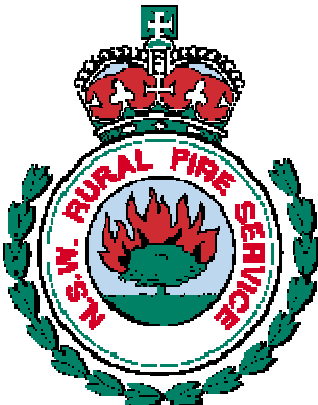


Newsletter Date

Autumn 2006



Brigade Newsletter

Brigade receives Federal funding for new Water Tanks

The Brigade was recently pleased to learn that it has received a grant of \$49,000 from Emergency Management Australia, a division of the Attorney General's department of the Commonwealth Government.

We were one of 400 projects which were awarded a total of \$14 million issued under the *Working Together to Manage Emergencies* program.

The money will be used to install a 110,000 litre (20,000 gallons) concrete tank at each of the two fire sheds, Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.

The Mt Wilson tank will be situated to the west of the shed (away from the road) on the site of an existing smaller tank and will collect water from the roof. We will plumb it into the shed so that trucks can be filled while parked in the shed.

Planning for the Mt Wilson tank has been proceeding smoothly and District Office will shortly submit the Development Application to Council on our behalf.

The Mt Irvine tank is proving to be more problematic. A less rigorous attitude to planning controls in the 1950s enabled the fire shed to be situated on the road reserve which is Council property. This land needs to be re-designated for RFS use to enable installation of the tank. Progress through Council is encountering obstacles and delays, but both Bob Debus (State member) and Kerry Bartlett (Federal member) are working on our behalf to hasten the necessary approvals. Hopefully we can resolve the matter soon.

The Mt Irvine tank will be situated east of the Mt Irvine fire shed in the bush away from the road and will be partly buried. It will be accessed from the dirt track which is behind the shed. Rainwater will be collected from the shed roof in order to fill it.

Deputy President Ross Kelly is to be congratulated for all his work in identifying this opportunity, determining the project, and following through with the submission. Thank you, Ross.

I would welcome any comments regarding the proposed installation of these tanks. Please call me on 9380-9903, or write to me at GPO Box 1532, Sydney, 2001 or at howelldj@ozemail.com.au.

David Howell

President

3rd June AGM and Pig & Horn night

Non-financial members please pay before the meeting

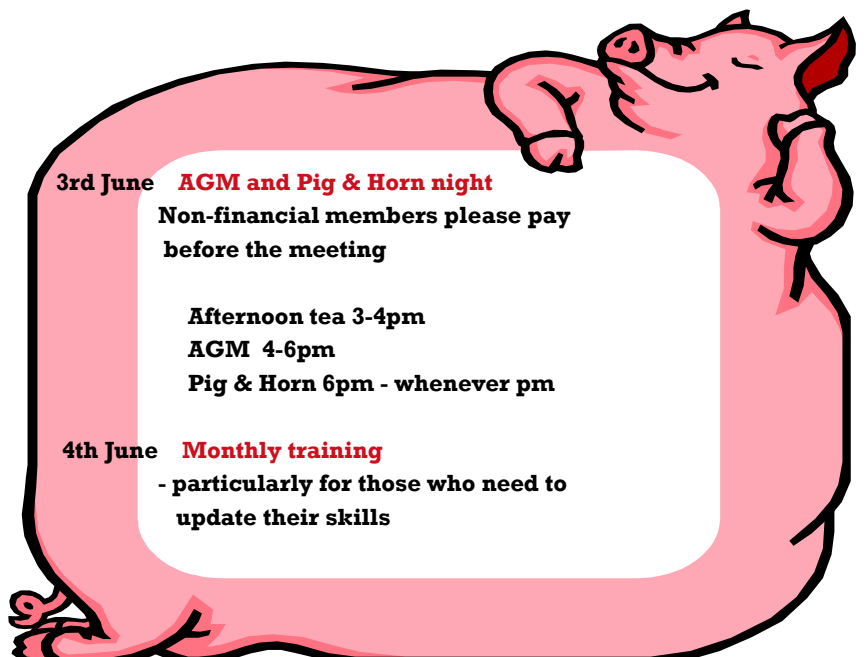
Afternoon tea 3-4pm

AGM 4-6pm

Pig & Horn 6pm - whenever pm

4th June Monthly training

- particularly for those who need to update their skills



Easter Bunny 2006

The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine brigades were represented at the recent Easter Bunny training exercise by Beth Raines, Robyn and Allen Hyde, and Vic Zhukov. Members of all Blue Mountains Brigades are invited to a two day training exercise over the Easter break in areas adjoining and within our usual area of operations. The 2006 Easter Bunny was centred on the Wiseman's Ferry area including Bilpin and Bucketty, the latter being part of Gosford's area of operations.

The exercise is designed to provide practical experience in navigation, radio procedures, and four-wheel driving. Over the two days the Brigade members wove in and out of Wollemi and Yengo National Parks, setting up camp at a spot a little east of Mangrove Creek Dam. Navigation skills were tested and improved over an area covered by six topographical maps, and rugged back-country tracks challenged the four-wheel drivers.

Vic Zhukov observed that "much of the country in the area of the lower Putty Road including the convict-built Great Northern Road is the real Old Australia replete with pioneering history evidenced by place names, river fords, and track junctions."

The evening's camp under the stars in a clearing surrounded by old pines and gums contributed to the other major benefit of this exercise – the opportunity to swap stories and strengthen friendships within other Blue Mountains brigades. Large scale bush fire events can be improved immeasurably by working with familiar faces and brigades, and events such as the Easter Bunny can aid in cementing these relationships.

All our participants agreed that it is a wonderful opportunity to see some of the State's most beautiful scenery, camp out in the bush, as well as hone their fire fighting skills. All recommend it unreservedly to Brigade members and encourage more to join them at Easter 2007.

Sarah Howell

Volunteer fire-fighting, Tokyo style

Whilst wandering around an inner Tokyo suburb recently, I came across a large group of residents who were undertaking some strangely familiar activities.

In one of the most densely populated cities in the world, a major problem for Tokyo's emergency services is finding the location of the problem. Despite the widespread use of Global Positioning Systems in virtually all vehicles, finding a particular address in Japan provides a great challenge. Buildings are numbered not in any logical or numeric sequence, but rather in order from the date they were built.

Given these difficulties, local resident involvement is actively encouraged and supported.

Tim Gow



Smoke alarms now compulsory from 1st May

From 1 May 2006 owners of homes and places where people sleep are required to install smoke alarms. Owners will have six months to comply. After 1 May it will be an offence to interfere with or remove an existing smoke alarm unless it is to repair, maintain or replace the alarm.

Smoke alarms are an effective early-warning device to alert people to the presence of fire so they have more time to escape. 144 people have died in house fires in NSW in the past five years, 60% during sleeping hours.

A smoke alarm must be installed between each area containing bedrooms and within 1.5 metres of the entrance to each bedroom. The general principle is that smoke alarms should be positioned to detect smoke before it reaches sleeping occupants. The sound emitted by the alarm is designed to wake occupants giving them time to evacuate.

You also need an alarm on every level along the path of travel that people will take to evacuate the building. This will ensure an alarm is sounded before smoke makes the escape route impassable. If the bedrooms are on the first floor, then an alarm should be positioned near the area of the interconnecting stair on both the ground and first floors. Install alarms on or near the ceiling. On a wall, the smoke detector should be 300mm to 500mm from the ceiling. Never paint over them and test them every month.

Alarms can be either hard-wired to the mains electricity power supply (with battery backup), or powered by a battery. Smoke alarms are available at most hardware, home equipment and building supply stores, and a number of department stores.

Most battery-powered smoke alarms can be easily installed by the home owner or a maintenance contractor and do not require professional installation. Hard-wired smoke alarms, however, will need to be installed by a licensed professional.

When installing smoke alarms, special care is required to avoid 'dead air spaces'. A dead air space is an area in which trapped air will prevent smoke from reaching the alarm. This generally occurs at the apex of cathedral ceilings, the corner junction of walls and ceilings, or between exposed joists. The distance from the apex of a cathedral ceiling to the top of the alarm should be between 500mm and 1500mm.

Smoke alarms are extremely sensitive and may detect smoke and moisture created by common household activities such as burnt toast or steam from a bathroom. To reduce the likelihood of false alarms, the smoke alarm should, wherever possible, not be located near cooking appliances or bathrooms.

To be effective smoke alarms must be properly maintained. The alarm should be cleaned at least annually by carefully vacuuming to remove dust that may affect the operation of the unit. They should also be tested routinely to ensure they are still functioning. The operation of most smoke alarms can be easily checked by pressing a button on the outside of the alarm. The battery in most smoke alarms will need replacing each year. Smoke alarms should emit a warning sound when the battery needs replacement. A good idea is to replace all alarm batteries when daylight saving ends in March each year.

For further information about Smoke Alarms and the new regulations, contact Inspector Eric Berry at the RFS Blue Mountains District Office on 02 4782 2159 or email eric.berry@rfs.nsw.gov.au.

Information can also be obtained from NSW Fire Brigades and Planning NSW websites, by phoning the Smoke Alarms Help Line on 1300 858 812, or email smoke.alarms@planning.nsw.gov.au.

2006 Training Calendar

The Training Calendar for the Blue Mountains District has been recently published and is available at the Mt Wilson Shed.

A wide variety of courses are available throughout the year. As always, members are strongly encouraged to identify areas of interest and complete a course nomination form.

Drivers with a Medium Rigid truck licence are still in short supply!

New regulations for burning of rubbish piles

Regulations governing the lighting of rubbish piles on private properties have been amended, particularly regarding notification before the burn.

When planning a fire, you must now notify **Blue Mountains City Council** (Ph: 4780 5000) at least 24 hours before you plan to light up, or by 5pm on Friday if you plan to light the fire on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

In addition, at least 24 hours notice must be given to the following:

- Neighbours on all sides
- Any other person who may see smoke or hear the fire and be concerned
- The Rural Fire Service Fire Control Officer for the Blue Mountains District (Ph: 4782 2159) at Fire Control, Katoomba
- National Parks & Wildlife Service (Ph: 4784 7300) if the fire is within five kilometres of a National Park. This is virtually all properties in Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine.
- Our local Brigade (Ph: 4756 2168).

The proposed pile burn should be not greater than 2m² in volume. Only one pile burn is to be conducted at any one time.

Water supplies and fire suppression equipment are to be in place prior to the pile being lit.

There must be a cleared area of 4.5 m around the burn which must be at least 10 m away from any building.

The fire must not be lit if the average wind speed exceeds 15 kph. Your local Brigade will be able to provide you with an accurate wind speed reading. Once the fire has been lit, it must be extinguished if the wind exceeds 15 kph.

An adult must be present at the site of the fire from the time it is lit until it is fully extinguished.

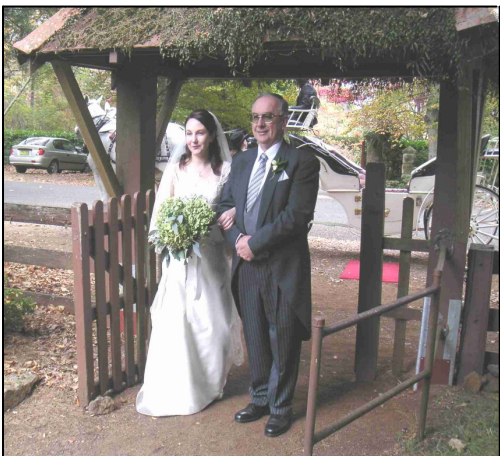
Ring our local Brigade to inform them when the fire is extinguished.



Hearty congratulations to Melanie Freeman!

All the very best wishes from the Brigade and local community to Melanie Freeman for her April 24th wedding to Rod Hutchings at St George's Church, Mt Wilson.

A horse-drawn carriage provided the very stylish transport for the wedding party. This was a complete surprise for Melanie, who had previously agreed that she would be transported to the church in a fire truck!



(Left) The bride with her understandably proud father

(Right) The wedding carriage, featuring two very well-behaved horses



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Sarah Howell (sarahhowell@ozemail.com.au)

Comments, contributions and suggestions welcome!

Find us at <http://mtwilson.rfsa.org.au>