

Blue Mountains RFS Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade Annual General Meeting Saturday 2nd June 2018

Attendance

Invited guests:; David Jones, District Manager; Mick Metcalf, Group Leader; Paula Metcalf, Fred Taylor, West 2; Steve Parrott, West 3; David Noble, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service; Councillor Kerry Brown, BMCC; Councillor Kevin Schreiber, BMCC;

Residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine: Susie Hope, Joe Montano, Elizabeth Montano, Richard Beattie, Jane Beeby, Philip Beeby, Helen Freeman, Barry Freeman, Duncan Peppercorn, Robyn Scrivener, David Howell, Lesley Wilson, Graham Tribe, Sarah Howell, Anne de Salis, Martin Barge, Mary Holt, Owen Havilland, Jane Mayne, George Mayne Marilyn Laving, Peter Laving

David Howell opened the meeting at 4:10pm and welcomed the invited guests and residents. Tribute was paid to Libby Raines, an active member of the Brigade since 1968. Libby was a highly valued member of the Brigade and our community. Her maps of the Mounts are still used by the Brigade. Her daughter Beth is the Captain and son Peter Senior Deputy Captain.
Vale Libby Raines.

Apologies

Invited guests: Trish Doyle, Member for Blue Mountains; Susan Templeman, Member for Macquarie; Frank Vincent, West 1. Michael Garvey, Ambulance NSW.

Residents of Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine:

Alison and Alex Halliday, Deb and Ted Griffin, Julian and Bettina Ludowici, Carol and Brian Carrigan, Sue, Steve, Mitchell and Andrew Woolfendon, Judy Tribe, Minnie and Henric Nicholas, Keith Ralston, Peter MacDonald, Jim Tzannes, Annie Catling, Robyn and Allen Hyde, Penny Ewing, Steven and Margaret Dean, Tim and Kim Gow, Sarah Hope, Mark Bancroft, Kathy and Ray Harrington, Loretta Beattie, Wendy Holland, Milba Kirk, Catherine and Alexander Montano, Peter and Linda Raines

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM

Moved that the minutes be accepted by Graham Tribe, seconded by Susie Hope

Email from Michael Garvey, Ambulance NSW:

An email was sent to the meeting on behalf of Ambulance NSW, unfortunately it was received after the meeting

Please accept our apologies, due to operational and staffing issues, we will not be able to attend the meeting this afternoon.

We would like to acknowledge our Mt Wilson Community First Responders, past and present, who provide such an invaluable service to not only your community, but also to the NSW Ambulance Service.

The commitment they show as volunteers to not only responding on casualty cases, but to the training is a remarkable example for even our full-time staff.

We as Paramedics are always glad to see our team of CFRs at the cases in your area, knowing they will have commenced management of the situation in a calm, professional and respectful manner. I can't speak highly enough of them and on behalf of Inspector Ron Gavin and Lithgow Paramedics, I would like to thank them for their on-going commitment and pass on our support and regard for each one.

Our thanks also go to the Rural Fire Service for the support they provide as partners in the CFR program, with essential infrastructure and communication roles, enabling the CFR program to provide this vital service.

Report from the RFS District Manager: David Jones

David Jones recently attended the annual NSW Rural Fire Service District Manager's Forum. The focus was on building District capability, and topics such as training, the role of Group Officers, succession planning, community engagement and infrastructure development were aimed at how to ensure the longevity of the RFS throughout the communities we serve.

The longevity of the Rural Fire Service is a primary consideration which has been met as a District with continued

- Ongoing training allowing the development of skills and abilities
- Completion of election of Group Officers who are charged with working within the District and to ensure its longevity
- Development of the Young Members Group
- Ongoing community engagement activities
- Ongoing infrastructure development to ensure appropriate facilities for Brigades which can meet operational and developmental requirements

David Jones thanked all the officers for their services, and to the Brigade members for the work they have performed.

Captain's Report: Beth Raines

This year has seen the passing of a number of key people from the Community and the Brigade – Bill Scrivener, Robert Chesney and Libby Raines. We reflect on the contribution made by them over a number of years.

Bill was a long serving Captain most notably in the 1994 fires and before that as Deputy Captain and Treasurer and Secretary. He witnessed a massive change not so much in how fires were fought but in how fires were managed, the improvement in appliances and tools and the organisation supporting the volunteers. Bill was a much loved Life Member of this Brigade.

When Libby talked about the '94 fires she remembered vividly creeping into this hall at 5am amongst all the sleeping fire fighters to get ready for the early morning breakfast shift. Libby was always there doing whatever was needed, in the kitchen, in the office or on a truck. Her local knowledge and assistance at Rescues from the 1980's onwards was of great benefit and she was a very conscientious member of the Community First Responders.

Robert Chesney joined the Brigade as many do when they retire and move to the Community and could be called on when needed for fire duties. He reluctantly decided when he reached his 80's that it was probably better that he didn't go on trucks anymore.

This year we have also farewelled Kathleen Oakes and Peter Dempsey. Pete was a much valued Deputy Captain and Kathleen a superb Community Engagement Officer. I and the Brigade will miss all of these people.

We have had a busy year averaging almost one callout a week. Community First Responder calls to Residents and Community First Responder calls for Rescues make up the majority of all incidents with 12 apiece for both. The Brigade also attended 8 trees across road incidents, 8 motor vehicle incidents and 5 callouts to fires or smoke sightings.

The Brigade has also been involved with Hazard Reductions across the District and support for the Six Foot Track Marathon at Jenolan Caves.

Brigade training is continuing to upgrade people's skills and help prepare them for further courses such as Advanced and Village fire fighting. We are also welcoming new members into the ranks of the trained fire fighter with a bunch of new recruits currently undergoing training. Thanks to Graham and his team of Joe, Keith and David and to Peter Church who is stepping down in his role of West 3.

One of the Brigades biggest achievements this year was the production of the new topographic map that covers both Mountains. It can be purchased for \$20 from Susie this evening or can be found for sale on the Mount Wilson website. This year the RFS have designated to have the two Community Halls as Neighbourhood Safer Places and substantial works have taken place at the two sites. The Mt Irvine Hall has had a considerable amount of trees removed and a tank installed and overall the project is a success aesthetically and practically. The site around the Mt Wilson Hall however is another matter and until more works are completed then the Brigade is not in a position to endorse this or recommend the Hall as a place of shelter during a fire.

Another initiative of the RFS is the development of a fire access and fire trail plan which is of great importance to this Brigade because of our strategic network of fire trails. One of the key focuses of this plan is to upgrade key fire-trails to a common standard regardless of land tenure so hopefully the upgrades will be carried out as a whole rather than in a piecemeal approach as has happened in the past. This Brigade spends a considerable amount of money each year on the maintenance of fire-trails especially on private property and we ask the District Office to ensure that the Brigade is engaged and kept informed about the progress of the plan, priorities and any planned scope of works so we can have our input and so the Brigade can focus our efforts on the trails not included as strategic in this plan.

The Group Officer elections have just occurred and we welcome Steve Parrott in as West 3.

I would like to thank all those who have been a support to Pete and myself, staff from both the RFS and Ambulance and the tireless efforts of the Brigades executive and office bearers who do so much to keep the Brigade functioning.

Acceptance of Captains report:

Moved: David Howell seconded: Robyn Scrivener

Treasurer's Report: Susie Hope

** See attached Spreadsheet*

This report covers our financial position throughout the 12 month period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Working Account

Income for the year totalled **\$63,085.66** with the notable amounts being:

Spring Blossom Festival 2017.

- Opening night - \$3,176.97
 - Art and shop sales – 6,617.60
 - Donated from garden owners - \$15,175.00
 - Cafe & sausage sizzle - \$3,841.62
 - General donations - \$6,255.40
 - General costs – (\$4,411.19)
 - **Total profit - \$30,655.40**
- Autumn sausage sizzle 2018 netted us \$8,430.30.
 - Sale of maps still continues. This has been a most successful venture
 - Membership fees - \$1,218.10, down from previous years
 - MWPA share of traffic management course - \$1,800.00
 - NSWRFs small grants for printer & gazebo - \$912.59

Outgoings for the year totalled **\$78,730.13** with the notable amounts being:

- Wi-fi setup for our Mt Wilson shed - \$1,679.00
- Safety promotion material - \$1,757.44
- Survey for the Mt Irvine proposed shed - \$2,000.00.
- The resulting **deficit** from all this was **\$15,644.47**, which, when subtracted from our 1 April 2017 opening balance of \$12,222.17, left us with a closing balance in our working account of

(\$3,422.30). I withheld a few cheques until early April when our Public Fund reimbursed us over \$12,000 as approved by the trustees.

Public Fund Account accepts all donations and channels its funds, as approved by its trustees, back into our Working Account as long as they are purely for the purpose of supporting our fire and emergency services.

Income for the year totalled **\$58,470.35**

Outgoings for the year totalled **\$50,182.26**

The resulting **surplus** from all this was **\$8,288.09**, which, when added to our 1 April 2017 balance of \$17,263.53, resulted in a balance of **\$25,551.62**. Plenty to reimburse our Working account early April as noted

As well as the funds in our Working and Public Fund accounts as at 31 March 2018, we have **\$387,349.20** invested in term deposits with the Commonwealth Bank.

With the **\$3,000.00** held in our Captain's debit account, our total funds as at 31 March 2018 were **\$412,478.52**.

A separate account is also kept for social activities not strictly related to RFB operations. The funds in this account totalled **\$1,555.58** as at 31 March 2018. This reflects a **decrease** of **\$307.00**.

Now audited and found correct

Acceptance of Treasurers report:

Moved: David Howell seconded: Beth Raines

Appointment of an Auditor for 2018-2019

That Phil Honan be the auditor for the 2018-2019 financial year

Moved: David Howell seconded: Beth Raines

Changes to the Constitution

David Howell addressed the meeting

- The RFS has been working for several years on a consistent Constitution for all Brigades across New South Wales
- This new Constitution will come into effect in July 2018 and thus we need to address the new Constitution at this meeting
- The new Constitution is largely determined by the RFS Headquarters
- As we have been diligent in keeping our Constitution up to date there are very few changes between our current Constitution and the new one
- There are a couple of clause in the new Constitution which we can't change which I would like to review them on the next page
- There are however 17 opportunities to change the Constitution to suit our specific situation - these are called "Brigade Rules"
- The Executive has examined all the Rules in detail and is recommending that our Brigade take advantage of five Brigade Rules

5.22: Criteria for appointment of life members	No criteria specified	Criteria to include length of service for RFS, length of service in this Brigade and other contributions to RFS and this Brigade
7.2(b): Process for nominating field officers	Brigade may make a rule to concerning procedure for nominations at AGMs	Current practice chosen: Nomination prior to meeting, in writing, by 2 ordinary members 7 days prior to the meeting delivered to Secretary
7.22: Other admin officers	Admin officers are President, Secretary, Treasurer	Add Vice President, Catering, Equipment, Community Engagement and Senior Station Officer
8.2: Membership of Executive Committee	President, Secretary, Captain and Treasurer.	Add Vice President, Senior Deputy, Training Officer, Community Engagement Officer, Catering Officer and two ordinary members
9.10(b): Authority to spend money –	Signing authority given to any two of Secretary, President, Captain and Treasurer	Add Vice President

Motion: That the new Constitution be accepted as of today, and the Rules as stated be accepted
Proposed: Barry Freeman Seconded Richard Beattie
Motion carried unopposed

Election of officers for 2018 – 2019

David Jones took the chair and declared the following members had been nominated unopposed prior to the meeting and were confirmed in their positions:

- President* David Howell
 - Vice President* Henric Nicholas
 - Treasurer* Susie Hope
 - Secretary* Robyn Scrivener
 - Captain* Beth Raines
 - Senior Deputy Captain* Peter Raines
 - Deputy Captains Barry Freeman, David Howell, Joe Montano
 - Training* Graham Tribe
 - Community Engagement* Peter Laving
 - Catering* Lesley Wilson
 - Committee Member* Elizabeth Montano, Allen Hyde
 - Equipment Stephen Dean
 - Fire Trails Beth Raines
- Those marked * will form the Executive Committee

General Business

a) Mount Wilson Fire Station

David Howell addressed the meeting

- Acquisition of Crown Lands block by BMCC;
- The VG has valued both blocks at \$143,000;
- Crown Lands cannot sell the property for less than the valuation ~\$110,000;
- Under the new Crown Lands Act, the block can be vested in the BMCC for no cost from July 2018;
- There are plans for a Pre-DA meeting in 12 July;
- Committee to manage/oversee the building; both the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Stations will have committees established
- Budget and the source of the funds an overall budget of \$520,000. The Brigade will use \$220,000 and the RFS will fund the remaining sum. David Jones said that it looks positive that the RFS will agree to that funding

b) Mount Irvine Fire Station

- There will be a meeting on 10th June at which the Mt Irvine community will agree on their suggestion for the location of the new shed;
- The block around the Hall has recently been surveyed;
- The Brigade has previously said that they will consider the wishes of the Mt Irvine community when deciding on the site for the shed and that determination still stands

c) Bowens Creek Road

Elizabeth Montano addressed the meeting

- Since last AGM considerable progress made
- Funding of \$100,000 promised by Federal Government – with promise matched by Susan Templeman - at July 16 Federal election to fund a feasibility study in respect of the restoration of the route to fire trail standard for emergency vehicles access.
- Have researched how to access that funding and process to be followed to obtain it – noting that , as the route is owned by BMCC and HCC, any application for funding must be made by Councils. Ascertained how to access fund and advised HCC and BMCC accordingly in the course of continuing campaign
- In mid-2017, BMCC and HCC agreed to jointly pursue the restoration of the route and the obtaining of funds for the feasibility study. As the majority of restoration work is required on the HCC side of the route, it was agreed that HCC would be lead council.
- In January 2018, HCC and the Federal government entered into an agreement for the funds to be provided to HCC for the study
- Continuing work to keep this matter on the agendas for both Councils.
- This has included seeking opportunities to brief the Media. Articles on the route have been published in both the Blue Mountains Gazette and the Hawkesbury Gazette.
- Continuing engagement with Susan Templeman who has made strong representation to HCC and BMCC on our behalf
- BMCC has previously passed a motion supporting the route. Until recently, we had no such support from HCC. Through contacts with government at both Federal and local level, have been able to raise the profile of this issue and obtain support from HCC Councillors. Spoke to HCC Council at its 8 May meeting – passed a Motion to seek more information on the route and to support exploration of the issue. HCC Councillors voted for the Motion unanimously –

in contrast to a Motion put by a sympathetic HCC Councillor several years ago which was voted down.

- Subsequent contact with several HCC Councillors has shown a continuation of their support and efforts on their part to ensure that our Brigade is closely involved in the feasibility study
- Advised by HCC that a consultant has been appointed to undertake the feasibility study
Have provided contact details for emergency services - NSW Ambulance, NSW Police Rescue, RFS DO as well as our Brigade.
- Continue to monitor the consultant's work to ensure that consultation is thorough and receives appropriate and timely input. Having had a very slow start, the study is now expected to be concluded by the end of June.
- The study will look at the technical feasibility and engineering requirements to restore the route to fire trail standard. And, importantly, it will provide a general costing.
- Once that is done, the next phase of the campaign starts- seeking Federal and State funding for the restoration works themselves
- Will look for opportunities in the next Federal and State election campaigns.
- This is a project which is all about essential emergency services infrastructure and community safety. We acknowledge the bipartisan support we have received from a number of elected officials - from Susan Templeman, our Member for Macquarie (which Electorate spans all of the route) and before her Louise Markus the former Federal member, Senator Marise Payne (who has informal responsibility for Western Sydney Matters), BMCC Councillors Don McGregor, Kerry Brown (who sponsored the last BMCC Motion on the subject), Kevin Schreiber and Mayor Mark Greenhill, who has been very responsive. Also, from HCC Councillors Sarah Richards (who moved the recent HCC Motion), Paul Rasmussen (who supported the last Motion put to HCC and has been a consistent supporter), Danielle Wheeler, Peter Reynolds, Nathan Zamprogno and others. In particular, the Mayor of HCC Mary Lyons-Buckett.
- It's also been very good to have the support of District Office. David Jones and I have spoken about this several times and he is supportive of the route being restored. In recent work to classify all fire trails in NSW according to their significance, this route has been classified on the Blue Mountains side as being of "tactical" significance. That's good but David Jones has advised that, if this route is restored providing access between Mt Irvine and Bilpin, he believes it should be reclassified as "strategic", which means it would attract higher priority for ongoing maintenance works.
- This was never going to be an easy campaign or a short one - we are dealing with a route which spans two local government areas, two State Electorates but, luckily, only one Federal.
- The road has been maintained on the BMCC side it has been the subject of significant neglect on the HCC side for many years.
- We remain optimistic, persistent and focussed.

Other business/Questions

Richard Beattie asked if there was a hazard reduction planned for the area between Mount Irvine Road and the Northern Fire trail. Beth Raines answered that the 2013 State Mine Fire burned the Northern Fire Trail and that there was no use in planning a Hazard reduction for at least seven years after a fire event. Beth also noted that landholders need to establish an asset protection zone around their properties and that this preparation needs to be done before fire season. Simple actions like cleaning gutters, testing hoses and testing fire pumps are an important part of asset protection which everyone needs to attend to.

Closure of meeting

As there was no further business the President declared the meeting closed at 5.30 pm and invited all present to join the Executive for wine and cheese.