IN THIS ISSUE:
- Australia Day Awards
- Fire and Emergency Support Services Network
- Care and Maintenance of PPC
CONTENTS:

Rural Fire Service Week 2
Assistant Commissioner’s Message 3
Keep It Clean - Care and Maintenance of Your PPC 4
Rural Fire Brigade Manual 5
RFS Print Products 5
RFS Dalby Office Hits Its’ Stride 6
Presentation of Medals and Appliances in West Moreton 7
Operation Cool Burn 8
Australia Day Awards 9
Nexus 10
Scenic Rim Regional Council Honours RFB Members 11
British Columbia, Canada Wildfires: Australian Deployment 12
Stanwell Corporation 14
Exercise in Rocky 15
Rural Fire Service Health and Safety Sub-Committee 15
Operational Fleet and Equipment Working Group: Working for Brigades 16
Concept Vehicles Tour Queensland 17
35 Years of Service Honoured 18
Legal Status of Brigades 18
Australia Day Celebration in Hodgson 19
Fire and Emergency Support Network 20
PPBs and RFBs Working Together 22
Event and Ministerial Protocols for QFES Officers 23
RFS Membership Review 23

Rural Fire Service Week
3 - 9 June 2018

Mark your calendars for the week Sunday 3 June to Saturday 9 June as volunteers and communities around the state celebrate Rural Fire Service (RFS) Week 2018. This is your opportunity to promote your brigade and show your community the importance of rural fire brigades and volunteers.

We encourage you to get out into your community or host an event to raise awareness. Specialty RFS week button badges are available for order from state office by emailing ruralfire.servicequeensland@qfes.qld.gov.au. You can also order a range of recruitment and awareness material by completing form CSO 068 - Community Education Orders, available on the Volunteer Portal and sending it to your local Area Office.
Assistant Commissioner’s Message

I would like to welcome all volunteers and staff back for 2018. I hope you had a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. I have no doubt this year will bring with it significant steps forward for the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and for the whole Emergency Management, Volunteerism and Community Resilience Division.

Legal Status

Consultation sessions are already underway for the review of the legal status of brigades. These sessions will provide an opportunity for brigades to engage with the RFS and Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) allowing us to gain a better understanding of where brigades wish to move into the future, and inform QFES as to how we can support that.

Volunteer Summit 2018

This year will see 160 volunteers gather with RFS staff and industry experts at the Twin Waters on the Sunshine Coast in May. The 2018 summit will focus on Stakeholder Engagement with attendees participating in a number of workshop sessions to improve understanding of who our stakeholders are, the importance of building relationships and working in partnership with them to better support our communities.

Over 200 expressions of interest were received from volunteers across the state. Volunteers who were selected to attend, ensure a wide cross-section of brigades are represented. Acceptance letters will be sent out this month and those who will be attending will be contacted to arrange transportation and other details. I look forward to seeing you there.

Personal Protective Clothing

Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) is an essential safety requirement for all RFS volunteers. For the continued health and safety of our personnel, it is essential that PPC is well maintained. The proper care and maintenance of this clothing will ensure that the flame retardant fabric will provide continued fire protection. Further information on how to care for your PPC is included in this issue of the Bulletin.

Operation Cool Burn

Area Fire Management Groups across the state are now meeting to prepare for the upcoming Operation Cool Burn. Running from April until August, this is our opportunity to prepare for the 2018/2019 bushfire season by completing a range of mitigation activities to reduce the risk of fire in bushfire prone areas. The RFS, brigades, councils, National Parks and landowners will work together to ensure that our communities are well prepared and informed for the future.

Rural Fire Brigade Manual

The Rural Fire Brigade Manual (RFBM) is a significant reference tool for all RFS brigades, containing procedures and forms to assist brigades in their management, business and operational capacity. All updates are made available to volunteers via the Volunteer Portal, where they can be downloaded onto a USB for easy access. Content is reviewed on a quarterly basis, in alignment with release of the Bulletin magazines and publicised accordingly. Exceptional and urgent changes are also promoted on the Volunteer Portal to ensure all brigades have access to the most up-to-date version.

I encourage brigades to check the Volunteer Portal regularly and download all new and updated content.

Nexus and O365

I would like to finish by encouraging all volunteers to sign-up to the Volunteer Portal to access your Office 365 for QFES volunteers email account and activate your Nexus profile. Nexus provides all volunteers with a direct way to update contact and personal details and access training and learning modules.

Office 365 will provide you with a QFES professional email account and access to a range of cloud-based Microsoft software to assist in brigade activities. You access to these features is gained by registering for the Volunteer Portal, which is as simple as visiting the RFS website and following the links to the Volunteer Portal.

Steps for accessing the Volunteer Portal are included in this issue of the Bulletin.

Gary McCormack
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service
At all times it is expected that you wear appropriate Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and ensure your PPC is clean and well maintained. Dirty and worn PPC is not a badge of honour and could be putting you and those around you at risk.

Proper care and maintenance of PPC provides continuous protection to the wearer and the required level of safety. A build-up of contaminates on your PPC decreases the effectiveness of the flame retardant treatment and could potentially affect the health and well being of those around you. If your PPC is worn or if you have altered the outside of the garment (added patches etc.), you are also risking decreasing its effectiveness.

RFS PPC is constructed of flame retardant material. Although the treated garments will still burn, the burning process is retarded by a chemical reaction that the treatment activates. When the flame source is removed, the fabric will self extinguish, unlike treated cotton which continues to burn, and poly/cotton which burns and melts at a very rapid rate.

It is extremely important to understand that the flame retardant treatment is resistant to removal by repeated laundering, and can be removed only when the cotton fibres themselves are worn away. It is important to wash your PPC. There are however, a number of factors to follow when laundering your PPC, these are:

- You must not wash flame retardant treated garments in traditional soap based powders such as Lux, Velvet and Advance. These soap powders can form flammable deposits which may adversely affect the flame retardant performance of the fabric.
- You must not use hydrochlorite-based household bleaches such as Domestos, White King (and all supermarket blends) as they can destroy the flame retardant capacity of the fabric.
- You can wash your PPC in a conventional washing machine in cold or warm water at a temperature no higher than 60 degrees Celsius, using the program for non-colour fast cotton articles.
- You may use the following washing powders: Castle, FAB, Cold Power, DMO, Drive, Radiant, Dynamo, Spree or Surf.

For further care and maintenance instructions please refer to the Rural Fire Brigade Manual Procedure D6.2.1 - Care and Maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is issued free-of-charge to firefighters and designated support members. It consists of:
- jacket and trousers (wildfire)
- helmets
- gloves
- goggles
- respirators
- boots
- ear plugs
- epaulettes

Initial issue of boots is one pair only. These should be ordered along with one jacket, trousers and helmet. The jacket, trousers, boots and helmets will be replaced on an ‘as required’ basis however all volunteers are eligible to have two sets of PPE.

Helmets that have a fixed life as set by the manufacturer but will be replaced on an ‘as required’ basis. Where jackets, trousers or boots become unserviceable and a replacement is sought, subsequent issues are available on approval by the authorising officer.

RFS encourages all volunteers to ensure their PPC is clean and kept to the highest possible standard. The safety and professionalism of our organisation is a shared responsibility and common goal.
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.

New
- D1.9 - Rural Fire Brigade Bona Fide Brigade Activities

Major Changes:
- D5.2.1 - Volunteer Fleet Fuel and Maintenance
- D6.2.1 - Care and Maintenance of Personal Protective Clothing

Minor Changes:
- C1.4 - Resignation or Termination of Membership
- C6.5 - Newstart Allowance
- D3.1 - Provision of Uniform
- D5.2 - Appliances
- D6.2 - Personal Protective Equipment

Forms:
- CSO 068 - Community Education Orders
- CSO 069 - Community Education Presentation Report
- OBM 084 - Assessment for Appliance Allocation
- OBM 053 - Change Proposal Checklist
- OBM 085 - Appliance Acceptance Agreement
- OBM 130 - Volunteer ID Card Request
- OBM 136 - Risk Assessments (NEW)

Deletion:
- Nil

Standing Orders:
- SO-6-OM-3.01 Operations Communia

Operations Doctrine:
- Nil

RFS Print Products

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) State Office and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Community Engagement Unit provide a range of products and promotional material for recruitment and community education. Brigades and Volunteer Community Educators (VCEs) are able to order these products through their Area Office using form CSO 068 - Community Education Orders.

To ensure that the RFS are disseminating the correct and most up to date information to the public, we encourage brigades to avoid stockpiling materials at home or the station. Consider restraining your orders to only what you will need and return any left-over items to your Area Office.
In mid 2017 the Darling Downs Area underwent a major change in the service delivery model which has existed for a number of years. This saw the opening of a new office in Dalby to provide a higher level of service to brigades in the Western Downs and Goondiwindi Areas.

Now more than six months on we are seeing the benefits. The Rural Fire Service (RFS) Dalby Office, which is co-located with Fire and Rescue Dalby Command, has seen a steady flow of traffic from volunteers. This new office means staff are more available and easier to access for the Western Downs and Goondiwindi Regional Council areas. Area Training and Support Officer (ATSO) John Welke, and Acting ATSO Katie Mann have spent a considerable amount of time on the road working with brigades, and an increase of the capabilities and capacity in the area is being seen. The new office has also improved accessibility of staff to brigades who are some distance from the main office in Toowoomba. All of our brigade members in the Western Downs are encouraged to drop in at any time.

Tim Chittenden
Area Director, Darling Downs
Rural Fire Service
Presentation of Medals and Appliances in West Moreton

On Saturday 2 December 2017 the Hatton Vale Summerholm Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) hosted a ceremony to formally recognise the hard work and dedication of 19 volunteers from the West Moreton Area. 31 medals were presented including the National Service Medal, the Diligent and Ethical Service Medal, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Medals and Service Clasps.

A special award was presented by Acting Assistant Commissioner Gary McCormack to Patrick (Rusty) Kraut, Toogoolawah First Officer and Fire Warden for 50 years of dedicated service. Rusty also received his QFES medal (with First to Fourth Clasp) and his First, Second and Third National Medal Clasps.

The handover of new Appliances for Coominya and Mulgowie brigades and Command Vehicles for Pine Mountain, Ripley Valley and Lockyer Valley Group also took place along with the opening of the new Lockyer Valley RFB Group Facility. The delivery of these vital resources will enable the West Moreton Area to increase both the response and incident management support capacity within the area, enabling brigades to better support their local communities.

Sarah Toth  
Acting Brigade Training and Support Officer  
West Moreton Area  
Rural Fire Service
Operation Cool Burn is the time of the year when Queensland’s Fire Managers across the state turn their attentions to undertaking mitigation activities to reduce the fire risk in bushfire prone areas ahead of fire season. Operation Cool Burn 2018 is scheduled to start on 1 April and run until 31 August 2018.

The focus of Operation Cool Burn 2018 will be to build on the success of 2017. Meetings of Area Fire Management Groups to undertake strategic planning to target high bushfire risk areas in your local government area are well underway. Much of the planning work is aided by sophisticated mapping applications, such as the REDI-PORTAL mapping tool and is the combined effort of a range of key stakeholders including your local council, local landowners, National Parks and Wildlife, Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Rural Fire Service (RFS). Over the next weeks and as soon as conditions are favourable Rural Fire Brigades, National Parks, Council burn teams and landowners will commence with their fuel reduction burn program, hold a range of targeted public information sessions and continue working on strategic fire trail upgrades.

However, despite the good work of brigades, landholders and burn teams we cannot do this alone and we also need to use this time to re-enforce the message to be Bushfire Prepared to the community and remind residents and landholders that it is their responsibility to ensure their properties, homes and families are prepared for bushfire season, either as individuals or by getting involved with Operation Cool Burn, by reducing fuel loads, preparing fire breaks and by preparing a Bushfire Survival Plan. Further information and downloadable templates are available on the RFS website at www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au.

Queensland is a vast state with a long fire season which traditionally commences around July in the Cape York Peninsula and Gulf Country and progresses to the central inland and coastal areas south to the New South Wales (NSW) border during spring and into summer. In the west and south west of the state the fire season can begin as early as August and extend well into February. However, wildfires can occur at any time of the year and timeframes for fire seasons can vary significantly from year to year, as they are largely dependent on long-term climate, short-term weather conditions and available fuel loads.

As a final note I would like to thank our brigades, fire wardens and partner agencies for their timeless effort during Operation Cool Burn in 2017. Managing bushfire risk across the landscape has many challenges; from climate change to protecting people and communities at risk is an evolving and ever changing concept. We have arrived now where we began so together, in 2018 let us continue to meet the challenge.

Bruno Greimel
Acting Executive Manager
Office of Bushfire Mitigation
Rural Fire Service
On Australia Day 2018, more than 70 members of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) workforce, both paid and volunteer, were recognised for their exceptional work in keeping Queensland communities safe.

**Australian Fire Service Medal**

Congratulations to the three Rural Fire Service (RFS) members who received an Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) as part of the 2018 Australia Day Honours List. An AFSM is one of the highest honours that can be bestowed upon QFES personnel.

Kevin Anderson of the Burketown Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) was awarded as AFSM for demonstrating exceptional communication and innovative leadership skills unifying traditional owners, graziers, miners and volunteer firefighters to deliver sustainable fire management strategies across northern Queensland as part of the Gulf Fire Management Project. Kevin has served with the RFS for more than 30 years and was instrumental in the alignment of 12 brigades to a common operating platform, transforming their service delivering capacity for surrounding communities. He also established a Cadet program providing structured, nationally recognised training for local youth members.

Arthur Puccini of the Crowley Beach RFB was a founding member of the brigade and has continuously served for 50 years. Throughout this time he’s made significant contributions to the development and operation of his brigade, instigating the amalgamation of several smaller brigades to ensure ongoing service capacity. Arthur was also instrumental in the establishment of the Rural Fire Brigade Association Queensland (RFBAQ) Art union, which assists under-resourced brigades.

Alan Wells of the Samford RFB has contributed to the safety and well being of the Samford community for more than 20 years, providing a unique leadership style, enthusiasm and passion for community risk prevention. He has also delivered strategic rural fire management initiatives such as appliance design and construction, community safety, bushfire mitigation and operational response, and his extensive networks and resourcefulness have been instrumental in delivering essential funds to cover equipment needs and facilitate unique training opportunities.

**Australia Day Achievement Medallions**

Congratulations also goes to the 66 QFES members who were awarded Australia Day Achievement Medallions at QFES ceremonies around the state. These members, both paid and volunteer, were recognised for their exceptional work above and beyond the normal course of their duties over the past 12 months.

This year’s Australia Day Achievement Awards were again sponsored by QSuper and we sincerely thank them for their ongoing support.
Nexus, the new Human Capital Management solution, was introduced to staff and volunteers across Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) in late 2017 with the release of Phase One. Further functionality will continue to be released throughout 2018, as new modules and features are brought online.

Many Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers have already logged into Nexus and updated their individual profiles - customising home pages, correcting contact details and exploring the functionality provided by the Nexus system. There are many volunteers who have yet to set up their accounts and take advantage of the tools the department now offers through Nexus and we encourage you to do so.

So, how do you go about getting onto Nexus for the first time?

Firstly, you will need to register for the volunteer portal. This will set you up with a log-in, password, and Office365 email account. This email account will then be used as your Nexus username.

Once you have logged into Nexus, you will be able to start exploring the system. Take a moment to check that your address details are correct. Check out your organisational chart to see who’s in charge of your Brigade. Browse the Learning Module to see what training might be available in your area. If you get stuck, download the user guide from the Volunteer Portal or browse the Frequently Asked Questions.

But if you have any issues accessing Nexus, please contact Nexus.Support@qfes.qld.gov.au. For any other ICT issues, including RFS Volunteer Portal access and Office 365 account activation, please contact your Area Office.

How to activate your Nexus account

2. Select “Register”. Enter your details (First Name, Last Name, Date of Birth and Volunteer ID). Create your password. (This password will be the same one for the Volunteer Portal, Office365 and Nexus) and select “Submit”
3. A successful screen will pop up with your Volunteer Portal username, Office365 email address and password. Note these down.
4. You can now explore the Volunteer Portal.
5. Wait 24 hours. Log on to Office365 at: https://login.microsoftonline.com with your Office365 email account and password.
6. Follow the link to Nexus on the homepage of the Volunteer Portal. Log in using your Office365 email address and password.
Two volunteers from the Scenic Rim Rural Fire Brigade have been recognised for their extraordinary community efforts at the Australia Day Awards held at The Centre in Beaudesert on Wednesday 24 January.

Before presenting the awards, Mayor Greg Christensen commented, “Scenic Rim Regional Council is proud to present these Australia Day awards, acknowledging that those who give so much to their community also contribute in their unique way to our Australian way of life.”

Wayne Reiser was awarded the Mayors Award.

Wayne has been an active member of the Canungra Rural Fire Brigade for over 25 years. He has been a dedicated member, both past and present, of numerous other local community groups, including Canungra Bowls Club, Beaudesert Tennis Association, Beaudesert Cricket Association, Canungra Cricket Association, Beaudesert Golf Club, Beaudesert Rural Youth Club, Queensland Council of Rural Youth, and the Canungra Creek Water Advisory Committee - all while being President of the Canungra Sports and Recreation Reserve Grounds for the past 31 years. Wayne’s community fundraising efforts have helped to supply a cold room for the Canungra School of Arts Hall, a truck for the Canungra Rural Fire Brigade, computers for Canungra State School, and a donation towards a defibrillator for the local ambulance service.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR was awarded to Kim Crow of Beechmont. Kim is currently the Second Officer of the Beechmont Rural Fire Brigade and has been a very active member since 1996 and an officer for 13 years.

Described as someone who epitomises the Australian character, Kim is recognised for her generosity and calm nature, which is appreciated during times of crisis. Sharing her contagious enthusiasm with the community as a willing worker and leader, Kim was the first female First Officer of the Beechmont Rural Fire Brigade. Over the years, she has thrown herself into numerous local community groups, including Beechmont Playgroup, Beechmont State School Parents and Citizens’ Committee, Beechmont State School Out of Hours School Care, Beechmont Junior Soccer Association, Beechmont Sports Association, Beechmont Landcare Association, Beechmont Amateur Drama Company, and the Beechmont ANZAC Committee, encouraging others to take part in voluntary work along the way.

We are immensely proud of all our volunteers and especially pleased that these members have been well recognised for their outstanding achievements.

Lou Rankin
Administrative Officer, South Coast Area Office
Rural Fire Service
British Columbia (BC), a province in Canada experienced its driest period on record and received over 300 lightning strikes in July 2017. This resulted in their worst fire season on record and BC Wildfire quickly started running out of resources. A request was sent to the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) for support from fire and land management agencies to provide specialists in incident management, Air Operations and fire behaviour analytics to assist in the rapidly growing fire emergency across the province.

Superintendent Wayne Waltisbuhl, Rural Fire Services (RFS) Regional Manager was asked to join an Australian contingent as Operations Officer to be a part of an 11 person Australian Incident Management Team (IMT) that was assigned to three large incidents during the deployment. Superintendent James Haig was selected to be one of three Australian Agency representatives who supported the movement and tasking and overall well being of all Australians while in Canada.

The deployment was a total of 38 days. This included travel, the first 15 day operational period, two days rest and a second 14 day deployment.

The first three days of briefings in Canada, prior to being deployed to an incident, was invaluable for the 53 Australian team members in understanding BC Wildfire operational procedures, communications and safety procedures. In particular working in large tree native forests and how to drive on the wrong side of the road.

The IMT Superintendent Waltisbuhl was a member of was assigned three incidents involving large groups of international firefighters, multiple aircraft and large earthmoving equipment. The team worked 14 plus hours a day in some very difficult environments and conditions that really tested their physical and psychological well being. Accommodation was in fire camps on most occasions which bring its own challenges of sharing with over 200 fire fighters.
Superintendent Waltisbuhl was also given the opportunity to provide feedback to the BC Wildfire Service on improvements that could be implemented by them based on flaws that were identified in their operational responses.

“Community engagement was not prioritised in the same manner as it is in QFES. There are few community meetings and this lack of consultation can lead to tension between residents and the fire service. Mandatory evacuation orders are often issued well in advance and residents are displaced for weeks at a time, often when their homes are defendable.” Superintendent Waltisbuhl said.

“There are very few mitigation measures implemented in BC and limited hazard reduction burns. The dry conditions experienced and the lack of mitigation did contribute to very large out of control fires. The largest fire this season in Canada was a result of 19 smaller blazes merging and was estimated to be 4,674 square kilometres in size. We must remember that Canada is a big country and there are large forests across most of the landscape. Even with over a Million hectares burnt this only represented one percent of the landscape.”

International deployments offer a unique opportunity to share knowledge with fire service professionals across the globe. The learnings from the deployment to Canada have been presented to QFES with the hope that the service can continue to improve on operational responses.

Wayne Waltisbuhl,
Regional Manager, Brisbane Region
Rural Fire Service
On Friday 17 November 2017, a collaborative hazard mitigation burn was conducted at the Stanwell Power Station.

The exercise was coordinated between the Kalapa Rural Fire Brigade (RFB), Stanwell Corporation and the Rural Fire Service (RFS) Rockhampton Area Office. During the development of the burn plan, risk management plans were established, infrastructure risk was conducted with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Predictive Services Unit providing relevant information. This gave us an effective and efficient plan this was to help implement the required outcomes for asset protection and escaping wildfires into the future.

During the planning phase Stanwell Corporation and the RFS brigades created a networking environment with open discussions for the planning and safety of all involved.

On the day Gogango, Gracemere and the Kalapa RFBs worked alongside the staff from the Stanwell Power Station. The day was a success with the crew achieving a cool burn to help lower the fuel load and protect infrastructures. Even through the grass looked green the underneath vegetation was abundant as this area had not been burnt for a number of years, nor had it been grazed on to help lower the fuel loads.

The day as provided an opportunity to trial the Rockhampton RFS Operational Support Unit (OSU) vehicle and to test radio communication networks under different affects including smoke and distance. Media opportunities were also included to keep surrounding communities informed on what was happening in their area.

Overall the day was a huge success; rebuilding strong relationships, testing equipment, and providing training opportunities. The Stanwell Corporation was pleased with the outcome and the way the event proceeded.

Tracey Charles
Brigade Training and Support Officer
Rockhampton Area
Rural Fire Service
The inaugural meeting of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) Health and Safety Sub-Committee was held on Thursday 18 January 2018. The role of the Sub-Committee is to provide stewardship and oversight of health and safety related matters within the RFS. This includes matters relating to the health and safety of RFS staff and volunteers, ensuring they are not put at risk.

The purpose of the Sub-Committee is to perform an oversight and advisory role for the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Health and Safety Committee ensuring RFS Health and Safety efficiency and effectiveness is maximised. The Sub-Committee will work with RFS Regions and the QFES Health and Safety Committee to foster strategies and activities that promote a positive safety and wellness culture within the RFS.

The objectives of the Sub-Committee include:

- Providing a structure to review specific RFS health and safety issues.
- Providing a referral forum for regional RFS health and safety issues.
- Promoting safety and incident prevention as vital to the success of the organisation’s operations.
- Promoting safety and incident prevention as an integral part of all RFS workers responsibilities.
- Committing to safety as an integral part of everyday activities by ensuring that the safety of our staff, volunteers, stakeholders, contractors and visitors is a priority.
- Identifying strategic RFS health and safety risks and when needed, refer to the QFES Health and Safety Committee.
- Championing a culture of safe practice that builds on the goal of injury free emergency and non-emergency situations and promote positive lifestyle choices as well as encourage participation in activities that enhances staff and volunteer well being.
- Directing managers and supervisors to be responsible for the health and safety of staff, volunteers and others and take all reasonably practical steps to identify and control hazards in their specific work areas.
- Striving towards achieving an injury free work environment and aspiring to eliminate all risks, as far as reasonably practicable.

The Sub-Committee is comprised of the following members:

- Assistant Commissioner, RFS (Chair);
- Executive Manager, Volunteer and Frontline Support Services, RFS
- Director Operations, RFS
- Principal Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Officer, QFES
- President, Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland Inc (RFBAQ)
- Secretariat for the Sub-Committee is the Executive Officer, Office of the Assistant Commissioner, RFS.

The management of health and safety risks remains a high priority for all persons and local level issues should continue to be dealt with accordingly in a timely manner. The Sub-Committee will address issues of an increased risk and/or with broader RFS and QFES implications. All RFS staff and volunteers are invited to submit items for consideration by the Sub-Committee through their respective regional chains-of-management.

Gary McCormack
Acting Assistant Commissioner
Rural Fire Service
The Operational Fleet and Equipment Working Group, formally known as the Operations Strategic Working Group or OSWG, is tasked to provide advice and recommendations to the Rural Fire Service (RFS) Strategic Steering Group on policies and procedures relating to the support and resources provided to the volunteers of the RFS. In simpler terms, the group provides recommendations and advice to the Executive Management of RFS and the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) on RFS fleet, equipment, uniforms, Personal Protective Clothing (PPC), policies and procedures.

To ensure appropriate representation, the Working Group is made up of RFS staff, Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) representatives and volunteers. The Working Group meets three times a year, where they invite subject matter experts from within and/or external to QFES to attend to discuss issues impacting brigades and provide advice or make recommendations. The Chair also has the ability to call out of session meetings which are usually conducted as teleconferences.

In November 2017 the Working Group met in Caloundra over a two day period. Day one was spent looking at and test driving the latest new build appliances and concept vehicles. That night the First Officers and Group Officers in the Caloundra area were invited to a barbecue to meet with the members of the Working Group to further the consultative process. Day two was a lengthy meeting discussing a range of topics including issues with the current build appliances, PPC and maintenance of First Aid Kits and Automatic External Defibrillators.

Recent recommendations from the Working Group have led to a number of changes to the 2018/19 truck build including; the introduction of a exhaust driven venturi primer pump, Self Guided RFR3 Hose Reels and a number of small safety changes. The Working Group also endorsed the introduction of the Fit for Task – Vehicle Design process. This new process exceeds the Malone Review recommendation 77 and will ensure that ideas or issues submitted by brigades will be discussed and evaluated, allowing for formal recommendations to be made. If your brigade has a great idea contact your Area Office to allow the information to be forwarded to the Working Group. A video describing the process can be found at https://streamable.com/hzoww

Mark Saunders
Acting Manager Operational Development
Rural Fire Service
A number of Rural Fire Service (RFS) specific concept vehicles have recently been under development and are now ready to hit the road on a state-wide tour. A Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) truck has recently toured Central and Northern Regions. In February an Isuzu single cab appliance also started its RFS tour. This appliance has been fitted with an Allison Automatic Transmission and a CAFS unit. With the ratio of Queensland drivers holding automatic only drivers licenses increasing, a capability gap was identified into the future where brigades will struggle to find licensed heavy vehicle operators who are competent driving manual appliances. This has led to the production of RFS’s first purpose built appliance with an automatic transmission.

Other concept vehicles that will start touring later in the year include a Dual Cab Medium appliance with a Power Take Off (PTO) driven high and low-pressure pump and the basic build western appliance. RFS Area Offices will let you know when these vehicles will be in your area and we look forward to receiving the feedback on these concepts.
35 Years of Service Honoured

On the 6 November 2017, Mr Paul Egan was recognised for over 35 years of volunteer service with the presentation of the second clasp to the National Medal.

Paul joined Burnett Heads Rural Fire Brigade in July 1980, and in his 37 years has held many roles from First Officer through Fourth Officer, and Secretary. He was always dedicated towards mentoring and training members, and was also heavily involved in the school-based program and regional firefighter championships.

Paul often deployed to other areas including Monto, Gayndah, Mundubbera, and Rockhampton. With these deployments came different titles and positions he was asked to fill, and he did so to the highest level.

The Burnett Heads Rural Fire Brigade would like to thank Paul for all of the time, patience, and knowledge he has shared with his brigade and the organisation.

David Way
Secretary, Burnett Heads Rural Fire Brigade

Pictured above: Burnett Heads First Officer Darrin Thomas, Paul Egan and Bundaberg Area Director Bruce Thompson.

LEGAL STATUS OF BRIGADES

The Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990 provides delegated powers to Rural Fire Brigades (RFBs) for the purpose of conducting their operations. However, the legal status of RFBs is far more complex.

By now many volunteers would have heard of the review of the legal status of brigades. The goal of this project is to gain a better understanding of the impact the current legal status has on brigades, to allow us to develop solutions and strategies that will support a modern rural fire service into the future.

Consultations across the state have recently finished. These sessions have provided us with an opportunity to talk with volunteers and gain a broader understanding of what support our frontline services need, the current challenges and way forward.

This important piece of work is being undertaken in partnership with the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ).

More information regarding outcomes of the consultation process will be communicated via the Rural Fire Bulletin and Volunteer Portal.
Australia Day Celebration in Hodgson

The local community at Hodgson celebrated Australia Day in 2018 by gathering for a community fun day. The Bungeworgorai Rural Fire Brigade and Rural Fire Services Roma Area Office were on hand to support the event. Community members competed in a range of events including wheel barrow races, tug-of-war, leaf blower competition and cricket, rounding out the day with a barbecue.

Goetz Graf
Area Director, Roma
Rural Fire Service
Within Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), we have a duty of care to look after one another as well as looking after ourselves. We often think about our physical health, like health check-ups but we don't always think about our mental health. The Fire and Emergency Services Support Network (FESSN) has established services to ensure the social and emotional well being of all QFES members. FESSN aims to promote well-being by helping all staff, volunteers and their immediate family, manage work-related and/or personal difficulties.

FESSN incorporates:
1. Peer Support Program;
2. Confidential Professional Counselling
3. Leadership Advice; and
4. Critical Incident Response & Management

**1. Peer Support Officers (PSOs)** are QFES members (from Urban, Rural Fire Service (RFS), State Emergency Services (SES), and Corporate/Administration) who are well trained to assist and support their colleagues, with either work-related or personal difficulties. PSOs work in conjunction with the FESSN team and fellow PSOs to provide confidential, informal short-term assistance, support or guidance to colleagues. PSOs may assist in referring members to appropriate community resources or other specialist services. PSOs have no operational authority or status other than that which they would have in their normal duties. PSOs are under supervision locally by an external (non-QFES) independent Counsellor for their support and to ensure they are competent in providing the right support in the right ways. PSOs are NOT counsellors and are not trained to give psychological advice. PSOs are NOT advocates or representations for Human Resources (HR) matters/disciplinary/performance management issues.

PSOs adhere to strict confidentiality in all interactions with fellow workers. To this end, PSOs sign a Statement of Agreement and a Code of Ethics, binding them to the guidelines, policies and procedures of FESSN and QFES, which are in accordance with the QFES Privacy Policy Statement.
2. Counselling Services

Who can access and What is available? All QFES staff and volunteers and their immediate family members can access counselling for any reason. All QFES staff and volunteers and their immediate family members have an annual allocation of four FREE counselling sessions with an external, independent Counsellor. Extensions to this allocation can be easily accessed if required.

Who provides FESSN Counselling?

FESSN is a network of highly qualified external Psychologists and Counsellors in private practice across the state. Each Counsellor has been specifically selected for their experience working with fire and emergency services workers and the challenges that this can bring (e.g. Relationship issues, Post Traumatic Stress, Depression ...). Each FESSN Counsellor is registered with a relevant nationally recognised professional association that regulates the profession and monitors the quality of practice. All counsellors are external to QFES and no information about who is accessing is released back to QFES (except in rare cases when it is a legal requirement to disclose information; failure to disclose information would place the client or another person at risk of harm; the client’s written consent has been obtained to release the information).

What does Counselling involve?

Counselling is not like in the movies. It is typically a chat where the counsellor asks straightforward questions about concerns and provides advice or education around the issues and possible solutions.

How to access?

People generally arrange an appointment themselves by using the Counsellor listings (‘Find a Counsellor’ available via the link below) to select the counsellor with the right location and specialisation:
Or Call FESSN on 1300 309 508.

3. Leadership Advice Leaders can simply call the advice line for brief confidential advice regarding developing strategies and confidence to tackle challenging people management situations, especially those involving emotional responses and well-being. Call FESSN on 1300 309 508.

4. A Critical Incident (CI) is complex and varied, and is any experienced or witnessed incident, either directly or indirectly, which impacts on an individual or group and leads to:
   • unusual or unexpected emotional reactions, or
   • reactions which last longer than expected, or
   • excessive strain upon a person’s usual abilities to function.

All QFES members have a role in reducing the impact of trauma. It is the task of managers, and PSOs to enable and facilitate this process to support, maintain and promote resilience and well-being.

Further information can be accessed on the QFES website - www.qfes.qld.gov.au/fessn

Dr Bernie Scully
Manager Clinical Services and Organisational Development
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
What a great experience it is to spend a day mustering with the volunteers from Beilba Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) and bringing cattle into the yards. The brigade area is north of Injune in the Rural Fire Service (RFS) South Western Region.

Neighbours and friends not only come together in an emergency and fight fire, they also help each other when a spare hand is needed for mustering and any other station work.

It was a special day out to work with the cattle at their pace, no rush and no pressure and to leave the day-to-day office work behind.

Some people may think it is not a big deal, but if you are not from a farming background it will make you appreciate the skills and knowledge involved in managing cattle and the land. Traversing the landscape will also allow you to validate the ever existing fire risk and to think about the potential impact of fire in this landscape, where every blade of grass is valuable fodder.

It was a great experience in a great environment, to recharge the batteries a different way and have a good yarn over a tasty dinner with a great bunch of people.

Goetz Graf
Area Director, Roma
Rural Fire Service
**Event and Ministerial Protocols for QFES Officers**

Within the Queensland Government, there are strict protocols in relation to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) events and invitations provided to Government officials. In specific, Ministers, Members of Parliament and Election Candidates. These practices apply to all Rural Fire Service (RFS) staff and volunteers.

Ministers, Members of Parliament and Election Candidates are **NOT** to be invited to any event without prior approval from the Office of the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Any requests for invitations first need to be referred to the Executive Manager, Correspondence who will seek Ministerial approval.

When submitting a request to invite a Minister, Member of Parliament or Election Candidate to an event, a draft invitation should be provided to ensure appropriate protocols and titles are used.

QFES officers are **NOT** to directly contact Ministers, Members of Parliament or Election Candidates. Direct contact is restricted to members of the QFES Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and staff from the Executive, Ministerial and Corporate Services Directorate.

If a RFS brigade wish to invite a Minister, Member of Parliament or Election Candidate to an event, they should submit their request and draft invitation through their Area of Regional Office.

**Rural Fire Service Membership Review**

We are pleased to advise that the Rural Fire Service (RFS) is currently working with the Public Safety Business Agency's (PSBA) Internal Audit Team to undertake an RFS Volunteer Membership Review.

The objective of the review is to assess the strategy and effectiveness of the processes in place to identify and manage records of RFS volunteer firefighters and support members. This will include comparing the records in the Operations Management System (OMS) against a sample of independent sources to assess the records for completeness and accuracy. Furthermore, this internal review will assess the processes in place around local capture and state collation of information for recognition and documentation of RFS volunteers. The areas of focus will be:

- policies and procedures
- record keeping and storage
- collating volunteer information
- data input.

As part of the review, staff from PSBA will be randomly selecting a small number of RFS Area Offices and brigades, and will be contacting them as part of the data collection process. We encourage wherever possible, staff and volunteers assist the engagement team by providing as much information as available, in a timely manner.

It is hoped that as a result of the review, RFS will be able to identify any gaps or challenges in our current systems and rectify this to ensure we provide the best possible service, assistance and communication to our valued volunteer workforce.
### AREA OFFICE CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICE</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>FAX</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Far Northern Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairns Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4232 5468</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Cairns@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Cairns@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innisfail Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4061 0650</td>
<td>(07) 4061 0651</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Innisfail@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Innisfail@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charters Towers Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4761 5130</td>
<td>(07) 4787 4708</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.ChartersTowers@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.ChartersTowers@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4769 9082</td>
<td>(07) 4799 7184</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Townsville@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Townsville@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcaldine Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4651 1190</td>
<td>(07) 4651 1803</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Barcaldine@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Barcaldine@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4983 7580</td>
<td>(07) 4983 7585</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Emerald@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Emerald@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4899 2200</td>
<td>(07) 4972 0704</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Gladstone@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Gladstone@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4965 6641</td>
<td>(07) 4965 6640</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Mackay@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Mackay@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4938 4736</td>
<td>(07) 4922 2768</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Rockhampton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Rockhampton@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Coast Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4153 3244</td>
<td>(07) 4151 2166</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Bundaberg@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Bundaberg@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnett Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4172 8700</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Burnett@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Burnett@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caloundra Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5420 7517</td>
<td>(07) 5420 7521</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Caloundra@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Caloundra@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4190 4839</td>
<td>(07) 4190 4853</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Maryborough@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Maryborough@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South West Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4622 2074</td>
<td>(07) 4622 1451</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Roma@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Roma@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darling Downs Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 4616 1945</td>
<td>(07) 4616 1939</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.DarlingDowns@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.DarlingDowns@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South East Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Moreton Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 3294 4944</td>
<td>(07) 3294 4933</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.WestMoreton@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.WestMoreton@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brisbane Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caboolture Area Office</td>
<td>(07) 5420 3733</td>
<td>(07) 5432 3863</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RFSQ.Caboolture@qfes.qld.gov.au">RFSQ.Caboolture@qfes.qld.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>