

NSW FIRE BRIGADES



FIRE NEWS



March 2004



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FROM THE COMMISSIONER



Summer is over and thankfully it was free from the major bushfires we have become accustomed to in recent years.

Unfortunately 2004 has begun under the spectre of terrorist attacks. The Madrid bombings show that we have to remain vigilant.

These events underline the fire services' new roles in managing the consequences of terrorist attacks. The NSWFB leads Australian emergency services, and is at the forefront worldwide, in its capabilities to deal with chemical, biological and radiological attacks, and to rescue people from collapsed

buildings Urban Search and Rescue (USAR). We must continually train to hone our skills for events that we hope will never happen on Australian soil.

Other incidents during the first three months of the year have highlighted the diversity of roles, and the professionalism of the NSWFB. The Port Kembla ethanol fire, the Sydney city underground rail "gas leak", Redfern riots, Newcastle University fire and Mt Victoria and Dubbo chemical spills all tested our capabilities. The common theme was that firefighters excelled when tested, and each incident was handled safely, professionally and effectively.

2004 promises to be an exciting year in the history of the NSWFB. Our "back to basics" compartment fire behaviour training is rolling out statewide, our fleet renewal program continues apace, and our new USAR, CBR and air operations capabilities are now in place. All of this translates into safer, more confident communities and improved morale amongst firefighters in this, the most challenging and rewarding of careers.

Greg Mullins AFSM

FROM THE EDITOR

"Be careful what you wish for..."

When putting together this edition of Fire News, I noted a distinct lack of major incidents, and was at a loss for a spectacular cover picture. Less than fifteen minutes later I was on the way to an explosion at Port Kembla.

I learned a lot that day, especially about logistics. It had never occurred to me that during an extended incident, appliances need refuelling (what else runs the pumps?), firefighters need feeding, and it amazed me how all these items materialised, seemingly orchestrated from one big red bus, the Incident Control Vehicle. I also learned that despite the many variables of weather; heat, rain, hail and howling wind, firefighters simply and cheerfully got on with the job.

The only problem now is deciding which photos to use.

Jan Crombie-Brown

Major ethanol tank fire

Sides of tank collapse

Just before 10am on 28 January 2004, NSWFB crews from Wollongong and Warrawong responded to reports of an explosion at Manildra Park Petroleum located in an industrial area near BHP's Port Kembla steelworks. On arrival firefighters were confronted by a large flammable liquids storage tank from which flames were leaping 50 metres in the air. Radiant heat had melted and buckled plastic fixtures on cars parked over 50 metres away.

The first arriving officer noted that the 5-tonne tank roof had blown off in the explosion, landing approximately 20 metres away. Unfortunately, this damaged much of the tank's installed fire protection equipment eliminating any chances of quickly controlling the blaze.

Inspector Frank Murphy from Wollongong was told that the tank contained four million litres of ethanol concentrate, a polar solvent. The water-soluble nature of ethanol, and the need for ATC (alcohol resistant) foam, meant that firefighting operations would be extremely difficult.

Chief Superintendent Hans Bootsma called for a 5th Alarm response and an Incident Management Team (IMT) to help him in commanding operations.



Above: A melted car

In these early stages local knowledge paid off. Local firefighters, with the assistance of technical advisers from the complex, were able to manually activate the drenchers on the tanks at the northern end of the complex. Firefighters quickly moved into the bunded area and set up a number of ground monitors despite intense radiant heat, and then withdrew to safety. These initial actions proved crucial for the success of the operation from then on.

A further threat came from two unprotected and directly exposed tanks on the south-western side of the complex. These tanks contained a further three million litres of ethanol and 12.5 million litres of heavy fuel oil. The possibility of an additional 15 million litres of

hydrocarbon fuel freely flowing into the bunded area posed obvious risks to the firefighters, to the environment, and to adjoining premises including the BHP plant. Strategies were implemented for cooling these exposures and protecting the tanks. Despite the intense radiant heat, this defensive strategy was showing early success when Commissioner Greg Mullins flew from Sydney in FireAir 1 with Chief Superintendent Jim Hamilton from State Operations and Superintendents Mick Guymer and Doug Williams from Region South. A full IMT comprising Incident Controller, Operations Officer, Planning Officer, Logistics Officer, Media Officer, Safety Officer, Division and Sector Commanders was then put in place by the Commissioner.

Chief Superintendent Bootsma briefed the Commissioner and arriving officers on the current strategies, based on protecting the exposures through cooling and protecting the tanks. The IMT immediately liaised with representatives from Caltex, Shell and Manildra Chemicals to develop strategies for attacking the fire later in the day. It was decided to conserve foam until enough supplies were available to extinguish the fire.



Incident briefing



Monitors cool surrounding tanks



Commissioner Mullins and Chief Superintendent Hans Bootsma discuss strategies



Left: Commissioner Mullins briefs Minister Kelly and NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Terry Collins

When Assistant Commissioner Murray Kear arrived, Commissioner Mullins restructured the IMT appointing Assistant Commissioner Kear as Incident Controller and Superintendent Bootsma as Operations Officer. The incident site was then divided in two divisions; each division having a number of sectors.

By this stage local emergency management procedures were also in place. Assistant Commissioner Kear liaised with the local Police Commander, Ambulance Superintendent, District Emergency

Management Officer, representatives from the Environment Protection Authority, and port facility managers to ensure a coordinated, multi-agency effort.

The Sydney Communication Centre played an important role in supporting the logistics officers by sourcing extra supplies of foam from the NSWFB's contract supplier, having extra stocks of stored foam in Sydney transported to the fire scene and seeking additional foam stocks from the Caltex refinery at Kurnell.

By 4pm an 11th Alarm response had brought 120 NSWFB firefighters and 22 pumpers to Port Kembla, as well as three aerial appliances, rescue and hazmat teams, and the Incident Control Vehicle. A strong breeze from the north east, and extreme radiant heat from the fire,

estimated to be several thousand degrees Celsius at its core, made firefighting conditions even more difficult.

After considering the tank size, surface area and nature of the ethanol product, the IMT developed a strategy for a bulk application of foam at around 5pm.

"We knew we had come up with a large supply of alcohol-resistant foam and a number of different options for applying that foam to the tank," Superintendent Guymer said.

It was decided to use the Erickson Skycrane and its foam-producing capacity together with foam delivered from an Airport Fire and Rescue Service tender. This foam would be used in addition to that delivered from the aerial



The incident continues into the night.

platforms already on scene, as well as the seven ground monitors delivering water. A Rural Fire Service spotter aircraft would be used to guide the Skycrane.

This bold strategy was the first of its kind to be used in Australia. Unfortunately, the wind direction changed and blew from the south as the attack on the fire commenced. This made the foam from the airport rescue tender less effective due to the southerly wind combined with air turbulence generated by the fire.

The change in the weather conditions meant that, despite tremendous efforts, the combined attack of the Erickson Skycrane, airport tender, monitors and hydraulic platforms rendered efforts less effective than hoped. However, the attack

substantially reduced the intensity of the fire and the large amount of foam solution assisted in cooling the tank and surrounding structures.

The predetermined fallback was to focus on containing the fire to the tank of origin. Plans were drawn up to continue the foam application which would assist in diluting the ethanol, allowing the fuel to burn down to a level where another foam attack could be made with greater chance of success some hours later.

The IMT was relieved at approximately 7pm, and Assistant Commissioner Benson became Incident Controller assisted by Chief Superintendent Ken Bryant. The next IMT led by Chief Superintendent Roger Bucholtz decided on a foam attack at first light the following morning. The strategy that eventually proved effective was a conventional ground-based attack, including another bulk foam application at 6am. The wind conditions were very favourable, and once the tank had cooled to below 100°C from the continual use of ground monitors, a ladder platform and the airport fire tender managed to get enough foam in the tank to extinguish the blaze in seven minutes. The foam layer was monitored throughout the morning and the levels were topped up when required. In all, 50 000 litres of foam were used.

Commissioner Mullins praised firefighters as did Minister Tony Kelly who attended



Members of the IMT monitor the situation

the incident to observe operations. "Containing the fire to its origin and protecting the surrounding fuel stores was a tremendous effort by the fire fighters involved, especially given that ethanol is a notoriously difficult product to extinguish," Commissioner Mullins said.

Commissioner Mullins also praised the overall management of the incident, and the level of cooperation and coordination with other agencies.

Once the tank contents had cooled, NSWFB hazmat technicians supervised industry clean up teams, and the Environment Protection Authority started a clean up program to ensure the remaining ethanol could be safely removed for reprocessing. Fuel or contaminants in the bunded area were properly treated before being released into the environment.



Commissioner Mullins and firefighters manage a smile.



Above: Change of shift



Manildra pumper next to crumpled tank lid



Above: Erickson Skycrane drops foam



Section of tank lid

**NSWFB attendance**

Wollongong
Balgownie
Corrimal
Dapto
Shellharbour
Warrawong
Unanderra
Thirroul
Bulli
Bankstown
Cabramatta
Rosemeadow
Riverwood
Mascot

Mortdale
Glebe
Cronulla
Matraville
Fairfield
Lidcombe
Drummoyne
Leichhardt
Campsie
Rockdale
Gladesville
Merrylands
Runner HQ
Willoughby
Rydalmere

Concord
St Andrews
Busby
Redfern
Chester Hill
Pymont
Ashfield
Incident Control
Vehicle
Hazmat
Rescue
Commissioner and Senior Officers
SOLO
FireAir 1

Other agencies

NSW Police Service
NSW Ambulance
Rural Fire Service (air operations)
National Parks and Wildlife Service
SES
Caltex
Shell
Manildra
BHP
Environment Protection Authority
Local Council
Integral Energy
Port facility managers
Sydney Water

Firefighting US style

By Inspector Ron Sinclair

Ron at Whisky - 1st day

Last August I joined a multi-Agency contingent from NSW sent to Montana to assist US firefighters in their escalating battle against numerous wildfires. At the request of the US government, 16 firefighters from the NSWFB, NSW Rural Fire Service, State Forests and the National Parks and Wildlife Service formed part of a contingent of 51 Australian and New Zealand firefighters.

It was a big two weeks, coping with tough mountain terrain, high altitude and long hours at the Mineral Prim fire in the Rocky Mountains, Montana where I managed crews at the fire line as well as helicopter water drops.

They were very appreciative of the efforts and skills of our Australia/New Zealand contingent.

What assistance did the NSWFB provide to the US firefighting effort?

US firefighting resources were becoming stretched to the limit as they headed towards the end of this particularly long

and arduous season. Many of the major fires required an Incident Management Team (IMT) and other people in leadership and supervisory roles. The NSWFB would classify these positions as fireline leaders such as Division Commanders, Sector Commander, Task Force Leaders etc. The US has a standing agreement with Australia and New Zealand to provide qualified people when shortfalls arise.

I was allocated the role of Task Force Leader at a major fire, managing teams of firefighters on an active fireline. Other members of our contingent performed roles in air support, IMT and liaison.

Our attendance at the fires also meant that many US personnel were able to take a well-deserved break before they moved on to another fire.

Up, up and away

After passing the fitness test with flying colours, it seemed that only a very short time later I was boarding the US-bound plane along with other members of the contingent. To my surprise, we received a welcome announcement from the pilot and applause from the passengers.

Over 27 hours later we arrived in Boise, Idaho and transferred to the National

Interagency Fire Centre (NIFC). A tour of the facility revealed a veritable Aladdin's cave of gear: rows and rows of equipment - most of it brand new. The NIFC houses one of four caches of firefighting equipment stored for use at fires across the US.

As part of the orientation, we were shown a video on wildfire fighting with emphasis on the fire shelter, which is also known as the 'shake 'n bake' - it cooks you if you're not careful. With that delightful piece of information under our belts, we managed to successfully execute our practical training in deploying the shelter, which was just as well because our efforts aroused some local media interest!



Shelter training



Drop off at meadow



Heavy fill at lake



Camp at dawn

Down to business

Our camp, Mineral Prim, was ten miles north east of Missoula. It was a very flat, bare farm paddock on the main road. No shade, lots of traffic noise, and about 800 people. Security, Information and Ground Support tents were situated at the front gate, beyond which was a large row of tents known as Main Street. Main Street was the IMT centre with a tent for Operations, Logistics, and Communications as well as a separate section for the sleeping tents of the overheads (that's us).

There was a huge catering trailer which was a fully-functioning industrial kitchen, hot and cold water sinks and three very large marquee mess tents as well as Supply and Medical tents, shower trailers, laundry tent, telephone tent, and the Commissary which sold everything from toothpaste to T-shirts with the logo for this particular fire.

At the initial briefing, Task Force Leaders were allocated their Divisions, and we were given updates from Operations, Logistics, Air Support, Finance, Human Resources, Communications, Information and Safety personnel. Part of the safety talk emphasised the danger of bears, and what precautions needed to be taken, such as taking all rubbish with us, not

leaving food in our tents, keeping food in bear boxes where possible, or hanging it from trees. We were also told to try not to startle the bears, and to make lots of noise while walking through the forest. There was even a brochure on what to do if confronted by one!

Out on the trail, while scouting for my Division (Whisky) I noticed that I was very short of breath. It took me a while to realise that we were at an altitude about the same as Mt Kosciuszko, and I definitely was not acclimatised. Another thing I found most unsettling was the position of the sun in relation to north. I found orientation difficult now the sun had moved south, and I was always getting confused and having to align the map to a compass.



Heber hotshots truck

Hotshots

Hotshots crews are elite wildfire firefighters in mobile teams of 20 who travel wherever they are needed for major fires. There are only about 14 crews in the US, and many firefighters aspire to join these teams. Even very experienced firefighters are still considered rookies for a while after becoming a hotshot.

Hotshots are trained to remember and perform particularly detailed commands or strategies. Their fitness levels are extremely high and they use their down time to sharpen tools or work out. They also have a very high discipline standard; each one knows his/her place in the crew and each has a number. They then march everywhere in order. At one stage the Heber Hotshots were working on a ridge with us and were split to complete two tasks. At the end of the day the crew at the bottom marched up the hill to link up with their boss and the rest of the crew so that they could march back down the hill in correct order!



Meadow from air



Chopper through smoke

As the week progressed, some days involved even more walking/climbing than before. There were some injuries to crew members: heat exhaustion, a nose bleed, and a wasp sting (it flew up the unfortunate victim's trouser leg). On a more serious note, one of our crew was hit by a falling tree. While the crew was removing scrub from around trees that were beginning to "torch", a helicopter dropped a water bucket very close to the crew, knocking a tree over onto one of the firefighters. The tree hit him on the head and back, and he was only saved by his helmet. The chopper pilot had decided to make the drop on his own, without instructions and without checking to see if anyone was there. He said later, "really sorry man," just before he left to go back to California!

The injured firefighter was treated at the scene and airlifted by helicopter to hospital. Happily, he was OK, except for the skin off his forehead where the EMT had taped his head to the stretcher without folding the sticky part over.

Weather-wise...

I was amazed at how quickly the weather could change. While crews were mopping up a few spots that had jumped the fire line in gale-force wind, it began to snow. The high wind also meant that crews who

had been flown in now had to walk out, and the result was 90 people marching in single file back to camp - encountering two black bears en route.

I woke the next morning to discover that my tent wasn't as waterproof as I thought. There was a pool of water on the floor (it had been dripping on my face during the night) and my sleeping bag was wet. My pack and most of my clothes were also wet. Then it snowed again as we headed back up the mountain. It was at about this stage I was looking forward to a warm dry motel...

I thawed out eventually and attended several major debriefing sessions before heading back to Australia. We landed in Sydney accompanied by a rousing vocal rendition of *Waltzing Matilda* courtesy of one of the more patriotic contingent members.

What I learnt from the experience

I learned that Australian firefighting authorities would be unwise to emulate the US system of using contract teams and crews, as the cost is enormous. US firefighters also rely heavily on resources such as air support, equipment, vehicles and support facilities. Their spending on a major fire would be considered extreme by our standards.

The tactics and operational procedures

are very similar to those used by the NSWFB, but a much greater emphasis is placed on the Safety Officer role. The Safety Officer plays a major part in the IMT, and one is assigned to each Division. The Divisional Safety Officer remains on the fireline with the crews, and is constantly vigilant in addressing breaches of the safety code.

US Fire Camps are quite amazing and provide excellent support for the firefighters and the IMT. These could be a great bonus for Australian and New Zealand fire crews if we could ever get our firefighters to agree to sleep in a small tent on the ground for 14 days while on a tour of duty at a fire!

What did they learn from me?

Besides benefiting from my considerable firefighting expertise, I taught the American firefighters how to cooeeee.

Incidents

Chemical spill at Mt Victoria

At 11:21 pm on 25 February 2004, NSWFB firefighters were called when a semi-trailer carrying a mixed load of chemicals overturned at the bottom of Mt Victoria Pass on the Great Western Highway. Many of the drums containing the chemicals had fallen onto the road, scattered over a wide area and split, their contents leaking and combining to form toxic products and gases.

When fire crews arrived they donned spillage suits and breathing apparatus and set up a hot zone around the truck. Hampered by heavy rain, crews constructed earth dams to control the spill. "We didn't want to risk the chemicals getting into any of the nearby watercourses," said Katoomba Station Officer Andy Peters.

Hazmat Commander Acting Superintendent Michael Brown was contacted and he responded the NSWFB Primary Hazmat Units from Greenacre. A/Superintendent Brown arrived at the incident control point at 1:15 am. After reassessing the severity of the incident, Incident Control was moved 250 metres west to increase the safety of the hot zone.

Hazmat teams were also sent to the service station at Mt Victoria Tops where a number of people had contaminated the shop after coming in contact with toxins at the accident scene. The people and the area were decontaminated and the people left with NSW Ambulance officers for observation.

At approximately 2 am a new incident control point was established in a more accessible area on the eastern side of the incident with local resources remaining on the western side to provide fire protection.



The Incident Management Team decided to use our jointly owned helicopter, FireAir 1, to fly air cylinders to the incident ground in order to maintain continuity of operations. Extra cylinders were then transported by road and refilled at the Katoomba Fire Station facility.

Rescue crews in spillage suits and breathing apparatus worked for four hours to recover the deceased driver. They stabilised the truck using timber cribbing, shoring and a 'titor' winch. The truck had been carrying herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, hydrochloric acid and sodium hypochlorite, as well as tinned food stuffs and

bulk galvanised piping. As the hydrochloric acid was fuming and reacting with the galvanised pipe, hydrogen was being produced so it was unsafe to use petrol powered rescue equipment and crews used air-operated equipment and hand tools.

The recovery was made even more difficult by the severity of the damage to

the cab and the fact that crews had to be decontaminated at each air cylinder changeover.

Crews worked through the rest of the day and into the night to clean up the site. Firefighters in spillage suits removed the steel, foodstuffs and surface debris first. Then, in fully encapsulated suits, they identified the different types of chemicals and separated them into individual containers for removal from the site by salvage contractors.

To ensure the ongoing safety of crews their health was monitored by NSW



"I believe that this incident was handled in a very professional manner," said Superintendent Tom Milburn. "Firefighters performed their tasks under extremely arduous conditions and I congratulate them on their efforts during this incident."

"It is important to acknowledge the invaluable assistance from other emergency service agencies, especially during the recovery phase, particularly the District Emergency Management Officer John Mayfield, who assisted in bringing this incident to a satisfactory close."



Ambulance SCAT officers. Observations were conducted on firefighters prior to their entering the hot zone in protective clothing and on leaving the hot zone after decontamination.

The area, including the semi and equipment was spot decontaminated with a sodium hypochlorite solution to neutralise the spilt organophosphates. The Department of Environment and Conservation continued to monitor the incident ground by conducting atmospheric monitoring, water quality and soil tests.



Photos by Kernin Lambert and Robert Comerford

NSWFB Attendance

Mt Victoria
Lithgow West
Katoomba
Blackheath
Leura
Wentworth Falls
Bathurst
Lithgow
Springwood
Lawson
Wentworthville
FireAir 1
Mt Druitt
Dunheved
Glenbrook
SAR5
Zone Commander W3
Operational Commander W3
Hazmat 1
Hazmat 2
NSWFB Scientific Advisor
Hazmat 9 Alpha
SIW3
SOLO
USAR 1

Other Agencies

Rural Fire Service
NSW Police
NSW Ambulance
Department of Environment and Conservation
NSW Roads and Traffic Authority
Lithgow Council
District Emergency Management Officer
Sydney Catchment Authority
Western Area Health Service



Fire at Australia's oldest winery

On 5 January 2004, fire broke out shortly before 6 am in the administration building of Australia's oldest operating winery, Wyndham Estate at Dalwood. Crews from Bransford, Telarah, Cessnock, East Maitland, Maitland, Singleton and the Newcastle hazmat team responded along with three Rural Fire Service brigades.

When firefighters arrived, the fire had already taken a firm hold and was spreading rapidly through the roof of the building. Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus had to move cautiously as the roof was collapsing around them. They faced further difficulties fighting the fire in a cellar. Initial water supplies were limited and the lack of water pressure hampered firefighting efforts. Rural Fire Service tankers were used to relay water to the scene.

While the administration building was largely destroyed, firefighters were able to save vital computer equipment. Fortunately, the vineyard, factory and historical buildings, some dating back to around 1828, were not threatened.

"Fire crews showed great determination in tackling this extremely exhausting and dangerous fire," said Inspector Mark Reilly. "Operations were complicated by poor water supply and a unique building layout. Firefighters had limited access to the basement and this is where the fire spread into the roof of the building."

The cause of the fire was investigated jointly by NSWFB investigators and the NSW Police Forensic Services group.



incidents

No picnic for Tamworth fires

On Tuesday 13 January 2004 a suspicious package was found next to a mini underground substation next to the Tamworth Services Club. The NSW Police Service Bomb Disposal Unit was called in to remove the package and more than 140 people were evacuated from surrounding buildings.



Firefighters from Tamworth and West Tamworth were responded and the NSW Police Service notified. In case there was a chemical, biological or radiological incendiary device being inside the package, Tamworth's Hazmat van was also dispatched. West 5 Country Inspector Terry Farley, barrier-taped the area and established a hot zone. After liaison with Station Officer Wayne Zikan, Inspector Farley moved club patrons away from the windows to the other side of the club. The windows overlooked the car park and could have been affected by a blast.

Firefighters used a thermal imaging camera to determine whether there was anything abnormal inside the package but found no heat coming from it. They ran a line of 38mm hose out for protection and stood back until the Police arrived.

"I was not taking any chances with the lives of the community or my crew," Inspector Terry Farley said. "The procedures set out in the Standard Operational Guidelines relating to bombs certainly helped me carry out my role."

When police arrived they asked crime scene investigators and a bomb squad technician for help. It was decided to close Marius Street, the main arterial road north and south out of Tamworth.

A 100m blast radius was established and NSWFB set up a BA Stage 1 Control with one crew in breathing apparatus running a line of 70mm hose as cover while the bomb squad opened the package. Another crew stood by with encapsulated suits if required.

When the package was finally opened it turned out to be a picnic basket containing an empty plastic bottle.

Although the incident caused major disruption to the community, it proved a good test of emergency resources leading up to the Tamworth Country Music Festival when more than 100,000 people came to the city.

"All emergency services worked extremely well together and I would like to congratulate firefighters on their professionalism during the incident," said Inspector Farley.

Thermal Imaging Camera aids fires

Toukley Fire Brigade used specialist rescue equipment to pinpoint the exact location of a fire in a Central Coast kitchen manufacturing factory.

At 5.30am on 18 December 2003, crews fighting a fire in a dust extracting silo/hopper at Polytech Doors in Warnervale, employed a thermal imaging camera from Berkeley Vale Fire Station to determine the fire's location within the silo. They were then better able to decide on appropriate firefighting techniques to access and extinguish the fire.

After carrying out a thorough reading with the camera, one crew opened the external access door with 2 x 70mm lines for fire protection and attack (as shown in the accompanying photo). A safety crew below provided fire protection to those above. Crews in breathing apparatus at the bottom of the hopper removed perspex covers to gain entry to the fire. The area was declared safe at 1.17pm.



Warehouse fire in Armidale



On 1 January 2004, firefighters from Armidale, Guyra and Uralla battled for two and a half hours to control a fire at Harvey Norman's Armidale warehouse which contained furniture and household goods.

Firefighters had to use power saws and axes to gain access to the building. They then faced a tough job as the stock added fuel to the fire, and the building's single-storey tin and iron construction buckled under the intense heat.

During the fire the warehouse roof caved in, and an LPG cylinder exploded inside the building. Nobody was injured, but three firefighters suffered heat exhaustion and were treated on scene by the Ambulance Service of NSW.

Inspector Terry Farley said the Incident Control System was implemented in the early stages and helped in controlling the incident, by accounting for the firefighters, putting tactics and strategies in place and enabling them to successfully extinguish the fire.

Purrfect rescue

A Dubbo resident had given up all hope of finding her much loved purebred Siamese cat, Biddy, who had been missing for several months. The animal, however, was eventually located (via microchip scan), alive and well and residing in a wall cavity in the Grace Bros Building.

Bidly had given birth to six kittens, and was reluctant to leave her new home, so the NSWFB crew from Dubbo were called to the rescue. After much effort on the part of firefighters, Bidly and her mewling offspring were removed from the wall and returned home.

Cartoon by Firefighter Paul Dorin



Fairlight Childcare Centre

On 15 December 2003, a car crashed into a childcare centre in Fairlight and burst into flames.

Fire crews responded to 000 calls reporting a school fire in Balgowlah Rd, Fairlight. When firefighters arrived they saw smoke coming from a childcare centre. On closer inspection they discovered that a car had smashed through a wall and window of the centre and was now on fire. Some children were trapped inside the badly damaged structure, including several who were seriously injured.

A Red message for a 2nd alarm was transmitted, while firefighters initiated a search and rescue operation. Crews from Manly, Dee Why, Narrabeen, Crows Nest and Mosman were joined by Ambulance personnel, centre staff, council workers and members of the public in carrying out a phenomenal rescue effort. Two firefighters, Senior Firefighters Tony Farrell and Wade Leverack with the help of a courageous local, physically lifted the car to free trapped and injured children.

Firefighters extinguished the fire within five minutes of their arrival.

As children were located, they were freed and moved to the safety and care of Ambulance Officers. One child was still unaccounted for and the Narrabeen Heavy Rescue unit was called upon to lift the vehicle and search underneath. Thankfully a short time later the missing child was located.

Unfortunately, eight children suffered injuries, two seriously. The driver of the car also sustained injuries. In total, 48 children and staff were evacuated from the facility. All casualties were treated at the scene by Ambulance personnel and subsequently transported to hospital, including one child by rescue helicopter.

Getting ready for the charity walk



Fundraising efforts

In the aftermath, firefighters were also strongly involved with the local community in fundraising for the two girls who were seriously hurt. D Platoon firefighters from Narrabeen and C Platoon firefighters from Manly, Mosman, Crows Nest, Gladesville, Eastwood, Drummoyne, Bondi, City of Sydney, Silverwater and Parramatta helped participants at checkpoints of the walk-and-paddle fundraiser which began at Manly Wharf and finished at Parramatta Wharf.

The fundraiser ended with an auction at the Manly Wharf Hotel which raised over \$200,000. The families of the girls were also presented with the firefighting helmets of Inspector Gordon Boath and SF Wade Laverack who attended the incident.



Picture courtesy of Susan Walker, NRAHS

Firies on the front

Goonellabah firies were photographed with young patient Kane Shields during one of their regular visits to the children's ward of Lismore Base Hospital. The group is featured on the front cover of Health Bites, the Northern Rivers Area Health Service Magazine.

First year of sponsorship for the NSWFB Retired Members and Wives Association

In 2003, the NSWFB Relief and Welfare Fund elected to support the NSWFB Retired Members and Wives Association; many members of this association having previously been involved with the fund. The Fund donated \$2000 to the Association to cover costs in producing regular newsletters for members. The newsletters contain updates on what's happening in the NSWFB and provide news about other members of the association.

A few words about the Association

from Tony Hayman, Secretary

Retired NSWFB members began meeting in 1979. The original committee decided that an annual get-together should be held each year and that it should be open to all employees, not just firefighters. Annual dinners have gained popularity, with over 200 members attending.

Over the years, the organisation has grown considerably and is now incorporated. I have been secretary since 1988 and have been delighted that the Association has enabled me to keep in contact with both serving and retired members.

I encourage any retired member to contact the committee. There is no joining fee and we would be quite happy to put you on our mailing list.

Contact Tony Hayman, on 9632 7910 or 0402 448 526.

From Dave Gardner, President

To my way of thinking, the very idea of an association that gives one a chance of continuing a lifestyle is very appealing indeed. It would be a great shame if a member of the NSWFB were to lose contact with his/her mates. And, mates we all were.

After retirement our members appear to be scattered to the four winds. Some decide to stay in Sydney, while others choose to move to less frenetic climes, and we never hear from them again. The original founders of the Association decided to do something about it. *Well done*, I say.

In the early days there were no computers or any of the technical advantages we enjoy today. It was a case of writer's cramp and hours of organised chaos and stamp licking. Tony Hayman can vouch for this.

At our annual dinner there is a palpable feeling of *esprit de corps*. What better than to see the result of weeks of preparation culminating in a gathering of old comrades all under one roof for a few hours each year. We may all be looking a little older, but the memories are sharp and who cares if the stories grow slightly more embellished as the years roll by?

I urge all our present members to attend the annual dinner, and for the recently retired - join us and enjoy!



L to R: Superintendent Peter Stathis, Vice President Relief and Welfare Fund, Mrs Julia Simonides, Assistant Secretary Relief and Welfare Fund, Tony Hayman, Dave Gardner, Commissioner Mullins and Superintendent Doug Messenger, President Relief and Welfare Fund.

Flying the flag...

To help get into the spirit of Australia Day, small Australian flags were flown from the aerials of NSWFB pumper and major appliances.

Firefighters from Parramatta participated in Parramatta City Council's celebrations by providing a static display of their pumper and ladder/platform as well as distributing fire safety information to the community.

Firefighters from Castle Hill and Northmead took part in the Australia Day Emergency Expo at Castle Hill Showground. The expo was designed to explain the cooperative arrangements in place between the emergency response agencies. Firefighters demonstrated rescue and hazmat skills during a simulated accident between a car and a semi-trailer carrying a toxic chemical.



Keeping the NSWFB Australia Day flame alive in the south-west, Junee crews cooked up a storm by holding a BBQ to raise money for the Cancer Patients' Association.

A bloody battle

Firefighters from Armidale won the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) Fire Fighters Blood Challenge Shield for giving the most amount of blood (318 donations) during the 2003 NSWFB Fire Fighters Blood Challenge.

The Challenge, which was held between platoons from 1 May to 30 September 2003, was designed to help the Australian Red Cross Blood Service ensure there was sufficient blood during winter.

Congratulations to all NSWFB firefighters and their families who made a total of 607 blood donations.

Back: Superintendent Steven Pearce, Zone Commander West 5 and Inspector Terry Farley, Operational Commander West 5.

Front: Firefighter Darren Meuron, Firefighter Ian Underwood, both from 205 Station, Armidale and Firefighter Les Solomons, Relieving Firefighter from Sydney.



Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands

Last December, NSWFB Fire Safety Inspector Chris Jurgeit returned to Australia after participating in the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

The RAMSI program, which was requested by the Solomon Islands Government in July 2003, coordinates the assistance of international agencies restoring law and order and re-establishing infrastructure in that country. Participating countries include Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

In recent years, the fire service in the Solomon Islands has been affected by political upheaval, resulting in the deterioration of fire service equipment and buildings, and eroding the confidence of its personnel. It is hoped that with a commitment from the Solomon Islands Government and their fire service (approximately 70 personnel), together with ongoing assistance from programs such as RAMSI, things can begin to turn around.

Inspector Jurgeit's task was to prepare a comprehensive report on the state of the Solomon Islands Fire Service and make recommendations for redeveloping the Solomon Islands Fire Service.



Solomon Island fire station



Honiara pumper

"I was well received by the people of the Solomon Islands. They were more than eager to witness change; in fact, they wanted me to fix things while I was there!

The weather was extremely hot and humid. There was nearly always a smoke haze hanging around from people burning off rubbish on the footpath. I was told not to swim in the sea near Honiara due to possible contamination by sewerage outfall. Mozzies were aplenty and I had to take anti malaria tablets each day. I'm told that there are some really beautiful places in the Solomon Islands, but unfortunately, there was little time to sightsee.

During my stay I developed relationships between the Fire Service and other government departments, including the water authority, the ports authority and the natural disasters organisation. I also attempted to set up a hydrant location/inspection regime for the firefighters, as well as liaising with technical personnel who could assist in re-establishing radio communications.

Although there is a long way to go, I departed the Islands a little more confident that firefighters were a little better equipped to deal with an emergency."



An SEV and striker

Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre

The new Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) was launched on 10 December 2003 by the Federal Minister for Science, the Hon Peter McGauran MP. The CRC will create opportunities for all Australian fire agencies to benefit from an unprecedented national collaboration on bushfire research.

The CRC maintains strong links with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council, and involves 30 Australian partner organisations. The CRC will have combined cash and resources of close to \$100 million over the next seven years, including a cash grant of \$25 million from the Commonwealth.

As the name implies, the Bushfire CRC relies on cooperation and collaboration among relevant research and educational organisations including state-based fire and emergency authorities, land management agencies, universities, CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology. In NSW, core participants include the NSWFB, Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service and State Forests. The University of NSW is an associate participant.

The CRC will focus on five programs:

Program A: Safe prevention, preparation and suppression

This program aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of bushfire behaviour and risk, taking into account local differences in vegetation, land management and weather conditions. The outcomes will be biophysical eg control of air quality, maintenance of biodiversity and prescribed burning.

Program B: Management of prescribed and wild fires in the landscape

Program C: Community self-sufficiency for fire safety

Knowledge gained from Program A will assist in development of local management arrangements such as prevention and suppression strategies, prescribed fuel reduction regimes and enhanced local community self-sufficiency.

Program D: Protection of people and property

Program A outcomes will also be relevant to improving the safety of people and buildings during bushfires.

Program E: Education and training

Aims to ensure that effective and appropriate communication and training occurs within CRC agencies and organisations, particularly educational agencies.

An important feature of the CRC is the development of strong, well-connected research teams within all programs. This coordinated approach should ensure that the results of bushfire research are efficiently transferred to agencies and communities, and the CRC intends to employ three part-time 'technology transfer' officers to translate research into practice. Examples include operational manuals, training packages, and enhanced decision-making processes that improve community safety and firefighter wellbeing as well as protect property and reduce risk and cost of bushfire management.

The CRC will support and produce graduates specifically trained in bushfire research with skills relevant to industry needs, and is offering up to 60 scholarships. Universities involved include the University of Western Australia, RMIT University, the University of Melbourne, Australian National University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, and University of NSW.



The CRC is offering appropriately qualified students full postgraduate scholarships valued at \$25 000 per year as well as top-up scholarships (for students eligible for scholarships such as Australian Postgraduate Awards) of \$7000 per annum.

The CRC will also be involved in providing short courses for a variety of audiences including postgraduates and agency staff. It will coordinate exchange programs for agency and research staff, and an annual bushfire research conference.

The CRC board is chaired by former NSWFB Commissioner Ian Mac Dougall. NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Phil Koperberg is also a board member. Chief Executive is Kevin O'Loughlin, formerly the NSW State Director of the Bureau of Meteorology.

Information about the Bushfire CRC, including research programs and educational opportunities, is available on the website at www.bushfirecrc.com or contact:

Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
Level 5
340 Albert Street,
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Phone: 03 9412 9600
Fax: 03 9416 3717.

Police Secondment - Critical Infrastructure Pre Incident Planning

Superintendent Glen Sheedy recently commenced a secondment to the Police Counter Terrorism Command. Superintendent Sheedy's primary role will be to assist NSWFB Zone Commanders in furthering a joint agency approach to pre incident planning for critical infrastructure sites.

Glen will be contacting Zone Commanders to discuss and assist with the progression of critical infrastructure pre-incident planning in their areas of responsibility.

Superintendent Sheedy can be contacted at:
glen.sheedy@fire.nsw.gov.au.

NSWFB participates in International Search and Rescue forums

Last November, Commissioner Greg Mullins travelled to Japan and Korea, where he represented Australia at the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Asia Pacific Chapter meeting in Kobe, and the International Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team Leaders Meeting in Seoul which attracted delegates from over 30 countries.

The meetings focussed on lessons learned from the most recent Algiers and Turkey earthquakes, standardisation of USAR size-up processes, and a proposed accreditation and assessment system for international USAR teams. Our NSWFB USAR Task Force 1 is accredited by the United Nations as capable of international response, which means that if an incident occurs in the South Pacific region, Australia can be asked to help.

As the Australian fire services' representative on the National USAR Working Group, Commissioner Mullins has been lobbying for Federal Government funding to help the smaller states to develop their own USAR capabilities.

Review of Mutual Aid Agreement with State Emergency Service



Following the windstorm on Sunday 24 August 2003 which affected many areas of Sydney and the Illawarra, the NSWFB and State Emergency Service (SES) decided to review the Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) between the two organisations. The aim of the MAA is to ensure that the NSWFB effectively supports the SES during flood and storm recovery operations and that the community receives the highest level of service.

The MAA covers activities and issues such as sharing information about calls for help from the public, coordinating the work of teams from each service and providing the best liaison and logistical support. NSWFB crews involved in flood and storm

recovery operations will continue to work as they have always done, but will be better supported and will be given jobs that match their capability.

Based on the lessons learned during the recent storm recovery operation, the MAA was strengthened in some areas, including giving more detailed information to the SES about jobs 'rendered safe' by the NSWFB. A training package in SES sector operations will be developed for NSWFB liaison officers.

The revised MAA was signed by NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins and the Director-General of the SES, Brigadier Philip McNamara, on 16 January 2004.



L to R: Superintendent Peter Stathis, Vice President Relief and Welfare Fund, Mrs Julia Simonides, Assistant Secretary Relief and Welfare Fund, Superintendent Doug Messenger, President Relief and Welfare Fund being presented the keys by Commissioner Mullins.

Take a break

The NSWFB Relief and Welfare Fund has recently purchased a fully furnished holiday unit at Forster on the north coast of NSW. The three bedroom unit, which sleeps six people, is situated one street back from the lake and within walking distance to shops and main beach. The rent is \$200 a week all year round.

Ballots are to be held annually and are open to members of the Fund. To those who were successful in obtaining accommodation this year, we hope you have a wonderful holiday.

Application forms are available on the NSWFB Intranet site.



2003

Community Fire Unit Gala Day and Championship

Late last year, Community Fire Unit (CFU) members from across Sydney and the Blue Mountains gathered at Museum of Fire grounds in Penrith to compete in the CFU Championships which were hosted in partnership with the NSWFB Firefighters Championships Association.

Team members competed in four events designed to promote teamwork and simulate bushfire fighting scenarios. The competition provided a great opportunity for CFU members to hone their skills in protecting their homes from fire.

Apart from the competition, CFU members and spectators enjoyed the Museum of Fire displays, carnival rides and fire safety education, including the NSWFB Community Education Van, Bushwise Puppet Theatre, and a display from the NSWFB Rescue section. Recruits from the Training College at Alexandria displayed their skills in providing a sausage sizzle lunch.

And the winners are...

The major event trophy was awarded to Valerie Avenue, Chatswood West. The Commissioner's trophy went to Fuller's Road, Chatswood West, while Muttama Street, Wahroonga took home the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury encouragement trophy.



Matthew Wykniet benefit night



Matthew Wykniet with Superintendent Steven Pearce, Zone Commander West 5, Station Officer Mick Howard and Assistant Commissioner Murray Kear.

Photos courtesy of the Armidale Express

Last November, Armidale firefighters held a benefit night for Matthew, the son of NSWFB Retained Firefighter Ron Wykniet who, along with his wife Cecilia and two daughters Sarah and Bridgette, died in a horrific motor vehicle accident.

The evening included an auction which was well supported by local businesses who donated goods and services. Major items going under the hammer included a signed and framed Don Bradman cricket bat, which fetched \$7500; a signed and framed Don Bradman picture featuring his St George Cricket Club playing cap, which was snapped up for \$5200; and a framed Wallabies jersey signed by the entire 2003 Rugby World Cup squad, which went for \$3150.

NSWFB Regional Commander West, Assistant Commissioner Murray Kear said the tragedy had affected the entire community and he was immensely proud of the efforts of the Armidale firefighters.

"I met Ron Wykniet when I presented the members of Armidale Fire Brigade with a Commendation for Courageous Action and will remember him as a brave and courageous firefighter as well as a great family man.

"I have been touched and honoured by the efforts of the Armidale firefighters to provide solace and much-needed comfort to Matthew and the Wykniet family. This tragedy has affected everyone in the NSWFB and feelings of sorrow and loss were felt across the community.

"At a time when there is so much negativity in the world, nights like these remind you that there is still some good out there and I am extremely proud of the firefighters' efforts to help a mate.

"The thoughts and prayers of the entire NSWFB are with the Wykniet family."

A big THANK YOU

"Fellow firefighters, on behalf of Armidale Fire Station, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the overwhelming support of our appeal for Matthew. The benefit night was an outstanding success, and this was due, not only to the efforts of the people here in Armidale, but to all who donated money and goods. We raised over \$100,000 which should go a long way to help secure Matthew's future. On a personal note, I would also like to thank the fires from Armidale for their support of and dedication to this worthwhile cause."

Armidale Station Officer
Mick Howard

Surfboard Challenge

Australia Day Surfboard Tri-services Challenge

As part of Australia Day celebrations, a NSWFB team of nine firefighters competed against NSW Police and NSW Ambulance Service teams to win the inaugural 2004 Australia Day Surfboard Tri-Service Challenge.

The event attracted 1000 competitors and consisted of a 3.5 kilometre surfboard paddle which began at Sydney Opera House at 8.30 am and finished at Blues Point Reserve at 10 am. Times were calculated by dividing the times of the top three finishers from each service to get an average.

The NSWFB team won with a time of 36.31 minutes, closely followed by NSW Police with 38.68 and the NSW Ambulance Service with 39.06.

The top three finishers from the NSWFB were Anthony 'AJ' Payne from Redfern B Platoon who completed the course in 29 minutes and 28 seconds. This also won him first place in the Master Males 36-49 division. Second was Darren Bennett from The Rocks A Platoon whose time was 32 minutes and 54 seconds and third was Daniel Shaw from City of Sydney D Platoon who finished in 47 minutes 12 seconds.

The CEO of the Australia Day Council NSW, John Trevillian presented the trophy to representatives of the NSWFB Sports Association during a ceremony at Governor Macquarie Tower, Sydney.

The trophy will be engraved and held by the NSWFB until next year's event.



Pictured from left to right (back row) - FF Daniel Shaw, Commissioner Mullins, FF Adrian James, FF Scott Henderson, (front row) FF Andrew Barrett and FF Anna Batterham.



Photo courtesy of the Australia Day Council

Senior Firefighter Jeff Walsh

Sydney Communication Centre

Originally a computer operator for Telecom, Jeff joined the NSWFB in 1993 after deciding on a change of scenery. Literally. "I worked in an office with no windows — just like a concrete bunker," said Jeff. "After spending all day indoors at my desk, I decided I wanted to work outdoors. I looked for a job which provided a challenge, both mentally and physically."

As fate would have it, after gaining Rescue as well as Ladder/Platform and Hydraulic Platform operator qualifications, Jeff, seeking yet another change of scenery and further challenges, has come full circle and spends his days on a 10/14 shift at the Sydney Communication Centre (ComCen) — sitting in front of a computer. "At least the ComCen has windows," he quipped. "Seriously though, I really enjoy this type of work. You can see what you've done at the end of the day and you get results. There's great job satisfaction in knowing you've helped save a life or someone's home."

"The ComCen is the first contact point for anyone trying to contact the NSWFB during an emergency," said Jeff. "When a 000 call is received, we respond the appropriate resources given the information supplied by the caller. Often, ComCen operators need to decipher, interpret, and translate information from a distressed caller, and during major incidents it can get pretty busy. On occasions we have up to 14 operators working at the same time in the one room."

Jeff had been rescue qualified for six years before joining the ComCen. "The five week training course was fairly intense, but at the end you're pretty confident and competent at doing what has to be done, although it helps if you've got a little bit of computer knowledge under your belt."

"I don't really miss active firefighting or driving a shiny red appliance," Jeff said, "not at all really. I now get to drive around in a shiny red bus (the Incident Control Vehicle)! Besides, I really enjoy the challenges, especially the logistics side of major incidents when we organise move-ups and stand-bys."

Jeff was a member of a Communications taskforce at the Jindabyne bushfires in February 2003, and was subsequently part of the small group who developed Emergency Operations Centre kits (EOCs). The kits contain a FireCAD laptop, a colour

printer/fax/copier, radios, mobile phones and a full set of stationery in a rugged carrying case. As a result, senior NSWFB officers at prolonged incidents will now be supported by ComCen staff armed with EOCs to manage all of their communications tasks, including dispatching, incident logging, paging and faxing needs, as well as accessing FireCAD's databases. "It's basically a

mobile communication centre," said Jeff. "We can control and monitor the incident at a local level while still having access to all normal resources available in the ComCen."

Still looking for the next challenge, Jeff completed the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Specialist Technicians course in 2003.

Manager Operational Communications Superintendent Mark Whybro believes that, "Jeff's hard work and dedication has helped to improve the way Operational Communications meets the demanding communication needs of the NSWFB's operations, and he is typical of the type of people who staff our ComCens."



profile

Butt out... NSWFB Don't be a firebug campaign



It's enough to make your blood boil - the sight of someone throwing a cigarette butt out of a car window. Every year the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) is called to hundreds of roadside fires believed to be caused by discarded butts.

NSWFB Station Officer Paul Scott, based at Parramatta Fire Station, has fought many fires on busy roads and even railway tracks where the most likely cause was a dropped cigarette butt.

This led him and the Community Risk Management team to develop a proposal for an awareness campaign for smokers along the lines of the high profile NSW Government anti-littering initiative, "Don't be a tosser". It was a good idea in theory but the connection between cigarette butts and roadside fires was still only supported by circumstantial evidence.

That was until a recent study by Jennifer Dainer, a student at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), with help from the NSWFB and CSIRO, provided solid proof. The study, which Ms Dainer undertook as her honours project for her degree in Forensic Science, was co-supervised by Dr Anne Lear from NSWFB Corporate Risk Management and Phil Maynard from UTS.

The study

As part of the study, called *Can cigarettes butts start (Bush)fires*, Ms Dainer conducted outdoor trials, supervised by Station Officer Scott and three firefighters with a fire engine from Parramatta Fire Station. She lit cigarettes and threw them into grass on the side of a road in the Sydney suburb of Prospect where there was no danger to surrounding property. At the time the prevailing conditions were recorded as wind speed of 40km/h, fuel (grass) moisture content approximately 12% of oven dry weight and humidity 14%.

"On the day it was around 27°C with a north westerly wind, and it was pretty dry," Station Officer Scott said.

In three out of the 75 trials, or 4%, the grass caught alight and started to burn, requiring the firefighters to extinguish the flames.

"The fires would have progressed quite quickly if we hadn't been there," says Station Officer Scott. "It's no wonder we're called to so many fires on busy roads and freeways and by railway lines when they can start so easily."

As well as the outdoor trials, the study also involved:

- laboratory trials to show whether cigarette butts could ignite grassy fuel (hay) in a well-controlled environment and to identify the parameters which affect ignition potential; and

- a survey of the number of cigarette butts on two median strips on a three-lane road in Western Sydney.

The laboratory trials found cigarette butts ignited the hay in 33% of cases. Ignitions increased when the wind speed increased, fuel moisture decreased (though wetter fuels could ignite with the application of wind) and the degree of the contact between the fuel bed and combustion area of the cigarette increased.

During the survey, 426 cigarette butts were collected in a 60 square metre area of the median strip of Abbott Road, Seven Hills, over a three-week period. The wind draught created by a line of passing traffic was also recorded and found to be sufficient to increase the potential for a cigarette butt to start a fire on the roadside even if the prevailing conditions were calm.

A campaign is born

Station Officer Scott says the study finally gives the NSWFB the scientific proof that cigarette butts can cause roadside fires, including bushfires.

"This confirms our view and gives us a firm basis for our new "Don't be a firebug" campaign," he said. "It also shows the benefits of partnerships between government agencies and universities on studies like this."

The “Don’t be a firebug” campaign, an adapted version of “Don’t be a tosser”, is being run by the NSWFB and the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Roads and Traffic Authority. The Minister for Emergency Services, Tony Kelly, announced the campaign in January 2004. Over the next few months local firefighters will kick off local versions of “Don’t be a firebug” in suburbs and towns around NSW. They’ll attach the distinctive red stickers, which show a hand dropping a cigarette butt from a car, to their appliances and vehicles as a warning to motorists. The stickers will also be available to the public from fire stations.

Station Officer Scott says it’s important to create greater public awareness around the issue.

“As well as the environmental cost associated with littering, there is also the potential for fires from dropped cigarette butts, particularly during bushfire season,” he says. “A careless act by one person may have dire consequences for others, including the firefighters who risk their lives at fires.”

“Smoke alarms... everybody should have them!”

“Responding to a smoke alarm, executing an evacuation plan, dialling 000 and remaining calm - we were amazed by the actions of this little boy,” said Cronulla Firefighter Graham McMillan.

Fire safety education paid off for a Burraneer family when seven-year old Michael Demaria rescued his siblings, and the family pets, from a house fire.

Michael was home with his nine-year-old brother and 13-year-old sister when a smoke alarm sounded in an upstairs bedroom. Michael ran to alert his sister who was showering, but the shower door became jammed. Michael freed the door, rescued his sister, and completed what Firefighter McMillan described as a “textbook evacuation”. The seven-year-old called 000 then calmly carried out his escape plan.

Michael even remembered the family pets, grabbing the budgie and kitten on the way out. He assembled the family at the designated meeting place, and waited for firefighters to arrive.

“When we arrived it was pouring down rain,” said Firefighter McMillan, “and flames and smoke were billowing from the upstairs window. There was a

group of children assembled around the letterbox - holding a box which, we later discovered, contained a budgie.”

The fire was extinguished within minutes, and the blaze contained to one bedroom. “It was a good save,” said Firefighter McMillan, “brought about because that little boy had the presence of mind to ring 000 and follow an evacuation plan.”

Michael’s bravery and quick thinking not only averted a possible tragedy, but saved the family home. This highlights the importance of installing smoke alarms in the home and devising an evacuation plan in case of emergency.

“We are very proud of Michael,” said his mother who arrived home a short time after the fire was extinguished. “The kids are safe, and that’s all that matters. We are very lucky Michael was here. He didn’t panic and had things under control. If the NSWFB hadn’t arrived so quickly, we’d have lost the house. Those guys were great, and those extra minutes make such a difference.

“Thank God for smoke alarms! Everybody should have them. Not only have them, but check them. I never realised how those little plastic things on the ceiling could save our home, and our lives! Fire safety is a definitely a good thing for kids to be aware of.”

Cessnock Firesafe Project

By Inspector Ray Manser Country Inspector North 4

The Cessnock Firesafe Project for Arson Prevention is currently being piloted in an effort to reduce arson in the Cessnock area.

A problem shared...

Research indicates that an effective strategy for reducing the incidence of fire setting relies on combining the resources and ideas of government, industry and the local community. The Cessnock Firesafe Project is the result of collaboration between the NSWFB, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Police, Cessnock Council and the NSW Department of Education and Juvenile Justice.

Strategy Development

Analysis of Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS) statistics indicated that Cessnock had one of the highest incidents of malicious fire setting in proportion to actual fires in NSW. I raised these concerns with Station Officers Paul Randall and Greg Lewis, who, with the assistance of Retained Firefighter Rob Nicholson, developed a program to tackle the problem.

The following strategies were identified:

- To reduce arson vulnerability by providing residents, businesses and educational institutions with strategies to reduce their risk of arson attack. This includes information on security and the management of waste materials. For business, it also involves information on staff training, conducting risk assessments and business continuity planning.
- To remove arson opportunities by forming partnerships and adopting a whole-of-government approach to deal with abandoned vehicles (stolen as well as unregistered), fly tipping (illegal dumping in commercial quantities), rubbish removal and garbage collection procedures.
- To improve education by working with high schools, community youth groups and juvenile justice agencies, and delivering education programs that explain the consequences of malicious fire setting.

Arson costs the Australian community an estimated \$180 million per year. As well as the numerous fires set in garbage bins, derelict cars and occupied and abandoned buildings, many fires on the urban/bushland interface also appear to have been deliberately lit.

- To improve security by advertising the Crime Stoppers number, and encouraging neighbourhood programs and community policing.

Community partnership

Several project meetings were held with other agency representatives and feedback was encouraged. The concept was enthusiastically received. Cessnock Council contributed to the cost of printing posters while NSWFB and RFS jointly funded the printing costs for the initial run of printed resources. The Council reviewed garbage collection procedures, abandoned vehicles removal, illegal rubbish dumping and provided drop off points where old vehicles can be left with scrap dealers free of charge. As well, the Council offered a \$1000 reward to anybody offering evidence that leads to the conviction of a malicious fire setter.

Implementation and Launch

Educational resources were produced and delivered to NSWFB stations within the Cessnock area, and crews were advised to contact local schools, youth community groups, local chambers of commerce, service clubs, and residential groups to arrange a presentation.

On 1 December 2003 the official launch at Mt View High School, Cessnock, generated a great deal of media interest. The attendance of both NSW Fire Brigades and Rural Fire Service personnel reinforced the benefits of a cooperative approach to a local problem.

Conclusion

Several studies of serial fire setters indicate that people who set fires in rubbish, grass, bush and cars, eventually progress to set the fires in buildings.

The imposition of tougher penalties to deter potential fires setters may prevent a small number of incidents. However, it is important to adopt a preventative approach by educating the community. This project was designed to ensure that early intervention, through education, will greatly lessen the number of deliberate fires in the Cessnock area.

- Being injury-free on stairs and ladders, paying special attention to placing a grab rail on stairs.
- Avoiding the stress of extra work and going down to the basement to clean the house.
- Home wiring and gas in basement entrance made over time, because not in line with existing regulations.
- Making preparation for the winter: both the owner to ensure safety and the contractor to ensure safety and compliance.
- Installing smoke alarms, replacing the batteries once a year, while using the alarm, and also to shut down the alarm.
- Discussing and preparing your disaster response to deal with the home with family or other guests.

Ensure emergency plans are comprehensive, implement them all your business employees.

Emergency: 911. Please report all emergencies to the NSW Fire Prevention Service on the 24-hour Strategic hotline 1800 323 800.

Community Care

Engagement of the community level with internal and community awareness is vitally important to protect all our citizens from arson attacks. This is especially the case in caring for senior citizens, the handicapped, and other disadvantaged people. Some more practical points here will be helpful:

- Advise your staff members of your involvement during their fire drills and in training, and then they may find themselves in your fire team again when they return.
- Make sure your senior citizens, children, employees and others are alerted to NSW Fire Prevention before they are alerted to other fire prevention measures, and they are not being misled by other fire prevention measures.
- Make sure your senior citizens, children, employees and others are alerted to NSW Fire Prevention before they are alerted to other fire prevention measures, and they are not being misled by other fire prevention measures.

Contact

| | |
|---|--|
| NSW Fire Brigades North: 1800 323 800 14 Church St. Newcastle NSW 2229 Ph: 082 4822 2147 Fax: 082 4822 2187 | NSW Rural Fire Service Fire Control Centre Delahay Rd., Pokoihi PO Box 300 Cessnock Ph: 082 4822 2147 Fax: 082 4822 2187 |
|---|--|

The Homecare Program is a joint project of NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Police Service, NSW Rural Fire Service & Cessnock City Council.

ARSON!

Community Homesafe Program

Information & Prevention Checklists






WORKING TOGETHER FOR YOUR SAFETY

The Fire Brigades and Police Service are concerned that a recent outbreak of malicious bush and property fires has occurred in your area.

We need your help to stop these deliberately lit fires

Malicious fires put lives and property at serious risk, while wasting Fire Brigade and Police Resources.

If you observe suspicious activity or have any information on these fires please contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000

(Information may be offered anonymously)



Quarantine Photo ID's (contact 0800 333 000)

| ? | The Impact on Victims | Is Your Home Arson Safe? |
|--|--|---|
| <p>What is and ing of</p> | <p>What does arson really cost?</p> <p>Victims of arson attacks caused by other deliberate fire-waiters to closed criminal assault certainly experience the suffering in financial economic terms. However, the spread of their sadness is exacerbated in reports of:</p> | <p>The effective prevention of random arson attacks is directly related to the existence of security and fire safety fire objectives in area and ground your home. Limiting exposure to arson attacks involves both the denial of access and opportunities to maintain arson safety.</p> |
| <p>not just (O) its. In rate</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping perimeter fences in good condition, securing all gates against casual intrusion with locks. • Not allowing general access to walls or in the yard, keeping windows shut closed away from the walls of your home. • Tool-Garden sheds and garages kept closed and securely locked when not in use. |
| <p>Part much of home lost</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an emergency alarm, taking with no indication such as locked, unsecured windows. • Keeping fences in good condition, securing all gates against casual intrusion with locks. • Not allowing general access to walls or in the yard, keeping windows shut closed away from the walls of your home. |
| <p>lost rate</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an emergency alarm, taking with no indication such as locked, unsecured windows. • Keeping fences in good condition, securing all gates against casual intrusion with locks. • Not allowing general access to walls or in the yard, keeping windows shut closed away from the walls of your home. |
| <p>at rate</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an emergency alarm, taking with no indication such as locked, unsecured windows. • Keeping fences in good condition, securing all gates against casual intrusion with locks. • Not allowing general access to walls or in the yard, keeping windows shut closed away from the walls of your home. |
| <p>at rate</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an emergency alarm, taking with no indication such as locked, unsecured windows. • Keeping fences in good condition, securing all gates against casual intrusion with locks. • Not allowing general access to walls or in the yard, keeping windows shut closed away from the walls of your home. |
| <p>at rate</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making an emergency alarm, taking with no indication such as locked, unsecured windows. • Keeping fences in good condition, securing all gates against casual intrusion with locks. • Not allowing general access to walls or in the yard, keeping windows shut closed away from the walls of your home. |

Graduations

Congratulations to our newest firefighters who recently graduated from the NSW Fire Brigades State Training College at Alexandria

Photos by Kerrie Hudson



Class 6a/2003

| FIREFIGHTER | STATION | PLATOON |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|
| Nicholas Leigh | Ryde | B |
| Gavin Lisk | Ryde | C |
| Cameron Edward | Beecroft | C |
| Paul Burke | Ashfield | C |
| Robert Cuell | Ashfield | A |
| Craig Strath | City of Sydney | A |
| Todd Amos | City of Sydney | B |
| Ralph Smith | City of Sydney | C |
| Naomi Yerbury | City of Sydney | A |
| John Lee | Alexandria | D |
| James Manuao | Crows Nest | C |
| Daryn Hyde | Mosman | C |
| James Tierney | Crows Nest | B |
| David Nicholson | Alexandria | B |
| Sandra Scott | Riverwood | C |
| Kate McNamara | Gordon | D |
| Justen Allport | Lane Cove | A |
| Chris McNeill | Glebe | D |
| Andrew Checker | Crows Nest | A |
| David Jenkins | Mount Druitt | C |

Class 6b/2003

| FIREFIGHTER | STATION | PLATOON |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Shane Dallimore | Campsie | B |
| Nathan Begley | Guildford | B |
| Jamie Ridley | Revesby | D |
| Phillip Dowling | Fairfield | C |
| Monty Dayman | Darlinghurst | D |
| Christopher Davies | St Andrews | A |
| Matthew Breen | Parramatta | A |
| Paul Hinze | Hornsby | C |
| Joshua Boughton | Lakemba | B |
| Andrew Abrams | Alexandria | A |
| Mark Linsley | Silverwater | D |
| Robert Tolhurst | St Andrews | D |
| Jason Whitfield | Campbelltown | C |
| Adam Weeks | Alexandria | C |
| Kenneth Moore | Bonnyrigg Heights | D |
| Jose Caraballo | Silverwater | C |
| Dale Gillespie | Parramatta | D |
| David Searle | Kogarah | A |
| Wayne Horrigan | City of Sydney | D |
| Robbie Stephenson | Hornsby | A |

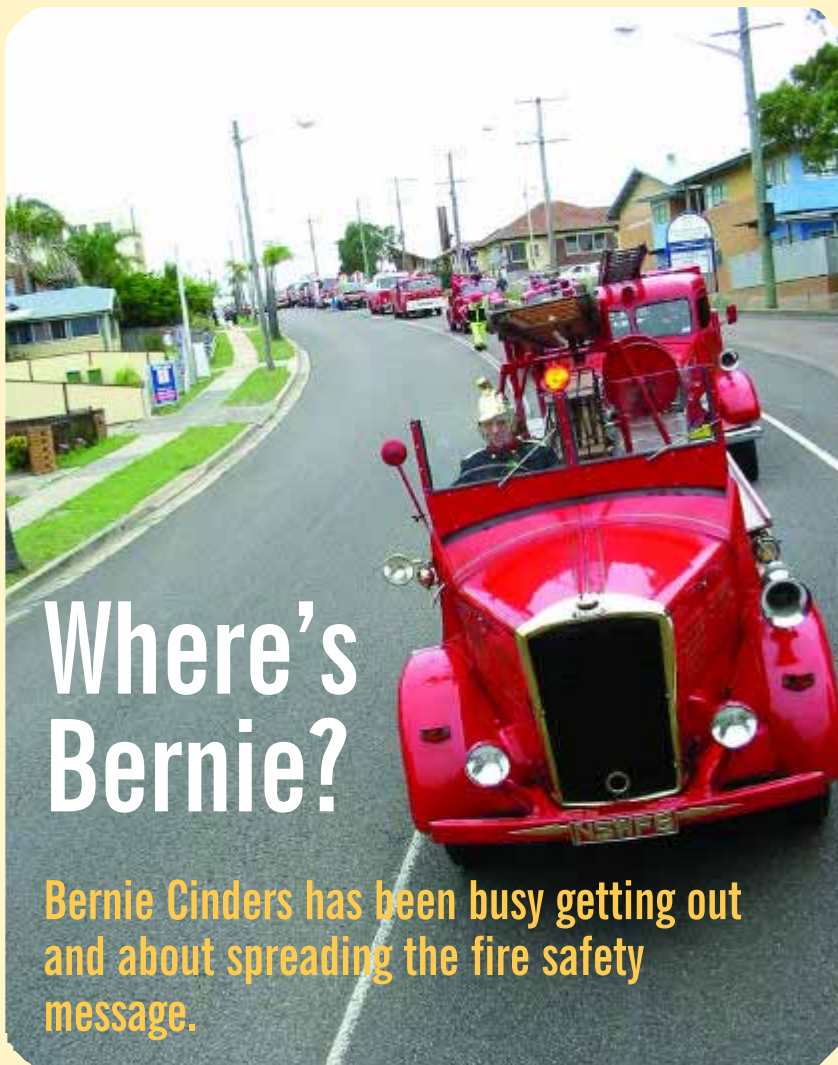


Class 7/2003

| FIREFIGHTER | STATION | PLATOON |
|------------------|----------------|---------|
| Timothy Poole | Pymont | B |
| Brett Hogan | Lidcombe | C |
| Daniel Favelle | Pymont | A |
| Matthew Anderson | City of Sydney | D |
| Michael Prince | Alexandria | B |
| Malcolm Bird | Gladesville | B |
| Luke Miles | Crows Nest | B |
| Marc Laird | Rockdale | C |
| Paul Frankham | Neutral Bay | C |
| Roger Pauling | The Rocks | D |
| Scott Hanley | The Rocks | B |
| Michael Herden | Willoughby | A |
| Anthony Picone | Burwood | A |
| Mark Davies | Randwick | C |
| Adam Coble | Concord | D |
| Pavel Novotny | Burwood | B |
| Nicholas Dale | Revesby | B |
| Scott Edwards | Alexandria | C |
| Brendan Edwards | Wentworthville | A |
| Justin Sullivan | Burwood | C |

Where's Bernie?

Bernie Cinders has been busy getting out and about spreading the fire safety message.

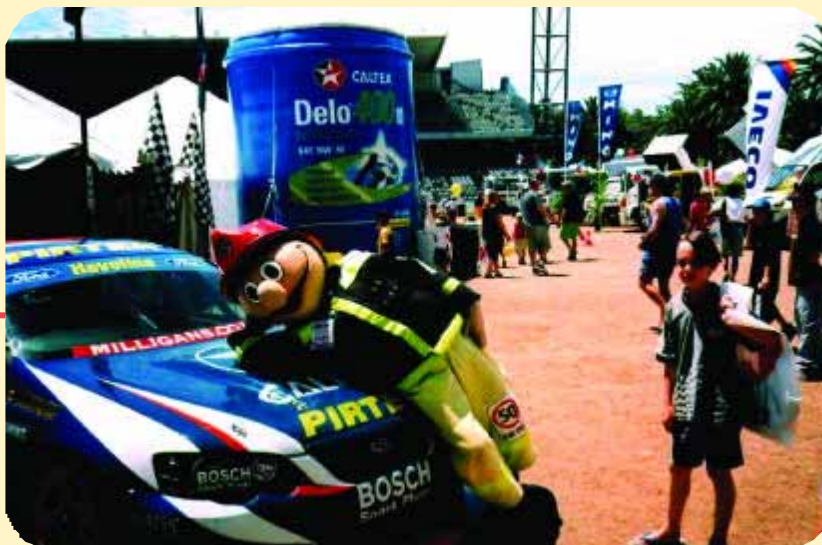


Tuggerah Lakes Mardi Gras Festival

Last December, Bernie Cinders visited the Tuggerah Lakes Mardi Gras Festival. Bernie and firefighters from The Entrance seized the opportunity to showcase the NSWFB and spread the fire safety message. Bernie Cinders and the Bushwise Puppet Theatre performed for a very enthusiastic audience, and 12 NSWFB appliances and seven vintage fire engines in the street parade were loudly cheered by spectators. Throughout the weekend, firefighters, their families and local volunteers hosted a barbecue in Memorial Park raising over \$2400 for The Central Coast Burns Equipment Fund.

Photos by Chris Wallace

Bernie finds a friend in NBN Television's mascot, Big Dog.



Bernie inspecting Russell Ingall's V8 supercar.

Gosford

Bernie attended the Central Coast Motor Show at Gosford and had a great day meeting and greeting the public, as well as inspecting the vehicles.

Photos by Ross Beckley

Bernie trying out his freestyle capabilities on motor bike.



Kids Day Out

Bernie was also spotted amongst the 20 000 strong crowd at Kids Day Out held at Ourimbah University on the Central Coast.

Last seen hurtling down a slippery slide and clutching balloons, Bernie Cinders proved very popular with the children. Crews from Wyoming Fire Station did a spectacular job entertaining the crowd, as did firefighters from Berkeley Vale and the hazmat unit.

ZITTS spread to country fire stations

Zone IT Training Program

by Garry Warren, Deputy Manager
Operational Information Service

Over the past few months, the NSWFB has been continuing its IT roll-out with the installation of computers in around 200 country fire stations across NSW.

Planning for this program covered not only the installation of hardware and software but also delivering training to thousands of retained firefighters within a short period. The NSWFB's Operational Information Service, which designs operationally focused and driven information systems, developed the concept of using retained firefighters as Zone Information Technology Trainers (ZITTs). We felt that the best people to train retained firefighters were those who knew their culture best.

This innovative program has proved successful in the field, driven by the proactive attitude and significant skill sets of the ten ZITTs (one for each Zone) who were chosen via a competitive selection and interview process. It was always a big ask and has been far from easy, yet all indications to date show the ZITTs have done really well, delivering over 2000 hours of highly-focused IT training to approximately 200 stations in less than five months.

Congratulations to all the Zone IT Trainers; you've made me proud!



Above: Retained Firefighter Jonno Hughes, ZITT S7, delivering a training session to Brad Blay and Chris Grady at ZITTs Goulburn.

Above: Back row: Phil Donaldson ZITT W7, Bob Wylie ZITT N4, Bruce Engert ZITT N3, Barry Fisher ZITT S4, Brian Farmer ZITT S5, Front row: Virginia Way, Workplace Trainer, Garry Warren

A ZITT's view By Retained Firefighter Jonno Hughes, Goulburn Fire Station

I was pleased to be selected as the Zone IT Trainer for Zone South 7, and was a member of the first group of five Retained Firefighters to be trained for this program. In September last year, I joined Brian Birks from Cobar, John McLean from Narrabri, Peter Smith from Kempsey, and Peter Williams from Goonellabah in Sydney for a week of training. The intensive course covered computer applications firefighters would be trained to use, and supplied comprehensive instruction on how to develop our training sessions and refine our teaching methods.

SO Garry Warren (the project manager for this program), and the staff from IT Training gave us invaluable support, encouragement and training.

Once our own training was completed, we returned to our zones to start delivering the training. Despite many early technical hurdles, we banded together as a team, and proved that no obstacle was too great to prevent us from effectively delivering the best possible quality training to the firefighters.

While travelling from station to station, I found it very satisfying to see how well everyone responded to the training, and how keen they were. The new computers have already become a valuable addition to the stations. All the Captains I visited have commented how much easier it is to run a station, especially with NSWFB applications such as Station Portal and ESCAT, the electronic Supply Catalogue.

In January this year, the second group of five Zone IT Trainers (Phil Donaldson from West Wyalong, Bruce Engert from Tarro, Brian Farmer from Jindabyne, Barry Fisher from Culcairn, and Bob Wylie from Nelson Bay) undertook their training, and straightaway waded into the task. They finished the course on Friday and started delivering training on the following Monday! I know that they are meeting the same enthusiasm and success already seen in the stations covered by the first group of trainers.



Zone West 3 Championships at Bathurst

With temperatures at the grounds reaching 39°, it wasn't just the competition that was hot. Local hosts Kelso and Bathurst put in strong performances despite being called away to house fires and grass fires throughout the first day of competition. Photos by Sue Bowen



Overall Winners

- 1st - Nowra
- 2nd - Scarborough
- 3rd - Canowindra
- 4th - Glen Innes
- 5th - Kelso





Zone West 3 Championships at Bathurst





NSW FIRE BRIGADES FIREFIGHTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS



Contacts

President

Ken Perrett - 02 6543 2446

Vice President

Peter Quin - 02 4271 1043

Executive Officer

Ross Hoy - 02 6583 2295

Finance Manager

John Hand - 03 5883 11103

Assistant Director Championships

Garry Tant - 0417 653 659

Calendar of Events 2004

www.nswfb.nsw.gov.au

BATHURST

7-8 February

COROWA

20-21 March

SWANSEA

1-2 May

GRAFTON

24-25 July

BALGOWNIE

28-29 August

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

17-23 October

Port Macquarie

COMMUNITY FIRE UNITS

14 November

Penrith Fire Museum

CHAMPIONSHIP DATE

PUBLIC HOLIDAY

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

| JANUARY | | | | | | |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

| FEBRUARY | | | | | | |
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| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | | | | | | |

| MARCH | | | | | | |
|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

| APRIL | | | | | | |
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| MAY | | | | | | |
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| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

| JUNE | | | | | | |
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| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

| JULY | | | | | | |
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| AUGUST | | | | | | |
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| SEPTEMBER | | | | | | |
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| OCTOBER | | | | | | |
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| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

| NOVEMBER | | | | | | |
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| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

| DECEMBER | | | | | | |
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| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

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Rugby World Cup - kicking some goals

By Superintendent Mark Brown, Manager Operational Readiness

Rugby World Cup 2003 (RWC) was staged in Australia from 10 October to 22 November 2003 and attracted over 40 000 international visitors. Twenty national teams played a total of 48 matches, making it the largest sporting event to be held in Australia since the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Matches were held in Sydney, Gosford, Wollongong, Brisbane, Townsville, Canberra, Melbourne, Launceston, Adelaide and Perth. The quarter-finals were staged in Melbourne and Brisbane, with Sydney hosting the opening ceremony, semi-finals and final. The key Sydney events were all hosted at Telstra Stadium at Sydney Olympic Park.

Staging the RWC required extensive planning and preparation by urban fire services in each of these cities and, although each service had autonomy, the arrangements and plans developed and implemented by the services were similar.

Venues protected by the NSWFB

- Telstra Stadium seating 83 000
- Aussie Stadium at Moore Park in Sydney seating 41 000
- Central Coast Stadium in Gosford seating 20 000
- WIN Stadium in Wollongong seating 18 500
- Giant screens televising the matches live as well as pre-match entertainment attracted over 30 000 people to the Sydney Opera House forecourt, The Rocks and Darling Harbour.

NSWFB Preparedness

Planning for NSW events involved extensive consultation with other agencies including Australian Rugby Union and the International Rugby Board, NSW Police Service, other emergency services, transport and health authorities, venue managers and precinct landholders, such as Sydney Olympic Park and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.

NSWFB officers participated in multi-agency tabletop exercises for each precinct, including the live sites. This enabled the local fire commanders to meet the key people they would be working with during the events. It also ensured that venue and precinct managers, as well as the representatives of other agencies, had a clear understanding of the NSWFB role and capability of the fire service should an incident occur.

The other key forum where agencies shared information was the Central Sydney Operations Group (CSOG), a legacy of the Sydney Olympics. Representatives from all agencies who have a role in major public events held in Sydney belong to CSOG, including the NSWFB. The group coordinates government agency involvement across a wide range of special events from the Sydney New Year's Eve celebrations to the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade.

RWC management plans

NSWFB developed a management plan detailing specific response procedures. Of major importance were the risk assessments conducted by NSW Police in relation to security threats. Australia remained at a national security alert level of medium during RWC and the NSWFB maintained close liaison with the Police Counter Terrorism Command during the tournament period.

NSWFB also developed contingency plans involving the pre-deployment of specialist resources to carry out an urban search and rescue (USAR) or combat a chemical, biological, radiological incident (CBR), including the requirement to deal with mass casualties and decontamination.

The management plan provided guidelines for the coordination of fire, rescue and hazmat resources. Operational readiness was based on ensuring that NSWFB officers had a thorough knowledge of the relevant venue and precinct. Local fire stations updated their pre-incident plans for each match venue and made familiarisation visits before the tournament.



Rugby World Cup debrief

RWC operations centres

Each RWC precinct staffed an operations centre during matches. The NSWFB provided a liaison officer for these centres as well as the Government Coordination Centre (GCC) which operated during each NSW match. The GCC coordinates the activities of government agencies outside the venue or precinct and monitors events that have the potential to escalate and impact on the event.

During pre-defined match periods NSWFB communication centres increased resources to all incidents within RWC precincts. This precaution was to overcome expected delays in response caused by traffic and crowds. In addition, specific alerts were incorporated into the computer-aided dispatch system.

A positive outcome

Happily, there were no major RWC-related emergencies. The experience gained from the 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games greatly improved the NSWFB's ability to plan for and respond to special events. Probably the most important legacy of the 2000 Olympics was the recognition that government agencies including the NSWFB must work closely together to ensure the success of large-scale events, including the safety of spectators and the public. This approach was used successfully for RWC in 2003 and will be refined as Sydney continues to attract major events from around the world.

Telstra Stadium is the renamed Stadium Australia. It was the main athletics venue for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Stadium is a large, complex structure. It is 58 metres high at the rear of the main stand, and the roof covers an area of 30 000 square metres and weighs over 4000 tonnes

The NSWFB's Fire Safety Division played a significant role in its development, from design through to commissioning. NSWFB officers worked closely with the Olympic Coordination Authority in relation to the performance-based design and testing of the fire systems for the stadium.

Features of the fire engineering design included the four unusual spiral egress ramps. These are fire-separated from the remainder of the structure and computer modelling indicated that a crowd of 110 000 could be evacuated in approximately eight minutes. All hazardous areas in the stadium are sprinklered, with fast-response heads. Smoke doors were installed to prevent smoke from a fire in the back-of-house area from affecting spectators.

Station profile: Narrabeen

Situated on Sydney's picturesque northern beaches with a view of the Pacific Ocean, the location might sound more like a tourist destination than a fire station. But firefighters at the busy rescue station at Narrabeen hardly have time to take in the view.

"There's few code calls here - most of our call-outs turn out to be working jobs, and it's mostly rescue," says Firefighter Daryl Johnston, who has been at Narrabeen Fire Station for the past six years.

As a primary rescue station, Narrabeen covers a broad area from Manly to Palm Beach and inland to Frenchs Forest, including two busy high speed roads, Wakehurst Parkway and Mona Vale Road.

"We attend a lot of motor vehicle accidents, including high profile incidents like the accident at the Roundhouse Child Care Centre at Fairlight (in December 2003)," Firefighter Johnston said.

"A lot of us are family people and incidents that involve young people affect us the most. The Brigades offers support and counselling. We're given plenty of support."

In January, Narrabeen firefighters were among crews from 11 stations who assisted at checkpoints in a walk and paddle fundraiser for the two young girls seriously hurt in the accident at the Roundhouse Child Care Centre. More than \$200,000 was raised.

Narrabeen Fire Station has also been assisting at cliff rescue incidents since 1992 and has been vertical rescue accredited for the past 12 months.

During 2002/03 Narrabeen fire/rescue crews attended 662 incidents, including 118 fires. The fire district is bordered by the Garigal National Park to the west and the ocean to the east and includes Narrabeen Lakes. It protects schools, a

shopping centre, and a residential population, including the RSL Retirement Village at Collaroy Plateau with more than 1000 units, commercial and industrial areas, and a large area of bushland.

As well as attending home fires, grass fires and bushfires, the station is also involved in hazard reduction at the urban/bushland interface in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Rural Fire Service.

"During the summer months, we often get called to grass or bush alight on the islands in Narrabeen Lake and have to borrow boats from local residents to row over and extinguish the flames, using buckets of water or a Davey pump," Firefighter Johnston said.

On the preventative front, crews from Narrabeen Fire Station take the Fire Ed program to around 10 public and private primary schools in the area. They also promote the NSWFB Smoke Alarm Battery Replacement for the Elderly (SABRE) program.

"We also have a Community Fire Unit at Elanora Heights, and we conduct drills and hose and hydrant training with them," Firefighter Johnston said.

"Some of the residents were there when the 1994 bushfires went through, and they're extremely passionate about the program."

Firefighter Johnston said he enjoyed working at Narrabeen as a firefighter.

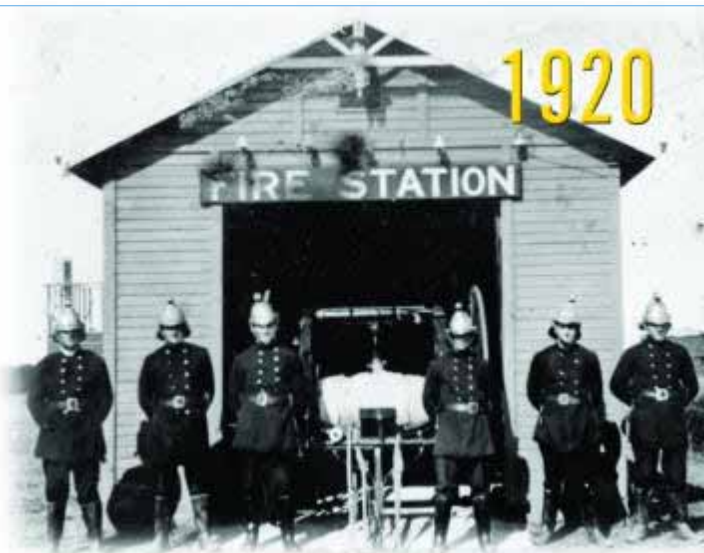
"The mix of firefighting and rescue work makes the job very challenging and interesting," he said.

And, working out of a station in such a nice location does have its perks when there's a moment to take advantage of them.

"In the winter months, we often see dolphins and whales through binoculars from the training room or the training deck," Firefighter Johnston said.

Station Facts:

- **Permanent station on 10/14 roster with four platoons, each with a Station Officer, six firefighters, a relieving firefighter and relieving officer**
- **Varley Type 3 pumper and an Isuzu Fire Rescue appliance**
- **Built in 1931; a shed previously housed the appliance**
- **Underwent extensive extensions and renovations in 2001, including a new training room and refurbished kitchen, showers and toilets**
- **Until 1992 the station had a pumper and water tanker; the water tanker was replaced with a rescue appliance when the station became primary rescue accredited in 1992.**



1920



1931



1985

A platoon 2002



B platoon 2003



D platoon 2003



2004

Narrabeen



Varley Commander (Class 3)



The appliance is very user friendly

Chairman of the Fleet Implementation Group, Chief Superintendent Hans Bootsma says, "The new Class 3, which is an improvement on the original Type 3 Varley Commander, is a great pumper. It is one of the best ergonomically designed fire engines in Australia, especially for passenger comfort and equipment stowage. Development of the vehicle included extensive consultation between the NSWFB engineering section, firefighters and the manufacturer, which is evident in the end product. Improved features include more room inside the cabin due to the relocation of the air-conditioning unit to the roof, and a display-type pump panel at the rear of the appliance which has been designed for easier operation, similar to the Class 2."

The main advantage for the NSWFB is the versatility of the pumper's stowage plan. The Class 3 Pumper can be fitted out as a standard pumper, secondary rescue or primary rescue pumper. This allows the vehicle to be relocated at stations with different risk profiles without having to alter the appliance, just the inventory.

There are currently 11 in service with a further 10 on order.



| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Chassis make & model: |VSV Commander Mk3 |
| Body manufacturer: |Varley Specialised Vehicles Ltd. |
| Year(s) of commission: |2001 - 2005 |
| Number in service: |11 vehicles* |
| Crew capacity: |6 |
| Gross operating mass: |13.85 tonne |
| Dimensions: |8.04m (L), 3.20m (H), 2.50m (W) |
| Wheelbase: |4.05m |
| Turning circle: |14.6m (k/k), 16.1m (w/w) |
| Axle loads: |Front: 4 640kg Rear: 5 360kg (tare) |
| Axle ratings: |Front: 6 600kg Rear: 18 100kg |
| Engine: |Cummins ISC275, 8.3 litre (205kW) |
| Maximum torque: |1085Nm @ 1300rpm |
| Transmission: |ZF Ecomat HP500, 5 speed automatic |
| Pump model: |Rosenbauer NH40 |
| Pump capacity: |3600l/min@ 1000kPa (high volume) 400l/min@ 4000kPa (high pressure) |
| Water capacity: |1800L |
| Foam capacity: |200L (class B), 40L (class A) |

*Total number of Varley Commanders in service, including Types 4 and 5, is 52.



The Scientific Support Vehicle

The Scientific Support Vehicle is a specialised appliance based on the Iveco Daily panel van.

The vehicle enables the Brigades Scientific Advisor to conduct professional scientific analysis and monitoring on site to assist the Hazmat Controller at hazardous or dangerous incidents, particularly those involving potential chemical, biological or radioactive hazards.

The interior of the vehicle has been specifically modified to accommodate a range of detection, monitoring and analytical equipment, located so that each defined operation can be carried out without being impeded by equipment designed for other Hazmat, USAR and firefighting functions.

The Scientific Support Vehicle has a fume cabinet, gas mass spectrometer, chemical vacuum cleaner, fresh water-supplied sink, and a gas powered refrigerator. It also carries equipment for atmospheric monitoring of gases and run off, and analysis of chemical, air, water, soil and other samples.

An Auxiliary Control System control console, Government Radio Network radio receiver, road map Global Positioning System, mobile cellular phone and satellite phone hand set are mounted on the dashboard.

The vehicle carries primary safety equipment for the two crew members, including a first aid kit, Oxy Viva kit, two sets of breathing apparatus and spare air cylinders.



Retirements

The NSWFB says a big thank you to the following firefighters for their unstinting efforts and dedication over the years. They have made a valuable contribution to the NSWFB's work in protecting the community. We thank them all the best in a well-deserved retirement.

Permanent firefighters Retirement date . . Recognition

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| 4077 Senior Firefighter G Staines | 25 November 2003 . . . | National Medal two Clasps |
| 3270 Inspector T Keely | 25 November 2003 . . . | National Medal two Clasps Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service - Frederick St Rockdale |
| 5077 Qualified Firefighter G Drew | 25 November 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 3963 Station Officer B Richards | 25 November 2003 . . . | National Medal and two Clasps |
| 4669 Qualified Firefighter G Hehir | 25 November 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 5464 Senior Firefighter D Heuston | 25 November 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 4148 Senior Firefighter M Rafferty | 11 December 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 4255 Station Officer A Smithers | 11 December 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp Individual Commendation for Meritorious Service - Hazardous Materials Response Unit |
| 4327 Senior Firefighter K Hall | 11 December 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 4425 Station Officer T Adams | 11 December 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 4788 Station Officer P Faassen | 11 December 2003 . . . | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 5213 Superintendent L Beauchamp | 8 January 2004 | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 3439 Station Officer T Marshall | 8 January 2004 | National Medal and two Clasps Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service - Thredbo Individual Commendation for Meritorious Service - Quakers Hill Rd, Quakers Hill |
| 4452 Senior Firefighter A Miles | 19 January 2004 | National Medal and one Clasp |
| 3354 Station Officer G Rice | 22 January 2004 | Australian Fire Service Medal Australian Sports Medal National Medal and two clasps |
| 4567 Qualified Firefighter D Rial | 22 January 2004 | National Medal and one clasp |
| 4314 Senior Firefighter A Costin | 11 February 2004 | National Medal and one clasp |
| 5030 Station Officer J Woods | 6 March 2004 | National Medal and one clasp |
| 4805 Station Officer R Cook | 6 March 2004 | National Medal and one clasp |
| 4304 Station Officer E Wood | 6 March 2004 | National Medal and one clasp |
| 4726 Senior Firefighter A Kingett | 6 March 2004 | National Medal and one clasp |
| 3371 Station Officer L Roach | 6 March 2004 | Letter of Appreciation – 42 Orangegroove Road Liverpool Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service – Thredbo National Medal and two clasps |
| 3454 Station Officer J Bone | 16 March 2004 | National Medal and two clasps |

Retained firefighters

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Retained Firefighter S Potts | Ulladulla | 6 November 2003 | National Medal |
| Retained Firefighter T O'Brien | Wollongong | 19 December 2003 | National Medal and one Clasp |
| Retained Firefighter R E Bryant | Lismore | 15 November 2003 | National Medal and two Clasps |
| Retained Firefighter D Fox | Avalon | 30 November 2003 | National Medal and two Clasps |
| Retained Firefighter K W Fitzgerald | Wallerawang | 31 December 2003 | National Medal and one Clasp |
| Retained Firefighter W Carroll | Lismore | 1 August 2003 | |
| Retained Firefighter J J Burnes | Denman | 16 October 2003 | |
| Retained Firefighter L C L Basset | Grafton | 23 October 2003 | |
| Retained Firefighter C S Charley | Saratoga | 23 October 2003 | |
| Retained Firefighter G Armstrong | Telarah | 23 October 2003 | |
| Retained Firefighter T Camage | Mortdale | 17 January 2004 | National Medal |
| Retained Firefighter R Cook | Balgownie | 31 January 2004 | National Medal and one Clasp |
| Deputy Captain K W Fitzgerald | Wallerawang | 31 December 2003 | National Medal and one Clasp |
| Retained Firefighter W Hart | Kiama | 30 January 2004 | National Medal and two Clasps |
| Retained Firefighter R F Ashworth | Lithgow | 23 October 2003 | National Medal |
| Deputy Captain J M Chase | Broken Hill South | 16 December 2003 | National Medal and two clasps |
| Retired Firefighter D Jolliffe | Tumut | 31 January 2004 | National Medal |
| Retained Firefighter R B Pitman | Coffs Harbour | 16 October 2003 | National Medal and one clasp |
| Retained Firefighter W Carnley | Tarro | 6 November 2003 | |

Code 2

These are the names of former NSWFB members who have passed away.

| | | |
|---|---------------|---------|
| Retained Firefighter Kevin Brown | January 2004 | Serving |
| Retained Firefighter Jack Douglas | January 2004 | Retired |
| 2567 Senior Firefighter Leonard Arthur Graham | January 2004 | Retired |
| Deputy Captain Max Murray | January 2004 | Retired |
| 2774 Firefighter William John Percy | February 2004 | Retired |
| Retained Firefighter Wayne Wallace | December 2003 | Retired |
| Retained Firefighter Norman Wells | January 2004 | Retired |

You've got mail

To: Zone Commander Brian Johnson,
Region North

The Department of Environment and Conservation wishes to thank the NSW Fire Brigades for their support during the prescribed burn undertaken within Sydney Harbour National Park, North Head, on Thursday 13 November 2003.

The success of this difficult burn can be attributed to the generous assistance of the NSW Fire Brigades, with special thanks to Station Officer Jim Murphie and his crew.

The Department looks forward to conducting future operations with the NSW Fire Brigades.

From: National Parks and Wildlife Service,
Harbour North Area

To: Chief Supt Bob Lewthwaite,
Newcastle

Thank you so much for the wonderful donation to the John Hunter Children's Hospital Surgical Ward, from monies raised through the staff payroll deduction scheme. We are extremely grateful for the continued commitment of the NSW Fire Brigades and the dedication of each staff member in helping raise funds for sick children in the Hunter.

As mentioned at the official cheque presentation ceremony, this wonderful donation - combined with previous contributions - will help us achieve our goal of installing air conditioning in the childrens' wards.

Thanks again to you and the guys for bringing the fire engine, miniature truck and Bernie Cinders out to the hospital. The presence of the guys is always a welcome sight and one very special little patient still remembers the fun he had with the hose.

May I take this opportunity to thank you again for partnering with Kaleidoscope - Hunter Children's Health Network - to help us deliver the highest quality of care and comfort to our patients.

From: Colleen Crowe,
Manager Public Relations and
Fundraising
Kaleidoscope-Hunter Childrens Health
Network

To: Supt Dave Gray,
Zone N5, Port Macquarie

Following a serious head on collision on the Pacific Highway at Tea Gardens this morning, I had arrived on the scene in the Rescue Helicopter and found myself working with the Tea Gardens Fire Rescue Station.

In forwarding this letter I would like to pass on my praise and admiration in the way the Tea Gardens firefighters conducted the rescue of seriously injured persons.

It is my pleasure to have worked with them and hope that you will pass this on to the team.

From: Alan Playford,
Flight Paramedic Newcastle

To: Captain Keith Ferguson,
Springwood

I am taking this opportunity to thank you for recommending Concord Hospital Burns Unit as the recipient of a \$200 donation from Mr and Mrs Frank Taffel of Valley Heights. I understand your unit attended their home when a large tree fell on their house in recent storms.

The Hospital is most appreciative of you continued support. This donation will assist the Burns Unit to maintain the excellent services currently provided.

From: Kerry Russell,
A/Executive Director
Concord Repatriation Hospital

To: Cardiff Fire Brigade

My name is Elisa and I am writing to thank you for what you all did around Hillview Crescent, Macquarie Hills on 29 September 2003. I arrived home at 1 pm on that day to find my home saved from a fairly nasty looking fire. I have no idea about what it is like to do what you guys do each day, but I do know how afraid I was after the event on that Monday.

I really appreciate that you risk yourselves regularly to defend other people and their property. My thanks probably means very little however, I really wanted to recognise your efforts.

We are grateful that we still have a home because you protected it!!

From: Elisa Milligan

To: Zone Commander N1

I was the driver involved in a car accident on 31 October 2003 at Gerard Street, Cremorne at approximately 3.20 pm, when a tree crashed down on top of my car.

It was a horrendous, frightening experience but I miraculously only had minor injuries. I would like to thank the firefighters who helped and rescued me on that day (Firefighters Laverack and Sinclair of 36B). Words cannot express how I feel but, all I can say is thank you. You were wonderful and did a great job.

May God bless you.

From: Heather Holgate

To: Superintendent Keith King,
Zone N7 Wyong

On behalf of Central Coast Health, I would like to thank the NSW Fire Brigades for the generous donation of \$20 000.

As you know, your donations are used to purchase medical equipment for burns victims who are taken to our Emergency Department at Gosford and Wyong Hospitals.

I understand that the funds were raised in a number of ways, including sporting competitions, a Firefighters Ball, raffles and through payroll deductions by your members.

Your staff are to be congratulated, not only for the jobs they perform so well but also for their commitment to the health of our community.

In addition, I would also like to acknowledge and thank you once again for previous donations made in 2001 and 2002. With this donation, we have now received a total of \$41 000 from your members. That is an excellent effort. Well done.

From: Dr Vasco de Carvalho
Acting CEO Central Coast Health

To: Station Officer Allan Johnson and Crows
Nest C Platoon

Late last year, the car in which I was a passenger was involved in a severe accident when the driver lost control rounding a corner. The car ended up wrapped around a lamp post and as a result I was trapped inside the vehicle with severe injuries

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude and praise for the professional and caring manner that Station Officer Allan Johnson and the crew members of C Platoon Crows Nest extended to me while cutting the roof off the car to get me out and their concern about my well being during what was an agonising experience.

From: Charles Tucker

letters

To: NSWFB

Thank you for the excellent support you gave us for our Jack and Jill Pre School fete, by once again having the fire station open day on the same day. It is really popular with our families and a great opportunity for the two services to collaborate. It adds to the festival atmosphere which we also strive to create on the day.

Thanks also for once again generously allowing us the use of your power for the jumping castle.

The day was a great success both financially and socially. We made over \$4500 which was a huge effort. As this is one of our major fundraisers, for the year, we are very pleased with the result.

Please accept my very belated thanks for coming and doing the fire safety talk here last month. I'm sorry that I haven't had a chance to thank you before. As usual, the children thoroughly enjoyed it and got a great deal out of it. We really appreciate your ongoing support.

From: Dianne Moore
Director Jack & Jill Pre-School
Association,
Lithgow

To: Senior Officer Charles Begley,
Narrabeen Fire Station

I wish to thank two of your officers, Jason Kaul and Philip O'Sullivan for removing a snake from our car park today. WIRES was not able to send a snake handler but thankfully the Fire Brigade was able to help. Once again, the NSWFB has come to our rescue.

From: Principal Louise Yeomans
St Ives High School



During the Port Kembla incident the ladies from Coniston Fish and Chips showed their appreciation by bringing food to the hard working firefighters.

To: Officer in Charge,
Wellington Fire Station

St Marys Central School Biennial Fete

Well, the St Marys Central School fete is over for another two years and what a great success it was! It was a great day, enjoyed by all.

Over \$15 000 was raised through the event and this is an outstanding contribution towards the refurbishment of our school's science laboratory which will enhance our childrens' learning environment immensely.

On behalf of St Marys Parents and Friends Association, I take this opportunity to acknowledge your support and to express my sincere thanks for your contribution to our major fundraiser. "Bernie Cinders" was a big hit with the kids! Without your support, major fundraisers such as our Biennial Fete would not be the success they are.

Once again, many thanks!

From: St Marys Parents & Friends Association

To: Commissioner NSWFB

Last week a possum became stuck in the pipe that goes from the exhaust fan above my stove, out on to the roof.

I contacted a plumber who told me there was nothing he could do about it. I contacted WIRES, who said that they could not help me, because they did not do any work that involved climbing on roofs.

What was I to do? A neighbour suggested that I call the Fire Brigade. I did and within ten minutes, four fighters from D Platoon at Gordon Fire Station had arrived at my house. In a very short space of time, they got the possum out of the pipe and put him in a possum catcher.

I am writing to you, because I want you to know how kind and helpful these men were to me. It was not an easy job, climbing about on a roof and reaching down a pipe trying to remove a scratching, frightened possum but not one of them complained about it.

I wanted to give them a cup of tea or a cool drink but they said they would not have time, as they needed to get back to their station.

Being a firefighter is a dangerous occupation in our modern day society, firefighters do not get the recognition they deserve for the wonderful work they do. I wanted to make sure that in this particular instance at least, they did get the recognition they so richly deserved.

From: Margaret Matthews. St Ives

To: The Unsung Heroes

On Wednesday my house was set on fire by a random arsonist. I lost everything I own and my mother lost 1/3 of her house and most of her possessions also.

But thanks to you guys, we didn't lose the whole house. So we have some hope. Your quick response and hard work saved us from losing everything. I cannot thank you enough for all that you have done, risking your lives for something you all may see as just another building, but is my home.

You've all been so wonderful, it's hard to know how to begin to say thanks. Please know that your kindness will always be remembered.

From: Alexandra Roy and Kay Parker

To: Station Commander,
Belmont Fire Station

I am writing this note to express my gratitude for services performed by your Brigade. I returned to my home unit at Belmont Towers to find the unit block evacuated. The Belmont Fire Brigade was already in attendance and thankfully because of the professional services rendered, damage and injury were minimised and avoided. It is frightening to think of the potential consequences of this fire that originated from my home unit, had it not been for the quick effective action of the Fire Brigade.

Undoubtedly, this is a situation that most individuals never confront but you deal with on a daily basis. Unfortunately, it takes a bad experience of this kind to fully appreciate the service.

You probably have long since closed this case, but I would ask that you accept my thanks, albeit belatedly

From: Allan MacRae

To: Fire News

The Management Board, Staff and residents of Jemalong Retirement Village would like to extend a very big thank you to all the emergency personnel staff who attended the small fire we had in our nursing home on Christmas night.

The Fire Brigade, Police, Ambulance and SES were just fantastic. There was not one word of complaint from any of them about being called out over Christmas and they were all prepared to stay there until such time as they were no longer needed.

They made the task of relocating the residents and then returning them to their rooms very easy for all the staff. The people of Forbes are indeed fortunate to have people such as these who are available at all times for all emergencies.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of those who attended.

From: Judy Kerr
Director of Care
Graeme Miller
Chairman of Management Board

To: The Station Officer

I am writing on behalf of KU Chatswood West Preschool to commend Platoon B on their two recent visits to our preschool. All members of the Platoon participated in making the visits fun and educational. The children loved the question and answer time, learning basic fire safety and sitting in the fire truck. It was an invaluable time for each of them.

Thank you for providing this important service to our community it is certainly very worthwhile.

From: Chantelle Withford-Cave
KU Childrens' Services
Chatswood West

To: Region North Office,
Artarmon

On behalf of myself and my husband, I would like to sincerely thank the fire units that attended our house fire.

We express our gratitude for their efforts in fighting the fire and also the compassion shown to us and our family on that night. I would also like to extend a special thanks to the officer (regretfully name unknown) who the following day, delivered back to me our digital camera with all its attachments which he had saved from the floor of the building.

Fortunately we are insured so for us the re-building has begun. The experience of the fire was most disturbing and the memory so difficult to forget but with time I'm sure things will improve.

Once again, our sincere thanks.

From: Bev and Bob Grigg

To: Officer in Charge,
Wellington Fire Station

St Marys Central School Biennial Fete

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On behalf of St Marys Parents and Friends Association, I take this opportunity to acknowledge your support and to express my sincere thanks for your contribution to our major fundraiser. "Bernie Cinders" was a big hit with the kids! Without your support, major fundraisers such as our Biennial Fete would not be the success they are.

Once again, many thanks!

From: St Marys Parents & Friends Association

To: Hornsby Fire Station

I am writing in appreciation of the excellent job your crew did for me on Saturday 13 December 2003. I had heard thumping and scratching noises in the flue over my kitchen stove last night and no noises at all this morning, so I was left to presume that whatever the creature was, it had either died or escaped. I need to know one way or the other. Not being able to do the job myself, I rang Hornsby Fire Station just to ask if they could help, and if not, who I should call for assistance. About 30 minutes later the crew was at my home and with the utmost courtesy and efficiency were able to locate and extract the very much alive possum. It was nearly as pleased as I was to have been released, as its death would have been certain had it stayed there too much longer. I think that the NSW Fire Brigades, like many similar industries these days, is not given enough credit for the work they do, and I hope is some small way that my letter will convey how valued the firefighters are in the community.

My heartfelt thanks

From: Denise Williams

To: Station Commander
Tweed Heads Fire Brigade

We are establishing an action committee within our village to be ready for any emergency. In getting this committee going we have asked the Tweed Heads Fire Brigade staff to come and give us a talk on what to do until the proper authority arrives.

Andrew Hassell came to speak to us and he was very helpful. We appreciate his help very much. He pointed out many things re the fire hoses and also touched on various matters relating to emergencies which we were unaware of.

We must also commend Chris Perrin and his crew from A Platoon 486 Station. They have been checking smoke alarms in our village and if need be, installing them for our residents, many of whom are elderly. They also have been changing batteries for them as they needed doing.

You should be very proud of the men from Tweed Heads Fire Station, they are a wonderful, polite and helpful bunch of men and we thank them very much. Their assistance in these matters has been invaluable.

From: Mary Kelly
Chairperson
Palms Village Liaison Committee
Tweed Heads South



To: Officer in Charge,
Wollongong Fire Station

Following the windstorms which occurred in the Kiama Municipality in August, Council was informed of the damage which occurred in the Municipality and more specifically, the work undertaken by Council staff, the NSW Fire Brigades and volunteers from the SWS and Rural Fire Service in cleaning up. The report highlighted the long hours worked by staff and volunteers in often dangerous conditions.

Council resolved to extend in writing its thanks to all organisations for the assistance provided during the event. Could you please pass on Council's appreciation for the dedication and cooperation shown by members of your agency.

From: Peter Stuckey
A/Director of Engineering & Works
Council of the Municipality of Kiama

To: Mark Wilmott,
C Platoon
Wollongong Fire Brigade

Thank you for allowing us to come and visit your station. We had such a lovely time there and are very thankful that you and your crew made us feel very welcome.

The children have not stopped talking about the whole experience. The excursion clearly has sparked up an interest in all of them. We have even made a Power Point slide show with the digital photos so that the children can revisit their experience. We are also hoping to work towards making a class book about the excursion as our children have created some beautiful drawings using the computer.

Thank you again for making it such a positive experience.

From: Maree, Beth and Marlene and the children at South Coast School for Children with Autism

To: Fire News

Further to discussions about the "birdbath", the following article appeared in our newsletter some time ago.

At one stage at Headquarters there were fifty odd men on shift at any one time. The place was crawling with firemen, stairs north and south were continually being pounded by size ten boots at all hours of the day and night.

It was, for all practicable purposes, pretty nearly impossible, to have a decent five minutes kip.

All this energy must have brought about rather sweaty conditions and the hierarchy, in their wisdom, decided to build a large ablution facility across the yard alongside the drying room.

It was circular in shape and with anything up to a dozen fires surrounding it, stripped to the waist, it was not long before it was christened the 'bird bath'. To operate it, one had to depress a large chrome ring that ran around the perimeter just above ground level.

One Kevin Brady, an inveterate practical joker, would be having a wash when a couple of firefighters would come in, take off their shirts then lean

over to have a wash. Off would come Kev's foot till the water gradually slowed to a trickle and then would shut right off.

"You are not leaning at the right angle," he would say. "Let me demonstrate." He would execute a smart downward bend, down would come the foot and on would come the water.

Sometimes he would have them go to the watchroom and ask Matt Davis to press the master switch. Matt would give them a blast and they would come back in a mild panic. They were good old days and little incidents like these added another small page to the multitude of stories surrounding Headquarters.

I do not know what happened to the thing, it could be in the zoo or long since melted down at Simm's but whatever its fate, the room where it stood is still affectionately known as the 'bird bath'.

From: Tony Hayman
President
NSWFB Retired Members and Wives Association



COMMUNITY SAFETY CALENDAR AUTUMN CAMPAIGN 2004



MARCH

SENIORS FIRE SAFETY

Senior citizens are one of our most at risk groups.

Seniors often have less mobility than younger people so they need to be able to escape from a fire in their home quickly and safely.

Seniors week will be conducted from March 14-20. Visit www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au for more information.

Things to do

Stations who are currently involved in the SABRE program should complete the template media release.

All stations should complete the template seniors fire safety media release and fact sheet when they arrive.



APRIL

OPEN DAY PREPARATION

NSWFB Open Day 2004 will be held on May 8.

During April stations are encouraged to contact their local newspapers, schools, councils and other community groups to promote Open Day.

Things to do

Complete the template letters for local community groups.

Complete the first template media release promoting Open Day.

Order any additional materials from the Supply Catalogue.



MAY

OPEN DAY 2004 - MAY 8

Open Day is a great opportunity for you to make face-to-face contact with your local community.

Use this opportunity to promote winter fire safety.

Things to do

Check and see if your station has any National Medals or Clasps to present and invite your Zone Commander, Deputy Regional Commander or Regional Commander to present them on the day.

Send out the second Open Day media release outlining details of the event. Add in any specific activities unique to your station (e.g. you might be displaying aerial appliances or rescue equipment).

If you are combining with another station for Open Day 2004 fill in the template sign for visitors letting them know where Open Day is to be held. Also, if you share the same local media you should coordinate the sending out of media releases.

REGION NORTH

Community Risk Management Officer
Kevin Proud, Tel: 02 9901 2411
Public Affairs Officer
Natalie Lahamar, Tel: 02 9265 2907

REGION WEST

Community Risk Management Officer
Steve Woods, Tel: 02 9895 4610
Public Affairs Officer
Steve Norris, Tel: 02 9265 2613

REGION SOUTH

Community Risk Management Officer
Brad Smith, Tel: 02 9742 7310
Public Affairs Officer
Sarah Darmody, Tel: 02 9265 2802

ABORIGINAL SERVICES OFFICER

Terry Hill, Tel: 0407 002 371

BUSHFIRE/NATURAL HAZARDS

Tel: 9742 7155

COMMUNITY FIRE UNITS

Tel: 9742 7346

CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

David Weir, Tel: 0408 228 740

JUVENILE FIRE SETTERS

Russell Airey, Tel: 0409 129 647