

# Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 171\* February 2016



*Barry Aitchison, Medal of the Order of Australia*

## **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:**

Nil



## **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.***



## **Barry OAM:**

*(adapted from the Summit Sun, 28 January)*

Congratulations to Barry Aitchison, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the general division for his service to the community of the Monaro, in this year's Australia Day awards.

Barry is well known to many Colinton members. He is a highly respected former Fire Control Officer, Operations Officer and Firefighter who represented the Snowy River, Bombala and Cooma Monaro Fire Districts for more than 30 years.

Mick Holton, Vice President of the Volunteer Firefighters Association, says that Barry continues to work towards seeing improved land management practices.

"Barry's dedication to the preservation of the high country is inspirational," says Mick.

“A large area of high country which Barry owns was made available to the High Fire Project, run by CSIRO, the universities (notably the University of Sydney), RFS NSW, RFS ACT, the Victorian CFA, and National Parks (NSW, ACT, Victoria).

“This major bushfire research project was established to assess the effect of grazing and prescribed burning on alpine ecology, carbon emissions and water run-off.”



*Training: Jeremy demonstrating the use of a stand-pipe and hydrant*

### Hydrant Heroes:

Our colleagues at Fire and Rescue NSW are running a campaign throughout February: *Be a Hydrant Hero*. They are asking town and village residents to find their nearest hydrant and make sure that it is clean and serviceable, doesn't have a car parked on top of it, and (hopefully)

doesn't have any unwelcome creatures living in the hydrant pit.

The campaign includes a photo competition with some attractive prizes.

This is a good idea, for those living within cooee of a hydrant.

For country dwellers, we could adapt the idea:

- make sure that you know where your nearest water source is
- make sure it's accessible, clear of blackberries or barbed wire, doesn't have a vehicle parked across the access
- make sure that pumps and valves are fuelled and operational
- and see that there is a Storz fitting on your reserve or emergency tank, so that a fire truck can be instantly connected.

Note that each Colinton fire truck has a stand-pipe, that is, the vertical metal pipe which is screwed into an underground hydrant.

Hydrants can be found in towns and villages such as Bredbo which have reticulated water. There is a blue marker square on the roadway, and a marker plate on a nearby fence, post, or power pole. These marker plates are not standard, but usually have the letters H and P, and may have (in small lettering) the distance from the hydrant and the size of the water main.

Depending on circumstances, the hydrant may be used to re-fill a tanker (larger trucks have a special 'hydrant access') while the crew uses the pump and hoses to deal with the situation.

### Warmer winters:

Warmer winters, according to *The Canberra Times* (9 February) are responsible for more kittens. Cats, says

Kristina Vesk of the Cat Protection Society of NSW, are increasingly on heat and are breeding all year round. The RSPCA recommends de-sexing of all cats.

From the same *Canberra Times*, a more significant story (at least to the emergency services): residents and firefighters in the ACT are concerned that the situation of 2003 is going to be repeated, when massive fires killed four people and destroyed 487 homes.

Some familiar voices have been raised, including Tharwa firefighter Val Jeffery, who asserts that the ACT is following the world-wide trend, moving away from early detection and rapid initial response, and keeping bushfires as small as possible.

Mr Jeffery pointed to the 42ha Mount Clear fire. (See: *Colinton Courier* 170). "A small fire like that should have and could have been under control by daylight the next morning," he said.

Ex-CSIRO fire expert Dr Phil Cheney also called on the ACT to carry out an extensive program to reduce the amount of fuel on the ground, and "for blazes to be quickly attacked and extinguished by trained firefighters."

An ACT Emergency Services Agency spokesperson responded that all of the recommendations from the McLeod and coronial enquiries into the 2003 bushfires had now been implemented. 

### **Werriwa Wiener Dash:** (from Sandra L)

"I had been planning to make a firefighting outfit for our dachshund since I first retired my torn firefighting pants a few years ago.

"So, when the inaugural *Werriwa Wiener Dash* (dachshund race and best dressed) was announced for the Bungendore

Show, I decided it was time to get my sewing machine out and create a firefighting costume.

"As a bit of a bowerbird, I had collected some old "captain" patches during a clean up at the fire station. I used those as my inspiration to create some authentic personal protective clothing (PPC) for Bernard.



*Sandra with Fire Dog Bernard*

"Bernard's PPC includes: a captain's badge and stripes (approved by fire captain, Graham), a red helmet (the correct colour for an NSW RFS captain), a rope, a red flashing light, a pair of goggles and a pair of gloves (I made from old leather gloves). In the pockets he has a smoke mask and the *NSW RFS Firefighters Pocketbook* for reference.

"Bernard came third in the best dressed at the show; he was beaten by a clown and an Obi Wan costume.

"We plan to use Bernard in his costume at our Driver Reviver and for other fundraising activities ... Please place your

donations in his pocket. Notes only, as coins are too heavy!

“If you see us out and about, please come and say hello.”

### **Bushfire-proof architecture:**

A long article in *The Guardian* (9 February 2016) considers the possibility of “bushfire proof” home design. There are some interesting photos of specially designed houses, and very animated discussion in the following Comments section.

The consensus seems to be that, despite the best efforts of architects, there is no totally fire-proof dwelling without extensive removal of flammable trees and vegetation.

The issue of fire brigade access is also discussed.

See:

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/feb/09/bushfire-proof-houses-black-saturday-innovations>

### **Training Action Group 2016:**

Cooma-Monaro Learning and Development Officer Tim Ingram has brought together a large team of instructors, and created a detailed training schedule for the coming year.

Brigade members are encouraged to take part in the training program, upgrading qualifications and learning new skills.

Colinton Training Officer Jeremy has the details: and you can register for training courses though the website myrfs.

(Start at ‘My Profile’, then ‘Training Centre’, ‘Course Type’ and ‘Course’.)



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by the first Saturday each month, or to any  
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Views expressed in *The Colinton Courier* are not  
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RFS.



**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**

