



Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Service August 2007

Brigade Newsletter

AUGUST 2007

MT WILSON AND MT IRVINE BRIGADE LEADS THE WAY

The first batch of graduates from the Community First Responder program have just emerged from intensive training in an exciting new joint initiative of the NSW Ambulance Service and the RFS.

The Community First Responder program was devised as a practical solution to the health needs of remote communities where an ambulance can take half an hour or more to attend a medical emergency.

After a memorandum of understanding was drawn up between the RFS and NSW Ambulance Service, two pilot programs were devised to train local RFS brigade members in first response skills which could save lives while waiting for paramedics to arrive. Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine was the first brigade in Region East to be invited to trial the program.

Brigade members who were already senior First Aiders were asked for expressions of interest in doing the course, resulting in a group of enthusiastic and competent volunteers.

In January of this year a meeting was held in the Mt Wilson hall where potential First Responders and our brigade's Executive were briefed by both senior members of the NSW Ambulance Service and the RFS. For the Ambulance Service, Superintendent Susan Webster, Ron Gavin (Station Officer, Lithgow), and Jeff Woods (Western Sydney Sector Office) attended, and from the RFS, FCO1 Mal Cronstedt, FCO2 Jack Tolhurst, and FCO5 Rob Vinzenz outlined the program and answered questions.

This meeting led to applicants being trained over three weekends, with a rigorous assessment on a seventh day. Successful graduates will be known as Honorary Ambulance Officer – First Responder and will be trained in the skills required to sustain life until an ambulance arrives.

First Responders will be qualified to administer CPR techniques and defibrillation in the case of heart attacks, and to administer specified medications. They will be able to deal with diabetic emergencies, anaphylaxis (severe and life-threatening allergic reaction), and monitor vital signs until the arrival of qualified medical assistance.

Another vital part of the First Responder's role is to meet the ambulance and escort it to the patient to ensure no time is wasted. They will be able to locate and operate all equipment on an ambulance to assist the paramedics once they arrive.

In the case of a medical emergency the immediate response should still be to ring 000. At the same time as the call goes out to the ambulance, First Responders will be paged and can respond to the patient immediately.

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine brigade is well placed to provide the state's first batch of First Responders already having a defibrillator sponsored by Citigroup, and two oxygen resuscitation units purchased with community donations. Once the First Responders are certified, each person will be supplied with a personal kit and the brigade will also have a kit kept at the station. The Ambulance Service will provide the Brigade with portable radios to enable the First Responders to brief paramedics on the patient's status and receive advice while the ambulance is travelling towards them.

A celebration to mark the graduation of seven First Responders will be held in the Mt Wilson Village Hall on **Saturday 11 August** from 10am to 12 noon where morning tea will be served. This is an opportunity for you to congratulate these graduates and learn more about what the service will mean for you, your family and visitors.

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

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR MT WILSON CHURCH

St George's Church in Mt Wilson relies on the generosity of its community for its continued survival. Libby Raines will generously open her superb garden, Merry Garth to the public on **Saturday 6 October** from 10am to 4.30pm in order to raise funds for the church. The garden will be showing off its peak spring colour with the flowering cherries in particular expected to be in full bloom.

Entry fee will be \$5 with children under 12 being admitted for free. There will be stalls selling all manner of country produce, cakes and gifts, and a barbeque will offer a sausage sizzle all day. A light lunch of sandwiches and slices will be available as well as Devonshire teas. All proceeds from the day will be donated to St George's.

Libby Raines, an accomplished water colourist has also kindly donated a raffle prize of one of her botanical paintings featuring Plantation Pink sasanqua camellias. Tickets are \$2 each and are available from Jenny Benjamin (4787 1571), Libby Raines (4756 2121), or Sarah Howell (4756 2091). The raffle will be drawn at *Merry Garth* on 6 October.

Without sufficient funds to support our minister and the running of the church, St George's could close which would be a sad loss to the Mt Wilson community. So come along to enjoy the beauty of *Merry Garth* in spring and support St George's and your community at the same time.

HOW ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES AND DONATIONS ARE USED

Last year, thanks to your generosity, we were able to purchase

- life-saving Oxy-viva equipment
- essential fire-ground radios
- numerous maps, signs and assorted items to make life easier in the field
- cupboards in the Mt Wilson shed to store much of our valuable equipment

We were also able to

- carry out necessary fire trail maintenance
- help the MWPA pay for the road base on Bowens Creek Road
- set up a water tank at Zircon Creek
- help with extra funds required (beyond our grants) for the water tanks at the two sheds and for our future communications towers

Susie Hope, Treasurer

P.S. Our good-fun Pig & Horn nights in the Mt Wilson Village Hall also helped pay for our annual Village Christmas Party and allowed us to donate towards our community's wonderful new A/V equipment. It would be great to see more of you at these nights!

Editors:

Sarah Howell sarahhowell@ozemail.com.au

Kim Gow kimgow@hotmail.com

Tim Gow tgow@aul.ibm.com

Comments, contributions and suggestions welcome!

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