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Sunday  
XMAS DRINKS December 7th  
& BBQ

Silva Plana

PIG & WHISTLE January 31st  
SOCIAL NIGHT April 3rd

Sats 7-10 pm Village Hall



# Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Brigade

## Roger .. over and out.....



**President Tom Harding, Captain Barry Freeman and Community Liaison Officer Helen Freeman with one of the radios donated by Roger and Wai Davidson**

Last month as we commenced the 2003/2004 fire season, Roger and Wai Davidson came forward with a very generous donation of 12 handheld radios for use by crew during training and emergency incidents

During the last two fire seasons our brigade was involved in fighting major bushfires on the other side of the Grose Valley. With the large amount of radio communication on the RFS network and on fireground

radios, it was difficult to stay in contact with each other as we found when someone was on the end of a hose and out of sight of the truck.

These Radios are an essential tool for our crew to remain in contact with each other during major incidents and when involved in rescues.

Thank you Roger and Wai for your support and generosity.

# *All Dressed up and nowhere to go!*

## **HR PRESCRIBED BURNS**

**- Barry Freeman**

Before the rain we did get one burn done at the Southern Fire Trail, however, it did not want to burn properly at the time. A few weeks later, with our planned burns *finally* authorised, the rain beat us to the punch by three days.

Since that time, the ground has not dried out sufficiently to carry out the burns, and now coming up to the 1<sup>st</sup> December the weather will be too hot to risk carrying out any hazard reduction.

However, the good news is that with our six HRs approved, the local brigade can decide when to go ahead with the burns in Autumn with only 24 hours notice. Also NPWS have advised that they will be doing 2 large HR prescribed burns to the North and South of Mt Wilson this Autumn

◇ **Additional 2004 Operation Plans are now being prepared for submission to BMFRS for Approval in line with our 5 year Mosaic Plan**

December  
Training Day  
& BBQ

*Our monthly training day on the 7th December will be at Silva Plana. It will be similar to last year's field day style training followed by a BBQ lunch. We are hoping that Bell and Tomah will come along as well*

## ***Position Vacant***

### ***Community Education Officers***

The Brigade is looking for 2 Community Education officers to work with the Captain and Senior Deputy to organise between 2-4 Education/Firewise events throughout the year. These people need to be BF trained and familiar with the requirements for preparation of properties.

Training will be provided.

The Blue mountains District Community Education Group meets every other month to discuss issues and resources for Community Education, and there is an Annual Residential Conference (held last year in Orange) for which you would represent the brigade.

These roles would ideally suit a Husband and wife team who currently may or may not be front line fire fighters.

If you are interested please contact Barry Freeman with any questions or to express your interest

## ***OH&S REPORT***

*All activities undertaken by Rural fire Brigades such as ours are subject to the legislative requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Act.*

*One of the requirements of the Act is for organisations to undertake formal audits of the working environment Audit findings are then tabled and an agreed action plan implemented.*

*The Mt Wilson shed was assessed in August and a series of recommendations were made.*

*The major area of concern was the storage of large quantities of fuel inside the shed. The short term solution has been to move most of the fuel outside .*

*A DA has been submitted to Council for a detached banded fuel shed which will permanently solve what has been a problem for many years*

***Many thanks to Peter Raines and Owen Haviland for the planning and design of this***

*The reopening of the Village Hall has meant that a lot of bulky furniture item that were previously stored in the Fire Shed have now been returned. This in turn has opened up more space in which to organise and store operational gear.*

*A similar audit of the Mt Irvine shed is planned for the near future*

**-Tim Gow**

# Is your property prepared for the Fire Season?

- *Peter Raines*

**I would like to see the property owners of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine doing a lot more to prepare for fires. 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 bush fire.**

What should you do to prepare your property?

- **Have firefighting equipment and water ready.**

Equipment:

- Fire Fighting pump, suction line, hoses & nozzles
- Appropriate storz fittings on tank
- Knapsack spray
- Rake hoe
- Buckets
- Sand bags to block down pipes
- Canvas/Tarps to cover and protect items
- Ladder

√ Look after your firefighting equipment and put away after use. (UV sunlight will damage hoses and knapsack sprays if left out for long periods).

√ Ensure equipment is serviceable. Now is the correct time to check; not the hour before a fire impacts your property.

**WATER** – You need to keep an amount of water dedicated for fire fighting (I would suggest approx 15,00 litres or 3,000 gallons)

√ Set your tank up so that the pick up point for your pressure pump is higher than that of your firefighting outlet and that you do not accidentally use up your firefighting water

Have a storz fitting on the tank so the RFS tankers can plumb into it.

- **Ensure that you have a fuel reduced zone around your house and sheds.**

√ Remove any build up of leaves or bark around buildings, clean gutters, avoid planting trees and shrubs too close to buildings.

Do not stack firewood against buildings or verandahs

Keep grass mown around buildings.

- **Construct a firebreak around your property**

√ Start by clearing 1.5 m on either side of your fence or boundary line, and if you have a bush area on your block you will also need to clear a fire break 2 or 3 metres between it and the house and garden.

Having cleared firebreaks helps give access to the area and a place to stop the spread of the fire.

- **Prepare your house and other buildings against ember attack**

See Blue Mountains development control plan No.26 Building in Bush Fire Prone areas.

Some things to think about are to -

√ Ensure gaps in eaves and under floor are filled in.

√ Cover air vents with metal fly mesh.

√ Fit draught seals to all external doors.

## WANTED

2 Residents from **Mt Irvine** and 2 from **Mt Wilson** to provide daily rainfall data to the RFS once a week. If you currently monitor a rainfall gauge and live on the mountains full-time, you can be of great service to the brigade.

Please call Barry Freeman with any questions and to volunteer for this important role

**Firewise Community  
Education  
Meeting:  
Saturday 7th Feb 10am**

# Training

By the time you read this letter 7 of our members will have completed their **Village Fire Fighting** (VF) assessment, following 5 days of training. They are:

*Doug Wood*

*Beth Raines*

*Peter Dempsy*

*Stuart Donaldson*

*Kim Gow*

*Scott Laing*

*Sarah Sernak*

This brings the total number of VF trained members to 18.

*Well done* to the following who completed their **Advanced Firefighter** (AF) training.

*Helen Freeman*

*David Howell*

*Sarah Howell*

*Sarah Sernack*

*Doug Wood*

*Scott Laing*

*Stuart Donaldson*

**Congratulations and Welcome** to the following members who have completed and passed their **Basic Training** in August:

*Richard Marquardt - Breenhold Cottage*

*Joe Landsberg - Withycombe*

*Diana Landsberg - Withycombe*

*Bruce Nott - Chimney Cottage*

*Gordon Bills - Treilm*

*Marion Nicholas - Danes Way*

*Henric Nicholas - Danes Way*

*Suzzane Daly - Balangara*

*Penny Ewing - Culverden*

*Ken Carruthers - Nutwood Farm*

The training was conducted by Peter Raines (Senior Deputy) and Dick Emmerson (Bell Brigade) and we had members from both Bell and Mt Tomah attending the training as well.

*Congratulations* also to *Alan Heap and Tim Gow* who completed their **Crew Leader** (CL) training and are now accumulating their Crew Leader hours prior to assessment.

Captain *Barry Freeman* as completed the **Prescribed Burning Supervisor** (PBS) training as well as the **Group Leader Analysis and Planning** (GLA/P) and will be assessed after supervising prescribed burns and fulfilling the role of Incident Controller.

Senior Deputy Captain *Peter Raines* completed **Remote Area Firefighting** (RAF) which includes helicopter winching, as well as completing a **Rural Fire Instructor** (RFI) course to qualify as a trainer.

## FOR SALE

***Fire pumps - Suction hose - Lay flat hose 25mm/38mm - Nozzles - Storz fittings Knapsack sprays - Rake hoes - Fire extinguishers - Fire blankets***

**Fire Fighting equipment at the right price**

**The Mt Irvine/Mt Wilson rural Fire Service together with Lithgow Fire Protection are helping property owners equip themselves with firefighting gear at the right price.**

We are putting together a bulk order for the end of November - the more we order, the better the price will be.

Place orders with Peter Raines 'Merry Garth' Mt Wilson 2786

Ph 02 4756 2121 or mob. 0403 140 963 between 9am and 10 am or between 9pm and 10pm before the 30th November. We will get back to you with the final price before placing the order on 1st December.

## *Bushfire CRC*

On the 10 December 2002, Federal Science Minister Peter McGauran announced new Commonwealth Government funding of \$25 million for a Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC). Mr McGauran announced the funding while visiting the Sydney headquarters of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

Mr McGauran said the Bushfire CRC would bring together experts from State based fire authorities including the NSW Rural Fire Service, the CSIRO, universities, the Bureau of Meteorology and several other organisations from around Australia to form a vital 'fighting force' to increase understanding of bushfires and how to control them.

"This is the first time that our best researchers and those who undertake the 'on the ground' fire fighting have come together in a national effort to deal with bushfires," Mr McGauran said.

"By bringing together all stakeholders, I am confident the new CRC will provide research that can quickly be applied to assist in the prevention and fighting of bushfires."

"I also welcome international experts in joining our efforts to minimise the devastating effect of bushfires."

The Minister said the coordinated approach of the CRC would assist in ensuring the results of bushfire research were quickly passed on to Australia's fire agencies, land managers and communities.

"The vital results of this research will help all Australians more effectively prepare for and control bushfires and minimise their destructive impact on people, property and the economy."

The Bushfire CRC will begin its work in July 2003 for a seven year period, and have resources totalling some \$100 million, made up of contributions from the Commonwealth Government and all the other CRC participants.

Further information available on [www.bushfirecrc.com](http://www.bushfirecrc.com)

## Junior Brigade Membership

The MtWilson/MtIrvine Brigade is considering the commencement of a Cadet/Junior Firefighter program in 2004. **Expressions of interest** are sought to determine the level of support for such an initiative.

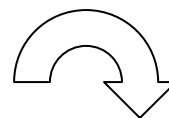
### Junior members will;

- Turn 13 in 2004 and be 17years of age or under
- Have the written consent of their parents or guardian to join the brigade
- Undergo similar training to adult members, but will not participate in fire fighting or other emergency operations
- Be fitted out in full safety Personal Protection Equipment (PPE yellows)
- Be supervised by a field officer at all times

The future of our Brigade is dependant on the continual flow of enthusiastic and competent members into the operational side of the brigade, therefore encouragement of junior members is important.

The skills learned could help save your own property

If you have a son/daughter/grandson or granddaughter who has an interest in learning how to fight/survive a bushfire and how to operate firefighting equipment efficiently and safely, please contact the Brigade Captain, Barry Freeman on either Mob: 0429 429-401 or Hm: 4756-2053 to discuss further and/or have a membership form sent to you.



### Training Days:

Dec 7th (Xmas Drinks & BBQ)  
January 4th  
February 1st  
March 7th  
April 4th  
May 2nd  
June 6th