

Fire & Rescue

May 2014

News

FRNSW lends a hand in Victoria

Future directions for rescue

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

FIRE & RESCUE
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Commissioner Writes



While our January issue naturally focussed heavily on our bushfire deployments, a key focus of this issue is rescue. Inside you will find an article about the Rescue Summit which we held last year at Sydney Olympic Park to evaluate our rescue capabilities and to discuss future directions.

There are also articles on our partnership with GIO which is providing late model cars for rescue stations to practise extrication skills, and our new primary rescue operator training program which commenced recently.

In addition to the usual range of incidents, FRNSW was called upon twice in the first quarter of this year to support emergency services in Victoria, firstly during their bushfire emergency, and secondly as a result of the Hazelwood open cut mine fire which proved very challenging. We were pleased to respond to both requests and assist our interstate colleagues just as they did last October during our own bushfire emergency. Articles in this issue give details of the two deployments to Victoria.

Other information in this issue which I am sure you will find interesting are the 'What's New' section, the Logistics Support profile, tips on how to engage with the media, and details of programs to support the mental health and wellbeing of our staff. The FRNSW Sports Association and its 11 affiliated clubs are also profiled – I would encourage you to consider joining as this is a great way not only to keep fit but also to connect with other staff.

We are always keen to get news about what is happening around the organisation, so if something interesting or worthwhile has happened in your 'neck of the woods'; don't hesitate to contact our Media and Communications Unit on 9265 2907.

Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner

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Send in your stories and photos

Fire & Rescue News is the internal news magazine of Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW). FRNSW Media & Communications Unit (MCU) wants to publicise the incidents your crew attended, and the achievements of your unit.

T: (02) 9265 2907 E: media@fire.nsw.gov.au

Intranet

Email any photos and stories to peter.walker@fire.nsw.gov.au

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Scania P280 Hook Loader

Fire & Rescue NSW commissioned a number of new appliances in the second half of 2013.

In July 2013, 377 Minmi received a new rehabilitation van, a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Van 413 CDI with a high roof, long wheelbase and dual rear wheels.

This type of van already operates in rural areas, crewed by two firefighters, and is designed to provide firefighters at emergency incidents with immediate rehabilitation. It provides a temporary marquee sheltered area that includes cooling chairs, tables, seating, area lighting and, in colder rural areas, gas heating. It is also stocked with hydration packs, bottled water, drinks and refreshments.

The delivery takes the total number of rehabilitation vans strategically positioned in NSW to three.

In September 2013, new Class 2 urban pumpers were delivered to 417 Parkes and 405 Nowra. Class 2 urban pumpers may be located in rural/regional or metropolitan areas where community infrastructure is of an intermediate hazard level and the lower number of fire



NEW APPLIANCES

calls results in the staffing for the area being predominately retained.

They may be configured for Standard Road Accident Rescue, Secondary Rescue or Primary Rescue roles. The Class 2 appliance is fitted with an automated manual transmission and the pump has a maximum capacity of 3,000 L/min.

The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Van 413 CDI already operates in rural areas, crewed by two firefighters, and is designed to provide firefighters in emergency incidents with immediate rehabilitation.

A new Scania P280 Hook Loader was commissioned in November, replacing the International 2350G 4x2 hook lifts that had been in service for 15 years. It provides transport of the rehabilitation and fire duty pods to emergency incidents in the Greater Sydney Area. **END**

Little truck has a BIG BARK

In October 2013, FRNSW's mini-appliance, 'Responder 1', was deployed for the first time to Circular Quay, providing rapid response to incidents in the area.

With thousands of spectators visiting Sydney Harbour to view the International Fleet Review, access for larger fire appliances was difficult. Due to its compact size, 'Responder 1' was able to navigate through the crowds more quickly and easily, and provided an initial response to fires and other emergencies until regular fire appliances and crews could arrive.

Similar-sized vehicles were used very successfully at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games venues around Sydney.

'Responder 1' is crewed by two firefighters and carries personal protective clothing, radio, water supply, hoses and pump, foam-making equipment, self-contained breathing apparatus, first aid kit, oxygen and an automatic external defibrillator.

A unique feature of the vehicle is that, as well as having a standard



siren, it is also equipped with a loud 'dog bark' siren. Overseas research prior to the 2000 Olympics identified that, in large crowds, people are often slow to react to traditional sirens. However, they will react immediately if they hear what they think is a vicious dog barking behind them.

In recent months, the vehicle has been deployed to a number of large events in the city, as well as to other venues such as those at Sydney Olympic Park. **END**

LEARNING HUB GOES LIVE

FRNSW is introducing a new learning management system called the Learning Hub.

The Learning Hub is an online system that enables the delivery, tracking, reporting, administration and documentation of FRNSW learning courses. It facilitates the delivery of both self-paced e-learning and blended learning courses.

Engaging interactive activities are embedded into the self-paced e-learning courses to improve learning. No instructor intervention is required and results are automatically marked and recorded in firefighters' Employee Self Service records.

The blended learning programs are a mix of online learning with other learning methods such as face to face, practical training, scenarios and workplace learning. Blended learning offers the ability for greater instructor interaction with participants and where distance learning takes place this can be through online discussions (forums, chat sessions or through Learning Live). Learning Live is a virtual classroom that is already being used within FRNSW, in particular with the Incident Management Distance Simulation Training program (refer Fire & Rescue News, January 2014).

The Learning Hub went live on 22 April 2014. A number of self-paced e-learning courses were immediately available for all staff to access, including:

- Induction Modules – for all staff
- Manual Handling Tasks – for admin and trades staff
- Motion Scout K-R DSU – for firefighters
- Fire Dynamics Modules 1 to 4 – for firefighters
- Electrical Hazards Modules 3 to 5 – for firefighters.

Learners will be able to complete these courses at any time by searching the catalogue and enrolling themselves into relevant courses.

The first blended course will be the Level 1 to Qualified Firefighter Program which will be available from 12 May 2014. Firefighters on this program will access most of their learning resources and undertake learning activities online, but the assessments will continue to be conducted face to face in the usual manner.

FRNSW learners will benefit from the Learning Hub by gaining access to courses that they couldn't access before. They will have more control over their own learning as they can access their courses at any time, at their own pace and anywhere there is an internet connection. They can also refresh their knowledge at any time on available courses, track their own progress, and carry on where they left off, e.g. if they are learning at work and are called out to an incident, when they next log in the system will show where they should start from.

The Learning Hub also provides for collaborative learning where participants can hold online discussions with other people doing the same course. This increased interaction with others provides a more social learning environment and reduces the feelings of isolation which may occur in distance learning courses.

FRNSW instructors also benefit from the Learning Hub as it allows them to track student progress and eliminates handmarking of quizzes by using the online system-generated marking. Submission, marking and



return of assignments is simplified and instructors can choose to communicate with participants using one of the many collaborative tools mentioned above. The Learning Hub will significantly reduce paperwork as it becomes the 'one-stop shop' for all current learning resources and makes file-sharing seamless with both metropolitan and country instructors. This reduces the risk of participants accessing out-of-date resources and increases consistency of training delivery across the State.

The Learning Hub, Learning Live and the mobile assessment app (refer page 44, Fire & Rescue News, January 2014 issue) is transforming education and training at FRNSW and will result in a more eco-friendly environment. **END**



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CAMPAIGN CALLS FOR SMOKE ALARM BATTERY CHECKS

On Sunday 6 April 2014, FRNSW in conjunction with Duracell launched the 2014 'Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery' campaign.

The campaign's key message – 'Working smoke alarms help save lives' – encourages households to check and/or replace their smoke alarm batteries at the end of the daylight saving period when they change their clocks. Households will also be reminded of the need to develop and practise their home escape plans.

In addition Duracell, a Supporting Partner of the Smoke Alarm & Battery Replacement (SABRE) program, has funded the provision and delivery of 11,000 9 V alkaline batteries to FRNSW.

According to Community Safety Coordinator, SF Melanie Rebane, the primary audience for the campaign includes households most at risk of having a fire that results in injuries, such as single parents and the elderly living side-by-side in central city rented flats

as well as elderly adults and low-income lone-person households in regional areas.

"Seniors who live in single occupancy housing are highly vulnerable to fire risk, so there's an ongoing need to give them higher levels of support, advice and assistance," said SF Rebane.

Secondary audiences include people who are often in contact with over-60s, such as doctors, librarians and representatives of aged care and seniors' community groups (such as Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, RSL, Community Housing, Housing NSW, the Home Care Service of NSW, seniors' community centres and local councils).

The campaign included the initial distribution of 5,000 Duracell batteries and 2,000 posters to FRNSW Zones in late February. The Zones then distributed the batteries and posters to stations according to a list provided by the Community Engagement Unit. Stations were also given a 'How to' sheet that provided tips on how to use the batteries

and posters, and how to promote the campaign locally.

Another component of the campaign was a series of firefighter-hosted seniors-specific events in areas ranked as having a high fire risk. These included the metropolitan areas of Botany Bay, City of Sydney, Randwick, Hunters Hill, Canterbury, Liverpool, Parramatta, Leichhardt, Bankstown and Newcastle. They also included regional areas such as Broken Hill, Murrumbidgee, Junee, Leeton, Narromine, Bogan, Deniliquin, Narrandera, Lithgow and Cowra. The events comprised, among other things, kitchen fire demonstrations, due to the over-representation of kitchen fires particularly in metropolitan areas.

In addition, at the Premier's Seniors Week Gala Concert Series in the Sydney Entertainment Centre from 18 – 20 March, firefighters distributed 5,000 batteries (provided by Battery World) and 7,000 smoke alarm campaign magnets.

END

2014 RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

ATTRACTS RECORD NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

Applications for the 2014 FRNSW permanent firefighter recruitment campaign kicked off on 30 January with much interest.

More than 8,550 people applied this year, a significant increase on the 7,000 applicants received last year.

FRNSW Assistant Director Recruitment and Staffing, Chief Superintendent Craig Brierley, said the process was highly competitive but everyone had to complete the same tests and meet the same benchmarks.

"I know there are some concerns about the information sessions and why there are separate sessions for women, for people of different cultural backgrounds and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders," he said.

"All the information sessions receive the same presentation with the only difference being the guest firefighter speakers are tailored to the individual audiences."

"We want FRNSW to reflect the diversity, culture and skills of our society. We need men and women from around the State, including indigenous communities and people of all cultural backgrounds, to step forward and apply but everyone has to meet the same high standards." **END**



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REGIONAL RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES



While the 2014 permanent firefighter recruitment campaign achieved a record number of applications, regional zone management teams have also been busy on initiatives to attract men and women interested in becoming retained firefighters.

'Marketing' approach to recruitment at Maclean

The Regional North 2 Zone Management Team developed a Recruitment and Retention Action Plan for 372 Maclean Fire Station. This was a collective strategy involving the entire Zone team and 306 Grafton Station Officer Colin Drayton, as well as 372 Captain Darrell Shaw and his crew. Senior Firefighter Justin Hyde applied a marketing approach which involving identifying and targeting specific market segments supported by the production of dedicated radio advertisements.

According to RN2 Duty Commander, Inspector Gary White, the campaign was designed to build future capability by ensuring everyone involved learnt more about marketing principles for future recruitment activities. "The Zone team plans to replicate the approach in other stations as required, with clear objectives and measurable outcomes," said Insp White. "The outcomes were gratifying at Maclean, with more than 26 applications received."

Media blitz in Tea Gardens and Urunga

When more retained firefighters were required at 471 Tea Gardens and 476 Urunga Fire Stations, the Regional North 1 Management Team kicked into gear with some proactive recruitment strategies.

For the Tea Gardens campaign, firefighters engaged closely with local media, with the Myall Coast *Nota* newspaper featuring a front page story and photo in the 13 February edition. Flyers were produced for the local

community and businesses. Specific groups of potential recruits were also targeted, such as stay-at-home parents and semi-retired people, all of whom would most likely be available for call-out during standard daytime business hours. This activity culminated in an Open Night at the station, at which five potential recruits expressed their interest.

"This showed that people in the town are interested," said RN1 Duty Commander, Inspector Mark McGuire. "So we will continue with recruitment posters in shop windows to generate word of mouth around the community.

For the Tea Gardens campaign, firefighters engaged closely with local media, flyers were produced for the local community and businesses, specific groups were targeted, and the activity culminated in an Open Night at the station at which potential recruits expressed their interest.

We're also following up on an idea devised by the other RN1 Duty Commander, Inspector Tony Lenthall, with FF Kelly Pietsch dropping off posters at local schools to target stay-at-home parents."

Community engagement in Murrurundi

In the town of Murrurundi (population approximately 1,000), attracting prospective retained firefighters for daytime duty is understandably a challenge.

When regular forms of recruitment failed to provide enough applicants, community meetings were held with the support of the Upper Hunter Shire Council. The key message at these meetings was clear: "Without community support, the future of Murrurundi's fire station is under threat."



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"Nine applications were subsequently received from a diverse group of prospective recruits who represented the community of Murrurundi," said Regional West 2 Zone Commander, Superintendent Murray West. "Medicals were held at the fire station, with the help of Health and Safety coordinating the attendance of a local doctor, and already two appointees have been booked into Phase 1 training in Armidale."

'Recruitment Musters' in Peak Hill and Cobar

Recognising that one big obstacle to recruiting retained firefighters is the slowness in completing mandatory health checks, the Regional West 1 Zone Management Team arranged a 'recruitment muster' in which a Health and Safety team travelled from Sydney to 419 Peak Hill Fire Station to perform all required medical testing in a single day for 10 potential recruits. The applicants undertook all the necessary pathology, ECG testing and a full medical review, enabling five to progress to the new functional assessment test at the local football oval.

The Health and Safety and Zone Management Teams then travelled over 300 km the next day for another muster in the town of Cobar involving a further five potential recruits.

"These were long busy days for all participants," said RW1 Duty Commander, Inspector Gary Barber. "However, testing in this way ensured the process was completed without the need for return visits to GPs and the labour-intensive tasks of following up outstanding applicants." **END**

Barangaroo Incident

**FIRE
INCIDENT**



7TH ALARM FIRE AT BARANGAROO DISRUPTS SYDNEY CBD

12 MAR 14:00

Sydney was brought to a standstill on Wednesday 12 March when fire took hold of an underground carpark under construction at the Barangaroo building site in Hickson Rd, and threatened to bring down a 60-metre construction crane.

The first of numerous 000 calls came in at 1400hrs with 3 The Rocks arriving just two minutes later and sending the first of many messages for assistance. Large volumes of smoke were reported coming from two levels of an underground area as the fire took hold of timber formwork which

was coated in laminates. Site managers informed Police that all workers had been successfully evacuated from the site without injury. Temperature readings from the two level basement area were in excess of 1000 degrees Celsius preventing any chance of an internal offensive attack. Directly above the basement area was a large construction crane which quickly became the subject of flame impingement around its base. Engineers from Lend Lease declared the crane was at risk of collapse and a 100-metre exclusion zone was immediately established. This resulted in more than 2,000 people being evacuated from the adjoining KPMG

building and Sussex Hotel, and the Western Distributor closed to all traffic.

A 7th Alarm response that included the fire tug Ted Noffs was required to enable relay pumping from adjoining water mains and the harbour, and to supply sufficient crews to enable crew rotations during the protracted incident. A defensive strategy was initiated with three fixed monitors deployed to deluge around the base of the crane in an effort to prevent further flame impingement and subsequent collapse of the structure. It wasn't until around



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1800hrs that basement temperatures dropped to around 40 degrees allowing the first of an offensive attack into the basement area in an attempt to contain the blaze.

Crews in SCBA rotated every 15 minutes and worked for several hours to bring the basement fire under control, finally enabling engineers to move into the basement area and assess the integrity of the crane. At around 2300hrs, both the site engineers and the Public Works engineer declared that the firefighting strategies had successfully protected the base of the crane and there was no further risk of collapse. Just prior to midnight, the response was scaled back

to a 3rd Alarm as the adjoining Western Distributor motorway was re-opened to traffic. Firefighting operations continued throughout the night and next day to extinguish large amounts of burning timbers and other construction materials.

The incident attracted enormous media attention both in Australia and overseas given the high profile of the construction site and the resulting city gridlock caused by major road closures leading onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Incident Management Team worked together with all responding crews who, despite the threat of the collapsing crane, worked in difficult circumstances to successfully prevent what could

have been a major disaster to the city's infrastructure. The Coroner's office called for a full report into the circumstances and cause of the fire, and FRNSW conducted an extensive investigation together with the NSW Police Force, WorkCover NSW and Lend Lease management.

Due to the threat of collapse and the possible off-site effects, Commissioner Mullins asked Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione to authorise the opening of the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) where all agencies conducted pre-planning for worst-case scenarios.

END

LENDING A HAND IN VICTORIA



Photo by Deputy Captain Nigel Semmens, 206 Albury North Fire Station

FRNSW was called upon twice at the beginning of this year to support emergency services in Victoria as a result of separate fire emergencies in that state.

Bushfire emergency

In late January and early February, FRNSW fire crews and incident management officers assisted the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA) during bushfire emergencies in that state.

Personnel from FRNSW, NSW Rural Fire Service, ACT Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW and the Ambulance Service of NSW stepped up to work alongside their colleagues in Victoria.

On Wednesday 29 January, Supt Paul Bailey and SF Robert Strauch were the first FRNSW officers to join the

multi-agency team working out of the Seymour and Shepparton incident control centres, monitoring fires in Kilmore and Shepparton. They were eventually relieved by Insp Michael Jay and QF John Sullivan, who were in turn relieved by Insp Steven Moran and SO Glen Mole. The final FRNSW incident managers to be deployed in this role were Insp Stuart Mitchell and SF Richard Wilson.

On Sunday 9 February, a contingent of around 40 FRNSW retained firefighters headed to Shepparton. Crews from 206 Albury North, 203 Albury, 268 Corowa, 313 Gundagai, 472 Turvey Park, 456 Temora, 223 Berrigan and 336 Jerilderie headed

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south and formed two Strike Teams, led by Insp Stewart Alexander and Insp Daryl Manson. The FRNSW rehabilitation van from 272 Culcairn and a logistics vehicle from the Training Centre in Deniliquin were also deployed.

By that afternoon, FRNSW firefighters was busy attacking fires in the Numerkah region and protecting properties, including a hospital, in extremely difficult circumstances.

After the initial firefront passed on Sunday, there was still plenty of work to be done, especially in protecting properties from flare-ups. On Wednesday 12 February, Strike Teams RS3 Alpha and



Bravo were relieved by Strike Team RW3 Charlie which was led by Insp Andrew Ticehurst and comprised appliances from 311 Griffith, 321 Hay and 360 Leeton.

Deployment due to Hazelwood open cut mine fire

On Monday 17 February, Commissioner Greg Mullins responded to a formal request for FRNSW to assist the CFA in a number of regional centres and outer Melbourne metropolitan areas.

The mine fire

The CFA and the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) were dealing with a major fire burning along a 3 km length of the open cut Hazelwood Coal Mine near Morwell in southeast Victoria, which began after two grass fires ran into the mine on Sunday 9 February.

Commissioner Mullins was asked to be a member of an expert panel tasked with reviewing the Incident Action Plan on firefighting efforts at the mine. This fire had serious implications due primarily

“Victorian firefighters provided assistance to us in October last year. This year we welcomed the opportunity to return this support. It’s also a great opportunity for FRNSW firefighters to work alongside our interstate counterparts, using different equipment and responding to a range of emergencies.”

to its proximity to the adjoining power station – a major supplier of power to the Victorian community.

Firefighting operations at the mine placed heavy demands on firefighting resources across Victoria, especially considering local fire crews had just completed several weeks of intense operations dealing with major bushfires.

“They had about eight aerial appliances and numerous ground monitors working,” said Commissioner Mullins. “It was incredible. You had to fly over it to get an appreciation of its enormity.”

FRNSW deployment

As a result of the depleted firefighting resources in Victoria, FRNSW appliances and crews were required to backfill at CFA stations across the state.

“This is the first time FRNSW firefighters have been deployed interstate to work in another agency’s fire stations,” Commissioner Mullins said.

FRNSW established a Logistics Team to plan for the deployment, which involved eight Class 3 pumpers and two aerial pumpers. These were the most



modern Scania appliances, to minimise the chance of any mechanical or other issues, and were staffed on the 10/14 roster by permanent Station Officers and firefighters, with crews rotating on their days off.

Thirty FRNSW firefighters started duty in Victoria on Thursday 20 February with further deployments taking place through until 31 March. The firefighters were stationed at 10 Victorian stations – Frankston, Patterson River, Dandenong, Traralgon, Morwell, Shepparton, Bendigo, Ballarat City, Corio and Geelong City.

At each location in Victoria, a FRNSW appliance was staffed by a CFA Station Officer and a FRNSW Station Officer plus two FRNSW firefighters, except for locations with aerial pumpers, which were staffed by a FRNSW Station Officer and two firefighters plus a CFA Leading Firefighter. This ensured there were no legal issues in terms of liability and powers, and also provided local knowledge and expertise. The CFA also supplied radios and standpipes to ensure interoperability of the appliances.

In addition, the compressed air foam system (CAFS) pumper from 31 Busby was deployed to the Hazelwood Mine fire. It commenced operation on Sunday 2 March and proved very effective, together with CAFS units from Tasmania, the ACT, Queensland and South Australia. Hazmat firefighters were also deployed as replacement staff in the teams managing the Hazelwood Mine fire.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher joined Commissioner Mullins on 27 February to farewell a group of around 35 FRNSW firefighters deployed to Victoria.

“It is a testament to the expertise of FRNSW that NSW is able to provide such a significant resource commitment to Victoria while maintaining the delivery of fire and emergency services in NSW,” Minister Gallacher said.

The FRNSW crews worked two shifts before returning to Sydney in time to stand down and resume their normal rostered platoons in Sydney. This ensured that there was no disruption to FRNSW capabilities during this operation.

The Victorian Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley and the Chief Officer of the CFA, Euan Ferguson, both expressed their gratitude for the crucial assistance provided by FRNSW. Chief Officer Ferguson visited some of the Victorian fire stations where FRNSW staff were deployed and was impressed with the professionalism of everyone he met.

Cross-learning

“Victorian firefighters provided assistance to us in October last year when bushfires ravaged the Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands and Central Coast of NSW,” said Commissioner Mullins, “with firefighters from the MFB working at a number of fire stations in the greater Sydney area, and the CFA providing Strike Teams in the Blue Mountains, Newcastle and other areas.”

“This year we welcomed the opportunity to return this support. It’s also a great opportunity for FRNSW firefighters to work alongside our interstate counterparts, using different equipment and responding to a range of emergencies, which is a great way for them to develop their own skills.”

FRNSW SO Matthew Bramall was stationed at Bendigo Fire Station in Victoria’s North West during the deployment. While there, he reported how FRNSW crews had benefited by working alongside CFA crews.

“All firefighters here have been exchanging ideas, as well as learning from each other, observing different operating procedures and conditions,” SO Bramall said. “We’ve participated in various training, including aerial appliances and portable field information technology (PFIT) training kits. PFIT is an ‘Emap’ multi-agency software system that collates data in real time, using a tablet with built-in GPS technology. For example, it can plot a wildfire perimeter (either a firefront or an extinguished perimeter), identify any hazards present and track crew locations. It provides additional crew safety.”

SO Bramall thanked all FRNSW administrative and trades staff who helped make this deployment possible. “The work to plan and manage resources and the logistics required have been huge, and the professionalism and dedication I have seen has been outstanding.”

■ END



B-double trouble at Yass

15 JAN 07:50

A B-double truck overturned while negotiating an on-ramp to the Hume Highway northbound at Yass, trapping the female driver.

FRNSW received the call at approximately 0750 hours on Wednesday 15 January 2014. The crew from 511 Yass responded and worked for two hours to free the driver, who was trapped upside down, while she was treated by paramedics. Once freed, she was airlifted to Canberra Hospital by the Snowy Hydro SouthCare helicopter.

A male passenger was also injured in the accident and was taken

by road ambulance to Yass Hospital. Firefighters remained to help right the truck, which was fully laden with refrigerated goods.

On the same morning, in a second incident on the Hume Highway south of Yass, a truck punctured its diesel tank, spilling around 240 litres of fuel onto the highway. Two FRNSW crews attended the scene and cleaned up the spill, which took about one and a half hours to mop up. **END**



FRNSW RESCUE TO THE RESCUE

FRNSW is Australia's largest rescue provider, with a proud history and an even more promising future.



Rescue is a core activity of FRNSW, and no longer just a function for a select few. In 2014, all firefighters can be called upon to attend rescue incidents as an expected part of their day-to-day work.

While FRNSW still has registered rescue operators and accredited rescue units, every firefighter now has basic training and capability across a range of rescue disciplines, such as road accident rescue, basic high angle/vertical rescue, Category 1 urban search and rescue (USAR), swiftwater/flood rescue, confined space rescue and industrial and domestic rescue situations.

FRNSW rescue professionals also work in conjunction with other government agencies, including the NSW Police Force, Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW State Emergency Service and Volunteer Rescue Association.

FRNSW is one of the world's largest rescue agencies. In addition to all firefighters having rescue capability,

FRNSW is one of the world's largest rescue agencies. In addition to all firefighters having rescue capability, the organisation has around 2,000 specialist, registered rescue operators.

the organisation has around 2,000 specialist, registered rescue operators. These include personnel at secondary accredited rescue stations that may only receive one or two calls a year to primary accredited stations like Bankstown Fire Station, which is one of the busiest rescue stations in NSW.

"On the international stage, FRNSW performs and competes extremely well," said former Capability Manager Rescue, Superintendent Warwick Kidd. "We have won the World Rescue Championships several times and invariably perform at a

very high level even when we are not the outright winners. It is our capability out in the field, however, that is paramount and is what we inevitably measure ourselves on."

FRNSW also has the largest rescue equipment capability in the Southern Hemisphere. That capability includes an equipment maintenance section which ensures compliance to all Australian and international standards. It also provides improvement ideas back to the equipment manufacturers who then develop new rescue tools. **END**



SUMMIT GUIDES FUTURE FOR RESCUE

On Wednesday 4 December 2013, the Commissioner held a Rescue Summit at Sydney Olympic Park.

The event was a huge success, bringing together over 100 rescue operators from throughout NSW. Its objective was to evaluate our rescue capability and to discuss its direction. It also provided an opportunity to identify key issues and formulate strategies to ensure we continue to meet current and future challenges and remain a leading agency in rescue.

Most of the day was taken up with group discussions on the vital areas of rescue equipment, rescue training and rescue 'future proofing'. Each session was facilitated and FRNSW mentors provided guidance and expert input.

"The value of the Rescue Summit was that we brought everyone together, including mentors and specialists from Training, Equipment and Logistics, Senior and Executive Officers, and a representative from almost every primary rescue station across NSW," said Supt Kidd.

"The Summit provided our first opportunity to engage such a large core group of firefighters, and to listen to what they have to say about their training, their

equipment and how they feel we can future-proof the organisation. They have the knowledge of the types of events they are facing, so we take those lessons and use them to build our future direction for rescue."

Arising from the Summit, a report is being finalised and will include recommendations about equipment, training, vehicles and procedures. A rescue roadmap will then be developed that will shape and drive the future of our rescue capability. The report and the roadmap will help to ensure that FRNSW remains one of the best rescue service providers in Australia and the world.

END



Australian USAR Task Force 1 members carrying out search and rescue operations at MinamiSanriku on 16 March 2011 following the 11 March Japan earthquake and tsunami.

INTERSTATE AND INTERNATIONAL RESCUE

The FRNSW-led NSW Heavy USAR Task Force is accredited with the United Nations and assists in large-scale operations on both a national and international level.

Over the years, FRNSW has been deployed to a range of major natural disasters, including the 1999 earthquake in Turkey; the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in Indonesia; and in 2011, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand and the Queensland floods.

According to Supt Kidd, the NSW USAR Task Force has been one of the longest serving search and rescue teams in Australia, and Australia is one of the longest serving members of the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG).

NSW, having become an internationally classified Heavy USAR team in 2012, remains a significant contributor to Australia's international disaster response program. NSW is also one of the only international USAR teams to have a United Nations Disaster Assessment Coordinator member.

The Task Force has also become a significant influence for USAR engagement around the world, with our officers and firefighters serving as panel members on international committees and working groups. ■■■END

Keeping up with trends in

ROAD CRASH RESCUE

A lot of FRNSW rescue work is, and always has been, at road accidents. However, the nature of this type of rescue has changed dramatically over the years.



Prior to 1970, motor vehicles were heavy, rigidly constructed and relatively slow. The volume of traffic was far less than it is today. While serious and sometimes fatal accidents did occur, it was rare for a person to be trapped in a wrecked vehicle. When someone did get trapped in this way, the extrication could take several hours.

By the late 1970s, new vehicles had more stylish bodies, more features and more powerful engines, and travelled at higher speeds. New cars were designed to crumple progressively on impact, so people were trapped more often in their vehicles when they experienced an accident. This presented a challenge to rescue agencies, requiring the extrication of people using mostly basic hand tools.

In the early 1980s, all fire appliances started to carry an array of purpose-built hydraulic rescue equipment. Prior to this, only 'Salvage Motors' at district stations carried rescue gear.

Legislation was passed in 1979 that gave the NSW Fire Brigades an expanded role in rescue operations. Changes to the Fire Brigades Act 1979 (Amendment) meant that NSWFB personnel could undertake rescue operations that did not involve fire.

The training and equipment installation program, introduced in the early 1980s, eventually provided a light rescue capability to all firefighters. The main purpose of the upgrade was to enable firefighters to release persons trapped in vehicles at road accidents. In addition, the NSWFB at this time conducted rescues requiring heavier types of rescue equipment, so salvage/rescue unit equipment was also upgraded.

The wide geographical spread of FRNSW and its training, modern

equipment and rapid response time, has enabled its development into an efficient and effective rescue service. The implementation of Rapid Intervention Kits further enhanced FRNSW's broader rescue capability.

In the future, one of the main challenges will be to provide better training opportunities for firefighters. To this end, FRNSW is grateful for a new partnership with GIO, which is providing a number of high-end late-model vehicles to be used in rescue training and research.

"The opportunity for firefighters to access late-model vehicles in their rescue training is something we've struggled with. Now, with GIO on board, we can bring in rescue operators from across NSW to work on these."

Until now, firefighters have not been able to train on late-model vehicles, which incorporate technology that complicates the rescue of people from these cars after high-speed accidents. While the capability of modern cars works well to keep passengers safe at low to medium speeds, it can be an impediment in high-speed crashes where FRNSW personnel are extricating people trapped. The



provision of late-model cars for rescue training will enable FRNSW to improve its rescue capability and also, hopefully, save lives.

"The opportunity for firefighters to access late-model vehicles in their rescue training is something we've struggled with," said Supt Kidd. "Now, with GIO on board, we can bring in rescue operators from across NSW to work on these."

"Not only will they get to practise on the latest model vehicles and the technology that's causing difficulties, but we can also use these forums to trial new equipment and get the firefighters' perspective. It's a far better way of allowing our rescue crews to give input into the equipment that they will be supplied with to meet the challenges of the risks in their specific areas. We can physically put our firefighters into a realistic scenario at the time of their training, which is very useful."

"Strategically, FRNSW could use this training to create a huge repository of technical training data that can be shared across Australia and the rest of the world." **END**

NEW RESCUE training program

Following consultation with the Fire Brigade Employees' Union, a new on-shift primary rescue operator training program is now being rolled out to permanent firefighters.

The program commenced on Friday 28 February 2014. Permanent firefighters who are attached to a primary rescue station and who hold the minimum rank of Qualified Firefighter are eligible to apply to undertake this program, which is self-paced and is completed on-shift.

The program is underpinned by a totally revised and updated Rescue Training Manual supported by online videos, practical exercises and theory assessments. As candidates complete specific components of the program, they apply to undertake assessment of those components. The overall face-to-face assessments normally take a total of 80 hours and are completed by the candidate under the supervision of a Rescue Instructor from Education and Training.

The content is comprehensive, covering an extensive range of topics such as scene assessment, vehicle extrication and cordage. It covers the latest

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equipment and current techniques, and how to apply them in a range of situations. In particular, it demonstrates extrications from a variety of new model vehicles supplied by GIO, with specific techniques that apply to modern vehicle construction. All the content has been peer-reviewed extensively by firefighters currently working at primary rescue stations.

Applications to commence primary rescue operator training under this new system are now open. **END**

Chatswood Incident

**ROAD
ACCIDENT**



Concrete truck suffers a 'LEAN' DAY

26 FEB 07:43

At 0743 hours on Wednesday 26 February, FRNSW responded to Devonshire Street, Chatswood where a concrete truck had destabilised at a building site. The truck was pumping concrete to the 4th floor of the building under construction when a stabilizing jack punched through the concrete slab, causing it to topple over, leaving the 60-metre boom resting on the building. Fortunately no-one was injured in the incident.

NSW Police Force also attended. An exclusion zone was set up and around 60 people were evacuated

from neighbouring units, houses and a childcare centre as a precaution during the operation while traffic was diverted.

USAR1 attended to provide stabilisation. The truck was eventually righted using two heavy-duty cranes brought to the site. Engineers inspected the building that was damaged in the incident. WorkCover NSW was notified and attended to investigate.

The incident concluded at 1322 hours. FRNSW resources responding included 40 Willoughby, 68 Narrabeen, 36 Crows Nest and USAR 1. **END**



LOGISTICS SUPPORT: THE BACKBONE OF FRNSW

FRNSW's Logistics Support Directorate provides all the facilities, vehicles and equipment that enable our firefighters to do what they do best – respond to emergencies.

Firefighters are only as effective as the support services behind them, and Logistics Support provides much of this support. If firefighters don't have modern, well-maintained appliances and stations to operate from, effective personal protective clothing (PPC) and state-of-the-art equipment in good working order, their job becomes very difficult.

Decisions made by Logistics Support have far-reaching implications. For example, a decision to build a new fire station in a region will have consequences that last many years into the future. A decision on commissioning a new appliance for a specific location may only be made every 15-20 years. These decisions also involve major expense and must be made with considerable planning.

“Logistics Support aligns the front line of FRNSW with the administrative back-up and much more. A firefighter can go from a busy metropolitan station to a regional station and find the same high-quality equipment and appliances.”

That's why the Directorate continually seeks to improve the efficiency and rigour of its research and decision-making processes, to ensure that properties, vehicles and equipment are procured and maintained in the most efficient, accountable and cost-effective ways possible.

“Logistics Support aligns the front line of FRNSW with the administrative back-up and much more,” said Director Logistics Support, Emmanuel Varipatis. “We ensure that a firefighter can go from a busy metropolitan station in Kogarah to a regional station in Bourke and will find consistency in the same level of high-quality equipment and appliances that suit their needs.”

“This is essential for the efficiency of the organisation and the ability of individual firefighters to perform their duties.”

The Directorate comprises four key business units – Strategic Procurement, Operational Logistics, Fleet and Property Services. Each provides specific support services to firefighters on the front line. A specialised Projects area also supports these units by managing specific activities that affect the Directorate as a whole.

Strategic Procurement

Strategic Procurement and Contract Services (SP&CS) provides specialist expertise in the procurement of products and services for FRNSW.



The unit comprises a team of seven led by Assistant Director Guy Tesoriero. It facilitates the end-to-end procurement process, including planning, tenders, contract management, administration and reporting to ensure that goods and services meet operational needs, provide value for money, reduce waste and improve efficiency.

"The team's main challenges in 2014," said Guy Tesoriero, "are to continue to embed good procurement practice across the organisation; adopt more strategic approaches to procurement by working closely with all FRNSW Directorates; and continue providing excellent service to support frontline operations."

A recent major achievement by the unit was the procurement and rollout of new PPC to all FRNSW firefighters. This was one of the world's largest bulk purchases of PPC by a fire service. The project, from procurement to rollout, was coordinated by SP&CS and involved the manufacture and delivery of 13,600 PPC sets (two per firefighter).

The unit is also developing a procurement leadership role within the Police and Justice Cluster of agencies and, more broadly, as a member of the Australasian Fire & Emergency Service Authorities' Council (AFAC) collaborative procurement group.

Operational Logistics

The Operational Logistics Unit was formed in July 2012 by combining existing equipment procurement and servicing units (Hazmat, Rescue, Equipment Development and Stores) into one business unit. It has 27 staff, with a mix of uniformed, trades and admin employees, and manages over 100,000 items of

plant and equipment worth over \$90 million, including operational equipment, uniforms and PPC.

The Unit's role involves matching equipment with service delivery needs and maintaining emergency stores of equipment and PPC for immediate issue to support operational capability. It manages approximately 18 capital projects with a value exceeding \$6 million to purchase replacement and new equipment annually. It also involves research into future equipment needs. This includes practical testing and trialling of all equipment tendered to ensure procedures are well considered and the selected equipment provides the best and safest possible outcomes for firefighters.

The Operational Logistics Unit services over 10,000 units each year to ensure they are 'fit for purpose'

In conjunction with Health and Safety Branch, the Unit responds immediately to any concerns with equipment, PPC or uniforms by quarantining and investigating items to determine the cause of any malfunctions or safety issues.

The Unit services over 10,000 individual equipment units each year to ensure they are 'fit for purpose'. In addition, it publishes the annual SIMS calendars, along with equipment recommended practices, SIMS

worksheets, equipment specifications and training material for particular items of equipment.

The Unit is also responsible for supporting logistics plans for large scale or campaign events, such as the Logistics Support Sub Plan – Bushfires, which was initiated for the first time in October last year.

Execution of the plan, which called for the logistics support of 98 firefighting appliances and over 300 personnel, presented some challenges, said Assistant Director Operational Logistics, Chief Superintendent Gary Picken. "However the detailed prior planning, which had occurred prior to the bushfire season, enabled us to coordinate internal FRNSW resources as well as our own to support the bushfire operations in the best manner possible."

Since then, more operational challenges have arisen, such as stowing 10 urban pumpers at very short notice to enable the recent FRNSW deployment to Victoria.

Fleet

FRNSW's Fleet section manages a fleet of 650 appliances, 250 passenger vehicles, various other mobile plant and trailers. It operates 24 hours per day, seven days a week, through rostering and on-call arrangements. The section comprises 51 staff, including tradespersons, specialist drivers, project managers and uniformed officers, as well as technical, engineering and administrative personnel, plus contractors.

Fleet manages a range of activities including the servicing, maintenance and retrofit works of all FRNSW appliances, portable ladders and minor fleet vehicles. It organises insurance claims and repairs

Logistics Support

If firefighters don't have modern, well-maintained appliances and stations to operate from, effective personal protective clothing (PPC) and state-of-the-art equipment in good working order, their job becomes very difficult.

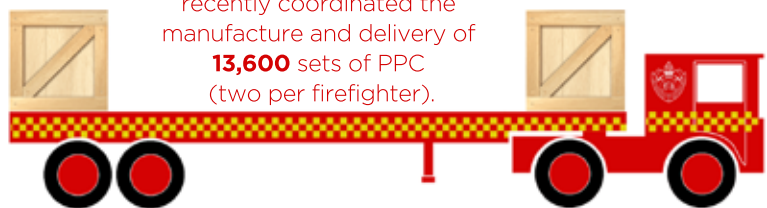
FLEET

Each year Fleet performs over **600** heavy vehicle inspections for registration, carries out **1000** preventative maintenance services and undertakes over **2000** road service repairs with an annual budget of approx **\$5.5 million**.



The Strategic Procurement & Contract Services Unit

recently coordinated the manufacture and delivery of **13,600** sets of PPC (two per firefighter).



Fire & Rescue NSW fleet overhead costs for registration, fuel, 'E' tags, insurance and fleet leasing:

\$6 million



The Property Services Unit manages a portfolio of over

400 properties, of which

106 are of

heritage significance.

FIRE



In the last three financial years Property Services delivered over

\$47 million of capital works projects, including new and refurbished fire stations.

Operational Logistics manages **100,000** items of plant and equipment worth over **\$90 million**.



Operational Logistics manages approximately **18 capital projects** each year with a value exceeding **\$6 million** to purchase equipment.



related to accidents. It re-registers vehicles, organises insurance and manages fuel cards. It also organises the movement and retrieval of appliances for maintenance, cascading and accident repair.

Other areas of responsibility include planning and implementation of the Fleet Total Asset Management plan, management of capital works projects for new appliances and replacement of minor fleet. The section also prepares technical specifications for the procurement of appliances and equipment, and prepares recommended practice documents for vehicle operators and stowage.

"Every year Fleet inspects more than 600 heavy vehicles for registration, carries out more than 1000 preventative maintenance services, and undertakes more than 2000 road service repairs with an annual budget of approximately \$5.5 million," said Assistant Director Fleet, Peter Fanning. "The overhead costs of registration, fuel, e-tags, insurances and leasing exceed \$6 million."

The October 2013 bushfires provided an effective demonstration of Fleet's capabilities and efficiencies, involving 100 pumpers, two water tankers, two bulk tankers, three forward-logistics support vehicles and 15 minor fleet vehicles. Mechanics were kept on the frontline with firefighters to ensure their vehicles were maintained and fully operational under tough conditions. Fleet also facilitated overnight fuelling of appliances.

In 2014, Fleet is commissioning a number of new vehicles, including the new Class 2 Mercedes pumper replacements and new Class 1 Mercedes Tankers. These will offer full automatic transmission, pump PTO drive (on the Class 2) and rear air bag suspension,

excellent rear crew cabin ergonomics, increased axle loadings (which means an increase in the tankers' water capacity), increased engine outputs and no burn-off required for the exhaust system filter (in contrast to the Isuzu).

The Property Services Unit delivers new fire stations, training facilities and office accommodation backed by ongoing service and support.

Property Services

Property Services Unit manages FRNSW's entire portfolio of more than 400 properties. This comprises 338 fire stations, a number of Area and Zone offices, storage facilities, training centres, residential leases and the major premises of Alexandria, Greenacre and the city Head Office.

The unit delivers new fire stations, training facilities and office accommodation backed by ongoing service and maintenance. Other key responsibilities include acquisition and disposal of new and old sites, strategic planning and management for new building construction and major refurbishments, a property helpdesk, repairs and maintenance, management of property insurance claims, and all residential and commercial leasing and property compliance work to meet

statutory, regulatory and legislative property codes.

Over the last three financial years the unit has delivered over \$47 million of capital works projects, including new and refurbished fire stations.

Property Services is also coordinating the Head Office relocation. This project will deliver modern and efficient workplaces incorporating the latest technology.

Projects

The Projects area works alongside Logistics Support's four key business units. Assistant Director Projects, Amanda Anderson, has a strategic role that ensures the activities of the Directorate's four units are aligned and integrated.

As Secretary of the Procurement Strategy Committee, Ms Anderson also incorporates appropriate governance into the system, analyses procurement patterns and expenditure, and recommends improved efficiencies or expenditure reduction. This has often led to high-cost items within ESCAT being replaced with more cost-effective products, or alternative providers identified who can supply products more cheaply.

"Organisational initiatives like recycling items and reducing the number of consumables held, have also resulted from the Committee's analysis," said Ms Anderson.

Currently, Projects' main focus is the \$10m SAP EAM (Enterprise Asset Management) project. Each business unit within Logistics Support is involved in the design of the system to ensure it will work for them. Projects' role is to identify potential issues and to liaise with the EAM team to manage their resolution. **END**

Matrville Incident

**FIRE
INCIDENT**



Huge paper factory fire anything but 'run of the mill'

19 DEC 11:00

A 10th Alarm fire burned for days at the former Australian Paper Mills site on Botany Road, Matrville.

Just after 1100 hours on Thursday 19 December 2013, firefighters were alerted to large volumes of smoke issuing from the rear of an abandoned paper mill.

The first arriving crew from nearby Botany Fire Station found large piles of recycled paper alight and, with limited access and strong winds forcing the fire towards buildings, the incident was quickly upgraded to a 2nd Alarm.

As the fire progressed, strong winds pushed the flames through bales of compacted paper, three metres high and five metres wide, and penetrated the walls of the

structure itself. Within two hours, the incident was upgraded to a 10th Alarm together with six aerial appliances.

Firefighting efforts were hampered by the large fuel load of compacted waste paper, strong wind, stored chemicals onsite and the close proximity of buildings and other structures. The incident management team was also concerned that drifting smoke could affect residents and flight operations at nearby Sydney Airport.

At the height of the fire, more than 100 firefighters from 20 stations were on the scene. At one stage four major aerial appliances and eight monitors

were at work when the roof of the five-storey building was well alight.

FireAir1 also took to the air and provided commanders on the ground with intelligence regarding fire spread and location, fire size, air quality and an aerial view of overall firefighting operations.

The fire smouldered for many days with the final Stop message not sent until 0959 hours on 24 December, by which time the fire had burnt through more than 1,000 tonnes of waste paper and severely damaged more than 90% of the building. **END**

FRNSW IN THE MEDIA

Top tips for engaging with your local media

“Dealing with journalists – whether they’re from a newspaper, TV or radio, can seem daunting, but it doesn’t have to be.” This is the message from Andrew Parsons, Assistant Director of FRNSW’s Media and Communication Unit (MCU).



“**B**uilding a relationship with your local media outlets is a ‘positive’ for you, your crew, FRNSW and the community,” Andrew told Fire & Rescue News.

To help firefighters throughout the State, the FRNSW Media Team has put together the following Top Tips for dealing with your local media outlets.

Andrew also reminds all staff that, if you have a question about media or you would like to tell your media team about something happening in your work area, you can call and speak with a media officer on (02) 9265 2907 or email media@fire.nsw.gov.au.

1. GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS



Do you know the local newspaper, radio station or TV station for your station area? Media Manager Tammy Shipperley says it’s important to find out.

“Local papers often have one or two journalists dedicated to doing the ‘emergency services round’. Work out who it is and get in touch with them. Invite them out to the station for a visit or, better still, organise a ‘Firefighter for a Day’ event. Take a look at the article

in this issue of Fire & Rescue News about some of the recent ‘Firefighter for a Day’ experiences around NSW – the results speak for themselves. It’s also important to stay on the radar – maintain regular contact with your local paper and radio station. Provide information about incidents and invite them to the station every 6-12 months.”

If you need an introduction to journalists or have any questions, contact your Media Team on (02) 9265 2907.

2. TAKE THE INITIATIVE



Senior Media Officer Heather Pillans, an experienced journalist herself, says getting in touch directly with your local journalists, editors or producers and pitching ideas is a great way to get your

story out.

“Journalists and the community don’t always understand what the job of a firefighter entails – so tell them. Journalists will appreciate the heads up and it gives them a contact point if they do want to follow up on an incident or community activity.”

Several firefighters are writing, or contributing to, weekly or fortnightly

columns for their local papers throughout NSW. This is a great way to showcase the diversity of incidents firefighters respond to, and how they are involved in the local community. The more you tell them, the more they’ll want to know.

3. TIMING IS EVERYTHING



Senior Media Officer Malissa Milligeon, who worked as a journalist and editor for many years, says her top tip is to remember that all media outlets operate on deadlines.

“To be successful, it’s important to get information to your local media as quickly as possible, particularly for TV stations or if your local paper publishes daily. A story that is two or three weeks old is unlikely to be of interest to a journalist and their audience. The same goes for responding to inquiries from your local media – if you don’t respond by the deadline, chances are they will go to another agency or someone else for the information. If you want the media and the local community to know what you and your crew are doing, tell them.”

If you are not sure how to respond to a media inquiry, refer it to a senior officer



or your Media Team. You can contact your local paper or your Media Team to find out the deadlines.

4. STICK TO THE FACTS

Superintendent Ian Krimmer AFSM, FRNSW's Operational Media Coordinator, says that while it's great to add colour to a story, it's vital to stick to the facts.

"Firefighters are authorised to talk about operational and community safety issues (with approval from the Station Commander) in their local area. Be descriptive – for example, 'the flames were leaping through the roof when we arrived' – but stick to the facts – time, date, place, what happened at the incident.

"If a journalist asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, just let them know, offer to follow it up and get back to them. If you are unable to find the information, or are unsure how to respond, refer it to a senior officer or contact your Media Team for advice and assistance."

5. A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS

A photo or video can help to tell your story. Your local paper or TV station can't always send a photographer or camera crew to

an incident or event. At an incident, if it's safe to do so and with permission from your senior officer, grab a photo or some video footage. Even radio stations post photos on Twitter and Facebook.

Action shots make the best photos as long as they do not show accident or fire victims – flames or firefighters at work are going to be most appealing to the media. The media will use it. Footage from the October 2013 bushfire, taken inside a responding appliance on a smartphone, was used by A Current Affair as part of a story about one of our crews who rescued a family in the Blue Mountains.

Make sure you send photos and video to your Media Team. MCU will use it on Facebook, Twitter, on the Intranet and in Fire & Rescue News. Next edition, MCU will also provide some tips on how to take good photos using an iPhone.

Just remember that any photos or video taken on duty – either with a device supplied by FRNSW or a private device – are the property of FRNSW and should be checked by your Media Team prior to release to media.

Do not take or use photos of injured or deceased people and avoid taking photos that identify a business, address or person. You should generally seek permission before taking a photo of a person / group of people, particularly

"If a journalist asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, just let them know, offer to follow it up and get back to them."

children. A photographic/video release form is available on the intranet (look under P in the Forms library). If in doubt, ask a senior officer or contact your Media Team for advice.

6. TELL YOUR MEDIA TEAM

If you're not sure about how to contact your local paper or radio station, if you just want some advice on what would make a good story, or if you'd like some media training, call your Media Team. They are in the office from 7:30am to 5:30pm every weekday and there's always someone on call after hours and on the weekend available to help you. They can be contacted on (02) 9265 2907, media@fire.nsw.gov.au or the on-call media officer 0418 181 000. **END**



Stations help journos experience a day in
THE LIFE OF A
FIREFIGHTER

Last year FRNSW launched a suite of resources to help fire stations host their own 'Firefighter for a Day' event for local media representatives. Since then, many brigades across metropolitan and regional NSW have adopted this concept as an opportunity to engage and build better relationships with local reporters.



The resources – a template event schedule with information, a participant invitation and indemnity form, and participant confirmation letters – were developed by 248 Camden Station Officer Kevin Smith and the Media Team on the back of a successful trial of a three-hour local media ‘Firefighter for a Day’ event held at Camden Fire Station mid-last year.

SO Smith wanted to develop a media ‘Firefighter for a Day’ concept that could be run locally at any permanent or retained fire station. During the day, participants wear PPE, use firefighting equipment and experience the physical effort required to complete some of the activities that firefighters undertake as part of their day-to-day service to the community.

There are many advantages to holding this type of event. It gives local reporters a taste of a day in the life of a firefighter and a better understanding of the physical and mental demands of the job. It also helps build relationships between reporters and firefighters and the subsequent articles published about their experiences showcase the work of FRNSW.

SO Smith said that, several months on, Camden Fire Station continues to reap the benefits.

“We have maintained a good relationship with one of the media representatives (the other has since moved on). The event enhanced the little bit we had to do with local reporters into a really good working relationship,” he said. “It is at a stage where, if they need something to help fill the paper, they’ll give us a ring and ask if we have an article or any information they might be able to use. It also works the other way. If we are keen to promote something to the community, we give them a call and they are happy to help.”

It also indirectly helped Camden Fire Station in its recent recruitment push for retained firefighters.

“Since the reporters’ articles from the ‘Firefighter for a Day’ event appeared, we have had a recruitment campaign which saw a huge amount of interest

from people who wanted to join us on the job,” SO Smith said. “We had more than 40 people come along to the information night and 70 applications. Those articles about the reporters’ experiences helped increase general awareness in the community of what we do and got people interested in becoming part of our team.”

Other fire stations that have recently hosted local media ‘Firefighter for a Day’ events include Bonnyrigg, Dee Why, Turvey Park, Toronto, Gosford

“The best scenario for the journalist, by far, was the search and rescue exercise.”

and Hurstville.

Dee Why Senior Firefighter Sam Wall said the event at his station, attended by The Manly Daily, was a huge success.

“We put the journalist through a search and rescue drill in full PPE, inert BA and frosted facemask. He bowled out lengths of 38mm and 70mm hose then dragged it once full charged. He experienced the jet reaction once the branch was opened up,” SFF Wall said.

“The journalist had said that he wasn’t sure why we were bothering to show him what it is like to drag a charged length of 70mm hose in full PPE ... how hard could it be? But once he tried it himself – he got the picture pretty quickly!”

“We used the thermal imaging camera to show him how valuable this is, with one of the firefighters playing the victim lying down in the dark gym area.”

“Finally we did a mock turnout, where Sydney Comms put a test call through and we donned all our PPE, got our radios in our tunic, BA on and ready to turn out at a moment’s notice. We wrapped the day up with a station favourite – sausage sandwiches.”

“The best scenario for the journalist, by far, was the search and rescue

exercise. Once he completed the search of two rooms and made his way out, we got him to draw a mud map of how he thought the room looked. It wasn’t until we took him back to check the rooms that he could see just how different it was from what he perceived it to be. The search of the two rooms took him about 10 minutes to complete. I told him we have to do the same task, but in only a few minutes. The journalist certainly left with a greater understanding and appreciation of the work we do.”

Bonnyrigg Heights Station Officer Wayne Rush said the feedback from the three journalists on the day of his station’s event was very positive.

“All three were young and fit, but commented on how hard it was – a bit of a combination of the heat and the exercises we got them doing,” he said. “It was all controlled, of course, and I reckon a bit of nervous energy was being used up too. They also asked about the human side of our job, which they said they found really interesting, and we talked about the proactive work we do in the community too.”

“We certainly now have a strong relationship with Fairfax Media in our area. Overall, I reckon it was a great day for all concerned and definitely worth the effort of getting it organised.”

Some stations have also used ‘Firefighter for a Day’ to engage other members of the community.

As this edition of Fire & Rescue News was going to press, Ingleburn Fire Station was preparing to hold a ‘Firefighter for a Day’ for its retained firefighters’ employers to give them an insight into the important work done by their staff members.

If any fire station would like to consider holding their own ‘Firefighter for a Day’ event for local media representatives, a template schedule with information, participant invitation and indemnity form, and participant confirmation letters are all available on the Intranet in the Media Toolkit. You can also contact the Media Unit on 9265 2907 for assistance. **END**



Daily Telegraph reporter Neil Keene's strength, stamina and dexterity were tested during the mock Physical Aptitude Test.



REPORTERS PUT THROUGH THEIR PACES IN MOCK PAT

There was a lot of huffing and puffing, moaning and groaning, but three reporters put themselves to the test to see if they had what it takes to make it through FRNSW's Physical Aptitude Test (PAT) on 28 January.

With different levels of fitness each of the reporters, to their credit, had a go.

The Daily Telegraph's Neil Keene, Channel 7 News' Talitha Cummins and Channel 9 News' Mike Dalton each took on a selection of PAT activities, including the reduced visibility search, ladder simulation, repeated hose drags, rescue static holds and a single-sided jerrycan exercise.

Alongside each activity from the PAT was the real thing – a real hose full of water to drag, a real ladder to lift (with a bit of help), and a real car to work on with a real combi tool. The idea was to demonstrate how permanent firefighter applicants are put to the test during the recruitment process and how it directly relates to the skills and capabilities they need for the job.

The repeated hose drag and ladder lift proved to be one of the more challenging for the reporters.

"I thought I was fit," Talitha Cummins gasped after her first attempt at this activity.

She admitted, however, that the reduced visibility mask was the most demanding. "It [the reduced visibility search] is so difficult, especially because it's so hot," she said. "I had such a great

time and have a much better appreciation of what our firies do!"

Mike and Neil also felt the heat wearing full turnout gear and weighted BA sets just like Talitha did. At one point Mike even fell to the floor, although this was more likely for dramatic effect for the cameras.

Chief Superintendent Craig Brierley said giving selected reporters a chance to have a go at performing some of the tasks was a good opportunity to show some of the work firefighters do, and to showcase how the PAT directly relates to firefighters' daily activities.

"Firefighting can be a physically demanding career. FRNSW has to ensure successful candidates have a certain level of fitness and strength to be able to do the job," he said. "It was a real eye-opener for each of the reporters." **END**



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OR
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FRNSW ON SCREEN



Celebrity chef Matt Moran at the Lismore Fire Station centenary.

Beyond the day-to-day media requests that flood in around specific incidents, FRNSW is always open to opportunities to educate on fire safety and communicate our essential messages, to take part in a multitude of safety campaigns and to speak to the communities we care for.

Celebrity chef celebrates Lismore Centenary

Lismore Fire Station officers celebrated the station's 100th year by going gourmet with celebrity chef Matt Moran.

Matt stopped by to cook a celebratory seafood feast for the firefighters as part of filming of his new show, Paddock to Plate. The episode, broadcast in early 2014, underlined the high regard with which FRNSW is held in local communities and raised awareness of fire safety with a kitchen fire simulator demonstration.

Matt said he had experienced "a lot" of burns in the kitchen over the past few years and appreciated the fire service's role first-hand.

"Coming from a cook's perspective, the fire service is vital," he said.

Station Officer Ian Grimwood worked tirelessly behind the scenes to assist the production on short notice. "It was a great honour for the station to gain profile in the show and to highlight the work the fire service does," he said.

"Lismore Fire Brigade was formed in 1896 and, over the decades, hundreds of firefighters have rushed to thousands of fire callouts in the region from the station since 1913. We are celebrating 100 years of the building, but the life of the building is the people who work out of it and protect the community, the environment and the businesses of Lismore."

Duty commander for the Northern Rivers Fire Service, Phil Sheedy, said it was great to have someone of Matt Moran's calibre in the area.

Beyond the TV episode, Paddock to Plate added a profile video on FRNSW's history in Lismore to their website, offering retained firefighter recruitment information for interested locals.

Not Angelina Jolie

Not many firefighters can say they have been mistaken for Angelina Jolie, but that is in fact what happened to our FRNSW spokesperson on the day Transport NSW shot their roadside safety campaign. As news helicopters hovered to catch a glimpse of what was rumoured to be the Hollywood star and traffic on the M4 banked up, a swift response behind the scenes and a quick change of location saved the production.

FRNSW had joined with Transport NSW and other emergency services to promote roadside safety, particularly for those working in emergency situations. The resulting video was used in a campaign over the summertime when many people are on the road travelling. At the video's launch, FRNSW Commissioner Mullins spoke directly to media about safety.

The campaign asks road users to consider emergency and roadside workers. The catchphrase was: "We're looking out for you. Are you looking out for us? If you see us on the road, slow down and give us space."

Also not Angelina Jolie

While, to our knowledge, no one from IT has been mistaken recently for Angelina Jolie ... it doesn't mean they are not being recognised as leaders in their field. Gavin Brown and Richard Host joined their counterparts from the NSW Rural Fire Service, the Ambulance Service of NSW

 **VIEW VIDEO AT**
fire.nsw.gov.au/frnews

OR

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and the NSW State Emergency Service to present the SAP platform as a case study for emergency services around the world. FRNSW was showcased as the lead agency in delivering SAP across emergency services in NSW. The video was filmed at Lady Macquarie's chair in Sydney's CBD.

ERV early warning app a global winner

A 14-year-old Sydney student, Viney Kumar, recently won his category in the global Google Science Fair by devising an early warning application for drivers in the vicinity of emergency response vehicles. His assignment was to create a device that enables people to hear emergency services sirens earlier so they can move out of the way with plenty of time.

FRNSW teamed up with Google Science to internationally profile Viney's great work and, closer to home, to talk to his peers, aiming to keep that message of safe driving around emergency vehicles front-of-mind on the roads.

Google Science flew in a director especially from London and Viney spent a day interacting with local firefighters at Hornsby, re-enacting the process of research to show the world how he received the valuable input from firefighters and other emergency service workers that allowed him to create the App and win the prestigious award.

END

Mudgee Incident

**HAZMAT
INCIDENT**



Photo courtesy of Darryn Snyder.

Mudgee truck crash fuels HAZMAT CONCERNS

14 JAN 07:30

Fuel leaking from an overturned semi-trailer in Mudgee threatened the Cudgegong River and a local childcare centre.

Shortly before 0730 hours on Tuesday 14 January 2014, a semi-trailer carrying 11,000 litres of diesel rolled over at the corner of Douro and Market Streets in Mudgee CBD.

The crew from 387 Mudgee originally responded to reports of a motor vehicle accident with people trapped. However, when they arrived on scene they found that the driver was free, but the semi-trailer was lying on its side with a ruptured fuel tank.

More than 5,000 litres of diesel leaked from the vehicle, with the

spill travelling towards a nearby river and pooling outside a childcare centre. Firefighters in BA set up fire protection and began working to bund nearby drains and dam the leak, while hazmat firefighters relocated to bund the river.

During the incident, surrounding roads were blocked and the childcare centre and several other buildings were evacuated as a precaution. Council staff assisted in blocking the drains. The energy authority was also called to isolate power before the trailer could be righted and the remaining fuel decanted.

At one point, vapour ignition caused a brief explosion as the fuel was being decanted into a second truck. Firefighters quickly applied a foam blanket to prevent any further ignition. By 1700 hours the truck had been decanted and righted, and the centre of Mudgee returned to normal. Quick response by crews prevented the spill from being significantly worse and ensured that the Cudgegong River was not contaminated. **END**



SUPPORTING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In 2014 Fire & Rescue NSW will roll out a number of innovative mental health programs and research projects to benefit our firefighters and non-operational personnel.

FRNSW has a long history of offering mental health support, initially through the engagement of Chaplains in 1980, augmented by the introduction of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in 1983 and a Critical Incident Support Program (CISP) in 1990.

The official FRNSW Mental Health Policy was launched in November 2013. It outlines the organisation's framework for raising awareness of mental health issues, implementing preventative initiatives to reduce the incidence of psychological illness and injury, and providing an effective response to situations that may give rise to mental

illness, thereby promoting early recovery.

According to FRNSW Wellbeing Coordinator, SF Mark Dobson, firefighters tend to ignore the early signs of mental health problems.

"They believe it's part of their identity to be strong and tough, and not to break down," said SF Dobson, "until sometimes it gets to the point where they can no longer cope with their job or their personal lives. That's why it's important for FRNSW to help our employees recognise the early warning signs, to encourage them to ask for help, and to provide the right support when they do."

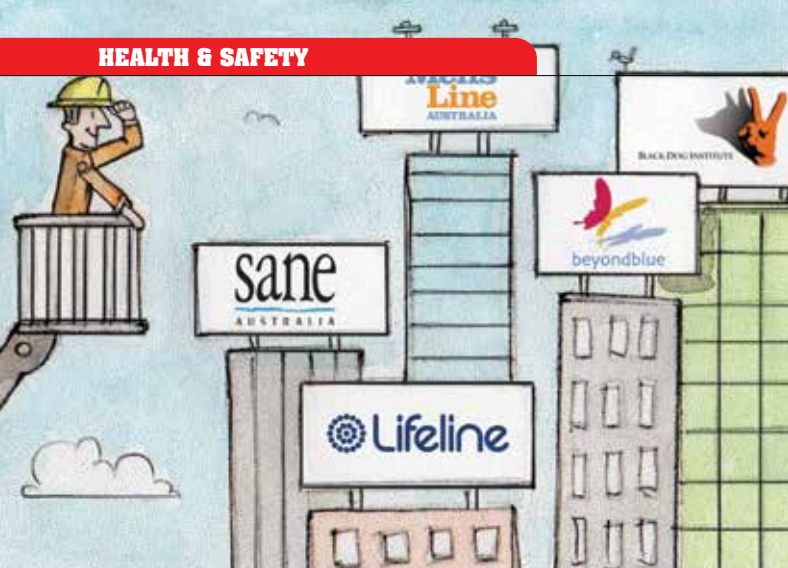
Practical mental health programs planned for 2014 and beyond cover four main areas – awareness, prevention, response and support.

The awareness programs are proactive and organisation-wide. They increase awareness of mental health issues, decrease stigma, improve the organisational culture and assist our people in managing stressors. Examples



include mental health awareness sessions delivered by members of the peer team, intranet information, brochures and training to both recruits and senior personnel.

Prevention programs focus on improving workplace safety from a psychological perspective. They aim at creating a positive work environment and improving day-to-day behaviours among workers and management. Examples include psychological risk assessments and education initiatives relating to resilience and workplace conduct.



Response programs involve the timely identification of people who may have an increased risk of psychological injury. Examples include Well Checks, CISP and other processes that assist at-risk individuals.

Support programs provide ongoing assistance to anyone impacted by trauma or other work-related stress factors. Examples include the EAP, Chaplains, CISP and enhanced intranet-based information.

Mental health toolkits

Over the next 18 months, FRNSW is developing four practical toolkits, each of which will address a different area of optimal mental health in the workplace. The 'Awareness' and 'Prevention' toolkits will be available in 2014, while the 'Response' and 'Support' toolkits will be available in 2015.

Each toolkit will comprise easily accessible and practical information to assist individuals seeking personal support and those looking to support others. The toolkits will use the "ALGEE" mnemonic to step individuals through the process of assisting themselves or others:

- Approach, assess and assist with any crisis
- Listen non-judgmentally
- Give support and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage other supports.

RECOGNISING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

The first recognisable signs of mental health problems are often changes in day-to-day functioning, such as:

- reduced motivation
- avoiding others, withdrawal
- increased use of alcohol and/or drugs (illegal or legal)
- decreased personal care
- reduced activity and energy
- increased anger or irritability
- difficulty in concentrating on tasks
- impaired decision-making.

SANE program available to metro managers

SANE Australia is a national charity that works for a better life for people affected by mental illness, through campaigning, education and research. Its Mindful Employer program is a workplace mental health training program provided to organisations throughout Australia.

FRNSW and SANE Australia have worked together to implement this program to Station Commanders and Deputy Captains in regional fire stations. It is now available to Station Commanders in metropolitan fire stations.

The online training component of the program provides advice and information on mental illnesses (such as depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder), and helps participants gain the skills to support someone at work who has a mental illness or is caring for someone with a mental illness.

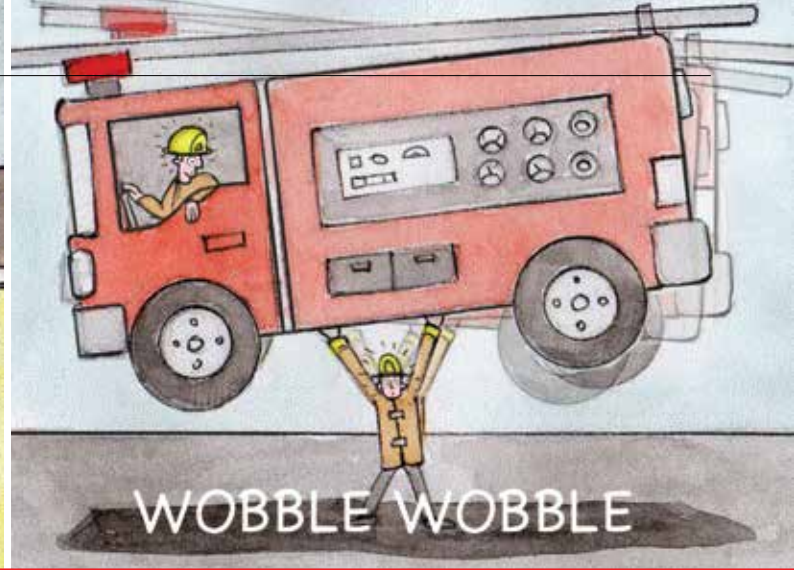
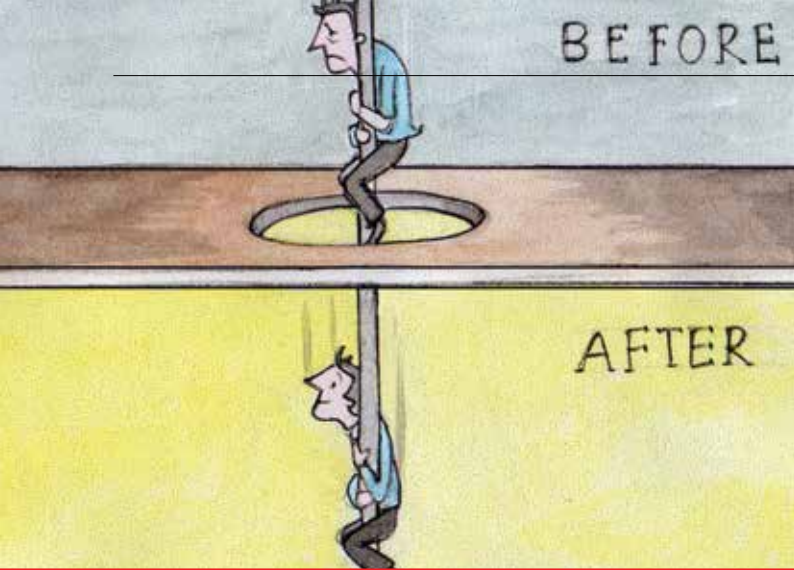
- The three eLearning courses are:
- What is a mental illness? Information on the different types of mental illnesses, including the signs, symptoms and treatments.
 - A guide for the workplace: Advice on how people can support a colleague in the workplace who has a mental illness or is caring for someone with a mental illness.
 - A guide for people managers: Training for managers and supervisors on how to respond effectively to mental health problems at work, and how to support an employee who has a mental illness.

CHECKLIST FOR STAYING WELL

- Adequate sleep
- Regular exercise
- Healthy diet
- Recreational activities or hobbies
- Short-term and long-term goals
- Good support network
- Stress management skills
- Deep relaxation/meditation

Black Dog RESPECT program

FRNSW has partnered with the University of NSW (UNSW) and the Black Dog Institute to develop the RESPECT awareness program for managers. This involves a half-day education program that addresses mental health literacy and



provides practical guidance on how to communicate about employees' welfare issues. The mnemonic RESPECT assists learning and indicates the key outcomes of the program:

- R – Regular contact is essential
- E – Earlier the better
- S – Supportive and empathetic
- P – Practical help, not psychotherapy
- E – Encourage help seeking
- C – Consider return to work options
- T – Tell them the door is always open, arrange next contact.

The program aims to improve managers' ability to undertake difficult sensitive conversations with workers. It is being rolled out to all duty, zone and area commanders within the operational directorates, as well as Grade 11/12 Clerks and Assistant Directors in the non-operational directorates.

The half-day training program is followed up with contact from EAP Manager Assist program counsellors, who provide telephone mentoring to all attendees. This contact assists with the application of program outcomes. The value of the program will be assessed by UNSW with a series of surveys and assessments.

FIT MIND

This project was developed by UNSW and FRNSW as part of an Australian Research Council grant, began in 2009, with stage 1 involving an initial survey of firefighters to determine attitudes toward critical incident support.

The survey results, derived from over 1,500 individual responses, showed that 83% of firefighters sought initial support from their peers in the wake of critical incidents. This demonstrated that improved awareness at station level could decrease the incidence of psychological injury.

To test this idea, a training program was designed for delivery to 200 new recruits (both permanent and retained). These firefighters are now being followed up over a number of years to gauge the effect, if any, of the training on their behaviour.

The key elements of the training program are summarised in the FIT MIND mnemonic, outlining the steps firefighters can take to check their psychological resilience and to access support:

- Find Time – pause and catch your breath before exiting the pump
- Individual Check – check your psychological readiness
- Team Check – check arousal levels with your partner and other members of the crew

- Mates – Talk with your mates about incidents and issues
- Internal – use internal support such as the CISP, Chaplains and EAP
- Network – establish a strong network of friends and family
- Doctors – access the mental health professions. **END**

WHERE YOU CAN FIND HELP

If you recognise signs of mental health problems in yourself or any of your co-workers, it's essential that you seek help – the earlier, the better.

Here are some options:

- **Peer Support Team:** This team offers help to employees who are affected by individual traumatic incidents or a cumulative effect over their career. It also provides support for general mental health issues. A list of peers can be found in the phone directory on the Intranet under phone directory lists.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** This service, funded by FRNSW, will connect you to a counsellor. Available to all FRNSW employees and their immediate family members, it is confidential and solution focused. Call 1300 360 364.
- **Your GP:** Ask your GP for a referral to a psychologist. Medicare will pay for 12 sessions a year and FRNSW will cover the gap between the counsellor's rate and the Medicare rebate.
- **Manager Assist Program:** This service is available through our EAP provider. It advises managers on how to deal with someone who has a mental health problem. It assists when having a difficult conversation with an employee. Don't put off having a conversation with someone who may need help. Call 1300 360 364.
- **Chaplains:** Chaplaincy provides emotional support and care to employees and their families during times of stress and major life events. Whether the issues relate to work, home, relationships or health, the Chaplains offer confidential and non-judgemental care and support. Contact Lyndsay Smith on 0418 869 280 or Dawn Smith on 0418 268 754, or email chaplain@fire.nsw.gov.au.

All calls and appointments with these services are completely confidential.



Boats ablaze at Canada Bay

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03 DEC 02:48

Containing a boat fire in Cabarita from the shore proved a challenging operation.

At 0248 hours on Tuesday 3 December 2013, FRNSW received the first of many 000 calls to an explosion and fire involving several boats at the Cabarita Marina, Canada Bay. Many callers also said they feared that people were living on board the vessels.

By the time crews arrived, three large boats were fully involved in fire and another smaller boat had broken

its moorings and was drifting freely, threatening to involve other vessels. A 2nd Alarm was requested together with marine support from Sydney Ports.

The response escalated and ultimately more than 30 firefighters worked for over three hours with SCBA, foam and handlines off the marina to extinguish and contain the situation. A water relay was required to deliver sufficient water to the wharf area to attack the blaze and protect numerous other expensive watercraft surrounding the area.

Two 15.9 metre yachts sank at the wharf and an 18.3 metre vessel was also severely damaged. The Otter and Hazmat

crews worked throughout the morning to deploy booms to contain extensive fuel leaks. Only one casualty was reported, a middle-aged man who suffered chest pains and was treated and taken to hospital.

It was a difficult operation and many other vessels could have been lost, were it not for the outstanding efforts of crews from 23 Gladesville, 42 Ryde, 13 Alexandria, 66 Rhodes, 15 Burwood, 14 Ashfield, 27 Parramatta, 3 The Rocks, 12 Balmain, 30 Lidcombe and Hazmat personnel. **END**



FIREFIGHTERS BRUSH UP THEIR CORE SKILLS

In the past year, over 1,800 FRNSW firefighters in Sydney and Wollongong received refresher training in core skills.

Core Skills Refresher Training is a new approach to skills maintenance training. It provides firefighters with the opportunity to enhance their practical skills during realistic scenarios.

FRNSW Education and Training began delivering this program in March 2013, with 93 sessions conducted last year for stations in the Sydney and Wollongong areas.

The program was developed to align with the eight core skills required of firefighters, these being:

1. using personal protective equipment and clothing, self-contained breathing apparatus and hazmat protective clothing
2. locating and accessing water supplies and deploying hoselines
3. conducting an assessment of a casualty and using oxygen and automated external defibrillator/basic life support
4. selecting and using appropriate extinguishing equipment
5. selecting and implementing an appropriate method to combat an emergency incident involving fire, hazmat, rescue, storm and tempest
6. accessing and using appropriate methods of entry
7. operating and maintaining pumps
8. checking and operating equipment – inspecting and testing, Station Inventory Management System.



The program comprises two stages. Stage 1 features a resource manual delivered to each station scheduled to attend the training. This provides key information on breathing apparatus, gas detection and atmospheric monitoring, thermal imaging camera operations, clandestine drug lab procedures, door entry and extinguishing techniques, and incident management procedures.

The manual enables Station Officers to conduct station drills on equipment and procedures prior to attending Stage 2. Self-check questions and answers are also provided for self-evaluation.

Stage 2 involves firefighters from stations in the greater Sydney area attending the State Training College in Alexandria. In Wollongong, due to resource availability, firefighters attend the Albion Park Training Centre. This stage incorporates face-to-face and scenario-based training delivery.

SO Timothy Climo, Team Leader in FRNSW's Breathing Apparatus and Hazardous Materials (BA/Hazmat) Training Section, told Fire & Rescue News that participants found the training both enjoyable and effective.

"During the first half of the day, Station Officers are separated from the firefighters and receive incident management, thermal imaging camera and breathing apparatus refresher training delivered by the Command, Leadership and Management Team,"

SO Climo said. "At the same time, firefighters receive refresher training in a series of scenarios provided by instructors from the BA/Hazmat and Firefighting Training Teams.

"The second half of the day provides everyone with the opportunity to further enhance their skills in two scenarios. Each scenario simulates a 2nd Alarm incident involving a building fire with people reported trapped."

Education and Training is currently developing a model to expand this training into regional areas. In March 2014 a new program will also commence, based on the Core Skills Refresher Training, only this time focusing on hazmat skills maintenance. This will again provide firefighters with the opportunity to enhance practical skills during realistic scenario training. **END**

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The feedback from firefighters who attended the Core Skills Refresher program was overwhelmingly positive, with a majority requesting 6-monthly (rather than annual) maintenance training.

Participants were asked which part of the training they found most valuable, and why. Here are some of their responses.

- Using the gas detector and TIC in scenarios was excellent.
- Drills, as it is one thing that's difficult to simulate at station level.
- Incident scenario – interaction with other crews was a valuable experience.
- Station Officer theory at the beginning of training was very informative and valuable learning. Also found the scenarios great for team-building and teamwork skills.
- Multi-competency scenarios are excellent at refreshing key skills in a systematic way. Combining skills was a great experience.
- The hands-on aspect of the training was the most valuable. This made it more applicable to the job in practice.



TEAMS DO US PROUD IN THE AUSTRALASIAN FIREFIGHTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Eight FRNSW teams competed in the Australasian Firefighter Championships in Launceston in November 2013.

The Championships were hosted by the Tasmanian Fire Service, with 30 teams competing from Tasmania, Victoria, New Zealand, the Northern Territory and NSW.

The overall winner was the Metropolitan Fire Brigade from Melbourne. FRNSW teams competing were the Kelso, Berry, Bega, Trangie, Port Macquarie, Wyong, Glen Innes and Dorrigo Brigades. Kelso finished third and Dorrigo fourth, with all our teams finishing in the top half of the field.

"Everyone attending had an enjoyable time," said Assistant Director Championships, Garry Tant, "even though the competition was extremely challenging, especially considering that visiting teams had to adapt to significant equipment differences."

Two weeks later, Port Macquarie hosted the Regional North 1 Championships at Westport Park on the river at Port Macquarie, surely the most scenic location for a Championships track in NSW. New teams from Gunnedah, Nambucca Heads, Toukley and Merrylands all competed for the first time.

Most recently, on 1-2 March this year, Mudgee was the site of the Regional West 2 Championships at which 19 teams competed. With Commissioner

2014 Firefighter Championships schedule

Regional Championships, Mudgee	1-2 March
Regional Championships, Unanderra	3-4 May
Regional Championships, Swansea	19-20 July
State Championships, Kelso	23-25 October

Greg Mullins in attendance, the teams – including eight from within zone and 11 from outside the zone – participated in 11 events.

The winning team overall was Tamworth on 1152 points followed by Dorrigo in second place with Kootingal RFS a close third. The leading in-zone brigade was Kelso on a creditable 838 points.

"Although it was very wet on the weekend, that didn't deter some fierce competition," said Director Regional Operations, Assistant Commissioner Robert McNeil AFSM. "The teams also showed an exceptionally high level of competence, with the lead changing many times, especially during the final stages."

Assistant Commissioner McNeil said the highlight was the Urban Pump Suction event. This was won by Tamworth over Kelso and Kootingal RFS in just over the State record time of 21.001 seconds set by Berri in 2010.

The modern series of the NSW Firefighter Championships has been held across the State for more than 80 years. Events are based on current firefighting practice, with an emphasis on simulating various scenarios encountered in contemporary fire and emergency response situations. They are designed to hone the firefighting skills of the thousands of firefighters who participate each year.

"As fire appliances and equipment are upgraded and modernised, new events are adopted and others are deleted," said Garry Tant. "For example, the introduction of breathing apparatus and rescue events provides firefighters with yet another way to practice life-saving skills."

Staged over a two-year period, the Championships comprise ten regional weekend Championships and culminate in the Australasian Championships and NSW State Championships, held in alternate years. **END**

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HUNTINGWOOD:

'SHOWCASE OF THE GOLDEN WEST'

Western Sydney is fortunate to have one of FRNSW's best-equipped and staffed stations in its midst.

In the early 2000s, then Metropolitan West 1 Inspector Peter Casey declared with enthusiasm that 97 Huntingwood Fire Station would be the "showcase of the golden west". The claim was viewed with amusement by staff at that time, given the station building's spartan appearance, back street location and origin as an electrical wholesaler's business. However, their now retired colleague clearly possessed superior predictive ability, because today the station at Huntingwood is not only the centre of FRNSW's western Sydney operations, but has also been modernised and beautified. It is now the envy of other Brigades and other emergency services.

"Our story begins back in the late 1990s when Regional Commander John Anderson AFSM and Inspector Peter Casey toured the area," Station Officer Garry Murphy told Fire & Rescue News. "They were seeking a suitable site for a new station in response to the rapid growth of Sydney's western suburbs and the predicted expansion of industries and roads."

"Huntingwood eventually opened for business on 11 May 2000. A standard International pumper was also installed

as an interim measure while we waited for the arrival of an aerial pumper."

The official opening on 28 June 2000 was attended by Commissioner Ian MacDougall AFSM, Blacktown Mayor Alan Pendleton, Member for Mt Druitt Richard Amery, other officials and scores of local school children. A young Station Officer, Ken Murphy, provided a rousing speech in which he outlined his aspirations for the new station.

During the first decade of the new century, it became evident that NSW Fire Brigades in Western Sydney needed additional administrative offices for the growing service, and the large premises at Huntingwood were an obvious choice. Ongoing renovations and staff additions commenced during the late 2000s and were eventually completed in February 2012.

Local area profile and challenges

The local area for Huntingwood Fire Station encompasses the industrial suburbs of Huntingwood, Arndell Park and Eastern Creek, as well as the residential suburbs of Prospect, South Blacktown, Doonside, Rooty Hill, Minchinbury and the new suburb of Bungarribee. Major arterial roads running through the area include the M4 Western

Motorway, the M7 Westlink and the Great Western Highway. Adjoining the area is reserved land for the Prospect Reservoir, Western Sydney Dragway and Eastern Creek Raceway.

Huntingwood is also the first response station for the Transgrid Sydney West 330 kV substation and the major recycling facility at Eastern Creek depot, so MVAs (many of which involve trucks) and associated spillages are regular occurrences.

The area contains numerous large warehouse complexes, and these are often many hectares in size. For example, Coles' national distribution warehouse is more than 6 hectares, and their chiller warehouse is 3.7 hectares.

The Toll dangerous goods warehouse in Arndell Park is a major hazard facility and carries all classes of dangerous goods, except radioactive and explosive goods. Consolidated Chemicals, also in Arndell Park, contains hydrofluoric acid, one of the most dangerous industrial substances. Thankfully, FRNSW is aware that the antidote is available on site, a good example of local knowledge acquired through pre-incident planning.

Also in Huntingwood's area is the new water fun park, Wet 'n Wild Sydney, which

The station at Huntingwood is the centre of FRNSW's western Sydney operations.



opened in December 2013, as well as numerous large cold stores, commercial areas, manufacturing areas and data storage warehouses housing scores of storage computers, many costing around \$1 million each.

"Close to our station, we have Diageo, which blends and bottles alcoholic beverages," said SO Murphy. "There's also the Arnotts Biscuits factory, which on cool mornings exudes the delectable aromas of freshly-baked bickies!"

Staff and equipment

The station serves the area with four platoons, each of which has a Station Officer and three firefighters, plus one relieving firefighter and two relieving officers. It also has one firefighter on K Platoon (weekends only) and four West 1 Platoon

Inspectors, as well as Zone Commander Supt Alex Scott, Area Commander Chief Supt Rick Griffiths AFSM, an area administrative officer and two office assistants, plus one or two temporary light duties personnel.

Appliances include a Scania Telesqurt aerial pumper with a 15-metre boom, aerial-mounted monitor and a Waterous multi-stage pump. The appliance is 10 metres long and, when

fully stowed, weighs nearly 22 tonnes. It cost approximately \$1 million to supply and equip.

"This is an impressive piece of equipment," said SO Murphy. "When properly supplied, it can deliver around 6,000 litres of water per minute, or conversely provide highly-atomised low-volume streams of water from two live hose reels mounted on each side of the appliance. The aerial monitor can shoot a jet of water up to 90 metres, so there's no need to get too close to a large fire. In addition, the hydraulically-powered boom can be used for aerial rescue situations, lifting casualties from depths or lowering them from heights, and as an observation tower."

Incidents

"Having an aerial appliance means you get invited to all the challenging jobs in adjoining areas," said SO Murphy. "But occasionally interesting events can occur close to home."

"For example, a nitro-cellulose fire at the Toll warehouse in Arndell Park resulted in 144 sprinkler heads activating. The fire went 20 metres through the roof. Nitro-cellulose can ignite spontaneously if allowed to dry after being wet, so crews were on hand for several days to ensure any

wet unburned substance did not dry out."

An ethanol explosion at the Diageo plant behind the fire station blew a 15-metre tank out of its mooring and filled the bunded area with tens of thousands of litres of ethanol. This incident lasted for three days.

An underground petrol leak at the Caltex station on the M4 Motorway resulted in a clean-up lasting a week. Although there was no ignition, the fuel found its way into an on-site waste tank and quickly evaporated to form 100% of the lower explosive limit, thereby presenting an acute risk of explosion.

A huge fire in the Sell & Parker Scrapyard in Blacktown initially seemed like a rubbish fire, but the aerial pumper was put to work and saved about \$40 million worth of equipment. On this occasion the aerial pumper reached where deck and ground monitors couldn't, so it proved its worth to 40 times its value.

Numerous overturned truck incidents have resulted in substantial spillages in the Huntingwood area, including one B-double carrying paints, one carrying soil and another carrying bitumen, as well as a milk tanker, a semi-trailer with a load of intermediate bulk containers full of detergents and, most recently, an open semi-trailer with a load of eggs that failed to negotiate an M7 off-ramp, resulting in the entire load catapulting out. ■■■ **END**

"Having an aerial appliance means you get invited to all the challenging jobs in adjoining areas."

COMMUNITY FIRE UNITS MOVING FORWARD



A new Community Fire Units team is dedicated to supporting the work of our CFU volunteers across NSW.

The Community Fire Units, previously managed by the FRNSW Bushfire Section, have undergone major restructuring and as a result, a new independent team was established.

The new team, exclusively dedicated to supporting the CFU volunteers and the firefighters who assist them, is focusing on training new CFU volunteers and skills maintenance training of the existing members; improving the communications with more than 7,000 CFU volunteers across NSW; and reviewing the program

The new team is focusing on training CFU volunteers, improving communications and reviewing program objectives, including equipment, policies, e-learning and recruitment.

objectives including equipment, policies, e-learning and recruitment.

The new CFU office is located at Wigram Street, Harris Park on the first floor of Parramatta Fire Station. The team, led by the CFU Manager, Samantha Colwell, was formed late last year and is now finally complete with 11 staff members on board.

The CFU program was established following the devastating Sydney bushfires in 1994 and has been continuously expanding. The new CFU Team started 2014 with a launch of two new units in Windsor Downs. Due to the proximity of the large Windsor Downs Nature Reserve and abundant potential fuel, the residential suburbs in this area are at high risk of being impacted by a bushfire.

The new CFU units MHP-489 and MHP-490 are made of 14 local residents who completed their training comprised of theory modules about bushfire behaviour, working safely and property protection strategies followed by a practical exercise on how to operate and maintain the CFU equipment. The launch of the new units involved a BBQ followed by an official presentation and the handover of the keys to their trailers.

The new units will supplement three that already exist in the area – MHP-378, 389 and 381. These operate in the suburb of Bligh Park on the other side of the Windsor Downs Nature Reserve. **END**

Banksmeadow Incident



Crane fire disrupts one of Australia's busiest ports

06 DEC 08:51

Firefighters battled a difficult fire in a container crane at Patricks Terminal in Banksmeadow.

A call came in at 0851 hours on Friday 6 December 2013 that a large 'straddle' crane situated over numerous containers was on fire.

A 2nd Alarm response was required to deal with the awkwardly placed fire. Situated at the end of the wharf, a relay was required to deliver water to the fire scene. Although aerial appliances responded, they were not required as crews with hand lines and SCBA were able to

extinguish the fire with the assistance of Patricks staff who carefully moved containers from the area to allow firefighting operations to proceed.

The fire involved the engine compartment of the large mobile crane equipment. A subsequent diesel spill was also quickly contained.

Crews from 35 Botany, 70 Maroubra, 56 Matraville, 18 Glebe, 21 Kogarah and City of Sydney quickly prevented what could have been a major disruption to one of Australia's busiest shipping terminals. **END**



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**FRNSW SPORTS ASSOCIATION:
EVEN MORE
ACTIVE IN
2014**

Photo courtesy of www.actioninfocus.com.au

The FRNSW Sports Association has a proud history of almost 35 years promoting sports awareness and firefighters' representation in sporting activities.

In 2014 the Association is stronger than ever, with 11 affiliated clubs and approximately 1400 members from FRNSW's permanent, retained and administrative ranks.

"We help our members to participate in a range of events and activities, including team and individual sports within Australia and internationally," the Association's Secretary, SO Alan Gerrard, told Fire & Rescue News,

"This year, we're entering a new era. We've improved our finances, we've strengthened the administration and we're now encouraging even greater participation from across the organisation."

"All clubs are on the lookout for new members. So I encourage FRNSW employees to get involved. You can join one of the clubs or, if your sport isn't currently represented, you can start a new club with the Sports Association's backing."

Games participation

A major focus for the Association each year is participation in either the Australasian Police & Emergency Services (APES) Games or the World Police & Fire Games. Both events are held once every two years, with the APES Games on even-number years and the World Police & Fire Games on odd-number years.

FRNSW sent a strong contingent to this year's APES Games in Melbourne on 19- 24 April. The Association also hopes a large FRNSW team will travel to Fairfax, Virginia, USA, for the next World Police & Fire Games, to be held 26 June to 5 July 2015.

Individual athletes

The Sports Association also actively supports individual sports men and women, especially where they compete at an elite or representative level. "We're interested in helping individuals to achieve their best, no matter what their specific sport might be," said SO Gerrard.

For example, the Association has provided assistance to FF Ruan Sims in her quest to make the Australian women's rugby union squad for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. SF Shane Thompson and SF Aaron Richardson both received support from

the Association when they competed in the 2013 Hawaiian Ironman competition. QF Matthew Johnson, who plays hockey for NSW and is potentially just a step away from national selection, has also received valuable support from the Association.

Website and merchandise

FRNSW sporting merchandise is now available from the Sports Association's updated website, at www.frnswsports.com.au. You can purchase items such as sports bags, towels, swimming costumes, polo shirts, t-shirts and hoodies. With these you'll always look and feel like part of the FRNSW team, whatever your sport may be.

The website also includes information about membership, affiliated clubs and support for individual athletes.

Affiliated clubs

In addition to supporting individual sports men and women, the FRNSW Sports Association comprises a range of affiliated clubs including the following.

Soccer

The FRNSW Soccer Club has existed in one format or another for many years. It was affiliated with the FRNSW Sports Association in 2010, and has grown to comprise almost 100 members and three main teams – Open Men's and Women's and Over 35s.

The main competitions include the World Police & Fire Games (bi-annually), the APES Games (bi-annually), the NSW Police Games, the Defence Force Games, Emergency Services Days and a number of other events. The club's teams also play the occasional game of futsal (indoor soccer) for charity events such as 'The Big Issue' Floating Pitch Soccer Event each year at Darling Harbour. The latest outing was a trip to Melbourne at Easter 2014 for the APES Games where, for the first time, the club entered an Over 40s event.

The Soccer Club welcomes new players and would especially like to have a more active Women's and Open Men's Team. You can contact current players, or committee members SO Scott Jarvis (Secretary) at scott.jarvis@fire.nsw.gov.au or SO Belinda Hooker (Women's Rep) at belinda.hooker@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Rugby League

The FRNSW Rugby League Club was re-established in 2009 after a long break and now has over 80 members who play in two teams, the Opens and the Masters.

The Opens team has four to five games a year against the likes of the Navy, Army and Police. In 2013 the Opens team travelled to Brisbane to play Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in front of a crowd of 5,000 noisy Queenslanders in what participants hope will be an annual event.

The Masters team is for over 35s who wish to continue having a run in a competition designed to protect the ageing player. The team plays every 3-4 weeks in a social yet competitive atmosphere. In 2013 the Masters side also travelled to Brisbane to play against the local Wynnum Manly Masters side in the lead-up game to the Opens' 'State of Origin'.

Rugby League Club membership is open to all FRNSW employees and their families. If you're interested, email Insp Josh Turner (Secretary) at joshua.turner@fire.nsw.gov.au. He will forward your enquiry to the relevant side's coordinator.

Rugby Union

After hosting the 2012 World Firefighter Games rugby tournament, the FRNSW Rugby Union Club had a quiet 2013, the main highlight of which was the men's Over 45s team defending their gold medal in Belfast in August.

2014 will be busier, starting in March with a game against the Police followed by two games against our FRNSW country rivals – one in the city and one in Newcastle scheduled in May and July. The season will culminate in a second game against the Police on 11 September. This will be the inaugural 9/11 Cup. The club has also organised some Women's and Masters' games. The Over 35s played in the Bondi 10s on Saturday 8 February. In April the Women's played against the Navy and in May an Over 35s team will play against the Navy Old Salts.

Anyone interested in playing this year should contact Insp Mark Reilly at mark.reilly@fire.nsw.gov.au or on 0411 186 054.

Tag and Touch

The FRNSW Tag and Touch Club was formed in early 2012 and has two specific goals:

- to promote fitness among firefighters by supporting FRNSW teams in local Otag and touch football competitions. Two teams of firefighters play regularly in Otag competitions, one in South Western Sydney and one on the Central Coast.
- to coordinate the participation of FRNSW sides in events such as the World Police and Fire Games and the APES Games (where FRNSW teams have regularly won medals).

In 2013 the club received an invitation from former Bulldogs player Hazem El Masri, host of NRL's Harmony Day, to play a 'friendly' game of Otag against a team from the Ambulance Service of NSW. The day was a great success.

For more information, contact Supt Brian Smart (President) at brian.smart@fire.nsw.gov.au or Insp Michael Ollerenshaw (Secretary) at michael.ollerenshaw@fire.nsw.gov.au.



Open Men's Bronze-Medal-winning Rugby 7s team at the 2012 World Firefighters Games, Sydney.



Women's Gold-Medal-winning Rugby 7s team at the 2011 World Police and Fire Games, New York.

Golf

The FRNSW Social Golf Club has been going strong for around 40 years and currently has 35 members, with hopes for even more this year. Each year the club participates in 11 games, four of which are qualifiers for selection into the final team (five players plus a reserve) for the Australasian Fire Brigades Golf Championships. All states and territories plus New Zealand participate in these Championships, which the FRNSW Social Golf Club hosted last year at Penrith. This year Queensland will host the event at Hervey Bay on 2-7 November.

If you would like to play with the Social Golf Club, you can just turn up on a game day or call SF Greg Flynn (47B) on 0404 885 675 or SF Glenn Lovelace (68C) on 0407 516 252.

Lawn Bowls

The FRNSW Bowls Club was established in the early 1980s and currently has 90 members. It does not charge annual fees, so the only cost is the entry fee for each event at the State Titles, which are generally in the 2nd week of October at the Soldiers Point Bowling Club in Port Stephens. Over 80 bowlers participate each year, and the Championships include Fours, Triples, Pairs and Singles.

The Club is also involved in the Australasian Fire Services Championships, played approximately every 18 months, with players from all the different states and territories plus New Zealand. They will next be played at Masterton Bowling Club in New Zealand in early April 2014.

Membership is open to permanent or retained firefighters, current or retired, or their next of kin relatives. For more information, contact Insp Mark McGuire at mark.mcguire@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Hockey

FRNSW's Hockey Club was formed in 2007 and has teams in most major inter-agency competitions, such as NSW Police Games and the APES Games. The club comprises some players who have only just picked up a stick for the first time through to others who play at representative levels. It is open to all permanent, retained, and trades and admin staff.

The club has had great success in the NSW Police Games, where it usually fields two teams in the mixed 6-a-side competition and usually finishes in the top three positions. It also fields competitive teams in the Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games, with the mixed team winning Silver in New Zealand in 2012. At least two teams will travel to Melbourne for this year's event.

If you are interested in joining, contact SO Graeme Tull at graeme.tull@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Athletics

The FRNSW Track & Field Athletics Club is the Sports Association's newest affiliated club. It is free to join and open to all permanent, retained, and trade and admin FRNSW staff. The club is now seeking track and field athletes in all disciplines and at all levels, to have fun and keep fit in a friendly, supportive team atmosphere at emergency services games in NSW, Australia and internationally.

If you're interested in joining, contact SO Stuart Sutton at 304 at stuart.sutton@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Surfing

The main focus of the FRNSW Surfing Club each year is the 'Guns n Hoses' charity surf event, which has been going since 1997. The event is open to members

and retired members of Australian emergency services and is usually held in May each year at Anna Bay. Funds raised go towards helping a member of one of our organisations, as well as the local community of Anna Bay.

For more information, contact SO Andrew Grimwood on 0407 230 472.

Basketball

The FRNSW Basketball Club had its two main events in March this year. The first was a curtain raiser for the Sydney Kings against the NSW Police on Sunday 16 March at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. The club also competed in the NSW Police and Emergency Services Games at the Stanhope Gardens Leisure Centre in Blacktown, with the Mixed Competition on Tuesday 18 March and the Men's on Tuesday 25 March.

For information about future events, contact SF Tim Hickey or email basketball.NSWFB@fire.nsw.gov.au

Cricket

The most recent event for the FRNSW Cricket Club was a 40-over per side 'Test' match against FRNSW's Victorian counterparts at Birchgrove Oval on 12 March this year. It is hoped this will become an annual event, alternating between Sydney and Melbourne, along with a number of other matches involving all short forms of the game.

If you'd like to be involved, contact SO Cameron Wheatley at Greenacre on 9742 7503. **END**



CRICKET MATCH RAISES FUNDS FOR SALVOS' BUSHFIRE APPEAL

On Wednesday 12 March 2014, the FRNSW Cricket Club battled valiantly against Melbourne's Metropolitan Fire Brigade Cricket Club in a 40-over match to raise money for the Salvation Army's Bushfire Relief Appeal.

 **VIEW VIDEO AT**
fire.nsw.gov.au/frnews

OR

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The game took place at the picturesque Birchgrove Oval, with Channel 9's Today Show on hand to record the event and pay tribute to the dedicated work of our firefighters, particularly in relation to the October bushfires and the more recent Victorian deployment.

Despite the home ground advantage, FRNSW were unfortunately not victorious on this occasion, with MFB winning by 85 runs. Our profession's reputation,

however, was greatly enhanced, as was the camaraderie between firefighters from the two states' fire and rescue agencies. Players and spectators also enjoyed an after-match function held at the stylish East Village Hotel in Balmain East.

All money raised went to help people affected by the recent devastating bushfires in NSW and Victoria. It is expected that the match will become an annual event. **END**



A passion for rugby and firefighting

Ruan Sims is a consummate athlete. She has represented Australia in both rugby union and rugby league, and rows surf boats in her spare time. She is also a FRNSW firefighter.

Firefighter Sims graduated from the FRNSW State Training College in December 2012 and now works at City of Sydney Fire Station. Fire & Rescue News asked her about the time she first developed an ambition to become a firefighter.

"I started thinking about it a few years ago," said Firefighter Sims. "I knew a lot of people who were already in the job, and quite a few people who row surf boats are also fireies. Some of them suggested years ago that I should apply, but the timing

wasn't right. And then an opportunity presented itself at a time when I was definitely looking for a change."

"I was working for a law firm for about ten years, but left when they eventually said I had to choose whether I wanted a career with them or to continue in rugby. I told them that sport is my passion, so I moved on to work with a sports medicine company for around 18 months."

"That's when the firefighter recruitment campaign came up again and I thought 'Well, I'll just apply and see how

I go.' But I didn't have any expectations. I thought I'd just go through the application process and, if I didn't make it, then at least I'd know what I'd have to do for next time."

"I was so fortunate. At each stage I just kept getting through, and made it right to the end. I was very happy about it."

Fitness as an asset

From day one, FF Sims found that her athleticism was an asset in her new career.



"I went in cold, not knowing what the PAT was," she said. "But obviously all the sports training backs you up. Especially things like football and surf boat rowing and the strength conditioning they require. It definitely helps. And now, as a firefighter, it still helps. When you find yourself walking up 10 flights of stairs with all your PPC gear on, it's taxing."

"But I actually get paid to be fit. It's incredible. And FRNSW is so accommodating with my sport. I can't think of any other job in the world that would be so supportive of one of their employees pursuing a dream like mine. I can even train here at work."

Parallels between firefighting and sport

Since joining FRNSW, FF Sims has increasingly noticed the strong similarities between working as part of a firefighting team at an incident and being in a sporting team. In both environments, there is a clear structure and positions, with designated leaders and workers. Firefighters and rugby players are all trained to know how things are supposed to work when they are called upon to perform.

"In both cases, when you see something coming to fruition that you've trained for, and it just comes together, it's such a great feeling of achievement," FF Sims said. "That happens on the football field and also at work as a firefighter."

The first incident

FF Sims was exposed to her first major incident as a firefighter in early May 2013 and performed well, to the extent that she was applauded at the following morning's roll call at City of Sydney station.

"That was really good," she said. "It was my very first incident, only five months after I started. It was at 3am, we were on night shift and we got a call to a building fire at Kings Cross. We were the second crew arriving. I honestly don't remember thinking 'What do I have to do?' It just all came together. We got the hose out. We got ready. And luckily nobody was trapped in there. It was a really great experience for me, seeing the fire up close and putting some water on it. And yes, the roll call was funny the next day! A few of the boys gave me a bit of a ribbing about it."

Sporting and professional ambitions

After playing in the Rugby League World Cup in England in July 2013, then taking a six-month break from elite sport to focus on her firefighting career, FF Sims is now getting back into rugby union, with a long-term goal of making it into the Olympic Games squad for Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

"That could be 'pie in the sky'," she said, "because I've been out of the game of rugby union for two years. So for now, I just want to get back into it and start building. My first short-term goal is to make the club team, Warringah, which will go to the state trials, and then try to make the NSW state team. From there, I can try to make it into the Aussie squad.

I don't want to put too much pressure on myself. I just want to set small goals and give myself the best opportunity possible to be considered for selection."

"I recognise that, at my age in that sport, it's difficult. I'm 32 this year and it may be a bit of a stretch, but obviously I enjoy pushing myself. I enjoy a challenge."

In terms of her work ambitions, FF Sims would like to become a Qualified Firefighter by the end of the year, and then build more experience to work towards attaining the rank of Senior Firefighter. From there she will keep re-evaluating as she goes and take it as far as she can.

"You always want to be the best you can be in whatever you do," she said.

Firefighting as a passion

FF Sims is unequivocal about her newfound passion for firefighting as a profession.

"In my previous employment, when they made me choose, I was always going to choose sport," she said. "But here, there's no pressure to make a choice. I can do both in this job. Not only that, but the organisation has supported me. Without a shadow of a doubt, this is the first job I've had that's a passion. It's something I enjoy doing as much as my sport."

"It has a lot to do with the people I work with as well. I'm very fortunate, here at City of Sydney, that we've got fantastic bosses from right at the top all the way down to our direct Station Officers. I'm lucky to have these kinds of people with such an array of experiences to guide me, give me all the information I need and let me make my own decisions. It's fantastic. And the opportunities in this organisation are whatever you make of them. The ceiling is only as high as you want it to be." ■■■■■ **END**

THE SUNSHINE TENNIS CLUB

Story and photos by Museum of Fire staff and research team.

There was a time when fire stations had no televisions, Foxtel, DVD players, radios or gym equipment ... and certainly no Internet to check out over a cup of tea. Yet those were the days when firefighters spent far more time at the station than they do now – the old-style rosters made sure of that.

With so much time spent at the station, fire brigade administrators were very much aware of the importance of providing recreational facilities. At volunteer stations, recreation rooms – often featuring a billiard table – encouraged the volunteer firemen to spend more time just ‘hanging around’ the station; it meant that more members were available to turn out faster. The billiard table was usually provided by the Board or by the local community.

Now, while a billiard table at a fire station was quite common, it was not so common to find a tennis court. But some brigades (including Kogarah and Glebe) did in fact have them, and they even formed their own clubs.

How did the Board of Fire Commissioners feel about that? Well, they had no objection, provided the firemen were prepared to do all the work of maintaining them.

On 25 May 1923, Station Officer Oswald Pickering (Glebe) requested a ‘mowing machine’. He explained:

At the rear of No. 18 Station there is a turf lawn and it is used by the members to play tennis ... The grass grows very long and if left so the growth dies off, the court is spoiled.

The customary practice at Glebe had been to borrow a ‘mowing machine’ from the neighbours; however, Deputy Chief Officer Thomas Nance immediately saw the wisdom of supplying one:

As a mowing machine will tend to increase the comfort and pleasure of the staff at the station by enabling them to keep their tennis court in good playing order, I recommend that the request be acceded to.



Nine years later, the Glebe firemen had their own tennis club (the Sunshine Tennis Club), complete with committee and club rules. Membership was open to all members of the NSW Fire Brigades in ‘E’ District, as well as family members over the age of sixteen. The court was open from 1pm each day.

In September 1932, to raise money for top-dressing, the club held a Monster Carnival Dance at Glebe Town Hall featuring the Fire Brigade Orchestra. The total cost of top-dressing a tennis court in 1932 was three shillings. At one shilling per ticket, the dance raised enough money for the firemen to erect and paint a timber fence around the court – they were tired of having to fetch well-served aces.

The Sunshine Tennis Club enjoyed its heyday during the 1930s and 1940s. Numerous tournaments were held for firemen and their families from all districts; and each concluded with



an evening dance in the fire station, again to the melodious tones of the Brigade Orchestra.

By the late 1950s, the court had fallen into decline. However, in 1959 the Board agreed to pay the cost of restoration – once again, provided the firemen were prepared to do the work. Unfortunately, by 1966, the court was no longer in use; and what remained of the wire netting surrounding the court was removed.

Another link to our past had become but a memory. **END**



Firefighter Peter Beare receiving his Graduation Certificate from Commissioner Greg Mullins



NSW Fire Brigades Chief Officer William H Beare

FIREFIGHTING

a proud family tradition

Firefighter Peter Beare graduated from the State Training College at Alexandria on 5 September 2013. Based at Mascot Fire Station on D platoon, FF Beare participated in the station's centenary celebrations in December. It was a special day for him, because FF Beare's family has a long and proud history at Mascot Fire Station and in the fire service as a whole.

Firefighter Beare's great great grandfather John C Beare was the City of Sydney representative on the Board of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. His great grandfather William H Beare was Chief Officer of NSW Fire Brigades. His grandfather William R Beare, as Secretary of the Board of Commissioners, encouraged his then clerk Bob Wallace to become a firefighter in September 1976.

Station Officer Wallace had been at Mascot for many years when FF Beare arrived at the station in September. SO Wallace's great grandfather was Clerk of Works for the fire service from 1909 to 1916 and in this role oversaw the construction of, among other buildings, Mascot Fire Station in 1913.

The Beare and Wallace families have together served the fire service for more than 130 years and have crossed paths many times during its history.

Here FF Beare reflects on his family's long history in firefighting:

Last September I graduated from FRNSW's State Training College as a firefighter. On that day, I was truly blessed to be standing among family and friends proudly dressed in uniform, my galatea with peak cap, simply put, a dream come true for me.

I would never have made it so far without my father-in-law Mark McFarlane, a Station Officer at

Marrickville Fire Station, who encouraged me to apply. But it was my grandfather, William Beare, who was the biggest influence in my life. I know he was watching from above when I saluted the Commissioner to signal my graduation.

When you talk about a legacy, my grandfather William left a proud one that includes not only his immediate family, but his extended family within FRNSW – then the NSW Fire Brigades. He was a true member of the Fire Brigade family. He was born above the now closed Annandale Fire Station and when he joined the Brigade in 1940, he gave his home address as 213 Castlereagh St – the headquarters of the Brigade. He worked his way up to become the Secretary of the Board in 1974, and remained in this position until he retired in 1982.

His father, my great grandfather, William H Beare, was the NSW Fire Brigades Chief Officer from 1944 to 1947, having joined the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Auxiliary Corps on 1 July 1900 at the age of 15.

His grandfather, John Beare, was a member of the Board of the forerunner to the NSW Fire Brigades, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, from 1890 to 1902. His son and my uncle, Mark Beare, was a firefighter for 22 ½ years, working at Campsie, Miranda, Cronulla and City of Sydney fire stations. In total, the Beare family has provided 112 years of dedicated service to FRNSW.

As a child, I remember we would sit around as a family and my grandfather would share many stories dating back to when his father was Chief Officer. There was one story he used to tell about how in those days firefighters weren't allowed into the Brigade unless you could grow a beard. This was not to prove their masculinity. Rather it was to save their life. Back then firefighters would wet their beards and put them in their mouths as a way of breathing inside burning buildings to avoid inhaling smoke.

Another story my grandfather told me about that I was reminded of on my Graduation day was the Wool Store Fire at Ultimo in 1946. My great grandfather was directing 12 firefighters at that fire when a wall collapsed and bricks flew around like shells. The firefighters and my great grandfather threw themselves on to the ground as others ran for cover. His leg was badly bruised and he was just able to limp about and was in considerable pain, but he carried on commanding the firefighting effort.

These are the sorts of courageous acts that firefighters are known for and, as I begin my career as a firefighter with FRNSW, I hope to uphold that tradition and continue the Beare family legacy. I also that hope one day my son, Jett Beare, will become a proud firefighter just like his father. ■■■END

MASCOT AND LISMORE RACK UP 100





Last December saw the communities of Mascot and Lismore celebrate a very special one-in-100-year event – their fire stations' centenaries.

Commissioner Greg Mullins and senior FRNSW commanders joined local dignitaries, firefighters past and present, and members of the public at the centenary celebrations which featured vintage fire appliances and other historical displays, public sausage sizzles and medal presentations.

Commissioner Mullins said the centenary celebrations represented important milestones for fire stations and their communities.

"It's an opportunity to thank all the firefighters who have served their local communities with such commitment, bravery and integrity over the years," he said.

Mascot

Mascot's centenary celebrations were held on 6 December 2013, with special guests including the State Member for Heffron, Ron Hoenig, and Botany Bay Deputy Mayor George Glinatsis.

A volunteer brigade was first formed in Mascot in 1891. The brigade's first fire station was erected on council-owned land adjacent to the town hall in Coward St and a 21-year lease agreement was entered into between the council and the then Fire Brigades Board. Once the lease expired in 1913, the fire station which stands today was built on government-acquired land next to the original station's site.

The new premises were reportedly described at the time as "a great improvement on the unornamental and inconvenient weatherboard structure which the volunteer fire brigade formerly occupied".

"For more than 100 years, Mascot firefighters have responded to major incidents from industrial and residential fires to aeroplane crashes. In the early years they were equipped with nothing more than a horse-drawn hose reel," Commissioner Mullins said. "Today, the 16 permanent firefighters stationed at Mascot have a state-of-the-art fire appliance and the latest in equipment and technology to ensure the safety and protection of the local community."

Mascot firefighters responded to 1,243 fire and emergency calls in 2012/13 and conducted 224 community education and engagement activities.

Lismore

On 17 December 2013, Lismore Fire Station finally had its chance to celebrate its 100th birthday after the originally scheduled centenary bash was postponed due to the October bushfire crisis. The State Member for Lismore, Thomas George, and Lismore Mayor Jenny Dowell were among the local dignitaries attending.

The fire station's milestone event also featured in TV chef Matt Moran's Paddock to Plate program which aired on Foxtel's Lifestyle Channel in January. Moran's Byron Bay special culminated in the chef cooking up a feast from local produce for firefighters at the station as part of their celebrations.

"In the early years Mascot firefighters were equipped with nothing more than a horse-drawn hose reel. Today, they have the latest in equipment & technology."

It's a far cry from the humble beginnings of a volunteer brigade that formed in Lismore in 1896. Its firefighters were equipped with a horse-drawn fire cart with 250 feet of hose, operating from a temporary shed on its Molesworth Street site. A church bell alerted brigade members to fires. Eventually, a two-storey purpose-built station was completed and became operational in 1913.

Today 21 permanent and 17 retained firefighters are stationed at Lismore. In 2012/13, they responded to 593 fire and emergency calls and conducted 293 community education and engagement activities.

"Since its early beginnings, the station has seen many changes in staffing, rostering and provision of fire protection in the Lismore district," Commissioner Mullins said. With the current 24-hour availability of both permanent and retained firefighters, Lismore Fire Station, with the support of surrounding retained fire stations, provides the highest standard of service possible in protecting the district's community, environment and businesses." **END**



Chief Superintendent Gerry Byrne AFSM

AUSTRALIA DAY AFSMS FOR FRNSW FIREFIGHTERS

The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) is one of the highest honours an Australian firefighter can receive and on 26 January 2014 three FRNSW firefighters – Chief Supt Gerry Byrne, SO Bill King and Capt Greg Fredericks – were named as the latest recipients of this major award. All three will be presented with their AFSMs at ceremonies later in the year.

Three decades of service acknowledged

Chief Superintendent Gerry Byrne has spent the past 30 years providing fire and emergency protection to the people of NSW.

Commissioner Greg Mullins said Chief Supt Byrne, who is currently the Area Commander for south and southwest Sydney and the Illawarra, is a worthy recipient of the AFSM. “Gerry is dedicated to serving the community of NSW. He is widely respected both within FRNSW and by his emergency service colleagues across NSW and Australia,” Commissioner Mullins said.

“Gerry is a leader and an innovator within the emergency services sector and I congratulate him on this well-deserved award.”

“Gerry headed up FRNSW’s highly specialised and demanding bushfire and natural hazards team for many years before taking on the role of Assistant Director Logistics Support where he was in charge of equipment research and development, including doing preliminary research on the new state-of-the-art firefighters’ uniforms that were recently issued statewide.

More recently he transferred to the demanding position of Area Commander Metropolitan South, where he is responsible for emergency planning, response and organisational development.”

“He is a leader and innovator within the emergency services sector and I congratulate him on this well-deserved award.”



Station Officer Bill King AFSM



Captain Greg Fredericks AFSM

Recognition for NSW's longest-serving full-time fire officer

Mosman Fire Station Commander Bill King has provided 52 years of dedicated service to FRNSW and has the title of NSW's longest serving professional firefighter. His team at Mosman have nothing but respect for their Station Officer and his guidance as a leader and mentor.

FRNSW Commissioner Greg Mullins congratulated SO King, from Elanora Heights, on his award. "Bill has seen huge changes during his time as a firefighter, and has earned a reputation as an outstanding and highly ethical fire officer and community member."

SO King has fought many major fires in his five decades as a firefighter. He became a firefighter in 1962, before fire appliances had enclosed cabins. At that time, firefighters were seated on the back of an appliance and had to hold on when the vehicle was moving.

Since then, he has been involved in numerous major incidents including bushfires in 1968, 1979 and 1994. More recently, he was the first arriving fire officer at the petrol tanker crash and explosion at Mona Vale in October last year.

In the past few years SO King has become an ambassador for Seniors Week, actively encouraging older people to

stay active and to adopt good fire safety behaviours. At 74, his fitness is legendary and he has been around the world to compete in indoor rowing and other sporting events.

"Bill continues to represent FRNSW at international sporting competitions and trains on a daily basis," Commissioner Mullins said. "He has won several mature-aged titles, including four gold medals for indoor rowing at the last Pan Pacific Masters Games. Last year he also travelled to Belfast, Ireland for the World Police and Fire Games. He exemplifies the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle, particularly in a job that is as physically demanding as firefighting."

"Bill has been a role model for generations of firefighters, including me – he was my Station Officer at Crows Nest in the early 1980s. He is the epitome of why firefighters are the most trusted profession."

Local fire captain a 'worthy recipient'

Balgownie Captain Greg Fredericks has been a firefighter for over 40 years – first as a volunteer and then as a FRNSW retained firefighter.

Commissioner Greg Mullins congratulated Capt Fredericks on his well-deserved recognition. "Greg is highly respected by firefighters at Balgownie

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Fire Station and throughout the Illawarra, by his colleagues in the other emergency services and by the local community," Commissioner Mullins said.

"He is also well known throughout NSW and nationally through his voluntary work, together with his wife Robyn, as President of the FRNSW Firefighter Championships Association, a position he has held since 2008. He has organised both intra and interstate competitions that provide a platform for firefighters to develop their firefighting skills through competition and enhance the service they provide to their local communities."

Commissioner Mullins said Capt Fredericks was known for his ethics and reliability and as someone who was always willing to lend a hand. "He has served as a FRNSW firefighter with pride and distinction for 40 years and is a worthy recipient of this prestigious award." **END**

Mayfield Incident

**FIRE
INCIDENT**



Crews respond to ‘Mayday’ from Mayfield

27 JAN 18:04

It took over two hours for a number of FRNSW crews to contain a fire that engulfed a large building in Mayfield.

At 1804hrs on Monday 27 January 2014, a 000 call was received to a building alight on Mayfield Rd, Mayfield.

Crews from 357 Lambton, 320 Hamilton and 260 Newcastle responded. Duty Commander, Insp Mark Cavanaugh, escalated the response to a 2nd Alarm en route and reported large volumes of dark smoke visible from approximately 3 km away. On arrival, Insp Cavanaugh requested a further escalation of the response to a 3rd Alarm.

Crews were faced with a 25m x 40m, two-level, brick-and-iron

building well alight. The structure was occupied by a whitegoods repair business and a small furniture store at the rear of the block. Residential premises on the second level at the front of the building were heavily smoke-logged and at imminent risk of ignition. Adjoining premises were also at immediate risk due to the fire's intensity and prevailing wind conditions.

Due to the risk of wall collapse and the need to use a second aerial appliance, the response was raised to a 4th Alarm, and an incident management team was activated. BA crews conducted a primary search of the upstairs residence before being forced to withdraw due to

increasing fire activity. All persons were later accounted for.

At the height of the fire, seven 70mm handlines and two aerials were used with only minor issues of loss of water pressure reported. Crews worked well early on in extreme conditions and effective crew rotation ensured firefighters were rested and rehydrated at regular intervals. The fire took over two hours to bring under control and crews remained on the scene for a further three hours extinguishing re-ignitions and completing extinguishment. **END**

With grateful thanks

Every month FRNSW receives many messages of thanks from the community. Here is a brief sample of recent messages – to see all the messages, visit FRNSW’s Twitter and Facebook pages.

Esther Fong

Thank you to the two firies who helped me when I ran out of petrol in Quakers Hill tonight :)

Kristy George

A huge thank you to all of the firefighters, emergency personnel and volunteers who have worked tirelessly during the Springwood, Winmalee and Yellow Rock fires.

Matthew Irvine

Great work by the Bathurst and Kelso crews in Bathurst at a house fire last night. Quite a few very grateful neighbours who feared they’d also lose their homes, but it was never going to happen with these high calibre crews on the scene. Top shelf stuff, well done

Kathleen Hunt-Davis

I just had to comment....I just watched an extraction of a person from a car by the Fire and Rescue NSW at Prospect .. guys you are absolutely the best.. well done to all involved ...

Jade Melrose

Words can not express how grateful we are to each and everyone of you for what you do. From something small to something out of control, you put your lives on the line. You are all heros.

Bianca Miller

Think its fantastic that the firies have come around to the kids today to hand out colouring in books and information books to families thanks guys the kids loved the truck

Dan Hill

Well done to the team of R001 and both P001 trucks. Well done isolating the busted sprinkler in my neighbours hotel room at the Rydges World Square! And well done on a speedy mop up! Great works lads and lasses! :)

Lee-Anne Hanney

A big thank to the Fire fighters from Rosemeadow Fire Station, who came to visit our Play to Learn Group at Woodland Road. The kids had a great time.

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Deaths and retirements

Vale: With gratitude for service to the people of NSW

Name	Station	Date
Retired RetF D Oakley	Toronto	Dec 2013
Retired Mr A Satchel	Musical Director of the NSW Fire Brigades Band	Jan 2014
Retired RetF J Baker	Wangi Wangi	Jan 2014
Retired Capt A Rousell	Forbes	Jan 2014
Retired SO H Hughes	Cabramatta	Jan 2014
Retired RetF J Hall	Warren	Feb 2014

Farewell and enjoy ‘you’ time

Name	Station	Date Retired
RetF S Kirin	Nelson Bay	1 Nov 2013
RetF O Smith	Tingira Heights	4 Nov 2013
RetF H Monroe	Toronto	13 Nov2013
SO D Short	Berowra	15 Nov 2013
RetF T Hussell	Tumbarumba	26 Nov 2013
Capt D Clifton	Broken Hill South	6 Dec2013
SO R Montgomery	Kincumber	6 Dec 2013
SO G McMillan	Randwick	6 Dec2013
Capt D Davies	Raymond Terrace	6 Dec 2013
DCapt W Hoare	Delroy	13 Dec 2013
SF P McCoy	Command Alexandria	13 Dec2013
SF M Roxby	Dubbo	13 Dec 2013
SF G Jonas	Shellharbour Hazmat	13 Dec 2013
RetF M Lewin	Tweed Heads	14 Dec 2013
Capt A Brooks	Yamba	22 Dec 2013
QF P Carney	Smithfield	31 Dec 2013
SF G West	Turvey Park	3 Jan 2014
Capt N Dent	Picton	10 Jan 2014
Capt K Lawrence	Balgownie	15 Jan 2014
RetF P Bateman	Nambucca Heads	21 Jan 2014
RetF E Muggleton	Yamba	24 Jan 2014
SF A Bruce	Building Fire Safety	24 Jan 2014
QF G Thorn	Schofields	24 Jan 2014
SF A Tomlinson	Berkeley Vale	31 Jan 2014
SF A Whitmore	Bateau Bay	31 Jan 2014
RetF G Waugh	Cessnock	31 Jan 2014
DCapt D Rumbel	Weston	31 Jan 2014
Ret F Bagnall	Nelson Bay	31 Jan 2014
SF J Roberts	Huntingwood	7 Feb 2014
SF A Blacklaw	Shellharbour Hazmat	14 Feb 2014
RetF A Fuller	Young	1 Mar 2014



FIRE & RESCUE NSW

**Thank you to all FRNSW
firefighters who helped to make
OPEN DAY a great success.**

Don't leave anything to chance. Visit [HomeFireSafetyAudit.com.au](https://www.homefiresafetyaudit.com.au)