Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Rural Fire Service

Rural Fire Bulletin
JUNE 2017

IN THIS ISSUE:
- Tropical Cyclone Debbie
- Operation Cool Burn
- Tablelands Station Opening
I would like to start this edition of the Bulletin by thanking all volunteers for their support and participation during the preparation, response and recovery to Tropical Cyclone (TC) Debbie.

TC Debbie

TC Debbie proved to be a massive weather event across most of Queensland. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) were well planned and prepared with prepositioned volunteers and staff across the state. The response and recovery process saw Fire and Rescue, State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire Service (RFS) all come together under one banner to support the effected communities. The department have received numerous praises from communities, across government and political leaders for the tireless work and dedication of our volunteers and staff.

We are now looking at the learnings coming out of the event to further develop some of our internal process, systems and technology to help in the preparations, response and recovery of the next major event to hit Queensland communities.

Operation Cool Burn

Operation Cool Burn 2017 officially commenced on 18 April and will continue until the end of August, unless extended for climatic or operational reasons. This years’ operations will proactively focus on assisting and coordinating risk mitigation. QFES will work together with state and local government agencies, industry associations and landowners and occupiers to prepare for the upcoming bushfire season.

All mitigation operations greatly benefit from the valuable local knowledge that can be provided by local business, industry, government and communities. Engaging with these stakeholders will provide QFES with the opportunity to enhance community safety, reduce bushfire risk and potential impact and perform informed operations prior to the 2017 bushfire season.
Primary Producer Brigade (PPB) Summits

I am pleased to see the introduction of the Primary Producer Field Days. The Mareeba Field Day kicked off the 2017 round of events in late May. RFS staff and Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) representatives were on hand to engage and provide targeted information to the members of the public but specifically representing our PPBs in attendance. Events across the state will continue from June through to September to ensure that we connect with the various industries that form Queensland’s Primary Producers.

QFES Strategy

QFES is undergoing a period of change to develop and establish our department as a single unit that incorporates all streams - Fire and Rescue, RFS and SES. Our goal is to ensure our department is robust and prepared to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of the Queensland communities and government. We are aiming to develop of culture of interoperability - how we work together and with others to continually improve the coordination of our skills and resources to ensure the best outcomes for the people of Queensland.

This departmental evolution and development has necessitated the recalibration of our capabilities to better align our products and services to meet expectations. As an organisation, our key priorities are prevention and preparedness, response, recovery, strategic capability and business enabling services. A number of strategies have been developed as a flow on which will shape the future of QFES. As such, our organisational structure has recently undergone a review to ensure our workforce is well-positioned for the future. These changes are currently rolling out across RFS and over time will enable us to shape volunteers and staff to be better positioned for the future.

The QFES Strategy document has been produced to provide a comprehensive overview our key priorities, strategies and policies. You can access this document via the Volunteer Portal.

Rural Fire Service Brigade Management Committee Reference Guide

I am pleased to announce the production of a new comprehensive tool to support our brigades - the Rural Fire Service Brigade Management Committee Reference Guide. The guide has been developed to support members of RFS brigade management committees by providing them with knowledge and assistance that they will require in conducting administrative duties within their brigade.

Information included covers, brigade meetings, supporting brigade members, engaging with the community, brigade finances, assets and requisitions and the tools that have been developed to support brigades. This detailed guide is currently being printed and will be mailed directly to all volunteers registered as members of a brigade management committee.

Tom Dawson
Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service
Thanks for letting us know!

Many thanks to all Rural Fire Service (RFS) members that recently completed the participation survey released by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Commonwealth Games Office (CGO) for the XXI Commonwealth Games which will be held on the Gold Coast from 4-15 April 2018 (GC2018). The results are currently being collated and will assist the CGO planning to ensure that QFES is appropriately prepared to respond to normal business activities or any major events during the Games period.

If you missed the survey deadline, were unsure what your plans would be during the Games period or your plans have changed you will have the opportunity to keep us informed; with a second survey planned prior to GC2018.

Volunteer with QFES

There will be opportunities to volunteer with the QFES deployment for GC2018 in your capacity as a volunteer. Due to accommodation and transport restrictions, opportunities for RFS to participate in GC2018 deployment is limited to members in South East Queensland.

These roles are not yet finalised, however the types of roles that may be available include:

- course stewards/observers for road events (marathon, cycle race, cycle time trial, mountain bikes)
- event management team
- staging and logistics support
- dedicated response teams for ‘business as usual’ events.

The commitment required will depend on the role, but may range from one day only, to a number of days.

More information about GC2018 roles and recruitment will be available in the coming months via the QFES website, volunteer portal and through your Area Offices.

Ayla Curtis
Project Manager Emergency Services Volunteering Commonwealth Games Office
On 19 April 2017, His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC congratulated the achievements and service of Queensland residents at an Investiture ceremony in Cairns. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Assistant Commissioner Far Northern Region, John Bolger attended in representation of the department. Included in the honours was Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteer, Mr Alexander Moroney, First Office of the Mount Fox Rural Fire Brigade.

Alexander was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) for his dedication to building community resilience and published as a recipient on the Australia Day 2017 Honours List on the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia's website:

“First Officer Moroney has demonstrated tireless determination and commitment as a volunteer. His commitment to the transformation of the operational capability and capacity of Mount Fox Rural Fire Brigade is most noteworthy.

His exceptional communication and innovative leadership skills have united and strengthened the relationships between land holders, community leaders and volunteer members and have assisted in the building of resilience of the isolated Mount Fox community. This effort has earned him the sincere respect, trust and admiration of his peers and the broader community.

First Officer Moroney’s extraordinary dedication, aptitude and passion has laid an excellent foundation for future risk mitigation in the Mount Fox and surrounding areas.”

Congratulations to Alexander on his significant achievements and for being recognised with this prestigious award for your work and commitment to RFS and the communities that we serve.
Volunteer Ben Twomey of the Ocean View Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) is the first qualified Fire Behaviour Analysis (FBAN) specialist in the Rural Fire Service (RFS).

After joining the Ocean View Brigade in 2012, Ben worked his way up to Crew Leader before joining the bushfire Predictive Services Unit (PSU) team in April 2015. As the Principal Information Analyst, he commenced his learning pathway to completing his FBAN qualifications. Ben proved invaluable in developing SABRE; providing nationally ground breaking decision support for firefighters and managers. Working in PSU, Ben will continue to develop SABRE to provide more comprehensive support for the upcoming fire season. To this end the PSU has recently provided an opportunity for end users to send feedback via an online survey.

The underpinning training courses to FBAN include, Fire Weather 1 (FW1), a one day course that introduces participants to the basic meteorological concepts and Fire Weather 2, a two day course that builds on the basics of FW1 to develop an understanding of more complex weather concepts such as thermodynamics and fuel hazard assessment training.

The successful FBAN then goes on to complete the following four stages

- Stage 1
  Applicants to the course must have on ground firefighting experience to consist of at least 20 days from at least five fire events. Three of which should be wildfires, the others could be prescribed burns.

- Stage 2
  Pre requisite training includes Fire Weather 1 and Fire Weather 2 courses.
A pre-course assessment must be successfully completed to demonstrate a reasonable understanding of fire behaviour, operations and fire weather. Ideally the applicant will also have successfully completed Fuel Hazard Assessment training.

- **Stage 3**
  A nationally accredited, five day FBAN course, delivered by qualified instructors, must be completed to be classified as a “Fire Behaviour Analyst Trainee”.

- **Stage 4 – Post-course Assessment**
  Competence in applying the skills of a FBAN must be demonstrated during two real fire events. These fires must be from contrasting fires which demonstrates the use of more than one fire behaviour model (e.g. forest/grass, wildfire/prescribed fire, alpine/plains, local/interstate).

The post-course assessment consists of the completion of two fire behaviour predictions for either wildfires or planned burns. The predictions must be verified as having been undertaken as part of a fire event by the Incident Controller. Ideally, this work will be done in conjunction with a mentor or companion FBAN. An evidence portfolio will be produced that includes any insights or lessons learnt from the experience of each fire event.

This post-course assessment will be evaluated by two or more of the course instructors. Successful completion of all four components, leads to being qualified as a “Fire Behaviour Analyst” and attainment of the National Unit of Competence PUAIR512, predict and analyse fire behaviour and analyse fire suppression options for a level 2 wildfire.

The FBAN role was initially developed to assist incident response activities. The specialist knowledge and services of FBAN mean that they are able to be utilised through all aspects of emergency management, including:

- fire fighter safety
- provision of timely and accurate advice of potential impacts to communities and infrastructure
- evaluation of the practicality and potential success of various strategies and tactics
- prediction of fire spread
- quantification of risk to inform resource allocation in advance of increased fire weather days
- bushfire risk mapping to support strategic planned burning decision making
- supporting effective execution of planned burning activities
- design of scenarios to support training and exercising of incident management personnel
- design of scenarios to support community preparedness activities
- strategic planning for community protection
- development of case studies analysing fire behaviour and progression of past fire events
- positive reporting (analysis of the effectiveness of response activities on potential bushfire impact).

Andrew Sturgess
Manager Predictive Services Unit
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Volunteers from the Southern Tablelands attended a two day Firefighter Minimum Skills training and refresher course in Ravenshoe on 22 and 23 April 2017. Participants included members from Irvinebank, North Millstream, South Millstream and Wondecla Rural Fire Brigades (RFB)s.

During the two days of theory training the participants also conducted several practical exercises as a means of incorporating the hands-on skills in a controlled environment while First Officer John Lange of the Wondecla RFB demonstrated some of the features of the new Wondecla tanker appliance.

Bill Hardy
Millstream South RFB

Participating in the information session were (L to R) Janette Hodgkinson (Irvinebank), Charlie Wakefield (Irvinebank), Zip Balovis (North Millstream), John Lange (Wondecla), Rick Allen (Millstream South) and Bernie Grech (Brigade Training Support Officer, Innisfail Area)
In March, the New South Wales (NSW) Rural Fire Service (RFS) hosted the Region North Annual Field Exercise at the Glen Innes Showgrounds. A number of Queensland RFS brigades were invited to participate in the event.

Scenarios were themed ‘back to basics’ in which participating crews were briefed on how to manage an incident, watched a demonstration and were then given the opportunity to put their skills into practice. The scenarios conducted were:

- **Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)** - a practical one hour scenario involving a two vehicle accident with multiple simulated casualties. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, this scenario had to be moved to an indoor site, and as a consequence, most Strike Teams did not get to go through this scenario.
- **Pumping** - a two hour practical scenario involving drafting and relay pumping.
- **Fire Overrun** - a one hour scenario where Crews were instructed in, and practiced how to survive a fire overrun situation.
- **Back to Basics** - a one hour scenario involving ITASK briefings and the importance of accurate information from fireground to Incident Management Team (IMT) to public messaging.
- **Vehicle Maintenance / Engineering** - a one hour scenario providing crews with practical skills for maintaining and servicing appliances.
- **Pump Maintenance** - a one hour practical scenario introducing crews to how pumps work, foam injection systems and pump maintenance.
- **Counter Terrorism** - a one hour scenario conducted by NSW Police Counter Terrorism personnel introducing crews to the awareness of domestic terrorism, and providing advice and examples to crews on how to identify and notify suspicious or suspected terrorist related situations.
- **First Aid** - a one hour scenario conducted by Ambulance NSW Paramedics that provided instruction on the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED’s) and fireground first aid.
- **Aircraft** - a one hour scenario based on familiarisation of RFS helicopter Firebird 200, and an overview of the aircraft NSW RFS have available for deployment to firegrounds.
- **Gas** - a one hour practical scenario where crews were instructed on how to deal with a gas fire utilising a three person fog attack.
- **Tanker Rollover** - a one hour scenario dealing with an overturned fuel tanker, and introducing Crews to approach, size-up and dealing with a hazardous incident.
- **Protect and Preserve Scene** - a one hour scenario that introduced crews to a number of incidents where, on arrival, they had to observe, record and protect the scene for forensic and fire investigation.

The Gladfield Maryvale Brigade were chosen as the winners of the Outstanding Crew Award, taking home a trophy and prizes for their brigade. It was a valuable learning experience for all NSW and Queensland RFS volunteers and staff in attendance with many looking forward to attending again in 2018.
On Saturday 6 May 2017, the Tablelands Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) officially opened their new station. The event also included the hand-over of a new truck to the Glencoe RFB, a replacement to their previous 21-year-old vehicle. Volunteers from across the North Coast Region attended along with South Burnett Deputy Mayor, Kathy Duff, Rural Fire Service Deputy Commission Mike Wassing and Regional Manager, North Coast, Peter Hollier.

Chairman and Fourth Officer of the Tablelands RFB, Mr Colin Coulson spoke on behalf of the brigade (opposite).
Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mr. Mike Wassing, Regional Director Mr. Peter Hollier and Mrs. Hollier, Area Commander Mr. Mark Long and Mrs. Long, Area Director Mr. Andrew Marnie, Deputy Mayor Kathy Duff, and guests,- on behalf of members of the Tablelands Rural Fire Brigade I would like to welcome you all here today to celebrate the official opening of our fire station and the presentation to Glencoe Rural Fire Brigade of their new appliance.

The Tableland Brigade as formed in 2007 along with other rural brigades in the former Murgon shire which was driven by the amalgamation of Kingaroy, Wondai, Nanango and Murgon shires. Evidently Murgon was one of the only shires not to have rural fire brigades. The appliance arrived 2008 was based at various farms in the area until the shed was finished to lockup stage in February 2012.

With the amalgamation of Tablelands and Redgate Brigades in 2013 the 41 unit from Redgate was relocated to this fire station. The building had its final inspection by council in mid-2016 after the amenities extension had been completed.

A lot of groups and individuals have assisted over the last ten years to make the Tablelands brigade the success that I feel it is, and I would like to thank them all on behalf of the members of the brigade. The list would be too long to read through here and some may feel embarrassed as they may not think their contribution was worthy of recognition, but I can assure everyone who has helped that everything done for this brigade is very much appreciated. The establishment of a regional office in Kingaroy with staff who have given us assistance on a person to person basis has also been most helpful.

I would like to thank all the members of the brigade for their service and contribution over the years especially - for example, when the phone rings on a hot summer afternoon and you know that after you answer it you're in for a long, hot, dirty night. At least you usually end up eating out with a lot of friends in a secluded location. The comradery that develops between all the brigades and services when attending these incidents certainly helps you get through the difficult jobs. Not everyone can do this kind of service as it can be very strenuous and we suffer from the same problem as most of rural Australia which is an ageing population, but all assistance with the running of the brigade has been appreciated.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) is a volunteer organisation which has thousands of members around the state and I am sure DC Wassing could give us an exact number which would probably surprise everyone here. While trying to think of what to say today the first thing that came to me was Why did I volunteer, indeed why do any of us volunteer. It is certainly not because we look good in bright yellow clothing or that we get to drive cool vehicles. It's not because the pay is good or the work hours suit our lifestyle. It's not because we like spending our Sunday learning how to give someone CPR or how to use a chainsaw. So why did I volunteer.

Personally I feel there is an innate desire in people to help their fellow man. It is certainly not for public recognition as there are much easier ways of getting that. Being a member of an organisation such as the RFS gives a person a sense of achievement that is hard to find in the modern world. When you arrive at an incident and there is a situation that requires immediate action you must respond in a way that is rare in the modern world, no toolbox talks, no calling someone on the phone, no waiting for someone else to arrive, you must have the conviction to act. The sense of satisfaction that comes from this is reward in itself, and it doesn't always go to plan but you have done your best and the outcome is always better than if you hadn't done anything.

You have to have tolerance of, and trust in other people as a fire ground can appear to be a chaotic place and you have to be able to accept the tasks assigned to you. You must have patience as you could end up waiting for something to happen and that can be very hard. You must be able to integrate and work with other groups, some of whom you have never met before. You have to be prepared to learn skills you never thought you needed and be able to pass on the knowledge you have acquired through experience.

We all have these skills and abilities; the RFS just seems to bring them out.

The Tablelands Rural Fire Brigade has easily returned to the community many times over the financial investment represented by the facilities you see here today and the brigade is very proud of this.

All in all personally and on behalf of all the members I feel that being a member of the RFS is a very rewarding, character building experience.

To finish off I would again like to thank all those who made today possible and all of the members of the Tablelands Rural Fire Brigade for your service.
The Honourable Mark Ryan, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services along with Caboolture Area volunteers, staff and other agencies attended the Energex Grants Equipment Handover on 27 April 2017 at the Caboolture Area Office.

Each year brigades in the south-east have the opportunity to apply for a range of equipment through the Energex Rural Fire Service (RFS) Equipment Program.

Over the past eight years, the Energex RFS Equipment Program has delivered over $600,000 worth of vital life and property saving equipment to more than 130 South-East Queensland brigades.

Brigades in the Caboolture Area have been the recipients of the sponsorship, with essential equipment to the value of $23,900 provided over the years. Such funded items include a Data Projector, LED TV’s, a Collar Tank, a Chainsaw, Fuel Spill Kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AED).

The 2016/2017 year of sponsorships have now been distributed to the following successful recipients:

- Brookfield Rural Fire Brigade
- Bellthorpe Rural Fire Brigade
- Clear Mountain Rural Fire Brigade
- Closeburn Rural Fire Brigade
- Dayboro and District Creek Rural Fire Brigade
- Delaneys Creek Rural Fire Brigade
- Elimbah Donnybrook Rural Fire Brigade
- Hazeldean Rural Fire Brigade
- Karragarra Rural Fire Brigade
- Lamb Island Rural Fire Brigade
- Macleay Island Rural Fire Brigade
- Moreton Island Rural Fire Brigade
- Mount Kilcoy Sandy Creek Rural Fire Brigade
- Ocean View Rural Fire Brigade
- Stoney Creek Rural Fire Brigade

The RFS would once again like to thank Energex for their ongoing support.

Debra Brittingham
Administration Officer, Brisbane Region Rural Fire Service
In late February, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) hosted the three day Grazing Land Management Workshop. 20 Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) personnel including Rural Fire Service (RFS) staff from Northern, Far Northern, Central Region and the state office attended the event in Charters Towers.

The workshop was part of the initiative and intent of Project Keahi in raising the awareness and knowledge of land management practice involving many RFS Primary Producers Brigades and remote communities.

The Principal Extension Officer Bob Shepherd and his team of five put together an interesting and informative agenda tailored to suit RFS objectives. Topics covered include:

- the grazing land ecosystem – factors affecting pasture production
- managing grazing – improving land condition
- fire and tree – grass balance – regimes
- managing weeds – weeds and land condition.

The final day of the workshop included a site visit to Wambiana Station and grazing trails. Discussions with landowner John Lyons and DAF staff strengthened the theories examined throughout the workshop.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions and the experience shared by David Luxton, Andrew Houley and recognise the local RFS staff in the planning and execution of the event.

Gordon Yorke
Bushfire Safety Officer
Northern Region
At the 2016 Volunteer Summits, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) was pleased to announce the launch of Bushy the Bushfire Wallaby, a new mascot for RFS. Bushy will be available to all to work alongside Blazer, the existing Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) mascot to deliver a range of safety messages.

The first Bushy costume production has been completed and Bushy was seen out and about at the Mareeba Field Day in Far Northern Region in May. Soon Bushy costumes will be available to borrow from all RFS Area offices.

Bushy has now also been brought to life on paper with a range of stickers available for use by brigades to help deliver the bushfire safety message. Stickers are available for order from your area office by using the updated form CSO 068 available on the Volunteer Portal.
For days Queenslanders watched Tropical Cyclone (TC) Debbie build over the Coral Sea, but on 27 March, she hit land as a Category 4 Cyclone. With maximum wind gusts recorded at 263km/h, TC Debbie brought with her widespread damage including roofs lost, properties destroyed, trees felled, boats wrecked, heavy rain, cut roads and 63,000 homes without power.

Emergency services staff were already in place across the Queensland coast in anticipation of the severe weather event, but the extent of damage was unexpected. With most of Queensland hit by damaging winds, heavy rain and flooding, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) staff and volunteers were deployed up and down the coast to begin and clean up and recovery process.

At the Kedron headquarters in Brisbane, the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) and State Operations Centre (SOC) were called into action pulling staff and volunteers into work. Regional Operation Centres (ROC)s were set up across Queensland to manage and evaluate any incidents and begin the recovery process.

Numerous taskforces were deployed out of Northern, Central and South Eastern Regions, made up of QFES staff, Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers. Equipped with vehicles, hoses, chainsaws and manpower, trained volunteers spent their time clearing accesses, sandbagging, pumping out flood water, undertaking structure washouts, conducting damage assessments and assisting residents with debris and damaged possession removal. Volunteer Community Educators (VCE)s were in the field to communicate with the local communities ensuring that residents were informed and reassured. As one taskforce completed their deployment, another was sent in to continue the recovery efforts.

The communities across Queensland gave their thanks and support for the hard work and dedication that QFES volunteers provided throughout the recovery process.

Throughout the event, Bulletin Alerts were published to provide snapshots of the hard work QFES staff and volunteers were delivering across our Regions. These can be downloaded from the Volunteer Portal.
The Orange Hill Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) participated in the Roma Harmony Day celebrations - an event that celebrates the cultural diversity of all Australians.

With the theme cultures around a campfire, the celebration featured numerous cultural displays. The music of the didgeridoo and ukulele mixed with traditional group dances and Indian Yoga. Foods from across the globe represented the diversity of the Roma community.

Brigade volunteers were on hand to guide the next generation of firefighters in their techniques of extinguishing the campfire. Attendees expressed their appreciation of the commitments behind the yellow trucks and the hard working volunteers who support their community.

Thank you to the volunteers from the Orange Hill RFB, who took time away from their families on a Sunday and supported this outstanding event.

Goetz Graf
Area Director, Roma
Rural Fire Service
A letter of thanks

Chais Pearson, showed his thanks to the Forest Pines Rural Fire Brigade, presenting them with a letter of thanks for keeping his home safe after extinguishing a local bushfire.

OLGR Grants Available for Rural Fire Brigades

The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) Gambling Community Benefit Funds (GCBF) Unit 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 91 of this grant has recently been completed with the following brigades successfully receiving funding:

Round 91
- Greenvale Town RFB - $20,000.00
- Boogie Rise RFB - $2,499.00
- Keppel Sands RFB - $29,492.92
- Cedar Pocket / Greens Creek RFB - $7,010.00
- Jundah Town RFB - $28,518.35
- Pelican Creek RFB - $15,561.00
- Widgee District RFB - $13,000.00

It’s important to note that changes to the application process have recently been implemented including a new online grants management portal. The Rural Fire Service (RFS) funding guidelines and information have been updated to reflect these changes; providing details on registering brigades and a step-by-step guide for the new grant application process. These guides are available on the Volunteer Portal.

Through this system, all brigade online applications need to be saved to the GCBF online portal. The RFS head office will review all applications, adding approvals and additional information before submission to the GCBF. Only RFS head office (the Legal Entity) is authorised to submit the application on behalf of the applicant organisation (the Sponsored Entity-Brigades). Brigades must follow this process for their application to proceed.

Should you wish to investigate your Brigade’s eligibility for the next round of OLGR grants, contact ruraloperations.finance@qfes.qld.gov.au.
Nexus is the new Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) system designed to manage Human Capital Management (HCM) processes for all of QFES. Developed as an online tool, Nexus features Australian maintained cloud-based information storage, providing full mobility for all users to access the system via smart phone, tablet devices, laptops and Personal Computers (PCs).

Nexus offers a simplified user experience and will focus on attracting, supporting and developing staff and volunteers. The system seamlessly integrates a number of different modules - recruitment, onboarding, learning, workplace health and safety, performance and goals, and succession and development. Each module allows users to complete processes and access information relevant to their role within the Rural Fire Service (RFS), reducing duplication.

Users will be provided with the ability to update and manage their own contact details while the learning module will allow users to view available training opportunities. Approval processes for training will still be in place, but users will be able to directly nominate for courses. Access to personnel information and different learning catalogues will depend on the users' position in the RFS and QFES. This means that personal details are secure and only a direct manager and their manager can view this information.

Paper-based systems will still be supported and managed regionally for RFS volunteers who do not have internet access.

Volunteers will be able to access Nexus by logging in with their Office365 email account. To activate your account, jump on the RFS Volunteer Portal or contact your local Area Office for information on Office365.

Nexus will be implemented in two stages which will each provide users with specific modules.

For further information about Nexus, contact your local RFS Area Office or visit the Volunteer Portal Nexus project pages. The portal will be regularly updated to inform volunteers of the project progress. Transition Leads have also been appointed by QFES to help roll out the system and are responsible for all communications and training. For any project related questions, email the team on QFES.Nexus@qfes.qld.gov.au.

Cassandra Coerper
Business Engagement Officer,
Nexus Project
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Wayne Ford
Transition Coordinator for Emergency Service Volunteers
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Nexus Stages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late November - early December 2017</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International Women’s Day, held on 8 March is a day to celebrate and recognise the achievements and struggles of women around the world. Women are recognised as an integral part of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Inclusion and diversity are Queensland Fire and Emergency Services’ (QFES) core values as a workforce to reflect diversity in communities.

This year, a celebration was held at the Brisbane Showgrounds where QFES announced the winners of the QFES Women in Fire and Emergency Services Awards at the Public Safety Portfolio luncheon. We are extremely proud to announce that Christine Reed, First Officer, Bellthorpe Rural Fire Brigade, Brisbane Region was the worthy recipient of the Outstanding Female Leader (Volunteer) Award.

Christine has demonstrated outstanding leadership in an operational firefighting environment. She has utilised a strong working relationship across partner agencies to enhance response capability as well as acting as a mentor for fellow female volunteer firefighters. Christine supports area training such as Crew Leader, Firefighter Minimum Skills and mentors and supports school students who are participating in the Certificate II Public Safety (Firefighting Operations) program.

Graham King, Area Training and Support Officer, Caboolture, nominated Christine and escorted her to the luncheon and presentation. He said, “The luncheon was an inspiring event with some remarkable presenters.”

Debra Brittingham
Administration Officer, Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service
Operation Cool Burn 2017 is now underway with mitigation burns, targeted education and fire trail upgrades taking place in many areas as conditions allow.

In 2016, Operation Cool Burn had some major changes with a sharpened focus on identifying key priority risk areas to protect Queensland’s communities. The process did not diminish the value of the many mitigation activities which occurred outside these highest priority locations, but ensured that mitigation activities in these areas were given a strong emphasis. These high risk, high priority areas were reinforced in the reporting to senior levels of Government. Despite challenging weather in many places during 2016 we still managed to complete some very good activities.

In case you haven’t seen them before the final statistics for Cool Burn 2016 are detailed in the included diagrams.

This year Operation Cool Burn will build on the success of 2016 with relatively few changes. Instead there are minor tweaks and already much of the planning work is well underway through Area Fire Management Groups. An interesting innovation which has been picked up in some regions, is to map the exact location of protected communities and proposed burns using the REDI-PORTAL mapping tool.

As we all know, Queensland is a big state and this year in some areas the impact of Tropical Cyclone Debbie will guide the mitigation priorities, while in a number of western areas, conditions have produced good pasture growth which has led to high grass fuel loads, now rapidly curing. All of these regional and local conditions will affect this year’s priorities and what can be done. Local and regional solutions to local issues remains an important principle in planning Cool Burn 2017.

Lastly I want to take the opportunity to again thank brigades, fire wardens and all of our partner agencies, for their great work in 2016 and encourage a similarly enthusiastic participation in Operation Cool Burn 2017.

James Haig
Executive Manager Bushfire Mitigation
Rural Fire Service
ties with an identified high risk

Graph 1. Number of bushfire prone localities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Number of Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Number of mitigation activities in priority areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Graph 2. Number of mitigation activities in priority areas

Map 1. Number of mitigation activities in priority areas
The Roma area office covers the most diverse environment within the Brigalow Belt South, the Mulga country to the channel country in the west. Servicing the community in front line and supporting our volunteers is associated with travelling long distances and into the most remote locations. While coastal Queensland have been dealing with the impact of Tropical Cyclone Debbie, the western part of the South Western Region is still seriously affected by draught. Every bundle of grass and vegetation counts as fodder for cattle, goats and sheep. The farming communities are still doing it tough in most parts of Queensland.

Fire plays a very important part in this landscape. Fire management planning, engagement with landholders and developing partnerships is an ongoing priority in protecting communities. Fire is also an important tool to maintain biodiversity and production associated with landscape health.

Goetz Graf
Area Director, Roma
Rural Fire Service
2017 sees the introduction of Primary Producer Brigade (PPB) Field Days onto the brigade calendar. These field days are designed to incorporate open discussion and information sessions specifically for PPB volunteers.

Rural Fire Service (RFS) staff and Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) representatives will be attending existing local events throughout the year in a trade show format offering a new forum for local volunteers to meet and engage with staff. This will allow RFS to gain a better understanding of the needs and requirements of PPBs.

The events scheduled for 2017 include:
- Far Northern Region
  - Mareeba Field Day (24-26 May)
- South West Region
  - Hungerford (3 June)
  - Farm Fest (6-8 June)
  - Miles (TBC June)
- Central Region
  - Ag-Grow (6-7 July)
  - Westtech (9-10 September)

For more information or questions contact your Area Office.

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 and Operations Doctrine.

An updated full version of the RFBM can be downloaded from the Volunteer Portal. We recommend wherever possible brigades download the updated version each quarter onto their brigade manual USB. This is the best way to ensure you always have the most current version. Any urgent changes made to business rules and forms are noted on the Volunteer Portal.

Major Changes:
- D5.2.1 Volunteer Fleet Fuel and Maintenance

Minor Changes:
- C6.1.2 - Chaplaincy Services
- D1.5 - Appendix E
- D5.4 – Utility Off-Road Vehicles

Forms:
- CSO 068 - VCE Community Education Order Form
- OBM 082 – Additional Incident Information Form
- OBM 086 - Rural Fire Brigades Donation Fund Confirmation of Banking Details
- OBM 104 - Light/ Medium Appliance Checklist
- OBM 132 - Rural Fire Brigade Three-Year Management Plan (NEW)
- OM 139 - RFS Volunteer Uniform Order Form
- New Zealand Police Vetting Form

Standing Orders:
- SO-Q-BM 3.38 Participation at Community Events
- SO-Q-OM 3.65 Operation Cool Burn 2017
- SO-Q-OM 4.32 Recording of Turnout Information

**PRIMARY PRODUCER BRIGADE FIELD DAYS**

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**Primary Producer Brigade Field Days**

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For more information or questions contact your Area Office.
## AREA OFFICE CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICE</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>FAX</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>(07) 4651 1803</td>
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<td>Darling Downs Area Office</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.DarlingDowns@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.DarlingDowns@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>South East Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Coast Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5587 4101</td>
<td>(07) 5559 0696</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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