

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 130* September 2012



*Tobias and Michael after the Paintball fire
Photo by TR*

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TOBAN:

A **Total Fire Ban** was declared for large areas of NSW, including the Monaro, for *Wednesday 5 September*, after a weather forecast issued on Tuesday predicted “damaging” winds of between 60 and 100 km/hr. ABC news later forecast 150 km/hr for the high country.

During a TOBAN, all fire permits are suspended, no outdoor fires at all may be lit, slashers and mowers should not be used, and there are substantial penalties for any infringement. ✍

Call out:

At around one p.m. on *Wednesday 15 August*, brigade members were paged for a grass fire off Bumbalong Road. Seven *Alpha* (Jeremy, Nick) and *Charlie* (Graham) responded, and it was quickly evident that more units were needed as a 200m fire front was threatening a house and out-buildings.

Bredbo *One*, Nine *Alpha* and Nine *Bravo* joined the Colinton crews, and then Colinton Seven *Bravo* (Bob, Kirsti, Dave) and the fire was soon controlled. Crews would have been able to leave the scene earlier had not two of the vehicles become bogged in a muddy paddock, needing serial rescuing.

Mid-afternoon on *Thursday 16 August*, there was a pager call for a grass fire in the vicinity of Michelago village. Seven *Alpha* (Tony, Gill, Nick) responded, while *Bravo* (Graham, Barry) remained on stand-by at the station, and Michelago *Seven* also responded. However by the time

Alpha reached the incident, the landowner had extinguished the fire, apparently the result of his burning-off some grassland. Crews were home by 1530.

A pager call at 1100 on *Sunday 26 August* had no more detail than "Fire Call". Triple Zero reports suggested that at least three fires were burning along the Monaro Highway in Colinton territory. Seven *Alpha* (Bob, Jeremy, Nick) was soon on the road, and it became clear that the single fire was in the grasslands south of Ingelara Creek.

Alpha was first on scene, followed quickly by *One* (Graham) and *Bravo* (Michael, Kim, Tony). The fire was burning hotly along a front of several hundred metres and threatening to spread into wooded country to the south, so the first priority was to contain the southern flank. The wind was gusty from the north west, and the fire moved rapidly up hill, with flame heights up to five metres.

The Colinton trucks were joined by Michelago Seven *Alpha* and *Bravo*, and Bredbo Nine *Alpha* and *Bravo*. Colinton member Martin arrived in his own vehicle, bringing welcome reinforcements (Rowan, Daniel). Justin and Kirsti also arrived from Bumbalong Road.

After some hours work, a perimeter was established, and the fire was contained by late afternoon. Useful additions to the firefighting crews were the heavy water tanker operated by neighbouring land-owners Peter and Gini, which made it possible for the smaller Cat Seven trucks to maintain a rapid turnaround as they emptied their tanks; and the Ingelara tractor, driven by Tobias, which rescued one truck after another as they were bogged in treacherous mud just below the flaming grass.

Bredbo and Michelago crews were stood down during the afternoon, and the last Colinton crews were home in time for a pre-dinner beer ...

On *Tuesday 4 September*, a large smoke plume at mid-morning alerted residents to a fire along the Tinderry Road, and the pager call came at 1100. Michelago *One* and Seven *Alpha* and *Bravo* were joined by Colinton Seven *Charlie* (Graham, Barry, Tony) and *Alpha* (Martin). Twenty hectares of grassland were burned, but the fire was contained by mid-afternoon.

Wednesday 5 September (a day of Total Fire Ban) started quietly enough, but by mid-morning there was strong gusty wind from the east, backing to the north, and the radio became very busy. There were fires at Anglers Reach; near Dalgety; near Jerangle; and also a 1300 ha fire in the hills west of Bredbo. At around one o'clock, the two Bredbo crews asked for assistance, and Seven *Charlie* (Graham, Barry) and *Bravo* (Bob M, Kieran) were dispatched, leaving *Alpha* (Tony, Nick) on stand-by.

The RFS issued an Emergency Warning for residents south of the Dalgety Road, which was closed to traffic. One historic homestead was lost to the blaze. A *Section 44 Emergency* was declared for the Monaro late in the afternoon.

Early afternoon on *Thursday 6 September*, smoke was sighted on the hills at the end of Baroona Road. Seven *Alpha* (Michael, Nick) was dispatched to investigate, and found a burning power pole on a hillside just south of the summit, about 100m beyond the end of the track. This meant that the burning grass, ignited by sparks from the pole, had to be extinguished using backpacks. It seemed that high winds had

twisted the cross-member and insulators so that one cable was making contact with the pole.

While Michael and Nick watched, one of the two power cables carried by the pole snapped and fell across a neighbouring fence, thus turning the fence into a potentially deadly obstacle. After some hours wait, during which Seven *Charlie* (Graham, Martin) arrived, and the two crews kept watch on burning tussocks, several trucks from the electricity utility arrived on scene. When it was certain that the power lines were no longer “live”, the burning pole was felled by chainsaw and the fires doused. Crews were home by late evening.

There are a number of important websites which have fire-related information.

The RFS home site has information and updates about all or most fires in NSW. – <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>
See “Current fires and incidents” for an interactive map, with details of individual fires. See also *Sentinel Hotspots*, managed by Geoscience Australia, for a satellite map of active fires:
<http://sentinel.ga.gov.au/acres/sentinel/index.shtml>

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.

No place for wooden shoes...:

from the Netherland National Broadcasting Service (NOS) 20 August 2012

“Dutch police, fire brigade members and members of the Netherlands Institute for Physical Safety are in Australia for training in fighting bushfires. They are being instructed by Australian colleagues, world leaders in firefighting skills.

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*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.*

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Websites:

“Yesterday the crews practiced how best to fight a fire similar to the one which threatened Radio Kootwijk in April of this year. Around 40 hectares were lit, about half of what was burned at Kootwijk.

“As well as fighting the fire, crews learned how best to keep the community informed, and about communication between police and firefighters. Seven Dutch members completed the practical course this week, after a week of theory training. Once back in the Netherlands, the crews will pass on their new knowledge to their colleagues, and will create a network of European wildfire specialists.”

For a video of the Dutch crews working with the ACT Rural Fire Service see: <http://nos.nl/artikel/408651-brandweer-op-cursus-in-australie.html>

The Dutch crews taking part in the burn explained that Australians have long experience of dealing with big bushfires; that it is simply not possible to burn 40 ha in the Netherlands, just as a training exercise; and that rising temperatures are making that country increasingly vulnerable to wildfire.



**roll out a hose
ride in a truck
have fun**

**from mid-morning
to mid-afternoon**

Everyone welcome!



Tinderry Road fire

RFS OPEN DAY

**The Colinton Brigade
invites our friends in the community
to the
Annual Open Day
on
Saturday September 22
at
Colinton Fire Station
to
meet the members
share a BBQ**



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

