

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade Held on Saturday 5 June 2010 at Mt Wilson Village Hall**

### **Attendance**

**Invited guests present:** Paul McGrath (L & D Officer BM RFS) & Kerri McGrath, Fred Taylor (Deputy Group Captain West 2), Peter Church (Deputy Group Captain West 3) & Alison Church, Peter Ellison (Captain Mt Tomah Fire Brigade), Kaye & Rick Whitbread (Bell Fire Brigade)

**Residents of Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine present:** Moira & Ron Green, Margaret & Peter Richey, Susie Hope, Ray Harrington, Brian Abrahams, Julie Townend, Mary Reynolds, Kim & Tim Gow, Stephen Dean, Minny & Henric Nicholas, Luke O'Hearn, Josh Rosinsky, Libby Raines, Elizabeth & Joe Montano, Florence Smart, Arthur Delbridge, Peter Raines, Owen Haviland, Duncan Peppercorn, Judy Tribe, Jane & Philip Beeby, Colleen & Michael Chesterman, Nancy Fox, Bruce Arnold, John Lee, Eleanor Herriott, Julian Ludowici, Rick Knight-Brown, Barry Freeman, Sarah & David Howell, Penny Ewing, Allen Hyde, , Wendy Holland

### **Welcome:**

The President, David Howell, opened the meeting at 3.35pm and welcomed the invited guests and the residents of the villages to the meeting.

### **Apologies:**

**From invited guests:** Hon. Bob Debus (Federal Member for Macquarie), Hon. Phil Koperberg (State Member for Blue Mountains), Terri Hamilton ( Councillor BMCC), John Fitzgerald (Group Leader BMD RFS), Rod Walker (Operations Support Officer BMD RFS), Frank Vincent (Group Captain West 1), Greg Honeysett (Captain Bell Fire Brigade), John Straker (Deputy Captain Bell Fire Brigade), Neil Stone (Ranger NPWS)

**From Residents of Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine:** Robyn & David Hyde, Paul, Geoffrey & Helen Naylor, Robert Chesney, John & Mary Holt, Pam Cave, Graham Tribe, Deb & Ted Griffin, Margaret Dean, Suzzane & Ricananda Daly, Milba Mewburn, Alan Rose, Helen Freeman & Rachel Freeman, Beth Raines, Kathy Harrington, Ross & Maria Kelly, Ellis Reynolds, Jim Tzannes, Annie Catling, Mira Tzannes, Ross & Suzanne Tzannes, Sarah Hope

### **Confirmation of Minutes from 2009 AGM:**

- o Moved by Henric Nicholas, seconded by Barry Freeman and accepted by the meeting

### **Report from Mick Beltram Acting District Manager/Fire Control Officer Blue Mountains:**

The report was presented to the meeting by Inspector Paul McGrath (Learning & Development Officer BM District, NSW RFS)

The past year has been significant in a number of ways:

- The transfer in March of DM/FCO Tom Shirt from Blue Mountains to the Chifley/Lithgow team after 2 years of good service to Blue Mountains
- The passing of Group Officer Terry Jacka, East 1, after a long illness. I also recognize across the district a number of members passed during the year including Foundation & Life Members and others in the prime of life with a lot more to offer the RFS community
- A busy operational period during spring and early summer with S44s declared for Red Ridge, Blue Mountains/Lithgow (Bell/Mt Wilson) and Grose Head South
- The impact of the interim findings of the Victorian Royal Commission over the routine way of RFS business in matters such as the introduction of new fire danger rating levels, public information systems/advices and the identification of 'places of last resort' (neighbourhood safer places)
- The finalisation of the District's revised Operations and Risk Management Plans
- Submission by the City Council to increase the rates based Emergency Levy to have additional funding for emergency services (including the RFS as a major recipient) and extension of Council's services in areas such as fire trails etc

The matters of continual improvement to District/Brigade infrastructure, services and systems are steady and relatively smooth in the main. Whilst items such as the vehicle replacement program and some stations works have been progressing, we have some major programs still in the development stage, such as brigade stations, we understand the frustration of the organisation that

some of these have taken very lengthy paths. District remains dedicated to the earliest resolution of these projects.

It is hoped that the District Manager's position will be finalised soon. Applications closed in mid May.

In closing, on behalf of Tom Shirt and the dedicated and hard working District team and Group Officers, he thanked everyone for their commitment and exemplary effort to protect our communities and keep the Blue Mountains (and our neighbours across Australia) a safer place.

## **Reports for 2009-2010**

### **Captain: Beth Raines**

Beth was unable to be present at the meeting. She was invited to be part of a RFS team from the Blue Mountains to work alongside the Brigade from Lord Howe Island and assist with training and engagement aspects with the wider community on the island.

The President, David Howell, presented Beth's report, with a power point presentation showing the activity in Mt Wilson during our major operations, the bush run and pie charts for our incident calls:

### **Operations:**

2009 - 2010 saw a few events of note:

- The Short Creek and Bell Complex fires in November. A series of storms resulted in over 12 fires starting due to lightning strikes to the north of Mount Irvine with the main concern being the Short Creek fire approximately 5 km to the north-west of Mount Irvine. The following day another set of storms resulted in two fires between Mount Wilson and Bell known as the Bell Complex. Water bombing and the insertion of RAFT (Remote Area Firefighting Team) members contained these fires although it was a week before the fires were classified as out. During this time we saw major activity with heavy machinery, bulk water carriers, NSW Fire Brigades and the SES all in readiness, the Hall was used for community information and for when the catering unit swung into top gear. The Street Coordinators were briefed, information updates sent via email and Brigade members from here, Hazelbrook and Woodford spent hours working on fire trails. Trails near the Mount Wilson sign, Sunday Walk Spur, the Northern and Southern Fire Trails, Lambs Hill, Cayley's Haycock, behind Touri, Knight Brown and Scrivener Fire Trails and Bowens Creek Road all received some maintenance.
- The other protracted incident was the Search and Rescue of 6 missing canyoneers in January which ended in the tragedy of Nicolas Delaney's death. The Brigade supported the families of the missing walkers as well as working with other RFS personnel, Police, Ambulance, Bushwalkers Rescue, NPWS and the Salvation Army and dealing with the media circus. Our deepest sympathies go to John and Cathie Delaney and the brothers - Chris, Michael, Andrew and Stephen. David and I represented the Brigade at the Memorial Service held at Shore Chapel for Nick and members of the family gathered at Mount Wilson a few weeks later to thank the Brigade personally. It was with heavy hearts that we accepted the Delaney's request that in lieu of flowers money should be donated to our Brigade. We have decided to use the money donated to enhance communications, especially in relation to search and rescues. It should be noted that out of the 3 groups rescued after this tragedy, one group had a GPS and mobile reception and the other two had EPIRBs or emergency positioning beacons, so the walk responsibly message is getting out there.

### **Incidents:**

The Brigade attended 34 incident calls this year:

- 11 Community First Responder calls
- 10 motor vehicle accidents
- 5 rescues
- 3 storm damage
- 3 smoke alarm calls
- 2 fires

### **Training:**

We continue to hold training on the first Sunday of the month and every second month the Brigade joins with Bell and Mt Tomah for a combined training. Members really appreciate the training exercises with the neighbouring brigades and the extra tutorage provided by Peter Church. For a while there we would have a training session in the morning and then the real thing on our way home or later in the day!

Anne Mayall and Nancy Fox have completed their Basic Fire Fighting and we welcome them as active members as well as Ian and Kylie Docker and Col Fullagar who have transferred in.

We have members who have completed or have signed up to do the whole range of courses including Advanced and Village firefighting, Crew Leader, Rural Fire Driving and Chainsaw.

- Beth and Julie Townend attended all 12 training sessions during the year
- Vic Zhukov attended 11
- 33 members attended 1 or more training sessions during the year

#### **Hazard Reduction:**

We still have 2 areas of hazard reductions waiting for the spring,

- around Wynnes Rocks Lookout
- behind the properties of Tallawong and Bowen Lea at Mount Irvine.

Further HR areas have been mapped along the Southern Fire Trail and around Killaloo below the Zig Zag and another awaiting mapping between the Northern Fire Trail and the properties from Wollartukkee to The Old Mill. Catch 22 – we hope for a dry spring but then a dry spring means a bad start to the fire season.

#### **Street Meetings:**

2009 saw the Brigade complete 5 street meetings around the 2 mountains with very positive feedback. Thanks to Peter Raines and David Howell for putting together the presentations.

#### **Pre-incident planning:**

We are working on the pre incident plan for Mount Irvine, where we have been looking at access into properties for trucks, availability of water, and hazards to be aware of.

#### **Bush Run**

The Mt Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run (W2B) is getting more and more popular; last year we saw the number of runners go from 200 to 300 with that number likely to climb. Typical comments from the runners are that they love the breakfast – so thank you scone makers; they love the friendliness of the volunteers – so thank you to the 50+ people who help out; they love the scenery and the run itself; and they love that the sweeper is not another runner but a horse and a rider. A huge thank you to Sarah Howell for the tremendous work she has done over the years liaising with Council, meeting with the Bilpin Brigade, organising the drink station volunteers and overseeing the entire operations. Sarah has now handed the baton to Kim Gow who will be in contact shortly as the race this year in on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August.

#### **Our new Cat 11 Pumper:**

I hope everyone noticed the big red shiny fire truck outside. This is the new Mt Wilson Cat 11 Pumper and it will replace one of the Cat 1's. Thanks to Peter Church for bringing it out so we could all have a look at it today. We should note that Peter is also the engineer that designed the vehicle so we are very fortunate in having him so close for the training and handover period.

#### **New vehicle garaging:**

For those that carefully inspect the financial statements, you will have noticed that the Brigade has a substantial amount of money in its accounts. For a couple of years the Executive has identified a need for additional vehicle storage. The addition of the Mt Wilson Personnel Carrier, which is used as the Community First Responder vehicle, has taken the Brigade's fleet from 4 to 5 but with housing still for 4. The PC and the Landcruiser are currently parked very close together in the same truck bay. We need an additional garage. The two big incidents this year have also highlighted the need for an operations room separate from our facilities in the Station. The Executive has asked Owen Haviland to draw up some plans for a double car garage that can also be used as an operations centre and training room. The plans have been discussed at training and are now here for comment. If these plans are accepted and passed, rough costing would mean that the Brigade funds would largely cover the basic building costs although we would be likely to appeal to the community for any gap and for specialised items such as heating, flooring, electrical work etc. Because of this major capital investment the Executive has been prudent about spending money although the new pumper will mean some funds will need to be put aside for specialised equipment for that vehicle.

#### **Thanks**

Thanks need to go to the executive, to David Howell, Judy Tribe, Susie Hope, Peter Raines, Henric Nicholas and Barry Freeman and the Deputies, Tim, Alan, Stuart, Stewart and Richard. Thank you to Margaret Ritchey in catering, Penny Ewing in training, Brian Abrahams in community education and Peter Dempsey and Vic Zhukov doing the trails and chainsaws. Thanks to all those I rang late at night or first thing in the morning and were still happy to put on the yellows or organise food for

us. For those that help again, and again and again – you make our community safer and make it so great. You are the ones that make the Brigade. Thank you.

Finishing this presentation David commended Beth as a fantastic Captain with a sensitivity that is greatly appreciated by us all.

- o Moved that the report be accepted by Peter Raines seconded by Barry Freeman

**Treasurer: Susie Hope:**

The audited financial statement of income and expenditure for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 was presented. A copy of the report before audit was distributed with the AGM papers. In summary:

Income for the year: including		\$ 46,986.85	
Donations:	\$ 37,683.75		
(including \$19,470 from family & friends of Nick Delaney)			
Fundraising Income:			
Bush Run	\$ 7,073.98		
Art Raffle	\$ 50.00		
Membership fees	\$ 1,536.21		
Expenditure for the year: including		\$ 22,385.39	
Fire Fighting Equipment	\$ 998.44		
Sundry Expenses:			
Mount Wilson Shed Gutter	\$ 2,000.00		
Fuel Store Container	\$ 2,400.00		
Comms site shed	\$ 1,263.64		
Term Deposits	\$ 10,000.00		
Office Administration	\$ 1,213.51		
Telecommunications	\$ 3,143.87		
Result for the year - surplus		\$ 24,601.46	
Balance of working account 31 March 2009		\$ 16,239.45	
Balance of working account			\$ 40,840.91
Fixed Deposits			\$ 52,691.04
<b>Total Brigade funds</b>			<b>\$ 93,531.91</b>

The Social Club account balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 is \$3,666.67. This reflects an increase from last year thanks to our stall at the Historical Society Market Day organised by Margaret & Peter Richey.

As mentioned in the captain's report, it is proposed that the funds accumulated will be used for a facility for additional garaging for our fire trucks, operations centre and training rooms. The donations as a memorial for Nick Delaney will be used to enhance communications, especially in relation to search and rescue.

- o Moved that the treasurer's report be accepted by Henric Nicholas, seconded by Sarah Howell, accepted by the meeting

**Appointment of an Auditor:**

Susie Hope informed the meeting that Phill Lupton is her personal accountant

- o Susie Hope moved that Mr Phill Lupton from N.A. Honan be appointed as auditor for the 2010/ 2011 financial year, seconded by Henric Nicholas, accepted by the meeting

**Thank you to David Howell:**

Henric Nicholas thanked David for all his hard work as President of our Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade.

**New Brigade Constitution:**

We have been asked to change our constitution to match the State-wide standard and we have taken the opportunity to amend other areas which have needed work for several years. Copies of the proposed constitution were sent out with the notice of the meeting.

David Howell highlighted the substantial changes to our constitution:

1. Previously the Blue Mountains City Council was the authority responsible for our brigade. Now there is a district manager for the Blue Mountains District of the NSW Rural Fire Service. Our constitution now reads '*district manager*' or in a few cases '*executive committee*' instead of 'responsible authority'.
2. We reference the Service Standards in several places in the Constitution. These are tied together so that when the Service Standards change then the Constitution is automatically updated, rather than having to be voted upon for each change in the Service Standards.
3. There have been some changes from our present constitution in how members are defined. In particular the category of Supporting Member as currently drafted is not acceptable to the RFS. The new membership definition is more inclusive as it defines an operational role or a support role for an ordinary member.
4. The quorum for an Annual General Meeting and General Meetings is to be changed to a % of the ordinary members who have paid the annual subscription. The motion is that this be 5%.
5. Our constitution is to state the length of term for field officers. We are proposing one year, as we elect field officers every AGM.
6. The quorum for an executive committee meeting to be changed to a % of its membership and to define the officers to be present. The motion is that this be 30% of the executive committee and that either the president or vice president and the captain or senior deputy captain be present.
7. The names of the positions of the office bearers who can sign cheques are to be specified. The motion is that these positions be two of the president, vice president, treasurer or secretary.
8. There have been others changes which follow from the changes above, or are clerical in nature.
9. We would also like to add to our constitution some clauses from the model NSW RFS 'New Brigade Constitution' that aren't mandatory but are good procedure. These concern meeting records, not-for-profit status, donations, the way notices can be sent out and the way the executive committee can make decisions.

Discussion of these changes included the membership changes and an AGM and General Meeting quorum of 5%.

It was noted that the constitution has also to be approved by the NSW Rural Fire Service.

- o Moved that the new constitution be adopted by Barry Freeman, seconded by Ron Green and accepted unanimously by the meeting

#### **Election of Officers for 2010:**

Inspector Paul McGrath took the chair for the elections. The following people had been nominated unopposed prior to the meeting and were confirmed in the position:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominee Name</b>
*President	David Howell
*Vice President	Henric Nicholas
*Treasurer	Susie Hope
*Secretary	Judy Tribe
*Captain	Beth Raines
*Senior Deputy Captain	Peter Raines
*Deputy Captain (1)	Barry Freeman
Deputy Captain (2)	Stewart Gunn
Deputy Captain (3)	Tim Gow
Deputy Captain (4)	Stuart Donaldson
Deputy Captain (5)	Alan Heap
Deputy Captain (6)	David Howell
Deputy Captain (7)	Ian Docker (subject to membership paperwork)

Equipment Officer	Stephen Dean
Fire Trails Coordinator	Peter Dempsey & Vic Zhukov
Training	Graham Tribe
Community Liaison	Kim Gow
Catering	Position to be filled

Those elected positions marked with \* will form the executive committee

**Other Business:**

On behalf of the NSW RFS Inspector Paul McGrath presented to David Howell and Vic Zhukov certificates of appreciation for their involvement outside the bounds of fire fighting for their role during the World Youth Day celebrations.

**Closure of meeting:**

As there was no further business the meeting was closed at 4.45pm and all attendees were invited to join the committee for wine and cheese.