In 2019 the Rural Fire Service is celebrating its 70th Anniversary. This significant milestone is an opportunity for us to recognise the important role RFS volunteers play in Queensland communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your invaluable contribution as volunteers, and thank you to the families of the volunteers who lend their community their fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, parents and children.

Congratulations to the following brigades on 70 years of dedication to the service.

- Glass House Mountains
- Lagoon Pocket
- Byfields
- Kandanga
- Thangool
- Gordonbrook

Brigades can download the 70 year celebration artwork for use on emails, websites and newsletters in 2019 from the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Gateway. Please be aware this cannot be used on any products, signage or promotional material. If you have any further questions, please contact us on RFS@qfes.qld.gov.au.
Welcome to another year with the Rural Fire Service (RFS). As there was no December edition of the Bulletin due to the significant weather events happening across Queensland, I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on the year that was 2018.

Last year was another year of progress and change within Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), as we continued to develop as a standalone department. A major change was the move of the QFES Gateway to the Cloud. This saw the consolidation of the staff intranet and the RFS and State Emergency Services (SES) volunteer portals into one site, accessible to all. This change provided one online home for all QFES organisational information, and improved volunteer access to QFES information, streamlining the volunteer experience.

To ensure volunteer access to the QFES Gateway, RFS continued to promote the use of Office 365 (O365) for volunteers. This system not only provides an RFS email account to volunteers, and access into systems including the Gateway and Nexus, it also offers volunteers access to a range of online Microsoft Office applications. I strongly encourage you to register for Office 365 and access the QFES Gateway, as it will provide you with access to information and tools that will be useful to you in your role as a volunteer.

In 2018 we held our 7th RFS Volunteer Summit, and we were pleased to welcome over 150 volunteers and a range of special guest speakers to the event. One of the highlights of the event, was the announcement made by The Honourable Craig Crawford, Minister for Fire and Emergency Services that Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) will be installed on all new RFS appliances from 1 July 2018.

Commissioner Katarina Carroll then went on to announce that in addition, QFES will begin the process of retrofitting AEDs to selected RFS appliances where a brigade does not already possess an AED. The delivery of phase one is now underway, and this will continue throughout 2019.

2018 also saw progression of the accelerated appliance build program which is delivering:

- 35 Isuzu Single Cab Medium Attacks.
- 34 Isuzu Dual Cab Medium Attacks.
- 30 Fuso Single Cab Medium Attacks.
- 14 Ford Ranger Space Cab Light Attacks.
- 6 Ford Ranger Dual Cab Light Attacks.

The year ended with significant fire activity across the state. At the end of November and into early December, QFES attended 1,243 fires across the state. Many thousands of QFES staff, RFS and SES volunteers worked day and night to protect and support the communities of Queensland. We also had support from every state and territory throughout Australia.

The activity we saw during this time was significant, with more than four million hectares of land burnt. 55 aircraft were working to support ground crews, dropping more than 12 million litres of water and fire suppressant and more than 430 bushfire community warnings were issued during this time. For many staff and volunteers, this period of activity followed on from what had already been a significant fire season, with campaign fire events in North Coast, South Eastern, Northern and Far Northern regions having already taken place.

I cannot express enough, my thanks to our RFS volunteers and staff across the state for your efforts in the lead up to Christmas. I'd also like to extend my gratitude to families and employers who support you to undertake your roles. All of you will have contributed to the protection and safety of your communities, whether it be through responding to emergency situations, supporting crews on the ground or delivering community messaging. Without the extraordinary efforts of all services of QFES, the outcome for many communities, families and individuals could have been much worse.

With 2019 now here, it’s amazing to realise that this year is the 70th anniversary of the RFS. While the Glass House Mountain Rural Fire Brigade was formed in 1948, the registration for the brigade occurred in 1949, with the registration of several other brigades closely following. There will be many opportunities to recognise and celebrate this significant milestone throughout the year.

I have no doubt that we are in for another year of achievements, progress and challenges. I ask that you support each other in your endeavours and keep in contact with the staff of the RFS. We are here to support you and the amazing work you do in serving your communities.

Thank you again.

Gary McCormack
Acting Assistant Commissioner, Rural Fire Service
All volunteers are an important part of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES). A key objective for the department is to empower volunteerism by recognising, respecting and valuing our volunteers, and by listening to their feedback to inform our future.

We are undertaking the next Volunteer Survey to assess volunteer satisfaction and particularly seek feedback on culture and how we work together, and how we support and engage with volunteers.

More information on the opening date of the survey will be provided shortly, however all QFES volunteers will be invited to participate.

This a great opportunity to get involved, for your ideas to be considered and your voices heard. Your views will be used to provide better support for all volunteers.

Be sure to keep an eye out for further details on the survey.

Thank you to all volunteers who have taken the time to respond to the Data Verification process currently being undertaken by the Rural Fire Service (RFS).

The RFS has almost 36,000 volunteers across Queensland that make up approximately 1,400 brigades and a comprehensive Fire Warden Network. It is essential that as a department, we have a clear understanding of who our volunteers are and the most up to date contact information for them. This ensures they are protected by our policies, procedures and insurances when undertaking any brigade activities, and that we can contact them or their next of kin should the need arise.

Due to the busy lives led by all of us, it is often the case that personal details are not updated with the RFS when a volunteers’ information or situation changes, and this impacts on the integrity of our data.

If you have not yet received a request from RFS to update your details, you will likely be contacted in the coming weeks. Can we ask those of you who have received the request and not yet responded, to take the time to respond so we can ensure our records are as accurate as possible. Once we have completed this process, we will return to business as usual processes for updating your details.

If your contact information or status as a member changes, please advise your brigade secretary and Area Office. Alternatively, you can update your information yourselves via Nexus.

Once again thank you all for your understanding during this process.
In 2018, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) introduced the new Ford Ranger Space Cab Light Attack. Five were delivered to brigades and a sixth has been touring the state so that volunteers can view the new appliance and provide feedback.

The 2017 Ford Ranger Space Cab, when compared to the now discontinued 2016 Nissan Patrol, outperforms its predecessor on many levels including:

- Safety - number of Airbags, Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) Rating and vehicle control systems.
- Lower height profile.
- Shorter overall length.
- Same track width for both front and rear axles.
- Ground clearance.
- Lighter tare mass.
- Greater payload.

The appliance itself incorporates a large internal cab space allowing for personal kit bags to be carried internally and room for a small fridge. The business end of the appliance has the following:

- A large two door locker able to carry an extra 30 kilograms of equipment.
- Storage locker for suction hose.
- Robyn Subaru self-priming electric start diesel pump set.
- 30m x 19mm id low pressure hose on a manual hose reel.
- Block foam system.
- Mast light.
- 500 litre water capacity.

The pump and tank are configured in a slip-on setup with an engineer certified restraint system. A speed-load system is provided with the appliance allowing the quick removal or loading of the slip-on.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is now an all-hazards organisation working across the full spectrum of disaster management phases of mitigation preparedness, response and recovery. Looking to the future, through the use of the slip-on system, the RFS is positioning itself to be able to adapt to the needs of the community by having the flexibility to switch purpose built slip-ons/pods to meet different risks and taskings.

Since the first delivery of the new light attack, RFS has been seeking feedback on the design from volunteers who are using this appliance.

As with all things there is always room for improvement and this appliance is no different. Taking on board the feedback from volunteers, some of the changes RFS are aiming to introduce over the next few years include:

- Below tray storage for suction lines and rake hoes.
- New storage configurations within the cabin.
- Improved internal layout for the locker.
- Introduction of High Pressure Pump.
- Introduction of a RFR2 electric rewind hose reel.
- Addition of a dedicated hydrant overhead fill.
- Addition of Gaam manual hand primer.
- Introduction of an automatic transmission.

The cab-chassis itself is reviewed regularly taking into account cost (including whole of life costs), capability, robustness, servicing regimes, government emissions requirements and passenger safety policies. With very few products available it is a challenge to meet all the above requirements and to provide a capable appliance.

Mark Saunders
Manager Operational Development
Rural Fire Service
On the 21 and 22 July, as part of the 2018 Operation Coolburn hazard mitigation strategy, the Southern Tableland Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) Group and the Tableland Lakes RFB Group combined in what became the largest rural exercise to have taken place in the Far Northern Region (FNR).

The organising committee was Group Officers, Peter Larsen and Bill Hitchener and Administration Officers, Betta Gianasi and Frances Pelgrave, supported by Innisfail Area Office staff. In all, 15 brigades and 18 different Rural appliances participated in the exercise including FNR 71 tanker, FNR Operational Support Unit, Ravenshoe 735A and 731 Yankee and three State Emergency Services (SES) vehicles from the Atherton group.

The exercise encompassed testing operational and deployment capability, strengthening multi- and inter-agency networks across the Tablelands Regional Council area. We would like to thank the Ravenshoe Police and Queensland Ambulance Services, SES traffic control, Fire and Rescue Service, Firecom and the SES Remote Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) team for their participation and expertise ensuring the exercise.

The exercise also welcomed many new volunteers into the Rural Fire Service (RFS) including, 10 firefighters from the Southern Tablelands (Certificate II Firefighter operations) high school program and five firefighters from the Cowley Beach RFB in the Cassowary Coast region.

The exercise was planned to conduct seven hazard reduction burns over the two days along with multiple awareness training activities. Sadly, because of a wildfire incident being reported, we were unable to achieve the whole operational mission. The preparations made will still be in place as control lines for this wildfire season.

Previous training activities have paid off, the transition from the exercise to wildfire operation was seamless; from the appointment of a sector command (the local first officer) to manage the wildfire incident to mobilisation of crews to complete hazard reduction activities and re-tasking to then focus on the wildfire.
The work undertaken by firefighters resulted in many days of firefighting being avoided.

It was good to see the mentorship and learning from firefighting on the coalface to incident management. The ability to test capability is sometimes very hard to do in such a scale, and without the combined participation by all it is sometimes unachievable.

The FNR RPAS team provided operations outcomes in the use of drones to give Sector Command and the Incident Management team the instant visual verification of terrain, fire behaviour, and situational awareness.

I would like to thank everyone who participated for their efforts over the weekend. This was a marvellous event for the training of new volunteers and for veteran fire fighters, Crew Leaders and Sector Commanders to refresh their skills and mentor their own brigade members in an operational context.

With special note to the area staff, Acting Area Training Support Officer Michael Spartalis, Acting Brigade Training Support Officer Tania Peake and Rural Fire Service Officer John Lange for their dedication and support to the volunteers through the logistical requirements for the Incident Management Team (IMT) and deployment to mentoring of ground crews throughout the exercise.

The combined group exercise has undoubtedly, demonstrated how much more we can achieve when we work as a team.

Matthew Eckhardt
Acting Area Director, Innisfail
Rural Fire Service
The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) vehicle insurer recently expressed concern regarding the increasing number of incidents causing damage to QFES appliances. The number of insurance claims has highlighted serious safety concerns which could easily result in personal injury or worse.

While some incidents are genuine accidents, a disproportionate number of incidents are deemed to be ‘driver error’ and avoidable if appropriate safety procedures were followed.

The most common of the ‘driver error’ category is the spate of vehicles reversing into solid stationary objects without the driver being ‘guided’ or physically checking behind the vehicle before reversing.

QFES Tactical Directives apply to all QFES staff and volunteers and provides clear direction regarding the responsibility of the Officer in Charge to ensure safety of the crew and members of the public as well as the driver’s responsibilities when reversing a QFES vehicle.

Regardless of an appliance being fitted with a rear-view camera or audible reversing alarms, the driver is ultimately responsible for ensuring the safe operation of the vehicle and is accountable if damage or injury occurs.

First Officers and other responsible brigade members are encouraged to set an example and foster safe driving practices for newer members, to ensure a safe operating environment for crews and community alike.

Robert Walker,
Manager Operational Support
Rural Fire Service
In 2018 fifteen enthusiastic young firefighters completed their Certificate II Public Safety (Fire Fighting Operations) with the Charters Towers Area High School Program.

In its eighth year, the program sources its students from three local co-educational boarding colleges and the local state high school.

During the year as the program progressed all the student friendships were made across all schools, this strongly supported team building and allowed trust between all. During training sessions and weekend live fire activities, they gained invaluable knowledge of fire behaviour and control that would be encountered at a wildfire.

This year students will take their skills home to places such as Hughenden, Mount Isa, Palm Island, Julia Creek, Charters Towers and areas of the Gulf. One trainee has already had the opportunity to put her new skills to use with her local brigade.

The mentors with the program come from of four brigades, bringing a variety of skills to share with the juniors. However, they all agree the knowledge and friendship given back by the School Program students shows the strength of the future of the Rural Fire Service.

Many past trainees remain active members of their brigades and communities. Many also stay in contact with the mentors and trainers.

Through the skills shared these students will contribute to making our communities more resilient.

Robert Downey
Area Training and Support Officer, Charters Towers Rural Fire Service
I have often said that the hazards we don’t recognise are the ones that are most likely to hurt us. Driving can be a bit like that, we do it all the time and can become complacent. Working near moving vehicles can be similar. This bushfire season we have had a number of incidents involving driving and vehicle safety, these prompted a safety alert (SA-07-18 Driving and Vehicle Safety) issued on 10 October 2018.

Rather than reprinting the alert I thought I’d make a personal plea for everyone to take care when driving or working near vehicles. I particularly wanted to highlight the issues when actually at an incident itself where we may be at risk from other road users or from our emergency vehicles. It’s personal to me since a few years ago I witnessed a near miss that still scares me when I think about it.

Incidents like these usually occur because people involved were distracted, hurrying or for some other reason did not see the danger. Regardless of the reason, the consequences can be tragic, people have been killed or seriously injured at similar incidents in the past and even a low speed contact can lead to a dreadful outcome.

It is critically important that we avoid these incidents and all team members have a responsibility and role to play to achieve this.

Incident Controllers need to make sure that any safety related driving issues such as smoke reducing visibility, nearby road traffic and safe parking and staging areas are covered when sizing up and planning at an incident. If possible separate staging and work areas from the road and through traffic areas and make sure all risks are covered when briefing incoming crews.

Vehicle drivers need to take extra care at incidents. There is usually a lot of noise and movement going on and it is very easy to be distracted. From personal experience this is especially important when reversing so get someone to guide you if possible and don’t hurry.

Firefighters on foot need to keep a constant lookout for your own and your mate’s safety. Don’t stand where vehicles may be moving and remember that the same distractions that affect drivers also affect us on foot so stay alert especially for vehicles starting up or reversing.

Anyone can report a safety issue so don’t rely on others, say something yourself straight away.

It is obviously also important that we follow the directions of the safety alert and other procedures, they are there to keep us safe, but these are just a few of the basic things I think we can do to help avoid tragedies.

Safety is not about blaming anyone, I make more mistakes than most people, but we all know that the safety of ourselves, our colleagues and the public is the highest priority at any fire. I can honestly say that this is the area that is most likely to keep me up at night and I think that applies to just about everyone reading this so please take extra care and stay safe.

James Haig, Executive Manager Bushfire Mitigation Rural Fire Service
As Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) continues to develop as a standalone department, staff and volunteers are seeing new initiatives and ongoing changes.

With these new and exciting initiatives being considered, it is important engagement with our key stakeholders is established early. A new QFES unit has been established, known as the Organisational Engagement Unit, to provide a conduit between major stakeholders and to ensure close communication and consultation at the ground roots of change. This unit is a multi-service team with a range of experienced senior managers from across QFES embedded in it, and who can relate directly to a specific group of key stakeholders.

With over 20 years experience in the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and having come from a RFS volunteer family, Kaye Healing was thrilled to be asked to take on this important role.

“It is important that we engage with our key stakeholders from the beginning to ensure we take the journey from start to finish together”, said Kaye Healing. Any change needs to be properly researched, communicated, considered and implemented, so that its full impact on our organisation and the brigades is understood. “Levering off the Volunteerism Strategy and the many talented and experienced members we have within RFS, we can help identify the drivers of change, develop the concept to suit volunteers and ensure it is implemented so that everyone understands why it is needed, how it will be introduced and what benefits it will be to them”.

Working closely with our stakeholders such as Rural Fire Brigades, the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) and staff will collectively put a volunteer lens over every aspect of change being considered to ensure its impact on volunteers is fully considered and communicated.

The evolution of Rural Fire Service (RFS) appliances has seen many improvements over the years including locker configuration, lighting, refrigeration, hose reel upgrades as well pump types and performance.

While some modifications are suitable for retrofitting to older appliances, other modifications which exceed the legal Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) of the appliance are restricted unless the additional weight can be offset.

To continue to ensure enhancements to RFS appliances, RFS has introduced the Appliance Modification Assessment (AMA) form (OBM 138), allowing brigades to submit requests to modify appliances.

AMAs are evaluated on factors including crew safety, fatigue management, operational capability and performance as well as legislative obligations and compliance with body building codes.

Although RFS have only received a handful of AMA forms to date, most have been approved. The condition modifications are undertaken by qualified technicians and comply with the Department of Transport and Main Roads regulations and manufacturers specifications.

Unfortunately, proposed modifications which render the appliance unroadworthy, breech road rules or conflict with manufacturers specifications, creating an unacceptable risk for crews and the community and cannot be supported.

To access the AMA form visit the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Gateway.
What prompted the decision to trial and ultimately introduce the P3 facemasks?
The safety of our staff and volunteers is paramount and it’s imperative we respond to emerging personal protective equipment (PPE) issues with absolute certainty. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) commenced a feasibility study into the P3 negative pressure masks for RFS during 2015-16, with a trial following in 2016-17. Further post-trial research and evaluation was conducted throughout 2018. There are several factors to consider with the implementation of any new and critical piece of equipment, including fatigue and fitness impacts. QFES has taken a highly measured and comprehensive approach to studying, trialling and ultimately introducing the P3 masks.

How will the deployment of P3 facemasks be funded?
The Palaszczuk Government will allocate $10 million to the already committed $13 million over the next five years to ensure additional respiratory and safety equipment for frontline personnel. QFES will re-adjust its current expenditure to ensure this can be funded. Funding will include the maintenance of P3 masks.

Who will receive the P3 masks?
The new P3 facemasks will be deployed to other frontline personnel attending bushfire incidents, including volunteer firefighters and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers providing support. Fire and Rescue firefighters already use a range of breathing apparatus and other respiratory equipment.

What are the benefits of the new masks?
The P3 facemask provides a higher level of protection than what is currently specified in the Australian Standard. Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs) currently use P2 facemasks in combination with goggles. P2 facemasks filter approximately 93% of the particulates that are in the atmosphere during a fire and meet the requirements of the Australian Standards for P2 facemasks. This is the national standard used in all other Australian jurisdictions. P3 masks filter 99.95% of particulates. The filters QFES use are a type of Particulate, Organic Vapours and Formaldehyde (POVF) filter as studies have shown a reduction in respiratory (irritant) symptoms using POVF filters in bushfire smoke.

Are firefighters who use the P2 masks in danger?

Is Queensland in line with respiratory protection requirements in other states?
QFES believes it will be among the first jurisdictions in the country to undertake a broad distribution of P3 facemasks to volunteer personnel. QFES continues to work closely with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and other states regarding developments in firefighter safety.

Which brigades were involved in the trial?
23 RFBs have been trained using the P3 facemasks, including four in Brisbane Region, four in South East Region, three in South West Region, three in Central Region, three in North Coast Region, three in Northern Region, and three in Far Northern Region.

When and how will the masks be rolled-out?
A phased roll-out will commence in 2019, complemented with comprehensive and ongoing training and maintenance support. QFES will adopt a strategic risk-based approach to distributing the masks to ensure a well-planned process is undertaken.

How long will it take to roll-out?
The roll out of these masks to Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers will take several years to fully complete. RFS is in the process of analysing risk and resourcing and using the learnings from the trial to determine the most efficient way to roll these masks out to as many of our people as quickly as we can. There is a need to complete face-fitting, training on the use and maintenance of the mask, distribution of masks and ancillary equipment. QFES also needs to ensure that brigades can access adequate facilities to clean and maintain the masks. All these factors will mean that the time to roll-out masks to each location will vary and for that reason, there will be a phased implementation of this equipment.
Will the P3 mask come with a carbon monoxide detector?

Carbon monoxide detectors will be made available for each location with P3 masks to further mitigate residual risk from the implementation of this piece of respiratory protection equipment. These devices have their own training and maintenance requirements. The allocation will be in-line with the outcomes of the strategic risk-based assessment methodology being used to assess the mask roll-out.

How do I get a P3 mask?

The relevant RFS Area Office will liaise with your brigade management to onboard your brigade in the P3 mask program. P3 masks will be issued to brigades rather than individuals.

How will my brigade maintain P3 masks?

As part of the roll out of the P3 masks, QFES will ensure that locations receiving a mask have access to adequate facilities to clean and maintain the P3 masks and ancillary equipment.

The trial identified several considerations for users of P3 masks. How will these be addressed?

As an outcome of the trial, QFES identified several issues that require investigation and analysis to understand the impact to our organisation. These related to the different requirements for the use of P3 masks versus P2 masks under the relevant Australian Standard and included:

- Requirements for medical assessment of wearers.
- Additional work/fatigue load associated with negative pressure masks.
- Effective, efficient and hygienic options for hydration during use.
- Facial hair management process for users.
- Implementation and resourcing of an ongoing facial fit assessment program.
- Training and skills maintenance of wearers.
- Suitability and effectiveness of carbon monoxide detectors and alternative options.
- The provision of adequate and appropriate hygiene facilities for the maintenance and cleaning of masks across Queensland.

All of these issues have been assessed and will be accounted for as part of the phased implementation to brigades.

Are there other personal safety protections we should consider?

Yes - The most effective protection is prevention, and people working on a fireground should make every effort to perform their duties from a safe area, up wind and out of the smoke wherever possible. People should also ensure PPE is regularly cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and that they keep abreast of safety alerts and other resources on the QFES Gateway in the Safety and Wellbeing section of Personal Support Services tab.
In November 2018 we were pleased to advise that the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteer portals were consolidated into one; the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) corporate intranet, known as the QFES Gateway.

This change has provided one online home for all QFES organisational information and has contributed to streamlining the volunteer experience.

The QFES Gateway still provides you with access to all the information previously found in the RFS Volunteer Portal, however you can now access a range of new information, material and tools.

To access the QFES Gateway you will require a QFES Office 365 email and password.

Once you have accessed the QFES Gateway, we have created quick links to take you to the information previously provided on the RFS Volunteer Portal. Simply click on the yellow box titled Rural Fire Service Volunteers, on the right hand side of the QFES Gateway home page and it will take you to the RFS Volunteers page.

If you have any further questions regarding the QFES Gateway or QFES O365, please contact your Area Office.
With each edition of the Bulletin we provide you with a summary of changes made to the Rural Fire Brigade Manual (RFBM) 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 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 procedures and forms are noted on the Volunteer Portal home page and RFBM page.

You will also notice that a number of our Rural Fire Service (RFS) forms have recently changed to a new template. This is to align with a whole of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) approach. Forms will continue to be updated progressively over the next few months.

Major Changes:
- C4.1 - Delivery of Training
- D3.7 - Brigade Grants
- D4.2 - Brigade Appliance and Station Insurance

Minor Changes:
- D1.2 - Brigade Formations and Changes

Forms:
- OBM 084 - Assessment for Appliance Allocation
- OBM 107 - Rural Fire Service Grant Application
- OBM 144 - SAP Vendor Creation (NEW)
- OM 139 - Volunteer Uniform Form

Standing Orders:
- SO-Q-OM-3.73 Operations Convergence 2018

QFES Policy:
- 3.5 - Training and Assessment (RTO)
- 3.20 - Supporting Employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence
- 6.12.0 - References to Trade or Other Suppliers

Rural Heavy Attack prototype for Wallumbilla RFB

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the State Emergency Services (SES) volunteers of Wallumbilla accepted the delivery and induction to a new state-of-the-art rural heavy fire truck, the Wallumbilla 61.

This 4x4 truck has road crash rescue (RCR) capability and a Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS). The CAFS has an impressive ability to drastically reduce and save the amount of water needed for firefighting operation, while producing high air pressure through a compressor induced into the system. The truck is jointly crewed by RFS and SES volunteers. This is the first ever state designed and manufactured heavy fire appliance, which is fit-for-task for the brigade locality and has been built as a result of consultation with our volunteers.

This prototype and design provides a platform that will give our RFS and SES volunteers in isolated communities the ability to better support the needs of the community.

Goetz Graf
Area Director Roma
Rural Fire Service
Late 2018 saw extreme weather conditions across much of the state. During the period, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) attended 1,243 fires. Many thousands of QFES staff, Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers and Fire and Rescue staff worked day and night to protect and support the communities of Queensland. Support was provided from every state and territory throughout Australia, with 1,161 people from interstate assisting with the incident.

During the period, 55 aircraft worked to support ground crews, dropping more than 12 million litres of water and fire suppressant. More than 430 bushfire community warnings were issued between 22 November and 5 December 2018 and more than 50 Emergency Alert campaigns were issued. These messages reached more than one million devices, alerting people of the dangerous conditions and directing them to further information regarding the situation.

This activity followed on from significant campaign fire events in North Coast, South Eastern, Northern and Far Northern regions. The bushfire season saw over 3.5 million hectares of land burnt in Queensland.

RFS volunteers and staff cross the state played a significant role in protecting the communities of Queensland, through responding to emergency situations, supporting crews on the ground and delivering community messaging. Without the extraordinary efforts of all services of QFES, the outcome for many communities, families and individuals could have been much worse.
“Firstly I would like once again to acknowledge the exceptional effort that was displayed by all the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) staff that were involved in our deployment to Queensland. Please pass on my warm thank you to Paul, Kaye, Dave and Garry for all their efforts.”

Peter Ikonomopoulous, South Australian Strike Team Leader deployed to Washpool Fire late November

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) crew from Wamuran arrive at Dunwich fire station to help. Photo by Kerrie Donaldson.

“Thank-you very much for assisting us with the supply of Rural Fire Service (RFS) chainsaw crews and liaison officer Tully. This action allowed us to complete all 456 jobs resulting from the storms on 21 and 22 December. Being able to mobilise RFS chainsaw crews for these larger events is fantastic, as it allows the SES crews to concentrate on tasks that are not common to both services such as working from heights. The result is a giant increase in efficiency, and the timely completion of all jobs. One of my goals was to have all jobs completed before Christmas day, with the assistance from the RFS we were able to achieve this.”

“Having Tully in the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was a pleasure. He is very easy to work with and knowledgeable about RFS procedure and process. Finally, thanks for making the Group headquarters building available for welfare on the 22 December. It was a good location, central to the work area.”

Jayd Woolard, Local Controller, Gold Coast Unit, SES
TINNANBAR- A CLOSE CALL

Tinnanbar a small town of less than 200 people was put in the spotlight in late November and early December 2018. A severe storm warning for the area on the 28 November was the start of a different turn of events.

Initial Call

In the morning of the 29 November, a 000 call came in for smoke coming from the coastline in a land parcel to the south east of the township, with smoke changing from white to dark brown.

Two brigades were dispatched and reported code 2 to a well involved coastal wallum/heath land that within the response time had developed in intensity to a large elevated fire with a strong convection column easily viewable from Maryborough, 49km away. With crews conducting a quick risk assessment it was clear that with severe weather conditions, continuous and very high fuel loads and difficulty gaining access, the clock was definitely ticking for groundcrews.

Fire Development

Crews worked with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and HQ Plantations, to gain access to the fire. Firefighters worked from an existing vehicle track to contain the fire tracking north east toward the last fire break before the Tinnanbar township. The fire intensity quickly grew to a stage where it was making it difficult for ground crews to contain via direct. Despite major efforts, spotting caused ignition to the north of crews beyond reach of hose lines. At this stage the job was escalated, calling in additional support.

At 3pm, the weather took a turn for the worse with a south east wind change causing the elevated fire to start crowning ten meters and traversing directly towards the township and to Tinnanbar Road which would effectively cut the only access route for residents. With an uncontained fire front potentially putting Tinnanbar at risk, crews worked to establish effective control by refocusing efforts toward structural protection and community safety.

Additional support

Additional resources from several partnering agencies and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) were activated along with air operations assisting from the skies. RJ85 Large Air Tanker (LAT) bomber and three AT802F firebombers utilised aerial attack strategies which were vital to
the containment of the fire that night. The aircraft worked to slow the forward rate of spread assisting the 20 ground crews to secure containment lines to stop the fire easily jumping the road and cut off Tinnanbar town. Later that night/Coming days

After hours of mopping up to ensure containment was maintained overnight on the western boundary, day crews were released. The night shift crews focused their efforts on the southern and northern boundary which was in the line to impact Headleys Camping ground and the Tinnanbar township with projected weather conditions. Midnight struck, and northern, western and southern boundaries consisted of strong containment lines however the job wasn’t over yet. Over the following 11 days, over 50 further resources returned to attack two spot overs to the south. Crews continued to monitor and patrol perimeters as there was still active fire burning in non-accessible unburnt fuel areas towards the east sea break.

Day 11 concluded with over 700 hectares burnt and the Tinnanbar township saved thanks to an amazing collective effort from all crews contributing their time, expertise and resources to achieve an outstanding result given the extreme weather conditions in Queensland.

Brittany Lea-Hewson
Acting Brigade Training and Support Officer
Maryborough Area
Rural Fire Service

In August 2018, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) launched the new conduct awareness package, Think Say Do, to promote awareness of and give information about positive workplace behaviour.

The package includes a brief introduction by the Commissioner, explaining the importance of good conduct in the workplace and eight modules covering:

- Code of Conduct
- Ethical decision making
- Positive workplace behaviours
- Complaint management and reporting
- Financial management
- Conflict of interest
- Diversity and inclusion
- Social media

We highly encourage all volunteers to take the time to complete the Think Say Do package. Each module takes around seven minutes to complete.

It is vital that each and every one of us understands the importance of behaving ethically and that our conduct reflects our QFES values.

The conduct awareness package can be accessed via Nexus, and launched by selecting one of the following options:

- Opening Nexus and selecting the “My Learning” tile;
- Selecting a link on the QFES Gateway; or
- Obtaining a USB and hardcopy on request through your Area Office.

When selecting the Nexus link it is preferable to select Google Chrome as your web browser. When using Internet Explorer or Edge you may be asked to log into Nexus using your usual QFES email and password and selecting the “My Learning” tile. The Think Say Do awareness package will be listed in your course learning programs.

If you would like to undertake this training via Nexus, please ensure you have first registered for your QFES Office 365 account via the QFES Gateway access page https://volsportal.emergency.qld.gov.au, then email your details to nexus.support@qfes.qld.gov.au so they can activate your account.
With the fire weather experienced in late 2018 across Queensland there was a sudden demand for more equipment on the fire grounds, to replace broken and damaged equipment as well as provide a capacity above and beyond our business as usual. Local crews continued to take up the fight and with the potential for more fires to start across the state, it became clear there were not enough appliances available for the multiple incoming interstate strike teams.

Our closest neighbouring state New South Wales (NSW) sent what spare appliances they could release but more were needed. The fires coincided with the largest Rural Fire Service (RFS) fleet build in history and at the time 39 new appliances were located at Isuzu with some having just passed Quality Assurance (QA) and others waiting for final delivery services to be completed prior to final QA. With the assistance of Isuzu staff and three local Fire and Rescue crews, 20 appliances were made operationally ready in the space of one day. Work included; filling the water tanks, removing all packaging, loading up 92 drums of foam, creating new callsigns, filling drip torches, labelling the appliance and conducting a shortened QA to ensure radios, pumps and hose reels worked.

The next morning Isuzu opened the yard at 6am and had three trainers on hand to ensure the incoming State Emergency Services (SES) and Western Australia (WA) fire fighters (drivers) were inducted on the new Isuzu Cab Chassis, whilst I gave a quick induction on the appliance body to the remaining fire fighters. By 7:30am they were on their way to the high priority risk areas of Central Region.

Two days later another six appliances were requested, and the same process occurred again with these vehicles deployed into South East Region.

Creating a surge capacity to this extent has not been required or considered in the past and to deliver the results Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) relied on the support of Brisbane Isuzu who supplied six staff members at no cost to QFES or the Queensland community. The efforts of the Volunteerism Support Team and Fire and Rescue must also be recognised.

The use of new appliances as a surge capacity allowed QFES to respond to the fire crisis in a fast and effective manner helping to protect Queensland communities and maintaining our commitment to Queenslanders. After the fires had died down some of the appliances were held in Central Queensland allowing continued service to the affected areas as local appliances were repaired and serviced. During the period of 27 November to 4 December 2018 approximately 170 RFS appliances reported to Firecom as Code 7, representing approximately 15% of the entire RFS state fleet. The job is not finished yet with all surge appliances currently returning to Isuzu dealerships to be thoroughly cleaned, repaired, serviced and fully QA checked before being delivered to their allocated brigades.

Mark Saunders
Manager Operational Development
Rural Fire Service
Rural Fire Service (RFS) brigades often hold events that are of interest or relevance to Members of Parliament (MPs). As such, protocols exist to provide for proper and transparent communication between ministerial staff members and the departmental employees and volunteers of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) while ensuring appropriate levels of responsiveness to the Minister and ministerial requirements.

It is important that these protocols are adhered to by QFES officers and volunteers to ensure proper consideration and endorsement of materials to be provided to the Minister’s Office and to avoid duplication and delivery of inconsistent or conflicting advice.

Under whole-of-government protocols, ministerial staff members should only seek departmental (QFES) information or advice through the QFES Departmental Liaison Officer (DLO) or Ministerial Liaison Officer (MLO). However, should a ministerial staff member contact a QFES officer or volunteer directly, they should refer the ministerial staff member to the QFES DLO or MLO and immediately inform the DLO or MLO of the contact.

QFES officers are not to respond directly to ministerial staff members as proper consideration and endorsement of a departmental response needs to be undertaken.

Ministerial staff members cannot ask QFES officers or volunteers to take any action that is inconsistent with their duties and obligations under the Public Service Act 2008 or the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service. In particular, ministerial staff members cannot direct a QFES officer or volunteer to give particular advice or change departmental advice.

Under existing protocols, MPs should not contact QFES officers in writing or in person as their inquiries should be directed through the Minister’s Office. However, should a MP write to a QFES officer directly, the officer should immediately refer the matter to the QFES Executive Manager, Correspondence. Should a MP make contact with a QFES officer by any other means, the officer should refer them to the Minister’s Office and immediately notify the QFES DLO or MLO. QFES officers are not to respond directly to a MP as proper consideration and endorsement of a departmental response needs to be undertaken and endorsed by the Minister’s Office.

QFES officers and volunteers are not to invite MPs (Federal or State) to official QFES events unless ministerial endorsement has been obtained. Any requests for invitations to MPs for QFES events should therefore be referred to the QFES Executive Manager, Correspondence through the RFS Office of the Assistant Commissioner who will liaise with the Minister’s Office and seek ministerial endorsement. Volunteers should notify their Area or Regional Office.

Queensland Government
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) operated out of the Agnes Water Airbase from 25 November until the 20 December 2018 to support the extreme weather events across Queensland.

Throughout the duration of the airbase operations, a total of 14 aircraft were operating in the area including:

- A large Air Tanker from New South Wales,
- Firebirds
- Bombers, Helitacks and Birddog aircraft.
- The base was further supported by: Three Gladstone Regional Council water tankers,
- Two fuel tankers,
- Central Region CR03, Central 72 and Central 82, and
- 12 personnel supporting the airbase consisting of an Airbase Manager, four Airbase Operators and two support personnel for the operating of the airbase control vehicle.

From 25 November to 1 December 2018 over 1,000 water bombing drops from both the fixed wing and the Helitack aircraft were completed.

Operations at the Agnes Water Airbase demonstrated the success of an interagency collaboration ensuring the airbase systematically functioned to promote non-stop support to ground crews at multiple wildfires within the Gladstone Area.

Rebecca Flintham
Bushfire Safety Officer, Central Region
Rural Fire Service
Volunteer Represents QFES

The 2018 bushfire season saw an extremely busy period for all streams of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) across the state. For First Officer Roy Muller and the Tinana Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) it consisted of strike team deployments, in area incidents, community engagement activities, brigade business as well as being the President of the Maryborough Rifle and Pistol club.

In addition to his role as First Officer, Roy volunteered his time to represent RFS in the Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games in the shooting division in late October. This competition consisted of approximately 3,000 international and Australian competitors converging at the Port Bouvard Rifle range in Perth to shoot it out for the bullseye. Roy competed in two events which came back with results. The 50 metre Benchrest event saw Roy with a 600/600 score hitting 52 centres scoring him the gold medal of the event. Round 2, the Air rifle indoor event also resulted in a win with Roy scoring the bronze.

Further to representing RFS in the games, Roy recently committed two weekends to travel to Melbourne international shooting club to shoot in the Rimfire and Air rifle trial events for Target Rifle Australia. Once again with extremely sharp shooting at age 71, Roy was selected for the team to represent Australia in the next world championship in South Africa in August 2019. Congratulations to Roy for his achievements so far and best of luck for August 2019 when Roy travels overseas to represent Australia.

Brittany Lea-Hewson
Acting Brigade Training and Support Officer
Maryborough Area
Rural Fire Service
ESCAPE WEEK

Wow! What an action-packed week. Twenty-eight of the most dedicated and aspiring cadets, young life savers and adult leaders in Queensland were rewarded with a bevy of emergency services activities during a six-day camp. Jordan Reid and Lachlan Wright proudly represented the Rural Fire Service (RFS).

Each day, cadets and mentors participated in a collaborative operational experience from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and partnering agencies. The training activities ranged from jumping onto a Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) boat covering radio communications, flare activations, and mapping activities, to live fire demonstrations, confined spaces and extinguisher training at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy (QCESA) as well as a very impressive site tour. Surf Life Saving Queensland on Coochiemudlo Island kept everyone wet and busy with swim events utilising jet skis and surf rescue boards. The police academy at Oxley made everyone sweat with a fitness challenge as well as interaction with the dog squad and pol air. Westpac rescue helicopter offered a hands-on approach with rescue equipment and a generous landowner from Kilcoy turned up the heat and allowed the cadets to utilise his farm to experience rural operations with interactive training techniques.

On the last day a ceremony and presentation was held at the Emergency Services Complex in Kedron to congratulate the cadets and adult leaders and recognise their achievements. Our RFS cadets were totally exhausted but thoroughly enjoyed the whole week. A big thank you goes to the Police-Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) for the opportunity to include RFS cadets in this awe-inspiring week.

Steve Brittingham
Acting Area Training and Support Officer, Caboolture Area
Rural Fire Service
On 1 October 2018, new sections of the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) Legislation was amended to ensure that every party in the heavy vehicle transport supply chain has a duty to ensure the safety of their transport activities.

Operating approximately 740 vehicles over 4.5 Tonne, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) is not exempt from this legislation. The law recognises that multiple parties may be responsible for offences committed by the drivers and operators of heavy vehicles. The legislation seeks to manage compliance with speed, fatigue, mass, dimension, loading vehicle standards and maintenance. Parties that are identified as having responsibility to ensure (so far as reasonably practicable) the safety of their transport activities are:

- Employer
- Operator
- Consignor
- Packer
- Loader
- Prime Contractor
- Scheduler
- Consignee
- Loading Manager
- Unloader.

Each Party must as reasonably practicable eliminate or minimise public risks and not cause or encourage a driver of a heavy vehicle or another person to contravene this law.

Within the RFS, our highest risks of breaching CoR obligations are:

- Creating demands that cause a driver to breach fatigue management requirements, or speed limits.
- Failing to ensure our vehicles stay within the allowable mass limits or ensuring loads are secured.
- Ensuring that our vehicles are roadworthy, regularly maintained and serviced.

To mitigate these risks to our parties Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) uses Policies, Procedures, Directives, Standing Orders and provides training to support staff and volunteers. Much like the Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Legislation, the onus remains with individuals to ensure the above are known and complied with (as reasonably practicable). Ignorance is not a defence.

Brigades and volunteers can mitigate the risk of breaching CoR by:

- Ensuring they operate appliances within the road rules and QFES directives.
- Ensuring that appliances are operating within in legal mass limits for their particular vehicle and that modifications are authorised.
- Crew members always ensuring equipment is stowed correctly.
- Appliances being regularly maintained, faults are rectified and Certificates of Inspections are completed annually.

Ignorance is not a defence. Failure to comply to CoR legislation brings about similar penalties to current WHS offences. Further information can be found at www.nhvr.gov.au/cor

Mark Saunders
Manager Operational Development
Rural Fire Service
The new Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) owned Hangar at Toowoomba Airport was officially opened by the Honourable Craig Crawford, Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, on 11 September 2018.

The Minister and many members of QFES Executive and Senior Management attended the recently completed Hangar at Toowoomba Regional Airport to officially open the facility for operational use. The event marked a stepping stone in QFES aviation capability and represents a culmination of efforts of QFES staff and volunteers in tailoring this facility to effectively manage aviation response for QFES. The State Air Operations Unit (SAOU) wishes to thank all involved in not only the opening, but with the thoughts and ideas for ensuring the hangar is fit-for-purpose for both fire and severe weather seasons into the future.

This year also marked the first year of a completely revised contract aircraft response. Prior to Operation Synergy, the SAOU had engaged three contracted aircraft for 12 weeks positioned at Archerfield Airport during the fire seasons through the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC). These aircraft were to support ground crews in fighting bushfires in the South Eastern corner of Queensland. Historically these aircraft consisted of two Bell 214B Helitak helicopters, and a ‘Twin Squirrel’ AS355 air attack helicopter platform.

On 11 October 2018, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, through the Get Ready Queensland program, hosted the Resilient Australia Awards.

There were six Government award finalists, and My Resilient Communities’ project was a joint winner.

The ‘My Resilient Communities’ project was a collaborative effort by Liane Henderson (QFES), Inspector Julia Cook (QPS) and Moreton Bay Regional Council’s Susan Trappett. The project saw the implementation of a resilience strategy within the Moreton Bay and Brisbane City Council regions.

This project was designed to assist communities in understanding their risks and how they can work with councils, disaster management teams and emergency services to better prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from disaster events, thus creating healthy communities and healthy communities are resilient communities.

The project is now a finalist in the Australian awards on the 8 November 2018.

Liane Henderson,
Samsonvale Rural Fire Brigade

QFES JOINT WINNERS IN THE RESILIENT AUSTRALIA AWARDS

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Liane Henderson,
Samsonvale Rural Fire Brigade

STATE AIR OPERATIONS CONTRACT

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The previous contracted period expired in December 2017 and the SAOU has subsequently been involved in negotiations to successfully expand that contracted fleet to eight aircraft in total, positioned at Toowoomba and Bundaberg airports. This change in position is to allow for a broader area of support in Southern Queensland with immediate aircraft response (roughly 15 minutes), instead of the majority of Queensland relying on the standard two hour response time.

The contract aircraft are there for the purposes of providing support to crews on the ground. If you require any information on the aircraft capabilities and the options for using them, please feel free to call the State Air Desk on (07) 3109 0129.

As mentioned, there is also potential opportunities as rostered aircrew members of these aircraft and airbase ground crews. If there are any volunteers interested in pursuing an aviation specialisation, please contact your Area Office and register your interest. The Area Office will coordinate with the SAOU to implement the required training to undertake these valuable roles.

The new contract arrangement will remain in place until the end of the 2022 fire season.

The new contracted aircraft that started this year consist of:

At Toowoomba Airport (The QFES Owned Hangar):
- Two Bell 214B Helitak Rotary Wing
- One AS355 ‘Twin Squirrel’ Air Attack Platform
- Two Air Tractor AT-802 Fixed Wing Bombers
- One Aero Commander S500 Shrike Fixed Wing Air Attack Platform.

At Bundaberg Airport:
- One Bell 214B Helitak Rotary Wing
- One AS355 ‘Twin Squirrel’ Air Attack Platform.

With each Air Attack Platform aircraft, both rotary and fixed wing, QFES has rostered one Air Attack Supervisor and one Air Observer for each day of the 12-week contracted period, a total of six QFES aircrew members every day. Included in this is a rostered QFES Airbase Manager to assist in the smooth coordination of these aircraft.

There has already been very positive feedback received from the regions with many operational responses of these aircraft. They have been reported as being very effective in assisting the ground crews, however the SAOU welcomes any and all feedback, both positive and negative. The aim is to ensure the ground crews are receiving as effective and efficient airborne capability as possible.

As with any aircraft request, the SAOU must fully justify the dispatch of these aircraft, so please ensure that as much information is given about the current situation when requesting aircraft, i.e. structures under threat, is an overall mapping picture required, etc.

Martin Gibson,
Manager Air Operations
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
The School of Fire and Emergency Services Training are excited to announce the release of two new, and important awareness videos.

The first Operating Rural Fire Service (RFS) appliances under red and blue lights, went live on NEXUS on 16 November 2018. This awareness video outlines the rights, obligations and responsibilities relating to driving RFS vehicles as an emergency services volunteer first responder. This video was produced in collaboration with the Rural Fire Brigade Association Queensland (RFBAQ) and forms part two of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) four-part Professional Emergency Services Transportation Series. The objective of this video is to equip and empower RFS volunteers with the information required to proceed safely to emergency incidents within their communities.

To keep volunteers and Queensland families safe, all QFES personnel must be mindful of the requirements for legal and safe driving of any vehicle when proceeding to an emergency incident. While first responders are expected to arrive at incidents in a timely manner, they are also expected to arrive safely and in accordance with their legal obligations, duty of care and the expectations of the Queensland community.

In 2013, the Commissioner, QFES, received a Vehicle Standards Exemption Permit which enables the fitting of sirens and red and blue flashing lights to RFS vehicles. Several conditions are associated with this permit which, in short, state that a driver of an RFS vehicle operating under this permit must:

- operate in accordance with QFES operating procedures; and
- is required to comply with all road rules.

The Operating RFS appliances under red and blue lights awareness video will be available to RFS volunteers through NEXUS and will be rolled out in both USB and CD-ROM formats.

The second video to be released, Clandestine Drug Lab Awareness for First Responders, is a joint QFES and Queensland Police Service (QPS) training package, focused on the safety of all first responders including Fire and Rescue, Queensland Police Service, the State Emergency Service, RFS, Queensland Ambulance Service, Volunteer Marine Rescue and some private enterprise organisations.

This package highlights the increasing risk to emergency services first responders coming across clandestine drug labs during the performance of their duties. These sophisticated, improvised drug labs are dangerous due to the toxic and flammable chemicals involved in the drug production process. The increased risk of explosives, firearms and antipersonnel devices being present at these sites are also a threat to the safety of first responders.

The key message delivered by this training is that if a first responder suspects a clandestine drug lab may be present at an incident scene they are to STOP, BACK AWAY AND REPORT.

The ability for numerous agencies to work together with Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy in the development of these projects is a testament to the organisations’ commitment to safety.

Bryan Byers
Training Resource Officer
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
The first week of the 2018 September school holidays was a busy time on Moreton Island with holiday makers and day visitors.

It was also an opportunity for Emergency Services, Local Government, Queensland Parks and Wildlife and support services to engage with residents and visitors on the island.

The Community Engagement Activity project on Moreton Island is in its second year and provides an opportunity for multiple agencies, local services and the community to meet and learn about local conditions and processes.

Brigade sausage sizzles, campground visits, static stalls and brigade station open sessions allowed for one on one time with visitors and locals providing the opportunity to discuss local safety and ‘what if’ scenarios on the island.

Like many communities that are isolated by distance or geography the residents and services on Moreton Island work together to support each other.

Program initiatives this year included an animated set of safety scenarios programmed into the vehicle barge public screens to be seen by those while travelling to the island. These safety prompts provided an early opportunity to communicate key messages to many of our visitors.

The opportunity for all stakeholders to engage with the community as a group allowed all aspects of Prevent, Prepare, Respond and Recovery to be shared.

I would like to acknowledge the support of Queensland Police Service, Brisbane City Council, Red Cross, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, State Emergency Service, Emergency Management and the members of the Moreton Island Rural Fire Brigade for supporting this initiative.

Wayne Ford
Bushfire Safety Officer, Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service
As a result of volunteer feedback, the Rural Fire Service (RFS), in consultation with the Operations Strategic Working Group (OSWG), has introduced new generation Wildland Personal Protective Clothing (PPC).

**Background**

Historically fire agencies have provided garments designed for use during bushfires that are made from 340gsm cotton which has been treated to be fire resistant.

Whilst garments made from treated cotton meet or exceed the requirements of the Wildland Firefighting Protective Clothing standard, (AS/ NZS4824), and have proven their durability, new technology is providing opportunities for change.

In line with what is occurring in the general community, emergency service workers are asking for more comfortable, less bulky garments, that still provide the same high level of protection.

**New Generation Fabrics**

In striving to meet these expectations, some fire agencies have moved away from treated cotton garments to those made from new generation fabrics that are inherently fire resistant.

By doing so they can provide garments that provide similar levels of performance to treated cotton but at around two-thirds of the weight.

When compared to fire resistant cotton, the new generation fabrics have these distinct advantages including:

- Provide same or better level of performance but are around 30% lighter in weight.
- Assist with fatigue management.
- Moisture management capabilities that wick moisture away from the body.
- Inherently fire resistant and not treated.

Although these are all positive features, the reduction in fabric weight means it is thinner and the wearer may feel hotter when exposed to nearby radiant heat, creating the perception that the PPC doesn't provide the same level of protection.

**Comparison**

Both Proban and Karvin are certified to meet the same Australian Standard, which relates to the “fire resistance” of the fabric, meaning that the fabric will not readily ignite and, if it is ignited, will self-extinguish within acceptable safe limits.

It should be noted that whilst the Australian Standard for “Structural Firefighting PPC” demands a significant level of radiant heat protection, the Wildland Standard does not share the same requirement.

Importantly, as you get closer to a fire, the radiant heat will increase and the wearer's situational awareness or discomfort level and should alert the wearer to retreat to a more comfortable and safe distance.

This equally applies for both Proban and Karvin PPC fabrics however, it is expected that this distance should increase when wearing the lighter new generation PPC.

**Implementation**

While moving to new generation PPC, RFS is also reviewing design and incorporating features that improve wearability and mobility, combined with operational necessities such as resizing radio pockets to accommodate the Government Wireless Network (GWN) portable radios.

The new generation Karvin PPC will be progressively restocked into the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) warehouse as existing stocks of Proban PPC are depleted.

**Cleaning and Maintenance**

All PPC and operational equipment should be regularly inspected and maintained in a safe operational condition to reduce unnecessary risk to firefighters.

Regular inspection of PPC should include the proper operation of all press studs, zippers and Velcro fasteners as well as checking for excessive pilling or damage to stitching.

It is also essential for PPC to be maintained in a clean condition to avoid the accumulation of foreign material on the exterior of the PPC which may become combustible and endanger the wearer.

General instructions for cleaning the Karvin RS 245 garments (soiled and other contaminants) are:

- Before garments are laundered, ensure...
all pockets are emptied, zips are closed and Velcro closures are secured.

- Machine wash with liquid detergent on a gentle cycle at a warm temperature (40 degrees Celsius), and follow with a cold rinse.
- It is important not to overload the machine. To ensure a cleaner wash, the load size must permit the garment to move freely through the water and rinse cycle.
- PPC should not be washed with non PPC garments.
- Do not bleach.
- Warm tumble dry but do not over dry.
- Line dry in shade is preferred.
- Use iron on low setting.
- If garments are still soiled following washing, the garment should be rewashed.

Should a wearer have any concerns with their PPC, they are requested to send a photo of the damage or issue to their respective RFS Area Office to ascertain if repairs or replacement is appropriate.

**Ordering PPC**

Information on available PPC items is published in the RFS Equipment Catalogue including sizing and stock codes. The latest version of the Equipment Catalogue is available on the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) Gateway or by contacting your local RFS Area Office.

Orders for PPC need to be completed using FR 001 - Rural Fire Brigade Requisition Form. Each item must be recorded on a separate line, and each line item must clearly detail the registered volunteer’s name and volunteer identification number. The completed form must then be approved by the Brigade Secretary before submission to the RFS Area Office for approval and processing.

Please note PPC orders must be completed on a separate Requisition Form to any equipment orders.

**RFS Patch**

There has been a small number of reported incidents whereby RFS volunteers have experienced a burn injury to their shoulder region which correlates to the location of the shoulder patch on their jacket.

This matter has been investigated by Workplace Health and Safety Officers, RFS and QFES Uniforms and Logistics to ascertain a cause or combination of factors contributing to this situation.

Both the Proban and Karvin garments were tested by two independent National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratories. A test was done to ensure the garments met the requirements for heat transference that occurs from radiated heat from a fire. The testing demonstrated that the garment and the patch (logo) area were well within the Australian Standard AS/NZS 4824:2006. Testing was also completed to see if adding another layer of material would reduce the heat transference.

The remedial action of not printing a logo on the jacket will remain in place while QFES conducts an environmental scan to see how other organisations are branding similar garments. To alleviate concerns RFS will have current warehouse stock retrofitted with another layer of fabric under the patch. If volunteers have concerns, they can order a new jacket and dispose of the old one, after removing any logos or patches.
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<td>(07) 4232 5468</td>
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<td>(07) 4769 9082</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gladstone Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4899 2200</td>
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<td>Mackay Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4965 6641</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>Rockhampton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4932 8129</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Rockhampton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Rockhampton@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North Coast Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bundaberg Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4154 6120</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Bundaberg@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Bundaberg@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Burnett Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4172 8700</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Burnett@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Burnett@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caloundra Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5420 7517</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Caloundra@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Caloundra@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryborough Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4190 4839</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Maryborough@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Maryborough@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>South West Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roma Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4578 0045</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Roma@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Roma@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Darling Downs Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4616 1945</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.DarlingDowns@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.DarlingDowns@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>South East Region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Coast Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5587 4101</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.SouthCoast@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>West Moreton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 3294 4944</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.WestMoreton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.WestMoreton@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>Brisbane Region</strong></td>
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<td>Caboolture Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5420 3733</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Caboolture@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Caboolture@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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