

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 127* June 2012



Sandra and Tania: the water comes out here ...

Committee 2012-2013:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey
Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie
Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Barry Woolacott, Michael Burton
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Secretary: Sandra Lauer
Treasurer: Bob Morison
Training Officer: Jeremy Mears
Equipment Officer: Michael Burton
Community Awareness: Nick Goldie
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Permits: Graham Povey
NSW RFS Delegate: Jeremy Mears
Call-out: Noreen Clark

Call out:

On *Saturday 19 May*, crews from Anembo and Michelago, as well as a unit from the NPWS, joined the three Colinton Sevens for a day of burning along the Calabash Fire Trail, between Smiths Fire Trail and the (extremely steep) Mopby Fire Trail. This HR burn was part of the continuing RFS District fire plan for 2012. Seven *Alpha* was crewed by Michael, Rowan and Nick; *Bravo* by Bob M, Jacqui, and Kirsti; and *Charlie* by Graham and Barry. The burn put up a great deal of smoke, with variable results on the ground, some slopes being too damp to burn well, but by the end of the day Captain Graham was well satisfied with the result.

During the burn, there was a fire sighting near Ingelara. Colinton *One* (Bob L) was dispatched, and reported that there was a grass-fire, but the land-owner had things well under control.

At about noon on *Wednesday 20 June*, there was a call for assistance from a land-owner who was burning love grass – and it had escaped. He was, he said later, extremely embarrassed. The three sevens, *Charlie* (Graham), *Bravo* (Barry, Jeremy) and *Alpha* (Nick) were soon on scene, and the fire was contained along the north bank of Ingelara Creek. Crews were home by early afternoon. 

Aboriginal fire management:

A new book by ANU anthropologist Bill Gammage (*The Biggest Estate on Earth*, Bill Gammage, Allen & Unwin 2011) explores the idea that the Aboriginal people were sophisticated land managers, using fire to create a 'parkland' of grass and scattered trees which suited their needs.

Gammage says that Aboriginal people created grassland as habitat for game, often up to a line of forest from which they could hunt, based upon a deep knowledge of how to control fire and especially and how to generate 'cool fires'.

Over many generations Aboriginal people used fire to clear forest and then were able to maintain grassland by doing what was termed 'firestick farming'.

Gammage describes how Aboriginal people would light small fires on damp ground to create small firebreaks to join up with other burnt patches and create a ring of them or perhaps join the ends up to a creek to create a ring of firebreak around an area that could be burnt to create fresh grass growth.

While Australia now has a far larger population there are far fewer people involved in fire management than pre 1788 when all Aboriginal people were involved in caring for the land.

Aboriginal methods of fire control both protected them from major bushfire as well as creating grasslands for hunting. Modern fire managers and pastoralists are edging towards the methods used by Aboriginal people, mostly by learning how to control fuel loads. Aboriginal experience shows that it is possible to control fire and to avoid catastrophic bushfires.

However says Gammage, there is a European mindset that prefers trees, whereas Aboriginal people preferred fewer trees and more grassland.

When he recently addressed a meeting at the RFS offices in Bega the audience filling the large conference room comprised members of the RFS, NPWS, Forests NSW, and Aboriginal organisations, environmentalists, farmers, and others. ↪

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 (1.30 pm) 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. ↪



Clipboard power: Michael in charge

Driver Reviver:

The Michelago Region Community Association (MRCA), in conjunction with Colinton Rural Fire Brigade, have commenced the 2012 snow season Driver

Reviver operations at the Colinton Rest Area. Our Driver Reviver is open every Friday and Sunday during the snow season. Opening times are available at the MRCA web site

(<http://www.michelagoregion.org.au>) and on our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/MichelagoColinton-Driver-Reviver/185392184808850>).

Please help spread the word! If you would like to volunteer, please contact Sandra: sandra.lauer@bewebbed.com.au or 0418 626 077.

No experience is required and it's a great way to meet new people, be involved in your community and to help reduce driver fatigue.

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.



Nicole, a willing (?) victim

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

Local Government and the RFS:

The Rural Fire Service Association represents the interests of volunteer and paid members of the RFS. This month, the RFSA President Brian MKinlay has reacted strongly to a suggestion by the NSW Shire Association, that Local Government should withdraw from the management of the RFS.

Membership:

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

"Transferring fire fighting management to a centralised State Government Agency as advocated by the Shires Association of NSW would destroy the local community-focused culture and the relationships brigades have with their communities – the

cornerstone of the volunteer ethos of the Rural Fire Service," said Mr McKinlay. "New South Wales leads the way in cooperative fire fighting management and this relies heavily on community-based input, local knowledge and the participation of land management agencies at a local government level."

For a paper, which seems to reflect the concerns of both sides: Google "Local Government and RFS Review Discussion Paper" - and remember that this is your taxes at work! 

"Work will continue to upgrade the Rural Fire Service's private mobile radio and paging network with \$16 million allocated to ensure volunteer fire fighters have the latest and most reliable communication capabilities.

"\$15 million has been set aside in this Budget for the Personal Protective Clothing Replacement Program, to ensure NSW fire fighters uniforms meet new Australian Safety standards.

"We have allocated \$10 million to maintain a state-wide aerial fire fighting and support capability."

For details: <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/> 



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at horehound@yless4u.com.au
02 6235 9190
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The Colinton Courier is also available at www.michelagoregion.org.au
Views expressed in **The Colinton Courier** are not necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the RFS.



Congratulations to Colinton Captain Graham, who celebrated his 60th birthday this month.

Now the good news ...:

From the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Michael Gallacher, in a press release for the NSW State Budget 2012 - 2013: