Colinton Courier

*Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 145* December 2013*

Jeremy deals with a stove-top blaze
(all photos in this issue by Sandra)

Committee 2013-2014:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey
Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie
Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Michael Burton
President: Nick Goldie
Secretary: Sandra Lauer
Treasurer: Bob Morison
Training Officer: Jeremy Mears
Equipment Officer: Michael Burton
Community Awareness: Nick Goldie
Fundraising: Jacqui Williams
Permits: Graham Povey, Nick Goldie

NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

Call out:

Nil

TOBANs and Fire Danger:

During a Total Fire Ban, all fire permits are suspended, and no fires may be lit.

Permits are also suspended if the Fire Danger Rating reaches *Very High.*

This was the case on *Thursday 28 November*, when the Bureau of Meteorology predicted high temperatures and very strong winds. In the event, there was enough cloud cover to keep temperatures down, though the wind was gusty.

Find out more about Fire Danger Ratings from:

http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/file_system/attachments/Attachment_FireDangerRating.pdf   ✍

Bumbalong shows how:

Nearly two dozen residents of Bumbalong Road took part in a fire safety awareness day at the Colinton Fire Station, on *Sunday 1 December*. This event was organized by brigade members Kim and Paul , and was timed to match the delivery of a Community Fire Unit trailer for Bumbalong Road.

The CFU trailer requires a small crew, who have done a short Basic Firefighting course, but who do not normally respond to fires as active firefighters. The trailer contains a pump, hoses, other fire-fighting tools, but needs a water source. It provides a community with some

defence, especially if crews and fire-fighting vehicles are busy at a fire. ✍

Bumbalong resident Danielle shows how it is done …

Bushfire Insurance:

Thanks to Allan Lehepuu of the Anembo Brigade, who forwarded some very useful material to us, on the subject of bushfire insurance.

Legal Aid NSW recently published a short guide: *Bushfires – Know Your Rights.*

See:
http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/factsheets-and-resources/bushfires-know-your-rights

The Law Insurance Service has also published a longer guide to what you could expect in the event of bushfire damage, what are the legal obligations of insurance companies, and what you should do.

See:
http://www.insurancelaw.org.au/fact-sheets/bushfire-insurance-guide/   ✍

What's in a box?
On display at the recent Cooma Rotary Markets: the Shelterbox.

We are all supposed to have developed a Bushfire Survival Plan – but what if the worst happens, and we lose everything in a disaster?

Shelterbox is a simple and practical answer for when (almost) the worst has happened. Founded in 2000 in the UK, Shelterbox has sent hundreds of thousands of boxes to emergencies around the world. In Australia, Shelterboxes have been sent to Queensland (floods), the Dunalley fires in Tasmania, and to Whittlesea after the Victorian fires.

… and how to use a fire blanket …

So what's in the box? Answer: everything that a family needs, who have just lost everything.

Firstly, the box itself, a sturdy plastic trunk, can used as a water container or a crib. In the box is a family-sized dome tent, groundsheets, blankets, mosquito nets, water containers and purification gadgets, cooking pots and cutlery and mugs; a primus stove; a tool kit with hammer, saw and screwdriver; even a children's activity pack.

At the time of writing, 500 ShelterBoxes have been sent to the Phillipines.   ✍

Grazing and fire:

Research published in November (*Austral Ecology*) shows that Alpine cattle grazing does little to reduce destructive bushfires.

Researchers from the University of Tasmania examined controversial cattle grazing in the Victorian High Country.

Proponents of grazing within the Alpine National Park claim "grazing reduces blazing" and that the severe fires in Australia's alpine forests in recent years could be reduced in extent, intensity, and ultimately damaging effects by the continuation of cattle grazing.

But others point to the degradation cattle cause to alpine ecosystems by spreading weeds, triggering erosion, trampling bogs and fouling streams.

The researchers surveyed over 11,400 km^2 of the Victorian Alps by analysing satellite images of the area. They looked at vegetation maps, looked back in time using historical satellite pictures, and took advantage of the cessation of grazing this decade and the extensive area burnt by fires over this period.

They then overlaid maps of crown scorch derived from satellite imagery following large bushfires in 2002/03 and 2006/07 with the location of pastoral leases. Crown scorch is a measure of fire intensity, based on the degree to which flames have reached a height which enables them to burn the forest canopy. This crown scorch can be detected in satellite images.

Cattle grazing had no effect on the likelihood of crown scorch in eucalypt forests and woodlands.

This result is plausible given that cattle are grazing animals, not browsing animals - they do not extensively feed on woody vegetation focusing on grasses instead. The researchers point out that grazing can be used to control fire risk in grassy areas.   ✍

Bushfires and communities:
*(adapted from **The Land**, and the Bushfire CRC Fire Note)*

January 2013 saw record temperatures, with some of the worst fire conditions ever recorded in parts of NSW.
The RFS engaged the Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) to undertake research into community bushfire preparedness and responses, in the areas impacted by the January fires, including Coonabarabran, Yass and Shoalhaven.

Telephone alerts are now the preferred method of warning for many in the community, but many people interviewed later were unable to receive messages due to lack of mobile phone coverage, and this contributed to their delayed decision-making.

Many people had a basic plan for what to do when threatened by a bushfire, but few had documented it or used the RFS Bush Fire Survival Plan kit.

Most people felt well prepared and had prepared their family much more than their home and property, although over half had cleared space around their home.

One problem was that fires are named for their starting point, which led to confusion about their later position.

Few residents understood the implications of the different fire danger levels on their safety, and actions to take at each, apart from Catastrophic.

The full report is on the RFS website. ✍

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: $20.00 for adults, $5.00 for juniors. Donations are always welcome. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. ✍

The new CFU trailer for the Bumbalong community

We wish all our friends and members a safe and happy festive season.
✍
Members: please let the brigade know about your availability during the holiday period.