Assistant Commissioner’s Message

The last four months has been a period of intense activity and announcements for the Rural Fire Service (RFS). I would like to start by thanking all volunteers for your participation during Operation Cool Burn. The extensive mitigation and preparation work undertaken by you all will assist in ensuring communities are prepared for the fire season.

2016 Volunteer Summits

The 2016 Volunteer Summits held in Townsville in May and on the Gold Coast in June were fantastic events and they gave the organisation the chance to make some major announcements and launch some changes within the Service.

The new uniform and logo were both unveiled in Townsville, and the Commissioner made the extremely popular announcement regarding the funding of fuel and maintenance for RFS vehicles, and the roll out of Office 365 to all Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) volunteers. In addition to this, the new Volunteer Charter was signed by the Commissioner and President of the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) at the event on the Gold Coast.

We were lucky enough to have QFES Commissioner Katarina Carrol, Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing and Deputy Commissioner Doug Smith present at both events and they were supported by some exceptional presentations provided by both staff and volunteers.

RFS was extremely pleased to be able to host close to 500 attendees across both events. For the first time this year, the events were held in a workshop format, with each attendee participating as part of a facilitated table, and with most presentations being focussed on receiving input and feedback from volunteers.

I would like to thank everyone who came for their contribution to the events. The feedback gathered at the Summits will be used to further inform current and future work being undertaken by the Department. The opportunity to engage with our workforce at events like this is invaluable, and I hope all volunteers who attended have the chance to share what they learnt with their fellow volunteers.

RFS Logo

As I mentioned above the new RFS Logo was announced at the Summit in Townsville. This logo has now received approval from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and we are currently finalising the Corporate Identity guidelines that will support the logo. We look forward to providing you with more information shortly.
RFS Appointments

Alan Gillespie - Regional Manager, South East Region

Alan has over 25 years of senior operational leadership experience in a rural fire service environment. Alan is highly experienced in landscape fire management and holds a broad range of qualifications within the AIIMS and disaster management framework. He has been recognised and awarded with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), National Medal and Commendation for Outstanding Service. Alan remains a long serving volunteer firefighter and has been a dedicated advocate for the advancement of volunteers when performing varied roles within the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland.

Peta Miller-Rose – Manager, Bushfire Safety Officer

Peta joined the RFS as a volunteer in 1999, going on to become an Auxiliary firefighter in 2003. In 2007, Peta progressed to a Rural Fire Instructor before moving into the permanent ranks as a Brigade Training and Support Officer, South Eastern Region in 2008. In 2010, Peta was successful in attaining one of the inaugural Mitigation and Education Officer positions (now known as Bushfire Safety Officers) and has been acting as the Manager Bushfire Safety Officer for the past few years. Peta has had many achievements and highlights in her career with QFES, including a principal role in developing the Volunteer Community Educator (VCE) program, being awarded an Australia Day Medallion in 2011 and the Australian Fire Service Medal in 2014.

Neil Parker - Area Director, Cairns

Neil Parker joined RFS in 2012 as the Area Training and Support Officer Innisfail, and in 2015 was appointed to Inspector, Area Director Innisfail. Neil has relieved as the Area Director in Cairns and Rockhampton as well as acting as Superintendent, Regional Manager Northern Region. Prior to joining QFES, Neil performed various roles within Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Environment and Resource Management. Neil is also a volunteer member of Quingilli Behana Gorge Rural Fire Brigade.

Michael Thomson - Area Director, Townsville

Michael Thomson has worked within the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services environment since 2007 when joining as an Operational Capability Officer. In 2014 he acted in the role of a Brigade Training and Support Officer for a three month period, and began acting as an Inspector, Area Director Townsville from March 2016. Michael is a RFS volunteer and experienced Rural Fire Instructor (RFI). Michael also volunteers for SES, is a Peer Support Officer and has worked as an SES Local Controller.

Andrew Houley – Area Director, Mackay

Andrew Houley joined RFS in 1998 as a District Training Officer for Mackay and Barcaldine Districts. In 2005, Andrew was appointed to Inspector as the Area Director for Mackay and in 2009 he left to join the private sector however always maintaining an affiliation with RFS in varied capacities.

Bruce Thompson – Area Director, Bundaberg

Bruce Thompson joined RFS this year as an Acting Inspector, Area Director Maryborough. Prior to joining QFES, Bruce was a Ranger in Charge with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Bruce was the Cherbourg Fire Warden from 1998 – 2008 and the Woodgate Fire Warden from 2014.

Konrad Sawczynski - Area Director, Maryborough

Konrad Sawczynski joined RFS in 2015 as an Acting Training Resource Officer before attaining the role as Acting Inspector, RFS State Training Manager. Prior to joining RFS, Konrad was a Station Commander with NSW Fire Brigades and Inspector with the NSW Rural Fire Service. Konrad has performed years of dedicated service as a volunteer and Instructor with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Steve Roberts - Area Training and Support Officer (ATSO), Burnett

Steve Roberts has a volunteer and auxiliary fire service background and has worked in the RFS Caboolture, Caloundra and Maryborough Area Offices as an Acting Brigade Training and Support Officer and Acting Area Training and Support Officer.

Goetz Graf - Area Training and Support Officer (ATSO), Innisfail

Goetz Graf joined the Rural Fire Service in February 2010 as a volunteer member of the Little Mulgrave Rural Fire Brigade. His volunteer service includes numerous deployments as an Incident Management Team member and an expert in Air Operations. During his employment with the RFS in Cairns and Innisfail, he has acted as an Rural Fire Instructor and Brigade Training and Support Officer and Bushfire Safety Officer. In April 2016, he was permanently appointed to ATSO for Innisfail.

Shane Hopton - Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO), Gladstone

Shane joined RFS as a volunteer at the Eton Rural Fire Brigade in July 2010 and in April 2013 was appointed to the position of Rural Fire Instructor within the Mackay Area. In August 2015, Shane was successful at obtaining an Expression of Interest to act in the role of BTSO Gladstone. Shane’s exceptional operational experience, knowledge of supporting volunteers and brigades has been a key part of the team with the establishment of the new Gladstone Area.
Mark Russell - Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO), Bundaberg

Mark Russell has a volunteer background and has worked in the RFS Bundaberg Area Office as an Acting Brigade Training and Support Officer. Mark is a volunteer with the Mount Perry Rural Fire Brigade and has held various positions in the Brigade including First Officer.

Michael Claffey - Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO), Bundaberg

Michael Claffey has a volunteer background and has worked in the RFS Bundaberg Area Office as the Acting Brigade Training and Support Officer over his employment with QFES. Michael has extensive land management and fire experience in Government through his employment in Forestry and has a broad range of experience in government organisations.

Steve Brittingham - Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO), Caboolture

Steve Brittingham has been a volunteer with RFS for approximately 25 years. During this time, he has been a fire warden, the First Officer of Elimbah Rural Fire Brigade, and a volunteer Air Observer working with Air Operations out of Archerfield. After retiring from his successful strawberry farm in 2016, Steve took on the role of acting BTSO in the Caboolture Area. He was appointed permanently to the position in August and is a valuable member of the team bringing with him a wealth of experience in supporting brigades.

Garry Fordham - Brigade Training and Support Officer (BTSO), West Moreton

A volunteer with RFS for ten years, Garry Fordham has over 25 years’ experience working in customer support and management. His knowledge and expertise has led to his permanent appointment to the role of BTSO in the West Moreton Area. He will be a valuable asset to the RFS.

Mark Saunders - Bushfire Safety Officer (BSO), West Moreton

In May 2016, Mark Saunders was permanently appointed to the role of BSO. Mark has a long history with RFS and a strong background in disaster management. His skills and experience will be an asset for the West Moreton Area and South East Region.

Appliance Build

The 2015-16 appliance build has seen a total of 56 appliances built and delivered to our front line. This has included six new 7000L regional tankers, four dual cab Ford Ranger light attacks, 11 FUSO Canter medium attacks, 17 Single Cab Isuzu medium attacks and 18 Dual Cab Isuzu medium attacks.

The FUSO Canter design and build has seen an amalgamation of highly desired features including 1500L of water, a high and low pressure multi-pump and chainsaw locker whilst still having all of the off road ability of the historical Canter.

The 2016-17 build ordering and design is underway with 53 appliances planned for construction. These will be made up of, 4 dual cab Ford Ranger light attacks, 15 FUSO Canter medium attacks, 18 Single Cab Isuzu medium attacks and 16 Dual Cab Isuzu medium attacks.

Annual State funded Slip On Unit allocation

From late August through to early October the annual state funded allocation of 500L low pressure slip on units will be distributed to the recipient brigades. This year has seen an increase in this allocation to 80 slip on units and speed loaders and these units are now being fitted with a Honda motor. These units are primarily allocated to Primary Producer brigades or Rural classification brigades who do not receive a levy.

Volunteer Survey

I’d like to thank everyone who participated in the 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey. Volunteers are recognised as an important part of QFES and a key objective of the Department is to empower volunteerism by recognising, respecting and valuing volunteers and the work they do.

The Volunteer Survey was your chance to give your feedback, and we now look forward to being able to use that feedback to inform our future and contribute to our decision-making. We look forward to releasing the results of the survey once they become available.

Bushfire Season

On a final note, we have now headed into bushfire season and with the record breaking temperatures, record rains in some areas, and the indication from the Bureau of Meteorology that we may be heading towards a La Nina weather pattern, this all makes for an interesting and potentially challenging fire season ahead. I would like to thank you all for your work and commitment ahead of the fire season and urge you to stay safe and support each other.

Gary McCormack
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service
North Coast brigades were excited to be assisting members of the local indigenous community of the Sunshine Coast to conduct an environmental burn at Bells Creek, and in turn, helping the ecological restoration of the future Environment Protection Zone as part of Stockland’s Aura development.

This area is in the Bells Creek catchment and the burn will be conducted using traditional fire management to maximise biodiversity as the ecosystem regenerates after a long history of pine plantation and grazing.

As part of the Aura Community Stewardship Programme, facilitated by South East Queensland Catchments, Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation and Kabi Kabi family members will be learning from traditional fire experts Victor Stefferson from Cape York and Oliver Costello from Northern New South Wales and undertaking trials on the peninsular of land between North and South Bells Creeks.

Nigel Terrell
Acting Bushfire Safety Officer
Caloundra Area Office
Rural Fire Service

Burn plan of “Little Italy” approximately 50 Hectares at Bells Creek.

Thanks to Susie Chapman, Northern Area Manager for South East Queensland of Coastal Catchments Limited.
This year the Rural Fire Service (RFS) was extremely pleased to be able to host two Volunteer Summits, with the first event held in Townsville in May and the second held on the Gold Coast in June.

With the addition of the second event, RFS was able to offer 400 volunteers from across the state the opportunity to attend the event and participate in a range of workshop and information sessions.

The program was packed, with presentations given by staff and volunteers alike. Seven key note sessions were delivered to the full group of attendees across the events including addresses from:

- Katarina Carroll, Commissioner Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES);
- Mike Wassing, Deputy Commissioner Emergency Service Volunteers (QFES);
- Doug Smith, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Strategy Officer for the Capability and Performance Division (QFES);
- Tom Dawson, Assistant Commissioner RFS with Alan Gillespie, President of the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ);
- Yvonne Thomson of Speewah Rural Fire Brigade;
- Caitlin Major, Media Officer (QFES); and
- Geoff Richardson Volunteer Community Educator Area Co-ordinator, Tamborine Mountain Rural Fire Brigade together with Peta Miller-Rose, Manager Bushfire Safety.

The round-table format of the events allowed attendees the chance to discuss each topic amongst their groups, led by a table facilitator. In addition to the key note speakers, the tables were split into three streams to view a range of additional presentations.
Each group participated in:

- Brigade Capability and Resilience (Capability and Response Agreement),
- Psychological First Aid (Dealing with Distressed People: Caring for Yourself and Others),
- The Simple things often Help us the Most,
- Do you know your Local Patch (Townsville Only),
- Office 365 for QFES Volunteers (Gold Coast Only),
- Emergency Service Volunteers: Training for a New Future,
- Low Intensity Burning – Keeping Cool Burn Cool,
- Strike Team Deployments – Are you Prepared?,
- Fire in Indigenous Ecosystems, and
- Building Brigade Culture through conversations.

Presentations from the summits were provided to attendees however they are also available on the Volunteer Portal. Should you have trouble downloading the pdf’s please contact ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au.

The questions raised and input provided throughout the event have been recorded and will be used to inform current and future work undertaken by the department.

The Summit was supported by a number of trade and appliance displays, giving our attendees the chance to see and learn about new products and initiatives. The entire event provided the chance to meet, network and socialise with volunteers and staff and everyone sat back in the evening to relax after a full day with dinner and the comedic stylings of Scott Williams in Townsville and Jeff Green on the Gold Coast.

Both events were resounding successes thanks to the amazing participation of our attendees, our presenters and our trade displays. The next set of volunteer summits is set to kick off in 2018. Keep an eye out in 2017 for your chance to nominate to attend.
Rural Fire Service Week 2016

June was a busy month for many of our brigades with Rural Fire Service (RFS) Week kicking off on Sunday 5 June and running to Saturday 11 June to celebrate the dedication and commitment of the 36,000 men and women across Queensland who volunteer their time to help keep our communities safe.

55 brigades across the state supported the week by holding events in their local communities, promoting their brigades. Events held were brigade open days, information stands, attendance at local annual shows, raffles, market displays, letter drops, BBQs and Family Fun Days.

Congratulations and thank you to all volunteers who contributed to RFS Week and to all volunteers for the fantastic work you do. The participating brigades included:

In Barcaldine and Emerald Area:
- Gemfields
- Iona

In Bundaberg Area:
- Branyan
- Gregory River
- Tirroan

In Burnett Area:
- South Nanango

In Caboolture Area:
- Dayboro and District
- Mount Kilcoy Sandy Creek
- Narangba
- Ocean View
- Stoney Creek
- Wamuran

In Cairns Area:
- Coen
- Julatten

In Caloundra Area:
- Eudlo
- Federal
- Glass House Mountains
- Ilkley and District
- Landsborough
- Maleny
- Palmwoods

In Charters Towers/Cloncurry Area:
- Southern Cross

In Gladstone Area:
- Captain Creek
- Rosedale
- Turkey Beach
- Warburg
- Westowe

In Innisfail Area:
- Wondecla

In Mackay Area:
- Habana
- Seaforth District

In Maryborough Area:
- Brooloo Mary River
- Burring Heads
- Cedar Pocket Greens Creek
- Curra
- Kilkivan
- Nikenbah
- Wolvi

In Rockhampton Area:
- Belmont
- Bondoola
- Bouldercombe
- The Caves.

In Roma Area:
- Thallon Town

In South Coast Area:
-Currumbin Valley
- Mount Alford
- Tallebudgera Valley
- Tamborine

In Toowoomba Area:
- Braemar
- Cabarlah
- Euekey
- Gowrie Little Plain
- Kogan and District

In Townsville Area:
- Black River and Districts
- Bowen Delta
- Rangewood

In West Moreton Area:
- Gatton Springdale
This time last year Queensland was experiencing a strong El Nino with the likelihood of below average rainfall and above average temperatures. 2015 was indeed warmer than average with the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) Annual climate report concluding that, “eight of Australia’s ten warmest years on record have occurred between 2002 and 2015. The past three years have all been in the top five (ranking first, third and fifth).”

This clear temperature signature was in contrast to the rainfall pattern across Queensland during the 2015 fire season. Some inland and central parts received record low rainfall, while parts of Northern and most of the South East received average rainfall. This resulted in a variable fire season across the state with below average in inland parts, above or near average in the North and below average in the South.

Interstate there were catastrophic fires in WA, SA and on Christmas Day in Victoria. The Predictive Services Unit (PSU) deployed Fire Behaviour Analysts (FBAN) to support the Waroona fires in WA and the largest ever Australian fire fight in Tasmania during January, February and March. FBAN were deployed from across the State and included permanent, part time and volunteers.

In 2016 we saw April and May break long term temperature records. This set Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) up for an early start to the fire season. This was followed with record rains in the top end during May and in the South West, followed up by flash flooding in the South East in early June.

The BOM outlook indicates a La Nina is likely this spring. Typically during La Nina, spring rainfall is above average over northern, central and eastern Australia. All this makes for a challenging fire season ahead.

The good news is that we are better prepared than ever. The PSU has delivered training this year in all regions to all parts of QFES. This has included six one day fire weather courses, one fire weather two day course, four fuel hazard assessment two day refresher and FBAN skills maintenance courses and Portable Automatic Weather Station (PAWS) sessions. The work undertaken in Central Region with local volunteer brigades, Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Fire and Rescue staff post TC Marcia has continued in 2016 to build on the understanding of the increased risk.

Both Phoenix and SABRE continue to be developed with QFES recently acquiring a software system that will provide a platform to deliver decision support to the fire ground, IMTs, ROC and state based decision makers, in one of the most innovative environments in Australia. There is significant interest nationally in SABRE as all agencies recognise the need to account for uncertainty in forecasting fire behaviour. An interactive product will be available to RFS staff and volunteers during the 2016 fire season.

The PSU is looking forward to supporting our RFS staff and volunteers using the most up to date science, tools, skills and technology available again this year. We are committed to continuous improvement so that we can provide better support than ever this fire season. This can only be achieved if you provide feedback so that we can enhance the services and products we provide.

Andrew Sturgess
Manager Predictive Services Unit
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
On 24 May 2016 the Teewah Rural Fire Brigade assisted Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) to conduct a controlled burn on the northern and western fire breaks around the village that back onto the National Park.

Five units from QPWS, one unit from Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM), two appliances from Tinbeerwah (41 & 51) and the 51 appliance from Noosa north shore brigade along with our 51 all participated in the burn. The crew lit up the North East corner of the fire break first then worked our way around the western side of the break. This burn takes place every two years to keep our little part of the world safe from any wild fires that might happen through the summer.

Clay Stjernquist
First Officer
Teewah Rural Fire Brigade
Bushfire 2016: Connecting Science, People and Practice

Bushfire 2016 is a conference a decade in the making, hosted and coordinated by the South East Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium (SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium), this Australian-wide conference will be held from the 28th to the 30th of September, at the University of Queensland, Brisbane. Bushfire 2016 will be an engaging, informative and inspiring conference squarely aimed at connecting fire scientists and ecologists with on-ground fire operators, fire managers and other fire professionals.

With a focus on applied fire ecology, fire management research, Traditional Owner fire projects and collaborative fire programs, we aim to showcase successful partnerships that translate science into practice for beneficial on-ground fire management and environmental outcomes, whilst supporting land owners, land managers and scientists. Bushfire 2016 is a chance to engage and network with Australia’s best fire scientists and on-ground managers – an opportunity to learn something new about fire and build invaluable partnerships.

**Keynote Speakers & the Program**

The Bushfire 2016 Organising Committee are thrilled to announce the following internationally recognised keynote speakers:

- **Professor Ross Bradstock**  
  Director - Centre for Environmental Risk Management of Bushfires, University of Wollongong;
- **Dr Neil Burrows**  
  Senior Principal Research Scientist - Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia; and
- **Associate Professor Alan York**  
  Head - Fire & Biodiversity Research Program, University of Melbourne.

The program will include two concurrent sessions running all day Wednesday and Thursday. Keynote speakers will be featured in the morning and after lunch. As much as possible, time will be allowed for questions and discussion, after presentations or at the end of a themed session. Wednesday evening includes a catered poster session, Thursday evening an (affordable) informal dinner and a field trip on Friday to North Stradbroke Island. A permanent poster display will be assembled in the main break out space, along with displays for sponsors and stallholders. Further information on the program, themes and social activities will be provided soon.

Session themes that are proposed for inclusion include:

- fire, flora and fungi;
- fire and fauna (including vertebrate pests);
- Indigenous and Traditional Owner fire projects;
- fire management for linear corridors (i.e. power infrastructure lines, rail, road);
- climate change, soils and fire;
- fire and land management;
- collaborative fire projects (i.e. successful stakeholder and community engagement); and
- fire, risk and biodiversity.

As the oldest collaborative organisation of its kind in Australia, the SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium has an extensive network of sponsors, contributors and supporters, both in SEQ and interstate. This includes over 850 people on our e-news list, over 40 members in our Research Working Group and regular over-subscription to our very successful biannual forum series (i.e. one-day mini conference). We have extensive experience and expertise in organising such events and are excited about the calibre of speakers and supporting organisations involved in Bushfire 2016. As such, and based on interest to date, we expect to attract delegates from across Queensland and the nation.

www.fireandbiodiversity.org.au

Craig Welden  
SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium  
Bushfire 2016: Connecting Science, People and Practice
A distinguished array of guests gathered with past and present members of the Gregory River Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) to celebrate 40 years of service to the community on Sunday 5 June, kicking off Rural Fire Service (RFS) Week.

Current brigade chairman, Geoff McCarthy, was at the very first meeting where 32 landholders in the Gregory and Elliott River areas on 8 June 1976. In his address, Geoff reminisced that it was established as Elliott River Bush Fire Brigade to protect newly developing cane lands and property in the area. John Cardillo was elected as the first Secretary and held the position for 18 years and Wally McCarthy was elected First officer. It was a pleasure to have Cliff Vacher, a founding member of the brigade, attend the celebrations with his wife Coral.

Geoff acknowledged the former Isis Shire Council, in particular Bill Trevor, and RFS for their support with the purchase of our current fire truck in 2000 and construction of a new Fire Station in 2008 which Isis Shire made possible prior to amalgamation with funds that had been set aside for the purpose. He also acknowledged financial contributions from Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland (RFBAQ) represented on the day by local area representative, Marilyn King. He paid tribute to the Rotary Club of Childers for laying the slab for the new station and for coming back to cook the BBQ for the birthday celebrations.

He said the day was really a celebration of 40 years of service by volunteers both past and present. He thanked neighbouring brigades for attending the celebrations and for many years of co-operation and looked forward to their continued support. The fantastic support of all the staff who have worked at the RFS Bundaberg Area Office, in particular Phil Williams, Acting Area Director, and Tony Johnstone (Acting Chief Superintendent), who both attended the day and many others too numerous to mention.

Geoff stated that in the 40 years the brigade has existed there have been a lot of changes, including a name change from Elliott River Bush Fire Brigade to Gregory River Rural Fire Brigade for communication purposes. The brigade has gone from a poorly equipped group of farmers who met every year or two or as necessary at fires, to a community brigade equipped with a decent level of assets and who meet regularly and conduct training and are able to respond and fight fires over a wide area. He said it had been a privilege to be a small part of the brigade over 40 years.

Among the invited guests was Minister for Agriculture & Fisheries, the Honourable Leanne Donaldson who addressed the guests and unveiled a memorial plaque rededicating the station to the late Darren Burfitt who sadly was killed in an accident 20 years ago. Darren’s father, the late David Burfitt was a former member and his brother Glen is a current member. The Burfitt family donated the land on which the fire station is now built.

The Minister also presented a National Medal to Grant Davies of neighbouring Bingera Weir RFB recognising his long and diligent service protecting life and property.

The brigade was happy to welcome other special guests including RFS North Coast Regional Manager, Peter Hollier, the Honourable Keith Pitt, member for Hinkler, the Honourable Stephen Bennett, Member for Burnett, Bundaberg Regional Council Mayor Jack Dempsey and Deputy Mayor Bill Trevor.

Dorothy Bunn, wife of the late John Bunn who was a member for many years, graciously cut the birthday cake and reminisced about the good old days then everyone enjoyed a lovely BBQ lunch and a catch up chat with old and new friends.

With some fresh new members and a dedicated band of ‘old’ members the Gregory River Rural Fire Brigade looks forward to serving the community for many more years to come.

Maureen McCarthy
Treasurer
Gregory River Rural Fire Brigade
Fire Management Program in the Southern Gulf of Carpentaria

The Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, along with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and other property stakeholders, have been working together for the last 10 years to improve fire management with the goals to reduce wildfire threats and enhance the biodiversity of landscapes in the Southern Gulf Catchment bio region.

The history of fire in the region prior to this program showed that 90% of annual fires occurred in the late season. These late season fires burnt over 45% of the project area on an annual basis, a total area of over 30,000 square kilometres within the 68,000 square kilometres that this project covers. After decades of poorly managed fire, visual signs of degrading vegetation were starting to show in landscapes across the region.

This program considers fire to be an integral part of the landscape. At the conception of the program all stakeholders came together for a fresh start to fire management; looking collectively at where we wanted to go with the project, and importantly, understanding where we have been. This approach involved talking to Traditional Owners and property managers in the region and recording and collating all the information gathered to develop the Gulf Savannah Fire Management Guidelines. These guidelines are now used across the region and continue to inform our fire management practices today.

Once we had developed the guidelines we then looked at how to move forward together to change fire management in order to enhance biodiversity, improve grass loads for production and protect infrastructure. Our program is undertaking the following actions:

- Maintaining or improving the productive capacity, ecological function and cultural values of the land, and the extent of native vegetation.
- Monitoring the enhancement of biodiversity in the landscape using the best methodology available with plots on country to show the enhancement of flora and fauna species.
- Using best practice fire management in the region and training all stakeholders to ensure effective delivery.
- Determining and promoting the application of appropriate fire regimes through the Gulf Savannah Fire management Guidelines.
- Building strategic relationships between Traditional Owners, rural fire brigades, the pastoral industry and NT and Qld State Agencies.
- Carrying out research into the relationship between fire regimes and biodiversity function to determine best fire management practices for the region.
- Monitoring and tracking of fire scars utilising NAFI and associated changes to biodiversity across the region.
- Understanding and using Traditional Aboriginal fire management skills and knowledge to effectively manage biodiversity through fire regimes.
- Increasing community participation in fire activities, by forming fire management work groups and developing education programs such as annual fire management workshops.

Kevin Anderson
Burketown Rural Fire Brigade

Left: Fire and Flora vegetation and plot monitoring
Above: Fauna plot monitoring
Little Boxes Made of Ticky Tacky

If you had gone down to the woods (Glenfern) today (last Wednesday) you would have been sure of a big surprise, for there were “Little boxes on the hillside, Little boxes made of ticky tacky”. A scenario had been set up for a practical demonstration of a wildfire surrounding a home.

Rural volunteers, including young volunteers from Kilcoy State High School completing their Certificate II Public Safety Firefighting Operations, participated in planning and practical firefighting skills to effectively manage a wildfire on a local property threatening a structure. Volunteers were able to confidently put their knowledge and theoretical training into practice as they attacked the fire. Team leaders assisted all firefighters to make assessments of the layout of the land, the vegetation, wind direction, water supply and appropriate extinguishment. Firefighters used the new Government Wireless Network (GWN) radios to effectively communicate on the fire ground and to the control centre.

The safety of all crew members was paramount and all returned to the station for the final briefing without incident.

This scenario was a controlled burn. Members of the public are reminded that a permit is required to light any fire over 2m x 2m. This permit is obtained from your local fire warden. Conditions in the Somerset Shire are currently very dry and some areas are not issuing any permits.

Young volunteers meet at the Kilcoy Fire Station fortnightly on Wednesdays to complete modules toward their certificate.

Reference: “Little Boxes” a song written and composed by Malvina Reynolds and “The Teddy Bears’ Picnic”, songwriter Jimmy Kennedy

Graham King
Area Training and Support Officer
Caboolture Area Office
Rural Fire Service

Left: Firefighters in action saving the home.
Below: Rural Fire Appliance arrives at the scene of the incident
North Coast Region would like to congratulate a number of volunteers who were recognised recently for their outstanding service to the Rural Fire Service:

**Rural Fire Service Week - My Volunteer Award**
- Mr. Ian Richardson
  First Officer
  Brooklands Rural Fire Brigade

**‘Diligent & Ethical Service’ Medal**
- Mr. Les Lane
  Group Officer – Nanango Group
  First Officer – Taromeo Rural Fire Brigade

**‘Diligent & Ethical Service’ Medal**
- Mr. Alan Livingstone
  2nd Officer & Equipment Officer
  Taromeo Rural Fire Brigade

Jo Allen
Administrative Officer, Burnett Area Office
Rural Fire Service

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The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) Community Benefit Funds Unit (CBFU) distributes revenue from gaming taxes to various not-for-profit community groups throughout Queensland. Grants up to the value of $35,000 are available and Rural Fire Brigades (RFB) are eligible to apply for funding. The grants are run four times throughout the year.

Rounds 87 and 88 of this grant have recently been completed with the following brigades successfully receiving funding:

**Round 87**
- Allandale RFB - $31,818.18
- Bilyana RFB - $31,818.18
- Paluma RFB - $18,181.82
- Mount Isa RFB - $31,818.18
- Stone river RFB - $31,818.18
- Grant RFB - $5,304.00
- Home Creek RFB - $5,304.00
- Aldershot RFB - $2,277.69
- Tiaro RFB - $31,240.00

**Round 88**
- Southbrook Linthorpe RFB – $31,818.18
- Flinders Peak RFB - $31,818.18
- Coowonga RFB - $28,813.09
- Captain Creek RFB - $31,818.18
- Mount Fox RFB - $31,818.18

Should you wish to investigate your Brigade’s eligibility for the next round of OLGR grants, contact Bianca Moss at bianca.moss@qfes.qld.gov.au.

Deborah Baumann
Rural Fire Service
From 2004 to 2006 large late season wildfires devastated most of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

In August 2007 a stakeholders meeting was held to document lessons learnt from past wildfires and to coordinate mitigation activities. In 2014 Burke Shire was divided into three location specific Fire Management Groups (FMGs), these locations being, Gregory, Hells Gate Roadhouse and Burketown.

The forming of location specific FMGs has resulted in a greater representation by stakeholders. The Gregory FMG draws its membership from traditional owners, pastoral properties, mining companies, national parks, Bushfires Northern Territory (NT) and government land management agencies, from Gregory and west into the NT.

The Hells Gate Fire Management Group draws its membership from a similar geographic area and as with the Gregory group has total representation from all land managers, with participants traveling upwards of 200 kilometres each way to attend meetings. In 2015 a meeting was held at Robinson River to coordinate the early season burning program with the traditional owners on both sides of the Queensland and Northern Territory border. The Burketown FMG deals with specific risks around Burketown and east to the Carpentaria Shire boundary.

The results of the early season burning program and an education program conducted by the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Council, Land and Sea Rangers as to the damage caused by late season fires, has significantly reduced the incidence of late season fires as shown in the NAFI fire scar mapping (left), the large 2014 September fire scar was largely on a property that hadn’t completed early season mitigation activities.

Each year dependant on weather, a training exercise is held at Hells Gate to train new rangers and brigade members and to start off the early season mitigation activities. The early season mitigation program in Burke Shire is heavily reliant on support from the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (CLCAC).

The CLCAC has obtained funding for a Fire and Weeds program, this program aims to reduce the damage caused to the environment by late season wild fires and invasive weeds.
Four ranger groups are involved in the Fire and Weeds program, including one from the NT, the early season mitigation program uses ground crews and aerial ignition to create strategic fire breaks or deepen-out existing natural barriers, to lessen the impact of late season fires. The fight against invasive weeds such as rubber vine, calotrope and parkinsonian, involves the chemical spraying and cut, swab and basil bark treatment. The use of late season hot fire has proven to be a highly successful in the treatment of rubber vine, this often requires the use early season cool burns to create a firebreak then the use of an aerial gel-torch to initiate the self-combustion of the vine.

Prior to each burning program reference and control plots are examined, all flora and fauna is recorded, a fuel sample is taken and weighed, these sites are inspected at various intervals after the fire to monitor the regrowth.

Gavin Fryar  
Area Director, Charters Towers and Cloncurry Area Rural Fire Service

Monitoring biodiversity reference plots as part of the 2016 Hells Gate Fire Exercise
2016 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games
— SUNSHINE COAST, AUS —

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Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games

Call for Team QFES competitors!

Registrations are now open for the 16th Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games to be held on the Sunshine Coast from 8-15 October 2016.

The biennial event is being held in Queensland for the first time since 2001, and is shaping up to be bigger, better and more inclusive than previous events, with Games organisers expecting as many as 3500 participants and up to 8000 supporters and spectators.

All QFES personnel over the age of 18 are eligible to register — whether paid or volunteer, operational or support, full-time or part-time — so get your registrations in for individual and team entries in more than 50 sports categories, from basketball, cycling, swimming and triathlon to crossfit, billiards, freshwater angling and stand-up paddle board.

QFES entrants will have the opportunity to represent the department and the state as they compete against police and emergency service staff and volunteers from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands.

Teams must be registered by Friday 9 September, with all entries closing COB Friday 23 September.

For more information including a full list of sports categories, eligibility and entry requirements, and the registration process please visit: http://www.apandesgames.com.au/

Fire Trucks at School

Last Friday, Rural and Auxiliary firefighters worked together to provide information to children at the Under 8s Day presentation at Kilcoy State School.

Blazer and Evil Knevil assisted firefighters to provide vital information to the children. These young children learned the emergency services number – 000; how to escape a smoke filled room – Get Down Low and Go, Go, Go; what to do if your clothes catch on fire – Stop, Drop and Roll as well as information on good fires and bad fires. Young volunteers completing their Certificate II Public Safety Firefighting Operations were kept extremely busy handing out ‘show bags’ full of information and activities.

Evil Knevil and Blazer had some adventures of their own when they wandered away to see the reptile display. Blazer was very uncertain about handling the python, but soon learned that just like fires there are good snakes and bad snakes.

Graham King, Area Training and Support Officer, said he was very impressed with the ability of the children to remember fire safety information. Joining a brigade means more than being available to fight fires or respond to emergencies in the community, assisting to deliver programs to inform and educate people is an important role.

There may be some future firefighters amongst these young children but regardless of their chosen careers, they have been provided a good understanding of fire safety. If this is able to prevent a possible disaster it is certainly a lesson well learned.

Graham King
Area Training and Support Officer
Caboolture Area Office, Rural Fire Service
A diverse and highly skilled work force
Building caring and connected communities
Working together
Business solutions to support interoperability

Theoretical training in Firefighter Minimum Skills (FMS) was presented to a diverse group including Straddie Camping, Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) Rangers, Naree Budjong Djara (NBD) Rangers, Parks and Rural Fire Service (RFS).

This multi-agency group were able to work together to develop skills and strategies to enable positive outcomes for the betterment of the community.

Over the two days, 9-10 May, participants gained a thorough understanding on the aspects of wildfire. Whilst planning and working as a team all contributed to developing a knowledge base of safety, the use and maintenance of equipment as well as fire behaviours.

The course involved theoretical and practical activities. The wildfire simulator was utilised to demonstrate fire behaviour, fuel loadings and aspects of landscape. Practical experiences on portable radios enabled participants to develop effective communication skills and an overview of AIIMS/IMS concepts promoted an understanding of management control, co-ordination and command of incidents with all agencies.

North Stradbroke Rural Fire Brigade members were on hand during the two days assisting with practical activities and the use of the fire appliance and slip on unit.

One participant representing QYAC Rangers commented that this is the first time he has felt a real sense of team cooperation and congratulated RFS for acting on this initiative.

Now it is back to their own agencies to practice these skills before being assessed to become qualified firefighters.

FMS training on North Stradbroke Island has provided this diverse group the opportunity to develop skills to respond to wildfire and carry out hazard mitigation activities. Being proactive with diligent planning, preparation, training and developing relationships with the people who will meet in an emergency is a model that provides community confidence, Stradbroke being a particularly vulnerable community due to its location.

Graham King
Area Training and Support Officer
Caboolture Area Office
Rural Fire Service
The Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (also referred to as “Presumptive Legislation) was passed by Parliament on 17 September 2015 and introduced new provisions that deem certain latent onset diseases developed by firefighters to be work-related for the purposes of claiming workers’ compensation benefits. This has emphasised the need to maintain retrievable records of personnel attendance at incidents which provide evidence in the event of a compensation claim.

Rural Fire Service (RFS) is undertaking a body of work to ensure that:

- Historical records for incidents are brought as up to date as possible;
- Processes are improved to make it easier to capture information in the future; and,
- Volunteers have visibility of their incident attendance information.

RFS can store and maintain electronic records of volunteer attendance and associate them to the full record of the fire event in a way that is easily retrievable in the event of a compensation claim, but this relies on the information you provide about the incidents.

**Reporting for incidents:**

- Provide as much information as possible about the incident to Firecom at the time of the incident. Be aware that the Firecom operator may not be able to capture the names of everyone in attendance during busy periods or if there is a large number of personnel in attendance.
- As soon as practical afterwards either submit a copy of the Additional Incident Information form (OBM 082) to record volunteer names and any other information you wish to add. This can be sent via email, fax or post.

OR

- Call 1800 062 632 (free call) to provide information about the incident over the phone.
- This service is available 24 hours 7 days a week. When calling between 7.30am and 3.30pm you will go directly to the OMS Call Centre, and you will be able to provide the information of your attendance at an event. Between 3.30pm and 7.30am you will be directed to the ICT Service Centre. You will need to go through the following steps:
  - You will be asked if you are calling for a password reset or general enquiry. Select the number corresponding to general enquiry. You will then be put through to a customer service assistant, please advise them you are calling the Rural Volunteer Attendance Line to report your attendance at an event. They will record those details for you.
- See updated Business Rule RFBM D1.5 Incident and Hazard Reduction Burn Reporting for more information.

Please be aware that when calling outside of normal business hours there is a decrease in staff taking these calls and is likely there will be a wait time. We ask for your understanding in this matter and also for your understanding while staff taking the calls become familiar with this new process and terminology.

**Historical records:**

As RFS prepares for the development of a new Volunteer Information Portal which will provide individuals the ability to view their own records, we are endeavouring to bring your records as up to date as possible. Brigades that have retained their own records of previous incidents, particularly where those records capture the names of those in attendance, are invited to provide a copy to RFS for updating into the central database.

Information can be submitted in hard copy (such as a photocopy of handwritten logs) or electronic format (such as spreadsheets or PDF documents). Records will require endorsement of the First Officer or Secretary before submission. Please send hard copy records to:

- Rural Fire Service Incident Attendance Records
- GPO Box 1425
- Brisbane, QLD, 4001

Send electronic records to RuralFire.ServiceQueensland@qfes.qld.gov.au

Until the new portal becomes available individuals can request a copy of their own incident attendance record from their Area Office. Due to privacy concerns individuals may only obtain a copy of their own record.

Watch this space for further developments in incident reporting.
For the first time this year, the Rural Fire Service introduced the My Volunteer Awards as part of RFS Week. These awards are peer nominated honours designed to allow our volunteers to recognise and thank a fellow volunteer for their outstanding contribution to the RFS, their brigade and community. Thank you to everyone who submitted a nomination, all nominations were worthy of recognition, but we are pleased to announce the following volunteers have been recognised in each region.

Thank you to all our volunteers, and to all brigades who are supporting RFS Week through local open days and brigade activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>BRIGADE</th>
<th>CITATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAR NORTHERN</td>
<td>Frances Pelgrave</td>
<td>Lake Eacham Brigade</td>
<td>For outstanding dedication to community education through the development of the Going Bush? Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN</td>
<td>Tony Palmas</td>
<td>Hawkins Creek Brigade</td>
<td>For long-service commitment to the growth of the Hawkins Creek Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>Timothy Fogarty</td>
<td>Wartburg Brigade</td>
<td>For long-service dedication, fellowship and guidance to the Wartburg Brigade and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH COAST</td>
<td>Ian Richardson</td>
<td>Brooklands Brigade</td>
<td>For long-serving dedication and brigade development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRISBANE</td>
<td>Frank McGaw</td>
<td>Samford Brigade</td>
<td>For outstanding dedication, initiative and guidance in service to the Samford Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH WEST</td>
<td>Keith Belford</td>
<td>Eukey Brigade</td>
<td>For dedicating time, knowledge, enthusiasm and humour to the Eukey Brigade and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH EAST</td>
<td>John Craufurd</td>
<td>Springbrook Brigade</td>
<td>For initiative, generosity and dedication to the Springbrook Brigade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gary McCormack
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service
Operation Cool Burn 2016 – How’s it gone so far?

By the time this issue gets to you, we will be nearing the end of Operation Cool Burn 2016. Originally the operational period was scheduled for the end of July however due to unseasonal rain in some key areas the operation has been extended to 13 September 2016.

Operation Cool Burn has required a significant effort from both Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Fire and Rescue staff, however particularly from RFS brigades, who have undertaken a lot of heavy lifting to get burns and other mitigation activities completed.

But we have undertaken Cool Burn for a number of years so what’s been different this time?

Well for a start we have a new Standing Order released by the Commissioner. This reflects a strong focus on prioritising our highest risk areas and coordinating with our stakeholders to ensure we work cooperatively and undertake activities at the sites where we will provide maximum benefit in protecting our communities. Of course we have always had this consideration in our planning but this year we have added improvements in our systematic, evidence based approach. Much of the information we have available has come at a broader scale and the local knowledge of current conditions provided by Area Fire Management Groups and brigade feedback through Area Directors has been critical in identifying the most important locations for mitigation.

Where we can, we have reduced the bushfire risk by reducing the fuel hazard through burning. This year we’ve had an increased focus on targeted education in our most at risk areas. This education component is particularly important as we know that homes which are better prepared are less likely to be severely impacted if a bushfire does occur. This also means that at sites where we have a risk but can’t burn, we can still do things to improve community safety.

Indeed this year there have been a number of areas where burning has been very difficult. The two east coast lows in the South East in June caused localised flooding and over 400mm of rain at Springbrook in one event. Further west it was already too dry to burn safely in a number of areas and recently there was exceptional rainfall in Yeppoon and Rockhampton. These examples highlight that Queensland is a very big state with diverse conditions and we have to recognise this.

Regardless of the difficulties, there have still been some excellent outcomes with brigades undertaking lot of work. This work has included helping deliver planned burning for landowners, cooperatively working with partners such as National Parks, and delivering the targeted education mentioned above. In fact without the work of brigades, many of the achievements of Cool Burn would not have been possible.

In the previous Bulletin edition I mentioned that the Predictive Services Unit (PSU) within Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) was going to evaluate a number of burns to see how effective these were. Manager of PSU Andrew Sturgess recently showed me the preliminary evaluation of the major multi-agency planned burn completed in the Tamborine Area in May.

This evaluation used SABRE, a bushfire modelling framework developed by the PSU using the Phoenix program. I think evaluations such as this will be more common in the future and will provide much assistance to us as we plan and move forward.

The changes to Operation Cool Burn this year have been significant and I am sure we haven’t got everything right but we will review Cool Burn and learn from it. Like all of our business it will require continuous improvement however there have already been some major changes and it shows we are on an exciting and challenging journey, tackling the full spectrum of disaster management from Prevention and Preparation through Response and then to Recovery.

James Haig
Executive Manager
Bushfire Mitigation
Rural Fire Service
On 18, 19 and 20 March 2016, volunteers, staff and 11 vehicles travelled from South West Region to the New South Wales (NSW) Rural Fire Service (RFS) annual exercise ‘Northern 16’ in Glen Innes.

This exercise is designed to test strike teams in a range of operational conditions and provide training and mentoring to volunteers in incident types they would not regularly attend. A record 60 appliances attended the event with over 461 firefighters and support personnel.

Each RFS appliance was assigned into a NSW strike team for the weekend and then as part of the exercise, responded to a range of incidents including multiple aircraft crash, road traffic crash with entrapment, structural fire and medical assist. The crews also attended training scenarios including a counter terrorism exercise, first aid, pumping and hoses and appliance and equipment maintenance.

All crews had a great weekend in particular the crew from Gladfield/Maryvale Rural Fire Brigade, who took home the champion team trophy for the weekend, beating all the NSW RFS crews. Despite this we have been invited back next year and hopefully we’ll take out the trophy again.

Tim Chittenden
Area Director
Toowoomba Area Office
Rural Fire Service
Caboolture Area Office has Moved!

Caboolture Area office has outgrown its current premises at Leda Boulevard, Morayfield and we have now moved to the industrial area off the Bruce Highway, on Lear Jet Drive. The premises has 3 covered bays and a wash down bay with offices down stairs and a huge open area upstairs, with more storage area for PPE and equipment.

Our Facility has the capability of being used for training, meetings, IMT staging, storage of appliances and equipment as well as the day to day running of our business.

We look forward to seeing you at our new office.

Debra Brittingham
Administration Officer
Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service

Christine Waltisbuhl
Administration Officer
Caboolture Area Office
Rural Fire Service
At the recent Volunteer Summits, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) was pleased to announce the launch of Bushy the Bushfire Wallaby.

Bushy was originally developed in Far Northern Queensland, as a way to provide specific bushfire safety messages to young children. Championed by Yvonne Thomson from the Speewah Brigade, Bushy was recently approved by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services and the Commissioner of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) to be an additional mascot for the RFS.

Since the announcement at the Summits, there has been much excitement from brigades around the inclusion of Bushy as an RFS mascot however in response to a number of questions, I want to clarify that Bushy is not replacing Blazer, rather he is being introduced for those brigades who wish to use him.

Brigades are still able to continue to use Blazer to provide all fire safety messages. Bushy now provides brigades with an alternative mascot option for providing bushfire safety messages.

RFS is currently working with the creators of Bushy to finalise the design and development of the costume, and we are working with illustrators to produce drawn images of Bushy for use in RFS and brigade material. We look forward to providing you with further updates as they become available. If your brigade is interested in finding out more about Bushy please contact your Area Office.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Yvonne for the time and effort she has committed into making Bushy a reality.

Gary McCormack
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service

Bushy the Bushfire Wallaby is great
He is our bushfire safety mate.
He teaches us bush fire skills we need to know,
And if there's a bushfire, where we should go.

An extract from the Bushy the Bushfire Wallaby poem, written by Kurt, Anna, Kelly and Pippa Plant, St Ronans Station, Forty Mile
“So much to celebrate and be grateful for” were the words from the Samsonvale Rural Fire Brigade and they honoured the role their current and previous first officers have played within their brigade, and paid tribute to the dedication of many of their volunteers.

On Saturday 16 April the Samsonvale Rural Fire Brigade held a celebration to honour its First Officers.

The role of a First Officer is often a demanding job and the members of the brigade voted to purchase an honour board to show our appreciation for the contribution our first officers have made over the past 64 years of service. A great deal of research was involved to obtain the names and dates of service, but thanks to the diligent and unrelenting work by the brigade secretary it was achieved.

This celebration though wasn’t just for our first officers, we had much to celebrate and be grateful for.

We also wanted to acknowledge the dedication of some of the region’s volunteers being awarded much deserved medals – Diligent and Ethical Service Medal (DESM) and the National Medal.

It was also with much appreciation that we unveiled the newly constructed 50,000 litre water tank, generously donated by Tank Works. This tank will be a great resource for not only the Samsonvale Brigade, but all the brigades in the local area and as there is no reticulated water in the area it will also useful for urban pumpers requiring water for structural fires. Thank you kindly Tank Works!

Lastly, after many, many months of hard work and tears along the way, the Brisbane Region Community Education Van was finally unveiled and dedicated to our much loved and missed friend, Rick Reddish. Ricks proud family attended the dedication ceremony and cut the ribbon with Commissioner Carroll.
Lorna (Mary) and Thomas Dixon from Bagstowe Rural Fire Brigade were recently presented with their second clasp medal for Diligent and Ethical Service as members of Gilbert River Rural Fire Brigade. They were presented with their clasp by Senior Constable Ian Carroll, Officer In-Charge Forsayth Police and Rural Fire Service member, in front of a large gathering at the 112th Oak Park Races.

Lorna and Thomas were surprised to have received this recognition and paid special thanks to their fellow volunteers who continue to provide support in the protection of their most valuable resource - grass. A scarcity, as the Etheridge Shire has been in drought the past four years.

**Medal Presentations at Oakspark Races**

Lorna (Mary) and Thomas Dixon from Bagstowe Rural Fire Brigade were recently presented with their second clasp medal for Diligent and Ethical Service as members of Gilbert River Rural Fire Brigade. They were presented with their clasp by Senior Constable Ian Carroll, Officer In-Charge Forsayth Police and Rural Fire Service member, in front of a large gathering at the 112th Oak Park Races.

Lorna and Thomas were surprised to have received this recognition and paid special thanks to their fellow volunteers who continue to provide support in the protection of their most valuable resource - grass. A scarcity, as the Etheridge Shire has been in drought the past four years.

**TASKFORCE ACTION**

Taskforce Action is a joint agency taskforce incorporating the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES), which is designed to support and accelerate projects from conception through to “business as usual” practices.

At present the team consists of RFS Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson, Acting Inspector and Project Manager Joel Gordon and Support Officer Louise Davis. Taskforce Action is working in conjunction with members of the Rural Fire Brigade Association Queensland (RFBACQ) and with members of State Emergency Service Volunteer Association (SESVA) as well as other key stakeholders.

**Rural Fire Service Fleet and Fuel Maintenance**

Taskforce Action has been focused on delivering a functional fleet management program that provides funding support for vehicles on the Government asset register. This will provide increased opportunities for rural brigades to undertake community preparation and prevention activities. Additionally there is an increased expectation that brigades will become more involved in hazard mitigation activities during ‘Operations Coolburn’ and throughout the year when conditions permit.

The rollout of the program has begun, with many applications being received and processed through Area Offices and passed on to RFS Head Office. The fuel support being provided to brigades is intended to strengthen the existing relationships between local community services. The approach QFES has adopted is a flexible tailored model that meets the needs of brigades and communities alike.

**Uniforms and Identification**

Taskforce Action has been working with RFS and SES Operational Support Units to assist with the rollout of the interim volunteer and staff uniforms. In conjunction with the uniform rollout is the introduction of staff and volunteer identification cards. The cards provide volunteers membership details and will be available to all members. First Officers and Fire Wardens will receive a slightly different card defining their powers as an “Authorised Fire Officer”. The rollout of the interim uniform and Identification cards is in progress, with a new volunteer uniform and identification card application form being provided via Area Offices.

**Training and AIIMS**

In recent months, Taskforce Action has undertaken a gap analysis of the Services AIIMS capability. Based on the findings of the analysis, Taskforce Action is working with RFS training and other key stakeholders on a skills capability enhancement program. This program is designed to assist with providing opportunity for brigade members across Queensland to build their command skills. This program will work within the current training framework. We are engaging with key stakeholders to provide mapping for the future development of volunteer training within Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES).

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**Goetz Graf**

Acting Area Director
Innisfail Area Office
Rural Fire Service

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**Louise Davis**

Administration Support Officer, Taskforce Action, Rural Fire Service
**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 (RFBM) Business Rules and any new, updated or deleted State Standing Orders, Safety Bulletins, and Incident Directives.

**Major Changes:**

- **D6.1 - Provision of Volunteer Uniforms (V3.0)** - updated to reflect new ordering processes through the PSBA Central Warehouse. Note name change – formerly ‘Provision of Volunteer Walk Out Uniform’

**Minor Changes:**

- **B1.1.1 – Volunteer Community Educators (V2.3)** - updated to reflect VCE reporting lines and inclusion of an additional appendix outlining the RFS reporting structure.
- **D3.7 - Brigade Grants (V4.3)** - Updates to QFES Construction grants to outline that QFES provides up to $25,000 to assist brigades to construct, modify or refurbish a fire station.
- **D1.5 – Incident and Hazard Reduction Burn Reporting (V3.4)** – Updated processes around the OBM 082 – Additional Incident Information Form and the incident reporting service line (1800 062 632).

**Forms:**

- **OM 139 - RFS Volunteer Uniform Order Form (V3.0)**
- **OM 175 – RFS Vehicle Maintenance and Fuel Form (NEW)**
- **OBM 084 – Assessment for Appliance Allocation Form (V3.1)**
- **OBM 118 - RFS Fleet Assets Warranty Fault Report Form (NEW)**
- **OBM 107 - RFS Fire Station Construction Grant Application Form (V3.1)**

**Qld Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donations Fund**

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) Finance Team has completed the annual audit of the Queensland Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades Donation Fund (QVRFBDF).

The outcome of this audit recognised that several Brigades are depositing funds into the Central Donation Account without issuing tax deductible receipts (Blue bound Receipt Book).

Only donations that require a tax deductible receipt are to be banked into this account. All other donations that do not require a taxable receipt can be banked into brigade’s normal bank account.

Reconciliation of the Central Account has found several deposits made into the account, which we have been unable to return to brigades, as the identified Brigade number (which is in each Brigade’s Commonwealth Bank Deposit Book) has not been keyed in by the teller when the deposit has been processed at the bank, post office or online transfer.

To redirect these funds please check your bank account statements for any deposits made into the Central Bank Account, which have not been returned to your brigade account, and notify the Area Office with any anomalies that you find.

Brigades can join the QVRFBDF Account, which gives Brigades Deductable Gift Recipient (DGR) status. The DGR status enables brigades to supply donors with taxable receipts.

For further information please refer to Business Rule D3.4 Tax Deductible Donation and the application form OBM 086 available on the Appendix A & Appendix B.

Deborah Baumann
Rural Fire Service
RFS is pleased to announce all volunteers will receive access to Microsoft Office 365 Enterprise E1 in a phased roll-out from August 2016. It will bring a new level of connectivity, communication, collaboration and engagement for volunteers and the wider department. The decision to standardise our communication tools aligns with the ‘One QFES’ vision of an integrated department working together to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Streamlining our work and processes will also strengthen our day-to-day business.

**Volunteer communications**

By enabling volunteers to work together online, QFES Office 365 will also streamline and strengthen communications at a local level. This will include improved real-time communication and collaboration before, during and after any emergency event.

These new communication channels are in addition to those already in use within the SES and RFS.

**What's in the QFES Office 365 roll-out?**

QFES volunteers will be able to use QFES Office 365 for everything from corporate email to project and team document collaboration and online meetings. It will give our volunteers access to communication tools anywhere, anytime and on any device.

As a starting point, each volunteer will receive a dedicated email address which, when activated, will be their point of contact with the department. This will provide a fast method of contact and will complement existing and essential face-to-face communications.

Other QFES Office 365 capabilities include an online calendar, instant messaging, file storing and sharing as well as access to a suite of Microsoft software such as Word, Excel, OneNote and PowerPoint.

Volunteers will also be able to host and participate in video-capable online meetings with colleagues across the department from a desktop computer or mobile device. The table below gives a brief explanation of what will be available in QFES Office 365 once the phased roll-out is complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email and calendars</td>
<td>Includes Outlook email, 50GB mailbox storage and send attachments up to 150MB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online meetings</td>
<td>With audio, HD video and web conferencing. Join meetings from a computer or mobile device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaging and Skype</td>
<td>Connect via Skype for instant messaging, voice calls, video calls and let people know your availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File storage and sharing</td>
<td>1TB of personal cloud storage, share documents with others and control who can see and edit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office online</td>
<td>Create and edit Word, OneNote, PowerPoint and Excel documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work management</td>
<td>Create new plans, assign tasks, share files and chat about what you’re working on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional digital storytelling</td>
<td>Create engaging, interactive web-based reports, presentations, newsletters and training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search and discovery</td>
<td>Search for content across Office 365 based on personalised insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate video portal</td>
<td>QFES-wide video upload, sharing and discovery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to access QFES Office 365**

2. Register for QFES Office 365.

If you have not previously registered for access to the Volunteer Portal:

1. Visit the portal login page and register.
2. Await confirmation of portal access.
3. Log back on to the portal.
4. Register for QFES Office 365.
5. Begin using QFES Office 365 from August.
Email changes

Each QFES volunteer will receive a dedicated email address in the format below:

RFS:
Firstname.Surname@rfs.qfes.qld.gov.au

SES:
Firstname.Surname@ses.qfes.qld.gov.au

Scientific Branch:
Firstname.Surname@sci.qfes.qld.gov.au

When you activate your QFES Office 365 account this email contact will be used instead of your previously nominated personal email accounts such as Gmail, Hotmail, Telstra, Optus, iinet etc.

This change ensures you will continue to receive news and announcements from QFES even if you change personal or work email accounts. It will also allow you to keep and manage your official RFS or SES communications separate from other personal or work email accounts.

If it is more convenient, your new QFES email address can be redirected to your existing day-to-day account.

Stay informed

To help you stay informed, information about QFES Office 365 will be available on the Volunteer Portal and the RFS and SES websites.

Questions or feedback can also be directed to:

RFS Members:
Office365FeedbackRFS@rfs.qfes.qld.gov.au

SES Members:
Office365FeedbackSES@ses.qfes.qld.gov.au

Scientific Branch Members:
Office365FeedbackSCI@sci.qfes.qld.gov.au

Woorabinda Community Education Day

Barcaldine and Emerald Rural Fire Service staff supported by Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) travelled to Woorabinda on 2 March 2016 to assist the Woorabinda Rural Fire Brigade at the Woorabinda Community Education Day.

On the day the Wadja Wadja High school Woorabinda, Woorabinda State Primary School and conducted a Joint Emergency Woorabinda Community presentation. As a group they provided information to the community on:

- Fire extinguisher practical and Fire blanket display
- Bush fire safety education messages / Bushfire Education / Prepare Act Survive (PAS) using the bushfire simulation display
- Stop Drop and Roll Fire safety Education message
- PAS /Bushfire Education / Bush fire safety education messages using the bushfire simulation display
- PAS /Bushfire Education / Bush fire safety education messages using the bushfire simulation display
- Recruitment

Congratulations to all involved.

Alan Johnson
Area Training and Support Officer
Barcaldine / Emerald Area Office,
Rural Fire Service
AREA OFFICE CONTACTS

<table>
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