



Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Service November 2006

Brigade Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2006

FROM THE PRESIDENT

EMA Grant shows results

As you can undoubtedly see, the Emergency Management Australia (EMA) grant of \$49,000 from the Commonwealth government is finally showing some results.

The Mt Wilson tank was installed in late September and is now plumbed in to receive all the rain we are owed by the heavens. Warm thanks to all the people who worked on the installation, particularly Owen Haviland who did all the surveying and design, and to Barry Freeman who provided valuable additional help.

We now have some progress on the Mt Irvine tank with the help of the NSW Department of Lands, who have promised to process a "Road Closure" for the land on which the Mt Irvine shed is situated and a DA at the same time. This is merely a formality to redesignate the land to enable installation of the tank, and does not involve any actual road closures as the name implies. Those residents who have properties around the Mt Irvine shed will be approached shortly to sign a letter of support for the redesignation.

All going well, we should have the new tank installed by the end of summer.

David Howell, President

'Back to Basics' Training

The local brigade held a '**Back to Basics**' training session during the regular monthly training session on

1st October. Twenty eight members in full PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) underwent a series of four exercises including

- 5 man fog attack for approaching hazardous materials during a structural fire
- Using foam to control/extinguish a fire
- Draughting water from a SWS (Static Water Supply)
- Setting up and using portable fire pumps for property protection

This was an excellent refresher on the first day of the fire season, which has already started in many areas of NSW. At the end of the training on Silva Plana, the members enjoyed a BBQ under the trees, on a glorious day. Thank you to Captain Peter Raines and Senior Deputy Doug Wood, for organising such a great practical exercise which was enjoyed by all.



NEXT TRAINING DAY 9.00am Sunday 5th November - Mt Wilson Shed

.....

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

CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Outlook for 2006/2007 Fire Season

The outlook for the 2006/2007 fire season is for elevated temperatures, below average rainfall and above normal fire potential. We have not had a major bushfire impact on Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine since January 1994; the current fuel load is high and the bush is very dry. It is imperative that you take the necessary steps to prepare your property for the fire season. Fire preparation will make it a lot safer for our crews to operate on your property and increase the chances of your property surviving a bushfire.

What should you do to prepare your property?

1. Prepare your house and other buildings against ember attack.
2. Ensure that you have a fuel reduced zone around your house and sheds.
3. Construct a firebreak around your property.
4. Have fire fighting equipment and water ready.
5. Have a bushfire action plan for your property.
6. Make a check list of things to be done as fire approaches



More details are outlined on http://mtwilson.rfsa.org.au/bushfire_checklist.htm showing a series of easy steps to prepare your property and family under the section "Be safe, be prepared this fire season".

First Responder Program

Mt Wilson/ Mt Irvine RFS will take part in a pilot scheme to set up a Community First Responder Program. This is a scheme devised by the Ambulance Service of NSW and the NSW Rural Fire Service. The idea is that RFS personnel who are first on the scene of an emergency will be able to provide patient care and treatment until an Ambulance crew arrives. Training will be provided by the Ambulance Service and the RFS will supply and maintain all the equipment, most of which we already have.

I am confident that this partnership will benefit both our brigade and community. More details will be announced as they come to hand.



Total Fire Bans

During a Total Fire Ban, outdoor cooking may only be done using a gas or electric BBQ, provided it is within 20m of a residential dwelling, under the immediate supervision of an adult, in a cleared area and there is running water available nearby.

Fireworks (including sparklers), wood or charcoal BBQs and candles (whether enclosed or not) are among the items not permitted to be used outside. Where applied for, special Total Fire Ban Exemptions may be provided for such activities as Carols and other religious or cultural observances, by applying to the Rural Fire Service on 1800 679 737. Lighting a fire on a day of Total Fire Ban attracts a fine of up to \$5,500 and/or 12 months gaol.

Penalties for a fire that escapes and damages or destroys life, property or the environment can attract much greater fines and gaol terms with maximums at \$100,000 and/or 14 years.

How will you know if a Total Fire Ban is declared?

Check the RFS website Current Fire Danger Map or call 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737), or the local RFS Fire Control Centre. Announcements are also made in newspapers, on the radio and on television. You need to know what NSW Fire Area you are in to determine if a Total Fire Ban applies to you. You can check this on the Current Fire Danger Map (available via "Latest Fire Data" section of <http://mtwilson.rfsa.org.au>) Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine's NSW Fire Area is Greater Sydney Region (4). Click on this area and the name of Blue Mountains Council will appear on the right hand side of the map. You can then check if a Total Fire Ban applies to your area.

You can report Bushfire Hazards

If you are concerned about possible bushfire hazards on a neighbouring property or any other land, you can report these to the RFS.

The RFS is responsible for inspecting bushfire hazards and issuing notices to all landowners and managers to reduce hazards. Notices can be issued to private, commercial and government landowners and managers. This includes general householders, councils and government agencies.

If you are concerned about something you believe to be a bushfire hazard, you can:

- contact your local RFS Fire Control Centre
- fill in the online Bushfire Hazard Complaint Form on the Mt Wilson RFS Website
- Write to the RFS Commissioner at Locked Bag 17, Granville, 2142

The RFS may arrange for an inspection of the site to determine if a bushfire hazard exists. The complainant and the landowner or manager will be notified of the results. If the hazard does exist, the RFS can issue a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Notice to the land owner or manager ordering that the hazard be dealt with. If the land owner does not act on the notice, the RFS can remove the hazard at the land owner's cost.

Your local Mt Wilson RFS website is a great fund of information with answers to many of your Brigade related questions. Have a look on: <http://mtwilson.rfsa.org.au>

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society AGM

The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society will celebrate its 10th Annual General Meeting on November 18 in the Mt Wilson Village Hall starting at 4pm.

All residents of both villages and a number of official guests are invited to mark this occasion with a community event themed 'Village Life' highlighting the histories and activities of the organised bodies within the two villages including the local Brigade, and the importance of the huge contributions made by them to 'Village Life'.



The AGM will include the following events:

- A brief account of highlights from the Historical Society's first 10 years.
- Unveiling of the new historical village map displaying historic sites and figures, which will be installed permanently on the exterior wall of the porch at the Village Hall.
- Progress report on the Luigi Strano Library.
- Information about the Society's archival storage facility at the Study Centre
- A brief account by David Howell of the history of the Brigade and its role in the villages
- AGM formalities including the ceremony of paying the Society's annual rent.

Light supper, with wine, tea, coffee and light food.

The Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society extends a warm invitation to you to make this community celebration the enjoyable event it promises to be.

Arthur Delbridge

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

1st October 'Back to Basics' Training on Silva Plana



Above: Crew members practice the finer points of a 'fog attack' under the watchful supervision of Barry Freeman



Above: A group photo of the attendees at the 'Back to Basics' training day. The cloudless blue sky on the day is a reminder of the desperate need for Brigade volunteers to maintain their training levels

Help! We are trying to reduce costs by distributing the monthly newsletter via email to as many residents as possible. Please contact Kathleen Oakes if you wish to be added to the email list — think of the number of trees, and dollars, which will be saved! Kathleen can be contacted via her email address k.oakes@bigpond.com

Editors:

Tim Gow (tgow@a1.ibm.com)

Sarah Howell (sarahhowell@ozemail.com.au)

Kim Gow (kimmgow@hotmail.com)

Comments, contributions and suggestions welcome!

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