

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RFS Brigade  
Held at the Mt Wilson Village Hall  
Saturday 7th June 2008 at 10.30am**

**Attendance**

- Invited Guests Present: A/District Manager Superintendent Tom Shirt(NSW RFS-Blue Mountains District), Hon. Bob Debus (Federal Member for Macquarie), Councillor Terri Hamilton (Blue Mountains City Council), Frank Vincent (Group Captain West 1, NSW RFS), Fred Taylor (Group Captain West 2, NSW RFS), Peter Ellison (Captain, Mt Tomah RFS), Greg Honeysett (Captain, Bell RFS), Sue Hardy (NSW RFS-Blue Mountains District)
- Residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine

**Welcome**

- David Howell, the President, opened the meeting at 1030hrs and welcomed the invited guests and residents of the two villages to the meeting.

**Apologies**

- Apologies were received from the following invited guests: Jim Angel (Mayor, Blue Mountains City Council), John Fitzgerald (Group Leader, NSW RFS-Blue Mountains District), Phil Pinyon (General Manager, Blue Mountains City Council), Greg Corrigan (Group Captain), Doug Wood (A/Group Captain, West 3), Dick Emmerson (Deputy Captain, Bell RFS), John Chorley (Senior Deputy, Mt Tomah RFS).
- Apologies were received from the following village residents: Tim & Kim Gow, Ross & Maria Kelly, Penny Ewing, Eleanor Herriott, John Lee, Geoff Naylor, Allen, Robyn & David Hyde, Moira & Ron Green, Sarah Hope, Ellis & Mary Reynolds, John & Judy Teulon, John & Mary Holt, Milba Mewburn, Ann Mellady, Joe & Diana Landsberg, Alan Rose, Wendy Smart.

**Confirmation of Minutes of 2007 AGM**

- Moved by Barry Freeman and seconded by Libby Raines

**Report from Superintendent Tom Shirt, A/District Manager, NSW RFS – Blue Mountains District**

Tom Shirt opened his report by thanking all members and staff who had made him feel so welcome and helped him come to grips with the many and varied issues that confront the RFS.

He noted that the fire season has been mild compared to 06/07. This meant a lower demand on PPE stores and provided an opportunity to provide wet weather gear to the brigades to the value of around \$40,000.

Inspector Rod Vinzenz has recently overseen the installation of new PMR voting radio equipment replacing the aging single frequency synchronized system.

Fion has been working hard to finalise all of the long standing Group Fund purchases.

His closing remarks concerned the closure of Shipley Station by Council due to an OH&S issue with nearby trees and reminded us to treat this issue in a sensitive manner and to afford Shipley members the respect and dignity they so rightfully deserve during these hard times.

**Presidents Report – David Howell**

As you know this year has been a wet one for the villages and there have been almost no fires – but Peter Raines will elaborate on this.

**Training**

- At the regular monthly training mornings we had an average of 11 volunteers attend training every month.
- This attendance is down from the average 16 which we achieved in 2006-2007 but I guess with the weather we have had fires have not been at the forefront of everyone's mind!
- Top attendees were Julie Mewburn who attended (10) and Beth Raines and Vic Zhukov who attended (9) each.
- In all 41 people attended one or more training mornings during the year.
- This shows that we have a successful brigade

**This Year**

- Both sheds are becoming too small for the activities of the Brigade

- The Mt Wilson shed has nowhere for training (to fit the average 16 people who attended training in 2006-2007, or for that matter the 11 who attended this year) – this hall is sometimes available but not always.
- In addition we have four vehicles and garaging for only three, and the new communication tower will need a dedicated communications room to be effective.
- The Mt Irvine shed is also too small for the truck and could do will doubling its size to add a storage room.
- We hope to progress the Mt Wilson shed project this year, and once the Captain and Deputies are happy with the design, we will canvass ideas from the community through the newsletter. Susie will report that we have some funds for this, but we will canvass the community to get your support prior to agreeing on a design and how to fund it.

### ***Lastly***

I would like to thank people who have made my job easy and enjoyable. Ross Kelly, Kathleen Oakes and Susie Hope as well as Doug Wood, Penny Ewing, Tim Gow and Barry Freeman.

- In particular Kathleen Oakes who has done the Secretary's role for (3) years, and Susie Hope – who says she is always disorganized but has the books in great shape.
- Doug, Ross and Penny are not standing for reelection.

I would also like to thank Owen for his great work in getting the tower approved and in place. There are lots of other people who deserve thanks

I am sure you will share my disappointment that Peter Raines is stepping down from being captain.

Of course I understand his reasons but I want to say that he has been an excellent captain of the brigade – his local knowledge and his operational strengths have been particularly valuable.

He is a great leader and it was a pleasure to work on the fire ground under him.

Without his guidance, hard work and good humor this brigade would not be a biggest and best in the Blue Mountains!!

## **Captains Report – Peter Raines**

### ***Callouts and other activities***

The past year has not seen any major fires in our district, a quiet year.

There were 26 callouts, up from 19 last year and 16 the year before that. The main reason for the increase is the First Responder Program with the NSW Ambulance Service, it has proved to be very worthwhile.

The callouts were:

- 4 Fire calls, 3 involving vehicles
- 9 First Responder calls: 1 MVA, 4 local properties, 4 bush rescues
- 2 smoke sightings
- 6 MVAs all on Bells Line of Road
- 5 Hazardous conditions, 3 involving fallen trees and 2 oil spills

This year the Brigade took part in the Blue Mountains Quest Navigation Exercise and helped with the Six Foot Track Marathon, as well as our own Mt Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run.

### ***First Responder Program***

The First Responder Program with the NSW Ambulance Service has proven a very valuable way of getting a trained first responder on to the scene of a medical emergency to sustain life and provide assistance until an ambulance arrives. The first responders also assist the ambulance officers at the scene and make sure that the ambulance finds the incident location as quickly as possible. This is important in rural communities where the properties are identified by a mix of property names, lot & street numbers.

Congratulations to the 7 people who make up the first responder team, to Barry Freeman for getting this program started and to Diana Landsberg for taking on the role of team leader.

### ***Firewise***

Brian Abrahams did an excellent job of putting together a firewise document, encouraging people to prepare for bushfires. With the assistance of the street coordinators this was distributed to all residents.

### ***Station Coordinators Role***

We ran a workshop to educate some of our key people in how to get the station running efficiently. We reviewed some of the key things to be done as an operation scales up. Graham Tribe prepared a series of flow charts to assist people step through their roles at the station. Well done Graham for putting together a system that is very usable and easy to follow. It is important that we utilize this material so all tasks are carried out and no steps missed.

### ***Thank you***

To Doug Wood and congratulations on his appointment as West 3 Deputy Captain as he replaces Barry Freeman in this role.

To Beth for stepping up to the Senior Deputy role

To the Executive team, in particular Kathleen, who has been doing the demanding job of Brigade secretary for the last couple of years.

Margaret Richey as the new catering officer. It is good to see such great team work with the food preparation.

Gold stars go to Vic Zhukov & Beth Raines for responding to most callouts and for a lot of behind the scenes work.

To the District Office for all their help and support throughout the year.

### ***Hazard Reductions***

A number of hazard reductions are ready to go in spring if the weather is suitable. We have had much support from District Office with the use of the Brigade Mitigation Support Team assisting us to prepare the paper work as well as the field work on the proposed burn areas.

### ***Training***

It is encouraging to see the number of people coming to monthly training. Congratulations to Peter & Marilyn Laving, Ted & Deborah Griffin who recently completed BF training. Congratulations also to all those who completed other training courses. It is important we have a good number of people skilled across a range of areas.

### ***Other works***

A 110,000 litre tank was poured at Mt Irvine Fire Station

Our communications mast was erected at Mt Wilson Fire Station

### ***Bush Run***

The Mount Wilson to Bilpin Bush Run: Thanks to all who helped. Bush Run for 2009 will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, please mark it in your diary, we would appreciate your help.

### ***Replacement Cat 9***

The Cat 9 landrover was replaced with a Toyota Landcruiser

### ***Property Preparation***

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage property owners to do more to prepare for bushfires. Make fire breaks, create fuel reduced and fuel free areas around all buildings, fill any gaps in the roof or under buildings, keep gutters clean. Have water & fire pump serviced and ready to go.

Also be aware of the new requirements for all houses to be fitted with smoke alarms.

Due to other commitments and time restraints I will not be standing for Captain this year. I will however remain active in the Brigade.

Thank you for your support over the past few years.

### **Treasurers Report – Susie Hope**

- Susie Hope reported on the financial position for the 12-month period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008
- Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was moved by Graham Tribe and seconded by Graham Thompson
- Details of the financial statements are attached at the back of this report

### **Hon. Bob Debus, Member for Macquarie**

The President, David Howell, invited the Hon. Bob Debus to say a few words. The Federal Member for Macquarie congratulated the brigade on its service to the community, its budget surplus and its ambitious plans for an extension to the Mt Wilson station.

### **Brigade Classification**

The following motion was moved by Graham Thompson and seconded by Libby Raines:

'This meeting endorses the classification of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade as "Village One" with the proviso that the minimum training of "Village Firefighter" for attending an incident remains only a recommendation.'

The motion was passed unanimously.

### **Election of Officers**

- Superintendent Tom Shirt took the chair to conduct the elections. The following positions had been nominated prior to the meeting and each nominee was 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)	Alan Heap
Deputy Captain (2)	Tim Gow
Deputy Captain (3)	Alan Gunn
Deputy Captain (4)	Richard Knight-Brown
Deputy Captain (5)	Stuart Donaldson
Deputy Captain (6)	Stuart Gunn
Deputy Captain (7)	Barry Freeman
Equipment Officer	Kathleen Oakes
Equipment Officer - PPE	Kathleen Oakes
Fire Trails Coordinator (joint)	Peter Dempsey & Vic Zhukov
Water Manager	David Howell
Training Coordinator	Penny Ewing
Hazard Reduction Coordinator	Peter Raines
Catering Team Leader	Margaret Ritchey
First Aid Officer (joint)	Dr Phillip Beeby, Dr Jane Beeby
O H & S Officer	Robyn Hyde
Community Education Officer	Brian Abrahams

### **General Business**

- Henric Nicholas expressed regret that Peter Raines was stepping down as Captain and moved that the meeting show its gratitude for his long and valuable service to the brigade. The meeting responded with loud applause.
- Bowens Creek Bridge: The BMCC and Hawkesbury Council survey degraded the bridge to a 5 ton limit. Funding is to be sought to upgrade the bridge to a 10 ton limit.

### **Award Presentation**

Awards were presented by Tom Shirt A/District Manager

- Certificates of appreciation to:
  - The whole Brigade
  - Milba Mewburn
  - Vic Zhukov
  - Doug Wood
- 15 year long service awards were presented to:
  - Peter Raines (16 years)
  - Libby Raines (16 years)

### **Closure of the Meeting**

- There being no further business the meeting was closed at 11.30am.