

# Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 112\* March 2011



*Kim at training ...*

## **Committee 2010-2011:**

**Fire Captain:** Graham Povey  
**Senior Deputy:** Nick Goldie  
**Deputies:** Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Barry Woolacott  
**President:** Martin Hughes  
**Secretary:** Nick Goldie  
**Treasurer:** Bob Morison  
**Training Officer:** Jeremy Mears  
**Equipment Officer:** Michael Burton  
**Community Awareness:** Nick Goldie  
**Fundraising:** Sandra Lauer  
**Permits:** Graham Povey  
**NSW RFSA Delegate:** Jeremy Mears

## **Call out:**

On *Thursday 17 February*, Captain Graham in *Seven Charlie* responded to a smoke sighting along the highway north of Willandra. The landowner was burning a fallen tree, in light drizzle, and was reminded of the need to hold a permit for any outdoor fire.

At about 1530 on *Sunday 13 March* the radio reported flash flooding and debris over the road at Colyers Creek, just south of the Colinton fire station. (Meanwhile, at Baroona Road, there was barely a drop.) A few minutes later, the brigade was called out: a 4WD had driven into the flood, become stuck, the driver trapped, and needed assistance. *Seven Alpha* (Bob, Michael, Nick) responded, but was stood down before reaching the incident.

Brigade President Martin happened to be returning north from Cooma and was halted by the flood. Here's part of his story:

*"Tree trunks were coming down the creek and lodging against the culvert on the highway, eventually blocking it. The water then diverted down towards Bumbalong Road and flooded across the highway at the lowest point, carrying more logs and debris that blocked the road, water being over a foot deep with a strong current.*

*"Believe it or not, apart from trucks and four-wheel drives, I watched foolhardy individuals in small cars forging through the water (at least 40metres wide with no indication of depth and a strong cross current) to get through to wherever they were going, dodging the tree trunks sweeping over the road!*

*"I waited 30 minutes for the water to recede. In the meantime, the police arrived and conducted traffic through the flooded section once it had receded. A group of about 6 young people rolled up their pants and took to the water to remove all the debris that had accumulated on the road so that traffic could proceed - good on them!"* ↪

### **Membership:**

Membership: please pay by cash at training, or cheque to The Treasurer, Colinton Rural Fire Brigade, 88 Weemala Lane, Michelago NSW 2620.

Membership fees: \$15.00 for adults, \$5.00 for juniors. Donations are always welcome. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. ↪

### **Training:**

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at two o'clock, at the Station at Colinton. Everyone is welcome. ***If possible, crews are asked to arrive at 1330 to check the trucks before training.***

The Junior brigade is in action, once a month on the second Thursday of the month. Contact Michael Burton (0407 003 392) for details. ↪

### **Training (2) Take-off and landing:**

Training Officer Jeremy spent the weekend 11-13 March in Tumut, where he attended an Air Base Operator course. ↪

### **Training (3): 24 hour event 26-27 March** *From Mick Holton 0427 562 136.*

We will accept crew nominations for one or more shifts (day one, night shift and day

two). Crews can work both day shifts as long as they stand down for the night shift.

**Start:** Saturday 26th at 1000 (state elections - you can vote in the morning)

**Finish:** Sunday 27th at 1400.

We will run the exercise with three shifts (1000 to 1800 - 1700 to midnight - 0800 to 1400.) We will base our operations in **Adaminaby** at a location with camping facilities (participants may wish to bring camping gear). All meals will be provided.

*Tasks will include (won't be the same for all crews):*

ICS tasking; driving (day and night time driving, on and off road); chainsaw work; preparation of helicopter landing area; hand tool work; map reading & GPS; radio communications (PMR and fireground); hazard reduction burning (weather dependent); pile burning (weather dependent); drip torch use; aviation tasks; machinery related tasks; communications; forward command.

**Nominations:** call your Captain or Training Officer to plan crews and vehicles. Call Kerrie at the Berridale FCC on 6456 4555 with crew and vehicle details. ↪

### **Training (4): Firie helping Firie**

Rocky Plain Rural Fire Brigade is Hosting an event known as "Firie Helping Firie". This event will start with a BBQ at the Rocky Plain Fire Shed at midday on the 2nd April 2011.

This event will include a series of activities for both Farmers and Furies. The activities will include:

*Pumps and Pumping for Farmers and Furies (get to know your pump)*  
*Firefighting - a glimpse into the past*  
*Our guest speaker - John Harper will talk to us about the Mate Helping Mate concept.*

This event will also be a great opportunity to catch up with a few friends, the Monaro

Team Chaplain and the RFS Critical Incident Support Team representative. ↻



*Jeremy brings home the bacon ...*

### **The future of fire:**

*adapted and abridged from an article mainly by Dr Richard Thornton, Research Director, Bushfire CRC. For the full text, see <http://www.bushfirecrc.com/>*

The year is 2020. Australia is hotter, drier and far more fire prone than ever before. What effect is this having on our water supplies, agriculture, changing rural populations, health systems, and the elusive carbon balance?

Rural fire, park and forest management agencies are confronted by growing urbanisation, partially driven by increasing immigration levels, an accelerating 'tree-change' phenomenon, drought and global warming, increasing strains on forested water catchments, the collapse of volunteerism - and a growing stridency in

the questioning of the agencies' ability to manage fire risk adequately.

It was not until the mid-2000s that scientists and politicians started to jointly address the predictions of looming global climate change. Assertions made by scientists around that time have proved remarkably accurate, such as initial temperature departures seeming relatively small and their suggestion that a 1 °C increase in mean temperatures was equivalent to many southern Australian towns shifting northwards by about 1000 kilometres.

Southern Australia is now characterised by successive bad fire seasons, each appearing to be worse than the last.

The long-tested and evolved bushfire strategies that are based on rural populations being largely capable of protecting themselves (staying to defend their properties) have been found increasingly faulty in recent years. In the face of looming adversity many 'tree changers' are choosing to abandon their properties in times of fire. This is creating an increasing demand on the local rural fire services.

In the face of these changes, the fire and emergency service agencies are no longer able to rely on a flow of young volunteers to staff the rural brigades or the SES. Retirees moving into rural and semi-rural areas do not have a history or culture of formal volunteering and perhaps no background in working with the land or with fire.

With extended fire seasons the load being carried by the declining ranks of volunteers is reaching breaking-point - volunteer burnout is now common. Moreover, even those volunteers who remain willing and able are experiencing employer resistance to the growing demands on their goodwill.

Flows into the Murray-Darling have been significantly affected by the south eastern

Australian alpine fires of 2003, 2006, and the biggest and hottest yet seen in 2013. This most recent fire has seen the catchments of the Ovens, King, and Murrumbidgee Rivers severely burnt – as expected, subsequent flows initially increased, but were heavily laden with sediment from the extensive post-fire erosion, and siltation of many town water supplies followed. Within a few years, however the regrowth in the catchments made its claim on precipitation and, whilst the average rainfall may only have decreased by 10-20 percent, the impact of the new growth has seen stream flows into the lower Murray drop to 10 percent of long term averages.

In some seasons farmers have refused to allow firefighting agencies access to water as this commodity is now more valuable to them than the assets that the fire service are seeking to protect. Meanwhile, a government inquiry across two states is now seeking answers as to why devastating bushfires were allowed to get into the catchments of major domestic water supplies.

Some or all of these scenarios may seem to overstate (while some understate) the problems we will all face in the near future. But today, Australia needs to think about the way it will respond if these situations evolve. Avoiding this scenario, or worse, will require new knowledge through scientific research so we can live safely in the future with fire. ↪

### **Hot house:**

As we mentioned in a previous issue, the Colinton Brigade and the Berridale Brigade were each fortunate to receive substantial funding from the Emergency Volunteer Support Scheme, Emergency Management NSW, each to build a 'hot house' for training volunteers.

Funding is now available, and work will begin soon. We are asking anyone with trade skills (carpentry, welding, painting,

digging holes) to assist with this project. Contact Nick (6235 9190) or Jeremy (6100 1100) if you can help. ↪

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*Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at [horehound@yless4u.com.au](mailto:horehound@yless4u.com.au)  
02 6235 9190  
by the first Saturday each month, or to any  
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***The Colinton Courier** is also available at*

[www.michelagoregion.org.au/bushfire/brigades.htm](http://www.michelagoregion.org.au/bushfire/brigades.htm)

*Views expressed in **The Colinton Courier** are not  
necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the  
RFS.*

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**Essential numbers**

**Emergency 000**

**Fire:**  
**Cooma Monaro Fire Control**  
**(24 hrs)**  
**1 300 722 164**  
**02-6455 0455**

**Fire:**  
**Captain and Permit Officer:**  
**Graham Povey**

**02-6454 4150**  
**0419 406 908**

