Rural Fire Bulletin
August 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

» KILCOY YOUTH TRIUMPH

» CLOSING THE GAP

» PRIMARY PRODUCER BRIGADE SUMMITS
Assistant Commissioner’s Message

Operation Coolburn continues to reduce bushfire hazards before the fire season and brigades across the state continue in their preparedness and community education activities.

Weather forecasts for the fire season predict dry conditions with little chance of rain. We need to be ready for an active fire season and maintain our readiness through equipment testing and maintenance, training and operational planning.

I am pleased to advise you all that the new South Coast and Gladstone Area Offices ‘went live’ on 1 July 2015. All brigades and Fire Wardens in these new areas should have been notified of these changes, and I am sure you will be working closely with staff in these new areas in the coming months.

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) positions are finally being filled on a permanent basis. I would like to congratulate Kaye Healing, Craig Magick, Tim Chittendon and Neil Parker who were all recently appointed as permanent RFSQ Area Directors.

Nine Area Training and Support Officer (ATSO) positions, four Bushfire Safety Officer (BSO) positions and one Inspector (Manager Air Operations) position are being shortlisted for interview as I write this. In the coming months, opportunities for the role of Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO) will also become available. The ability to permanently fill so many positions will bring stability to RFSQ and the support we provide to volunteers. It will also provide opportunities for volunteers to become staff members and staff members to advance their careers in RFSQ.

Safety of volunteers and staff is most important thing during fire season. If you are injured you cannot help others. For the sake of your family, friends, the communities you serve and yourself, make personal safety your number one priority.

With the filling of positions, the opening of new Area Offices, the rebirth of the Training and Research Strategic Working Group and the enthusiasm and drive of our staff and volunteers I predict better times ahead for RFSQ. The past few years have seen the introduction of fully funded appliances and equipment, long sleeved work shirts (with pockets) for volunteers, streamlined deployment, incident reporting and membership procedures and increased interaction with volunteers through the Primary Producer Brigade Summits. The RFSQ staff in State, Region and Area Offices will continue to provide improved support and assistance to Rural Fire Brigades and Fire Wardens in the coming years.

Peter Varley
A/Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
ANZAC Day celebrations at Southport

With a number ex-service persons in the brigade, Gilston Advancetown Rural Fire Brigade offered to help assist with ANZAC Day commemorations at Southport, knowing the local RSL was facing a volunteer shortage. It was an offer that was gratefully received by Southport RSL Sub Branch. The Brigade attended the day for the dawn service, the morning service and the march. The duties were many and varied, including assisting the RSL with planning, first aid and communications. The brigade 51 and 52 medium appliance units followed the march procession, as did the Queensland Ambulance Service, to provide assistance where required.

This offer of assistance also provided opportunities for the brigade and some of their new members, with a full Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration, Communication and Safety (SMEAC) briefing written and delivered to ensure a successful deployment on the day. It would appear that the Brigade may well have a long relationship with a local RSL Sub Branch, and looks forward to many more years assisting them. Southport Sub Branch Deputy President Mr Lawrie Pollard said “We had a magnificent Anzac Day this year at Southport. We would have had a great deal of problems in the running of the day without them and we want them back next year!”

Gilston Advancetown Rural Fire Brigade

Thank you from Yeppoon

While travelling around Yeppoon after TC Marcia, Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) staff noticed many signs thanking emergency service crews. These are just a few.

Thank you to all involved.
The Davies Creek Rural Fire Brigade was formed on 8 May 2003 due to urban response times and the identified need for a rural brigade in our area. The area we cover to the east of Mareeba in Far Northern Queensland is from Emerald to Davies Creeks, bounded by State Forest & National Parks to the east & west (with a few extra bits thrown in for good measure). Our area is made up of rural residential housing, small business and primary production, with various crops grown, cattle produced and active quarries.

Since that formation, we have grown from fighting fires with back-packs and rack-hoes, to purchasing our first slip-on unit. In 2006, we purchased a 51 medium attack work horse to assist us in fighting the many wild fires that occur in our area. In 2013, with the assistance of a grant from Mareeba Dimbulah Community Bank (Bendigo Bank), we obtained a 41 light attack vehicle to complement our fire fighting resources. This grant allowed us to focus on the construction of our shed.

Many hundreds of volunteer hours were put into the planning and various applications and approvals. The construction of the shed is a credit to all. Also worthy of note is the donation of a 53K/l water storage tank from Tankworks.

The assistance of many local businesses and organisations over the years is greatly appreciated. They include:

- QFES- Grant of $25K for shed as well as subsidised vehicles
- Mareeba Dimbulah Community Bank- Grant of $13,500 for a light attack vehicle
- Tankworks- Donation of 53K/l water tank
- Ergon- Connection of power $0.00
- Mareeba Shire Council - assistance with approval applications & waiving of some fees
- Redcorp Quarry- Use of heavy vehicles for land prep & quarry materials
- Boral Quarries- Supply of quarry materials
- Emerald Creek Store (Portsmith Fuels)- Ongoing support with supply of fuel
- Titchum Creek Coffee- use of business for meetings & great coffee
- Termite Cafe- Supply of food for volunteers working on shed & also on the fire ground
- Gerry de Bruyn (local builder) Assistance with construction of shed
- Last but not least, special mention must go to Ian Wienert for liaison with many organisations, contactors etc & also construction of shed. Charlie McDougal also assisted greatly with the shed construction.

The Davies Creek Rural Fire Brigade

.. we have grown from fighting fires with back-packs and rack-hoes, to purchasing our first slip-on unit...
Grantham Rural Fire Brigade is a very close knit brigade with 25 members, but in late March 2015, the brigade lost a long serving, pivotal member. Mr William “Wally” Reimann has been a member of the brigade for the past 19 years. A farmer by trade, Wally was always grateful when the pager went off, giving him a chance to escape the farm for a few hours. Veteran members of the brigade praised Wally for his daring tenacity on and off the fire ground. But it was not only his firefighting skills that scored him the respect that he deserved. His way of training new members of the brigade was most effective and enjoyable, with brigade members forever praising his abilities.

At Wally’s funeral, brigade member and Acting Area Training and Support Officer Simon Dawson, told the congregation about the times he and Wally responded to fires. Simon recalled one larger bushfire incident in Helidon during his years as a younger member.

“At that point in my career I didn’t have much experience with large fires and I was relying on Wally for instructions. The fire came at us through the bush and I was watching it intently, so intently I didn’t notice to our left a caravan had caught fire. It was starting to burn and I was just standing there when I felt a tap on the shoulder and I turned around and Wally said to me very calmly and matter-of-factly, ‘Well you better put some water on that’.”

But it was not only Wally’s firefighting that made him a key player in the community. Wally and his wife Shirley owned a farm, where they introduced eggplants to the Lockyer Valley, proceeding to win many ribbons at the local shows. This bought much pride to the community, being able to call Wally their own, and even more pride to Grantham Rural Fire Brigade being able to call one of our members, a celebrity in his own right.

Wally was a natural leader, however never held an officer’s position in the brigade. He was respected as a father, brother and mate. Grantham Rural Fire brigade, will never forget the time and effort Wally put into protecting and educating the community in times of disaster. You will never be forgotten.

On behalf of Grantham Rural Fire brigade, we thank Wally’s family for the time and effort they put into the brigade, and remember that we are always here to help.

We’ll miss you
Wally Reimann....

Geoff Purton
First Officer
Kameron Jeffrey
Second Officer and VCE
Grantham Rural Fire Brigade
On Saturday 28 March 2015, in recognition of National Youth Week, two teams from the Certificate II Public Safety Firefighting Operations Course participated in the State Emergency Volunteer Games in Brisbane. Representing the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) these volunteers competed against teams from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Emergency Services and Surf Lifesaving.

**Kilcoy Youth Triumphant**

Following a gruelling series of events, ‘Kilcoy Kaos’ were awarded the ‘Team of Excellence’ and proudly brought home the gold trophy. This team consisted of Arran Griffiths (team leader), Harry Farber, Shaylee Doubleday, Bianca Cerdor and Breanna Garbutt who rotated throughout the events.

The teams were made up of four young people with an assigned team leader. No adult was permitted to enter into discussion with the team as this would have resulted in a loss of points. There were three challenges: the team presentation, a First Responder Challenge and a Team Challenge. Judges analysed the responses in relation to safety, leadership, team work and casualty management.

The second team, “Kilcoy Fire Cats” was made up of; Josh Pene (team leader), Skye McRae, Rhiannon Bassett, Erin Nugent and Sarah Condie.

Both Kilcoy teams performed brilliantly under pressure. Graham King, A/ Area Training and Support Office, said he was extremely proud of the young volunteers and their ability to cope with new situations.

This is the first time such an event has been organised with young people across a diverse range of organisations. If the enthusiasm of the Kilcoy teams is anything to go on, it will most definitely be on again next year.

**Graham King**
Area Training and Support Officer
 Caboolture Area Office
Rain, Hail or Shine
The Show Goes On

Despite the inclement weather conditions on Friday 1 May, Under 8s Day held at Kilcoy Primary School proceeded with much fun and frivolity. Young volunteers completing their Certificate II Public Safety Firefighting Operations were kept extremely busy handing out show bags full of information and activities including Fire Truck money box, Snakes and Hoses game, tattoos, pencils and stickers as well as information on smoke alarms for adults.

Emergency Services were well represented at this event. Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), Kilcoy Auxiliaries, Queensland Ambulance Service, State Emergency Services and Queensland Police Service all contributed to make this day a memorable one for the young children. Delaneys Creek, Hazeldean, Villeneuve, Mt Kilcoy and Bellthorpe Rural Brigades all had representatives assisting.

Blazer and Evil Knevil entertained the children with their antics whilst delivering some very important messages. Demonstrations and messages to ‘Stop Drop and Roll’, ‘Get Down Low and Go, Go, Go’, ‘Get Out and Stay Out’ were enacted and well received by the young audience. Evil Knevil and Blazer also chatted about ‘Good Fires’ and ‘Bad Fires’ and how to call the emergency number 000.

The volunteers completing their Certificate are able to record Participate in Community Safety Activities in their log and are one step closer to finalising their studies. RFSQ are grateful to Kilcoy High School for releasing these students for the day to facilitate their participation.

Graham King
Area Training and Support Officer
Caboolture Area Office
In 2015, the program extended to Ravenshoe High School with the Mount St Bernard College students travelling to Ravenshoe weekly. This year’s enrolment is eighteen students. These young community minded persons have shown time and again, their invaluable presence upon the fire ground alongside veteran rural firefighters. They have showed dedication and often replenished crews on fires at remote stations and also in their local brigade areas. These include some of the more recent larger ‘campaign’ fires around Herberton, Wondecla and Ravenshoe.

Importantly these young firefighters (grades 11 &12) have acted as ambassadors for their school, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), the Rural Fires Service Queensland and their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures. This has been achieved through their interaction within the wider community from attending various school functions and community displays, through to promoting the merits of an equitable and culturally appropriate ethic within the QFES.

The benefits of the program also extend beyond the fire service in that, year after year, these young people have demonstrated great personal development and often a renewed interest in furthering their education.

In 2012, the Innisfail Rural Fire Service Queensland Area Office, worked tirelessly with Mount St Bernard College to introduce the Senior School firefighter program. Now beginning its fourth year, the program has successfully graduated some 25 Indigenous registered Junior firefighter`s. Approximately 70% of these young students have been female.
The graduation ceremony every year in front of 300 of their peers is a special moment, and ‘self-esteem’ is sky high. The students return to their communities to become fire management ‘leaders’ and as community protectors. These communities extend north to Papua New Guinea and the Torres Strait Islands, communities on Cape York and west to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

During the 33 week program, participants are made aware and encouraged to take action on career options, which are made more achievable after having completed the Cert II in Public Safety Fire-Fighting Operations. Throughout the year the School Program Coordinator Natalie Vanderzant and Principal QFES Instructor Michael Spartalis, place strong emphasis in promoting the students into future career pathways. These include community policing, armed services and ranger programs, to name but a few.

2015 saw the introduction of the Mount St Bernard Outdoor Recreation Program that sees students from year 10 enrol in a suite of Vocational Education and Training Certificate courses to further their career aspirations. The program has been designed around the success of the Certificate II in Public safety.

The Outdoor Recreation Program includes:

- year 10 – Certificate I in Conservation Land Management
- year 11 – Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation
- year 11 – Certificate II in Sport & Recreation
- year 12 – Certificate III in Sport & Recreation
- year 12 – Certificate II in Public safety (firefighting Operations).

With the above qualifications, graduates from Mount St Bernard College are equipped with training assisting them to follow their chosen career pathway, or they have a substantial foundation to continue on with further study.

In 2016, the program will explore future pathways to a certificate III in Public Safety or via a Conservation and Land Management component with Department of National Parks Recreation and Sport (QPWS).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students that participate in the Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations) course learn much more about themselves then they learn from regular schooling. It is under the guidance from Trainers from the QFES that the students learn to step out of their comfort zone, to face their inhibitions and fears and to learn responsibility and leadership. The Certificate II in Public safety (firefighting Operations) provides the students with a solid foundation to leave adolescence behind and enter the world of adulthood with self-confidence, self-respect and pride in their own self-worth.

Matthew Eckhardt
Acting Area Training and Support Officer
Innisfail Area Office
Primary Producer Brigade Summits

Following on from the 2014 Volunteer Summit, a series of Primary Producer Brigade (PPB) Summits are being held throughout 2015 in Cairns, Roma and Barcaldine.

The Summits are an opportunity to bring together Rural Fire Service Queensland’s (RFSQ) PPBs to foster working relationships and allow a chance to gain substantial, direct feedback with a view to developing further support tools and equipment to assist PPB operations. The agenda for each summit is based on topics of interest raised by a representative group of volunteers during pre-discussion meetings held in each summit location.

The Cairns and Roma Summits have been well received by attending volunteers and arrangements are underway for the Barcaldine Summit, being held on 19 August 2015.

Cairns Summit

When: 8 – 9 May 2015
Where: Paradise Palms Country Club and Resort, Kewarra Beach
Who attended: 36 volunteers from across the Innisfail, Cairns, Townsville and Mackay Areas.
What was discussed: The Cairns PPB Summit focussed mainly on the challenges faced by Cane Producers with the rise of urban development among farmlands. Further issues raised for discussion included equipment, ageing membership / recruitment and retention of young brigade members, training and support tools available to brigades.

As an outcome of the Cairns Summit, Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) have already placed a number of equipment orders to meet brigade needs and continue working on strategies to progress the identified key issues.

Roma Summit

When: 10 June 2015
Where: Roma Explorers Inn, Roma
Who attended: 57 volunteers from across the Roma Area
What was discussed: Key issues covered at the Roma PPB Summit included the Fire Warden System (including the issue of permits to light fires and fire bans); Command and Control; Equipment and Insurance. Volunteers were given the opportunity to actively raise questions and concerns, these issues were captured and an action plan to address these issues has been developed.

In addition, the Roma PPB Summit also included a trade exhibit consisting of a number of local Roma businesses as well as RFSQ vehicle and pump demonstrations. We would like to thank the following companies who participated and donated lucky door prizes for the day:
- Mid-West Rural
- Dore’s Power Equipment
- Roma Computer Centre
- Roma Saddlery
- Moving Stages and Entertainment.

We would also like to congratulate the members of Lower Bungil Rural Fire Brigade, who were the lucky recipients of a Slip-on Unit provided by RFSQ.

Nicole Emmerson
Project Manager
Rural Fire Service Queensland
As many of you may be aware, the Ilfracombe community, which is in the Longreach Shire, is running low on water and is on level 4 water restrictions, which is bucket water only for two hours a day.

Throughout this hard time, First Officer and VCE of the Ilfracombe RFB Mark Tysoe, began delivering water to the residents of Ilfracombe on behalf of the Ilfracombe RFB, and now the brigade has a roster system in place. As well as this, when Drought Angels delivered 79 x 1000l water pods to the community, Mark came to the rescue, filling the pods from the treated water. Mark and the brigade received further recognition for their efforts when the Barcaldine Mayor thanked them on radio, for distributing the bottled water, that was donated by Barcaldine residents, to the community and surrounding properties.
Woodhill RFB
OPERATION COOL BURN
2015

Woodhill Rural Fire Brigade got an early start to Operational Cool Burn 2015 in March, on a 1200 acre property between Jimboomba and Undullah, where 400 acres had been cleared and formed into windrows for burning.

A number of brigades supported the Hazard Reduction Burn including Woodhill RFB with four appliances, Flinders Peak RFB with two appliances, and Tamborine RFB, Logan Village RFB, Birnam RFB and Chambers Flat RFB, who all provided an appliance each.
June saw Rural Fire Service Queensland’s (RFSQ) first ever RFS Week. The event was changed from RFS Day to RFS Week to give more brigades the opportunity to participate, and to increase our opportunity to promote the important work of brigades across the State.

30 brigades across the State formally registered to undertake RFS Week activities, with many others holding small local events.

Brigades participated through events including open days, participating at community shows, promotion and local shopping centres and letter box drops for community education and recruitment.

Congratulations and thank you to all volunteers who contributed to RFS Week and to all volunteers for the fantastic work you do.

We are hoping to make RFS Week 2016 bigger and better and we appreciate any feedback or suggestions you may have. To provide input please email ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au
PBI endorsement

Approximately 500 of the 1,400 rural fire brigades in Queensland had previously sought and received endorsement by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as Public Benevolent Institutions (PBI). This endorsement provided access to a range of charities tax concessions and deductible gift recipient (DGR) status. However, the ATO decided several years ago that rural fire brigades did not satisfy its eligibility criteria for PBI endorsement. As a result, the PBI endorsement of all Australian rural fire brigades was revoked from 1 January 2013. This followed December 2010 changes to the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, which provided alternative means for volunteer fire brigades and State Emergency Services to access DGR status.

ACNC registration

In a related move, in August 2012 the ATO arranged for all then PBI-endorsed rural fire brigades to be automatically registered as Charitable Institutions (CI) with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) providing them with access to similar charities tax concessions to those available as a PBI.

The ACNC registration places some additional administrative obligations on all charities registered with it. This includes maintenance of the charity’s contact and membership details within two weeks of a change to office bearers, address for service of notices, email address, etc. and the preparation and lodgement of an Annual Information Statement (AIS) within six months of the end of a financial year. In the first year of its operation, the AIS required of small registered charities (annual revenues less than $500,000) did not include any financial information. However from the 2013-14 year onwards, the AIS even for small registered charities, includes disclosure of financial information about the charity’s operations (a profit and loss statement and balance sheet, preferably audited).

Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) staff has endeavoured to minimise the additional administrative burden of ACNC registration on these brigades, by handling change advices and the preparation and lodgement of statements centrally, on behalf of all registered brigades, where possible. Unfortunately, bulk preparation and lodgement of the AIS on behalf of Queensland rural fire brigades (all of which are registered as small charities) has become impractical with the additional requirement for detailed financial information. This is particularly problematic for a number of Queensland ACNC-registered rural fire brigades, particularly Primary Producer Brigades, which operate as virtual entities with no bank account and maintaining very limited brigade financial records.

The ATO and the not-for-profit status of Queensland rural fire brigades

Every Queensland rural fire brigade is a not-for-profit entity and therefore should be acknowledged by the ATO as income tax exempt. In fact, the only charities tax concession required by Queensland rural fire brigades is income tax exemption, whether or not they are registered currently as a charity with the ACNC.

The Taxation Ruling of 2015/01 providing not-for-profit status, applies to Queensland volunteer rural fire brigades, all of which satisfy two special conditions:

- the entity must comply with all the substantive requirements of its governing rules; and
- the entity must apply its income and assets solely for the purposes for which the entity is established.

Queensland rural fire brigades must satisfy these two special conditions to maintain their registration under Section 79 of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990.

All Queensland rural fire brigades are required to adopt as their governing rules ‘The Rural Fire Brigade Management Rules’ promoted by the RFSQ. These Rules require registered rural fire brigades to apply their income and assets solely for the purposes of the brigade.

Despite this, a number of brigades holding ABNs and/or registered for GST have received notices from the ATO over the past 12 months seeking the lodgement of an income tax return.
Actions aimed at resolving these issues

Discussions have been held with both the ATO and the ACNC aimed at resolving these issues. The expected outcome is that both the ATO and the ACNC are expected to decide to regard Queensland rural fire brigades as government-related entities under Commonwealth legislation.

Such a determination is expected to have no impact on the current status of brigades as being independent of government (i.e. not government-related entities) under Queensland legislation. Access to Queensland State Government Gambling Fund and similar grants is not expected to be impacted by these changes.

A Class Ruling application will be lodged with the ATO seeking confirmation that it will regard all Queensland rural fire brigades as income tax exempt, as government-related entities, pursuant to Section 50-25 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

Assuming the Class Ruling application is successful there will be several favourable outcomes for brigades:

- brigades should never again be bothered by the ATO seeking an income tax return;
- the ACNC will revoke the registration of all brigades currently registered with it on the basis that a government-related entity (under Commonwealth legislation) is unable to register as a charity, eliminating for brigades the administrative obligations required of a registered charity; and
- brigades will continue to have access to DGR status, if desired, pursuant to Section 30-102 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, either by participating in the Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund, or by establishing their own Public Fund.

It is possible that these planned actions will all have been completed by the time you read this article.

William Norfolk
Executive Manager PFRSG – QFES
Public Safety Business Agency

Updated information for brigades with current Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

There are currently 162 Rural Fire Brigades across Queensland who have chosen to be part of the Queensland Rural Fire Brigades Donation Fund. This is the central Public Fund enabling brigade access to Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

The annual independent audit of the Fund’s transactions and bank account has found a number of instances where brigades have made deposits incorrectly to this bank account. For example: some brigades have made deposits into the bank account, but have not written out a Tax Deductable Receipt on behalf of the Central Fund for the person or company making the donation.

Each of the 162 brigades have previously been sent a Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund Receipt Book (blue binding) as well as a Commonwealth Deposit Book for the Central Fund.

Donations deposited into this account should have a written receipt for the person or company making the donation. The money for which you have written up the receipt, must be deposited into the abovementioned Central Fund bank account.

**Your receipts and deposits MUST balance.**

Should you receive donations and the person or company does not require a Tax Deductable Receipt, these deposits must NOT be deposited into the Central Fund bank account.

These donations can and should be banked into the brigades own bank account. They will not be tax deductible for the donor as a donation.

Deborah Baumann
Finance Officer
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Appropriate Brigade Behaviours

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) are committed to providing safe and healthy Rural Fire Brigades that are free from negative behaviours which include bullying, sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination.

RFSQ expect all volunteers and staff to:
• behave in a responsible and professional manner
• treat all people with courtesy and respect
• listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of others
• be fair and honest in your dealings with others
• report incidents of victimisation
• act in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

RFSQ expects these standards of behaviour to apply:
• In connection with all work undertaken within the Brigade and RFSQ (for example, when dealing with landowners and/or members of the community, liaising with local councils);
• During all brigade activities (for example, attending incidents or training)
• At RFSQ and/or brigade related events (for example, representing RFSQ or the brigade at conferences and/or community events);
• On social media where volunteers may interact with others, including members of the public, and their actions may affect them either directly or indirectly.

QFES encourages all volunteers and staff to behave appropriately and responsibly at all times. QFES will treat any reports of negative behaviour seriously and will respond and resolve matters promptly, impartially and confidentially. RFSQ will encourage and support First Officers to take reasonable steps to manage their brigades. There are a range of support services available to volunteers experiencing negative workplace behaviours, these include:
• Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (Formerly FireCare)
• Harassment Contact Officers
• Harassment Contact Line - ph: 07 3635 3672.

Kay Krinke
Manager Volunteer Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland
RFSQ Operational Plan

2015-16 Highlights

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Strategic Plan for 2015-19, which was released in June 2015, has six key areas with an emphasis on supporting and developing the people that make up QFES. Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) have put forward an Operational Plan using this framework to guide the strategic direction for 2015-16. After such a long period of uncertainty during government and organisational change this is an important step in setting direction for RFSQ to measure performance and ensuring the ongoing support for volunteer rural fire brigades and the communities they protect.

Highlights from the RFSQ Operational Plan in each of the focus areas include:

**Operational Excellence**
- Build Air Operations capability by increasing regional air operations capacity; increasing training in air operations roles; and by establishing the Aviation Advisory Group.
- Coordinate risk mitigation and impact reduction activities in bushfire prone locations.
- Coordinate Area Fire Management Group meetings.

**Great Place to Work**
- Establish a leadership training program for volunteers.
- Conduct volunteer recruitment initiatives in areas with identified risk and need.

**Empowering Volunteerism**
- Establish an Office of Bushfire Mitigation.
- Increase the capabilities and capacity of volunteers to manage and support emergency events.
- Review classification of brigades based on the risk in the brigade area and define brigade training, recruitment and resourcing needs based on risk.

**Trusted Service**
- Increase the number of Volunteer Community Educators in areas with identified risk and need.
- Ensure all Fire Warden Districts have a Fire Warden.
- Deliver community awareness strategies to better prepare communities to withstand bushfires.
- Provide all Local Disaster Management Groups with an annual fire mitigation plan.

**Work Together**
- Provide appropriate training for volunteers to undertake their operational roles. This includes planning training delivery according to the risk and needs of brigade areas.

**Capable Organisation**
- Improve communication of operational debrief outcomes.

We look forward to sharing the progress toward these goals with you.

To see the QFES 2015-19 Strategic plan visit https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/default.asp

www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au
Ongoing programs

There are ongoing grants available to rural fire brigades through:

- The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR): up to $35,000 for equipment purchases, and station construction and improvement.
- The Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland Inc. (RFBAQ): for equipment and training, with consideration given to other areas including Volunteer Support.
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES): up to 25% of the construction cost (capped at $25,000) to assist brigades to construct, modify or refurbish a fire station. Up to $1000 for existing Groups and up to $2000 for new Groups to assist with administration costs.

You will find all the information on how to apply for these grants in the Rural Fire Brigade Manual.

Other programs

Most local governments provide grant programs for projects which respond to local needs and issues, and large organisations occasionally offer funding assistance for non-profit community groups.

http://community.grantready.com.au is a useful source of information about grants currently available and coming up in your location.

Handy Hints

- **Value for money**: A grant application which represents value for money is more likely to be approved. Value for money is not just about cost; consider the long term quality of the product and ongoing service the company is offering.
- **Quotes**: It is always a good idea to get a few different quotes to make sure you are going with the best product or service, and this information can help in your grant application. If you are approached by a company offering a service or product always get comparison quote from another company.
- **Safeguards**: Be wary of any company offering to do the application on your behalf for a service or product they are offering. Don’t commit to any expenditure until you have the funds from the grant secured.
- **Acquittals**: Keep copies of all receipts and invoices related to spending the grant funds. Most grant programs require some form of acquittal for the money provided through the grant.

Help!

If in doubt RFSQ staff are here to help. Make your Area Office staff your first point of contact if your brigade has a funding need or an idea.

The RFSQ Grants Officer in Brisbane can also help you identify the right grant for your needs and assist with the application process. Contact Louise Davis on (07) 3635 3252 or email Louise.Davis@qfes.qld.gov.au

Coming up

RFSQ will be making some improvements over the next six months to the support provided to brigades in the application and acquittal of grants. Watch this space for more information.

You will find all the information on how to apply for these grants in the 

**Rural Fire Brigade Manual.**
Energex to continue supporting Rural Fire Brigades through equipment program

Thanks to Energex’s ongoing support, $75,000 of valuable equipment and resources will again be available to Rural Fire Brigades in South East Queensland.

A/Assistant Commissioner Peter Varley said he was thrilled to announce Energex has recently renewed their sponsorship of the RFSQ Equipment Program for another year.

“Energex has long supported RFSQ and this agreement will provide brigades in the areas of West Moreton, South Coast, Caboolture and Caloundra with much needed equipment to enhance their operational and support capacity.”

As part of this year’s Equipment Program, eligible brigades will have the opportunity to apply for the following items:

- Portable pump
- Generator and portable RCD
- Backpack blower
- Portable fridge
- Reversing camera with monitor
- GPS unit
- Scene lighting kit and extension lead
- Basic level 1 command and control kit
- Eflare kit
- Raincoat and bag.

Energex Corporate Communications Manager, Ron Watson, said Energex is proud to continue supporting local Rural Fire Brigades.

“This renewed sponsorship arrangement is an opportunity to show our appreciation of RFSQ volunteers and the vital services they provide to the community.”

Secretaries of eligible brigades have been provided with a nomination form with this edition of the Bulletin. The nomination form can also be downloaded from the Volunteer Portal.

Completed nomination forms are to be forwarded to your Area Office for endorsement by Wednesday 30 September 2015.

Bluewater Rural Fire Brigade are a great example of successfully using grants to assist in purchasing brigade equipment. To date they have received:

1. Approximately $8250 from an RFBAQ grant to purchase a High Pressure UTV firefighting unit
2. Approximately $28,525 from the Queensland Community Benefits Fund towards the purchase of a brigade support vehicle to two the Bluewater ATV and move crew around incidents.
3. Ben Alderson Grant of $1250 to purchase a 400 litre tank for Bluewater 81 to allow Bluewater 81 to resupply Bluewater ATV.
4. Yamaha portable pump for Bluewater 81 to resupply Bluewater ATV as part of the RFBAQ Pump Gift.

In 2014 the Scott Rural Fire Brigade received

1. $35,000 from the Gaming Fund
2. $25,000 from the RFSQ Station Construction Grant; and
3. $10,000 from the RFBAQ.

These grants contributed to the building of the Station.
The last few months have been a very busy time for the Predictive Services Unit. The Unit has been involved with a number of projects across the state as well as co-ordinating an extensive training calendar.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has been continuing to enhance its knowledge base with regards to Fire Weather and Overall Fuel Hazard Assessment. Part of this enhancement process has been the delivery of training across the state. There are two weather courses, the first is Fire Weather 1 which is a one day course designed to give participants an overall understanding of the impacts of weather on fire behaviour. The second is Fire Weather 2, a two day course that goes into more detail on how to interpret weather information and its subsequent effect on Fire Behaviour. We have had a number of volunteers from across the state attend these courses in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Townsville, Gladstone, Mackay, Rockhampton and Cairns.

The other training that was conducted in Brisbane and Gympie was an Overall Fuel Hazard Assessment Course. This course is designed to build on existing knowledge and provide participants with enhanced knowledge on the assessment of fuels in the environment. More than 40 volunteers took advantage of this training and found the course of great benefit.

We have also conducted a Fire Behaviour Analyst course. This course requires considerable commitment from those who undertake it as there are a number of pre-requisite courses on Fire Weather and Fuel Hazard assessment to be completed as well as a significant pre course assignment that must be completed and assessed before being eligible to undertake the course. Once the course is complete there is significant after course work to complete before the qualification is obtained. It has been pleasing to see there are a number of volunteers who are prepared to make that commitment.

Outside of the training arena the Unit has also been involved in a number of projects. One of these is the National Grassland Curing Project in conjunction with CSIRO, Country Fire Authority (Vic), and NSW Rural Fire Service. This project involves conducting a series of controlled burns to measure the effect of grass curing on the rate of spread. This is the first time burns have been conducted in more extreme burning conditions in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland and the information gathered will lead to a revision of the Grassland Spread Meter. The project will run for at least another 12 months with further burns to be conducted in Northern Australia.

The other project that the unit was involved in was a post cyclone fuel hazard assessment as a result of TC Marcia. Dr Jim Gould was engaged and along with two Fire Behaviour Analysts and a number of local rural volunteers spent two weeks assessing the fuel hazard as a result of TC Marcia.

As a part of this project Dr. Gould agreed to give training to two groups of volunteer firefighters in the Rockhampton area on fuel hazard assessment which included a field trip to show those involved examples of what had been talked about in the presentations.

The Predictive Services Unit would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted with these projects. In particular we would like to thank the volunteers from Gowrie Little Plain, Gowrie Junction, Jondaryn, Withcott and Murphys Creek for their invaluable assistance with the burns in Toowoomba and also the volunteers from Byfield, Cawarral and the Keppel Group for their assistance with the Fuel Hazard assessment project.

Simon Dawson
Predictive Services Unit
At the start of July, the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) was extremely pleased to be able to open the new South Coast Area Office, and the Gladstone Area Office.

Approved at the end of 2014, staff have been working with agencies and volunteers to ensure the implementation of our new Area Offices best meet the needs of our volunteers.

The South Coast Area Office is now located at 32 Mudgeeraba Road, Worongary. I am pleased to advise you that the role of Area Director is held by Kaye Healing. In 1995 Kaye started with the Service as an Administration Officer on a part-time basis whilst completing tertiary studies. A new position was created soon after called the Brigade Support Officer (now known as the Brigade Training and Support Officer) which launched her career with Rural Fire Service. Since then she has been working with brigades in South East Region as Area Training and Support Officer at Ipswich, and numerous times as A/Area Director.

There are already a number of staff now located at the South Coast Area Office and in the coming months they will taking the time to talk with brigades. Staff at the South Coast Office can be contacted at:

32 Mudgeeraba Road, Worongary Qld 4213
PO Box 1567, Mudgeeraba Qld 4213
Phone: 5587 4101
Email: rfsq.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au

The Gladstone Area Office is now located at 118 Goondoon Street, Gladstone, and I am happy to say that Craig Magick has taken on the role of Area Director for Gladstone. Prior to this role Craig had been the Acting Area Director in Bundaberg and has 20 years involvement with RFSQ and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) in various positions including as an RFI, BTSO and Bushfire Safety Officer.

The position of Administration Officer for the Gladstone Office has now been filled, and at the time of writing this, the position of Area Training and Support Officer was being advertised. In the coming months the position of Brigade Training and Support Officer will also be advertised.

The best way to contact us is by telephone (07) 4899 2200 or at RFSQ.Gladstone@qfes.qld.gov.au.

The implementation of both the South Coast and Gladstone Area Office will offer enhanced support to volunteers and provide brigades with increased capacity to support surrounding communities.

As I outlined in the April edition of the Bulletin, a new office called the Burnett Area Office was also approved. The Burnett Area Office will be located in Kingaroy, and work continues to establish this office. I am pleased to say that Tony Johnstone will be A/Area Director for Kingaroy during the establishment of the new office.

Peter Varley
A/Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
The budget process for the 2015-16 appliance build program is expected to provide Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) with the opportunity to build a total of 63 new light and medium appliances. This is a significant increase on the 42 appliances built in the 2014-15 year. Over the next three years it is anticipated that RFSQ will continue to build this quantity of appliances to meet the fleet replacement schedule.

The appliances will be very similar to the 2014-15 as this appliance layout has now reached approval by the majority of our volunteers. It has also resulted in a number of adjustments including:

- shortening the rear overhang of the tray
- increasing the rear departure angle of the appliance
- lowering the centre of gravity
- reducing pump noise at the rear of the appliance
- increasing water capacity overall.

To allow greater transition and familiarisation experiences on these new appliances we have also undertaken a two day workshop at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy.

A staff member from each area, along with members from the Operations Strategic Working Group attended, and were briefed on the features and use of the new appliances. This now means that the new appliances will be delivered to the respective Area Offices (or closest practical location) for staff to then hand deliver the new appliance to the brigade and deliver the training and induction on that appliance at the same time. This offers brigades an “area champion” who they can refer to in the first instance should something go wrong.

We are once again seeing Rural Fire Brigades being given more options and flexibility on appliance design. Brigades now have the option of Single Cab or Dual Cab Isuzu NPS 300 and Dual cab Ford Ranger, with additional options of a Single Cab 4.45t GVM and a Single Cab 6.5t GVM being discussed.

This is to ensure budget pre-planning is done well in advance, Area Offices will be undertaking consultation with brigades identified with a potential replacement appliance, as part of the planning for the 2016-17 financial year build.

For more information please contact your local Area Office or visit the appliances information available on the volunteer portal.
High Pressure Slip on and Trailer Units

RFSQ has again increased the range of equipment specifications available to our brigades.

High pressure slip on units are built on the same slip on profile and frame as our traditional units only they are fitted with a Burtolini pump capable of delivering 50l/min at 3800kPa and being driven by a Honda petrol motor and fitted with a high pressure hose and trigger action spray gun. These units also have the solid block foam system which reduces the overall unit weight and complexity.

These units are available to eligible brigades as per the ‘Allocation of Slip-On Units’ Business Rule but will not be built unless specifically requested. The majority of the units will still be built in the traditional format with the single impellor fire fighter pump.

RFSQ is also supplying a very limited amount of trailer units to eligible brigades where the brigades would normally be applying for a slip-on unit and the terrain and operational requirements determine. These units are 1000L, built on heavy duty frame and can be either configured in the high pressure or normal pressure firefighting pump. Brigades can apply for these through their Area Office after consultation with the Area Director.

John Welke
A/Manager Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland

The blue light retrofit is in its final stages of completion. All Area Offices have been supplied with or given access to the required blue lights and lenses to complete the retrofit.

I encourage any brigade still requiring lights to complete the retrofit to contact their local area office, who will be able to source the required lights and lenses on a like for like basis. The light retrofits will provide an increased level of visibility to our appliances and increase safety on the fire ground. We must ensure that we do not go into the upcoming operational period without action being undertaken to finalise this retrofit.
Rural Fire Service Queensland Strategic Working Groups

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee met on Thursday 4 June 2015 after a long hiatus due to recent government and organisational change. The purpose of the committee is to provide advice and direction on the outcomes of the Operations, Volunteering and Support and Research and Training strategic working groups whilst considering matters of strategic significance that impact on RFSQ.

The current membership of the committee is:
- RFSQ Assistant Commissioner (Chair)
- Director Operations, RFSQ
- Executive Manager Volunteer Support, RFSQ
- Executive Manager Volunteer Emergency Services Training Command
- Colin Weeks, South Ulam RFB (Central Region)
- George Ganzenmuller, Ripley Valley RFB (South East Region)
- Alan Gillespie, RFBAQ President (South East Region)
- Jon Bundy, RFBAQ representative (South West Region).

The current issues on the table include oversight of previous government review recommendations and projects underway across Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

Operations Strategic Working Group

The Operations Strategic Working Group will next meet on Thursday 6 August 2015. The purpose of the group is to provide advice and recommendations on policy and procedures relating to the support and resources provided to volunteers of RFSQ. This Working Group is also the forum for rural appliance design and build.

The current membership of the committee is:
- Director Operations RFSQ (Chair)
- Regional Manager
- Area Director
- Area Training and Support Officer
- Manager Operational support
- Workplace Health & Safety Officer
- Fabian Stangherlin, Greenbank RFB (South East Region)
- Paul James, Duaringa RFB (Central Region)
- Wayne Krogh, Nome District RFB (Northern Region)
- Owen Thompson, Mount Urah RFB (North Coast Region)
- Les Green, RFBAQ Representative (Far Northern Region)
- Iain Pike, RFBAQ Representative (North Coast Region)
- Ian Swadling, RFBAQ Representative (Brisbane Region).

The current issues on the table include Identification cards for volunteers, wet weather clothing for volunteers and frequency of Safety Certificates for appliances in remote areas.
What is the Emergency Management Levy?

The Emergency Management Levy (EML) is a State imposed levy that assists in supporting the state-wide costs of emergency management and fire and rescue across Queensland. The EML replaced the former Urban Levy during 2013 and applies to all properties in Queensland. The EML is administered through the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 and is collected by Queensland local governments on behalf of the State Government.

Why are rural properties paying for the EML when the area is in a rural fire brigade boundary?

The EML is not a fee for service as it provides funding to support all aspects of emergency management throughout the State. The EML provides funding to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, including fire and rescue services and the rural fire service, as well as Volunteer Marine Rescue, State Emergency Services, swift water rescue crews, emergency helicopters and disaster recovery teams.

How does the EML help rural fire brigades?

The EML provides funding for operating expenses of the Rural Fire Service Queensland. Rural fire brigades do not receive direct funding from the EML, however the EML funding supports rural fire brigades by providing fully funded Personal Protective equipment to volunteers, communications and essential firefighting equipment, training, grant funding and replacement appliances.

What is the Rural Fire Levy?

The Rural Fire Levy (RFL) is a separate levy to the EML, collected by Queensland local governments under the Local Government Act 2009. All local governments may collect a RFL from property owners serviced by rural fire brigades operating in their area.

The funding from the RFL is provided directly to rural fire brigades to fund their everyday costs, such as electricity bills, ground maintenance and fuel costs, in conjunction with donations and fundraising.

Where can I find out more?

Further information regarding the EML is available online at https://www.fire.qld.gov.au/about/EmergencyManagementFireandRescue-Levy.asp

For information regarding the RFL, contact your local government or Area Office.
Early in 2014 Brisbane Region Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) and good friend Rick Reddish came to visit me at the Caboolture Area Office. At the time I was organising the VCE workshop weekend and he told me he would not be able to attend. My response was “Well you better have a good excuse because this weekend is going to be amazing!” He said to me “Well I have cancer, is that a good enough excuse?”. From that moment on he has battled this insidious disease with so much determination and good humour. Rick had surgery in September 2014 to remove the tumour. During his long recovery phase, he was starting to get understandably bored. He came to me one day with an idea of acquiring a vehicle to be used as a Community Education/Engagement appliance. The idea was born and the planning began.

We both went to speak to Gary McCormack, the Regional Manager “Great idea, we definitely need it” was Gary’s response. “Let’s talk to Peter Varley”. So the three of us ended up in Mr Varley’s office to discuss how we would acquire one.

The first part of the plan was to snaffle up a decommissioned ambulance when one became available. In case that didn’t happen Rick decided to get a quote on a brand new Mercedes Sprinter. That idea got squashed pretty quickly as we just knew we couldn’t raise that amount of money. We would just need faith that a vehicle would appear.

The second step in the plan was to start engaging the VCEs and brigades. It was during a pre-season workshop when we launched the idea to form a ‘VCE Vehicle Committee’ to run the project. With Rick as the Project Manager, we workshoped how we would like the van to look, what we wanted to put in it and how it could be utilised. It is amazing the ideas that come out of a group of passionate like-minded people.

Rick and I worked with the ideas that everyone had given us and created an agenda for our first meeting. He sent out the meeting email and we were ready to start. There was one small glitch… we still didn’t have the vehicle. Rick’s attitude was “It doesn’t matter we will still go ahead with our planning.”

Then we hit our biggest brick wall, the cancer had returned. It had spread to the oesophagus and metastasized to the thyroid gland. This in turn paralysed one of his vocal cords greatly affecting his speech. Rick was unable to attend the meeting but the committee were determined to get this job done, especially for Rick. In the meantime we received confirmation that we got our van!

The night of the meeting we focused on how we could raise funds to ‘Bling’ up our van. It was inspiring to be a part of this team, so many talented people with big hearts just wanting to get this done so Rick could see his vision become real. I was driving to work the next day totally perplexed as to how we could raise the money we needed to finish this van. Once I arrived at work I sat down with our Area Director, Neil Kelso to discuss this predicament. “Don’t worry about it we can support you with the funds, draw up a list and we can make a start”. I felt so much relief at Neil’s statement. I rang Rick straight away.

Rick had just come out of a four week stint of intense radiation treatment which left him feeling really tired and weak, but he re-called the meeting and we worked on designing the van. He was full of energy and enthusiasm again, it was heartening to see. We are now well on the way to developing an asset that will be of immense value to the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and in turn Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the local community.

Lastly we had to name our van. It was unanimously decided to call it “RICK” the community education unit.

P.S. At the time of writing this article Rick was taken to hospital in the early hours of the morning in a great deal of pain. He is in our hearts and in our thoughts. Rick, we will all be here to help and support you through this. Stay strong, you have to be the one to take this van on its first drive.

Liane Henderson
A/Bushfire Safety Officer
Brisbane Region

Brisbane Region Community Education Vehicle
On Saturday 22 February 2015, the Springmount District Rural Fire Brigade had a medal presentation dinner. There were approximately 50 people in attendance and I was fortunate enough to attend such a wonderful night among great company.

There were four volunteers who received Medals. John and Grace Gargan and Brian and Irene Westwood all received Diligent and Ethical Service Medals for 32 years’ service to their brigade and community. John and Brian also received the National Medal for their service. None of the recipients were aware that they were to receive the medals until they were called up to the podium.

John and Grace Gargan also took the opportunity to speak about how wonderful the community had been, supporting them after they lost everything in a fire that burnt their home to the ground.

John explained that he never asked for help, but in rolled the community, some armed with tools to assist, others with clothes and items they needed, including the local RFBAQ representative John Thomson, who provided them with a new washing machine. The local brigades had assisted them further through fundraising, and John said that everyone felt like family.

The brigade took the opportunity to also thank Brian and Irene for their dedicated service, and for being wonderful, caring members of the community. Brian was a member of the Wondecla RFB before he moved to Springmount, so there is a lifetime of neighbour helping neighbour in his blood.

Now it mustn’t be over looked that the brigade has a nucleus and that would be Berna. She is an amazing woman, organizing all the food the neighbours, children, volunteers, myself. It was a great night.

I have worked with the brigade for about twelve years and I truly feel special to have a relationship with this wonderful family. If the rest of the world could get just a taste of this group of volunteers the world would be a better place to live in. Thankyou for making me feel so welcome.

Jamie Haskell
Area Director
Cairns Area Office
Utility Task Vehicles in Rural Fire Brigades

With the recently release of the RFBM 05.4 – All Terrain Vehicles, I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of my knowledge and experience with Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs).

Since 1994 Ravensbourne RFB have utilised ATV quads then UTV (side by side) machines to assist in brigade activities and believe we have the experience to provide advice on these machines, on board equipment and best utilisation criteria for the safest use of these machines.

Our first ATV was a 2wd 230cc quad with a deck fitted. I originally pictured best usage to be as an ultralight attack vehicle complete with 200ltr spray assembly, however over the time we have refined our machine to a UTV side x side complete with ROP’s, seatbelts and 2 person carrying. Our equipment includes chainsaws, winch and minimalized water on board.

These vehicles are utilised for tactical surveillance, crew transport and replenishment, post incident monitoring and pre-season scouting. This experience has fine-tuned our machine criteria to requiring
- advanced off road tyres
- aggressive tred and puncture resistance with a spare wheel
- tubeless repair plugs and 12V compressor.

Advanced suspension allows better and safer cross country abilities with an emphasis on a low centre of gravity stability and contained loading. UTV’s vary greatly, from mild tyres and suspension more suited to flat terrain utility use to aggressive components best suited to extreme off road. I believe our rural brigade utilization falls approximately 2/3 up the scale i.e. compact utility with advanced off road traversing capabilities.

Our equipment priority is on board GPS with Garmin topographical mapping and constant route recording. Zoomed up we can re-trace our course within metres safely. The Garmin GPS unit shows all tracks, regardless of gazetted status, and has been essential to cutting off the fire cross country by leading a grader through dense lantana onto a displayed track, thereby minimising the fire area rather than falling back to a road which could be kilometres away.

I carry two compact Stihl chainsaws essential to re-open tracks before, during and after the fire and occasionally dropping a troublesome tree that has the potential to fall across and breach the containment line.

A winch should be mandatory to assist track clearing and guaranteeing safety and successfully traversing any feature outside the operators comfort zone such as ascending/descending soft terrain, sand, swamp and water.

In some circumstances where the tactics are decided and it’s down to shear unit numbers and crew, the deck can be cleared to accept a UTV slip-on unit. A 250ltr tank with 12V multi adjustable gun or even a miniature petrol powered pump, is hugely effective in inaccessible spot overs or extending the back burn where it is impassable for the medium or light attack units.

Over 20 years we have recognized this as the prime and best suited utilisation of the UTV with ultra-light fire fighting attack as a secondary.

I don’t believe it is practical to train all members as this is a very specific and experience demanding position not easily filled in most all areas.

UTV operator selection criteria
- Sound bush skills is very important as ground fuel quantity and type assessment plays a big part as does weather patterns, or extending the back burn where it is impassable for the medium or light attack units.

With timing and topographical experience we have effortlessly traversed along the ridge on our UTV we have literally been able to extinguish kilometres of fire. Where we have a more defined and natural break in a water course below the ridge we will allow it to take out the block so to speak. However if the consequence of its continued progress was dire it certainly is a very real option.

One of our best training and essential hazard reduction burns is the Cressbrook Dam catchment area. It is a hazard of steep ridgy and semi-open grazing country with permanent water. Regularly the grass reaches 2-3 metres high and almost explodes in giant bounding waves up to 30meter steps when allowed to ignite up the steep ridges.

We have developed a strategy of igniting our containment line from the highest point down to the water in both directions like an inverted u shape. By co-ordinating our ignition we traverse out along the ridges just ahead of the containment line and conservatively drip torch in specific locations by using the UTV and then re-tracing our tracks back ahead of the containment line progress. They are similar to the out stretched fingers of your hand and we refer to them as finger fires. By exactly re-tracing the UTV’s tracks back from the point before it drops steeply down, there are no hesitations or surprises and by conservative drip torching, we recommend a drop every 10 metres in volatile ground fuel. Some of these ridges are up to 2kms long and the containment line holds its progress until the UTV returns and moves ahead to the next ridge.

With careful attention to timing we have achieved complete and cool ignition, all burning downhill with no scorching or mop up ignition necessary and all at our pace.

I would suggest that these two tactics are exclusive to the UTV’s cross country abilities and should now be part of 21st century fire control reference.

Geoff Udy
Ravensbourne Rural Fire Brigade
The Volunteer Emergency Services Training Command or VESTC as it more commonly referred, is based at the School of Fire and Emergency Services Training (SFEST) in Brisbane and consists of the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) State Training Team and the State Emergency Services (SES) State Training Team. Collectively, our staff design and develop the programs that support the educational needs of the volunteers that make up 89% of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) workforce.

Currently a major project is underway to work on fostering opportunities to improve collaboration and training delivery for RFSQ and SES volunteers with an initial focus on First Aid and Incident Management Training. Over the next few months, we’ll be rolling out the current SES First Aid training program to RFSQ staff and volunteer trainers to develop capability in RFSQ for First Aid delivery to rural fire brigade members.

Similarly, we’ll be introducing better access to Incident Management training by enhancing the capabilities of staff and volunteer trainers across RFSQ and SES. My team is also in the process of harmonising the 4x4 and chainsaw packages across RFSQ and SES to ensure that trainers from either stream have access to the best materials and the latest equipment and techniques.

Another cross-stream program that we are cultivating is the “Enterprise Trainer and Assessor Skillset” program that supports the volunteers training volunteers’ philosophy that we have been implementing. As we develop trainers for this program, we will be rolling out additional courses across Queensland.

In the RFSQ specific space, we are establishing Regional Review groups to work on reviewing delivery materials and assessment process for the entire RFSQ Volunteer Learning and Development Framework (VLDF) to ensure that the materials not only meet current standards, but also reflect the actual on the ground role of brigades. Regional consultation regarding the proposed VLDF 2.0, to replace the existing framework, will be begin shortly.

But don’t worry – if we make any changes you would not need to “redo” any training that you have already completed. In keeping in the spirit of reflecting on the actual role that brigades have in the community, we are introducing additional programs to meet identified needs in certain brigade types – this will enable your Area Office team to offer capability development to suit your local community.

We are keen to get as many ideas as possible so if you think of something we should know about, contact your Area Office to pass on your feedback.

Finally, we will be working to provide much more detailed information on training-related matters in this publication but also in a new bi-monthly publication called ‘Rural Training Matters!’ which will be first published in early August 2015. Watch this space!

Until then, stay safe!

John Moy
Executive Manager
Volunteer Emergency Services Training Command

RURAL FIRE BRIGADE MANUAL BUSINESS RULES

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:
- C6.4 – Working with Young People.

Major Changes:
- A3.11 – Hiring of Plant Equipment at Incidents

Minor Changes:
- D5.3 – Brigade Equipment – amended to reflect updates to the RFSQ Equipment Catalogue and FR001 – Brigade Requisition Form.
- D5.3.2 – Apply for Slip-On Allocation – amended to reflect updates to the FR001 – Brigade Requisition Form.
- D6.2 – Personal Protective Equipment – amended to reflect updates to the FR001 – Brigade Requisition Form.

Deletion:
- C1.2.2 – Volunteers Under 18 Years of Age
Incident Report

Incidents where RFSQ has been the primary responder by Type, 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident Type</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Fires</td>
<td>3,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permitted Burns Attended</td>
<td>2,215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Incidents</td>
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<td>Other Fires</td>
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<td>Vehicle Fires</td>
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<td>Rescues and Medical Emergencies</td>
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<td>Structural Fires</td>
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<td>Hazardous Condition</td>
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<td>Mobile Property Crashes</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other False Calls and Good Intent Calls</td>
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Incidents and Permitted Burns (RFSQ Primary Response) by Area*

For detailed data on incidents by area, please refer to the image or the provided link.
Incidents attended by Rural Brigades by Type, 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015

- Landscape Fires: 4,116
- Permitted Burns Attended: 2,289
- Other Incidents: 1,043
- Mobile Property Crashes: 357
- Other Fires: 343
- Vehicle Fires: 338
- Structural Fires: 200
- Hazardous Condition: 100
- Other False Calls and Good Intent Calls: 81
- Rescues and Medical Emergencies: 80

Incidents and Permitted Burns Attended by Rural Brigades by Area:

- South Coast: 1,217
- Caloundra: 998
- West Moreton: 955
- Toowoomba: 802
- Maryborough: 794
- Bundaberg: 665
- Caboolture: 626
- Maryborough: 598
- Townsville: 500
- Gladstone: 476
- Rockhampton: 373
- Cairns Peninsula: 285
- Mackay: 277
- Innisfail: 186
- Charters Towers And Cloncurry: 186
- Barcaldine And Emerald: 125
- Roma: 70
## Rural Fire Service Area Office Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICE</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>FAX</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North Coast Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bundaberg Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4153 3244</td>
<td>(07) 4151 2166</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Bundaberg@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Bundaberg@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryborough Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4190 4839</td>
<td>(07) 4190 4853</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Maryborough@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Maryborough@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caloundra Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5420 7517</td>
<td>(07) 5420 7521</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Caloundra@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Caloundra@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>South West Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Toowoomba Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4616 1945</td>
<td>(07) 4616 1939</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Toowoomba@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Toowoomba@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roma Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4622 2074</td>
<td>(07) 4622 1451</td>
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<td><strong>South East Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>West Moreton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 3294 4944</td>
<td>(07) 3294 4933</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.WestMoreton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.WestMoreton@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Coast Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5587 4101</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>Brisbane Region</strong></td>
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<td>Caboolture Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5420 1333</td>
<td>(07) 5420 1339</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Caboolture@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Caboolture@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>Far Northern Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cairns Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4232 5468</td>
<td>(07) 4051 2017</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Cairns@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Cairns@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Innisfail Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4061 0650</td>
<td>(07) 4061 0651</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Innisfail@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Innisfail@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>Northern Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Townsville Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4769 9082</td>
<td>(07) 4799 7184</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Townsville@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Townsville@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Charters Towers Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4761 5130</td>
<td>(07) 4787 4708</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.ChartersTowers@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.ChartersTowers@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>Central Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mackay Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4965 6641</td>
<td>(07) 4965 6640</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Mackay@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Mackay@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barcaldine Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4651 1190</td>
<td>(07) 4651 1803</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Barcaldine@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Barcaldine@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerald Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4983 7580</td>
<td>(07) 4983 7585</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Emerald@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Emerald@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockhampton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4938 4736</td>
<td>(07) 4922 2768</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Rockhampton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Rockhampton@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gladstone Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4899 2200</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Gladstone@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Gladstone@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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