

Fire & Rescue

May 2013

News

Fire and flooding rain

Bushfire and storm features

Movement at the stations

News from the crews

Something old, something new

Appliances past and present



Fire &
Rescue NSW



The Commissioner Writes



Some of you may remember from your high school English studies, the poet Dorothea McKellar describing Australia as “a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains ... of drought and flooding rains.”

For FRNSW, the 2012/13 summer has been rather like that. In January this year, and particularly on the days of 8 and 18 January, NSW experienced some of the highest temperatures ever recorded, which led to widespread bushfire activity. The main feature in this magazine gives some snapshots of the extensive role played by FRNSW as we worked with the NSW Rural Fire Service and other agencies to fight the hundreds of bushfires burning around the State during January.

This summer, we've also had our share of “flooding rains”. In late January and again in late February, FRNSW was kept busy supporting the NSW State Emergency Service in storm operations. This issue also outlines the major role we played in responding to the extensive damage caused by the heavy rain, strong winds and subsequent flooding.

As Commissioner, I make it a priority to get out and do regular station visits whenever possible. And I am constantly surprised and delighted at the amazing amount of work being done at the station level in local communities. We've included in this issue a number of articles highlighting some of the great work done by crews at different stations, including Maitland's Mega Open Day, Bowral and Temora's community engagement activities, Dungog's retained recruitment success, and use of local media by Nowra, Bateman Bay and Regional North 3.

If you have an interesting story to tell about the work being done at your station, I encourage you to let us know at frnsw@fire.nsw.gov.au so we can consider including this information in future issues of Fire & Rescue News.

Happy reading!

Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner

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Send in your stories and photos

FRNSW Media, Ministerial & Communications Unit (MMCU) wants to publicise the incidents your crew attended, and the achievements of your unit.

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Intranet

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Fire & Rescue News

Send any high-resolution photos (larger than 1,000KB) to: fnews@fire.nsw.gov.au

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Between 8 and 21 January 2013:

10,321

Calls to Triple Zero

1,348

Bush & grass fires were reported

1,020

Firefighters and 240 appliances deployed

62

Strike Teams were formed and placed on standby on days of total fire ban

Firefighters spring into action as the

STATE sizzles

FRNSW Communication Centres answered 10,321 Triple Zero (000) calls between 8 and 21 January 2013. A total of 1,348 bush and grass fires were reported in that time, with more than 1,020 firefighters and 240 appliances deployed to major outbreaks. On the days of total fire ban, 62 Strike Teams were formed and placed on standby. Many were deployed to tackle major bushfires affecting Boorowa, Bungendore, Cessnock, Cooma-Monaro, Coonabarabran, Henty, Holbrook, Jerilderie, Lithgow, Nowra, Oura, Tarcutta, Wandandian (near Sussex Inlet) and Yass.

In January 2013, NSW experienced bushfire conditions not seen for many years. Temperatures soared to the mid 40s and above on a handful of days, most notably on 8 and 18 January, and the bushfire danger rating in many parts of NSW reached Extreme and Catastrophic.

Preparations for the soaring temperatures began in the days before 8 January with special logistical arrangements put in place. Dozens of off-duty firefighters were recalled on the 8th and assembled at Homebush before being picked up and transported by bus to the Greenacre complex where they were assigned to appliances, sorted into Strike Teams and supplied with the necessary gear to be deployed. A strike team was also formed at the State Training College and sent into the field on the South Coast.

Superintendent Wayne Roberts said it was a great team effort. "With the support of Inventory, Warehouse and Distribution, Equipment Logistics, Fleet, Training College and Properties staff, the whole task of assembling, tasking and committing large numbers of personnel ran like clockwork," he said.

Communications Centres were swamped with more than 4,000 Triple Zero calls on 8 January alone. Extra staff were also sent to the Bushfire Incident Control Centre at the NSW Rural Fire Service headquarters at Lidcombe.

On Friday 18 January, the hottest day ever recorded in Sydney, FRNSW experienced one of its busiest days ever.

All FRNSW stations and appliances were placed online and various contingencies put in place. Strike Teams were sent to bolster resources at fires at Coonabarabran, Boorowa, Cessnock and Nowra. On top of this, FRNSW firefighters responded to more than 200 automatic fire alarm activations, house fires, chemical spills, rescues, and hundreds of bush and grass fires that were extinguished by the first arriving crews.

Commissioner Greg Mullins praised the efforts of firefighters and support staff. "In contrast to last year's wet summer, the hotter drier weather experienced over the summer with above average temperatures resulted in us facing a very difficult period of bushfire danger. I am enormously proud of the tremendous efforts of our firefighters and support staff alongside personnel from the NSW Rural Fire Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW and other agencies as we dealt with numerous bush and grass fires across the State."

Bushfire Section Manager and BICC Coordinator Steve Moran said the high temperatures, low humidity and strong winds created the perfect bushfire conditions over the course of the two weeks. "We were quite fortunate that it wasn't worse. No lives were lost and we could have lost many more properties. I would put that down largely to the preparations that were made beforehand," he said. **END**

Bushfires 2013

stories from the frontline

Here are some brief snapshots of the tremendous efforts of FRNSW firefighters involved in bushfire operations in January 2013.

Coonabarabran

As bushfires raged through the Warrumbungles National Park on Sunday 13 January, a FRNSW Strike Team of three tankers with firefighters from Coonabarabran, Narrabri, Gunnedah, Delroy and Dubbo made the 30km trip up to the Siding Springs Observatory near Coonabarabran. It took three hours to get there with crews facing strong winds, embers, dense smoke and falling trees all the way. "You couldn't drive at more than 20km/h," Coonabarabran Captain Phil Mangan said.

The Strike Team were the only firefighters to make it to the Observatory. They found the accommodation lodge and several buildings engulfed in flames and got to work to save what they could using the water supply at the Observatory. It proved to be a long hard night with crews not finishing until around 4am. However, the Observatory, information centre, administration centre and fire station were all saved.

Over the following few days, the Strike Team was deployed to the town of Bugaldie to protect properties along Barradine Rd. Further property protection and firefighting operations were carried out along Timor Road.

Strike Team Leader, Inspector Grant O'Regan, said firefighters had put in many long hours of hard work together with their RFS colleagues to contain the fire. "The crews were dedicated in their efforts," he said. "I cannot praise their commitment enough. Without it, many more properties would have been lost."

On Saturday 23 February, Commissioner Mullins presented Unit Commendations for Courageous Action to the firefighters from Dubbo, Delroy, Coonabarabran, Gunnedah and Narrabri who helped save the Observatory. In presenting the awards, Commissioner Mullins said: "I congratulate them for their commitment and professionalism, and their determination to save the Siding Springs Observatory, which would certainly have suffered irreparable damage and incurred a disastrous financial and scientific loss without their efforts."

RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons and the Director General of Emergency Management Australia Mark Crossweller, after touring the fireground, praised the FRNSW Strike Team which, despite hostile fire conditions, saved the world-renowned facility from the fire.

Oura, Henty and Tarcutta

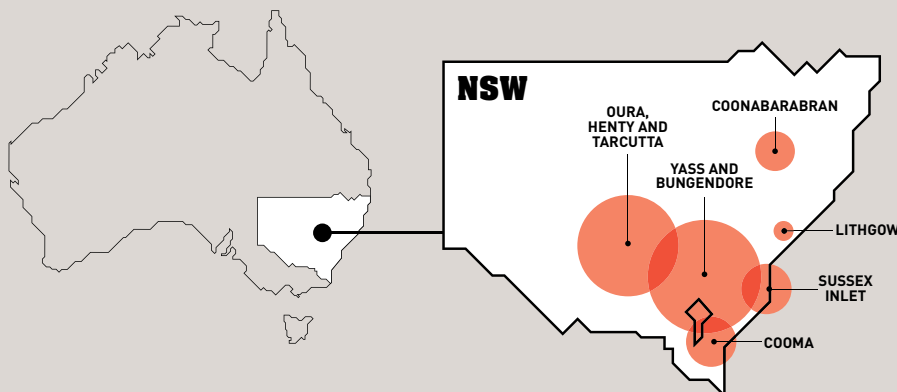
Firefighters from Jerilderie, Turvey Park, Leeton and Yenda battled through intense heat and smoke as they fought to save homes and livestock from bushfires at Tarcutta and Oura on Tuesday 8 January.

The Strike Team of 22 firefighters and four appliances started the day in Wagga Wagga and was soon sent to Oura to join the effort protecting homes and containing the blaze. While the main fire front had passed Oura, crews were faced with some of the worst weather conditions imaginable with temperatures hitting the mid 40s and extreme winds.

By mid morning, reports were coming in of another blaze at Tarcutta. Strike Team Leader Inspector Tom Freedom immediately dispatched half his team to Tarcutta with Wagga Wagga Inspector Daryl Manson. The second half of the Strike Team and Inspector Freedom joined them shortly afterwards.

As some of the first arriving crews to Mates Gully Rd, the Strike Team encountered dense smoke and ferocious flames threatening several homes. They immediately got to work and managed to save several homes and release large numbers of livestock. The crews remained in place overnight.

Inspector Freedom said it was a credit to all services attending that no houses were lost on that "frenetic day".





Strike team assembles in Wagga Wagga



Cooma and Bungendore

Firefighters from Bowral, Queanbeyan, Cooma, Bombala, Jindabyne and ACT Fire and Rescue fought for five days to save homes in the Kybean Valley and at Bungendore as fierce blazes threatened homes on 8-9 January. The Strike Team of 25 firefighters – the only joint agency Strike Team – battled through intense heat, strong winds and thick smoke.

Under the leadership of Inspector Ray Buchanan, the Strike Team was first deployed to Nimmitabel Public School to protect it from the fire front. They were then sent into the Kybean Valley at about 3pm on Tuesday the 8th, tasked with protecting a number of large heritage-listed homes, halls, farming infrastructure and livestock from the flames, which were stopped within 100 metres of buildings.

Crews faced extreme weather conditions with temperatures hitting the mid 40s. The surrounding pine forest fuelled a ferocious blaze as crews worked hard to prevent embers from setting fire to homes. The Strike Team also extinguished several grass fires that had flared up, threatening several properties. On 9-10 January, the Strike Team was sent to help contain and mop up the blaze at Bungendore that had impacted the Kings Highway.

No life or property was lost in the areas where Strike Team Charlie was deployed.

Yass

Afierce bushfire threatening homes near the Hume Highway on 8-9 January saw FRNSW firefighters pushed to their limits.

A Strike Team of 16 firefighters from Yass, Young, Temora and Narrandera battled through intense heat and smoke to contain the bushfire at Yass and Bookham. Strike Team Leader Inspector Steven Hayes said the flames were fierce and it “got a bit hairy. It was the quickest moving fire I have ever seen. We were lucky not to lose any properties.”

Sussex Inlet

Firefighters from the Greater Sydney Area were deployed to Sussex Inlet on 8 January. The Strike Team was led by Inspector Nick Ferrante.

“There were a number of small villages near Sussex Inlet, which were relatively isolated by the fire,” he said. “We had a fire appliance in each village, providing a point of contact for residents, and ‘eyes on the ground’. Crews were preemptively positioned to protect property and to call for additional resources to battle the blaze if the fire started to encroach on a village.”

Lithgow

Two FRNSW Strike Teams, made up of firefighters from the Blue Mountains and Sydney, were called to a bushfire at Lithgow in the early hours of Wednesday 9 January.

Superintendent Lindsay West said crews were called to the blaze at 5am and worked most of the day to bring it under control.

“At the height of the fire, we had 75 FRNSW firefighters and 50 RFS firefighters, plus additional RFS resources including three helicopters, a plane and three bulldozers (used to create fire trails) battling the fire,” Superintendent West said.

“Fortunately the winds were not as strong as predicted and we were able to contain the fire by 4pm, and no properties were damaged or lost. It was a great effort by the Strike Teams, which were made up of retained firefighters from across the Blue Mountains, including Wentworth Falls, Glenbrook, Springwood, Lawson, Katoomba, Blackheath, and Mount Victoria, as well as from fire stations in the Greater Sydney Area, including Rhodes, Merrylands, Dunheved and Riverstone.” **END**



Arsonists put on notice

FRNSW has joined forces with the NSW Police Force and the NSW Rural Fire Service to crack down on arsonists. More than 35% of bushfires each year are believed to be caused by arson.

Since 1 October 2012, Strike Force Tronto police officers have charged nearly 40 people in relation to deliberately-lit bushfires and grassfires. More than 20 of those were juveniles.

Together, the agencies are trialling a new system designed to predict arson trends. The Arson Trends Analysis System uses mapping technology to examine all fires to better determine if an arsonist is at work in a community.

Commissioner Greg Mullins said people who deliberately light bushfires made firefighters' job harder. "The fire services can't fight arson on their own – they need the help of the community. It's often local residents who are the first to notice suspicious behaviour of potential arsonists. Firefighters should encourage people in their communities to report anything suspicious by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. **END**

The Burns Unit, The Children's Hospital, Westmead

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Furniture factory up in flames

20 NOV 15:30

Numerous 000 calls received at 1530 hrs on Tuesday 20 November instigated the first response to a factory alight at Rich Street, Marrickville.

First arriving crews were faced with a fierce fire fuelled by a heavily-stocked furniture factory. It was a dangerous fire due to the presence of unknown chemicals which produced sporadic explosions, and the instability of the old complex with wall collapses an imminent threat.

Incident Commander Superintendent Greg O'Connor said: "The first arriving crews did a fantastic job in isolating and knocking down the intense fire which could easily have spread further and damaged surrounding properties. With three or four pumpers at work and two ladder platforms around 500-600L per second of water was being pumped onto the fire. The initial size-up is critical in getting the required resources to the site to properly deal with the incident and SO McFarlane did everything right in setting this up for a smooth operation."

SO McFarlane realised that relay pumping from Victoria Rd would be necessary due to the location of the fire and the need to deploy aerial appliances to stop the fire from spreading to the adjacent factories, and escalated the response to a 5th Alarm

Arriving resources had a logistical challenge in accessing and staging at what was a heavily congested site, in the densely populated suburb of Marrickville. The factory alight was sandwiched between two other factory units and two cul-de-sacs, Rich St and Brompton St.

Large volumes of smoke blanketed the area due to the high fire load of hardwood timber and polyurethane lacquers used by the furniture business. The large smoke plume spread across a densely populated area and Hazmat continually monitored the toxicity levels of the smoke until it dissipated. Local residents were advised but no further evacuations were required.

Flaming runoff, contaminated by unknown chemicals washed from the factory, flowed into a stormwater drain adjacent to the site. Hazmat was tasked with monitoring that situation and later treated the drain to neutralise any residual chemicals.

The timber-framed 25 x 25m iron clad factory was destroyed during the blaze but firefighters stopped the fire from entering the main part of the furniture factory and a food distribution warehouse which contained a considerable amount of cooking oils and fats. In total, 14 stations as well as specialist appliances attended along with an IMT.

The stop message was sent at 1740 hrs but a fire duty remained in attendance for much of the next day. The cause of the fire was determined to be accidental, having started in electrical wires that were part of the factory spray booth. **END**



Something old, something

new

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

CO₂ Tenders past ...

With the imminent arrival of a new CO₂ Tender, we thought it timely to revisit the history of an appliance type believed to be unique to FRNSW over a period of almost 80 years.

Back in the mid-1930s, the Sydney County Council (electricity distributor for much of Sydney) came up with the novel idea of putting small substations underground instead of in ground level cabinets or up on poles. Concerns about the possibility of fires led to discussions with NSWFB personnel about protection systems. Carbon dioxide was determined to be the best solution, but the expense of fitting every chamber with a suitable system was considered excessive. The NSWFB suggested a special mobile unit carrying sufficient CO₂ on board to deal with any outbreak in the largest sized chambers.

Thus was born the concept of the CO₂ Tender. A Dodge 3-ton chassis was purchased in 1938 and fitted with bodywork and suitable equipment, including eight 50 lb cylinders

of compressed CO₂. Installed at Headquarters in 1939, it also carried limited breathing apparatus and heat-resistant clothing for specialised operations.

By 1965 the Board of Fire Commissioners decided a replacement was necessary, and purchased a Ford Thames Trader chassis, similar to those being used as pumpers in that era. When the Ford entered service in early 1966, the Dodge was kept as a spare until withdrawn with mechanical problems in 1974.

The third generation CO₂ Tender with new bodywork was built in 1984 on an International 610A chassis. In 2002, the bodywork was transferred to a Mitsubishi chassis. This is still in service as an SEV but is expected to be withdrawn when the new unit enters service. The fourth generation was built on a new Isuzu chassis in 2002, and is currently in service at 38 Stn Pyrmont.

Both the 1938 Dodge and 1966 Ford have been preserved at the Museum of Fire, and it is expected the Mitsubishi will join them shortly.

... and present

Sydney firefighters have been busy training for the delivery of a brand new appliance – the CO₂ (carbon dioxide) Tender – the only one of its kind in Australia. The Tender is stationed at Pyrmont Fire Station and will be responded across the GSA, the area identified as having the greatest need for this type of specialised vehicle.

“Having a CO₂ Tender mitigates a lot of risk for us,” said City of Sydney Station Officer Craig Mashman. “They are essential for fighting subterranean fires where access is minimal and high-risk situations such as

underground electrical kiosks, basement fires, substations and ships’ hulls.”

The Tender is an Isuzu FRR 600 single cab design with automated manual transmission, ABS brakes and anti-skid traction control. The body was manufactured by Mills Tui (Australia) Pty Ltd who also built FRNSW’s last

**CO₂ Tenders
are essential
for fighting
subterranean fires**



New CO2 Tender



1966 Ford Thames CO2 Tender



1936 Dodge CO2 Tender

CO2 Tender. When the new appliance is commissioned, the 2002 Tender will be used as a Service Exchange Vehicle (SEV). "The current CO2 Tender will be used as the SEV and will have some minor modifications to allow it to carry the foam generator," said Assistant Director Fleet, Peter Fanning. "It will be used as a spare whenever the new one is being serviced."

The new vehicle carries 16 CO2 cylinders (22 kilos per cylinder), four more than its current counterpart. The appliance will be crewed by two firefighters and used predominately to extinguish subterranean electrical fires using CO2 via one or both of two hose reels mounted on each side of the vehicle, or by special hoses and connections that can flood an underground substation with CO2. The hose reels are 60 metres long and can be operated independently.

The CO2 Tender carries a cache of specialist equipment including a high expansion foam generator and a positive pressure ventilation fan, plus additional equipment that enables bulk CO2 supply. In addition, the appliance has been designed as a support appliance at major incidents and carries 40 CABA cylinders and a Stage 2 BA control board. **END**

New Appliances

Station	Zone	Type	Make	Model	Commissioned
Eastwood	MW2	Heavy Rescue	Isuzu	FVD1000	1/02/2013
City of Sydney	ME1	Heavy Rescue	Isuzu	FVD1000	24/01/2013
Rydalmere	MW2	Class 3 Pumper	Scania	P320	27/11/2012

CO₂ Tender Technical Specification

Cab/chassis	Isuzu FRR 600 cab chassis, 4x2 configuration
Crew capacity	2 firefighters
Vehicle dimensions	Overall length: 7,610mm Overall width (including mirrors): 2,750mm Overall height: 3180mm Wheel base: 4360mm Turning circle (kerb to kerb): 13,900mm Vehicle weights: Tare weight 6,650kg Gross vehicle mass (GVM): 11,000kg
Engine	Isuzu diesel
Engine performance	176 kW @ 2,400 rpm / Torque 706Nm @ 1,450rpm
Transmission	6 speed AMT with both automatic & clutchless manual operation modes
Maximum speed	Speed limited to 100-115km/h
Fuel capacity	180 litres of diesel
Electrical	Vehicle electrical system 24V Batteries: (vehicle) 2 x 12V (180Ah) (comms) 1x 12V (17.2Ah) Alternator: Rapid power RP4i x 150Amps
Body construction	Integrated aluminium body with Monsoon roller shutters

Getting the best **people** for the job

New FRNSW Physical Aptitude Test rolled out

Permanent and retained firefighter applicants for 2013 are undergoing the new version of the Physical Aptitude Test (PAT) as part of a staged roll-out of the testing developed by the University of Wollongong (UoW) Centre for Human and Applied Physiology in partnership with the FRNSW Health and Safety Branch.

Commissioner Greg Mullins said the revised PAT is the result of firefighter expertise, response profiling and science working together to develop one of the most valid physical employment standards in the world.

"The new PAT is an accurate reflection of the demands of the job. Demands on our firefighting skills are ever evolving. More and more often we are participating in response and recovery operations for long and complex incidents and these can be local, national and even international, where our firefighters are working in challenging and often unfamiliar environments.

"We needed to update and revise our physical employment standards to better reflect what we do as a fire and rescue service today and into the future, not what we did in the past.

"The research that went into this project was extensive, with focus groups conducted across the State and an organisation-wide survey identifying

15 critical and physically demanding tasks of firefighting for further analysis. The survey elicited more than 1,000 responses."

The identified tasks were then simulated by 57 firefighters from 11 stations under the instruction of subject matter experts from Bushfire, Firefighter Training, Hazmat and Rescue Sections.

The simulations allowed UoW researchers to conduct physiological monitoring on the participants and determine which tasks were the most physically demanding. Analysis of the data resulted in the following tasks being identified:

- ladder raise and lower
- hazmat load carriage tasks
- team lifts up stairs
- use of rescue shears
- bushfire fighting
- fire attack
- firefighter and victim rescue.

The UoW researchers then developed a circuit of assessments to create the same physical demands as those

measured during the simulations. The circuit recommended to make up the new FRNSW PAT consisted of:

- reduced visibility search
- ladder raise and lower simulation
- single-sided jerrycan carry
- single-sided jerrycan stair climb
- motor vehicle rescue shears static holds
- repeat hose drag
- simulated fire attack
- simulated firefighter rescue.

The new PAT was then piloted at Queanbeyan, Goulburn, Blacktown, Campbelltown, Katoomba, Alexandria and Sutherland. It was validated by 147 firefighters, whose age and gender were reflective of the FRNSW workforce.

"All firefighters who participated in the pilot did so voluntarily, providing valuable input and benchmarks for the project, as did all those who participated in the focus groups and provided responses to the survey," said Commissioner Mullins.



Villawood

**FIRE
INCIDENT**



Brendan Mott, Team Leader Health and Fitness, said the project has been about better tailoring the PAT to reflect the needs of the FRNSW.

"The science and research that has gone into this project has allowed us to better assess the cardiovascular fitness and muscular strength of potential recruits. It sets a robust and evidence-based standard which helps us in our duty of care to protect firefighters from illness and injury," said Brendan.

"Our community deserves the best and most capable people at the core of emergency response operations. This new PAT will ensure we choose the right people for the job. We know that recruits who can complete the new PAT will be physically capable of fulfilling the demanding roles that our firefighters are called upon to complete every day," Commissioner Mullins said.

For more information on the PAT and to see a simulation, visit the FRNSW website. **END**

Firefighters work 'tyrelessly' as New Year dawns

01 JAN 00:30

New Year's Day 2013 got off to a spectacular start when more than 100 firefighters spent hours fighting a fire involving a storage warehouse and yard full of tyres at Miller Rd, Villawood.

Shortly after 0030 hours, 000 calls were received reporting large volumes of smoke issuing from a 50m x 30m factory located between Miller Rd and Sir Thomas Mitchell Rd. First arriving firefighters, who had originally been responded to a report of a grass fire, found the factory containing a large quantity of tyres well alight.

Subsequent Red messages upgraded the response to a 12th Alarm, with two major water relays established. Crews from across Sydney and an Incident Management Team including Commissioner Mullins worked through the early morning hours to bring the fire under control.

The strategies and tactics employed by the first arriving crews successfully stopped the fire spreading to adjacent exposures. As dawn approached, firefighters finally managed to get the blaze under control.

Crews remained at the scene the next day to monitor the site and continue knocking down the fire using foam. Thick black smoke affected nearby residents who were advised to stay indoors and keep doors and windows closed. An excavator was brought in to dismantle the stack of tyres and to help extinguish the flames fully. The compressed air foam pumper was brought in the next day and in combination with a ladder platform, enabled the fire to be finally extinguished. **END**





Delroy Station



Yenda Station



Unanderra Station



Hornsby Station



Cabramatta Station

Hornsby Station



Fire station upgrades

In 2012/13, the NSW Government continued its commitment to upgrading FRNSW facilities and equipment, providing capital funding to build a new station at Cabramatta and to complete major refurbishments at a number of other stations around the State, including Unanderra, Yenda, Tea Gardens, Delroy and Hornsby.

New fire station for Cabramatta

Cabramatta's new state-of-the-art \$3.5 million fire station was officially opened by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher and FRNSW Deputy Commissioner Jim Smith last September.

Three times the size of its predecessor, the new station boasts a double engine bay to house two fire appliances, a large training room for on-site training and community events, storage space for personal protective equipment and breathing apparatus maintenance, as well as a fitness room.

Deputy Commissioner Smith told gathered media at the official opening that the new station had been designed and built to meet the needs of a constantly evolving and modern firefighting service.

Cabramatta Senior Firefighter Joseph (Barry) O'Regan agreed, saying the new station is what you'd expect from a modern emergency service.

"When you look at what we had before, compared with what we have now, it's an incredible difference. We call it the 'jewel of the west', we're now a station other firefighters aspire to come to and we're proud to have visitors.

"Our Zone Commander Steve Lyons put a huge amount of effort into ensuring the design was compatible with our needs. A lot of forethought went into future expansion, it's really all the little things that make a big difference in increasing the amenity of the place, like having control of the street lights when leaving the engine bay, it all saves time," said Senior FF O'Regan.

Major upgrade for Unanderra Fire Station

Unanderra Fire Station in the Illawarra was next 'cab off the rank', receiving a \$700,000 major upgrade in 2012, with the Minister and Commissioner officially opening the new-look station in October last year. The upgrade included new kitchen and bathroom facilities, improved personal protective equipment storage and a specially-designed breathing apparatus service and storage area.

Minister Gallacher said the upgrade provided a bigger and better base for the 18 retained firefighters at Unanderra – a vital cog in the Illawarra's fire and emergency response network.

Yenda Fire Station upgrade

Yenda Fire Station in the Murrumbidgee also received a \$160,000 upgrade in 2012, with the official opening delayed until November after Yenda and surrounding areas were devastated by a once-in-150-year flood earlier in the year.

The upgrade included a new combined training and mess room, uniform storage and bathroom facilities at the side of the building and a refurbishment of the main station area, including a dedicated female shower and change room.

Major upgrade for Tea Gardens Fire Station

In February this year Minister Gallacher and the Commissioner celebrated the completion of a major \$830,000 upgrade of Tea Gardens Fire Station on the mid North Coast.

The upgrade included a new watch room, training rooms and a new Station Commander's office, new toilets and change rooms for men and women, plus improved personal protective equipment storage and new equipment such as computers.

Major \$1.25 million upgrade for Hornsby Fire Station

Also in February 2013, the new \$1.25 million major upgrade of Hornsby Fire Station in Sydney's north was unveiled by Minister Gallacher and Commissioner Mullins.

The major NSW Government investment saw Hornsby Fire Station, built in the early 1970s, brought up to modern standards for the 33 firefighters based there.

The upgrade included a first floor addition with new accommodation, study areas and bathroom and storage facilities. A new fire pole was also installed to allow for faster response times to emergency calls.

On the ground floor a new kitchen, office and watchroom facilities were installed, as well as a specially-designed breathing apparatus service and storage area and a renovated training room and gym.

Delroy Fire Station receives major upgrade

In March this year the newly refurbished Delroy Fire Station was officially opened by Commissioner Mullins and Dubbo State MP Troy Grant.

The \$840,000 major upgrade included new kitchen facilities, a new watchroom and Station Commander's office, and an improved training room and personal protective equipment storage. The upgrade also extended to new facilities for the Area and Zone office, and male and female bathroom facilities and locker rooms. ■■■ **END**

Broadway



Crane fire stops Sydney traffic

27 NOV 09:40

At approximately 0940 hrs on Tuesday morning 27 November, inner city fire crews were called to a crane fire at a building site in Broadway. Firefighters were confronted on arrival with a serious fire involving diesel fuel at the top of a 65-metre tower crane.

Minutes before the first arriving crew, 18 Glebe, sent the Red message, Inspector Nick Ferrante who was passing by, alerted FireComms to the incident and commenced evacuations. He then started to stockpile extinguishers for the coming response and ascended the crane with DCP extinguishers to assist the crane driver still in the cabin and to try to knock down the flames before it spread. A crane driver and a second worker in the cabin evacuated soon after firefighters arrived as the fire spread from the engine to engulf the cabin. The crane was carrying 1,000 litres of diesel.

The IMT arrived quickly led by Incident Controller Inspector Mark Reilly, from City of Sydney whose first concern was the safety of firefighters and the public, construction workers on-site and emergency response workers. He immediately set up an exclusion zone of 1 km and tasked Police to close surrounding roads. Fire crews setting up for fire attack were quickly withdrawn when the fire started to destabilise the crane's structural integrity. The crane arm, which the operator had moved away from public areas, crashed down onto the construction site below while Inspector Ferrante was climbing up to ensure the safety of the crane driver.

Due to the timely efforts of the site safety delegate, crane driver and Inspector Ferrante, evacuations had begun from the building site and there were no injuries. Firefighters evacuated 100 workers from the building site and another 100 people from surrounding businesses and homes. The crane driver's actions in moving the crane arm away from the street may well have saved many lives.

Inspector Reilly reported: "Things could have been an awful lot worse because the University of Technology is right behind with a large number of students and pedestrian traffic, not to mention vehicles; we were very lucky not to have serious injuries."

Broadway was closed for about 5 hours while operations continued. Meantime, firefighters continued to monitor the situation from a ladder platform. Fire crews using the thermal imaging camera capacity of the 44m aerial appliance took temperature readings of the burning engine compartment which showed a considerable drop in temperature from 1,000° to 60°, showing that the fuel had been consumed and the fire was in the process of self extinguishing.

FRNSW USAR resources were deployed to secure the crane, check for further movement during the afternoon and liaise with police and local structural engineers on how best to stabilise the area.

By the end of the day, damaged hoarding on Wattle Street was secured, as well as cladding on an industrial lift shaft which was impacted by the collapsed crane.

A joint multi-services briefing held by the Police Commander determined that all rescue staff should be withdrawn overnight for safety reasons with recovery operations to resume the next day, Wednesday 28 November, at first light.

This was a very unusual incident. While FRNSW has responded in recent times to several mobile crane collapses involving rescue scenarios, the added elements of a significant fire at considerable height in unstable circumstances on a central city site posed a unique set of challenges for responders.

"It was a fast-paced and dynamic operation," said Incident Controller Inspector Mark Reilly. "We had a fire crew and police rescue crew in a precarious position when the boom went. It was a very brave effort to ascend to that height; but given the fast growth of the fire, they were unable to extinguish it at that time. All withdrew safely to the ground and continued to assist in the firefighting operations." **END**

New recruitment approach bolsters Dungog ranks

Just 12 months ago, Dungog Fire Station was in dire straits. Retained firefighter numbers at the Hunter Valley station were at a crisis point, with just five members on the books, one of whom was on maternity leave.

The overtime we had to pay to keep the station on line was killing us," Metropolitan North 3 Zone Commander Greg Windeatt said. "Retained firefighter staffing levels have been a chronic problem at Dungog for several years – it has been a long time since the station has had a full house – but we had reached a point where we needed to take desperate actions."

Those desperate actions have proved to be a blueprint for success in retained firefighter recruitment for the station which is now almost at full complement.

Like many towns in country NSW, Dungog's changing demographics have been a big contributing factor to retained workforce shortages. With a population of about 2,500, the Dungog community has been crippled by the gradual shutdown of its major employers – the local timber mill and dairy industry.

"There is very little permanent work in the town," Superintendent Windeatt said. "People of working age who live in Dungog basically have to travel out of town – whether it is to work in the mining industry or at a major centre – so the pool of potential recruits who are available through the day is very small."

Following urgent talks with FRNSW's Area and Regional Commanders, the zone hired a recruitment company which had assisted at other regional stations facing the same predicament of retained firefighter shortages.

"That was a big breakthrough," Superintendent Windeatt said. "The consultant knew the criteria we needed candidates to meet and got to work canvassing the town and conducting

preliminary screening of potential candidates. He started doorknocking at hotels, the local shopping centre, the council works depot, banks, schools and other places of work, talking to people about Dungog Fire Station's situation and the need to support it."

An open recruitment night was held at the station where potential candidates could meet the retained crew members and collect an application form. Those forms were then followed up.

"The clincher was we had an SO doing country relief at the time, Station Officer Matty Bramall, to help out. He is an ex-retained firefighter and understands what it is like to go through this process," Superintendent Windeatt said. "He did the back end of the consultant's work. He contacted the applicants and helped them through it all, keeping them in the loop with what was happening and giving them face-to-face support and assistance.

Zone management also brought in a doctor and nurse from a Maitland medical centre for the day to conduct all the candidates' medical tests at the fire station.

"There have always been long delays in getting applicants to see their GP for a medical so we took control of it and brought the mountain to them. That was a big breakthrough in saving time," Superintendent Windeatt said. "Zone office staff members Deb Gorman and Felicity Harnden also put in an enormous effort on the administration side of the application process. It truly was a team effort.

"It has been a really good success story and the costs involved have definitely been worth it. Finally, Dungog will soon reach its full complement for the first time in many years." ■■■■ **END**



Dungog's blueprint for retained firefighter recruitment success

Be proactive in targeting and canvassing potential applicants

Enlist a medical provider for a day to conduct health checks for all applicants at a central location

Have someone available at the station as a face-to-face contact for applicants to help them through the process.

These desperate actions have proved to be a blueprint for success

3rd annual Sydney Classic & Antique Truck Show 2013

PUBLIC SHOW DAY
16 Jun 2013
 8am to 3pm

Free amusement rides and displays

Museum of Fire, Penrith

ADMISSION: Adults \$15 (includes up to three children under 16 free with paying adult)
 Concession \$10 (excludes free child entry)

Open to Heavy Commercial & Specialised Vehicles over 30 years (pre entry required)

EXHIBITORS ONLY: Saturday arrival and setup, club run and night function. More details available with entry form. Free overnight camping facilities, breakfast, tea & coffee, hospitality tent.

Contact details: mail@museumoffire.com.au | (02) 4731 3000 | www.museumoffire.com.au



Retained firefighting in Bowral – an engaging activity

It's official – Bowral Fire Station has the most engaging crew! For the past two years, Station 234 Bowral has held the State record for conducting the most community engagement activities – **2087 in total.**

FRNSW community engagement champions 2011/12

901

Bowral

541

Bankstown

504

Busby

500

Mt Druiitt

Numbers indicate how many community safety, preparedness and engagement activities were carried out during the year.

Captain John Arnot and his crew's outstanding achievements were recognised when the then Assistant Commissioner Jim Smith presented Station 234 with the FRNSW Directors' Award for Excellence in Community Safety for 2010/11.

In 2011/12, the 12 Bowral firefighters responded to 482 calls and conducted a staggering 901 community engagement activities. Captain Arnot attributes these outstanding results to the enthusiasm and professionalism of his crew.

"Our bar is set high and we all strive to maintain a certain standard," he said. "It's important how we present and conduct ourselves; a professional manner is mandatory. We take pride in what we do, and having a clean station and a gleaming fire appliance is part of that ethic. We have an obligation to the people of NSW and a level of accountability."

"We try to educate people where and whenever we can and it's not difficult to engage members of the community in a fire safety discussion," said Captain Arnot. "You may have to initially chat about the weather, but eventually you get around to fire safety. If a child shows interest in a fire engine, you can use the opportunity to talk to him or her about what to do in the event of a fire – things like that."

Captain Arnot believes that planning and organisation also play a large role in the success of community engagement activities. These are planned weekly and the details pinned on the station notice board. Activities include SABRE, senior

safety talks, hydrant inspection and Pre Ed and Fire Ed school visits.

"Bowral is a diverse community of over 20,000 with many people migrating from Sydney," said Captain Arnot. "We view this as an opportunity to target previously untargeted groups including those with disabilities and the hearing-impaired. There are also a significant number of elderly people in our community, therefore many of our activities are SABRE-related."

"We have been conducting SABRE for over four years and we have a spreadsheet that is updated monthly," he said. "Every person needing a smoke alarm battery replacement is listed and we generally call those elderly clients in

the evening when we know they will be home so we can book them in."

To deliver this extraordinary level of community service, Captain Arnot believes it's important to involve as many people in the station activities as possible. "I believe we need to encourage progress and reward achievement," he said. "While community involvement brings its own rewards, everyone needs to feel appreciated, even if it's as simple as a 'thankyou'."

Captain Arnot believes that the crew from Station 234 can continue to maintain these high standards, whatever the future may bring. "We might need to change direction a little bit to keep things ticking over, but we're up for the challenge," he said. **END**

Planning and organisation play a large role



Maitland's Mega Open Day

FRNSW Open Day provides firefighters with a great opportunity to interact with local communities, so why just have one Open Day when you can have two – one of them MEGA?

Thanks largely to the exceptional efforts of Firefighter Nicole Sutton, on 13 October 2012, Maitland Fire Station hosted what may have been one of the world's Biggest Fire Station Open Days! Well over 600 visitors passed through the station doors and \$6000 (the top fundraising tally in NSW) was raised for the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation (MDF).

MDF had invited thousands of Australian firefighters to raise funds by participating in a Fill the Boot Relay. Firefighters ran, cycled, walked or flew from station to station, passing on a firefighter's boot to symbolise fundraising efforts. Many stations organised fundraisers and Firefighter Sutton suggested that Maitland hold a Mega Open Day, volunteering to coordinate the event.

Station 374 prepared for a busy time ahead. "Most of us know that if Nicole is on a mission, you either help, get out of the way or get run down," said fellow Firefighter Mark Goffett. "She even put her Senior Firefighter studies on hold to work on the project."

"It did take a huge amount of planning," Nicole admitted, "but the support I received was fantastic. Over 20 permanent, retained and retired firefighters volunteered to help, along with family and friends. Some of the retained firefighters were at the station from 6.30am to set up and Retained Firefighter Wayne Chapman spent the previous night building two very solid wooden access ramps for wheelchairs, strollers and those with limited mobility."

The event was widely advertised and firefighters had been expecting a great deal of community interest, but no-one anticipated the sheer volume of people that would flood into the station between the advertised hours of 10am and 2pm.



"People were lining up at the doors from 9am," said Firefighter Goffett. "We were staggered by the number of visitors – in fact, we gave up counting heads in the end. For most of the day it was difficult to get from the front to the rear of the station," he said, "and it was standing room only in the engine bays!"

Appliances had been moved out of the engine bays which were bursting with fire safety displays, historical information and non-stop audiovisuals showcasing FRNSW specialist operations. The fire trucks (both vintage and state-of-the art) were on display in the rear yard where visitors watched alternating hazmat scenarios and kitchen fat fire simulations. Also causing a spectacle were the Star Wars

Over 600 visitors turned up and \$6000 was raised

Storm Troopers aka Nicole's cousin Firefighter Simon Melmeth and friends from the 501st Legion, (resplendent in authentic Star Wars costumes) who were lending support to the MDF fundraising.

"We were absolutely overwhelmed by the amazing response," said Nicole. "It was bedlam and all the media was there – radio, TV, and newspapers. I was the go-to girl," she laughed. "If I saw stuff missing or something needing attention, I was able to get that sorted. Everyone was flat out but it was fantastic."

And how did they raise \$6,000? "It was a combination of things," said Nicole. "Collection tins were left with local businesses who also contributed, firefighters registered for online

donations (direct to MDF), and on Open Day heaps of people made donations. We also made a huge amount from selling sausages and chocolates."

For her part in the Relay, Nicole cycled from her home in Morpeth to Maitland fire station where she crammed the official Relay Gumboot (size 12!) and a charity tin into her backpack. Nicole then rode to Lambton Fire Station, collected their charity tin and continued on to Hamilton Fire Station where she delivered the boot in time for the next leg of its journey. She then cycled home – a round trip of 80 kms!

Not surprisingly, Nicole has already started planning for a bigger and better Open Day this year. "We had such a great result, and now we have a better understanding of what we need and how things run," she said. "I'm certainly looking forward to doing it all again!"

END

Facing hardship?

FRNSW's Relief and Welfare Fund helps staff and their families who belong to the Fund.

Not a Member?

Then join today to gain support and benefits.



For more information, visit the Fund's website at <http://rwwfund>



Homeowners on alert as **park ignites**

05 DEC 14:00

On Wednesday 5 December just after 1400 hours, FRNSW responded to a bushfire in the Lane Cove National Park. The fire was located away from the major public area of the National Park on the North Ryde side of Pittwater Rd. With numerous 000 calls, response was quickly escalated to a 2nd Alarm. Temperatures were in the low 30s, a stiff southwesterly wind was blowing, and humidity was low – perfect ingredients for a serious fire.

First arriving crews tried to access the bush area behind North Ryde RSL Club, which was later used as the incident control point and staging area for arriving crews. There were reports of smoke plumes from the other side of the river towards Lane Cove West and 61 Station was deployed to the eastern side to monitor and investigate. Thankfully, this proved to be smoke carrying across the water and there were no spot fires.

On arrival, Duty Commander MW2 increased the response first to a 3rd Alarm, and then to a 4th Alarm due to the possible threat to properties downwind from the strong

southwesterly that was blowing. A tactical backburn was quickly commenced to create a firebreak between properties on Magdela Rd and the main fire front. Crews from stations 23, 37 and 66 were put in place with hoselines behind the properties to ensure they were adequately protected.

Residents were contacted and told to follow their Bush Fire Survival Plan for a Watch and Act alert level if they had one prepared. Some chose to temporarily leave with their pets. Others who decided to stay were advised to keep off their roofs and remain inside with their windows closed.

At the peak of the incident, crews were faced with a fire covering around 10 hectares. To bring this under control, FRNSW appliances were assisted by five Category 9 appliances from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and three water bombing aircraft. The aircraft included the sky crane Malcolm which had been brought out to Australia to boost aerial firefighting resources for the 2012/13 bushfire season.

The fire was well contained and brought under control in the early evening around 1800, six hours after

the initial calls, but a lot of work was still required to ensure full extinguishment. A backburn was put in place by FRNSW and NPWS along Pittwater Rd which was completed by 2230 hours. NPWS spent most of the following day mopping up and blacking out.

One of the biggest risks from this fire included smoke blowing across Epping Highway and the M2 motorway, and drivers were warned over the radio to put on headlights and slow down due to the loss of visibility.

FRNSW Assistant Commissioner Jim Hamilton praised the work of firefighters in containing the blaze. "With the support of our National Parks and Wildlife Service colleagues, firefighters were able to contain the blaze within a couple of hours with no loss of property. It was an outstanding effort," he said.

The crews who responded to this incident were 66 Rhodes, 61 Lane Cove, 23 Gladesville, 17 Drummoyne, 59 Eastwood, 37 Gordon, 12 Balmain, 58 Beecroft, 52 Campsie, 38 Pyrmont, 65 Rydalmere and 19 Silverwater.

END



Retained Facebook ad a big 'hit'

Last year the Media Ministerial and Communications Unit (MMCU) produced two 60-second video recruitment advertisements designed to attract retained firefighters. The ads were launched via the official FRNSW Facebook page in February, attracting more than 10,000 views in three days.

Filmed on location in 2012 with 338 Jindabyne, the ads feature retained firefighters Marten 'Marty' Whittington and Lucy Shumack. In the ads, both Marty and Lucy talk about how rewarding and satisfying being a retained firefighter is, how they manage their professional lives to meet their commitments as retained firefighters, and the benefits of the training provided by FRNSW.

The ads were produced completely in-house by MMCU and designed for distribution via FRNSW's social

media platforms. This made the whole campaign extremely cost effective – well below the expense of mainstream advertising.

When the ads were launched on Facebook in February, the uptake was immediate with 'hits' averaging 50 to 100 per minute. Within three days both clips exceeded 10,000 views with the 'register your interest to become a retained firefighter' link on the FRNSW website accessed more than 1,000 times over the same period.

END

www.facebook.com/frnsw

Some of the feedback on Facebook:



Facebook message

Rob:



The best ad for RFFs yet. Now get it on the TV!



Facebook message

Ellen:



I've just been lucky enough to receive a retained position and can't wait to complete the training and begin assisting in the community. It's all I've wanted for a long time and hope many others consider joining!



Facebook message

David:



Been in 3 years so far. Absolutely love the job!



Facebook message

Josh:



I did it for 5 years and loved every minute of it. I even went over to America and worked in a volunteer station over there for 3 months. Had the time of my life. Made some lifelong friends.

DON'T LEAVE FIRE SAFETY TO CHANCE



Do a Home Fire Safety Audit now at www.HomeFireSafetyAudit.com.au



Fire & Rescue NSW



Rozelle

**HAZMAT
INCIDENT**



Cement truck fuels hazmat incident

12 NOV 12:11

At 1211 hrs on Monday 12 November, crews from 12 Balmain and 13 Alexandria Heavy Hazmat were called to an overturned cement truck on Somerville Rd, beneath Anzac Bridge in Rozelle. The truck had toppled over when negotiating a bend and had come to rest on its side on the footpath near a wire fence.

The first arriving crew was 12 Balmain and SO Chris Ross as OIC quickly appraised the situation. After checking on the driver's welfare, Heavy Hazmat 13 was also called as a large quantity of fuel was leaking from the truck's diesel tanks. The crew from Balmain banded the drain to stop the fuel entering Sydney Harbour, applied sphagnum to the area and then set about decanting the truck's fuel tanks with the assistance of Hazmat officers.

Using the air-operated diaphragm pump so as not to create an ignition source, the first fuel tank was easily decanted. However due to the position of the truck, the second fuel tank proved to be more challenging. Because the truck had come to rest on its side, the filler cap of the other fuel tank was inaccessible. Quick-thinking firefighters improvised by attaching a length of garden hose to the pump hose and accessed the remaining fuel in the tank through the drain plug.

It is estimated that firefighters stopped around 300 litres of diesel fuel from entering the Harbour and returned around 150 litres of salvaged fuel to the trucking company. 12 Balmain remained in attendance until around 1600 hrs while a recovery vehicle salvaged the truck. **END**



Building relationships with the media – why bother?

Love them or hate, journalists and the media outlets they work for are an important tool in communicating with the public that we serve, whether it's getting safety messages out or simply showcasing the breadth of fire and emergency services FRNSW delivers.

The media operate on a 24-hour news cycle and the thirst for information has been heightened even further with the growth of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter. Journalists want information and they want it now – and if FRNSW doesn't fill the information vacuum, someone else will.

FRNSW's Media Team actively seeks out opportunities to promote the organisation and the work of its firefighters and staff. However, having a relationship with a local journalist can make all the difference in getting a story out there.

Station Officer Ian Walters from Nowra Fire Station said he had built and maintained relationships with the local media by organising interviews at incidents, keeping in regular contact with key journalists and updating them on incidents attended by local firefighters.

"Maintaining a good relationship with the local media means that there are regular articles in the local paper and opportunities for TV interviews, which means exposure for FRNSW's public safety messages and our role in the community.

"We have a monthly spot on the local community radio station, which is a great way of sharing the latest community safety campaign messages and providing reminders – for example, about the need for fire permits and the importance of calling Triple Zero in an emergency."

The permanent and retained firefighters at Batemans Bay Fire Station have both worked hard to develop and maintain relationships with their local media outlets. In recent months, this has resulted in articles in nearly all of the local papers and a couple of radio interviews.

"We have built an excellent rapport with our local media over the past few years. We directly text or call the local paper – The Bay Post – to let them know of incidents we're responding to so they can attend, or contact them after the incident and provide the details.

"The spotlight of the media helps us demonstrate our roles and how we support the local community. Great media coverage also makes firefighters seem more approachable – people are more likely to drop in to the station and ask questions if they see us in the media regularly and feel like they know us," said Station Officer Phil Eberle.

The Deputy Captain at Batemans Bay Fire Station, Alan Fitches, agrees. "The local paper supports us when we need to get safety messages out and all of the local media outlets are generally good at reporting information accurately. We also want to organise a regular radio segment so that we have even more regular contact with the media and the community."

Superintendent Steve Hirst, who recently took up the position of Zone Commander Regional North 3, said establishing relationships with the local media was vital. "When I took up my post in Tamworth, I sent out letters of introduction to our local media outlets so that they knew who I was and had my contact details on hand. I let them know directly about any newsworthy incidents or stories.

"I find that by having a good relationship with journalists, we tend to get a 'heads up' about the questions they want to ask during an interview and therefore I'm not blindsided mid-interview."

Dealing with the media does, however, come with some challenges. Station Officer Eberle and Deputy Captain

Did you know that the FRNSW Media Team is very active on Facebook and Twitter?

 **22,535**

Facebook Likes (as at 26/4/13)

 **8,435**

Twitter followers; more than **3,003** tweets posted to date

Get online and start following us today

Fitches identified inaccurate reporting of information as the main challenge in Batemans Bay.

"On a few occasions we've found that a journalist – generally a new journalist to the area – has embellished the truth or misquoted a FRNSW spokesperson. I've found the best way to deal with this is to speak directly to the editor or a senior reporter, provide the correct version of events and ask that they speak to the reporter. This approach works for me because the local media need stories as much as we want the coverage, so it encourages a collaborative, mutually beneficial relationship," Station Officer Eberle said.

Station Officer Walters said confidence in front of the camera could also be a challenge.

"In a media interview, you do need to feel at ease in front of the camera and deliver the information in a clear logical way. It's also important to 'stay on track' – deliver the facts about the incident or safety message – and not get drawn in to commenting on issues outside of my scope or authority. This gets easier with practice and feedback from colleagues."

If you have a story that you think deserves some media attention, tell the Media Team about using the 'Tell your media team what's happening' link on the intranet (located in the Media Toolkit).

If you need further advice on dealing with the media in your area, or would like some training in delivering media interviews, call the FRNSW Media Team on 9265 2907 or email media@fire.nsw.gov.au. And to see what media coverage FRNSW is receiving, you can now read the daily media summary on the intranet (see the link in the Commissioner's section in the top right hand corner of the Intranet homepage). **END**



City of Sydney meets Schäfflertanz

On 3 December 2012 City of Sydney firefighters were more than a little bemused when they opened the station doors to a group of Bavarian firefighters. The visitors (who also happened to be dancers) carried fir-tree branches, were colourfully dressed, and accompanied by a rousing German band. Schäfflertanz had arrived!

The firefighters had traded turnout gear for traditional Schäfflertanz dress: feathered caps, red velvet jackets, breeches, white stockings and brilliantly polished black leather shoes – straight from the pages of a Grimm’s fairy tale. Their iconic photos of quaint Bavarian villages and the legendary Black Forest added to the magic.

Back in the real world, City of Sydney firefighters conducted a tour of their fire station and the visitors inspected FRNSW appliances and equipment and shared stories about firefighting in Bavaria with a little help from interpreters. Inspector Wayne Buxton welcomed everyone to the station and FRNSW Band Leader

Mark Reay said that he was delighted to meet fellow musicians and dancers and hoped one day to pay a reciprocal visit with the FRNSW Precision Drill and Marching Band.

Then it was time to dance! In the old engine bay at City of Sydney Fire Station, the audience assembled, the German band began to play, and the dancers holding fir arches aloft performed the 495-year-old Coopers’ dance. Not something you see every day, especially as this medieval dance is only performed every seven years. The finale, which ended amid much cheering and applause, decreed that the air was pure, the water was safe, and the plague purged. All in a day’s work! **END**

Schäfflertanz

The tradition of the Schäfflertanz dates back to the year 1517 when Munich was recovering from the plague. Almost half of the city’s 20,000 inhabitants had succumbed and even after the plague abated, people were still afraid to leave their homes despite the urging of doctors and officials.

A cooper (barrel maker) proposed an amusing spectacle to encourage people back onto the streets, and other coopers and even the butchers got into the act. Cheerful music was played and the coopers danced to prove that the air was again pure. At the end of the dance, the butcher’s apprentices jumped into the fish fountain at Marienplatz and thus proved that the water was safe as well. Soon the streets were once again a lively place filled with people.

In memory of these events, the Coopers’ dance is re-enacted every seven years.



456 Stn Temora

Firefighting in 'the friendliest town in NSW'

Station 456 is situated in the Riverina area of NSW, 418 kilometres south-west of Sydney. Temora has a unique claim to fame; the town of 5,000 residents having been declared "the friendliest in NSW" in recent media reports.

Originally a small pastoral settlement, in 1869 the population swelled to 20,000 following the discovery of gold by a fencing contractor with the apt name of Goldspink. In 1880, at the height of the gold rush, Temora had 58 hotels and a multitude of fire-prone makeshift dwellings erected from timber, canvas and bark. This situation resulted in many fires attributable to accidents, arson, misfortune and murder.

The first Temora Volunteer Fire Brigade, formed in 1881, was taken over by the Board of Fire Commissioners in 1910. Temora Fire Station celebrated its Centenary in 2010, and while the face of firefighting may have changed in 103 years, modern firefighters remain just as dedicated. "The desire to help the community through service is every bit as real today as it was one hundred years ago," said Peter Speirs, Mayor of Temora.

Temora Captain Greg Matthews AFSM affirms his crew are committed. "They are an incredibly keen and eager group," he said. "We responded to over 120 calls last year, and there is a real sense of pride in knowing you have contributed to the safety of your crew, and the safety of your community. My two sons are members of our brigade, and there is a waiting list of people wanting to join. I think that says a lot about us."

The 18 crew members of Station 456 are actively involved in community activities. "Most of us grew up here," said Captain Matthews, "and there is a wonderful sense of camaraderie. It's virtually impossible to walk down the

street without running into someone you know. That's one of the great things about living in a country town.

"As country firefighters, we attend the usual range of incidents," said Captain Matthews. "We're on a main road from Yass to Griffith so we get quite a few truck and vehicle MVAs as well as structure fires, AFAs, grass fires and bushfires. We also provide fire protection during the Annual Air Show at the Aviation Museum."

The Air Show, which features local and visiting historic aircraft, attracts up to 12,000 people to the town. "An event this size requires a significant amount of planning," said Captain Matthews, "especially when you consider the huge influx of people and aircraft. We have worked closely with other local agencies (the NSW Police Force, NSW SES, Ambulance Service of NSW and RFS) to formulate a Local Emergency Management Plan. It's important that we are well

prepared for any emergency. Our own FRNSW training drills and multi-agency training exercises are an integral part of this preparedness," he said.

The Aviation Museum has enabled the crew from Station 456 to spread the fire safety message as well as fundraise through the operation of the museum's food kiosk which, according to Captain Matthews, began as "one barbecue and a pie warmer under a tarp!"

"The original kiosk was built by Temora firefighters who did the ordering, catering and cooking," he explained. "Our barbecues and sandwiches were legendary!"

From its humble origins, the Aviation Museum Canteen has now become a fully

commercial kitchen. "We recently handed its running over to the museum," said Captain Matthews, "but we still like to keep our hand in on special days."

The crew's culinary efforts have resulted in \$250,000 being raised and distributed among 30 local charities over the past 10 years. In addition, firefighters have purchased and installed more than 600 smoke alarms in the homes of pensioners and people with disabilities using funds raised through the kiosk.

It might be a surprise to learn that Station 456 is not the only fire station in Temora. In 2010, a second fire station was built at the Rural Museum. "The new station, which firefighters helped construct, houses a huge and diverse range of memorabilia which includes basically, anything and everything relating to firefighting," said Captain Matthews, a keen historian. "Most of the display comes from Temora, but the Museum of Fire in Penrith also kindly donated articles that reflect the history of the brigade."

Temora is steeped in history, so what better place for a keen historian to gather material? Captain Matthews AFSM has written a book, *The History of the Temora Fire Brigade: A collection of stories, photos, newspaper articles and records of the Temora Fire Brigade 1881 - 2010*.

The book contains fascinating photographs, detailed incidents and vibrant oral histories which provide a wonderful hundred-year journey from "fractious horses" to modern firefighting. Captain Matthews has donated all proceeds from the book towards the upkeep of the firefighting collection at the Rural Museum.

Copies of *The History of the Temora Fire Brigade* can be obtained by emailing the author: Gregory.J.Matthews@fire.nsw.gov.au ■■■■ **END**

**A real sense
of pride in
contributing
to the safety of
the community**

SF Bronnie Mackintosh

Bronnie Mackintosh has been a FRNSW firefighter for just over 10 years. For the first six years she was stationed as an operational firefighter on the Northern Beaches, gaining her Rescue accreditation while working at Narrabeen Fire Station. After a two-year stint as a Rescue operator, she moved into the Operational Communications Section. Bronnie then moved into the training college in Alexandria where she instructed Recruits for two years then last October joined the Technical Rescue Training section.

What I love most about my job...

Definitely the variety in what I get to do keeps me really involved and challenged; learning, teaching, travelling around the State sharing information and facilitating learning. I really enjoy training out in the country and hearing the experiences of the men and women who live and work on the land. I also love the range of skills I get the chance to develop including technical, administrative and teaching skills. The professional development opportunities that FRNSW offers, such as emergency management courses and technical ropes training, are excellent.

"One of the best things about working in this organisation is the variety of sections you are able to work in, the scope to broaden your career options and to specialise. Doing Rescue greatly enhanced my skills as a firefighter and provided opportunities to assist the community in a range of situations. The jobs were always varied and usually required some lateral thinking to resolve.

"Working in Operational Communications, where they receive Triple Zero calls and coordinate the dispatch for fire and rescue emergencies across NSW, was

really interesting work too. You get to see how all the different sections of the organisation work together in an emergency. You assist those on the fireground by arranging resources and feel like you're at the centre of the large coordinated incidents like the Olympics and World Youth Day."

An incident I'll never forget...

"Like most people, I tend to remember the big or protracted incidents the most but don't like to recount the gory ones. In

particular, I'll never forget the amazing survival of a woman who was pinned in her bed by a thirty-tonne gumtree that fell through her roof during a storm. Miraculously she was sleeping on her husband's side of the bed because he was away, and the tree fell parallel to her so that only the length of her arm was pinned underneath it. Despite rain, darkness and structural instability, they got her out using the hydraulic rescue tools to spread a section of the tree away. I still remember the incredible calm and humour of that woman during the extrication, the lateral thinking of the Rescue crew and the coordination between our Station Officer and the paramedic."

An active spirit...

Bronnie is not one to lay around on her days off, in fact, it is hard to imagine how she manages to pack in all those extra activities. She describes her great passions outside work as property development and adventure travelling, her recent snowboarding trip to Lake Tahoe clearly falls in the latter category.

She's a regular starter on plenty of FRNSW sporting teams too, most recently soccer, rugby, dragon boating, touch football and mixed netball.

She has represented Police and Fire Games at state, national and international events for the last ten years, and behind the scenes, was heavily involved with the establishment of a FRNSW women's rugby team; "a mix of experienced and first time players representing the FRNSW in local tournaments as well as in New York".

She says the last three World Police and Fire Games were the most memorable, especially being in New York

City for 2011 and being a part of the 9/11 memorial; "Playing and commemorating in New York really brought home to me what it means to be part of the firefighter family – from cruising up the Hudson as part of the Fire Paddle (www.firepaddle.org) crew and boarding the NYC fire boat, to playing alongside and against other female firefighters, and culminating with marching down 5th Avenue alongside comrades from around the world as part of the 9/11 commemorations – an amazing experience!"

Passing it forward... mentoring and spreading the word

A few years ago, Bronnie worked at a development camp for teenage girls in Washington, USA, called Camp Blaze. It is run by female firefighters from throughout the country who volunteer their time to fundraise and run a fire-training camp for young women. The participants are school leavers who are interested in emergency service careers. In their week at the camp, they get to experience many aspects of firefighting including live fire training, physical aptitude testing, vertical rescue, fire science and extinguishing mediums. If you are interested you can check it out at www.campblaze.com

Mentoring is such an important and necessary process across all professional fields and one she sees "we are only really beginning to develop in our organisation".

Last year, Bronnie, along with four other female firefighters and administration staff, represented FRNSW at the Women and Firefighting Association's Conference 2012 (WAFWA), in Adelaide: "I'd been to other conferences before but this time it was amazing to see the growth in numbers and progress in training, management and culture throughout the different services. The guest speakers and workshops were varied and informative and we all came away inspired and proud."

**The variety
keeps me really
involved and
challenged**

How people I work with would describe me:

- brutally honest
- organised chaos
- fun to travel with
- a good teacher
- and finally, one I heard recently was: “She’s like a guy on the fireground!”, she laughs; “whatever that means!”



At the conference, Bronnie was elected to be part of the WAFA board, and she says she is “looking forward to being a conduit between the Association and anyone, male and female, who is interested in women in firefighting”.

Last August, Bronnie made her screen debut during National Skills Week, agreeing to be interviewed to showcase the wide range of training opportunities and variety of interesting career pathways that FRNSW offers. The episode, which featured a number of firefighters, screened on the Aurora Channel broadcast on Foxtel and Austar as well as digital free-to-air channel TV4ME. It was made at no cost to FRNSW and may also be used in upcoming recruitment campaigns. As Bronnie says, “Being part of projects like that is really just another mode of education. If telling people about what I do means we get more applicants who are better informed, then we benefit from a bigger pool to choose the very best firefighters from. I am happy to be part of that.”

On being a firefighter and the future

“To be a firefighter – in the many and varied roles it requires, you need to be someone who likes the variety of work, enjoys physical work and pushing your limits, likes to be part of a team, that has initiative and likes to contribute to the community.. There’s a pretty rigorous physical requirement to get in and you need to be strong, a lot of the equipment that we use is heavy and cumbersome and requires technique and endurance. A happy disposition and good sense of humour is vital too because you work in close proximity with a lot of different people.

“I think in future our community engagement work is going to be interesting as we focus efforts more on prevention and preparedness. Firefighters may see less fires as we educate people on avoiding risks but we will probably also see more natural disasters in which we will be involved in helping.” **END**





Fire investigation

How other countries are doing it

A two-month trip learning first-hand how other countries conduct fire investigation and research has SO Morgan Cook excited to share with FRNSW colleagues some interesting techniques and a renewed passion to build our partnerships with research organisations such as CSIRO and universities.



SO Cook visited five countries including Sweden, Hong Kong, mainland China, Canada and the USA as part of his Churchill Fellowship trip to study the latest advances in fire investigation techniques, fire research and community safety.

SO Cook, Research Officer in the Fire Investigation and Research Unit (FIRU), was awarded the Fellowship. A likely deciding factor in Morgan getting the Fellowship was the research work he undertook into the tragic Quakers Hill Nursing Home fire in November 2011 which claimed 21 lives. This research advocated the need for sprinkler systems to be made mandatory in all aged care facilities in NSW. The NSW Government adopted this recommendation and under Planning Minister Brad Hazzard, the policy is currently being implemented across NSW with a phase-in period of approximately four years.

"We reconstructed two full-scale models of the rooms involved in the fire in what we call 'build it and burn it' projects. The results were conclusive and validated the need for a greater focus on the science behind fire research.

"Other international fire services work closely with research organisations and scientists to focus on evidence-based

outcomes and the next logical step for us is to do the same.

"A great example is how the SP Technical Research Institute in Borås, Sweden is directly involved in investigation and research into major fire events as well as research into various fire phenomena and safety measures. While visiting the Institute I was directly involved in the research and testing of an air extraction system for an underground railway station in Stockholm – which had only one evacuation route for commuters. The project used a quarter-scale model of the station and simulated a train fire to determine smoke movement and measure heat.

"Air curtains were tested to see what impact they had on reducing smoke and heat in the evacuation route such as those used by Sweden to reduce smoke and heat in evacuation routes in underground railway stations. About 40 tests later, researchers determined the concept of installing air curtains was valid and this has now been put out to tender to manufacturers.

"This is the sort of testing and research we could be doing in conjunction with research organisations here like CSIRO and universities at our Londonderry facility.

"Another thing to take away from the visit to Sweden was the efficiency of using smaller scale model burns for research, initial testing on a smaller scale would determine whether a concept was valid and therefore whether the expense of needing to conduct full scale model burns was necessary.

"The facilities in China were to say the least inspiring. From the six-storey, full scale fire test atrium at the State Key Laboratory of Fire Science (Hefei), to a scale model of a complete five-storey building, it was easy to see how the facility maintains its ranking as a major global player in the field of fire science.

"The recurring theme at every facility I visited in each country was that increased collaboration between fire services and research facilities leads to improved fire investigation tools and techniques which produce scientifically sound results that are more defensible in court. We need to apply more science and research to what we do as fire investigators if we are to keep up with the rest of the world and keep our firefighters and communities safe." **END**

Been exposed to a disturbing incident and need someone to talk to?

Our Critical Incident Support Program can help you.

Call our Wellbeing Coordinator on
(02) 9265 3910 or 0448 295 725

or the 24 hour Message Line on
1800 657 903



The way it was... the Coachman



Story and photos courtesy Museum of Fire staff and research team

In modern times, every firefighter in FRNSW is expected to qualify as firefighter, driver and pump operator. However, it wasn't always the case.

When the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was formed in 1884, the coachman was a specialist position; although he was also required to qualify as a firefighter. Joseph Stanchell was one such coachman. He was formerly a member of the old Insurance Companies Fire Brigade and a farrier by profession. He joined the Metropolitan Fire Brigade as a coachman on 1 July 1884 and subsequently served at both Headquarters and George Street West, fire stations.

From 1899, however, things changed for Joseph and his fellow coachmen – they became even more specialised. They became a special class of firemen with their own rank structure; and became less involved in firefighting. Superintendent Alfred Webb noted that, while it made sense for coachmen to 'double-up' as firemen when the brigade was small, the increase in personnel had rendered that practice inappropriate. In fact, such 'doubling-up' was hindering the brigade's efficiency:

It has happened at several fires within the last few months that coachmen could not be found when they were required. There is always plenty of outside work to do at a fire such as pulling on the hose,

attending to hydrants etc, and this could very well be attended to by coachmen. They could also assist the steam men besides attending to their horses.

Thus, at a fire, a coachman would now be required:

... unless specifically ordered otherwise, to attend their horses, attend to hydrants, assist with engines ... and generally make themselves useful outside.

With the establishment of this special class, a coachman would only be permitted to transfer to the ranks of firefighters if it was considered to be of direct benefit to the brigade.

The competencies required for each rank of coachman were as follows.

Third Class: To be able to drive any appliance with a pair of horses and be proficient in brigade knots;

Second Class: To have had charge of a stable, and to have a good knowledge of the care and management of horses; also a good knowledge of the streets of Sydney.

First Class: To be competent to drive 2, 3, or 4 horses and to be able to fasten a shoe properly, and be able to assist with a steam fire engine.

The requirement to assist with a steam fire engine is significant, for unlike modern brigade drivers, the coachman was not a pump operator. The driver's job was to get the engine and crew safely to the fire; then to detach the horses and remove them to a safe place; and finally to assist with tasks outside the building when required. It was the steam-man's job to get the pump to work – and he had to be a First Class Fireman.

What happened to Joseph Stanchell? Well, he collided with a horse-drawn taxi at the corner of Bathurst and George Streets while responding to a fire in January 1895. The Coroner cleared him of any fault; however, six months later he had another accident while delivering a steamer from George Street West to Headquarters. On this occasion a cart driver was killed. Once again the Coroner found that he was not at fault; however, the Board decided it was time to find Joseph another position. He was appointed as Brigade Farrier and Veterinary Officer, a position which he held until his death in 1916. He was honoured by the Board with a firefighter's funeral. **END**



Water, water everywhere...

28 JAN BETWEEN 00:00-16:00

After causing widespread havoc along the Queensland coast, in late January ex-tropical cyclone Oswald moved south into NSW, bringing heavy rain, strong winds and extensive flooding.

300

Emergency calls

51

Trees down

18

Reports of wires arcing

3

Building collapses

FRNSW received nearly 300 emergency calls for weather-related incidents in the 16 hours from midnight to 4pm on Monday 28 January. These included 197 AFAs, 51 trees down including 27 which brought down power lines, 18 reports of wires arcing, 9 requests for help with flooding, 3 building collapses, 3 requests for help with storm damage and 11 other requests to assist the public.

Most calls for assistance were in northern NSW, particularly in the Richmond/Tweed area. Banora and Tweed Heads firefighters were called to Tweed Heads District Hospital late on Monday morning due to some roofing that had come loose because of the strong winds. 10 young patients and 15 staff were evacuated from the hospital's Intensive Care Unit.

Firefighter response was often hampered by the severe weather conditions, debris on roads and major road closures. The Bellinger River cut the town of Bellingen in half so fire

appliances and personnel had to be positioned on either side of the river. At 391 Murwillumbah, a fallen tree at the rear of the fire station cut off power, hampering operations.

A FRNSW Strike Team comprising crews from Coffs Harbour, Sawtell, Macksville and Kempsey deployed to Grafton to assist local firefighters as flooding intensified, but thankfully the river did not breach the levy banks. The Fire Air 1 helicopter was also sent to Grafton to assist with operations.

On Tuesday 29 January, the heavy rain moved south into the Hunter, Sydney and Illawarra areas, resulting in further extensive flooding and numerous requests for assistance. The combination of bad weather and high traffic as people returned from holidays and the long weekend contributed to a number of MVAs. This included a multiple vehicle accident on the F3's Mooney Mooney Bridge which FRNSW and other emergency services attended. **END**



Tragedy strikes at Claymore house fire

5 MAR 14:30

Shortly before 1430 hours on Tuesday 5 March this year, FRNSW received 000 calls reporting a townhouse fire at Duterreau Way, Claymore. Station Officer Newcomb from 92 St Andrews D Platoon sent a radio message en route that large volumes of smoke could be seen in the distance and called for a third station to be responded. Police also advised that they had information from a Highway Patrol officer on scene that a young child was trapped in an upstairs room and despite his efforts, the child could not be reached. The crew from 92 arrived on scene within eight minutes of the initial call with the crew from 88 Campbelltown less than a minute behind them and 87 Rosemeadow shortly after.

The crews were confronted with a difficult scene. The top floor of a two-level townhouse was fully involved in fire and the distraught mother was pleading with firefighters to try and save her four-year-old daughter trapped on the top floor. Earlier, the mother, who was downstairs at the time of the fire, smelt smoke from upstairs and was able to rescue one of her daughters from an upstairs bedroom. However she was unable to reach her second daughter in an adjacent room due to the dense smoke and ferocity of the fire which had already taken hold of the roof void. Several other neighbours had also unsuccessfully attempted to enter and rescue the girl by way of the back door.

Two firefighters from 92 with SCBA attempted second floor entry but were beaten back by the collapsing roof and intense heat and flames. Sadly the young girl perished in the blaze.

Surrounding townhouses were quickly evacuated and the mother and surviving daughter, together with a Highway Patrol officer who had attempted entry prior to FRNSW arrival, were transported to hospital suffering smoke inhalation.

92's Ladder Platform and 88 Campbelltown's Tanker also responded to the incident. Fire crews worked extremely hard in harrowing conditions, containing the blaze within about half an hour to the one townhouse which was part of a four townhouse complex. Fire and Police investigators prepared a report for the Coroner on the cause of the tragic fire.

END



Fire Brigade items heritage listed

Story and photos courtesy Museum of Fire staff and research team

On Monday 25 February 2013, the Hon Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, attended the Museum of Fire, Penrith to formally announce the listing of five NSWFB heritage items on the State Heritage Register. These listings are the result of an ongoing process of assessment and ensure that they will be properly maintained for future generations. The items listed were as follows.

An 1869 horse-drawn manual fire engine

This manually-pumped engine was built by the Shand Mason Company of London, in 1869. At the time of its manufacture, Sydney's fire protection consisted of the Insurance Companies Fire Brigade (formed 1851), as well as two independent volunteer companies (formed 1854 and 1855). It was handed over to the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in 1884 by the Insurance Brigade.

An 1898 set of horse-drawn curricule ladders

Number 4, 50-foot (15.25m) curricule ladders were ordered in 1897 from the Shand Mason Company by Sydney's Metropolitan Fire Brigade (1884-1909) for use at Newtown Fire Station. Following the arrival of the ladders, the Newtown firefighters were given a course of instruction, and an additional

man and horse were subsequently placed at Newtown. The ladders were used at the 1901 Anthony Hordern fire in Haymarket, at which five people were tragically killed (at the time it was Sydney's largest fire, destroying five highrise buildings). They served at Newtown, Circular Quay, Headquarters, Darlinghurst and Newcastle.

The 1909 headquarters switchboard

This large and impressive switchboard was wholly built by a firefighter Principal Electrician, Edward Smith – in 1909 to receive telephone calls and monitor automatic fire alarms. Withdrawn from service in 1969, it remained as a standby facility at headquarters until 1979.

A 1942 Ford mobile canteen

The mobile canteen saw service from 1944 until 1974. It was presented to the NSW Fire Brigades by the Women's Fire Auxiliary (WFA) during World War 2,

following extensive fundraising activities. The WFA was established by the Board of Fire Commissioners in 1940 to enable women to assist in the war effort. Initially, members were recruited from the WANS and were restricted to the 30-45 year age bracket, but eventually the WFA was opened to the general public of all ages.

The FRNSW heritage fleet

The FRNSW heritage fleet consists of a range of hand-drawn, horse-drawn and motorised fire engines, spanning almost every decade from the 1840s till the 1980s. It includes hose carts, pumpers, ladders, and specialised vehicles such as a mobile canteen, carbon dioxide tender, bushfire tanker, salvage appliance and hydraulic aerial appliances.

The Museum is currently assessing the heritage significance of other items owned by FRNSW. **END**

'Briton' – end of an era

Station Officer Malvern sat down at his desk and began to write his report to Head Coachman Jim Jones concerning Briton – Canterbury Brigade's horse. Briton had been found in a helpless state in his stable that morning. Malvern wrote: 'He appeared to lose all use of his hindquarters and was struggling for fifteen minutes before getting onto his feet ... I might report that this is the second attack of its kind recently'.



Story and photos courtesy Museum of Fire staff and research team

It was 1924 and Briton had become the last of his kind in Sydney metropolitan fire stations. Horses would continue to serve in country stations for another three years; but in Sydney, there were no replacement horses for Briton. A motorised hose carriage was immediately despatched to Canterbury, while Head Coachman Jones examined Briton. "Rheumatism!" he reported, "I recommend that Briton be pensioned off as he will not be any further use for Brigade work". The Board decided to defer the matter to give Briton time to recover; but three weeks later, he was once again found helpless in his stall. This time, Jones recommended euthanasia – and the Board of Fire Commissioners agreed.

Chief Officer Frank Jackson became indignant when he heard of it. He refused to entertain the thought for, like Briton, he was one of the Old Brigade. He insisted: 'I will endeavour to find a home for this horse, rather than see him butchered!'

Firefighters and their horses were very close. The 'neddies', as they were then called, were admired by their firefighters; and they were very sensitive to any criticism or ill-treatment of their horses.

It was 14 years since Head Coachman Jones had selected Briton as a four-year-old. He recalled Briton's 'touchiness', considered an asset in a fire brigade horse: "You can't train a sluggish horse ... and old Briton was one of the bright youngsters in the beginner's class at his first station", Jones noted.

Chief Officer Jackson placed an article in the *Daily Guardian*, which caught the eye of a country property owner. She kindly offered to put Briton out to pasture; but first, Briton had one more duty to perform. He was brought to Headquarters to pose for photographs with some of the old coachmen who had driven him during his 14 years of service. Then, on 6 January 1925, he was taken to Central Station. His destination? Green pastures at Camden!

■ END

In search of photos

The Museum of Fire is currently researching the first four fire stations to be built by the Fire Brigades Board: Stanmore (originally Marrickville), City of Sydney (originally Central), George Street West and Circular Quay. At this stage, we have been unable to find a photograph showing the full façade of the George Street West Station. If you have one, or know of one, could you contact the Museum at admin@museumoffire.com.au

■ END

Need help?

HR/Payroll Helpdesk

Phone: (02) 9265 3900, or
Email: HR.Payroll@fire.nsw.gov.au

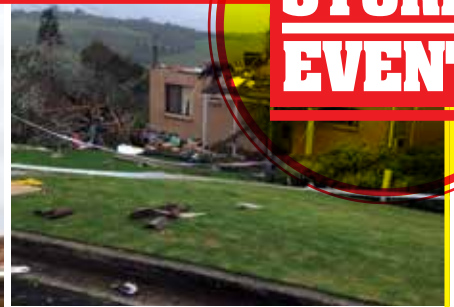
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Email: ServiceDesk@fire.nsw.gov.au

Properties Helpdesk

Phone: (02) 9742 7557, or
Email: PropertyHelpDesk@fire.nsw.gov.au





Mini tornadoes batter NSW coast

19 & 20 FEB

The weekend 19 and 20 February saw a significant response from FRNSW after a major storm system triggered “mini tornadoes” that hit hundreds of homes in Sydney, Kiama and Shellharbour in the south while places like Kempsey, Taree and Grafton in the north, and other parts of the State were battered by gale force winds and heavy flooding rain.

FRNSW crews responded to more than 1,500 calls for assistance as high winds and torrential rain buffeted the coast and brought down trees and powerlines and caused major damage to roofs and buildings.

With the majority of damage caused overnight on Saturday, FRNSW crews and communications centres received more than 550 calls for assistance alone between 8:30pm on Saturday night and 6am on Sunday morning.

At least 50 fire appliances were sent to support NSW SES operations in various parts of the State. Most incidents involved dislodged trees, wires, roofs and other structures, as well as some building fires. FRNSW crews also assisted the SES with flood evacuations, doorknocks and clearing storm damage on Sunday.

Kiama firefighters responded to an early morning callout to find their engine bay no longer had a roof, and debris had to be cleared before the appliances could be used to respond. At Bowraville,

firefighters from 235 Station were on standby ready to assist Ambulance paramedics with medical emergencies if required with an appliance equipped with a defibrillator and crewed by firefighters trained in first aid as the town had become isolated due to floodwaters.

A large section of roof at Malabar RSL Club was ripped off and landed on Victoria Street on Saturday night. FRNSW crews secured the remaining roof structure and cleared the debris from the road, while Hazmat crews were deployed to clear asbestos from a number of nearby streets.

Inspector Greg Houston, the Strike Team Leader deployed to Maroubra/Chifley said, “It’s like a mini tornado has torn through the joint. It has come off the water and made an arc across the suburb bringing down garage roofs, trees and electrical wires, and destroying people’s properties.”

END

The 12th World Firefighters Games were held in Sydney from 19-28 October 2012. The Games were open to both permanent and retained firefighters, admin and trades staff, as well as their direct family members. FRNSW staff and their families participated in a variety of events. The following gallery of photos records various FRNSW personnel demonstrating their prowess in a range of sports and events at the Games.

12th World Firefighters

Games



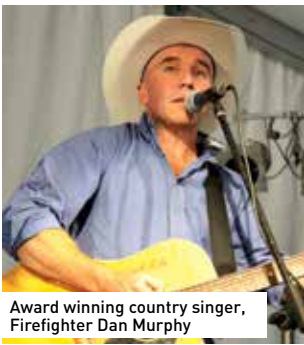


Commissioner Mullins demonstrates his Karate skill



Legendary performer Diesel gets the party started





Award winning country singer, Firefighter Dan Murphy



FRNSW Precision Drill and Marching team turn heads at the WFF Opening



Commissioner Mullins declares the WFF Games Officially "Open"!

World Firefighters Games





'Hats off' to our firies

These are some of the many messages of thanks and appreciation that we get for our work in serving and protecting the community.

**Acting Premier Andrew Stoner,
late January 2013**

"The bushfires that have raged across the State over the past two weeks have been some of the worst we have seen in recent years. I applaud our firefighters for their hard work and professionalism in helping us avoid what could quite easily have been a disaster. Thanks to our firefighters, including from the Rural Fire Service, NSW Fire and Rescue, Forests NSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, as well as other emergency services personnel and police, a potentially tragic disaster has been averted. I also want to thank the families and employers of the thousands of firefighters deployed over the last two weeks for their support of their efforts. Although the bushfires have now eased as a result of cooler weather and milder winds, there are still more than 140 bushfires ongoing across NSW. While there is still more work to do in order to bring these fires under control, we need to give credit to our firefighters for their heroic efforts over the past two weeks."

T Neale, Illawarra

"Last night at around midnight the wires that connect our house to the street shorted out, rang the fire brigade the guys from Corrimal 269 turned up I must take my hat off to them they conducted themselves in a professional matter but the way they waited with us for the electricity company to make sure all was safe was outstanding they could have just left but a huge big thanks to those guys and well done."

**C Bear
(in response to an incident at a
Darling Point unit block in February)**

"Hats off to the NSW emergency crew. Always doing a fine job."

K Paterson, Balgowlah Heights

"I just wanted to say a heart-felt thanks to our wonderful firefighters. Recently my neighbour called emergency services as there was a strong smell of smoke in and around her home. Two fire engines from the Manly Fire Station were on site within five minutes, and all the officers were professional and thorough. We are so lucky to have such great people in our community whom we can call on in such a situation. So to those guys, thank you so much, you all do such a fantastic job for our community."

R and M Gleeson, Narrabri

"We would like to thank the Rural Fire Service firefighters, the Narrabri NSW Fire and Rescue firefighters and all our neighbours and other individuals who helped fight the bushfire which threatened our home last Wednesday afternoon. Your help was very much appreciated."

Quoted in the Daily Examiner, Grafton

"Thumbs up to Deputy Captain Dave Woods, Fire Fighter Mick Brooks and the rest of the dedicated staff at the Yamba Fire Station for teaching the younger generation fire safety skills that might one day save their lives."

**T Hadfield, Coonabarabran
(after recent bushfires
in the Coonabarabran area)**

"The efforts of emergency services especially the VRA, NSW Fire & Rescue, NSW Rural Fire Service and the SES went above and beyond the call of duty on many occasions and should be acknowledged."

L Nicholson, Aberdare

"I would like to convey my special thanks to all those involved in fighting the fire we experienced in Aberdare on January 18. So to all the RFS, NSW Fire Brigades, the helicopter crew and the police I want to say thank you so much. I was also very thankful for the messages I received by phone keeping us up to date on the situation. They did a wonderful job."

J Putra, Auburn

"I would like to say thank you to the firefighters who attended my home on Thursday night. Thankfully we were spared anything serious. They were there in minutes and were professional and caring. A smoke alarm warned us smoke was pouring through the back area of our home. So please check your fire alarms—one day it might be you."

Deaths and retirements

Farewell and enjoy 'you' time

Name	Station	Date Retired
RetF W Cross	Temora	5 Oct 12
RetF P Fuge	Orange	15 Oct 12
SF J Karimanovic	Concord	26 Oct 12
Capt R Tinker	Parkes	31 Oct 12
SF S Greenshields	Shellharbour Hazmat	2 Nov 12
SF P Salt	MW3 Z0	2 Nov 12
SF S Dewling	Redfern	2 Nov 12
SF J Bray	Lakemba	3 Nov 12
SO P Johnston	Newcastle Communication Centre	16 Nov 12
SF A Hillard	Cardiff	16 Nov 12
RetF S Whitfield	Kingscliff	30 Nov 12
RetF P Barber	Moama	30 Nov 12
SF A Cox	Cranebrook	30 Nov 12
SF M Cameron	Botany	30 Nov 12
SO P Little	CEDU, Community Safety Directorate	30 Nov 12
QF K Hackett	Hamlyn Terrace	30 Nov 12
SF N Loveday	Shellharbour Hazmat	6 Dec 12
Capt D Crane	Dungog	7 Dec 12
SF D Whiteside	Wollongong	7 Dec 12
RetF P Mason	Toronto	7 Dec 12
CSupt G Parkes	Education and Training	14 Dec 12
SF M Prendergast	Gladesville	14 Dec 12
QF S Newton	Leichhardt	14 Dec 12
RetF K Mahoney	Seven Hills	19 Dec 12
RetF M Dowell	Cootamundra	21 Dec 12
RetF D Shepherd	Woolgoolga	21 Dec 12
SF E Sobiesiak	Schofields	24 Dec 12
RetF D Brooks	Scarborough	1 Jan 13
SF L Love	Katoomba	2 Jan 13
RetF P Wild	Branxton Greta	15 Jan 13
SO K Doherty	MW3 Zone Office	25 Jan 13
RetF C Kitch	Wellington	25 Jan 13

Vale: With gratitude for service to the people of NSW

Name	Station	Date
QF Warren Perry	Seven Hills	Nov 12
Firefighter Frank Gough	Campbelltown	Nov 12
Capt Malcolm Bee	Wentworth Falls	Nov 12
RetF Barry Neilson	Forbes	Nov 12
SF Gordon Regan	Alexandria & E District	Nov 12
SF Ted Horrigan	Darlinghurst & Mascot	Nov 12
RetF Paul Abbott	Nowra & Berry	Dec 12
RetF George Marriott-Statham	Katoomba	Dec 12
Capt David Harris	Moss Vale	Dec 12
RetF Garnett Humphries	Wollongong	Dec 12
SO Gerald Rothwell	Crows Nest & B District	Jan 13
SF Rob Derwin	Crows Nest & Forestville	Jan 13
Capt Des Fairfull AFSM	Lismore	Jan 13
Capt Richard Harris	Leura	Jan 13
SO Alan Cox	Dunheved	Jan 13
RetF Neil Hampshire	Bombala	Jan 13
Capt Keith Harvey	Hillston	Jan 13
RetF Neville Winn	South West Rocks	Jan 13
District Officer George Pascoe	D District	Jan 13
SO Robert Symonds	B District	Feb 13



**Fire &
Rescue NSW**

