



the **volunteer** fire fighter

Summer 2018/19

Volume 10 No.2

Official magazine of the Volunteer Fire Fighters Association

🔥 Dubbo... Simply the place to be 🟡 Discover your undiscovered

Stop the rot!

PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

🔥 70 Years of Land Rover - Cooma 2018 🟡 Why would anyone join the RFS?





WHY NILFIRE?

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WHY AS 1530 PART 8.2?

- AS 1530 PART 8.2 IS A FULL SCALE FURNACE TEST
- DEMONSTRATES THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE OF A SYSTEM AGAINST A KNOWN FIRE TEST STANDARD
- TEST CONDITIONS ARE SIMILAR TO THE FLAME ZONE OF A REAL FIRE AND AS SUCH IS A TRUE MEASURE OF THE PERFORMANCE OF NILFIRE CEASEFIRE GLAZING IN REAL BUSHFIRE CONDITIONS

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- MANY BUSHFIRES OCCUR IN AUSTRALIA EVERY YEAR. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THESE ARE MAJOR AND CAUSE CATASTROPHIC PROPERTY DAMAGE AND IN SOME CASES LOSS OF LIFE
- ALL OF OUR PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN FIRE TESTED AND MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF ALL RELEVANT AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS FOR BAL-FZ. AS WITH ANY PRODUCT THERE WILL BE OTHER CHOICES OF A CHEAPER NATURE. IN THIS INSTANCE COMPLIANCE WITH THESE STANDARDS IS THE KEY TO PROTECTING YOUR LOVED ONES, HOME AND MEMORIES. DO NOT PUT YOUR TRUST IN PRODUCTS THAT DO NOT MEET OR HAVE NOT BEEN TESTED TO THESE STANDARDS, PRODUCTS THAT, BY THE VERY NATURE OF THEIR BASE MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION CANNOT MEET THESE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS. REMEMBER COMPLIANCE WITH THESE STANDARDS IS THE MINIMUM NOT THE MAXIMUM REQUIREMENT. BY INVESTING IN OUR PRODUCTS YOU ARE GUARANTEEING YOU HAVE PROVIDED YOURSELF, YOUR LOVED ONES AND VALUED POSSESSIONS WITH THE BEST AVAILABLE TEST PROVEN FIRE PROTECTION AGAINST THE RAVAGES OF SUCH A FIRE.
- PROTECTION OF YOUR LOVED ONES, YOUR IRREPLACEABLE, POSSESSIONS AND MEMORIES IS PARAMOUNT
- ENSURING YOUR PEACE OF MIND IS PARAMOUNT
- ENSURING THE VALIDITY OF YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE IS PARAMOUNT.
- ONLY USE GLAZING SYSTEMS TESTED TO AS 1530 PART 8.2

THE PROBLEM



THE SOLUTION - NILFIRE BAL FZ FULLY TESTED WINDOW AND DOORS



Volunteer Fire Fighters
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2018/19

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Professor Bill Gammage AM (Ret) – Academic Historian, Adjunct Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre of the Australian National University (ANU).
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The VFFA welcomes and encourages members to send
in any pictures, photos and articles of interest.

Please email these to feedback@volunteerfirefighters.org.au

Front Cover - Bargo RFS - New station 2018

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President's Report

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *continued*

Being associated with the Rural Fire Service (RFS) was once a popular past-time and something to be proud of, but it is now more common to hear phrases like “I used to be in the RFS”, “I couldn’t be bothered anymore” or “they’ve lost the plot”.

Regional and rural people are increasingly losing faith in the RFS and I’m not sure how long the RFS can continue on this path of destruction before it’s too late to recover.

The rot that urgently needs to be removed from the RFS, is the city centric management at the very top. Decentralisation to a regional area is the key to reform but the current NSW Government is asleep at the wheel. They are standing by and allowing the city centric management to continue.

The Minister for Emergency Services, Mr Troy Grant has failed NSW. He has allowed the RFS empire to flourish whilst the volunteer is pushed aside, bullied and treated with contempt.

The Bullying and Harassment Must be Stopped

An Upper House Inquiry into emergency services agencies (2017 - 2018) highlighted that the rates of bullying in the NSW RFS are fairly high at 27%. Wow, that is over 1/4 of the Service without counting those who don’t speak up and those who simply walk away.

The Legislative Council, Emergency services agencies Report 36 - July 2018 stated that a number of former and current members of the NSW RFS raised concerns about the level of bullying, harassment and discrimination in the agency and the ineffective processes in place to address this. Many wrote to the Portfolio Committee confidentially, and some of the themes and concerns from these submission authors are summarised as follows:

- Members experiencing constant and repeated acts of bullying and intimidation, sexual misconduct, verbal and physical abuse, exclusion or harassment.
- Members harassed and discriminated against due to their ethnicity, gender and weight.
- Systemic bullying and harassment culture with only ‘lip service’ paid to NSW RFS policies and procedures.
- A culture of paid staff bullying volunteer members to the point of them leaving the agency.
- Fear of retaliation if members speak up against senior management.
- Members who have reported bullying experiencing reprisals.
- Clear conflicts of interest during the investigation of formal complaints.

- Extensive amount of time taken to resolve formal complaints, sometimes over years.

- A culture of cronyism that favours those who are part of the group and harassment of those who are not.

- Members actively persuading and bullying other members to vote a certain way during member elections.

In section 3.12 of the report, The NSW Rural Fire Service Association (RFSa) and the Volunteer Fire Fighters Association (VFFA) both acknowledged the existence of bullying, harassment and discrimination in the NSW RFS. The NSW RFSa stated that it is ‘aware of claims of bullying, harassment and discrimination’ in the NSW RFS and suggested that ‘attempts to actively discourage workplace bullying do not completely meet the expectations of members’.

Likewise, I commented on the level of bullying within the NSW RFS and expressed my concerns for members, stating that:

Appalling behaviour of bullying, harassment and discrimination has reached catastrophic levels, and I am deeply concerned about the welfare of many volunteer firefighters.

Section 3.13 of the report, the NSW RFS Commissioner, Mr Fitzsimmons, acknowledged that the agency has had cases of bullying and he was not denying in any way.

The Rights of Volunteers

Section 3.36 of the Legislative Council, Emergency services agencies Report 36, stated that numerous inquiry participants expressed the view that the complaints management process lacked procedural fairness and justice, with the rights of members not adequately taken into account. The concerns brought to the attention of the committee in this regard included:

- The denial of the right to legal representation during the investigation process
- An investigator not being obligated to provide all relevant information to the complainant
- No provisions within the standards to provide for action being taken against persons who make false, misleading or vexatious statements during proceedings
- Members being bound by a confidentiality clause that appears to discourage them from seeking outside advice during investigations, and
- No appeal mechanism available beyond a determination made by the NSW RFS Commissioner.

Section 3.37: More generally, a number of submission authors

stated that the complaints handling process does not follow the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, lacks transparency and impartiality.

In section 3.47, in terms of legal assistance, I stated that the NSW RFS declines requests for legal assistance which makes it unfair for members during an investigation.

The NSW RFS Commissioner stated (during the Upper House inquiry) that all of the applications for ex gratia assistance were supported. But that statement was untrue because in the case of Firefighter X (see below), the volunteer has been left carrying the can for an amount exceeding \$100,000 in legal fees after clearing his name. He was falsely accused of wrong doing whilst carrying out duties as a Volunteer during a hazard reduction.

The Minister for Emergency Services (and his boss)

The NSW RFS did respond to the Questions on Notice during the Inquiry into Emergency Services Agencies, but the Minister for Emergency Services has failed to act in any way, shape or form. It would seem that politics is more important than the welfare of our volunteer firefighters.

Even in Mr Grants own backyard, he has failed to conduct a proper investigation of the Sir Ivan fire, that occurred in November 2017. In many cases, farmers were abandoned and left to defend themselves whilst Mr Grant backed the RFS hierarchy as they ordered fire crews to stand down.

There has been ample time and opportunity for Mr Barilaro, Deputy Premier (and Mr Grant’s boss) to intervene. The NSW Government is well aware of these issues but does nothing to fix the problems.

A Conspiracy Theory

It has been suggested that the NSW RFS is purposefully demoralising the volunteer and setting up to become more heavily dominated by paid firefighters and the use of contracted aviation services and specialist departments.

Meanwhile the local knowledge from the man on the land is being dismissed.

Quotes from the white shirts include “if you don’t like the way that the service is heading – leave”.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what is happening, experienced people are leaving but the membership records are maintained to deceive NSW communities.

The claim of 70,000+ members is smoke and mirrors, it does not represent actual number of volunteers on the ground. Politicians are being led down the garden path as the RFS puts it’s hand out for more cash.

Wake up Minister Grant, you are being had

Brigades are struggling to find enough volunteers to fill the seats on a fire truck and the volunteer workforce is a ghost of its former self.



Image: The above image appeared in the Bushfire Bulletin, Vol 32 in 2010. It was part of a promotion that attempted to focus upon volunteers. That focus has been further distorted since 2010.

Firefighters Left to Defend Themselves - Abandoned by the Service

The VFFA has been doing everything in its power to assist firefighters caught up in bullying and harassment cases. In many of these cases, volunteer firefighters have been abandoned by the NSW RFS.

One Firefighter has applied twice for ex-gratia assistance from the Commissioner of the NSW RFS. One application was rejected and the second request left with no reply to date.

After the first application for ex gratia assistance, the RFS suspended the Firefighter from RFS membership. The Firefighter had not been charged with anything at that stage and had not attended local court. The RFS incorrectly stated the reason for suspension was that he had been found guilty of a criminal charge.

After reviewing the RFS Standard Operation Procedures, the solicitor (acting for the Firefighter) successfully appealed his

Continued on next page >>

PRESIDENT’S REPORT *continued*

suspension and he was re-inducted as a RFS volunteer with full rights again.

At no stage since the alleged incident (over a 2-year period), had anyone from the NSW Rural Fire Service Head Office or even the local Fire Control Centre been in contact with the Firefighter to check on his wellbeing.

To date (Oct 2018), that Firefighter has had zero support from the NSW RFS.

Zero Support (not even a phone call)

Now cleared of all charges, the Firefighter faces legal bills of over \$100,000

NSW RFS Volunteers at Risk of Prosecution without Support or Assistance

In light of the terrible ordeal that the Firefighter (above) was subjected to, the VFFA stands by our Safety Bulletin titled “NSW RFS Volunteers at Risk of Prosecution without Support or Assistance” that was issued in December 2017.

A web search of the title will direct you to the safety bulletin.

Politics

The NSW State Election is just around the corner (23rd March 2019) and I encourage all Volunteer Firefighters to consider how their vote impacts upon their future.

The current NSW Government is not acting in the best interest of our volunteers and they are neglecting to recognise that their failure to adopt simple, low cost land management practices places all firefighters and the environment at risk.

Firefighting has become BIG BUSINESS and there is a lot at stake. Politicians must be prepared to challenge the big players to ensure that regional and rural people have a powerful voice across a wide range of issues including land management and bush fire mitigation.

I have decided to run as a candidate for the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party in the Monaro Electorate because I’m fed up with the lack of support for rural NSW.

The National Party was once the go-to party for regional and rural areas, but they are now controlled by City Liberals.

Make your vote count and give the Shooters Fishers and Farmers

Party a chance to represent you, they have done great work in Orange and their Upper House presence is a valuable commodity.

Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Volunteer Firefighters, the VFFA Executive Council and Representatives, our VFFA Consultants and Fire Scientists, Sympathetic Politicians and the many RFS Staff who are also sympathetic to our cause.

Together we can make a difference.
Wishing you & yours a very Merry Christmas

Kind Regards
Michael (Mick) Holton



President - Volunteer Fire Fighters Association
president@volunteerfirefighters.org.au

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Above: Actual heat/fire damaged vehicles

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Image: Intensely choking Smoke – Crews were all in the middle of this

From an article of the last edition entitled; How low can they go?

Now we'll tell you all just how low the RFS can go

Some of you have read the article written by Daily Telegraph Court Reporter, Emma Partridge, published on October 11th 2018 about a Volunteer Rural Fire Fighter who has been subjected to, what has been described as, the most appalling mistreatment by the NSW RFS.

The volunteer has been dragged through the NSW court system, faces legal expenses of over \$100,000, been publicly humiliated, had his name dragged through the mud (we will not be naming him here – he's endured enough public scrutiny!) and he's received no support whatsoever from the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Many of you that read the article in the paper, would have been wondering how on earth this matter ever got to this point and many of you would be questioning why the RFS would go to so much effort to destroy one of its own. Indeed, you may ask but don't expect an answer from the RFS. The following story has been written by a witness to many of the events surrounding this matter and is based on facts in evidence presented in court, statements provided to the writer by witnesses including the accused and honestly held belief in the matters presented as factual. All care has been taken to ensure that the following story is accurate in every aspect – we say this because it seems incredible that the story could possibly be true, and yet sadly it is.

Our story begins back in 2016 on Sydney's Northern Beaches when a brigade Captain had been agitating for some time to get an area of great concern burnt by way of Hazard Reduction, an area of great fuel load, an area that when last caught alight ultimately worked to see thirty-seven houses & many cars burnt out across a district.

Finally after some "gentle attempts of embarrassment", it was announced this major "HR" would proceed but on a working weekday! Thursday October 20th 2016. A plan was created,

crews were sought from all local brigades & other "Out of Area" brigades came to assist along with NP&WS.

On the day, it was a struggle to get reasonable numbered crews on local tankers because like all of us, we have regular jobs so people just can't up & walk away for a simple Hazard Reduction, as against a Fire....employers won't cop that for very long. The home brigade of the HR started off with a skeleton crew, which built slowly through the afternoon. Text messages from the home HR brigade crew members continued through advising of arrival times. Multiple volunteers from the home HR brigade entered the fire ground in their private vehicles to attend the HR.

At one point late afternoon, a Deputy Captain (we'll now refer to him as the DC) of the home HR brigade drove in his own car wearing PPE enroute to his station along the road which leads to it. This road was in the heart of the fire ground, it was never closed off, it had traffic control at one end only...but it was never closed off.

** Investigations revealed that there was no formal traffic management plan in use on the day of the alleged incident - No traffic management plan was ever submitted to Northern Beaches Council by the IC.*

The road leading to the home brigade's station is 4 kilometres long & is a dead end road. At the half way point, the DC enroute to his station passed a newly appointed Group Officer, Rick Jones. Not far past Mr. Jones, the DC was pulled over by a NP&WS staff member acting as the Safety Officer for the HR. The DC was told to report to the IC upon arrival at his station.

** We point out that there were twenty tankers with crews spread along 3.7km of road!*

Continued on next page >>

On arrival at his station, rather than question the DC in asking something like; *did anything occur whilst driving along the road?* No, instead RFS Inspector George Sheppard who was the IC, he pointed at the DC & told him; *Sit on the grass, the Police are coming, they want to talk to you.*

The DC asked *what have I done?* to which Ins. Sheppard replied again; *Sit on the grass, the Police are coming, they want to talk to you.*

At no stage was the DC advised of what he was alleged to have done, so here he is, sitting on the grass thinking; what the hell have I done?

Ins. Sheppard called upon his district support officer, OP's 21, to contact & seek the NSW Police based on the complaint of Group Officer Rick Jones, no one else among the many working on this HR, just a single complaint by this new Group Officer & fully supported by his offsider Luke Graham.

Eventually a NSW Police Highway Patrol Snr. Constable arrived & was escorted by RFS Ins. Sheppard into the station office along with the DC & both were left together to discuss some allegations. ** No support was given to the DC nor was his brigade Captain informed of what was taking place....he was simply escorted into the office & left on his own with a Police Officer to be interviewed.*

It was alleged that the DC had driven “at speed” past the newly appointed Group Officer Rick Jones & almost hit him.

The Police Officer told the DC that he would investigate the complaint & that the DC could expect either a formal Caution or a fine for Negligent Driving, which would incur a fine of up to \$1100 & a loss of up to 6 points. RFS Ins. Sheppard then suspended the DC from any further activities that day & the DC was told to go home.

Five months later after complete silence, the DC received a phone call from the Snr. Constable seeking his attendance at the local Police Station to give a statement, which he had already done five months previously.

The DC contacted this association & we referred him to a major law firm in the City. Now under representation, the lawyers of DC submitted a written statement to Police. One week later, DC received a summons for the DC to attend Court charged with; Negligent Driving & Dangerous Driving at Speed.

**Negligent Driving is a traffic offence, which comes with a loss of points & a fine, Dangerous Driving is a Criminal Offence, which comes with a fine up to \$3000 & up to nine (9) months imprisonment.*

Three days in Local Court spread over two months with the entire local community of his brigade there supporting him, the DC faced a horrid time before a Magistrate. With no solid evidence to go on, just the questionable word of one person backed up by an offsider (a scribe) that gave a written statement mirrored on that of the complainant, yet in the witness box, their versions of events that day were both miles apart.

On Day four, the Magistrate it was felt, initially in her summary attempted to give the DC a penal sentence however after quick intervention by legal counsel, the Magistrate changed her verdict to a fine of \$750 & a loss of licence for twelve months.

The DC had by now expended around \$74k in legal costs, which included Solicitor's work in the many months leading up to the case & a Barrister for four days in Court. An immediate appeal was lodged & was set down for October 3rd 2018 in the District Court in Sydney at much additional costs.

In March 2017, on behalf of the DC, his brigade sought through a formal application to the RFS Commissioner's office, a request for Ex Gratia Financial Assistance. There is a provision within the RFS for members to access what is called, ex gratia assistance, particularly if they have got a matter that they find themselves needing to deal with in the course of their duties.

The DC's call for assistance from the Commissioner was refused.

After the DC applied for ex gratia assistance, the RFS suspended the DC's RFS membership of which he had been a volunteer for 15 years, (the DC had only been charged at this stage, not attended local court) stating the reason he was found guilty of a criminal charge. What happened to innocent until proven guilty?

After reviewing the RFS's own Standard Operation Procedures for RFS Volunteer's, the DC's solicitor successfully appealed the DC's suspension. NSW RFS Executive Director Membership and Strategic Services, Bronwyn Jones, wrote to the DC's solicitor to inform his that the decision to stand the DC down is now revoked until the charges against DC are finalised. It's interesting to note that on September 18th 2017, at an Upper House Enquiry into Bullying within the RFS, the RFS Commissioner was asked by the Hon. David Clark MLC the following question:

Today the Committee heard that the RFS has denied legal support for volunteers involved in disciplinary processes. What is the process for application for legal support? Have you ever received a request for legal assistance by a member of the

Volunteer Firefighters Association? What was the outcome?

Under oath the RFS Commissioner responded;

“There is a provision in the RFS for members to access what we call ex gratia assistance particularly if they have got a matter that they find themselves needing to deal with in the course of their duties. In the last seven or eight years since I have been commissioner, I am aware of five applications being received. All of those were supported in respect of ex gratia assistance.”

Well we would ask; why was the DC in mention refused especially when you & your office was asked in March 2017, which was six months before you presented your response to the Bullying Enquiry?

Then after the Commissioners statement in Parliament, another Volunteer came forward to us offering details (*from 2014*) of a request for same & the RFS Commissioner's subsequent letter of refusal that he had received back.

This then doesn't really marry up with the response the RFS Commissioner gave under oath to the Parliamentary Enquiry Committee's question. On July 31st 2018, the DC sent a second request for Ex Gratia Support to the RFS Commissioner, it asked that given what he had said under oath at a Parliamentary Enquiry in September 2017, would he like to review his earlier decision.

To date that second request has been completely ignored.....no response at all.

Special Note: In 2012, a Volunteer attending an incident & on returning to station via the M1 (*formerly the F3*) was involved in a motor accident, which ultimately resulted in the deaths of two people. That RFS Volunteer was charged with; Negligent Driving Occasioning Death & after a lengthy Court Case & Appeal, he remains today convicted of the above charges.

Rightfully so, the RFS fully supported this Volunteer covering all his legal costs, they provided Chaplaincy support all the way & they even offered this Volunteer a full time paid job working for the service, which he took up.



Meanwhile in the Sydney District Court on Wednesday October 3rd 2018, Judge Paul Conlan was scathing of the management of the HR. It was pointed out to Judge Conlan that evidence provided by the NP&WS Safety Officer, Andrew Heighway,

You would now seriously have to ask yourself, why would anyone bother or be silly enough to ever put themselves at such great financial & emotional risk in joining the NSW Rural Fire Service?

clearly stated that he could see the DC's vehicle approaching him from 400 to 500 metres away & that the DC was driving responsibly, he was not driving dangerously; Andrew Heighway stated.

Judge Conlan went on to describe both Rick Jones & Luke Graham as not being credible witnesses & he lambasted the Local Court Magistrate for allowing this case to extend past day one of what was four days in a Local Court & thus finally ending up in his Court.

He asked the DC to stand & proclaimed; (DC was named in full) you are cleared of all charges as laid, you are exonerated in full – Case Closed.

As all Court proceedings have now completed, the DC's final legal costs has reached a collective total amount of; **\$105,339.20**, that's right, he now faces a legal bill of over **\$100,000** for having given up his afternoon at work to come to his station to undertake leading his crew at a major HR, then be wrongly accused, then be treated appallingly by his local RFS Staff, suspended of his RFS membership, called a criminal by the RFS yet hadn't gone to trial yet, then be put through hell for just short of two years including five days in Court, then be refused & later ignored by the RFS Commissioner seeking Ex-Gratia support, with a second request still pending & now left with this massive debt.

Where has the RFS Commissioner been in all of this – nowhere to be seen or heard.

“ ...he now faces a legal bill of over \$100,000 for having given up his afternoon at work to come to his station to undertake leading his crew at a major HR ”



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Ootha NSW

October 9th 2018



Our readers may recall back on October 9th, a woman was allegedly taken hostage with her mother and two sons after the house they were in at Ootha was set alight.

A massive operation involving the Police dog squad, PoAir & tactical officers tracked down the 41-year-old woman and a 44-year-old man in bushland near Blaxland's Ridge, north-west of Sydney, shortly before midnight.

RFS Derriwong 1 was first on scene followed by Condobolin Headquarters, Ootha 1 & 7, FRNSW Condobolin, Condobolin SES, NSW Ambulance as well

as the NSW Police and Forbes Central. This was a huge turn out that speaks volumes about the mateship, the good will and the invisible hand of support that very much exists in the bush.

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to every member of each of the agencies identified above that successfully played their part in this massive operation.

Thank You



X-press Kurrajong Heights

LOCALS HELPING LOCALS

The Kurrajong Heights Brigade greatly appreciates the fundraising support helmet at their local IGA store and have been delighted with the response. The Kurrajong Heights Brigade would like to thank their community for their generous support and most particularly John Flanjak of IGA Kurrajong Heights.

The VFFA fully endorses this type of fundraising, as all money donated goes directly to their local Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade.

Photo: Kurrajong Heights IGA proprietor John Flanjak presents a full fundraising helmet to Kurrajong Heights Rural Fire Brigade members – Deputy Captain, Andrew Jones (centre) and Jon Ingersole (right).



TRUNDLE ABBA FESTIVAL

Yes Trundle's famous ABBA Festival returns on

Saturday, 4th May 2019



Initiated and supported by local RFS volunteers - all profits from the Festival go back into the local Community. Over the last three years, tens of thousands of dollars have been donated to organisations such as the Trundle War Memorial Hall, the Footy Club, the local Health Service, the 6th Light Horse Trundle Troop and supporting other local events such as the Tullamore Irish Festival and the Trundle Bush Tucker Day. Also many local community groups and charities run successful fund raisers over the weekend including the Cancer Council, both Schools, the CWA, the Men's Shed and the Bogan Gate War Memorial Hall. The Showgrounds at Trundle and Tullamore are also big winners with a huge influx of camping. Overall the Festival injects over \$2 million a year back into the local economy.

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Dubbo... Simply the place to be

ISN'T IT AMAZING that since the VFFA identified and went public with their campaign to move the RFS Headquarters to regional NSW and since Dubbo Regional Council took the initiative and offered free land for such a facility, so many things have suddenly happened in Dubbo?

In fact, in recent times Dubbo has been buzzing with activity, economic growth and large amounts of government spending. We lost our battle to move the RFS HQ to Dubbo. However, through political activism both the VFFA and Dubbo have been successful in significant consolation prizes.



Image: Dubbo Mayor Ben Shield's addressing the media

We have since seen the construction of a \$30 million RFS training complex at the Dubbo City Regional Airport as well as a brand new SES and Volunteer Rescue Association compounds. The Royal Flying Doctor Service Head Quarters at Dubbo is going through a significant upgrade and expansion and in early November, the RFS commissioner and responsible Minister oversaw the new "Hunter" jet launch that is now based in Dubbo for at least the duration of this fire season.



Image: Dubbo Mayor Ben Shields boarding the new water bombing aircraft named; Hunter

But that's not the only thing that is putting Dubbo, or DubVegas as our young residents call it, on the map. In six months we have had two prime ministerial visits, the Governor General came and the Today show chose Dubbo as their place to conduct a 12-hour Television Marathon. However, the most exciting visit was by far the visit of The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan when they came and made Dubbo (at least for the day) the centre of the universe.

The economic benefit from having the Prince and his new wife in Dubbo has been monumental to say the least. Not only was the day huge, where tens of thousands of people converged on Dubbo, but our long-term visitor forecast has jumped considerably. Already we are seeing preliminary reports of a massive surge in enquiries about our tourist attractions and accommodation facilities for the coming months.

The day the announcement that DubVegas would host a royal visit was hectic to say the least. While we confidentially knew that we had the Royal Visit, we weren't given notice of when the announcement would be made to the public. The announcement came from the Prime Minister's office at 6.30pm at night and by 7am the next morning, I was forced to request Council cancel my appointments for that day to handle the multiple national media enquiries and interviews. That day alone we did well over 30 interviews with national media outlets. Nearly all of them asked "why Dubbo?" and my response was simply *"when visiting Australia, there are the three major cities you must see, Sydney Melbourne and Dubbo!"*

All the media coverage we got makes that statement that the RFS HQ needs to remain in Sydney because they need access to the national media looks farcical.

Hats off must go to Dubbo Regional Council staff who put the day together. It was an incredible success and journalists were all in agreement that Dubbo put this event together perfectly and that our great city shone bright. The coverage our great city on the plains got was not just national, because an old school mate in London and my cousin in Tampa Florida both saw me on the television!

There is no doubt that Dubbo is rushing ahead building its reputation as an events destination and rightfully so.

Back in November we were very proud to host the Koorie Knockout where aboriginal football teams from across the eastern



Image: Dubbo Mayor Ben Shields with their Royal Highnesses, the Duke & Duchess of Sussex Prince Harry & Megan

states converged on our world standard Rugby League oval at Apex Park for a competition that a lot of people say is as exciting as the NRL. Again, our motels, hotels and accommodation providers were all booked out, while our local economy flourished.

We have unprecedented private sector investment and our housing market is thriving making Dubbo punch well above its weight in terms on economic growth. In Dubbo you can buy a lovely large four-bedroom home for under \$400,000 and it does

not take more than 15 minutes to reach any part of the city by car. I often tell my friends in Sydney that the only traffic jam in Dubbo is in the McDonalds drive thru!

With all this positivity, growth, confidence from the private sector in Dubbo, I still wonder why we couldn't have the RFS Head Quarters in Dubbo!



Are your Membership Details up to date?

Quite often we move House, we change Email addresses or Phone numbers and we struggle to think of everything and everyone to notify of those changes.

The last thing we want is that you miss out on getting your Volunteer Firefighter Magazine and emailed Newsletters....and sadly some are.

Please send us any updated contact details to our Membership Officer at:
membership@volunteerfirefighters.org.au

Windows in Extreme Bushfire Prone Areas

In 2009, Victoria suffered a firestorm like we had never experienced, and this, combined with a spread of more building in bushfire prone areas over recent decades saw a loss of life and property that was devastating.

Black Saturday saw fire spread and crown fires so extreme, it redefined the thoughts of the community on what we need to do to be safe. Scientists had been watching this for some time, these more extreme fire events, and a new building standard had been drafted post the Canberra fires in 2003, but deemed too extreme and onerous to implement. Then Black Saturday happened....

In May of 2009, 3 months after Black Saturday, Victoria and the ACT adopted the new standard, AS3959-2009, Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas. 12 months later the other states followed, however with some interesting variations. Most states added extra requirements, generally around ember protection and access. One state, NSW, added a reduction of requirements by way of an NCC amendment for BAL FZ, referring the specification of building requirements to the relevant fire authority, in this case the RFS.

The solution for windows allowed by the RFS until the end of 2017, was generally an aluminium roller shutter over a window very similar to a BAL 40 window. This changed as of January 2018 to require tested systems, finally in line with the other states. The barrier to fire provided by aluminium is very limited, as it melts at ~ 680°C. Bushfire flame temperatures range from 1000°C to 1500°C, pending the fire conditions. This is BAL FZ, around 80kW/m2.

This heat presents another conundrum. The radiant heat coming through windows in extreme conditions is not compatible with life. As little as 15kW/m2 will peel skin in seconds. This is why the AS1530.8.2 test was added, requiring not only 30 minute of fire integrity, but 30 minutes of insulation, to less than 15kW/m2 inside (-/30/30). A -/30/- product will offer integrity, but not insulation. With any (normal) volume of



Image 1: BAL FZ rebuild at Flowerdale, Vic Image 2: BAL FZ rebuild at Kinglake

glass in a house, 80kW/m2 outside with give ~60kW/m2 inside, and result in internal house temperatures over 200°C, along with the risk of spontaneous combustion of curtains, carpets etc., without a fire breach. This will create a fatal indoor environment in seconds.



Image: BAL FZ testing at Exova Dandenong

So as builders, designers, and homeowners embark on this building journey, looking for products to satisfy the requirements should be asking their suppliers for proof of compliance prior to committing to purchase.

If a window is going to protect the occupants during a fire, and the rating is BAL FZ, is the product:

- Compliant to AS3959-2009
- Tested to AS1530.8.2
- Designed and warranted for the building warranty period as a minimum

If there is not a resounding yes to all questions, and documentation to support, then it is probably not compliant and safe.

With the courts currently considering who will have to fund replacement cladding on hundreds of Australian buildings, it is a timely reminder to be sure your choice is compliant and safe.

Sonnenschutz manufactures window shutters for BAL FZ. These can be fitted to all wall systems. During testing to AS1530.8.2, we get 6kW/m2 at the back of the shutter, and less than 3kW/m2 inside the window. The safest choice by far, and one of the most economical!

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Corrimal Rotary Club Visit's Naradhan September 2018

The Corrimal Rotary Club have been coming annually to Naradhan since 2010 (except for 2017 where they assisted community members with the clean-up following the Sir Ivan Fires at Cassilis) with their Farm Aid program with assisting farmers in the local district following fire & flood events. The years when there hasn't been any natural disaster work to be completed, they have brought a number of international Rotary Exchange students to the district to have a rural experience on local farms.

A new initiative for the Rotary District 9675 has been to adopt a town to show their support during this extensive drought period. Naradhan & Lake Cargelligo districts have been very grateful that they have been adopted by the Corrimal Rotary Club.

This year the dynamic team of helpers consisted of Corrimal Rotary Club members with support from a member from the Concord Rotary Club, a Swiss Rotary Youth Exchange student, a Wollongong University nursing student along with Tarrawanna Salvation Army members.



In excess of \$50,000 has been raised to date in partnership with School Aid (who provide a proven vehicle to empower young philanthropists to promote kids helping kids) via Corrimal Club Rotary members manning collection points at their local shopping centre, hotels, clubs, Corrimal Branch of the Illawarra Mutual Building Society Bank (IMB Bank) over a six-week period for their drought appeal.

Local businesses and members from the Tarrawanna Salvation Army have also generously donated funds and items for drought-stricken farmers.

Certainly an impressive achievement despite an initial target being set by the Corrimal Rotary Club of \$10,000, which further demonstrates the generosity of the wider community where there is a genuine care and concern for farming families and communities.



Following discussion amongst Club members about how to help out farmers and their communities, it was decided to put together a number of hampers consisting of food, personal & cleaning items.

Continued on next page >>

NARADHAN GETS A VISIT FROM CORRIMAL ROTARY *continued*

Most of the goods in these hampers were purchased in West Wyalong and Lake Cargelligo using the funds raised with the purpose of supporting the local businesses in these small towns that rely on the farming community.

Over several days, the dedicated Corrimal Rotary Club members and friends put together these hampers in the Naradhan Public Hall. Included in these hampers are a number of vouchers supporting local businesses as well, that will amount to over \$28,000 being spent in Lake Cargelligo. Corrimal Rotary Club thanks Lower Lachlan Community Services Inc for assisting them in administrating these vouchers.



During their time at Naradhan, these generous people assisted local families with concreting, lamb marking, fencing & sheep droving tasks. On Thursday evening, the Rotarians joined the Lake Cargelligo Rotarians for their meeting. Thanks to John Hart for following up a young Corrimal Rotary member's interest in vintage cars.

A visit to Naradhan Public School was also included in their stay where the Swiss Exchange Student gave a very informative presentation on Switzerland, which was followed by a delicious morning tea of scones, jam & cream supplied by the Naradhan students.



Friday saw several Corrimal members pop into the Lake Cargelligo "After School Care" to view the activities on offer and then very generously donated items for the centre to use (all purchased from local Lake Cargelligo businesses) to this wonderful facility that entertains students after school. Saturday evening saw locals coming together to enjoy a bonfire & BBQ with these helpers.



Many thanks to the Temora/Bland Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service for allowing this team to utilise the new Naradhan Fire Station during their stay at Naradhan. A very generous in-kind partnership that allowed this voluntary activity to be able to take place once again and support our farming families and community.



Our hearty Congratulations to the Corrimal Rotary Club & especially the amazing team of members of the Naradhan Rural Fire Brigade.



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How is your prostate?

Report by Vic Widman

Did you know that 3,500 men die every year in Australia from Prostate Cancer?

Did you know that 20,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year?

Did you know that more men die from Prostate Cancer than Women die from Breast Cancer?

Well I didn't, until I met Ross Alexander, a board member of the Prostate Cancer Research Foundation of Australia. Ross was attending one of my 4wd training courses in 2017 and after completion of the course he contacted me to ask a favour.

Ross wanted me to design and lead a 4wd rally from Sydney to Birdsville and back with the idea of raising funds for Prostate Cancer Research. On hearing of these terrible figures in relation to Australian men and prostate cancer how could I refuse?

But putting together a rally for we hoped up to twenty 4wd drives across some of the harshest country in Australia was not going to be easy. We enlisted the help of Peter Fehon from Charity Car Events, who regularly organises fund raising car rallies for Beyond Blue, another very worthwhile organisation. Peter had the experience and knowledge to look after the insurance side of things and some of the logistics. Ross was charged with the mammoth task of acquiring all the necessary

accommodation and meals for all the participants and all I had to do was plan an exciting, off the beaten track route and lead the mob.

After some thought I came up with a rally route that would start in Cobar and take the participants to Birdsville via some very iconic locations such as Louth and the Darling River, Wanaaring and Tibooburra, Cameron Corner and Innamincka, then past Burke and Wills' Dig Tree across Sturt's Stony Desert to Cordillo Downs eventually reaching Birdsville and its famous pub. But then the real adventure would begin as I would lead everyone out to and over Big Red, a giant sand dune named by explorer Denis Bartell and into the Simpson Desert. We planned to return to the giant red dune to catch sunset before traversing the equally famous Birdsville Track to Marree then on past the ruined town of Farina and into the magnificent Flinders Ranges with a stopover in Wilpena Pound before trekking via outback Sth Australia to Broken Hill for our final big auction night together in the silver city.

Entry fees were established for each participant to cover the admin costs



and insurances plus each participants' accommodation and meals on the trek. Then we set a moderate \$1500 donation fee that each vehicle entry had to raise, all of which went straight to Prostate Cancer Research, we set a target of \$30,000 and twenty 4wd drives for the inaugural event.

So when we all gathered in Cobar on 22 September 2018, you can imagine how good it was to be delivering the last minute tips on outback driving to an assembled 37 vehicles and over 80 people. With that formalities completed and impressing on everyone this was not a race but a scenic amble through the outback, each participant was given a road book with detailed route notes to follow for the long drive to Tibooburra. Ross Alexander had followed my suggested route on two occasions previously to prepare the route notes,

Continued on next page >>




a lot of preparation goes into making these events a success.

The first 500 kilometres on day one took its toll on quite a few tyres with bad luck and poor tyre choice being the main issue, but the oldest vehicle in the rally a Model T Ford of all things, sheered a front spring coming into Wanaaring and this proved too difficult to weld, the Model T was one of only two casualties in the Rally and eventually joined us at Wilpena Pond on the second last night.

Apart from raising money for Prostate Cancer the band of vehicles and people were injecting much needed funds into every town we passed through. It was estimated that up \$20,000 was spent on accommodation, meals and fuel at each night's stop. In this time of severe drought, this kind of cash injection into the local economies was invaluable.

Day 2 saw us drive the beautiful Jump Up road from Tibooburra to Cameron Corner where quite a few enjoyed the giant burgers before heading north through remote country via Epsilon to arrive at Innamincka in time for a cool lemonade in the Pub before a great dinner. We had driven through very dry country today

and the few waterholes we did pass were dry and littered with the rotting remains of dead kangaroos. The day shook the battery cradle in a Hilux to pieces and our resident sweep vehicle with its volunteer mechanics did a masterful job ensuring the battery stayed in place with a dozen or more zip ties!



Day 3 was another warm sunny day, perfect driving conditions with only a few bush flies hitching a ride each time we stopped. Following the Cooper Creek basin and visiting the Burke and Wills Dig Tree the bull bars were pointed north once again along the isolated Arrabury Road. With a quick stop at what was once the largest shearing shed in the country at Cordillo Downs. Then infamous rock strewn Cordillo Downs road to the ruins of Cadelga was next to be challenged. At Cadelga the waterhole teemed with over 2000 Corellas, gathered around the only

water in this rock strewn landscape. Then it was the final 3 hours of a long and dusty drive along the Birdsville Developmental Road to the iconic Queensland town. As each participant arrived they parked in front of the Hotel for their hero photo before venturing inside to enjoy the colour and character of the hotel.



Day 4 would see us all conquer Big Red, this was to be my most daunting day. Getting 36 vehicles up and on top of Big Red for a group photo and then all 80 participants to drive a dozen giant sand dunes into the Simpson Desert for lunch in the Desert was enough to give a seasoned tour guide the shivers. I needn't have worried though, as everyone headed my advice on tyre pressures and driving technique and before long not only had we all driven over Big Red but into the Desert. It was very rewarding for myself to have assisted each and every driver



achieve for what was for some a lifelong goal.

We returned to Big Red in the afternoon where once again we managed to talk every vehicle over the dune. Of course quite a few had to try the difficult and steeper crossings, with some having success and others suffering the indignity of getting bogged almost at the top of the dune. And then John Maloney in his giant F350 4WD showed the brute force of the giant diesel engine by reversing up the steepest incline on Big Red.

Sunset nibbles and drinks on top of Big Red is one of those must do things and this evening did not let us down with a magic clear sky allowing the dying embers of the blood red sun to light up the rich red sands of Big Red. It was just fantastic and many had to drag themselves away from this perfect setting to return to Birdsville for dinner.

Day 5 and it was time to depart Birdsville, but even though we had a well-planned route in mind, after speaking to some local station owners and hearing that the Inside Birdsville Track was open (a rare occurrence due to frequent flooding of Goyder Lagoon which the original Track passes through) I seized the moment to treat the participants to a fabulous

drive along the flood plain of Goyder Lagoon. Plans were made to be changed especially when one is presented with something that is rare and unique. So we all drove the Inside Track and revelled in its smooth running, scenic vistas and stone free landscape. The contrast when we emerged on the Birdsville Track with its flat plains of nothing more than red gibber stones took the breath away and reminded us how quickly the landscape can change. Lunch at Mungerannie with eccentric barman Phil and then another 3 hour drive south to arrive at the Old Ghan railway depot of Marree.

The Marree Hotel is a classic old stone building with stained glass windows with walls built from ballast from the convict ships dating back to the 1880's. This is another spot everyone should visit one day. Its room dedicated to the real Tom Kruse, (not the movie star but the Birdsville Track Mailman) and the story telling Hotel owner, Phil Turner, are just some of the attractions. If you drop in make sure you ask Phil about the Marree Man but also allow an hour for the discussion.

Day 6 and we departed Marree under the first clouds we had seen all week, driving past the Stone Man dedicated to the outback explorers who trudged



across this arid landscape well before our modern vehicles roared though. We paused at the old town of Farina, much of which is being restored by a dedicated few, wished that the old bakery was open (it is between May and July) and solemnly visited ANZAC hill where there is an impressive memorial to the ANZACS from the Farina district.

John Williamson wrote a song about the Prairie Hotel at Parachilna, we didn't do any singing, but enjoyed lunch there from their road kill menu, Emu and Roo never tasted so good and probably never will again! Then we entered a completely different planet, or so it seemed, as we were now driving through rolling hills, tree lined dry river beds and seeing colours of every pastel shade, this was the Flinders Ranges. Even though they too were in drought and the magnificent wild flowers so synonymous with this region were not in bloom, the views were simply stunning. I dare say this was the surprise package for many on the rally as they did not expect the Flinders to be so breathtakingly beautiful.

Day 7 after very comfortable accommodation in Wilpena Pound and an equally impressive meal our troupe of now dusty 4wdrives rolled across the Ranges to Yunta for the final stretch of 200 k's

HOW IS YOUR PROSTATE? continued

into Broken Hill, with one Troopie expiring on the finish line. Nothing our capable mechanics couldn't fix with parts from a wreck in the local dump. We all gathered at the Musicians' Club where Ross' wife, literally just out of hospital, had flown in to dress our dinner tables in time for the last supper and our final auction of odds and sodds we had picked up along the way.

As the hammer fell on the auctioneers table for the last time it was announced that the final tally raised by all the participants had exceeded \$186,000!! An incredible effort by all concerned, remember we thought we might raise \$30K. The Cancer Research Foundation was in disbelief but the best thing is that this money will go towards saving more lives and saving men from the indignity of this terrible cancer.

If you would like to donate to this worthy cause please visit:

<https://outback4wdadventure.everydayhero.com/au/outback-vic>

and we're planning an even better event for 2019 so please keep in touch via www.4wd.net.au and join us for a great adventure and the opportunity to save a life or several.



HOW IS YOUR PROSTATE? continued

Continued on next page >>



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Brand new for the year Stacer has started a boating revolution with the release of their Revolution Hull. The new Revolution Hull is the natural evolution of the famous Stacer Barra and Assault Pro Hulls.

Combining concave bottom sheet design, EVO advance pressing and a raised chine, Stacer has created a high performing hull that glides over the water providing a more well-balanced ride with superior stability underway and at rest.

The release of the Revolution Hull coincides with Stacer's new model release for 2018 and features across their new range of runabouts- the Seamaster, the revamped Crossfire range, the new bowrider range – the Wildrider and of course the Stacer favourite the Assault Pro.

Stacer National Account Manager Dominic

Smith said he believes the Revolution Hull is the greatest development in the history of Stacer boats. 'The hull, built in a manufacturing process unique to Stacer, is high performing and glides over the water providing a more balanced ride with superior stability underway and at rest.

Everyone who has been lucky enough to go for a ride in a Revolution Hull is extremely impressed by the performance and it will have an impact on the market once the word gets out. Stacer's bestselling runabout range has a complete new look as well which is very exciting.' The new Sea Master range is available in a line-up of new sizes including the 429, 449, 469, 499 and 519 and will replace the current Seaway and Bay Master line ups.

A variety of new standard features have been added to the range, sure to make them a hit come boat show season including a larger side sheet creating increased freeboard, 3mm topsides and fully welded side decks. While the all new rubber gunnels, semi hookless shark carpet, under dash

storage with solid foot bar, stainless steel ladder add a few creature comforts to the family favourite.

Boaters can choose from a number of new options as well including a re-designed transom door and a factory drum winch option across the whole range. The 469, 499 and 519 models feature a walk-through dash with the Low Profile Sports Deck (LPSP) for a sportier look while the underfloor storage adds practicality.

Dominic said it was well known that the Stacer brand is synonymous for its runabouts with the Seaway having been a popular model for long time. 'The 429 comes standard with the Revolution hull, shark carpet, smooth sides, rubber gunnels and fully welded side decks. I challenge you to find a better value runabout in the market at the moment.'

For more information on the all new Revolution hull visit your local Stacer dealer or visit stacer.com.au





Image: First production LAND ROVER 80", HUE 166, released 30 April 1948, on display at Solihull, UK.

This first Land Rover had a carefully chosen 80-inch wheelbase. The numbers used to describe various models were 80, 88 etc. It was conceived as a post-war stopgap measure to prop up the Rover Car Company. It was rushed into production using war surplus aircraft sheds and aircraft grade aluminium for the body panels.

Maurice Wilks led the team of engineers who created the Land Rover. Its durable, modular design was ahead of its time. Attention to detail, new ideas and extra capability added value. The welded box section chassis provided great strength for its mass. This backbone created a low centre of gravity and carried all stresses.



Image: A 2008 Range Rover Sport (above-right) and a 1955 Series 1 88" (left) approaching Cooma.



At Easter 2018, all roads in Australia led to Cooma NSW. They were carrying almost 1000 Land Rovers of all ages, shapes and sizes from all states to the Snowy Mountains. This was to celebrate the **70th Anniversary** of the launch of the smart little truck that changed the post-war world.

Cooma is regarded as the spiritual home of Land Rovers in Australia as over 700 were used in the construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electricity Scheme. They were the only utility vehicle available after WWII that was tough enough to survive the arduous conditions. The first Land Rover, HUE 166, is affectionately known as Hughie. It is now on display at the Land Rover complex at Solihull, UK. It was revealed to the world at the London Motor Show on 30 April 1948.

This multi-purpose vehicle was part-tractor and part- car. It was a 4-wheel drive with excellent, approach, ramp-over and departure angles. It had low centre of gravity and low gearing, thanks to the addition of a double reduction transfer gearbox. This provided a very useful 1:60 drive ratio on first gear in the lower range. It also had power take off drive points front, back and centre.

Written by **Steve Marshall**

70 YEARS OF LAND ROVER - COOMA *continued*

The release of the Land Rover coincided with post war boom. It was right for a role in booming primary industries and the services.

Land Rovers were an instant success. Orders soon came from all over the world earning valuable foreign exchange for the UK.

Flat packed, the Land Rovers were exported in wooden crates. The wheels, windscreens and optional door-tops and canvas hoods were packed in the body. Cranes swung these crates from ship holds onto foreign ports on all continents.

A score of these early models drove into Cooma this year. Atleast one was "1 of 3" ordered by a South Australian farmer in first shipment to reach Adelaide.



The generous strength and clever design has led to many owners modify their Land Rover for expeditions, camping and just touring. There were hundreds of examples on display from a humble fold out bed-in-the-back to full-on camper conversions.

It is estimated that 70% of all Land Rovers produced are still going. The initial idea was so good they stayed in production for seven decades. Over 2 million were built. After 1990 this model was called DEFENDER. The RANGE ROVER had been released in 1970. New models called DISCOVERY and FREELANDER soon followed. EVOQUE, SPORT and VELAR have joined.

It is common to meet owners who have kept their Land Rovers for decades or passed them on to younger family members. Frequently owners have collections. There were passionate collectors at Cooma from the UK and USA. Two I met owned around 130 each.

Many Land Rovers had a story to tell. Some showed years of neglect, other years of hard work. One oldie drove in filled with bush rock while others were presented as masterpieces. Land Rovers of all ages capture the imagination of their owners connecting emotionally.



Image: Ian D'Arcy Harvie from Bowen Mountain NSW with the 1956 LAND ROVER 88 Series 1 that he has been driving for over 55 years.

An Australian, Mike Bishop, heads up the Land Rover Reborn program at the factory in the UK. Now Series 1 Land Rovers and early Range Rovers are being restored and sold as new. Old hands at the factory are sharing their knowledge and some original machinery has been brought back into service to produce hard-to-get parts. Already there are waiting lists for these vehicles.



Image: DEFENDER production ended on 29 Jan 2016. Left: 100s of DEFENDERS lined up in Cooma and a last of type LAND ROVER 90, rego 'HUGHIE' above.



Continued on next page >>



Clockwise from top left:
A restored Series 1 Land Rover with the invincible capstan winch fitted to the front power take off (PTO). The easily removed "grill" often doubled for lunchtime BBQs in the Snowy. The horizontal mudguard tops served as dinner and worktables.



This 60yr old ex-NRMA Series 1 has the aluminium body showing out.

Rae Wroe from Berridale NSW with his trusty Land Rover 80 powering a water pump though the rear PTO.

400 ex-Army "Project Perentie" Land Rovers with galv. chassis attended.



LAND ROVER FIRE TRUCKS



1985 LAND ROVER DEFENDER 130 FIRE TRUCK

Land Rovers have been used to protect communities from fire for 70 Years. The robust design allows easy modification. They are often referred to as meccano sets on wheels. This is as Land Rovers have a modular body that bolts onto the legendary chassis. These light aluminium body panels are easily removed, repaired or replaced with standard tools. The welded box cross-section chassis acts as a massive backbone supporting all of the mechanical components and heavy loads, such as large water tanks, firefighting pumps and other tools.

The Land Rovers were market leaders at a time when most utility vehicles had inferior "open C"-channel cross section chassis which twisted as the laden vehicle crossed uneven ground. It was these superior design features that led to the creation of the Land Rover Special Vehicles Unit, which adapted the basic Land Rover design for hundreds of customers. The Australian Services of all descriptions added Land Rovers to their fleets. Fire brigade, SAR, and scores of Army Land Rovers designs are now highly collectable and durable vehicles.



(Above & R) MICK HOLTON, President VFFA, receiving STEVE MARSHALL's book at Easter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Steve Marshall has had the Land Rovers bug all his life. He first saw them in the Snowy Mountains in 1961 when he was 3 years old. He has been eyeing them ever since. He started driving a Series 2A 109 off-road in 1971 on a family farm. He bought his first Land Rover, a Series 2 88 in 1975. Since then he has owned Land Rovers continuously. He has travelled extensively exploring Australia. In 1996 he purchased a trailer and utility hire business. From the start the chief tool in the business, the office, storeroom and recovery vehicle, was a **Discovery**. Twenty years, ten Land Rovers and 2 million km on, the business had grown to a 100-plus utility and van hire operation. Steve's passion now is **Range Rover Sport TdV8** with off-road tyres and 300K km.

He wrote the book **Unlock Your Land Rover Genius, Intel from 50 Years x 14 Land Rovers x 2 Million Km** (Global Publishing, 2017) to inspire others.

For more info see:
www.landrovergenius.com



Continued on next page >>



The **Land Rover Experience** programme now operates in eight countries introducing new generations to the awesome DNA standard in every model of Land Rover.

Modern Land Rovers have improved on and off-road ability, more power, more torque, more strength, more comfort, more safety more reliability and far greater economy.

Left: A rare 10 seat **Defender 147** in the UK. Charlotte from QLD is on the “work bench”.

Below: Land Rovers have always delivered generous ability and features. The new models continue this theme using 21st century materials. Large iPhone-style touch screens deliver exceptional amounts of information for safe driving on all roads and surfaces. Computer controlled technology improves grip when braking and accelerating. Clever air springs change ride heights on and off road. If the Land Rover gets stuck the suspension automatically extends even further to restore traction.



Fast switching hydraulics optimizes the handling on all roads with any load. This is impressive especially with a laden roof rack! The independent suspension also behaves like a rigid beam axle to aid progress over, say, fallen logs. The body is all aluminium, saving 600kg. It will tow 3.5T. A stunning 4x4!

The newest Land Rover model is the **Range Rover Velar** (top right). It has a strong aluminium chassis and body too with true to brand Land Rover DNA. It is further packed with luxury car features befitting a top-end European sedan. The Land Rover Motto: **Above and Beyond** rings true in every aspect. For example, it has a generous and useful measure of three large iPhone-style touch-screen displays. Flexibility means the satnav can be displayed where the speedo and tachometer are normally. There is a “head-up” windshield view too for speed and selected data, so no limit to the information at hand.

Climbing ability is built into all new Land Rovers: **The Land Rover Discovery Sport** (below) has awesome space, handling and economy. It is amazingly quiet and has exceptional all-trail 4x4 ability. The ‘Mud and Ruts’ program maintains traction uphill with two diagonally opposite wheels off the ground, as above. The **Discovery 5** (bottom right) will conquer any terrain with 7 passengers. This Land Rover is cleverly designed to **wade 900mm** without a snorkel. It may go deeper but the rear can float



off unless weighed down. Flooding inside or loading up will help here! It has 16 forward gears, with the transfer gearbox option, full time 4x4 traction, plus very intelligent electronics, which provide staggering ability.

The 3.0l bi-turbo diesel version is fast. It flies. It has big wheels and brakes on each corner, precise steering and excellent ground clearance for exciting drives on twisting country roads. It is a driver's car, which comes to life like no other Land Rover before it. Fittingly, 82 judges voted it Best Design World Car of The Year 2017. Now that is a Land Rover!

Land Rover is now the largest car exporter and manufacturer in the UK, building record vehicles numbers. They now account for 30% of all British car exports. The brand is delivering in spades and these tough vehicles will be on our roads for many decades. On thing is for sure, over years their paint may fade away, but they will never rust out! Enjoy life; “adopt” a **Landy** into your family. Then go explore Australia in comfort and style with safety and economy. **Happy Roving!**

Thanks to **TOOWOOMBA LAND ROVER** for drives. Footnote: The all-new Defender is expected by 2020.

BE PREPARED

QUICK DEPLOY. FAST RESPONSE



UNIT AVAILABLE IN 360L OR 600L

Call 1800 011 000 or visit resources.rapidspray.net/firescout



IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR,

Australian manufacturer Rapid Spray are launching the SprayScout and its variants, the FireScout and the PressureScout. Rapid Spray have developed some really innovative equipment over the past few years, and it's obvious the FireScout is a product of many years of listening to customer needs for more compact fire equipment.

Earlier this month we were asked by Rapid Spray to take the first manufactured FireScout 360L out for a test run and let them know what we thought. Keen to try the new unit out, Kinsley and I took the FireScout out early in August and immediately ran into a few issues! The FireScout features handy tie-down points on all four corners of the tank, but being excited to get started, we unstrapped the unit and pulled it towards the tailgate of the ute for a closer look.

Backing up to a dam, we started filling up the tank, but as we were on a slope, and the FireScout got heavier, without us noticing, it started to slide down the back of the ute. By the time Kinsley and I had noticed, the tank flipped off the back of the ute and straight into the dam! Quickly, we pulled the tank out of the dam, but it still came out completely covered in mud and we thought that we had ruined the unit!

Washing all the mud off the unit, we were happy to note that the FireScout hadn't suffered any damage and was able to be re-started with minimal hassle. In saying that, we are not advising to drop the FireScout into a dam next time you are filling the unit up! Making sure the unit was now secured to our ute, we finished filling the tank, and headed out to test the FireScout's capabilities.

Refilling the unit was easy with the supplied 38mm hose for sucking water out of the dam which took no time at all, however we did think the hose

could be longer for dams that are harder to reach.

The versatility of this unit was very surprising. Not only would it fit into the back of a UTV tray, but it also fit neatly into my dual cab Navara between the wheel arches perfectly. With the easy tie down points which also double as handles, and the forklift points built it, it would be a breeze to swap the unit between your different vehicles including tub back utes.

As we drove around our property we noticed the FireScout didn't move around due to the built-in baffles inside the tank, keeping the FireScout steady the whole trip meaning there was little to no loss of water, and the ute wasn't swaying with the slosh of the water.

With the combination of a poly hose reel with 36m of fire spec hose and adjustable nozzle, the very powerful Honda motor (which still worked perfectly with just a quick wash down and check even after being fully submerged in dam water!) and Aussie FireChief pump, the FireScout was very capable in reaching everything we required it to and more.

We did feel the hose clamp which secures the suction line could have



been positioned differently for better movement of the supply hose, and a net system on the left where the suction hose is kept would be an improvement on the current metal framework.

The overall look of the FireScout is great with its streamlined look, and built in spot for the hose reel, pump and motor which are all easily accessed. There is also an integrated additional 70L tank which Rapid Spray informed us can be used for foam concentrate when the optional foam system is fitted. Though small in stature, the FireScout does not sacrifice on performance.

We would highly recommend this unit to anyone whether it be industrial, commercial, emergency services or for home protection.

Reviewed by Kinsley and Al Talbot

For further information on the FireScout, call Rapid Spray on 1800 011 000 or visit resources.rapidspray.net/firescout



Discover your undiscovered in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Region

Written by Kimberley Pickrell for Visit Queanbeyan-Palerang

Located in the picturesque tablelands between the NSW South Coast, Snowy Mountains and the Southern Highlands, Queanbeyan-Palerang is an area unrivalled in the natural beauty of majestic farmland, lush and wild national parks and early colonial heritage.

Travellers may be forgiven for having unwittingly passed Queanbeyan-Palerang on route to other destinations; the region has remained a well-kept secret, maintaining an aura of mystery that few have uncovered.

However, the secret is now out and Queanbeyan-Palerang is quickly emerging as a destination of superior offerings.

For the discerning traveller, the countryside is unspoilt with stunning farmland and national parks playing host to a multitude of activities and fine produce, steeped in Australia's rich rural heritage.

A Rich Heritage

There is a little place inside everyone where exhilaration arises from an appreciation of our history and Queanbeyan-Palerang has a complex, inspiring past. The Ngarigo, Gundungurra, Ngunnawal and Yuin people originally inhabited

various areas of the region, centring their lives on intimate cultural relationships with the land and its provisions.

The 1820s saw the first European explorers arrive in the region, largely attracted by the profits of sheep grazing, a pursuit well suited to large land parcels and cooler climates. The influx of settlers sweeping across the region saw Braidwood proclaimed a town in 1833, Bungendore in 1837 and Queanbeyan in 1838.

Today, each township is home to well-maintained heritage buildings that uniquely reflect the era of their birth.

A new economic imperative in the post-

depression 1850s, saw the development of the Wool Road between the region and the coast to ease the overland journey for producers. The new route reduced the cost of their product reaching market, opening up the option of joining the shipping lanes into Sydney.

Gold fever overwhelmed the region after small traces were found in Queanbeyan, leading to larger mines being established south of Braidwood, in Araluen and Majors Creek. Thousands of new arrivals from China, Ireland and elsewhere arrived, hoping to strike it rich. From here, the region's rich multicultural future was assured.

In the 1870s, copper was struck at Foxlow Station in Captains Flat. 'The Flat,' as it is now affectionately known, was rumoured to be named after a white bullock called Captain, who would slip away from the station to graze along the banks of the Molonglo River.

The mines at Captains Flat still stand today, visible to travellers from a viewing platform with spectacular, panoramic views across the township.

The region's romantic history of struggle and hard times would not be complete without some ruthless bushrangers. Settlers were terrorised and murdered, their settlements pillaged and ransacked.

Some of these bushrangers remain household names today. Ben Hall, responsible for Australia's biggest gold robbery, rode the area in 1965. The brutal Clarke Brothers, whose crimes 'were so shocking that they never made their way into bushranger folklore — people just wanted to forget about them,' outmatched the likes of Ned Kelly and Capt Thunderbolt with their crimes.

In 2017, the townsfolk of Braidwood held a re-enactment of the Clarke Brothers' deadly showdown with police in 1867. The commemoration, 150 years after the event, was a means of acknowledging the era and the 'system of the times that worked against poor rural families'.

Chronicling this rich history of the region are the Braidwood and Queanbeyan Museums.

Braidwood Museum - 186 Wallace Street, Braidwood – open Friday to Sunday 11am to 2pm.

Queanbeyan Museum - 10 Farrer Place, Queanbeyan – open Saturday to Sunday 1pm to 4pm

Following this rich heritage, the region is maturing into a contemporary modern tourist mecca, rich with culture that celebrates its past, present and future.

Braidwood today

Travellers are drawn to Braidwood to uncover the dramatic national parks, historic homesteads, boutique shopping

and the amazing freshness and vivacity of the regional produce - served up into fine local cuisine.

As an enchanting country town, steeped in colonial history and rural Australian heritage, the township of Braidwood has been around since its location was selected in 1833. After settlers arrived in the early 1820s, the Government selected a parcel of land including a large section of 'Braidwood Farm,' a piece of land granted to the town's most important settler, Dr Thomas Braidwood Wilson.

The government resumed a section of Wilson's property and consequently named the town after the farm. The historic farm, renamed Mona Farm, exists today under new ownership as a luxurious Estate with heritage accommodation nestled amidst English gardens and farmland. Mona farm is part of the living history that still thrives in Braidwood today.

The first town listed on the NSW state heritage register in 2007, Braidwood is a vivid, bustling example of a historical

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¹ Regions were determined using the watershed basis as a template. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>

² Re-enactment to look back at capture of Australia's deadliest bushrangers at Braidwood – Bill Brown 10 April 2017 - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-10/anniversary-of-clarke-bushrangers-capture/8431500> ³ Ibid

streetscape where the original buildings are still open to the public and original settlers' cottages dot the lanes and outlying villages.

Having gone through a boom in agriculture, the 1840s Depression and the rise and decline of the 1850s Gold Rush, Braidwood's prosperity increased, leading to the establishment of fine period buildings, which, like Mona Farm, still remain today.

To bring the town's heritage into the present, the people of Braidwood have delicately restored the precious 19th century buildings and introduced new businesses and reinvigorated the town's traditional businesses to provide a wide range of products and services that embrace and honour the town's heritage.

The town has become home to hobby farmers, artists, writers, poets, historians and creators who are proud of the area's history

Bungendore

As you drive along the Kings Highway from Braidwood towards Canberra,

visitors will arrive in the beautiful village of Bungendore. The town and the nearby Lake George were proposed potential sites for the new national capital in 1901, however, despite not being the crowned capital location, the town's history, charm and location are a winning destination for tourists and locals.

Initially the town was a collection of large sheep and cattle stations but the arrival of rail in 1885 saw rapid growth resulting in the building of churches, schools, a post office and court house.

The first explorer passed through Bungendore in 1824, with a steady influx of settlers to the area as the years past. By 1837, with the introduction of the mail service, Bungendore was declared a town and continues to be a relocation destination for many sea changers, with many of the original farms still operating today.

The town, like Braidwood, has attracted many artists, hobby farmers, small business owners and creatives to its space and is a hotspot for galleries and boutique shopping. It is home to a range of beautiful galleries and boutique cafes...

check out the Bungendore Woodworks Gallery to pick up something unique on your travels.

Queanbeyan

Europeans arrived in 1820, with the first use of land a property named 'Quinbean'; an Aboriginal word for 'clear water'. While searching for the Murrumbidgee River, Joseph Wild, James Vaughan and Charles Throsby Smith came across the present location of Queanbeyan.

They were the first non-indigenous persons to see the present location of Queanbeyan when they discovered the junction of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers on December 8, 1820.

Proclaimed as a settlement in 1838, this tiny township grew and became the epicentre of a thriving primary producing district. Nineteenth century churches, public houses and historic buildings can still be seen today.

Canberra's foundation in 1913 changed Queanbeyan significantly. It created new avenues for employment. It boosted building and housing development. And

in 1972, with a population of over 15,000, Queanbeyan was proclaimed a city. It is now one of the fastest growing inland cities in NSW.

The city is home to many art galleries, studios and other creative spaces making Queanbeyan a great spot to stop and visit. As the central hub of business to the region, Queanbeyan is expected to undergo dramatic changes in the future.

Meet the Makers

Engaging experiences and real people; Queanbeyan-Palerang offers visitors the opportunity to experience local life, by helping with the daily tasks on a farmstay, walking the vineyard and chatting to winemakers, taking part in a truffle hunt or picking your own chestnuts or Christmas cherries, getting hands on with a cooking class or learning a few tricks of the trade from craftspeople and artists.

There are a number of galleries throughout Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Braidwood; each with their own unique flair and offerings. If you are interested in exploring the region's galleries yourself, take a peek at the Visit Queanbeyan-Palerang website.

If a farm experience is more of interest, the area is proud to boast eight cool climate wineries, a cherry orchard and chestnut farm. For a fresh, traditionally made cider, there's the opportunity to experience genuine cider made on either single variety or blended apple.

If caring for injured and orphaned wildlife is on the bucket list, visitors can experience a stay at Tiandi Wildlife Sanctuary, or take part in a farming experience at one of the region's numerous farmstays where visitors can experience life on a working farm and enjoy the delicacies of consuming fresh, local produce.

The Great Outdoors

For visitors dreaming of escaping to little-known national parks or unending rolling countryside, the region is a must-see destination. Close to Queanbeyan lies Googong Dam, which is the perfect location for a stroll through nature and the opportunities for bird and wildlife watching, fishing and photography are boundless.

There is also the opportunity to take in the fascinating natural landmark of London

Bridge and the heritage-listed London Bridge Homestead.

For more remote adventures, the region is home to Monga, Deua, Tallaganda, Budawang and Morton National Parks – there is limitless nature to enjoy and explore. Visitors can choose from bike riding in Tallaganda, exploring the Corn Trail on horseback in Monga, or hiking to Pigeon House Mountain from Wog Wog Campground.

One of the region's most spectacular natural phenomena, the monumental Big Hole in Deua National Park, is a moderate hike from the parking lot and a delight for photographers and nature-enthusiasts.

For those less mobile, the wheelchair-friendly Penance Grove walking track in Monga National Park is an accessible, easy way to discover rainforests and Gondwana plants.

There are plenty of campsites throughout the region, with most situated alongside water sources including the Shoalhaven River, Mongarlowe Creek, Deua and Corang Rivers, making visiting the area convenient and comfortable during warmer weather conditions.



Linger Longer

While camping in the great outdoors comes highly recommended in this region, more traditional accommodation is also available.

Affordable motel and serviced apartment accommodation is spread throughout the district or, if your tastes are a little more unique, consider the wide range of B&Bs, guesthouses and farmstays that can offer a truly memorable experience.

A range of itineraries, from day trips to multi-day explorations, are available to help plan your visit and discover the best of the region.

Plan Your Visit

Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Braidwood are the perfect places to visit when travelling within the Canberra Region. The new Visit Queanbeyan-Palerang website offers extensive inspiration for planning your holiday and showcases the range of attractions available.

The region is also home to a huge range of iconic events and festivals where the local spirit and cultures really come to life.

From rodeos, camp drafts, team sorting and local markets to multicultural festivals, Christmas in July celebrations, a Riverside Symphony or an outdoor theatre performance, the Queanbeyan Palerang region is never short of a good time and a spectacular event.

More information about the region, experiences and local events can be found at visitqueanbeyanpalerang.com.au or by calling the Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre on **02 6285 6307**.



Festival on the river - Queanbeyan



Dancers at Multicultural Festival - Queanbeyan





FIRE RESCUE SAFETY AUSTRALIA

Fire Rescue Safety Australia (FRSA) has been an integral part of the emergency services landscape for many years, infact the company is now 15 years strong.

The team at FRSA are professional equipment suppliers and service agents who provide expertise in equipment selection to assist you to prepare and manage your emergency response capability.

FRSA's Integrated Management System is certified by DNV-GL. They employ quality people, promote quality products and provide quality services that mirror the certifications they have achieved.



With branches in all states FRSA has operated in Sydney in Rosehill since mid- 2016.

Scot Sullivan FRSA's National Agency Manager works from the Sydney office. He said "It provides us an enormous amount of satisfaction, working with the world's best manufacturers and innovators, accompanied with the trust and relationships we build with the men and women who devote their careers and personal time as volunteers, to protecting our communities, saving lives and keeping our country safe"

FRSA offers a holistic "One Source" capability providing its customers the opportunity to streamline their

procurements channels, reduce risk and maintain their assets all through a company who is passionate about taking care of your business and compliance requirements. FRSA represents a myriad of manufacturers who lead the world in their respective fields. They are proud to represent companies such as Holmatro, Task Force Tips (TFT), Avon Protection (Argus), Nardi Compressori, Euramco (Ramfan), Cobalt Light,



Eflare, Grace Industries, Pax Bags, Biomarine, Microgard, Fire Service Plus, SafeQuip, Specialised Inflatable Technology (SIT), MSA Safety, 3M Scott Safety and many more.

Specializing in routine service, maintenance, commissioning and overhaul of emergency response equipment there is no one that is better equipped to maintain your equipment than the team at FRSA.

When lives are on the line it is critical that all life safety and rescue equipment are compliant to local and international standards, which includes following a service regime in accordance with manufacturer requirements. A well-coordinated service program will maximise the life of your equipment and will protect the warranty that comes with all new product purchases.

The highly skilled and competent team of technicians at FRSA can service your equipment on site or in our state of the art service centres. We also have a fleet of fully functional mobile service units ready to respond to your service requirements, "anytime anywhere"

Scot went on to say, "We need no greater motivation than to look directly at our first responders, our customers... who dedicate themselves to our safety every day and to know that we have the best job in the world"

If you want to know more about FRSA and how the team can help you with equipment selection or periodical maintenance, simply call the Sydney office on 02 8059 6902.

For additional information, you can also visit the FRSA website, www.frsa.com.au. Look out for their competitions, posts and news on social media. www.facebook.com/FRSA1





Here’s a story about the most amazing Community based Radio Station, 2WEB.... Outback Radio, based in Bourke

We’ve chosen to share this story with you all as Radio 2WEB being community based & not part of some large commercial group, broadcasts to a large & in many cases, an isolated audience which includes families of which many would be our fellow RFS Volunteer firefighters and 2WEB are now celebrating 40 years of fabulous service to their audience.

We suggest as you read this story, why not visit their website & click on: **Listen Live**

📶 <https://listen.outbackradio.com.au/>

2WEB broadcasts from Bourke, which is situated in the centre of the Far Western region of NSW and is regarded as ‘the gateway to the ‘real’ outback’. Their broadcast area covers over 130,000 sq. kilometres. There are few ‘major centres in the listening area but many smaller towns and communities. The population they service fluctuates during the year owing to the seasonal nature of much of the industry, however, the estimated static population of their listening area is around 100,000 people.



The centre of their listening area is also the point where two of Australia’s newest highways meet. ‘The Kidman Way’ is the most direct route from Melbourne to Darwin and is rapidly gaining favour with transport companies and tourists alike. The Kamilaroi Highway links Melbourne to Brisbane and has long been the standard route for Victorian, South Australian and Western travellers alike to make their way in to coastal QLD. Running through the heart of the outback is the Mitchell Hwy, which has been the lifeline of the western region for many years and now links Sydney with the northern capitals via the fore mentioned routes.



The Bourke Shire estimates the vehicles travelling these Highways to be in the region of 1000 per day. With seasonal fluctuations, the annual figure is in the region of 500,000 vehicles per year.

Whether static or transient, recreational or industrial, there are in excess of 100,000 potential listeners in the western region at any given time. 2WEB has refined its programming over its lifetime to become the preferred station in the outback, and for many of the audience for much of the time, 2WEB is the only station available. The Western Region of NSW is one of the most diverse industrial areas in Australia. Rural based industry is, of course, by far the most prominent and is in itself, remarkably diverse. Various forms of irrigated agriculture have gradually overtaken the instantly

recognisable staples such as broad acre farming and grazing. From wine and table grapes, olives, citrus and stone fruit, cotton and wheat, through to more experimental crops such as jojoba. Along with the viticulture and irrigated agriculture, mining and mineral exploration have featured prominently in the local economies.



Image: An aerial image of Bourke, by Joanne Bond.

By far the fastest moving new industry in the region is tourism. Riding on the back of the nation’s success as a whole the outback has become a high priority destination for international and domestic markets alike. Having become far more accessible over recent years due to increased infrastructure and more easily recognised due to the communications explosion, the outback has come to symbolise Australia as much as the Harbour Bridge or the Opera House.

2WEB features prominently as a key part of the outback’s psyche. The station has been a saviour for the outback in times of emergency as well as a companion during the easier times. It has been, on many occasions, the only link that isolated communities have with the rest of the world. It is also the device by which travellers in the west can negotiate the sometimes-treacherous outback region.

The Western Herald

In 2018, 2WEB took over the operations of the Western Herald Newspaper, their newspaper, which was founded way back in 1887. The Western Herald is Bourke’s only local newspaper and has proudly served its community for more than 130 years.

The first issue of the Herald itself was released on October 1, 1887, but the paper was a resurrection of sorts of an earlier paper — the Bourke Watchman. The Bourke Watchman and North-Western Advocate was printed in a brick premises in Oxley Street across from what is now the National Parks and Wildlife office. Under editors William B. Dixon and H.K. Bloxham, the Watchman had a short and apparently tumultuous run between the years 1882 and 1886.

A copy of the first issue is in the keeping of the Back O’ Bourke Exhibition Centre; It is a single sheet printed on calico and dated January 2nd, 1882. While it announces the launch of the new journal the editors also asks forgiveness for the delay in producing an issue in a proper form: “we are powerless in the hands of the fates and carriers — requesting you accept this as number one, we hope to place number two in your hands in proper form at the proper date.”

Henry Lawson was a writer for the Western Herald, he wrote under a pseudonym. Some of his unpolished works were found at the old Western Herald Office only a few years ago.

Today the newspaper is available both in print & digitised form.

2WEB radio station presenters themselves all come from a vast range of backgrounds & there is one very special presenter that has without question, become a true legend of the Outback.

May Watkins who with her Show, Country Beat, every Saturday lunchtime 12pm – 2pm, delivers the most amazing range of popular hits of the past & present.



Image: 2WEB Outback Radio Host – May Watkins

May ended up out west from Lismore having moved to Byrock in 1963, she landed in Bourke shortly afterwards and has been there ever since. Having raised her family of four kids there, May is well and truly a local lady and well entrenched in the history of 2WEB. She’s been volunteering at 2WEB for over 30 years and has her fingers in many pies including being an announcer, the morning front desk receptionist and she’s also on the board of directors.

She’s built up an extremely loyal following of listeners who listen out for their Cheerio’s every week in fact, she’s so popular that she’s even had a “Spotify Megamix” created & named in her honour – simply Google search; May Watkins Spotify Megamix

A brilliant collection of May’s favourites have been compiled so happy listening.

Continued on next page >>

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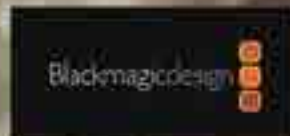
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Four Wheel Drive NSW & ACT INC

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Phone: 1300 4WDNOW

secretary@4wdnow.com



Thanks for the opportunity to give your great volunteers a bit of an insight as to what the Four Wheel Drive NSW/ACT Association is all about.

I guess in a lot of ways we are a lot like you, we are volunteers too and the main reason we exist is to give our members a voice, everything after that is just a bonus. In some ways it would be nice if we didn't need to exist, but we all know that is a bit of a dream. We are made up of seventy-five clubs all over the state with approximately four thousand members, mostly families. We are part of a National Council and the Australian Confederation of Motor Clubs (ACMC) and the Australian Automobile Aftermarket Association (AAAA). All up we are a part of over two hundred thousand club members, so we have a say.



So, what do we do, well we have two main sides to the Association that then get broken down into smaller sub categories. The two main items are what we drive and where we drive too, that

would be our four-wheel drives and the places we visit. To achieve this, we have representation at many different levels.

With what we drive we have affiliation with the ACMC, with this we have a committee position, and this gives us a seat on the Road Safety Council as well as representation on Vehicle Standards Working groups. The biggest one of these to date for four-wheel drive owners is the amount of input we had on the Suspension Manual that has been adopted by the State Government as legislation, this was a big win for common sense. Something that is not that often seen when dealing with government departments. Other groups are working on break testing, bull bars and aftermarket lights, this has been very interesting and not as simple as one would think.

We have recently made some great advances with this relationship and a better understanding from the RMS and Transport NSW. We still have a long way to go with some old school thinking, but we are making progress.

Where we go is a lot more complicated and we would imagine a lot of our issues would be familiar to most of you. Just identifying who the landholder is can be a complicated issue and then finding the right contact can be just as confusing. Our big three

are National Parks, Forestry and Lands. We have built good relationships with all these landholders but with the ever-changing managers it is almost a full-time job just to keep up with the changes. We use the clubs as a way of staying in touch with the local representatives and we have regional committees that help with the region managers. At a state level we have contacts with Ministers and their advisors.

By having members on the Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) for Parks and have just recently had the President appointed to the Ministers Advisory Committee we have representation at all levels and are finally starting to be heard and taken as a serious voice.

Our members spend a lot of their time and expertise to help with volunteering for the different landholders, with tree planting,



rubbish removal, property maintenance and track clearing. They also help with different charities, kids love riding in four-wheel drives, probably not as exciting as a fire engine, but we try. We enjoy spending time with the traditional landholders and

this is particularly important for our kids as we all know nothing beats a proper education.

The Association is also a Registered Training Organisation and offers our members training at a reduced cost but at a level way above the required format. Also, we hold the Four-Wheel Drive and Adventure Show at Eastern Creek each year, this helps us to showcase our members and the industry that works with us. Our members have many interclub events and we are always trying to promote more of them, the biggest interclub event is our Jamboree, we have just revived this after a ten-year break and it has already made a massive impact on the members and the way we work and play together.



Just on closing we are always looking for ways to help, we are often used after fire or flood as we are totally self-sufficient, so if you ever need a hand, we are just a call

away. It would be great to build a more formal relationship with your Association but don't let that stop you from just contacting your local club and asking for a hand, it is what we do.

Smartphone Photography

Today's smartphones pack some serious photographic punch.

By Nick Rains

THERE IS AN EXPRESSION IN THE PHOTOGRAPHY WORLD:

The best camera is the one you have with you. Given that smartphones are so common these days, and we almost always have them with us, then it follows that (some of the time at least) your phone is your best camera!

Smartphone cameras are extremely convenient and they are easy to use, which means that people often turn to their phone to grab a shot when they don't want to go to the trouble of getting their 'proper' camera out. Convenient does not always equate to good, though;

so let's look at the pros and cons of using phones as photography tools ... and look at some ways to make the most of their tiny little cameras.

PROS AND CONS

There are some good and bad points about smartphones' cameras.

Negatives:

- Small sensors and tiny lenses limit the quality of the image. Low light ability is very limited.
- Only one focal length unless you 'zoom' the shot digitally (which reduces quality) or add an external lens adapter.

- Shutter response is often sluggish – you can miss fast-moving subjects.
- Many phones are all 'auto' so you can't necessarily control the settings.
- Phones only produce JPEGs, not RAW files, thus limiting the quality.
- No tripod mount for long exposures.
- Hard to hold steady.

Positives:

- Image resolution in reasonable light can be surprisingly good. iPhones can make A3 prints with a bit of care.



Image: Mangroves

- The internal processing of the image seems to deal with contrasty subjects quite well.
- No controls to worry about, and the auto-only design works well enough most of the time.
- Very light and convenient to use – most people carry their phones with them at all times.

I'll be mostly concerned with Apple's iPhone in this article since it's the one I have most experience with, having owned each model since the iPhone 3. I'm told the Samsung range of phones also offer excellent imaging ability and can be modified by third party 'apps' much like the iPhone.



Image: Karatha

Image Quality

Image quality can be excellent, within the limits of the phone's sensor design. I have made excellent A3 prints from my iPhone 5, prints that no-one could pick as having been taken on the smartphone. I simply treated each image like any other photo and applied my usual polishing methods in Adobe Lightroom. Even straight out of the phone itself, the images can print really well.

Once the light levels begin to drop, the image quality drops off in direct proportion. What looks just fine on the phone's screen can in fact be very noisy and lacking in contrast if you try to make a print. Low light limits are to be expected, however. Small sensors (make that 'tiny')

are always limited in their light gathering abilities. So don't expect too much in the dark!

Operation

The iPhone 5s and iPhone 6, straight out of the box, have a few controls which are not immediately apparent and that are very helpful.

Two excellent features spring to mind. The first is the ability to shoot a very fast burst of images rather than one image – thus making it far easier to get the moment 'just right'. Hold the shutter button down and the phone will fire off a burst of images at 10 per second. Right away you can pick the best one, or more, out of the

sequence as 'keepers' and delete the rest.

The other feature I like is the ability to specify the focus and the exposure point by pressing and holding your finger on the screen where you want the camera to focus. You can also swipe your finger up and down to the right of the focus box to manually increase or decrease the exposure – great for backlit subjects which sometimes

come out as silhouettes. Unlike many cameras, if the 'viewfinder' image looks good on the phone's screen, it will look just as good after you have taken it.

The iPhone has a shutter button on the screen but it's a bit awkward to use and hold the phone steady at the same time. Better to use the volume control buttons on the side to take the shot – as they fall under your fingers more naturally while you grip the phone.

Advanced Features

Panoramas: Phones can do more than just take single shots. Most have some sort of panorama tool where you set the camera to 'panorama' mode; then, starting at the left, trigger the camera and turn to the right slowly (following a prompt

on the screen). This is called a sweep-panorama and the internal processor joins together a whole series of stills 'behind the scenes'. You end up with a shot which is a lot wider than a single shot could ever be ... anything from slightly wide to a full 360 degree panorama.

HDR: High-contrasting subjects sometime need more than one photo to capture the entire range of tones between the brightest parts to the shadows. Most current model phones have some sort of auto HDR mode which takes multiple shots and squashes them together into one photo. The results can be a bit varied but many times you do get a better result than shooting a normal, single image.

There are other imaging features, but most of them are based around video capture – something outside the scope of this article.



Third Party Apps

The true power of the iPhone, and to a certain extent Android based phones, is the wealth of add-on applications that you can get either for a few dollars or totally free. Searching in the iTunes store for Photography Apps shows 1,481 different choices!

Some apps have become almost 'standard' for people wanting to squeeze more out of the phone camera, and also to do a bit of post-processing. Here are a few that I use regularly.

Camera Operations: The built-in camera controls are fine but there is a lot more you can do.

Continued on next page >>



Image: Condamine Gorge

VSCOcam and Camera Awesome, along with many others, give you more nuanced control over camera controls such as white balance, focus points, ISO etc. ‘Manual’ allows full control of all camera controls much like you get on a fully-fledged DSLR.

ProHDR is a more advanced version of the camera’s own HDR feature and does a better job of dealing with high contrast subjects. TrueHDR works well, too.

Post Processing: A straightforward photo will satisfy most people but why not express your creativity and produce something with more flair? You can add texture overlays, frames, grunge effects, drama, film grain – the list is endless. In fact there is such a huge range of options that there’s a whole photography activity called iPhoneography with forums, photo sharing, competitions and so on.

Again, there are a whole host of apps that can do all sorts of ‘creative’ things – some good, some a bit ordinary and some appallingly tacky! One of the best is called

Snapseed and it comes free from Google (so its pedigree is impeccable). Snapseed allows you to easily take your photo and turn it into a work of art with controls such as Tune Image, Crop, Frame, Grunge, Drama, Detail, Grain and so on. It’s easy to use and very powerful – so much so that even though I have tried other apps, I keep coming back to this one.

Your phone camera can indeed be a viable alternative to a ‘real’ camera – but only as long as you are aware of its limitations. Your camera phone is likely to be the one you turn to if something crops up that you just have to grab ... and a modest quality photo is better than no photo at all.

All photos in this article have been taken with a smartphone.

“The true power of the iPhone, and to a certain extent Android based phones, is the wealth of add-on applications that you can get either for a few dollars or totally free.”



Image: Fowlers Bay



Image: Gammon ranges



Image: Sugarloaf rock



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Community Expectations

Whilst the VFFA acknowledges that a hierarchical structure is required for fireground command and control, it is equally important for fire service leaders to recognise local knowledge, tactical input and decision making.

Questioning authority (Respectful Interaction) and providing local input is endorsed in RFS training under the heading "Crew Resource Management". This principle is taught by the NSW RFS but not always followed.

Background Information

The Sir Ivan fire that occurred in February 2017, has left many farmers feeling that they were abandoned and ignored.

- The feelings of abandonment by the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) during the firefighting operations, and
- In the wake of this disaster, farmers have been ignored by the NSW State Government as they continue to wait for an inquiry that was welcomed by the Minister for Emergency Services, Mr Troy Grant.

The VFFA has saved an audio clip that clearly demonstrates how Mr Grant welcomes an inquiry into the Sir Ivan Fire but to this date, an inquiry has not been conducted.

Surly Mr Grant knows that the farmers in his electorate are not happy with his inaction to properly investigate and follow up on the operational aspects of the Sir Ivan fire and decisions made by the RFS hierarchy.

Could it be that Mr Grant's decision to stand down as a candidate in the next State election is linked to his inactions relating to this fire in his own back yard.

The NSW Government needs to listen to the feedback from farmers and firefighters in the leadup to the next election or they will lose many seats in country NSW.

The VFFA is determined to see the farmers and our volunteers get a fair go. The following Sir Ivan Fire story and letter to the Kangaroo Valley firefighters (recorded as minute) has been prepared by Mike Gorman.

Mike is the Captain of the Kangaroo Valley Rural Fire Brigade (RFB).

Forward by Mike Gorman

While on the long bus journey back to the Shoalhaven from Coonabarabran, Brigade members discussed what we had just experienced and what would be the implications for our Brigade if

our local farmers and community were treated in the same way as what we had just witnessed on the Sir Ivan fireground.

For me personally, being self-employed and earning most of my income from my local community, I was very conscious of the possible outcome for myself and other Brigade members if the Brigade didn't "have a go" in the time of need.

As the Brigade Captain, I was also very keen to understand where I stood from an ethical, moral or legal sense if my local community was expecting one thing and I was being directed by higher authorities in the RFS to do, in effect, the opposite.

The following letter (recorded as a minute) represents the outcome of my journey to understand where I felt I stood and was my attempt to document what I had learnt and to pass that information onto the Brigade members. A copy of the letter was also supplied to the local District Office at the time of its release.

RFS management have had a copy of the original letter (minute) for well over a year. Just recently the letter was passed onto the Minister by my State local member of Parliament. I now hope that this story can be of some help for volunteers across the state, particularly for those that operate in the smaller rural communities and have strong connections to their local community.

In my view, our strike team badly let down both the local community and the local RFS Brigades. Four times in the one day our strike team failed to provide assistance when there was either a direct request for assistance or at the very least an obvious need for assistance. Two of these failures are identified in the letter (minute).

The first of the other two cases was at the beginning of the day when the fire first broke containment lines and was beginning to impact on houses and farm land. Sir Ivan Control, who, according to our briefing, had 7 fire trucks under his control, was desperately calling for more resources just as our strike team arrived on the fireground. Sir Ivan Control was not informed of the strike teams' availability even though the suggestion was put forward.

The other case not covered by the letter (minute), was at the other end of the day after the fire had skirted around the side of the small village of Leadville to the north east and had proceeded to burn through farm land along the Black Stump Way. Our strike team left Leadville and headed along the Black Stump Way towards Coolah. The strike team was not offering assistance to the farms along the way. We were in effect, leaving the fire ground when farm land and houses were still being impacted by fire. Just as we were leaving the fireground, a NSW Police Officer stopped our strike team as there had been a call for assistance just back

Continued on next page >>

down the road from where we had come. It turned out that a farmer who was fighting a grass fire by himself in his front paddock had seen the strike team drive past. After some discussion, the strike team turned around and headed back and eventually found the farmer who directed our strike team to his house where there were multiple fires burning in and around various farm buildings.

Letter addressed to all Members of the Kangaroo Valley Brigade (recorded as a minute)

All Members
Kangaroo Valley Brigade

Sir Ivan Fire Summary

The purpose of this minute is to update all members on the ongoing discussion about Kangaroo Valley’s deployment to the Sir Ivan Fire as part of Strike Team South 19 that has taken place over the last few months.

Status of dialogue between Kangaroo Valley and Region South/Shoalhaven Fire Control.

Extensive conversations and written correspondence has been had with staff from Shoalhaven Fire Control and Region South.

While a large range of issues have been discussed the major focus of the discussion has been around the reasons for the unwillingness of South 19 to undertake firefighting in particular when the local farming community were directly asking for help.

Unfortunately, I have to say that the only consistency in the answers I have received with respect to this question has been the inconsistent answers. The responses have ranged from: “the group officer froze” to “the group officer was following orders from the highest levels” and pretty much everything in between.

At this point I now believe from Kangaroo Valley’s perspective it does not matter why it happened. What is more important is what is the best course of action if members of the brigade were faced with this situation again.

Fireground SOP #1 Basic Priorities

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) clearly states that the RFS should provide a “Service to those in need”. I would recommend that all members of the brigade re-familiarize themselves with this SOP and that the concepts covered in this SOP continue to be a part of the brigade’s training program.

In my dialogue with Shoalhaven Fire Control I particularly focused on the issue: can a member be directed not to follow these SOPs, ie not to provide a service to those in need? My question was always prefaced with the assumptions that it was safe to help, the

crew had the correct skills and that there was not higher priority tasking. Shoalhaven Fire Control have responded that a RFS crew can be directed not to help, ie a crew can be directed not to follow Fireground SOP #1. On two occasions, I have asked Shoalhaven Fire Control for a reference to RFS documentation that could verify this position but on both occasions my requests for such documentation have gone unanswered.

Service Standard 1.1.1 Management of NSW RFS Policy Documents states that failing to comply with an SOP may result in” disciplinary action”. This applies to both staff and volunteer members.

I do not believe that any member of the RFS, staff or volunteer has the authority to direct a member of the RFS not to follow Fireground SOP #1.

Fireground SOP #13 Special Precautions During High Fire Danger and Above

This SOP states that all units are to be advised of any unusual command, control or communication arrangements. During the dialogue with Shoalhaven Fire Control we were told that a directive had been issued by the Incident Controller for the Sir Ivan Fire that there would be no active, direct firefighting. If this is the case then I believe this would fall under the category of an “unusual” command. South 19 was briefed by the Incident Controller in Coonabarabran on the Sunday morning before heading to the Sir Ivan Fire ground. At no stage during that briefing nor during the day were the crew leaders for South 19 informed about a directive that there would be no active firefighting.

It is possible that the Incident Controller does not have the authority to make a directive that would put a blanket limitation on firefighting. Even with large fires on the worst possible days there will always be parts of the fire and parts of the day when it is safe to conduct active direct firefighting. To deny the farming community RFS support when it is perfectly safe makes little sense and it would also contravene Fireground SOP #1. If it is established that the Incident Controller does have the authority to make such a directive then I believe there would be a clear moral obligation to make that directive known to both the volunteers and local community so as to limit the amount of anger that will inevitability be directed at the volunteers on the fireground.

At any future briefing at major fires I would recommend to all crew leaders that they actively ask is there any “unusual command, control or communication arrangements”. I would also recommend that you keep a written record of the briefing.

Group Officer Role at Major Fires

When South 19 left Shoalhaven Fire Control our group officer (Strike Team Leader) had no driver or scribe. According to our

I do not believe that any member of Government, be it the Premier of NSW or senior public servant as in the RFS Commissioner has the authority to direct RFS brigades not to help their communities. This line in the sand should never be crossed. Once it is crossed, as it was at the Sir Ivan Fire, then the very community model that the RFS is built around starts to disintegrate or decay. This was evident on the fireground at the Sir Ivan Fire with the visible anger been directed at the RFS volunteers. I have said on two occasions to senior RFS staff, only partly in jest, that we were in more danger of been shot from an angry farmer than been burnt. The Sir Ivan Fireground is only fireground that I have been to where as a member of the RFS I felt unwelcome, both from the local brigades and community. It could best be described as that we were “tolerated”.

Reflecting back on the day I now realise that we were witnessing and caught up in a dysfunctional attempt to manage a major public disaster. I have also said to RFS staff that in many ways it would have been better if South 19 was never on the fireground. Having five big red fire trucks sitting there while properties burnt just confused the local farmers and the volunteers alike. It has made me question why I am in the RFS. I would have provided a better service to the local community if I had driven there in a private vehicle and jump on one of the many farm vehicles that were actually firefighting and succeeding.

Implications for Kangaroo Valley

Bad fire days already come with a high level of stress but being directed not to help the local farmers when they are in effect begging for help resulted in a significant increase in my own level of stress that I was not prepared for. If this same situation was to occur in our own community where we may well know the faces and the names of those that are asking for help then I suspect the level of stress would go even higher.

At the Sir Ivan Fire, we were also directed to leave the Leadville community just as the fire approached the village. The flame heights were not big and fortunately for the local community the local brigades stayed. If we were directed to do this locally we may well know the faces and the names of those that you are being directed to leave behind.

Based on what I witnessed at the Sir Ivan Fire and what we have also seen, all be it to a smaller extent at other fires, it is highly likely that the RFS will be in a similar state of dysfunctionality come a major fire in Kangaroo Valley. Through the entire After Action Review (AAR) process and subsequent dialogue with senior RFS staff they rarely admit that anything was wrong with the party line of “no one died therefore we must have done a good job” being touted. In the case of my own AAR input the first strategy adopted by the RFS staff was to “shot the messenger”. When that didn’t work the second strategy was to bury the information. This was followed by “off the record discussion” and now we are in the

Continued on next page >>

Regional Manager not only should the group officer have at least one other person with them but that the other person should be the driver of the group vehicle, particularly once on Fireground. He went on to say that the group officer should be conducting the communication up the line, to the divisional commander or to fire control, and that the driver should be conducting the communication down the line, to the crew leaders. The Regional Manager also said that the expectation is that the driver would be an experienced firefighter.

I would recommend to all crew leaders that if you are ever faced with this situation again, where a strike team leader’s vehicle is not properly crewed, that this needs to addressed by Shoalhaven Fire Control before the strike team leaves the Shoalhaven.

Command and Control

Are they “orders” or “directives” and do you have to follow them? According to a recently released Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics they are directives and yes, you do have to comply with them. Importantly it also states that the directives have to be “lawful and reasonable”. Under normal circumstances where SOPs are being followed I would always recommend the following of directives from a more senior volunteer on the fire ground.

At the Sir Ivan Fire South 19 crews were directed not to help the community even when the farmers and their families were directly asking for help. The South 19 crews had no other tasking and it was safe to help. No explanation was given for this directive with the group officer mostly unwilling to communicate with the crew leaders or the farmers.

I believe this directive was definitely unreasonable and most probably unlawful in the sense that it directly contravenes Fireground SOP #1.

At any incident if you are directed to do something it is reasonable for you to ask for an explanation if you feel that one is needed and certainly if it appears that the directive contravenes standard procedures. I believe it is “unreasonable” not to be provided with an explanation if one is requested.

Community Service

The RFS is a community based fire service where members are appointed from within their local community rather than one of the three tiers of Government. As volunteer members of a local brigade we are in effect “community servants” rather than “public servants”. This is all clearly stated in RFS documentation. The very reason for the RFS existence at the brigade level is to help our local communities. The staff (public servant) side of the RFS is there is assist the local brigades to provide this service to local communities.

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS continued

shutdown phase. The defensive culture that seems to be pervasive throughout the RFS staff structure means that it is highly unlikely to learn from its mistakes and hence change and improve.

With this in mind it we need to be aware of the limitations of the support that we could expect out of the RFS. If they continue to send out group officer vehicles that are poorly manned it is highly likely that the support will be more of a hindrance than a help, just as South19 was to the local community around Leadville.

Local knowledge is the key to most firefighting activities and in the case of a major fire in Kangaroo Valley it will be the responsibility of our own crew leaders and crews to make the call about what they can and cannot do. If at any stage, you are directed to do something that you are not happy with then it is your responsibility to speak up.

If the person giving that direction is unwilling to communicate then I believe you are well within your rights to take the directive as being unreasonable and you should exercise your own judgment about the correct action to take.

What would I do next time?

In my own case if I am ever faced with the situation again where the public are asking for help and no reasonable explanation has already been provided for not helping I would, in company with the member of the public, approach the group officer seeking an explanation. If the group officer was either unwilling to communicate or could not provide a reasonable explanation I would go back to the crew and seek their opinion. If the crew was in agreement I would then proceed to provide the help that the public had requested.

Would I run away and leave a community like Leadville again? I know that I would not leave my own wife and family. I do not believe I would leave the Kangaroo Valley Village if the community had not first been evacuated. In the case of an unfamiliar village like Leadville where the community had not been evacuated I would endeavour to find out what the local brigades were planning to do before making a decision. In all likelihood, if my own crew agreed, I would then offer to assist the local brigades.

Ultimately, as each fire is different, these are questions that each crew leader would need to consider and answer for themselves. I would also recommend that not only the current crew leaders but all members of the brigade consider what they would do in a similar situation.

Mike Gorman
Captain
Kangaroo Valley RFB
6/10/17

Postscript by Mike Gorman

In no way do I blame our Group Officer for these failures to assist the local community, as in my opinion, he and the other group officers had been put in an impossible position by the decisions

that had been made by the RFS staff prior to the start of the day and subsequently during the day. It is worth noting that the RFS came out with the following statement as part of media update to RFS members and NSW public “Throughout this period, control of the fireground rested with local volunteers, who were supported by their local Incident Management Team” I do not believe that this is an accurate description of the command and control system that I witnessed. Whatever system was in place it failed both the local community and the volunteers.

The echo of the command and control issues that came so visibly to the surface during the Sir Ivan Fire are still reverberating through my own District today. Relationships have been significantly strained due to the unwillingness of the RFS to confront the thorny questions that arose from the Sir Ivan Fire.

The NSW Government finally addressed the elephant in the room with respect to the turf war between NSW Fire & Rescue and the RFS by holding an independent inquiry. I feel that it is again time for the NSW Government to act and establish an independent inquiry into both the RFS command and control system and the overall direction that the RFS has been heading in for some time now and whether this direction best serves the rural communities of NSW and in particular the farming community.



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Blatant Discrimination, a Complete Lack of Fairness
& the absence of Equal Opportunity.

Welcome to the NSW Rural Fire Service

- How many of you have ever wanted to undertake an RFS Course & been denied?
- How many of you have managed to get an RFS Qualification yet are repeatedly ignored in being given a chance to use those skills?
- Have you been repeatedly denied any opportunities....because you're not a "favourite" of the RFS Staff?

We know & you know that it's been going on for years under this current RFS Leadership. It's been incredibly blatant, it's been downright nasty & quite vindictive on so many occasions where decent Volunteers who put themselves forward, are denied an opportunity in place of the favourites, yes those who we've come to know as; The Yes Men

It's not in any one specific area, districts within Sydney are certainly a stand out feature of this problem obviously because of the larger membership base. In one particular Sydney district, the issue is so bad that the District Manager regularly blames the Group Captain for refusal of Volunteer opportunities....so as to hide from his own directives, which he imposes upon his fellow staff. This is but one of the many indicators behind the poor morale among that particular district's Volunteers.

What makes this all so much worse is that the current RFS Commissioner is long aware of these issues, yet he sits back allowing it to continue.

We've seen endless numbers of experienced Volunteers just up & walk away simply because certain RFS Staff don't like them, some Volunteers have stood firm & tried to fight the disease within the RFS but continue to be locked out & all to the detriment of the overall benefit of the wider communities of NSW.

Experienced Volunteers don't grow on trees!

Let's make one thing clear, this organisation was created by Volunteers over one hundred years ago, it's still owned today by the Volunteers whilst the RFS Staff were only ever put there to SUPPORT the Volunteers who put out the fires.

And that's the critical word, SUPPORT!

The Staff are not there to play mind games nor pit one Volunteer against another, as so often happens. Staff are not there to threaten, or intimidate, or bully or simply abuse their authority towards a Volunteer. We demand the RFS Commissioner steps up now & eradicates this insidious disease from our organisation of which he is extremely well paid to lead. Failure to make swift & major changes will see a very loud & repetitive campaign towards the Premier & the NSW Government in order to see this issue resolved once & for all.

There is after all, a State Election due in March 2019.

If you have suffered what has just been pointed out above, then contact us & share your story, which will be treated with total confidentiality: feedback@volunteerfirefighters.org.au

This is Your Chance to Make a Difference for the Bush

Robert Brown, MLC

AS WE MOVE CLOSER to the state election on March 23, there is a looming threat to rural areas that we can no longer ignore.

For too long, the major political parties have taken the bush for granted and neglected essential services, only offering lip-service and having the regular funding they we're already entitled to portrayed as something new being delivered. This cannot continue.

That's why having the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party in the Upper House of State Parliament is so important. Not only can our party hold the Government to account for their actions in Parliament by scrutinising legislation, but we can meticulously examine their decisions through the committee inquiry system.

You will all remember my Parliamentary inquiry into the Wambelong Fire near Coonabarabran and how it uncovered mismanagement by the Office of Environment and Heritage in risk mitigation of bushfires and how it made it more difficult for firefighters on the ground to do their job. As a direct result of this inquiry, the State Government placed the primary responsibility for all wildfires with the Rural Fire Service, regardless of land tenure. That means there's no more confusion over who's in charge of a bushfire.



Image: One of many property owners affected by the Wambelong Fire 2013

My inquiry into Water Augmentation in rural New South Wales took this further and provided comprehensive examination of water policy that can improve every rural town and landholder for generations to come.

My colleague Robert Borsak's Parliamentary inquiry into Emergency Services Agencies uncovered the bullying and harassment that permeates not only the Rural Fire Service but other agencies as well. Now it's up to the Government to show how they will address these concerns with their response due on January 24 next year.

Philip Donato, our Member for Orange who won his seat in a landmark by-election in 2016 has proven that when an electorate falls to the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party, hundreds of millions of dollars of funding and investment follows from State and Federal coffers.



Image: The Member for Orange, Phil Donato

Since his by-election alone, more than \$320 million of election promises were made by the National Party for just one electorate, and Mr Donato has held them to account for every cent. One prominent example is the delivery of a much-needed carpark for Orange Hospital that had been

promised but not delivered since 2011. Millions of dollars of Federal funding has since been earmarked for Orange after Mr Donato's election, including the Inland Rail Link through Parkes and the \$4 billion Rural Investment Bank being established right in the heart of Orange.

My Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party colleagues and I have always stood side-by-side with the Volunteer Fire Fighters Association (VFFA) and firefighters across the State, but this election we need your help.

In the upcoming election we aren't just standing in the Legislative Council election, we're also fielding candidates in local electorates as well. More than 15 people will be standing for election across New South Wales, including in the Northern Tablelands, Tamworth, Upper Hunter, Clarence, Dubbo, Cootamundra, Barwon, Murray, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Goulburn, Wollondilly, Coffs Harbour, and Coogee electorates.



L-R: VFFA President Mick Holton & Robert Brown, MLC

Your own VFFA President, Mick Holton, is also standing for election in the Monaro electorate against Deputy Premier John Barilaro. With a narrow 2.5 per cent margin, Mr Holton has a chance of unseating the Nationals Leader.

Continued on next page >>

Whether it's by assisting with a campaign, voting on Election Day, or just having a conversation with your friends and neighbours about how the bush needs a better deal from the Government, you can do your bit to help us deliver for you.

No matter which major party is elected into Government in March (and there's a strong chance that there will be a change of Government or a hung Parliament) the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party can deliver for rural people.

If a major party is elected as your local representative, but is in Opposition, there's very little they can get out of their opponents in Government.

The difference we offer is that our strong role in the Upper House of Parliament means that we can influence whichever party is in Government.

Robert Brown MLC
Member of Legislative Council
Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party



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Yankees Gap Fire: Half a century of regress in land and fire management

In autumn 1968, CSIRO and New South Wales Bushfire Council carried out only the second aerial hazard reduction burn in NSW, in Vacant Crown Land that is now National Park and Wilderness. Danny Christopher, the Fire Control Officer reckoned that the burn saved Bega in spring that year. Other parts of the state had a devastating fire season. Fourteen people died, 156 homes and buildings were lost and a million hectares were incinerated. Later on, wildfires in the rough country between Bemboka and Brogo in 1986 and 1988 were contained by back burning from the network of fire trails constructed by the Bush Fire Council.

Another wildfire started in this area on 15th August 2018. Just as well it happened when it did. After 30 days of fire control operations using ground crews and water-bombing helicopters, under mostly favourable conditions, crews were evacuated in anticipation of extreme winds on Saturday 15th September. A house, several sheds and possibly some livestock were lost. Conditions eased with a south westerly change. On Sunday a Rural Fire Service air tanker commenced bombing operations with fire retardant from its base in Sydney.



Image: You Tube – Helmreich Joinery

Dying trees, pestilence and megafires during the early 20th Century convinced foresters that fire suppression doesn't work. Aircraft had sprayed thousands of hectares of hydroelectric catchments with dangerous insecticides in diesel oil to control plagues in forests suffering from lack of mild fire. The introduction of broadscale burning with aerial ignition improved forest health and fire safety. In the 1970s Australia led the world in land and fire management.

Continued on next page >>

Then, in the 1980s, green academics with wilderness between the ears came up with ridiculous theories that burning would damage the environment. This, where Aboriginal people had maintained a healthy and safe landscape for at least forty thousand years. They had no need for firefighting. They didn't have boots or overalls, let alone aircraft and computers.

Now we've got an ecofascist paramilitary firefighting authority at the expense of sustainable land management. We're pissin' into the wind. We could use small aircraft operating from local airfields to help us burn large areas of 'wilderness' from the top down, using spots that would coalesce at the end of the day. Instead, we've got stupid rules, regulations and attitudes. Where we do burn, we do it at ridiculously long intervals, lighting lines of fire around perimeters, often across the wind and from the bottoms of slopes, to 'tidy up' large blocks. We're actually lighting high intensity fires that turn green scrub into dry fuel and resprout or germinate more green fuel. It's hazard production burning.

Meanwhile, aircraft are on standby or being used for long hours at huge expense on fire suppression. At the same time, our taxes are funding academics to make lunatic models 'proving' that prescribed burning doesn't work. Ross Bradstock's gang got four million dollars. After Tathra, he said burning wouldn't have made any difference.

Supposedly all you need is a 40 metre break around your house. The Reedy Swamp and Yankee's Gap fires show up a systemic problem. Whether it's wilderness, or infrequently burnt park, or production forest, it's a time-bomb.



Imagine what's going to happen when we get ignitions on bad days in the middle of summer?

No amount of air tankers, water buckets and media warnings can prevent the inevitable catastrophes that occur when you lock people out of the bush. A relatively small expenditure on sensible land management would be far preferable to throwing money at an emergency authority that relies on disasters to keep itself on TV screens and ensure that money keeps flowing to build its air force and mint more campaign medals for its Generalissimos.





Sonia O'Keefe



**“That NSW Farmers Association
liaise with the RFS to more actively
publicise penalties for criminally lit
fires to deter arsonists, including
improved roadside signage.”**

With the increasing dry conditions across NSW it is not surprising that this motion was passed at the NSW Farmers Annual Conference in July. In a very small number of hotspots across the state there had been a spate of deliberately lit grass fires that caused considerable concern to nearby landholders. It is beyond comprehension that an individual does not realise the very real danger that they are creating by deliberately lighting grass fires. The RFS has stated that they are very happy to work with the NSW Farmers' Association to deter would-be offenders.

The annual NSW Farmers conference is not only the prime policy development mechanism of our Association, it is when we elect our external representatives and working committees. Following this year's annual conference I had completed my 4 year term as the chair of the Rural Affairs Committee, which has carriage of most bushfire related policy. Garry Grant, a farmer from Braidwood has been elected the new Chair. Garry has along involvement in his local bushfire brigade, has a keen interest in bushfire management, and has been the NSW Farmers' representative on the Hotspot Program for many years. He is a strong advocate for farmers and rural communities and will continue to prosecute our policy to achieve better outcomes.

This year NSW Farmers' has participated in the RFS Working Group of the BFCC Standing Advisory Sub-committee to review the Bushfire Management Committee Handbook. This is made up government agencies and non-government organisations and who provide feedback on ways to engage, inform, and educate

those involved in the BFMC initiatives. NSW Farmers' welcomes the comprehensive review of the handbook and look forward to it being an effective resource for the RFS and greater community.

The BFMC Committees are important legislated channels that offer private landholders a framework by which to communicate concerns and provide valuable feedback into the management of hazard reduction and fire control across the state.

NSW Farmers' Association members also took part in the BFMC Information Workshops held across regional and rural NSW. As an attendee, I realised that the format of the BFMC Committees works well for government agency participants who have administrative support structures and dedicated budgets. However, it could be improved for volunteer organisations such as NSW Farmers', Aboriginal Land Councils, or the Nature Conservation Council, which are a network of volunteers, with less formalised support structures across our networks. NSW Farmers' has one volunteer representative on each BFMC Committee across the state, and are often stretched to comprehensively liaise with other farmers across such large geographical areas to identify and report back on issues.

On behalf of members of the NSW Farmers' Association I take this opportunity to say thank you to the many people within the VFFA, your family and friends, who have expressed such overwhelming support for our farmers during the prolonged drought across NSW. I have been truly humbled by the concern and generosity that has been conveyed to me over the last 6 months. Only rain will ease the situation but it makes an incredible difference to know that we are not alone, and that the broader community is so willing and able to assist.

Male volunteers URGENTLY NEEDED to help Kids living with cancer.

Boys living with cancer need male role models to help with their development and confidence at camps which involve everything from rolling in mud to laser tag.

"You'll change lives by making a kid living with cancer smile and laugh. You'll make life-long friends with other volunteers who are selfless, funny and inspiring."
- A Camp Quality volunteer

CAN YOU HELP? or know someone who can?

campquality.org.au/volunteer or 1300 662 267



Angel Flight pilots really are angels in disguise.

Melbourne pilot **Shaun Aisen** recently celebrated his 450th Volunteer Angel Flight with a flight from Adelaide to Port Lincoln on 21st September.

Shaun is Angel Flight's most experienced pilot and his contribution to the rural and regional people of Australia is humbling and deserving of recognition.

Shaun has been flying Angel Flight missions since 2004 and has flown 450 rural and regional people along with their family members and carers to medical appointments that otherwise would have involved several days of driving and overnight stays.



Pilot Shaun Aisen

Channel 10 news in Melbourne featured his 450th flight on their news

bulletin on 3rd September and Shaun was hailed as a hero by all who saw it.

Shaun also won a Pride of Australia Award last year for his contribution to Angel Flight.

Angel Flight CEO Marjorie Pagani said Shaun was a remarkable flight champion. "Shaun has completed 450 missions, which in reality means over 900 flights, out and back," Mrs Pagani said.

"Shaun uses aircraft from 4 seaters to jet-powered, depending on the passenger requirements, at his own expense."

"He has been helping our rural friends

far and wide for 15 years, and shows no signs of slowing down. Angel Flight is truly indebted to Shaun, and I know he has won the hearts and appreciation of all of his passengers, young and old."

Brisbane Angel Flight pilot **Michael Solomon** has hung up his wings after more than 12 years of flying Angel Flight missions.

Michael completed 104 missions between January 2006 and February 2018.

Michael also received an OAM in the June 2018 Queens Birthday Honours for not only his contribution to Angel Flight but also for the many other community organisations he is involved with.



Pilot Michael Solomon

Angel Flight CEO Marjorie Pagani said he will be sorely missed by the Angel Flight staff.

"It is with great regret that Angel Flight will no longer have the pleasure of Michael's flying contributions to the charity," she said.

"After a tremendous flight record over many years Michael is parking his wings."

"We, along with the many country people he has assisted are very privileged to have had the benefit of his skills and contributions – not only to Angel Flight but to his wider community.

Congratulations Michael – we know you will keep in contact and remain one of our very good friends. "

In other news, Angel Flight has been attending air shows around Australia to help spread the word of our free services to those who may need our help.

Angel Flight pilots Stephen Hudson and Anthony Rowell from Brisbane along with Angel Flight CEO Marjorie Pagani recently attended the Air Venture show in Cessnock speaking to pilots who are interested in volunteering and the general public about how they can access a free Angel Flight.



L to R: Pilot Anthony Rowell, Angel Flight CEO Marjorie Pagani and Pilot Stephen Hudson at Cessnock NSW.

Angel Flight CEO Marjorie Pagani gave a presentation to the pilots at the show which was greatly received by all. We have also spread our wings with volunteers representing Angel Flight at Ausfly at Narromine and the AAPM Medical Conference in Canberra in October along with the OzRunways Fly-In Angel Flight fundraiser in the Clare Valley in South Australia in November.

2018 has been a very successful year for Angel Flight and we are looking forward to flying many more rural and regional people to their city medical appointments for free in 2019.

The McGrath Foundation makes life that little bit easier for families experiencing breast cancer, by placing specialist McGrath Breast Care Nurses wherever they're needed in Australia.



Donate today at www.mcgrathfoundation.com.au



The Phantom Says'

FOLLOWING ON FROM WHO WANTS TO BE A VOLUNTEER (DEC 2017)

It has been a sad series of events recently when Volunteers are accused of doing things and then the RFS turns their back on them.

We have members in one District that were "set up" by their local Group Officers and District Management for something they didn't do, only to have a another RFS member investigate them and find that they did nothing wrong.

We have had a Captain investigated by the RFS for saying or doing things to a fellow RFS member that was substantiated based on the probability it may have happened but dismissed by the nature of the complaint as being minor. (The complainant was the same person that has been described recently by a District Court Judge as not being a credible witness).

Oh & please don't get dressed up as an Elf this Christmas, someone may complain about you and you're driving and then after all the pain and agony, have the Commissioner visit you at home and say "I always thought you were innocent".

So where has the Commissioner been through all of this? He appears to be sitting in his office watching his new Palace being erected up the road at Olympic Park.

* Has he spoken to those accused and exonerated? No, only the Elf.

* Has the member who has forked out over \$100k to clear his name had an apology? No

* Has the Captain investigated for a matter of minor nature been given an apology? No

* Has the 2 members set up by their own District and investigated and exonerated received an apology? No

Whilst all this is happening, Volunteers are spending thousands of dollars to clear their name and once

clearing them, are left to pick up the bill....Why? On every occasion, they have been acting in their role as a Volunteer within the RFS.

Whilst there are many cases that we don't hear about, there has been one that did get the support of the RFS. As we all know, a member made an illegal U turn on a highway and was subsequently charged and convicted. He was supported by the RFS but they seem to pick and choose those they support and those they leave out to dry.

There has been a suggestion that we set up a **GOFUNDME** campaign to help those that have been left with no financial help. Do we need this?

Can I phone a friend? - Yes, contact your solicitor.

50:50? - Your chance of a fair investigation by the RFS is as good as tossing a coin in a Cyclone

Can I ask the audience? - Yes, contact the VFFA for advice.

The RFS always reminds us of these values:

- * Mutual respect – (it should go both ways)
- * Adaptability and resourcefulness - (Get a solicitor and pay for it yourself)
- * One team, many players, one purpose (yeh Head Office, Districts, Volunteers doing the work)
- * Integrity and trust - (Guilty until proven innocent)
- * Support, friendship, camaraderie - (Stick with your mates and ask the VFFA)
- * Community and environment - (We try our best)
- * Knowledge and learning - (It is not what you know, but who you know)

Have a great Christmas everyone and remember, watch your back, watch your buddies back and be safe!

Serving volunteer firefighters Australia wide

As a volunteer firefighter you serve a vital role in the community.

There were more than 24,000 incidents¹ in NSW last year handled by volunteer firefighters like you. You put the safety and well-being of others before your own, during those situations. Without your assistance, the human and financial cost of emergency situations would be much greater.

While you were out fighting fires, that was time away from your family and friends and limiting your leisure time. But instead you were there supporting the community. At Firefighters Mutual Bank², we recognise your sacrifices. With such a hectic life, the last thing you need to worry about is your financial future.

For the benefit of members

Firefighters Mutual Bank is a bank dedicated to firefighters and emergency services workers and their families. We exist solely for the mutual benefit of our members. All members have an equal say in how the Bank is run, giving you more control over your financial future. Over 4.5 million Australians are members of mutual banks, credit unions and building societies.

We've been around for 50 years

In the 1960's a small group of like-minded individuals from the NSW Fire Brigade, including paymaster Bob Hall, had a vision

of creating a financial institution that would understand the needs of firefighters.

What began as one man's vision has grown into a thriving community of members focused on reaching their financial goals. 2018 marks the 50 year anniversary of Firefighters Mutual Bank. We now have thousands of members Australia wide, a great testament to the pioneers of the organisation.

We support your community

We reinvest a portion of our profit back into the firefighting community. We sponsor events and charitable causes, including the recent Rural Fire Service State Championships held in Temora NSW.

Your financial future – whatever you need

Our products and services³ are designed to make day-to-day banking a little easier. You can check us out at fmbank.com.au

Join Firefighters Mutual Bank and you'll find a bank that wants to serve you, just as you serve the community. Find out more at fmbank.com.au or call **1800 800 225** 8am to 7pm, weekdays or 9am to 3pm, Saturdays.



¹ Source: RFS Annual Report 2016-17

² Membership is open to citizens or permanent residents of Australia who are current or retired employees and current volunteers of a fire and/or emergency service or family members of members of the Bank.

³ Before you decide on any of our products or services, we strongly recommend that you read both the Conditions of use Accounts and access and Fees and charges booklets. You can find these online at our website or ask at any of our offices. We have not considered your objectives, financial situation or needs. For further information call 1800 0800 225 or go to fmbank.com.au Firefighters Mutual Bank is a division of Teachers Mutual Bank Limited ABN 30 087 650 459 AFSL/Australian Credit Licence 238981.

Volunteer Fire Fighters Association Membership Application

All memberships are free of charge



Your Details			
First Name:			
Last Name: (Surname)			
Date of Birth:		Gender:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Your Contact Information			
Address: (Line 1)			
Address: (Line 2)			
Town / Suburb:			
State:		Post Code:	
Phone:			
Email:			
Membership			
Application Type: (Tick one box below)			
<input type="checkbox"/> New Membership (NSW RFS Volunteer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Update my Records (NSW RFS Volunteer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter or Sponsor (Magazine Only)	
Membership Status: (Tick all boxes that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> NSW RFS Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> NSW RFS Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter or Sponsor (Magazine Only)	
Brigade or Brigades: <small>What Brigade or Brigades are you attached to?</small>			
Free Magazine			
Do you want your own magazine or do you share with another member / subscriber?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes I would like my own magazine subscription	<input type="checkbox"/> No I don't need a magazine subscription	<input type="checkbox"/> I share with another subscriber (No magazine required)
How many magazines do you need?			
Please complete and return to the VFFA Membership Officer (see address below)			
VFFA Membership Officer Kittani 2037 Dry Plains Road Dry Plain, NSW 2630		For assistance call 0410 317 638 Alternatively, complete our online form at volunteerfirefighters.org.au (Click on Memberships & Subscriptions)	



Looking after volunteer firefighters' mental health Support when you need it

Looking after your mental health in your role as a volunteer firefighter may not be something you think about often. However, the nature of your work means you are likely to be exposed to distressing situations and potentially traumatic events, which may impact your mental health.

The levels of anxiety, depression, and suicide among police, emergency service and fire and rescue workers in general is too high and seems to be growing.

In 2014, *beyondblue* established the Police and Emergency Services Program to promote the mental health of police, emergency service and fire and rescue workers and reduce their risk of suicide. The program is for current and former/retired workers, volunteers and their families.

As part of this program, *beyondblue* is currently undertaking the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Study of Police and Emergency Services. This study involves active engagement with the sector to establish important national baseline measures and provide strong evidence about the issues affecting the mental health of police, fire and rescue, ambulance and emergency services and the best ways to provide support.

In addition, *beyondblue* provides a range of support and resources for police, ambulance, and fire and rescue workers to take action to manage their mental health and support colleagues they're concerned about. If you are struggling in your role as a firefighter or just with life in general, or if you are concerned about someone else, contact us and we'll point you in the right direction for further support.

Where to find more information

beyondblue

www.beyondblue.org.au

Learn more about anxiety, depression and suicide prevention or talk through your concerns with our Support Service.

☎ 1300 22 4636

✉ Email or 💬 chat to us online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

Heads Up

www.headsup.org.au

beyondblue's Heads Up website is all about supporting organisations to create mentally healthy workplaces. Access a wide range of resources, information and advice for all employees on staying mentally healthy at work.

✉ Email headsup@beyondblue.org.au

Police and Emergency Services Program

For more information about *beyondblue*'s Police and Emergency Services Program, visit www.beyondblue.org.au/pesresearch/

For more information visit headsup.org.au/pes



YOU CAN BANK ON US

As a volunteer firefighter, you put yourself on the frontline, helping ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. The last thing you need to worry about is your financial future.

Firefighters Mutual Bank is the dedicated bank for volunteer firefighters and all emergency service workers Australia wide. Our products and services are designed to make day-to-day banking easier and give you peace of mind.

Visit **fmbank.com.au** or call **1800 800 225**
8am to 7pm, weekdays and 9am to 3pm, Saturdays



**Firefighters
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Serving those who protect

Membership is open to citizens or permanent residents of Australia who are current or retired employees and current volunteers of a fire and/or emergency service or family members of members of the Bank. Firefighters Mutual Bank is a division of Teachers Mutual Bank Limited ABN 30 087 650 459 AFSL/Australian Credit Licence 238981. 01323-BRA-FMB-0918-VolunteerFirefighterMag-A4