Rural Fire Bulletin
April 2016

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>>> DEPLOYED TO FIGHT IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

>>> BUSHFIRE MITIGATION AND COOL BURN 2016

>>> RURAL FIRE BULLETIN IS GOING ELECTRONIC
Since starting in the role, Deputy Commissioner Emergency Service Volunteers Mike Wassing has been taking the time to travel around the state listen to and talk with RFSQ and SES volunteers.
Fire Season

I would like to welcome you all back in 2016. I have no doubt this year will bring with it dramatic steps forward for the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and for Emergency Service Volunteers as a division.

The recent fire and storm seasons have seen brigades activated across the state in support of their communities, and undertaking a variety of activities including fire suppression, community information and messaging and support activities in response to severe weather events.

Early in the year we also had a number of staff and volunteers deployed to Western Australia and Tasmania to support the tireless work being undertaken by their crews in response to wildfires.

To all of you, thank you for your efforts throughout the fire season, you have demonstrated to Queensland and our interstate counterparts, the commitment, dedication and expertise of the RFSQ.

Operation Cool Burn

We have now moved into Operational Cool Burn 2016, and this operational period will proactively focus on assisting landowners/occupiers with hazard mitigation for the coming bushfire season. This will be the first Operational Cool Burn since the establishment of the Office of Bushfire Mitigation (OBM) and more information on the role of OBM is included further into this edition of the Bulletin.

The OBM will be working closely with the Predictive Services Unit (PSU). The PSU will provide specialist advice, and trained Fire Behaviour Analysts (FBAN) will be able to use the latest tools and technologies, including Phoenix, to model fire behaviour. Part of the Cool Burn mission is to reduce bushfire risk and impact. The PSU can quantify by how much the relative risk has been or will be reduced where hazard reduction burns are undertaken or planned.

This intelligence can be used to inform strategic planning for hazard reduction burning. The validity of these risk assessments will be enhanced where good information is provided on the actual hazard, both pre and post burn, and where accurate mapping of the burn area is provided. Tools are available to capture this information. In the response phase of operations this same information will better inform fire spread mapping and risk assessment to support decision makers.

2016

Since taking on the role of Assistant Commissioner RFSQ I have spent a large amount of time travelling and talking to our staff and volunteers. To those of you who I have met so far, thank you for taking the time to chat with me, and provide me with your thoughts and feedback. I look forward to meeting with more of you in the coming 12 months, and working with you to further enhance the support we provide to our volunteers and the overall service of RFSQ.

Tom Dawson
Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
All of the brigades were provided with Windscreen Assessment tools and briefed on their use in case of activation and were included in Local Disaster Coordination Centre’s (LDCC) briefings regarding information and potential tasking. The main concern was with the communities of Mornington Island, Burketown and Karumba due to tide inundation ahead of highest tides for the year and storm surge. As the event progressed, the tide inundation was not as severe as predicted, however heavy rainfall quickly caused roads in the area to be closed isolating the communities.

During the severe weather event, there were no RFSQ activations, however volunteers in the area were been involved as members of their communities assisting with resupply and other requirements. At the time, volunteers said they were enjoying the wet weather and were not concerned with the isolation as it is seasonal and a regular occurrence in their community.

Rob Woodward
A/Area Director
Charters Towers Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland
On Thursday 28 February 2016 the new Burnett Area Office at Kingaroy was officially opened. This brought to a close the Caloundra Areas administrative responsibilities in the South Burnett. The South Burnett area was made up of twenty brigades that have been part of the Caloundra Area since its inception in 2006. The new area, which includes the entire Burnett, is made up of brigades previously from the Caloundra, Maryborough and Bundaberg Areas and now comprises 81 brigades, including Izone, rural and primary producer brigades.

The last official act by Caloundra Area Director, Gary Seaman in the Burnett was to present Diligent and Ethical Service Medals and Certificates of Appreciation to some senior members of the Nanango Group and local brigades. The low key event and presentation was held at the Wattle Camp Rural Fire Brigade station on Wednesday 27 January 2016.

Caloundra office staff were sad to say goodbye as there have been many challenges to overcome throughout the years, and many great results achieved through excellent working relationships. The brigades on the coast have always supported, and will continue to support the South Burnett with strike teams or anything other resources required.

Nigel Terrell
A/Brigade Training and Support Officer
Caloundra Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Six Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) personnel comprising of Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), Fire and Rescue Staff (F&R) and volunteers were recently deployed to Western Australia to assist the Incident Management Team and the Air Base Operations Unit in the affected townships of Waroona and Yarloop.

Superintendent Tony Johnstone (North Coast Region) led the team and showed great support as our Incident Controller and was supported by Bushfire Safety Officer Liane Henderson (Brisbane Region), F&R Station Officer Kent Barron (South West Region) and our wonderful volunteers Mark Doble from Birnam Rural Fire Brigade and Alan Gillespie from Guanaba Rural Fire Brigade and myself (South East Region).

Liane acted as the Media Liaison and Information and Warnings Officer in the Public Information Unit, stating that no matter what part of Australia you are in, no matter what the disaster is, there is one thing that is always the same - the spirit of the community, the local crews and the many individuals working for the one common cause. There is a vibe, a feeling, a drive to move beyond what has occurred. To support those who have been affected and bring back a sense of normality to the community.

The communities of Waroona, and especially Yarloop had been devastated by the disaster. Houses in the fire path didn’t just burn, it is reported that they exploded. Years of history, people’s homes, livelihoods and tragically two lives were lost.

Kent assisted the Predictive Services Unit with planning, as he said the deployment to assist the people of Western Australia was a great opportunity for us as QFES staff and volunteers to be exposed to a community with fuels and weather systems differing greatly to anything found in Queensland.

The people we worked with in the Incident Management Team were very welcoming and keen to show us the tools and systems that they were using to assist them in managing the fire. We in turn had the opportunity to show them some of our processes, leading to information sharing that will benefit both of our organisations in the long term.

Mark was the Air Base Manager for some of the busiest days of activity during our deployment and received great praise from the local crews and incident management team. Mark stated that the relationships he built across three different agencies within the country have set him up for all future deployments.

Alan held the role of Logistics Officer on the night shift and I can vouch for the fact that he can locate anything, anytime from anywhere. When you are on deployment it is often the little things that can brighten your day and Alan was able to do that for us all with our special dietary needs met and jackets to keep us warm when the evening temperatures dropped.

The highlight of the deployment for me personally was the opportunity to meet with members of the community in the affected areas of Waroona and Yarloop. To be able to sit and listen to their experiences of survival and their respect for the crews that fought so hard to protect them.

We heard of situations where the fire fighters knew their own properties were perishing whilst they fought to save others, but they kept on with their duties. They spoke of how they surrounded residents with their appliances to protect them from the flames as they continued to fight the wall of fire. I listened to their voices quiver as they spoke of their experiences and how they still couldn’t believe they were alive to tell their stories. These are memories I will hold for years to come and this is why I personally will continue to tell as many people who will listen, why it is so important to be prepared, to have a plan and understand and acknowledge your risk.

Liane and I were blessed to meet the two local Captains from Waroona and Yarloop brigades and we have forged lifelong friendships with them both. Both Captains passed brigade memorabilia to us to bring back as a thank you to Queensland for the support.

As this goes to print – the items as shown in the picture attached are being mounted in a frame with a picture of the local crews and this will hang at our head office at Kedron Park in memory of the deployment.
After watching the dynamics of the base camp for the week, I learnt many lessons from the deployment that I would like to share with you.

- On deployments to other jurisdictions, we need to remember we are visitors, so Queensland policies and procedures may not be appropriate. We need to be flexible and adapt to the agency requirements. Don’t forget that we are there to help.
- The local crews may well be hurting – they may just need some friendship, a chat and a bit of understanding and respect for the hard yards they have done before we arrived. We don’t need to be on the white horse riding in to save the day. Go gentle and show respect.
- Never ever forget to use local knowledge to your advantage. Take the time to ask questions and get to know the place you are now in. Residents and crews deserve to be heard.
- Be on the front foot with providing information to the community. We must think about the needs of the community at all times. We must be audience focussed. Public information is a responsibility for us all.
- Look out for your mate, your colleagues. Sometimes you will see things and hear stories that may affect you where they don’t affect anyone else.
- Always remember if you need to talk about your experiences after deployment – we have the support of our Peer Support Officers and Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN). You are never alone.

Rural Fire Service Week 2016 will be taking place from Sunday 5 to Saturday 11 June 2016. This is your opportunity to promote your brigade and show the community how important your brigades and its volunteers are.

There's something that every brigade can do, no matter how little time you have to organise your day. Events are a great way to promote the important work of your brigades. You could try:

- hosting an open day at your brigade office
- running a sausage sizzle or bake sale
- running a stall at the local markets
- asking your local library or community centre to set up a display with information
- visiting schools to talk about fire safety etc.
- contact local business to display information material (brochures, postcards)
- host a family fun day picnic and provide entertainment, games and information
- provide a stand at your local sporting facilities
- organise a breakfast in the park
- encourage your brigade members to hand out information in their groups and workplaces
- run a social media awareness campaign
- display a photo story at a local community centre of your Brigade throughout the years
- host a myth busting session to address the facts and fiction around fire in your community
- plan an auction or raffle (contact local business to provide the prizes or items to auction)
- utilise the creative talents of your brigade members to host events such as a cooking demonstration, dance lessons or art show, or
- contact your local radio stations to promote your brigade and any of your events.

You can order specialty flyers, postcards and badges to help promote your event as well as a range of recruitment and community education material.

Register your brigade so that we can promote your activities on our website, through media, social media and local councils. Registration and order forms are available on the Volunteer Portal and through your Area Office. You can send in your forms until end of April at ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au
Queensland Government Corporate Sponsorship Western Downs

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is committed to ensuring that environmental best practice is considered and applied to all activities undertaken, where possible. South West Region covers 367,600 square kilometres which is supported by 362 brigades and 7500 volunteers that support their community in their time of need.

For this to be effective and sustainable, QFES and brigades work cooperatively with its stakeholders and key partners. The department develops partnership arrangements with key industry bodies that have similar purpose and values. Strengthening community resilience and providing additional resources to build Brigades capabilities and capacity is one of the key roles of QFES.

The department undertakes hazard reduction and wildfire suppression activities that could have an adverse impact on the environment and the community. Brigades are aware that there are many environmental issues that must be considered and may also apply to the protection of cultural heritage sites and the community in which they work.

Rural Fire Brigades across the Western Downs Regional Council area have been identified as suitable candidates for additional fire fighting trailers and slip on units. These brigades currently have minimal pieces of operational fire fighting equipment.

A total of 12 slip on units with speed loaders and two trailer units area have been delivered to boost their response and mitigation capacity. The slip on and trailer units are to be of QFES standard being 500L per slip on unit and 1000L per trailer unit with foam capability.

In addition to this fire fighting equipment ten iPads will enable the use of INCSnap, a point-in-time image and short message capture app, which provides real-time data from an incident ground back into regional and state decision-making processes. This innovative app allows the capture and management of images and their coordinates in a secure and safe way.

John Welke
A/Manager Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Tablelands Fire and Land Management Group

The newly invigorated Tablelands Fire and Land Management Group (FMG) convened recently in Ravenshoe. Chaired by Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) Acting Inspector Peter Ruddick from Innisfail Area Office, the FMG now includes stakeholders and agencies that service the Ravenshoe / Millstream area of the southern Tablelands region in the Far Northern Region.

Continued support from State land management agencies Department of Natural Resources and Mines and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and the Tablelands Regional Council, has allowed the Group to draw on greater local knowledge and involvement from neighbouring Fire Wardens, land care, grazier and pastoral groups as well as local fire brigades in the Ravenshoe / Millstream area.

The newly adopted Terms of Reference has the 35 member group focussing on reviewing fire mitigation strategies and plans and fostering greater cooperation between all agencies in developing multi-agency response to wildfires in the area. Joint training exercises are planned to include multiple agencies, and provide greater communication and cooperation between all, promoting further inter-agency and stakeholder collaboration.

The Tablelands FMG meets quarterly, with its next meeting at Atherton in May.

Peter Ruddick
A/Area Director
Innisfail Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Firstly, on a personal note thanks to everyone for making me so welcome since I started with Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), it is great to part of the team. As Executive Manager Bushfire Mitigation and a new member of the RFSQ I have been very impressed with all of the staff and volunteers and the great work that is already going on. I have been lucky enough to have worked with various brigades from the Lockyer Valley to the far south west of Queensland previously so I am not surprised that the team is a great one. But it is nice to see the depth and spread of skills and talent.

By the time this edition goes to print we will already be well into the detailed planning for Operation Cool Burn for 2016. In fact in many ways we undertake bushfire mitigation planning and delivery year ‘round in a continuous improvement cycle. But Cool Burn does provide us a defined period when we and all our stakeholders can focus on mitigation of the bushfire risks before the wildfire season later in the year.

This is the first Cool Burn since the Office of Bushfire Mitigation was set up and our job is to help provide some strategic direction and support for Cool Burn and produce some tools to help our regional teams plan and deliver mitigation activities. We also have a role in getting engagement from the various stakeholders, especially the many state government agencies and local governments.

Our focus at the moment is on Cool Burn planning, helping Area Fire Management Groups improve some of our systematic identification of risks and priorities and capturing better information on the effects of our activities. While we are aiming for improvements, it is critical that we also make things easier not harder. This is a key driver for any tool we come up with and any reporting we request. It must be simple to use and must not put extra load on to the people doing the work on the ground.

One of the key planning tools that will be used extensively in Cool Burn this year is the REDI-portal. This is a mapping tool which shows the potential vegetation hazards across the state as well as having maps of all the structures which might be at risk. We have recently added other layers including data from our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service partners on fire histories in State Forests and National Parks and some satellite data showing fire scars. We will keep adding more information so that the REDI-portal becomes a thorough up to date tool with better information to help us understand not just the potential hazard but also what the fuel load is at the moment. A map showing the sort of features in REDI portal is attached.

To help regions make the most of the REDI-portal we are currently organising training for Bushfire Safety Officers (BSOs). It requires a login, but it is intended to be available to brigades. If you are interested please contact your BSO or email ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au for further information.

As we do our planned burning for a reason, usually to reduce fuel loads and risks before the wildfire season, we also hope to start collecting better information on the effectiveness of our burns. For example we are hoping to capture information on what the fuel load was like before and after some priority burns. The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Predictive Services Unit (PSU) would then run a simulation to see how much of a difference that burning would have made to an approaching wildfire. The PSU will be supporting Cool Burn in many other ways and their technical skills and knowledge will be important as we keep improving our operations.

All in all it is an exciting time, there has already been a lot of mitigation work take place, but we have a real opportunity to build on this and make things better. I don’t expect everything to be perfect straight away, some things will work well and some we will try to modify or drop altogether, but we are heading in the right direction.

Lastly, I am keen to get out and about and hear some of the great ideas that I am sure are out there. Hopefully I will also get to a burn or two and suck in a little smoke, just to keep things real! If you see me around please introduce yourself. I really do want to know what I can do to help.

James Haig
Executive Manager
Office of Bushfire Mitigation
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Phase One was completed over six months concluding at end of 2015. Key actions undertaken included:

- Consultation with frontline volunteers providing preliminary input into a capability framework at four pilot workshops held in the Brisbane and South Coast areas.
- Providing contemporary solutions to enhance the capability and capacity of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) volunteers in a cooperative all hazards approach to building and sustaining community resilience over the four disaster risk management framework areas of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Analysing the Emergency Services Computerised Aided Despatch (ESCAD) system matrix and policies, operational process and procedures within the context of responding rural fire brigades and provide solutions to improve or build on the use of local volunteer/resources.
- Consideration of the key components to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the joint response for all volunteer groups in an all hazard response to supporting community resilience needs and expectations.

Realising that the ESCAD matrix analysis of more than 1,500 RFBs was too labour intensive, research of a random 283 brigades consisting of different classifications was used to appreciate the overall challenges, and recommend improvements to the capability and response process. Further studies continue of the 283 brigades selected for the ESCAD area demographics analysis, including: bushfire hazard in demographics; membership status; minimum skill acquisition; officer appointment; and operational resource and financial capacity; to qualify underpinning data for a capability maturity model.

The volunteers’ response to the four pilot workshops was excellent. 180 well considered recommendations for improvement opportunities in joint operations were provided and have informed preliminary development of the draft capability and response framework. These recommendations were categorised as per Figure 1:

### A sample of recommendations:

- Development of a RFB based capability maturity model approach will provide guidance as to the capability and capacity of brigades. A definitive model may prove to be too complex. However, a flexible model based on a wider appreciation of brigades based on similar risk or reviewed classification type could be beneficial.
- The Regional Manager RFSQ is to be notified by State Operations Support Unit to make operational response changes to the ESCAD response matrix quarterly as the response plan moves through its regular update cycle.
- Implement an awareness education package on the end to end process of the ESCAD response matrix review for RFSQ Response Plans.
- Develop a MoU with Rural Fire Brigades for incident types and specialist activities the brigades are capable of responding to. The MOU may include other QFES services.

At the conclusion of Phase One the outcomes identified that benefits will be further achieved from additional consultation with specialist response committees and key frontline personnel across all QFES services and regions. This will aggregate the perspectives of the QFES volunteers (approx. 36,000) ensuring the framework is effective and flexible, sustaining diverse and resilient communities.

With the findings of Phase One there was significant evidence that the capability of rural fire brigades is not fully recognised for both individual and collective ability. Local volunteer resources can be engaged more effectively and efficiently across most incident or problem types in an all hazards approach.
The Operations Strategic Working Group (OSWG) which is made up of Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) Volunteers from all brigade classifications, staff form different locations around the state and Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland (RFBAQ) representatives have met again for the first time in 2016 with another packed but productive schedule of topics.

Some outcomes of the OSWG have been:
- Roll out of wet weather jackets to all RFSQ appliances
- Increase in options of wildfire entrapment blankets
- Dissemination of information on Isuzu air conditioner maintenance
- Implementation of Fire Retardant epaulettes into RFSQ
- Review and comment on Standards of construction for new RFSQ stations
- Development of resource capability matrix for RFSQ firefighting fleet
- Ongoing review of appliance design including pump options and locker configuration
- Review of allocated operational life span of RFSQ appliances
- Implementing National Heavy Vehicle driver fatigue laws into RFSQ
- Ongoing input into Identification Cards for RFSQ volunteers

Key ongoing topics are:
- Expanding the options of RFSQ appliance fleet (light attacks)
- Review of how RFSQ allocate replacement appliances
- Integration into Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) vehicle and equipment committee
- Lessons learnt from other Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) member agencies
- Changes to the design of RFSQ wildfire Personal Protective Clothing (PPC)

John Welke
A/Manager Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland
An optional piece of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is under trial across the state to test the viability for Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) volunteers to utilize the full-face mask (P3 Negative Pressure(NP) mask with a canister filter) as a means of providing further PPE for all volunteers. The trial is being coordinated through RFSQ but with significant support from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Special Operations who provide the accredited expertise covering facial-fit testing, breathing apparatus use (donning and doffing the P3 mask), training and assessment as well as skill development in the management of the “Toxirae; Carbon Monoxide detector”.

The use of the full-facemask in combination with the ToxiRae detector aims to provide the volunteer firefighter with an alternative option of protection from smoke and particulates at vegetation fires, while offering a means of alert to potentially high concentrations of Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Training material in support of the use and application of both the P3 facemask and the CO detector is undergoing trials at selected rural fire brigades pending a broader-scale release across RFSQ. The trial is being coordinated to cover both a fire-season and a mitigation season in the first instance.

The Scott Promask P3 NP facemask is a full-face fitting negative pressure mask. The mask fitting process that needs to precede the allocation of P3 masks to volunteers tests the suitability of the mask size and whether the normal physical activities of a firefighter on the fire-ground may compromise the mask’s seal against the face. Wearing such a mask requires the wearer to be free of facial hair as facial hair or stubble will not permit a suitable seal against the skin. The mask must be used with an appropriately rated canister designed to extract or filter significant amounts of the gases Sulphur Dioxide, Ammonia, Chlorine, Formaldehyde and Hydrogen Chloride. The canister provides limited protection against Carbon Monoxide so it must be used in conjunction with the ToxiRae 3 CO 500 detector.

The CO sensor in the detector is set to display a reading of “parts-per-million” (ppm) of CO in the atmosphere. The device has two alarm points triggered at 30ppm and 400ppm. Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S) information from commercial testing facilities recommends various limited exposure times against allowable concentrations (e.g. 60 mins at 60ppm, or peak exposure at 400ppm) when it becomes critical to get to fresh air immediately.

By appropriately combining the use of the P3 mask with effective monitoring of the CO levels in the atmosphere, QFES aims to provide another option of protection for firefighters at vegetation fires. Correct cleaning, storage, testing and recording of each item’s use are vital parts of ensuring the continued reliability of these units. The trial aims to assess whether the management of such rigorous requirements are within the capability of rural brigades as well as ascertaining the cost effectiveness of managing the process across RFSQ.

Updates on the trial will be forthcoming over the next few months as more brigades begin the draft use of this PPE. Comments on effective cleaning, storage and record keeping as well as operational functionality will form the basis of the feedback volunteers will be asked to provide. Coupled with this feedback will be an expected comment regarding the ease of following the regular scheduled calibration test, re-certification and annual facial-fit portions of the project.

For further information about this project, please direct comments to RFSQ Inspector Andrew Hopkins, Project Manager for the P3 Mask Project, on email Andrew.Hopkins@qfes.qld.gov.au.

Andrew Hopkins
Project Manager P3 Mask Project
Rural Fire Service Queensland
It is a priority for RFSQ to be able to effectively communicate with volunteers, and with 36,000 across the state it can be quite a challenge. The Rural Fire Bulletin magazine is produced in April, August and December, and is currently the main source of communication with Rural Fire Service volunteers.

The magazine is currently distributed to:
- First Officers
- Secretaries
- Fire Wardens
- Deputy Fire Wardens
- Volunteer Community Educators
- Volunteer Community Educator Area Coordinators and
- Those with the rank of Firefighter.

This means we distribute approximately 13,000 copies with each edition. Despite the fact it is also available on the RFSQ website and Volunteer Portal, we are restricted as to the number of volunteers who receive this important communication, due to the cost and timeframes associated with producing and distributing it.

For some time now, we have been considering ways to increase our distribution, and improve the timeliness of information in the magazine, ensuring you receive the best possible service from us. To do this we will be introducing an email Bulletin. Using distribution software, we will be offering all volunteers the opportunity to subscribe to receive the Bulletin via email. There are many benefits we can offer to you with this change, including:

- All volunteers will have the opportunity to receive the Bulletin.
- The timeframes for the production of the Bulletin will significantly decrease, meaning we will be bringing you more up to date and relevant information.
- The cost for the production and distribution of the Bulletin will dramatically reduce, allowing those funds to be utilised elsewhere.
- The Bulletin will come directly to your email.
- You can unsubscribe at any time.
- We will be able directly link you to online tools, forms and other resources.

We understand that some of you will not have the option to receive the Bulletin electronically, and we want to ensure no one misses out, so for those volunteers who cannot receive it via email, there will be an option to receive a printed PDF version of the magazine. It won’t be the glossy format you see now, but it will ensure you are up to date on all of the latest news from RFSQ.

How and when will these changes occur

The magazine you are reading now, will be the last magazine edition of the Bulletin for the year. In the next few weeks you will receive in the mail, a reply paid form asking if you would like to subscribe to receive the Bulletin either via email, or a hard copy PDF. Simply select the option you would like, fill in the appropriate information (we need your up to date details) and post it back. Alternatively, volunteers can subscribe at any time by emailing their Name, Vol ID, Brigade Name, and Email Address or Postal Address to ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au.

Feedback:

As we move into a new phase of communication within the RFSQ, we want to make certain these changes meet the needs of our volunteers, so for the August and December editions we will be trialling the new format and asking for your feedback.

There have been many changes over the years to the Bulletin magazine, however this will undoubtedly be the most significant. We understand that for some of our volunteers the loss of the printed magazine will be disappointing, however we ask for your support and understanding as we try to improve our processes making the best use of funding and resources, while at the same time offering all volunteers the option to receive this important communication.

Tom Dawson
Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) volunteers across the North and South Burnett have been given a boost thanks to a new Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Area Command Facility in Kingaroy.

The Burnett Area Office manages and supports the North and South Burnett Local Government Areas.

The new Area Office will support 2,334 volunteers, 181 fire wardens and 89 brigades across the Burnett region, previously supported by the Bundaberg, Maryborough and Caloundra Area Offices.

QFES Deputy Commissioners Mark Roche and Mike Wassing opened the facility on Thursday 28th of January 2016. Mr Wassing said the $153,000 facility was a welcome boost for the volunteers in the Burnett region.

The facility is complete with two training rooms which can also be used as an incident control centre in times of emergency.

Steve Roberts
A/Area Training and Support Officer
Burnett Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Have you updated your details?

Recent mail-outs to all Rural Fire Service volunteers have identified that a large number of address details in our system are incorrect. If you have moved recently or aren’t getting mail from us, it may be time to update your details. Contact your local Area Office or send us an email on ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au to update your details today.
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.

Round 86 of this grant has recently been completed with the following brigades successfully receiving funding:

- Bowen Delta RFB - $18,181.82
- Branyan RFB - $8,464.00
- Kogan and District RFB - $31,818.18
- Woodlea RFB - $31,818.18
- The Palms RFB - $31,818.18
- Cedar Pocket and Greens Creek RFB - $4,090.91
- Mungallala RFB - $31,818.18

- Bungadoo RFB - $7,327.27
- Buckland RFB - $5,304.00
- Mexico RFB - $5,304.00
- Consuello RFB - $5,304.00
- South Springsure RFB - $5,304.00
- Hermit RFB - $5,304.00
- Forest Pines RFB - $5,172.72
- Edwinstowe RFB - $5,304.00
- Gaeta RFB - $31,818.18
- Seafort RFB - $31,705.85
- Charters Towers RFB - $31,818.18

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

Deborah Baumann
Grants Project Officer
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Grant up to the value of $35,000 are available
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has provided numerous resources to assist with the dozens of bushfires that continue to burn in Tasmania. The Predictive Services Unit (PSU) has provided several Fire Behaviour Analysts (FBAN) including two Rural Fire Services Queensland (RFSQ) staff: Simon Dawson from the PSU and Phil Williams, Bundanberg Area Director.

Phil and Simon were deployed on Friday 29 January 2016 to provide technical advice in fire behaviour including rates of spread and likely impacts. Phil worked in the Incident Control Centre (ICC) at Cambridge just outside of Hobart and Simon was deployed to the Burnie ICC.

The Cambridge ICC managed eight fires in the south west of Tasmania, with the Lake Gordon River Road being the highest priority. Much of this country is world heritage listed and has some of the most pristine landscapes in the world.

David Bowman, Professor of Environmental Change Biology at the University of Tasmania says the case is strong that these fires are climate change related, and there will be more in the future threatening the existence of some of the nation’s most valuable forests.

At Burnie in the north west of Tasmania there are multiple fires still burning weeks after they were first detected. The Wuthering Heights and Pipeline Road fires are the highest priority for this ICC. Numerous community warnings have been issued as a result of these fires.

Fire fighting in Tasmania is always a cooperative effort with limited resources available on the island state. The Tasmanian Fire Service, Forestry Tasmania and Parks and Wildlife routinely work together. These resources have been supplemented with FBAN from South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and QFES. Our FBAN have worked alongside the other interstate agencies and local FBAN to provide specialist advice to the Tasmanian Incident Management Team.

These deployments are important as they continue to build the national predictive services capability and enhance the knowledge skills and experience of our QFES FBAN.

Andrew Sturgess
Manager Predictive Services Unit
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
The inaugural Emergency Service Volunteers (ESV) Regional Manager Workshop was conducted on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 January at the Windsor International, Brisbane.

The workshop was attended by staff from across the Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and State Emergency Services (SES) working through an agenda of combined and separate service sessions. Proceedings were opened by Deputy Commissioner ESV Mike Wassing, Assistant Commissioner RFSQ Tom Dawson and Assistant Commissioner SES Peter Jeffrey who shared their views on the future direction for each of the respective services and the collective ESV Division.

Session topics for the workshop included:
- ESV Integration
- Future ESV Deployment Processes
- Operation Coolburn Planning
- Volunteer and Staff Training
- Complaints Management Processes.

A highlight of the workshop was the official conference dinner that included an entertaining and thought provoking presentation on change management delivered by Deputy Commissioner Doug Smith. The combined workshop concept proved to be a great success and has laid the platform for similar events into the future. The workshop achieved several important outcomes including the continued progress in building a respectful and productive ESV culture.

Gary McCormack
Director Operations
Rural Fire Service Queensland
What is the GWN-South East Queensland Project?

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

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

The GWN will bring the public safety agencies onto the same radio communications platform and frequency group, and provide the ability to communicate between multiple agencies.

Importantly, the new technology will improve the personal safety of police, firefighters, ambulance paramedics and patient transport officers. It will also increase end-to-end encryption, protecting against the interception of transmissions – a vital tool against the ever increasing threats to information security.

Who is building the network?

Telstra has been contracted to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the network under a 15-year managed service agreement with the Queensland Government.

What is a managed service?

Under the GWN Services Agreement, Telstra and its major sub-contractor, Motorola, will provide the infrastructure, network and equipment, and the ongoing technical support to QPS, QFES and QAS for the life of the contract.

Telstra will manage the network and associated equipment, including vehicle fit-outs, network repairs and maintenance and vehicle fleet repairs.

Contracted services will be available on a 24 hour per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year basis.

Go Live!

On the 31 January 2016 the Toowoomba area transitioned onto the GWN, completing months of installations, training and exercises.

This fulfilled 18 months of planning and coordinated outcomes between the regions, area offices, brigades, individuals, the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) (as the contract directorate) and the QFES GWN implementation team.

Other Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) regions within the digital service area had previously transitioned on the digital network including South East Region on Sunday 18 October 2015, Brisbane Region on Saturday 12 December 2015 and North Coast Region on Sunday 17 January 2016.
Project milestones

- In March 2015, 23 RFSQ volunteer trainers joined the GWN implementation team to assist in the delivery of end user training providing over 135 scheduled training sessions commencing on 13 June 2015.
- Over 173 rural fire brigades were actively involved in on-site appliance and vehicle installations.
- 468 Rural appliances, support vehicles, staff vehicles and aircraft installed with GWN radio equipment, power management units and voltage systems.
- Over 2000 portable radios distributed to brigades.
- Over 2000 volunteers trained in the end user training package.
- GWN contracted service area covers 33,000 square kilometres.

In what is considered to be a world first the GWN P25, Phase 2 digital Ultra High Frequency (UHF) ‘system’ has been specifically designed and engineered to include radio coverage between an aircraft (fixed wing or helicopter) and ground based resources.

The ‘system’ has been equipped with four dedicated GWN Aeronautical (Aero) Radio Frequency sites located across the South East Queensland (SEQ) service delivery area. These four Aero sites are co-located with Terrestrial sites operating on different frequencies / frequency band plans and equipment from the Aero sites which greatly diminishes the possibilities of frequency interference from aircraft operating and communicating at altitude.

After a significant amount of consultation, research and development all aircraft engaged for QFES operational purposes are now required to carry or be fitted with a GWN mobile or portable radio. These mobiles are to be programmed with a modified Aero fleetmap and codeplug designed with two ‘talk group Zones’ (both using the same GWN system ID and Radio ID). This modified codeplug allows these radios to operate on either the Aero or Terrestrial networks as selected.

A voice announcement has also been programmed into the radio to assist the operator or pilot in identifying the zone selected (zone one or zone two) when transitioning through altitude before, during and after operations.

To assist with the integration of QFES air operations communications and response into the digital network area the QFES GWN Unit has developed a Air Operations – Concept of Operations – Communications document. This is designed to enhance frontline service delivery through the seamless integration and interoperability of communications for emergency response aircraft and disaster management operations.

For more information on this system, please contact the QFES GWN Unit or the QFES State Air Desk.

As of Sunday 28 February 2016 the UHF analogue network will be unavailable for use by QFES in the greater South East corner of the state including the South East Region, Brisbane Region, the Caloundra area of the North Coast Region and part of the Toowoomba area of South West Region.

The commissioning of the GWN replaces the traditional analogue network providing world class P25 phase II trunked digital radio technology for the three public safety agencies QPS, QAS and QFES. This technology utilises multiple ‘talk groups’ as opposed to our conventional single channel communications process, allowing for multiple users on the same network simultaneously.

The increased safety features of the radio and network include encrypted transmissions, location services (Global Positioning System data presented to FireComm consoles and QFES mapping solutions) and duress which allows operational crews to work in a secure and safe communications environment.

For information on the Government Wireless Network, please visit the GWN tab on the Volunteer Portal page.

I personally acknowledge the dedicated team of trainers that worked tirelessly every weekend for over six months to deliver the end user training package and bring the RFSQ into position to go live. It’s been a tremendous effort.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the RFSQ staff and the many Brigades and volunteers who have provided support and feedback throughout the implementation journey.

Wayne Ford
Manager
Rural Fire Service Queensland,
Government Wireless Network Transition
With each edition of the Bulletin we 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:

- **C5.3 – Coordination of Complaints** (V1.0) – outlines complaint management processes and requirements.
- **D3.1.5 – Debit Cards** (V1.0) – outlines the processes for the issuing, management and use of debit cards to pay brigade expenses.

Major Changes:

- **A3.5 – Compliance with Traffic Regulations** (V3.2) – updated information on National Heavy Vehicle Fatigue Laws, updated reference materials and a new Fatigue Law Frequently Asked Questions included in the appendices.
- **C2.1 – Work Health and Safety and Workers Compensation** (V2.1) – includes new Form OBM 116 – Induction Sip-on Unit Checklist and new workers’ compensation provisions as per the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.
- **D1.5 – Incident and Hazard Reduction Burn Reporting** (V3.2) – new provisions to record volunteer attendance at incidents in line with the Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.
- **D3.4 – Tax Deductible Donations** (V2.0) – updated with information on the Deductible Gift Register status options and new Appendices.
- **D3.6 – Art Unions, Bingo and Private Raffles** (V2.0) – reference to the new Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) website and updated to include new OLGR processes for Category 1 and 2 Games.
- **D4.1 – Public Liability Insurance** (V2.0) – inclusion of new Appendix A – QFES Safety Checklist for Events.
- **D5.4 – Utility Off-Road Vehicles** (V2.0) – business rule name changed – previously All-Terrain Vehicles. New requirements for operators and passengers to wear helmets that comply with Australian Standard AS1698.
Minor Changes:

- **A3.6 – Road Crash Rescue (V2.1)** – updates to terminology, rural fire brigade response matrix and reference materials.
- **A3.9 – Deployments (V4.1)** – inclusion of Use of Assets requirements.
- **D3.1.1 – Operating an Account with a Financial Institution (V2.1)** – updates to terminology, Act references and inclusion of information on debit cards.
- **D3.1.2 – Payment of Invoices and Accounts (V2.1)** – inclusion of debit card information.
- **D3.1.3 – GST and ABN (V2.1)** – updates to terminology and Australian Taxation Office links.
- **D3.1.4 – Petty Cash (V1.1)** – updates to terminology and appendices.
- **D3.5 – Fee for Services Rendered (V1.0)** – business rule reviewed and information determined to still be current.
- **D3.7 – Brigade Grants (V4.1)** – updated to specify that acquittals are to be sent to the Rural Fire Service Queensland Grants Officer in the first instance.
- **D4.3 – Self-Insurance Claims (V2.1)** – updates to terminology, Act References and forms.
- **D5.2 – Appliances (V3.2)** – outlines the appropriate use of light response appliances.
- **D5.2.1 – Fuel Cards (V1.1)** – business rule reviewed and information determined to still be current. Name change from 'Caltex Fuel Cards'.
- **D5.3.3 – Stocktakes of Brigade Equipment (V1.1)** – business rule reviewed and information determined to still be current.
- **D5.3.4 – Use, Storage and Maintenance of Brigade Equipment (V1.1)** – business rule reviewed and information determined to still be current.
- **D5.3.5 – Purchase and use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) (V2.2)** – minor updates including new supplier details.
- **D5.6 – Command/Support Vehicles (V1.0)** – business rule reviewed and information determined to still be current.
- **D6.2.1 – Care and Maintenance of PPE (V1.0)** – business rule reviewed and information determined to still be current.

Forms:

- **CSO 068 – VCE Community Education Order Form (Effective 14/07/15)** – now includes stock codes.
- **CSO 075 – Volunteer Reimbursement Form (Effective 18/12/15)** (*previously Out of Pocket Expense Claim Form*) – now includes provision to claim deployment allowance.
- **OM 135 – QFES Automated External Defibrillators Order Form (Effective 09/12/15)** – contains new supplier contact details.
- **OBM 054 – Change Proposal Summary Form (Effective 18/01/16)** – minor amendments.
- **OBM 101 – Equipment and Safety Inspection Checklist (Effective 16/10/15)** – previously 'Station Inspection Checklist' – updated with additional guidance notes to clarify inspection requirements.
- **OBM 113 – Brigade Station Signage (Effective 14/01/16)** – minor updates.
- **NEW - OBM 114 – Debit Card Agreement (Effective 21/12/15)**
- **NEW - OBM 116 – Induction Slip-on Unit Checklist (Effective 26/11/15)**

Deletion:

- **D3.8 – Exemption from Payment of Ambulance Levy** – redundant process.
New Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) heavy tankers have been constructed and commissioned for the Brisbane, South East, South West, Central, North Coast and Northern Regions. The vehicles have been built on a 2WD Isuzu cab chassis and have 7000L of useable water complete with high volume transfer pump. These are designed specifically for bulk water transfer only and not direct firefighting.

The new Ford Ranger light attack vehicles are currently in the build phase and are expected for completion at the time of this Bulletin. They will then go through pre-delivery and be distributed to their home areas. Upon handover, training staff will provide familiarisation training with the recipient. These dual cab light attack appliances will have a usable water capacity of 500L to be capable of providing both firefighting capacity and crew carrying ability.

The Isuzu medium attack appliance builds are well under way with all of the pump assemblies completed and delivery of the cab chassis being to the body builder. They are on track for delivery to the home areas by the end of the financial year.

The Mitsubishi FUSO Canter appliances have also been ordered with designs finalised and fabrication underway.

John Welke
A/Manager Operational Support
Rural Fire Service Queensland
After a jam-packed year of hands-on learning with the Wolffdene Cedar Creek Rural Fire Brigade, the Emergency Services Cadets consolidated 2015 with an overnight camp. 18 Cadets, eight Rural Fire Brigade volunteer fire fighters, and five Adult Cadet Leaders came together to celebrate what had been a powerful year of volunteering, mentoring, learning technical skills and developing leadership potential.

Sticking to their usual high energy, fast paced approach and capitalising on every minute spent at the Wolffdene Cedar Creek Rural Fire Station and Cedar Creek Park the Cadets practised their orienteering, sustained themselves with camp cooking, completed their fire extinguisher training and dropped in at the Mount Tamborine Auxiliary Fire Station all within 30 hours.

Teamwork was the central theme for the weekend, with the volunteer fire fighters setting the standard for camaraderie, cohesiveness, cooperation and respect for each other. Thanks to the commitment of this outstanding group of volunteer mentors, the Wolffdene Emergency Services Cadets are looking forward to expanding their numbers and building on the strength and skill base of their Unit in the year ahead.

Sally Baisden
Program Manager
PCYC Emergency Services Cadets
New Fire Station for Battle Creek Rural Fire Brigade

Wednesday 3 February 2016 saw the long awaited opening of the Battle Creek Rural Fire Station by Commissioner Katarina Carroll. Brigade members from Battle Creek, and neighbouring brigades at Innot Hot Springs and Mount Garnet joined representatives from fellow emergency services, community members and dignitaries in celebrating the occasion. Acknowledgements included the tireless efforts of Brigade Secretary Val Fowler and members of the Battle Creek community who work together to protect their close knit community from fire.

Peter Ruddick
A/Area Director
Innisfail Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland

New Air Operations Training Structure

The State Air Operations Unit alongside Volunteer Emergency Service Training Command (VESTC) have been working to ready the new Air Operations Training Structure that awards nationally accredited courses, aiming for full release in 2016. Document development and review has been undertaken both internally and with other state authorities to ready training packages for the wider organisation, taking an all-hazards approach to traditional course material.

The new structure allows for participants to develop their skills gradually over time with some self-paced learning, whilst gaining experience in some new roles through state and regionally delivered courses. This will allow them to choose between the two main streams: Ground Based or Airborne (or both), with sufficient experience progression into Incident Management functions. The structure will also fully encompass the nationally recognised units of competency across all streams and allow pathways for gradual progression across 15 courses from general awareness through to management roles.

Further allowances have also been made into the overall training structure to make additional courses available to personnel who may come into contact working with aircraft at incidents. These courses are designed to give the individual more insight into how to effectively communicate with aircraft and how to use aircraft efficiently in an incident action plan.

Some work is currently being completed to allow current qualification holders to be brought across to the new system to line up with the nationally recognised qualifications. This will most likely occur when recertification activities and refresher training is required. The new structure is due to be fully released by mid to late 2016. Trials of new course material are currently underway in selected areas.

The State Air Operations Unit has made recent team changes and now encourages and invites all questions, queries and feedback. This will be forwarded through the Area and Regional offices to the team at the State Office. The intent is to work with all aspects of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to deliver training to a national standard and promote pride within the Unit that they are supporting the department to the best of their capabilities through appropriately trained personnel.

Any questions can be directed to your local Area or Regional office.

State Air Operations Unit
Rural Fire Brigades Build in the West

It’s been a long time coming, but everything is falling into place with the new rural fire shed build at Orange Hill. The brigade has been working tirelessly toward their new station for well over 12 months and finally the shed has been ordered and foundations are being laid.

To support this endeavour, Orange Hill Rural Fire Brigade have received funding from Maranoa Regional Council, Jupiter’s Community Benefit Fund, The Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) and the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ).

Other government bodies such as the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNMR), Public Services Business Agency (PSBA) and the Local Regional Council have also strongly supported this project for the benefit of community safety and the future of the brigade.

The brigade members are very grateful for the support they have been given by the Roma Area Office and other government departments. They are keen to see the project through to completion which is expected by the end of March 2016.

The bridge will also be receiving a replacement appliance (a Medium Twin Cab Isuzu) in the near future to further enhance their capability, which not only manages fire preparedness and mitigation in their area, but also supports the Roma Auxiliary Brigade and surrounding Primary Producer Brigades as required.

Further out west, Yowah Opal Fields Rural Fire Brigade has been hard at work raising funds over the past two years to build their own station. Their new station, built in 2015, now houses a new Twin Cab Medium Tanker, which will aid in be Brigades’ ability to support community resilience. Due to its remote location, the brigade not only deals with local fires and mitigation but also supports The Royal Flying Doctors on a weekly basis by ensuring the landing strip is clear of all fauna (Kangaroos, Emu and wild pig). The Brigades’ members are also strongly involved in the Mines Rescue Service and the State Emergency Service (SES). The members would like to thank the Paroo Shire, Jupiter’s Community Benefit Fund and RFSQ and staff at the Roma Area Office for their assistance in supporting this project.

Phill Young
A/Area Director
Roma Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland

A Busy Afternoon at Innot Hot Springs

On Wednesday 3 February 2016, Commissioner Katarina Carroll presented new equipment to The Upper Silver Valley and Innot Hot Springs Rural Fire Brigades (RFB). A large local gathering at Innot Hot Springs was present to witness the afternoon’s presentations and to welcome Commissioner Carroll back to her home community.

Commissioner Carroll presented First Officer Lance Chapman of the Upper Silver Valley brigade with the keys to a new purpose built Slip on Unit, followed by the presentation of keys to the new Innot Hot Springs (Iveco) Medium Appliance to First Officer Ian Hepple, and Chairman Wayne Bowden, of the Innot Hot Springs brigade.

Mr Bowden took the opportunity to announce the brigade’s intention to dedicate their new appliance in memory of Margaret “Margie” Clark who sadly perished in the Café explosion at Ravenshoe in June 2015. Margie was a long standing member of the Innot Hot Springs brigade with over 21 years of service to her brigade and community. Commissioner Carroll joined members of the Clark family in dedicating the new appliance to the memory of Margie.

Peter Ruddick
A/Area Director
Innisfail Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Firefighter Minimum Skills Welcome Night

The Caloundra Area Office team recently tried an innovative approach to the Fire Fighter Minimum Skills (FMS) program. The new tactic was to invite any new and existing volunteers who wanted to gain FMS accreditation to a welcome night at the Caloundra Area Office. Along with these students, first officers and training officers of their brigades were invited to provide support and gain an understanding of the new technique.

The venue was chosen, as many of the attendees had never been to Caloundra before, and as a first time experience it would be beneficial if new members saw their Area Office the facilities that are available. It was a great opportunity to put names to faces of the entire training team, as well as network and socialise with other brigade members.

Our five Rural Fire Instructors (RFI) facilitated the evening, explaining the process for FMS and the requirements of the course. They presented the Rural Fire Service Awareness program, so that the attending students have already completed the first stage of their training by attending.

The decision to make FMS a more significant event than it has been in the past, proved a success with over 50 people attending including 32 new FMS students. It was the perfect opportunity to introduce the training staff and Area Director.

We have received positive feedback from attendees who enjoyed the interaction with fellow students and the delivery staff.

Nigel Terrell
A/Brigade Training and Support Officer
Caloundra Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland

The recently formed Gladstone Area Office has been singularly focused on providing improved service delivery to make the most of the new area structure. One of many outcomes achieved recently was the Fire Warden Workshop tour, held in various locations including Gladstone, Biloela, Wowan, Moura, Theodore, Taroom, Many Peaks and Agnes Water. The tour was conducted over a week, requiring a coordinated effort by staff and volunteers, who juggled competing area priorities and operational demands.

The Workshops were aimed at developing relationships between the Area staff while offering support and leadership within the Chief Fire Warden’s jurisdiction. They also provided a unified and consistent approach to Risk Mitigation through the Permit to Light Fire system across the Gladstone Area. Special attention was paid to the obligations and responsibilities of the Permit holders, with a focus on the management of breaches, common themes were identified and addressed. This approach allowed for learnings from past experiences to facilitate the prevention of future issues.

With 104 Fire Wardens across the Gladstone Area, the workshops provided an opportunity to enhance our approach to community safety by offering professional development to 60% of Fire Warden Districts. Some of these volunteers have been in the role for 50 years while others are much newer. Staff benefited by gaining an understanding of the diverse needs of Fire Wardens, who range from the coastal fringe to the western corridor.

The workshops were such a success that in years to come, the Gladstone Area will roll out two such programs each year.

Daniel Schneider
Area Training and Support Officer
Gladstone Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Permitted Burning Open Forum

In 2015, several fires in the range country between the South Eastern and South Western Regions highlighted the need for further engagement with communities regarding permitted burn practices. In particular, the fires instilled the importance of permittees following all conditions stated on the permit and controlling fires to the permitted properties.

After profiling the community needs, the Area Director and Bushfire Safety Officer for West Moreton teamed up to provide support to the local fire wardens and rural fire brigades. Together, they addressed the community by providing resources for landholders to plan and undertake permitted burning practices in accordance with legislation.

On 16 January 2016, more than 50 members of the small community met at the Junction View community hall to attend a Permitted Burning Open Forum. The plan for the evening was simple: a barbecue, a short presentation, and time for open discussion surrounding current burn practices. The result, however, was something much more. Community members opened up about the challenges with confining fire to individual properties in the range country and asked how to work within the current legislative requirements.

Staff on site provided practical solutions to these questions. Community members left with the knowledge that permitted burning practices are achievable within their localised landscape. Further work is being done with some landholders in the area to help them achieve their hazard reduction strategies for this year.

The success of this event has already been measurable. Ongoing engagement with brigades, fire wardens, and landholders is increasing, while presenting new engagement opportunities with some local community members. The long term success will be demonstrated in the upcoming Operation Cool Burn and fire season by determining if escaped burns decrease as a result.

In the future, similar events are planned for communities with a similar makeup across West Moreton. Special thanks to the local fire wardens and Junction View and Left Hand Branch Rural Fire Brigades for their support of this event.

Matt Harris
Bushfire Safety Officer
West Moreton Area Office
Rural Fire Service Queensland

Laidley Group gets a Tanker

The Laidley Group in the Lockyer Valley have a new edition to their fleet to help enhance their capability at the numerous Wild Fires, Structure Fires and Motor Vehicle fires that they regularly attend. The group have been working with the manufacturer who specialise in building water trucks to provide expert guidance throughout the build program.

The Laidley Group 71 tanker has a water capacity of 13,000lts which sits on an Isuzu FVZ1400 chassis. The tanker was delivered on the 3rd November 2015 and has assisted in a number of incidents already. The vehicle will be an integral part of operations in the west of South East Region, supporting a number of different call types.

Corey Bock
A/Regional Manager
South East Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
Just over 12 months ago, Tropical Cyclone Marcia passed over the Central Region leaving a trail of destruction. We saw structural damage, massive infrastructural losses to our power network and a dramatic increase in vegetation fuel spanning over two Local Government Areas.

A working group was formed in conjunction with a number of sponsors, with an invested interest to oversee all aspects on how to educate, mitigate, and reduce our risk to an acceptable level, and create a safer Queensland.

As a member of this working group, it was obvious to me that our Volunteer Community Educators (VCE) network had the necessary skill set and expertise required to deliver relevant information on the project’s direction and to assist in the co-ordination of hazard reduction activities in the various communities within our local government areas.
As a result four Regions contributed to deploying VCE’s into the area to assist Central Region’s VCE network. After a comprehensive induction in the Regional office, which consisted of intelligence from our fire prediction analyst team at Kedron (Phoenix Mapping), our VCE’s were ready to move out and engage with the community. Their tasks included obtaining permissions from landowners, door knocking the community, developing Bushfire Survival Plans, visiting school and identifying risks from the viewpoint of a volunteer firefighter. Throughout this work and in keeping the community informed, I was amazed at the amount of detail our VCE’s reported back to the project team. This aspect itself enabled the team to better prepare and plan for further operations to come in the following months.

Two of our deployment teams in Central Region were activated to attend and assist the incident management team at two significant wildfires burning in the Rockhampton area. Without hesitation they were soon on the move keeping the community informed on current and predicted fire conditions, placing trust, lifting spirits and boosting our profile as a fire service within the community.

The comradeship that was infused amongst the VCE’s while in the Region was truly a highlight and was reinforced by feedback, especially from newer members on their first deployment. I would strongly recommend that if you have the passion, commitment and dedication to become a VCE, talk to your First Officer and make contact with your Bushfire Safety Officer.

Without a doubt our community was in excellent care when it came to commitment, passion and dedication while our VCEs were going about their duty.

Craig Adams
Bushfire Safety Officer
Central Region
Rural Fire Service Queensland
It is with great sadness that I advise you that on Thursday 18 February 2016, a Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) volunteer firefighter passed away while responding to a bushfire in South Western Region.

First Officer Trevor Vallance from the Weranga Rural Fire Brigade was on the scene at a fire near Weranga on the afternoon of the 18th, when he collapsed. Despite the best efforts of other volunteers, Auxiliary firefighters from Tara and Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics, Trevor was not able to be revived.

Trevor first joined the Rural Fire Service in 2002. In 2009 he took on the role of First Officer, a position he remained in until his passing. Trevor also held the position of Treasurer from February 2002 until August 2005 and again from August 2013 until August 2015.

Trevor was a very community minded person and was a centre piece of the brigade, Weranga and the greater Tara community. Trevor was always willing to lend a

Trevor was an outstanding volunteer, but more importantly an outstanding person.
hand and help out a neighbour, the very essence of a Rural Fire Service volunteer.

Trevor held the brigade together and introduced regular training sessions. He took an active role in training new members and enjoyed working with them to assist them in becoming experienced fire fighters.

He had a passion for safety and instilled the importance of this in his brigade. There were always important safety messages around the station on large notice boards that Trevor had installed.

Trevor helped grow the brigade into a strong, productive brigade and the cleanliness and appearance of the station and the brigades’ appliances were due to Trevor’s leadership and guidance.

Trevor kept in regular contact with the Area Office and was always interested in who was there and what was happening, he regularly phoned up just to say hello and for a chat.

Trevor was an outstanding volunteer, but more importantly an outstanding person. He will be greatly missed by his brigade, members of his local community and staff here at RFSQ. His commitment to his community will never be forgotten.

Tom Dawson
Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service Queensland
## Rural Fire Service Area Office Contacts

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<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>
</tr>
<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>Rockampton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4938 4736</td>
<td>(07) 4922 2768</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Rockampton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Rockampton@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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