

# Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 167\* October 2015



Michael on the Tinderry Road fire ground

## **Committee 2015-2016:**

**Fire Captain:** Graham Povey  
**Senior Deputy:** Nick Goldie  
**Deputies:** Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears, Michael Burton, Barry Woolacott  
**President:** Michael Burton  
**Secretary:** Sandra Lauer  
**Treasurer:** Bob Morison  
**Training Officer:** Jeremy Mears  
**Equipment Officers:** Michael Burton, Karl Higgins  
**Community Awareness:** Nick Goldie, Eliška Donaldson  
**Fundraising:** Gill Robinson  
**Permits:** Graham Povey

**NSW RFSA Delegate:** Jeremy Mears

## **Call out:**

At lunch time on *Saturday 19 September*, units were called to an escaped burn at a familiar address south of Bredbo. *Bravo* was soon on the road (Graham, Barry) followed by *Charlie* (Michael B, Jeremy, Sandra.) The Colinton trucks joined crews from Bredbo.

The fire was burning briskly on steep ground with a love grass cover, but trucks were unable to access some areas because of wet and boggy conditions. Several trucks became bogged and had to be rescued by tractor. At one point, the fire could only be reached by laying out 170m of hose.

The fire was contained by late afternoon.

Day Two of the official Bushfire Danger Season (*Friday 2 October*) began with an early mid-morning call for a fire on Cappawidgee Road, south of Bredbo. Bredbo *Seven* (James B) was quickly on scene, and there was a pager call to neighbouring brigades. Colinton *Seven Charlie* (Michael B, Daniel) and *Seven Bravo* (Graham, Kieran) soon headed south. *Alpha* (Nick, Sandra) was held on stand-by at Baroona Road. The fire was in three hectares of grass. By noon the fire was contained, and crews were stood down in early afternoon.

On *Monday 5 October*, there was a call from Michelago at mid afternoon. A smallish area of fire was burning in dense love grass with a flaming gas cylinder in the midst of the fire.

Two Michelago trucks were joined by Colinton *Seven Alpha* (Michael B, Jeremy, Nick) and *Bravo* (Graham, Barry). Bredbo *Six* arrived with a supply

of bulk water, and the fire, including the gas bottle, was soon extinguished. (At one point it was thought that the gas bottle contained acetylene, which has a mandatory safety perimeter of 100 metres from the bottle. Fortunately this was not the case.)

Crews were home by late afternoon.



*Springvale – the view from the cabin*

The fire weather forecast for the following day, the first for the summer, was for a temperature of 30°C, with NW winds gusting to 50 km/h, and all fire permits to be suspended from midnight.

Sure enough, the brigade radio network was busy all morning with calls for assistance at fires, mostly to the south of Cooma, and at three o'clock came a call for a local fire south west of Bredbo.

Crews from Colinton in *Alpha* (Jeremy, Sandra, Nick) *Bravo* (Graham, Kieran, Karl) and *Charlie* (Bob M, Barry, Daniel) joined trucks from Bredbo, Michelago and Cooma on the fire ground. This involved

fording the Murrumbidgee just north of Bredbo village, then following a steep track to the high ridge overlooking the river. The fire was driven by a gusty wind from the north-west, and was travelling slowly down-slope through very steep scrubby country.

This was inaccessible to vehicles, so the only means of containing the fire was by some skilled chainsaw operators dealing with “problem” trees, while long lengths of hose were carried by firefighters on foot, down the steep and flaming escarpment, which is very hard labour indeed. (Seven *Alpha*, as one typical example, used five full tanks of water and 150m of canvas hose.)



*Sandra on Springvale Ridge*

Well after nightfall, the fire was deemed to be “controlled”, and crews were offered a late supper from the Bredbo Brigade welfare trailer. Crews were home by 10.30 pm.

A Bredbo crew patrolled the fire ground the next morning, as a cool southerly change came through. 



*Springvale – a steep approach*

### **Training:**

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at 2.00 pm 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.*** 

### **Total Fire Bans:**

Lighting a fire on a day of Total Fire Ban attracts an on the spot fine of \$2200. If the matter goes to court, an offender could be fined up to \$5500 and/or 12 months gaol.

Penalties for a fire that escapes and damages or destroys life, property or the environment can attract much greater fines and gaol terms with maximums at \$132,000 and/or 14 years gaol.

\*\*\* Permits are automatically revoked if the Fire Danger Rating reaches *Very High* or above. 



*Springvale – looking east down the escarpment*

### **Climate in NSW:**

An October *Operational Brief* from RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers cites detailed forecasts from the Bureau of Meteorology for October to December 2015. According to the *Brief* there has been “a significant shift towards a drier October nation-wide, related to the emerging Indian Ocean Dipole reinforcing the strong El Niño.”

The *Operational Brief* describes weather conditions for NSW in coming months:

- El Niño is expected to peak in late spring/early summer
- There is a significant shift towards a drier October – December period
- High chances of warmer days and nights
- Heat waves more likely during the El Niño peak
- Grass and forest fuels will cure rapidly during October

Detailed information can be obtained from the BoM website:  
<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/> ↪

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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**

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**Volunteer!**

The Colinton Brigade welcomes new members, especially at the start of a new fire season. Volunteers are given full training and equipment, and do vital work in a friendly – sometimes exciting – environment. For details, contact any Committee member, or just turn up on a Saturday training day. You'll be made very welcome. ↪

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Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at  
[nickgoldie@bigpond.com](mailto:nickgoldie@bigpond.com)  
 02 6235 9190  
 by the first Saturday each month, or to any  
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 Views expressed in The Colinton Courier are not  
 necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the  
 RFS.*

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**Fire Season:**

**A reminder that the  
Bushfire Danger Season  
started on  
1 October.**

**This means that  
NO FIRES  
may be lit without a permit.**

**All permits are revoked on  
days when there is a Total  
Fire Ban.**

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