectionately become known as the “Smoke Whisperers”. With the development of the PSU, and RFSQ having a strong and direct link into the unit, the intention is to take the “whisperers” out of the “smoke whisperers” and firmly integrate the FBAN role into RFSQ as a specialist function. Just like what happened with fire investigation, air operations, and Volunteer Community Educators.

Some of the milestones achieved over the last 12 months include:

- The fire simulation program “Phoenix” (developed and operationalised in Queensland) has had its vegetation data set increased from 20 to 63 which will give improved accuracy when predicting fire behaviour. The “Phoenix” model is currently being adopted by AFAC for national rollout.
- A grass curing assessment training package has been produced and is being adopted by QFES.
- 14 FBAN trainees were deployed to Victoria.
- A portable weather station that is linked into the Bureau of Meteorology has been delivered to almost every region, with Far Northern Region to receive theirs before the end of the current financial year.
- Roll out electronic, iPad based fuel hazard assessment tools to each region with a number of volunteers trained in both pieces of equipment.

We are now looking to increase the accuracy of our grass curing data by adding more grass curing sites to our online database. We are investigating an online training package to assist those who take grass curing assessments, as the information that we provide is linked into the calculation of the Bureau of Meteorology Fire Danger Index values.

The calculation of the Fire Danger Index rating has also undergone some review with changes being made so that the most applicable fuel type, of either grass or forest Fire Danger Rating (GFDI / FFDI), is being used for each 6km grid. Currently this approach is applied to the whole of the BoM forecast district. (See map below)

A significant amount of research, in conjunction with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and CSIRO, is being done on grass fire behaviour. In their previous research, Cheney and Sullivan found fuel load by itself does not influence rate of spread for grassfires; it is the continuity that is the most important driver for rate of spread. Currently QFES does not capture this as an input to GFDI, and the generic fuel loads currently used are 1.5, 4.5, and 5 t/ha. It has also been noted that the grass fire danger related to exotic grasses, particularly in Northern, Central, and South Western Queensland are not captured. The majority of firefighter deaths (80%) are at grassfires.

Between now and the next fire season we plan to run Fire Weather One courses in the regions, with Fire Weather Two courses booked for the end of May in Brisbane. From these courses, the next round of FBAN trainees will be selected. To become an FBAN trainee you must complete all of the Fire Weather courses as a prerequisite, and have served a notable period of operational time with RFSQ or similar agencies. We ask that people with a particular interest in the weather and fire behaviour come forward as we are looking for dedicated people with a passion for the role and not just serial specialists. All nominations will be through your local Area Office.

Should you have any further questions about the predictive services unit please contact your local Area Office.

John Welke  
Acting Inspector  
Predictive Services Unit  
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Geoff joined the Rural Fire Service in 2008 when he and his wife Leigh moved to Tamborine Mountain. Geoff was a member of the Lions Club in Brisbane Grange for 15 years and enjoyed giving back to the community. When he moved to Tamborine Mountain he decided that following his retirement from his family business he would have more time to give. Geoff laughs about the fact that he was an energetic 66 year old looking to make a difference.

Geoff heard about the Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) program when it was announced at a training night at his brigade in 2009. Geoff at this time was in the final stages of treatment for cancer and felt that the VCE role would suit him down to the ground. He was excited to take on a new challenge. Geoff attended the inaugural VCE induction workshop in February of 2010. He hit the ground running and hasn’t slowed down since.

Geoff’s wife Leigh was diagnosed with an aggressive neurological disease in 2010 which was a hard blow for the family following Geoff’s cancer treatment the year before. But always the optimists, they decided to live every day to its fullest. Leigh often used to comment “go out and tell them how to be safe – they don’t know how – make sure they know what they need to do.” She was a driving force behind his dedicated community commitment. Geoff said that the VCE program allowed him to stay with the service during this difficult time, as he was able to manage his presentations around caring for his wife.

Geoff and Leigh were members of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia and they would travel with the group. They used every opportunity to see the sites until Leigh’s disease made it impossible for her to mobilise. Geoff used every opportunity to spread the PREPARE.ACT.SURVIVE. and Camping Fire Safety message, and he would often report to me from places far and wide of a presentation that he had just delivered.

When an old community education trailer was made available to the VCEs within South East Region (SER), Geoff became the driving force behind its design and function. Geoff spent countless days and nights for four months working on the trailer to transform it into a mobile community education and community messaging resource. Geoff was assisted by many of our very dedicated volunteers from across the region. When most people would walk away after such a long project, Geoff then asked to take on the transformation of an ex-ambulance for the tow vehicle.
Geoff dedicated the next two months to the design, fit out, and exterior of the vehicle. Henry and Henrietta, as they were lovingly called by Leigh, now travel across the region delivering community education messages, assisting Incident Management Teams/Incident Control Centres and delivering community messaging during incidents.

During this time, Geoff continued to deliver vital bushfire and home fire safety messages across the region. His passion for volunteering and making his community a safer place to be, he states, is what kept him going through the final stages of Leigh’s illness. Leigh passed away in March of 2014.

Geoff has presented at the Volunteer Summit at Twin Waters in May 2014, SER Officers Forum in June 2014, CFA Community Engagement Conference in Preston, Victoria in August 2014, Indian Police Delegation Workshops at QCESA in October 2014, and to the Phillipines Disaster Management Delegates Workshops at QCESA in October 2014. Geoff often jokes that he is shy and doesn’t have much to say. When he speaks – people listen. His passion and his dedication is admirable and respected.

In 2011 Geoff was very proud to receive an Australia Day Award for his commitment to the VCE program and community education. In 2013 Geoff received the Highly Commended Achievement in Community Safety - Commissioners Award for Excellence, and also the Rural Fire Service Queensland Assistant Commissioner’s Volunteer of the Year Award for SER.

Geoff told me just recently that he was very humbled by his past recognition, but he was completely lost for words and even had tears when he opened the letter from the Governor General advising that he was being considered for the AFSM. I rang Geoff early on Australia Day this year when it was officially announced that he received the AFSM. He was very emotional and acknowledged that without Leigh’s support and encouragement he would not be in this position.

Geoff has committed his time to making our communities better prepared and also making our community education cache kits more mobile and easily accessible. Our Queensland communities are a safer place to be because of you, Geoff, and we say congratulations and a very big thank you.

Peta Miller Rose AFSM
Acting Inspector
Bushfire Safety Officer, South East Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Bunnings Australia Day BBQ

The Bunnings Australia Day BBQ was a fantastic success, raising over $450k nationally for the units and brigades supported by the stores! It was the biggest Aussie Day BBQ ever!!

Over $88k was raised for Queensland, thanks to the fantastic work and support of RFSQ and SES volunteers.

Boreen Point Rural Fire Brigade receives donation

Each year over the Christmas period the Aqua Day Spa raises money to donate to a good cause and this year they decided to support the Boreen Point Rural Fire Brigade. Many thanks for their generous support.
What started out as a small group of farmers wanting to support their community with a bush fire brigade is now a major part of the small community.

The Yandaran Rural Fire Brigade has worked tirelessly within their community to assist with floods and fires. They are a village Rural Fire Brigade boasting around 70 members, supported by two appliances, and a large group of support staff that assist when needed, whether in their area or in the neighbouring communities.

On 31 January 2015, the Yandaran Rural Fire Brigade came together to help celebrate with past and present members, many of whom shared a story or two with the newer members of the brigade.

Although some of the original crew couldn’t be there to see how the brigade has changed over the last 25 years, the brigade unveiled a plaque to remember past members.

One of the fond memories for the Brigade and the community was when Yandaran was selected to light a bonfire as part of the national bi-centennial celebrations. The structure built for this purpose was over 10 metres high and was reportedly the brightest glow visible from the satellite. This community and Yandaran Rural Fire Brigade have proudly placed Yandaran on the map.

Craig Magick
Acting Area Director, Bundaberg
Rural Fire Service Queensland
The storm and monsoon weather commenced in December 2014, delivering significant rainfall across the region ending the operational period of Operation Westwind. During this operational period, 881 wildfire incident responses were undertaken across Far Northern Region. Operation Delta has now commenced, with Brigades and Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) staff busy preparing for the Cyclone and Flood season by contacting brigades, reviewing plans, and checking equipment.

Professional development remains a key focus and we are very pleased that 20 Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) personnel including RFSQ, State Emergency Service (SES), Emergency Management Staff, and Fire and Rescue Staff have completed a Public Information Course (PIO) in December 2014. One of our ongoing operational challenges is keeping our communities informed during incidents, and the development of PIO capability will greatly enhance our ability to communicate more effectively with our communities.

An Air Base Operators course was also conducted in Mareeba which resulted in 12 RFSQ and SES volunteers completing the training program. The program tested our ability to establish an Air Base and undertake resupply operations.

We are continuing to develop the leadership capabilities within our region with three Leadership courses taking place for eight participants in Cooktown. In addition 20 participants attended a three day Leadership in a Collaborative Environment course in February 2015, and another course will be held in Mareeba from 6-8 March 2015.

Congratulations to the Speewah Rural Fire Brigade who was highly commended at the Commissioner’s Excellence Awards for Operational Management for their significant contribution to operational capability within Far Northern Region. The Brigade has a strong focus on hazard mitigation, and has developed a range of capabilities to assist in keeping their community safe. The Brigade continues to play a major role in supporting the development of operational capabilities of other brigades within Far Northern Region.

In addition to this, two of our long serving, hardworking Administration Officers, Diane Edwards and Kelly Gutter, were the proud recipients of Australia Day Medallions for 2015.

Di’s Achievement Medallion was received for her outstanding guidance and assistance to the Mena Creek Rural Brigade over a ten year period. This has resulted in the brigade receiving grants and has seen the recent addition of a medium tanker and a new fire station. Di has been an Administration Officer for 14 years in Innisfail. During this time she has been the backbone of the Innisfail area through many changes of staff and policies. Her calm, positive style of administration (particularly during deployments) is a credit to the Innisfail office.

Kelly’s Achievement Medallion was for her outstanding effort for over a decade, particularly in the last twelve months in relation to assisting a number of brigades to obtain funding for station improvements and ensuring deadlines were met and works completed. Kelly’s administration leadership is what cements the Cairns staff together. She has been the Cairns Office Administration Officer for 17 years.

Both Diane and Kelly’s work ethic is the reason why the RFSQ is proud of our administration stream, which is one of our most stable work units.

I would also like to advise you all, that Inspector Ian Atherton will commenced preretirement leave in February. Ian joined our organisation as a volunteer firefighter in the Mackay Area and has served as a staff member since 3 October 1999 in a number of locations across the state including Charters Towers, Cloncurry, Emerald and Innisfail.

In the role of Area Director Innisfail, Ian has significantly grown the Incident Command Capabilities of the brigades located within his command. I wish Ian and his wife all the best for their future.

Tony Hazell
A/Superintendent
RFSQ Regional Manager
Far Northern Region
0438750623
As an avid reader of *Rural Fire Bulletin* for a while now, it is with great pleasure that I am now in a position to pen my first article for the latter.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is John Moy, the inaugural Executive Manager, Volunteer and Emergency Management Training Command (VESTC). This is one of two new commands (the other being the Emergency Management Training Command (EMTC)) recently created as part of the expansion of the School of Fire and Emergency Services (SFEST) based at Whyte Island and Kedron, in Brisbane. This newly created role is not only responsible for overseeing training in the Rural Fire space, but also responsible for SES training as well. Whilst our team structure is currently being bedded down, I have two teams reporting to me namely, the RFS State Training and SES State Training teams.

Whilst VESCT and its roles are still in its infancy at the heart our charter is to recognise the differences, operationally and in training, across the RFSQ and SES, whilst looking at the synergies between the two. We are now examining ways in which both services can work more closely together, for the collective good, ensuring all aspects of our training reflect ‘current best practice’. Furthermore, we aim to ensure that our combined efforts continue to provide the most effective and efficient service to our local communities in times of need, as is possible.

I recently had the privilege of addressing an audience of RFSQ Regional Managers and Area Directors at their annual conference in Brisbane. I provided a presentation outlining how my team will be working towards the implementation of a best-practice approach to all aspects of RFSQ training. I was humbled by the standing ovation received at the end of the presentation, which reinforced that my team and I were on the right track with our initial thoughts as to the issues, challenges and possible solutions, for the future, with respect to rural training.

Space does not permit here, but in future editions, I will outline which rural fire training and assessment products were are intending to review and develop as well as share our proposal for a new Volunteer Learning Development Framework (VLDF 2.0). I will also share more details as to how my team will be continue to work towards the reduction of red tape for rural volunteers, whilst providing increased access to our existing training products and services.

Recently I was able to provide over $250,000 to support regional rural training this financial year. Projects approved included the purchasing of new moisture meters and fire weather kits. Funding has also been provided to enable rural volunteer access to first aid, Cert IV TAE, chainsaw and leadership development training courses, across the state. I have also approved the purchase of chainsaw benches (we are currently looking at a number of options, including a custom-made bench) for distribution state-wide as well the re-stocking and provision of chainsaw training caches. Funding has also been provided support various rural volunteer leadership development training courses as well as regional training workshops. This funding is *in addition* to that which is already budgeted for and provided each year to support rural training in the regions.

Whilst I empathise with the many volunteers who feel that the only constant in the RFSQ is change, and who may be thinking I am just another ‘new broom sweeping clean’, my undertaking to you is that my team and I will work more closely than ever with regional volunteers and staff whom we serve. My team will focus upon ways in which we can increase the efficiency, effectiveness of the training services we provide, and work to reduce the blockages, red-tape and inefficiencies that exist or are perceived to exist in our organisation.

In closing, I would like to draw your attention back to the edition of *Rural Fire Bulletin*, December 2014, and the article by Graham King, “Comrades in Education and Emergencies.” This is a shining-light example of what my team and I hope to achieve on a state-wide basis, in due course, with RFSQ and SES working more closely together than ever, in their communities, for the greater good.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge you, the RFSQ volunteers for your continued dedication and commitment to serving your communities in times of need. Me and my team look forward to working more closely with you all in the coming months and look forward to sharing our challenges and successes with you along the way.

John Moy
A/Executive Manager
Volunteer Emergency Services Training Command (VESTC)
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
With each edition of the Bulletin we will provide you with a summary of changes made to the Rural Fire Brigade Manual Business Rules and any new, updated or deleted State Standing Orders, Safety Bulletins, and Incident Directives.

A copy of the Business Rules with major changes have been included in the Secretary's edition of the Bulletin.

**New Business Rules:**

- Nil.

**Major Changes:**

- **B1.4.1 – Rural Fire Service Week** – content updated to reflect decision to hold RFB Week (previously Day) to allow greater opportunities for brigade participation and community involvement.
- **C2.1 – Work Health and Safety and Workers Compensation** – now includes workers compensation and rehabilitation information previously contained in RFBM C2.3 – Workers Compensation.
- **C2.2 – Fitness for Duty** – Name change (previously Fitness for Duty and Fatigue Management); general updates to content and reference material, updates to logos and terminology.
- **C6.3 – Pay Roll Tax Exemptions for Employers of Volunteers** – includes updated pay roll tax thresholds and updated legislative references.
- **D3.1 – Brigade Audits** – clarifies requirement for Brigade Audits to occur, only if a Brigade is in receipt of $5,000 or more OR if local government requires Audit Statement prior to levy funding. *(Changes as per Malone Rec. 79).*
- **D3.7 - Brigade Grants** – this business rule now incorporates information from D3.7.1 – RFBAQ Inc Grants and D3.7.2 – Station Grants (which have subsequently been deleted). Also updated to include Group Grant information.
- **D5.1.1 – Fire Stations – Acquiring Land** – significant process changes based on updated information and inclusion of land lease renewals.
- **D5.2 – Appliances** – now includes a memorandum of understanding between brigades and RFSQ to extend appliance life.
- **D7.2 – Volunteer Portal** – updated terminology and hyperlinks.

**Minor Changes:**

- **C1.1 – Membership Roles** – inclusion of Appendix K – Volunteer Community Educator Area Coordinator Role Description.
- **D1.1 – Brigade Classifications** – updates include stipulation that a consultation process must be undertaken for changes to brigade classifications as well as other minor amendments to logos and terminology.
- **D7.3 – Websites** – updates to logos and terminology.
**Forms:**

Please note that a number of forms have been re-numbered.

- **CSO 068** – VCE Community Education Order Form – removal of old stock.
- **PD 076** – RFSQ Volunteering Expression of Interest – updates to form number (previously RF189), logos and terminology.
- **CSO 078** – Rural Fire Service Week Registration Form - change from Rural Fire Service Day to RFS Week.
- **CSO 079** – Rural Fire Service Week Order Form - change from Rural Fire Service Day to RFS Week.
- **OBM 053** – Change Proposal Checklist - updated terminology and QFES logos
- **OBM 054** – Change Proposal Summary - updated terminology and QFES logos
- **OBM 088** – RFSQ Self-Insurance Claim Form - update logos and internal position references.
- **OBM 096** – Rural Fire Brigade Land Acquisition Approval Form – updated in line with updates to business rule D5.1.1, updated form number (previously RF183); logos and terminology.
- **OBM 097** – Rural Fire Brigade Land Acquisition Approval Form – Existing Station – updated in line with updates to business rule D5.1.1, updates to form number (previously RF183a); logos and terminology.
- **OBM 098** – Land Tenure Renewal Form – Rural Fire Brigade – updated in line with updates to business rule D5.1.1, updates to signatories, updated form number (previously RF183b), updated logos and terminology.
- **OBM 099** – RFSQ List of Members – form number updated to SIOPP numbering (previously RF171) updated logos etc.
- **OBM 107** – Fire Station Construction Grant Application Form – updated in line with updates to business rule D3.7 – Brigade Grants. Updated form number (previously RF174a); updated logos and terminology.
- **OBM 108** – Rural Fire Brigade Income and Expenditure Statement - minor updates to content and logos.
- **OBM 109** – Local Flood Knowledge Form - first official registration of this form (previously included as an appendix to business rule D5.1.1).
- **OBM 110** – RFSQ Print Approval Form – updates to form number (previously RF188), logos and terminology.
- **OBM 111** – Rural Fire Brigade Group Grant Application Form – updated in line with review of business rule D3.7 – Brigade Grants. Updated form number (previously RF181); logos and terminology.

**Deleted:**

(Please remove from your manual)

- **A2.2** – Pre Fire Season Checklist – Redundant process – Deletion of this business rule will reduce red tape.
- **C2.3** – Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation – Content incorporated into C2.1 – Work Health and Safety and Workers Compensation.
- **D3.7.1** – RFBAQ Inc Grants – Content incorporated into D3.7 – Brigade Grants.
- **D3.7.2** – Station Grants – Content incorporated into D3.7 – Brigade Grants.
- **RF101** – Pre Fire Season Checklist – Redundant process – connected to deletion of RFBAQ A2.2.
- **RF102** – Deployment Registration Form – Redundant process.
- **RF103** – Medical Assessment (Deployment) – Redundant process.
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