

Volunteer Fire Fighters Association

"The Voice of Volunteer Firefighters in NSW"

PO Box 123, Clarence Town NSW 2321



MINUTES OF VFFA ORDINARY MEETING 2017 HELD ON SATURDAY 5 AUGUST 2017 THE PARKVIEW HOTEL 281 SUMMER STREET ORANGE NSW

Meeting commenced 1155 hours.

Attendees; as per the attendance list.

1. **Welcome by Chairman:** President Mr Michael Holton welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Mr Phillip Donato MP for attending the AGM but had to leave due to another appointment. Next 12 months has indications of being busy and with the Inquiry underway we hope some answers are forthcoming for all volunteer members.
2. **Apologies:** As per AGM minutes.
Moved Mick Holton Second Michael Scholz **Carried**
3. **Previous minutes of 2016 Ordinary meeting:** The secretary presented the minutes of the 2015 Ordinary meeting.
Greg Godde moved that the minutes of the 2016 Ordinary meeting were a true and accurate copy of the meeting. Second Brian Williams **Carried**
4. **Business arising:** Mick Holton read through the minutes highlighting the following points: -
 - Funding for the NFEG still ongoing. A tour of the Canberra region that was impacted by the fire in 2003 with members of the NEFG and members of the VFFA. Research the fuel load conditions before the fire, what the fire actually did to the landscape, what did we learn from the fire and what are the fuel load conditions now. Very intense discussion took place on what happened at the ignition point of the fire and leading up to the firestorm impacting into the suburbs of Canberra. How the inquiry was conducted and the alleged cover ups of what did and did not happen.
 - Henty Fields Days – Costs involved with the site, advertising and any community consultation can be used against the \$5,000.00 grant received from the Ministry of Police given to the VFFA in 2015 for community liaison. Visitors sign on sheet and petition to designed for people attending on the day.

5. **Correspondence:** The correspondence report was presented as per the AGM.

6. **Financial Report:** The financial report was presented as per the AGM.

Mick Holton spoke on the report as per the AGM.

Moved M. Holton

Seconded J. Russell

Carried.

7. **President's report:** Michael Holton spoke on the following points;

- Val Jeffery vale – small part of inaugural speech to the Legislative Assembly ACT 2nd Aug 2016 recited.
- Membership decline in the RFS
- Loss of local control
- Inquiry into bullying in the NSW Emergency Services
- Building of Centre of Excellence in Dubbo NSW
- VFFA Website growth
- Facebook stat's
- Thank you to all executive for their work

8. **Media Officer report:** Jon Russell gave a report on the following points;

- VFFA magazine and content from members is all included.
- Comments from readers
- Henty Field Day photos needed
- CFA article
- Working with Phillip Donato office staff.
- Brief report on Oliver Mauda
- RFSA meeting with politicians
- Ian Page – Ag-quip field days at Gunnadah requesting any surplus magazines
- Black Hawk helicopters on offer from USA for fire fighting
- Submission to Inquiry
- We need to get out to the members and advertise the VFFA
- Cootamundra by election – Katrina Hodgkinson. Allen Jones radio excerpt.
- Speech from Ben Shields in Parliament on decentralization of RFS to Dubbo

General discussion took place from the floor on comments from the webpage and facebook.

- Andrew Scholz made comment on the Idaho Multiagency Fire Department Centre in USA which is located in Idaho but is not a major industrialized city.

9. **WHS report:** Greg Godde gave a brief report on some of the issues that have been reported throughout the year.

- Reports on the new PPC that is not users friendly if wet on cold days or nights
- Bullying still receiving complaints
- PTSD in amongst some of the volunteers who are seeing legal team for further action

10. Web manger report: Michael Holton covered the topics in his presidents report.

11. General Business:

11.1 Keeping 'Rural' in the NSW RFS.

We are heading in the right direction and need to keep the pressure on to keep them honest. "We need ideas and these come from everyone and if you have any pass them back via email for discussion." M. Holton. Meeting opened for discussion from the floor on any ideas.

- Social media is doing justice to the VFFA
- WA RFS head office has now been put on hold as Labor Party questions \$\$\$ value
- Any person willing to assist with webpage editing most welcome
- Try to obtain the business case study when DPI moved to Orange

11.2 Henty Machinery Field Days

- Site layout and design
- Members available to assist over the 3-day period
- New VFFA banners made and delivered
- Program for setting up site
- Details on web page

11.3 National Fire Experts Group (NFEG).

- The group needs to be progressed. A lot of meetings have happened but little in the way promoting the cause.
- Sponsorship required to promote the VFFA organization
- We have a good product to market in the VFFA
- Tour of the Brindabella Ranges to tour the aftermath of the 2003 Canberra fire. Get the NFEG involved and local Group Captains. 28th Oct 2017. A group of 20 people max in 4-5 vehicles 4x4. Barbeque lunch included. Mick and don to organize the actual tour and the route to take.
- Phil Cheany and a group of researchers were at the site of the fire before it got out of control. The group actually stepped through the fire and video tape the scene.
- Need to document the fuel loads before the fire, the fire behavior at the beginning and what changed with the weather over the 4 days and the devastation caused by the fire.
- All small video clips on Youtube – VFFA link

11.4 Jon Russell. Wished to acknowledge the support of Ray Law, former Councilor Wollondilly Shire has recently resigned from the Council from utter frustration and disgust. He fought hard and long for the new Bargo RFB Station, Ray could not stomach the rot any longer. Jon wished to put on record to acknowledge the support of Councilor Ray Law to the Bargo RFB members for the hard work and effort he put in to assist in any and every way to get a new station for Bargo. Well done Ray Law and thanks.

12. **Next Ordinary Meetings** - to be advised closer to the date when and if a location of significant event happens such as a large fire.

13. **Meeting closed 3.30pm.**

Greg Godde
Secretary
VFFA

Mick Holton
President
VFFA