

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade on Saturday 11th June 2016 in the Mt Wilson Village Hall

Attendance:

Invited guests present: Louise Marcus, Member for Macquarie; Hon Trish Doyle, MLA for the Blue Mountains; Councillors Don McGregor, Sarah Shrubbs and Michael Begg; David Jones District Manager BM RFS; Fred Taylor, Group Officer West 2; Peter Church, Group Officer West 3; Ron Gavin and Mick Garvey, NSW Ambulance Service;

Residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine: Ray Harrington, Paul Naylor, David Eadie, Richard Beattie, Sue & Steve Woolfenden, Alice Simpson, Robyn Scrivener, Mark Bancroft, Bill Scrivener, Thom Renton, Barry Freeman, Nancy Fox, Bruce Arnold, Duncan Peppercorn, Kathleen Oakes, Peter Dempsey, Robyn & Allen Hyde, Ted & Deb Griffin, Graham & Beverley Thompson, Stephen & Margaret Dean, Robert Chesney, Philip Beeby, Libby Raines, Elizabeth & Joe Montano, Bob Korogiannis, Graham & Judy Tribe, David & Sarah Howell, Mary Holt, Libby Raines, Susie Hope, Owen Haviland, Beth Raines, Peter Raines, Susan Templeman

Welcome:

The President David Howell opened the meeting at 4.10pm and welcomed the invited guests and residents. He thanked the executive for their input through the year and informed the meeting that Barry Freeman will not be standing as a member of the Executive Committee for 2016 - 17, but is willing to continue as a Deputy Captain. David thanked Barry for his years on the committee, including 5 years as captain, and the changes he has made to the structure and direction of our brigade.

Apologies:

Invited guests: Mick Metcalf, Group Leader; Frank Vincent West 1; Neil Stone and Richard Kingswood NPWS;

Residents of Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine: Raoul & Lesley Wilson, Matt Mason, Ross & Maria Kelly, Henric & Minny Nicholas, Tim & Kim Gow, Milba Kirk, Carol & Brian Carrigan, Alex, Alison and Matilda Halliday, Katherine Montano, Alexander Montano, Kathy Harrington, Loretta Beattie, Jim Tzannes, Annie Catling, Johanna Renton, Helen & Jeff Naylor, Mitchell and Andrew Woolfenden, Penny Ewing, Ruth Scrivener, Sarah Hope, Helen Freeman, Elinor Herriot, John Lee

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2015 AGM

Moved that the minutes be accepted by Barry Freeman, seconded by Graham Tribe with the correction that Philip Beattie be corrected to Philip Beeby

Report from the RFS District Manager:

The meeting welcomed District Manager David Jones, who spoke to the meeting. The following is a summary, the full report is available from the secretary.

David Jones spoke of the commitment to humanity that motivates members in helping the community and their willingness to step outside their comfort zone.

The RFS has been 16 years in its present format and it is now working co-operatively with our fellow emergency organisations. An example is the MoU the RFS has developed with the Volunteer Rescue Association of NSW, delivering more value with infrastructure.

The next twelve months will see more changes in the NSW RFS with a number of new systems being implemented (e.g. ICON) along with the continuation of the new PPC roll out.

Recently Paul McGrath has transferred to Cumberland Zone as Learning and Development Officer. Paul has made a fantastic contribution to the District and David Jones asked that we join him in thanking Paul for his

contribution, leadership and innovation and to wish him well in his role in Cumberland. Michael Kerr will fill the L&D role until a permanent replacement is found.

David Jones presented awards to members. To Steve Woolfenden for Advanced Programs Introduction and Allen Hyde for Advanced Pumping; to Susie Hope, Long Service Medal 23 years; Owen Haviland Long Service Medal 24 years.

Long Service Medal recipients from our brigade who were awarded medals at the ceremony at Blackheath on 4th December 2015 are:

12 years service: Michael Bates, Penny Ewing

13 years service: Stephen Dean, Peter Dempsey, Moira Green, Ron Green, Allen Hyde, Robyn Hyde, Ross Kelly, Maria Kelly, Kathleen Oakes

14 years service: Tim Gow, Kim Gow, Sarah Howell, David Howell, Duncan Peppercorn,

16 years service: Stuart Donaldson, Beth Raines, Helen Freeman

20 years service: Wendy Holland,

23 years service: Libby Raines, Peter Raines,

Address by Ron Gavin:

Ron thanked the Brigade for the invitation and expressed his thanks to the CFR team. Having such a dedicated team takes the scariness out of an Ambulance call to Mt Wilson. They now have reliable directions to the location of the emergency and knowledge about the event, with the paperwork in order.

There are now 6 members in the CFR team: Barry Freeman, Diana Landsberg, Kathleen Oakes, Beth Raines, Libby Raines, Peter Raines, with 3 new members, Allen Hyde, Robyn Hyde and Linda Raines, soon to go to Gilgandra for their intensive training.

Reports for 2015 – 2016:

Captain: Beth Raines:

Welcome to all our Guests, the Brigade and community members

I thought the Mt Wilson / Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade had a relatively quiet year but in fact the total number of incidents is only slightly down from last year.

We have attended 37 incidents this past 12 months. The break down for these is:

15 Motor Vehicle accidents

7 Community First Responder calls

4 fires or respond to smoke (Hordern Road Fire and Mt Tomah Fire)

4 searches or search and rescues

2 storm / snow damage (on top of what residents deal with themselves)

2 Hazard reductions

2 Tasmanian Deployments – Vic Zhukov

1 Toban Patrolling

Training wise, I am pleased to add the following names to the list of trained firefighters – Bruce Kerridge, Will Kerridge, Dion Morrison and Keith Ralston. They always say that the best form of learning is teaching, so our new recruits had to teach a whole bunch of Scouts about fire and fire behaviour and deal with the oddball questions. Thank you for the time you have already committed to the Brigade – we welcome you aboard.

The gentle art of persuasion has also seen a number of people continue with their training – we have a great bunch of people working their way through the Advanced Firefighter modules at the moment. We have had

people complete first aid, chainsaw, ITASC training and others well along the way in Prescribed Burn Supervisor and Trainer /Assessor.

Thank you also to West 3 Peter Church and to Bell, Tomah, Blackheath, Medlow and Megalong Brigades for providing instructors, trucks and venues for the training and to all the trainers and assistants across the District who also give up their time for the various courses. The West Sector training that we attend is always great for upskilling and catching up with friends from other Brigades. Our Training Officer, Graham has also organised two training sessions to assist with the transition into Advanced Firefighting with a program on Wildfire Behaviour and on Pumping, that were hugely successful. Graham, along with other Training officers in the West Sector and West 3 are developing a mentoring program for crew members transitioning into the Crew Leader roles.

A bugbear of mine has been fire trails and mapping. Because of the issues of land tenure there has been multiple names for fire trails, each agency had a name and then the Brigade had a local name – some correlated, others didn't, some were confusing, others just plain wrong. Two weeks ago District Office facilitated a meeting with NPWS, BMCC and the Brigade and a comprehensive list was agreed to by all. This still has to be signed off by the Fire Trail subcommittee and the Bushfire Management Committee in turn. The other problem the Brigade has is trying to work from two topographical maps for the purposes of Hazard Reduction planning, coordinating search and rescues and having the two mountains on different maps. One of the great things about this Brigade is the networking that goes on – Kathleen volunteers at Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens and a fellow volunteer used to work at the Department of Primary Industries in their mapping division at Bathurst. Kathleen got thinking about our map problems and made some inquiries – the outcome of this is that the Brigade has commissioned a new map, one that includes the entire area, will squeeze in Bell in the west and Mount Tootie in the east, include Mount Tomah and the Bells Line of Road and will include the Wollangambe River and sections to the north. We can also add on whatever else we think is relevant, so the canyon routes and names have been added, courtesy of one of Pete's bushwalking mates, we will add our local walks such as Happy Valley and the Pavements and we will add our dormant fire trails and hand tool lines such as the link trail from the Southern Fire Trail across Waterfall Creek. We hope to have this new map by the beginning of the bushfire danger period.

Kathleen has also been busy in the Community Engagement role - her report is as follows

- The Recovery from the 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires officially ended last December. A survey of those affected by fire showed that significant numbers were still seeking medical and psychiatric assistance. The Blue Mountains may have officially recovered but on a personal level many still have a long way to go.
- Kathleen was included in a group of 16 from the Blue Mountains to attend the Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Conference in Albury recently. The messages of clean your gutters, maintain your property and have a plan are still there but there is acknowledgement that bushfires are inevitable and survival is not enough. A key component of bouncing back and growing from disaster is belonging to a vital, self-reliant and connected community. No need to remind us of that. The most interesting speaker came from the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, NZ. Although their disasters (tsunami and earthquake) are not quite the same as our bushfires they too have adopted a colourful way of advising residents of their risk. Just as we have our Community Protection Plans that are all red they have a blue line painted across town at the point which is predicted to be the highest reach for a tsunami, a very public and daily reminder to be ready when the time comes.

Closer to home:

- Received an NRMA Community Grant for community meeting equipment
- Regular column in 'The Mounts'
- Property Inspections conducted for the 'Get Ready' Weekend
- Winter Pile Burn Regulations distributed to every household
- Mt Irvine Community Protection Plan completed and distributed
- Along with other members appeared in a video advertising the Resilient Australia Awards. It went on Facebook but I don't believe it went viral

Other:

- The on again/off again/on again/off again/ now on again Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) is out of our hands, but I understand there are negotiations between RFS HQ and BMCC

Our Community First Responders continue to train and attend incidents. We are very appreciative of Ron Gavin and the staff from Lithgow Station especially Mick, Meah and Guy who come up and conduct the monthly training. This year has seen a substantial change in how we train – the introduction of online training has seen some interesting challenges from both the Ambulance training end and our ability to use the technology, especially with such poor internet connection to the community. Some of these issues need to be fed up the line if training is going to be effective. That said the face to face training is as informative and practical as always. Three new recruits will be heading to Gilgandra for intensive training at the end of June and the beginning of July.

This year we note the passing of Timothy Stirling-Levis and very recently of Dennis Brooks. The ebb and flow of life sees people go, people leave and others move in. I hope new residents will join the brigade and equip themselves with the knowledge, practical experience and physical tools to survive the inevitable bush fire.

Thanks

This year Barry Freeman has decided not to stand as a committee member – the contribution that he has made on the committee over many, many years has been considerable but he will continue to assist the Brigade with specialist projects – a huge thanks. Thanks again to the great Exec and others – David, Henric and Owen, especially with Station developments and plans, Susie our most efficient Treasurer, Judy our Secretary, who does so much more, Graham and his team of trainers, Pete and Kathleen whose focus in on the mapping project, to Lesley and all the catering people that help with events, training days, maintenance nights, to Steve and Thom Renton for all the work going on upstairs and Elizabeth on the ongoing Bowens Creek Rd campaign.

- Acceptance of Captain's report: moved Susie Hope seconded Robyn Hyde

Treasurer: Susie Hope

This is a summary of the Treasurer's report, which has been audited and found to be correct, the full report was sent as part of the notice for the AGM. The report covers the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Brigade Working Account which is for running the brigade but no longer accepts donations

Income	33,974
Expenditure	25,246
Result for the Year	8,727
Balance brought forward from 2015	6,497
Balance in Brigade Working Account 31 st March 2016	15,225

Brigade Public Fund Account accepts all donations and channels funds, as approved by its trustees, back into the Working Account as long as they are for the purpose of supporting fire and emergency services

Income	20,201
Expenditure	28,190
Result for the Year	(7,989)
Balance brought forward from 2015	15,509
Balance in Brigade Public Fund 31 st March 2016	7,520.04

Brigade Fixed Term Deposits

Fixed Term Deposits 31 st March 2015	
Working Account	173,143
Public Fund	89,780
Plus: New Term Deposits	
Working Account	-
Public Fund	15,000
Plus: Interest	
Working Account	5,471
Public Fund	2,919
Fixed Term Deposits at 31 st March 2016	286,313

Brigade Captains Debit Account to cover minor expenses

Balance of Captain's Debit Account 31 st March 2016	3,000
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Total Brigade Funds as at 31st March 2016 **\$312,059**

- Acceptance of Treasurer's report: moved by Libby Raines and seconded by Robyn Hyde

Appointment of an auditor for 2016 – 2017

- Moved by Beth Raines and seconded by Ted Griffin and agreed by the meeting that Phil Lupton of Honan Partners be appointed as auditor for 2016 -2016

Election of officers for 2016 – 2017

David Jones took the chair and declared the following members had been nominated unopposed prior to the meeting and were confirmed in their positions:

President*	David Howell
Vice President*	Henric Nicholas
Treasurer*	Susie Hope
Secretary*	Judy Tribe
Captain*	Beth Raines
Senior Deputy Captain*	Peter Raines
Deputy Captains	Barry Freeman, David Howell, Peter Dempsey
Training*	Graham Tribe
Community Engagement*	Kathleen Oakes
Catering*	Lesley Wilson
Committee Member*	Elizabeth Montano
Equipment	Stephen Dean
Fire Trails	Peter Dempsey, Vic Zhukov

Those marked * will form the Executive Committee

General Business:

a. Bowens Creek Road:

Councillor Don McGregor addressed the meeting. He told us there had not been much progress on this matter, while there is support from the Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee (BMBFMC) there has been none from Hawkesbury City Council (HCC).

Louise Markus Federal MP for Macquarie has briefed Minister Paul Fletcher as Federal Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, who has agreed that, if returned, the Coalition will provide funds for the project.

Elizabeth Montano gave the meeting an update on our campaign and thanked Don McGregor for his work with Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC), who resolved to work with HCC for joint funding. HCC debated the issue but did not resolve to participate. Local Governments are not funded for this work, only State and Federal Governments have funding. There has been no commitment by the Hawkesbury District RFS to help get an emergency road in place despite the expressed support for this from the fire brigades in the area. Why is this not significant to Hawkesbury?

Police Rescue and the Ambulance Service are supportive of the campaign.

With the increasing numbers of visitors coming to Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine, 30,000 last year, only having one road in and out and not having any emergency road access is a significant risk.

The campaign is now using social media more.

b. **Mt Wilson Fire Station extension:** The land issue has been resolved and the available land for the Mt Wilson Fire Station covers the area across to the Old Schoolhouse. The approximate cost of the extension is \$300,000. Plans are on display at the back of the Hall.

c. **Mt Irvine Fire Station:** Site and land consolidation still need to be resolved

d. **Spring Blossom Festival 24th & 25th September 2016.** Our major fundraiser for the year helping to complete both the Mt Wilson Station extension and provide funds for the new Mt Irvine Station. Many volunteers will be needed and all present were encouraged to invite family and friends to come for the Festival.

Other Business:

- Don McGregor informed the meeting that the Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) for Mt Wilson and Bell have been signed off, subject to RFS approval. Mt Irvine is more complicated because part is on land with threatened species.

Peter Raines asked why there was a lack of consultation with the Mt Wilson Hall committee and Mt Irvine Hall Trust. David Jones replied that there was a working party consisting of representatives from RFS & BMCC.

- Richard Beattie informed the meeting that a Special General Meeting of the Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc. has been called on Saturday 25th June at 5.30pm in the Mt Wilson Village Hall to discuss the issues resulting from increasing visitor numbers in autumn.

Richard also informed the meeting that after the Progress Association AGM in September both he and Peter Laving will be stepping down from the Progress Association

- Trish Doyle commended all the people involved in community organisations for their dedication. She also told us that she has had two conversations with Phil Koperberg about Bowens Creek Rd, recently he has been in poor health but she will follow up with him now his health is improving.

Closure of meeting: As there was no further business the President declared the meeting closed at 5.35pm and invited all present to join the Executive for wine and cheese.