

# Colinton Courier

*Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 168\* November 2015*



*the newly installed sprinkler system*

## **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 RFS Delegate:** Jeremy Mears

## **Call out:**

On the morning of *Thursday 22 October*, a medium-sized truck left Barooka Road, crossed the highway, and came to rest on its side at the bottom of the embankment. After some confused radio calls, the incident was attended by two police cars, an ambulance, Colinton Seven *Bravo* (Graham, Jeremy), and a tow-truck. The driver was unharmed. 

## **Bush Firefighter Course** *(from Jeremy Mears)*

The intensive BF course was held over two days (*24-25 October*) at Cooma Fire Control with an Assessment Day on *15 November* at Dalgety.

Some two dozen recruits including new Colinton members Laurence and Laura completed the course. Captain Graham and I attended as instructors on the Sunday.

First day was all theory. On the second day there was a quick refresher and then out in the fire-trucks to Cooma creek for a day of practical exercises, starting with an overview of the many items of firefighting equipment on the trucks: from AWGs to Quells and everything in between. Active reels, 25s,38s, 65mm lay flat percolating and non-percolating hoses were shown and demonstrated.

Then we moved onto the pumps to learn how to pump water on to the fire through the hoses and branches, and drafting water back into the truck from the creek, and practice with the various types of hoses, branches and extinguishing agents (foam), advancing and retreating with hoses fully charged.

Teamwork is critically important: when you are moving around with 30metres of hose, each crew member needs to work with the others to make sure no-one trips or is in trouble. Firefighting pumps are noisy, so standard hand signals are vitally important.

There was time for lunch somewhere and then hands-on practice with radio communication. A patient Fire Control Centre responding to many radio calls.

After a busy day we all returned to Firecom for a final debrief and then home.

### 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.***



*The Platypus sprinkler*

### Training (2):

Instructors from a number of Brigades including Colinton (Graham, Jeremy,

Sandra, Nick) met in Cooma on *Tuesday 3 November*, with Learning and Development Officer Tim Ingram.

Tim spoke about the role of Training Officers and Instructors, and the courses which will be offered to volunteers.

These courses (Bush Firefighter, Village Firefighter, Advanced Firefighter, Crew Leader, along with some specialist and advanced courses) have been considerably modified and updated. A final training calendar for the Monaro will soon be available.

### 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.

### ACT Warning:

(adapted from the *Canberra Times*, 25 October 2015)

Canberrans must prepare for a long, hot and potentially dangerous fire season that may last well into autumn, ACT Rural Fire Service chief officer Andrew Stark warns.

The strongest El Niño weather pattern since 1997, which is expected to bring hotter, drier days and more powerful winds in November and December, means it is unlikely last year's mild fire season will be repeated.

"Because of the mild summer], we were carrying out hazard reduction burns in

February 2015," Mr Stark said. "That is quite unique."

Although hazard reduction burning programs over the last two years have been successful, there is a lot of fuel on the ground waiting for the right conditions to feed a firestorm.

The harsh 2003 ACT fires were among the reasons why Canberra had not experienced such devastating fires in recent years.

However, that is changing.

"That year, 85 per cent of the bush areas of the ACT burnt," Mr Stark said. "But after 10 years, fuel on the ground accumulates back to peak levels. We certainly do have, across the ACT, high fuel loads in all our bushland areas again."

Mr Stark said climate change was having an impact on the frequency of fires, the intensity and the way they had to be fought.

"Without making judgments on what is causing it, firefighters are seeing climate change occurring," he said. "It is going to provide more and more challenges to firefighters and the community [in the years ahead.]"

### **Drones:**

Drones may be entertaining toys, serious scientific equipment – or even weapons.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CASA) says:

***“Never fly a drone, model aircraft or multirotor near bushfires.***

“While it might be tempting to record footage, you can pose a major safety risk to firefighting personnel in the air and on the ground.

“Even a small drone can represent a safety risk to manned aircraft. Due to this risk, firefighting aircraft can be grounded

if other unauthorised aircraft are spotted near firefighting operations, as was the case in the USA recently.

“Firefighters on the ground also depend on aerial support to help suppress and contain fires. By flying your drone, you not only put their lives in danger, but also the lives of the people and property they’re trying to protect.

“Aircraft—both manned and unmanned—that are not coordinated through the state or territory fire authority are requested to remain clear of aerial firefighting operations.

“CASA is working closely with state and territory firefighting services and the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC) to help raise awareness around the dangers of drone operators flying near bushfire-affected areas.”

See:

[https://www.casa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net351/f/assets/main/lib100071/rpa\\_brochure\\_fire\\_fighting.pdf](https://www.casa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net351/f/assets/main/lib100071/rpa_brochure_fire_fighting.pdf)



### ***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***





*a good water supply for the sprinklers*

### **DIY Sprinkler System:**

Colinton brigade member John S, soon to go overseas and leave his beautiful bush home in the hands of tenants, has done the sensible thing and installed a sprinkler system for his house.

With the help of Rosco, a local tradie, John has installed a system involving a ring of rooftop sprinklers to create a 'wall' of water droplets, backed up by three large garden sprinklers to wet down the surrounds.

The house sprinklers are fed from a 14,000 litre rainwater tank, while the garden sprinklers take water from a substantial dam. Each system has its own petrol-driven pump'

The house sprinklers are a new Australian- manufactured design (See: [platypussprinkler.com](http://platypussprinkler.com)). Materials and do-it-yourself installation cost about one third of an off-the-shelf system.



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



### **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.**

