

# Colinton Courier

*Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 177\* August 2016*



*Stall recovery on the steep Berridale 4WD course*

## **Committee 2016-2017:**

**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  
**Fundraising:** Gill Robinson  
**Permits:** Graham Povey

**NSW RFSA Delegate:** Jeremy Mears

## **Call out:**

An hour before midnight on *Friday 12 August*, the Bredbo brigade was called out to a motor vehicle accident, reported to involve two vehicles, up to eight people, and be “somewhere north of Bredbo”.

In the event, it was a minor incident which occurred at the Colinton Rest Area. At around midnight, Colinton Captain Graham was asked to supply a bag of absorbent material (“kitty litter”) to mop up spilled diesel, but no further Colinton resources were needed. ✍



*Berridale: Michael reverses out of a tight corner*

## Off-road driving:

A Rural Fire Driving and Off-road Driving course was held on *Saturday and Sunday 6-7 August*. Twenty participants from brigades across the Monaro took part.

As with First Aid and chainsaw operation, RFS driving qualifications are required to be renewed every three years. Colinton participants were Michael B, Tony C and Nick, Karl, with Graham as one of the instructors.

After a day of theory in Cooma, the second day was spent at the dedicated 4WD course near Berridale

Practical elements included stall recovery on steep slopes, gully crossings, guided reversing in difficult country, vehicle recovery and maintenance. 



*Berridale: Karl at the wheel*

## Emergency Management:

*(Book review by Nick Goldie)*

The title of this new book (*Incident Management in Australasia*) doesn't do it justice. It deserves something much more dramatic, like: *Disaster! How our Blokes coped with Fire, Flood, Fear!* But then it would be for a different audience.

The book is made up of ten chapters, each one dealing with a major emergency: floods in Queensland (2013) and Victoria (2011), a road-train cyanide spill at Tennant Creek (2007), major structural fires in Hobart (2007) and Adelaide (2012), the Christchurch earthquake (2011) and of course the tragic bushfires at Eyre Peninsula (2005), Kuring-Gai (2001), Linton (1998) and Canberra (2003).

Probably most of us know more about the Canberra fires – many of us were directly involved – and have followed the drawn-out enquiries, rich with accusations and counter-accusations which followed.

This book perhaps suffers from the fact that the different chapters are all written by Incident Controllers and Chief Officers, rather than firefighters on the ground, but that gives us a great insight into who and how decisions were made – incident management, in fact.

The Canberra chapter is written by Mark Crossweller, Director General, Emergency Management Australia, previously Assistant Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

It's a deeply personal account, starting with the disastrous lack of communication between the ACT and NSW services.

"I'm not interested in blame," says Crossweller, "but I am interested in accountability."

It was apparent that the Canberra fires went beyond anything that fire managers

had previously experienced. This – in itself – meant that the emergency services did let people down. Only some years after the event was the fire science able to explain what had actually happened.

This is at the core of Crossweller's belief that we need to change how we perceive the inevitability of natural disasters, and how the failure to learn from Canberra in 2003 had a direct bearing on Victoria's 'Black Friday' in 2009.

*Incident Management in Australasia: Lessons Learnt from Emergency Response*, Ed. Stuart Ellis & Kent MacCarter, CSIRO 2016. ↪

### **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.*** ↪

### **RFSA Survey:**

The Rural Fire Service Association (RFSA) is carrying out a survey of all RFS volunteers, to "help to equip the RFSA to better represent volunteers".

A similar survey is being carried out by volunteer firefighters in other States around Australia, and the nation-wide results will be compared and collated.

To take part in the survey, go to [www.rfsa.org.au/cavfa-survey](http://www.rfsa.org.au/cavfa-survey). ↪

### **California Fires:**

At the time of writing, the western states of the USA are suffering a large number

of wildfires, with the most serious being the *Sand* and *Soberones* fires near the Big Sur, Southern California. These two uncontrolled fires have burned more than 68,000 acres.

Other major fires are burning uncontrolled in states from Alaska to Wyoming, covering more than 300,000 acres. Most of the 35 "active large fires" were started by lightning strikes.

To keep up with fire events in the USA, see the excellent website of the National Interagency Fire Center:

<https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/nfn.htm>

"Fire seasons are an average 78 days longer than they were in 1970, and the number of acres scorched each year has doubled since 1980."

This is according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, reported in the Huffington Post in an article accompanying a series of satellite images of wildfire – from the Greek Islands to California to Kakadu.

See:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/07/31/a-look-at-this-years-raging-wildfires-from-space>

Meanwhile, a number of deaths have been reported from Portugal, and the Portuguese Atlantic island of Madeira, where fires have burned out of control in recent days. Popular holiday destinations as well as farming and forest areas and the capital Funchal were threatened. In France, the town of Vitrolles (20km from Marseille) was badly damaged with the loss of twenty homes.

See:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1593919/chilling-map-shows-deadly-threat-posed-by-wildfires-in-popular-holiday-destinations-as-flames-continue-to-rip-through-southern-europe/> ↪



*Tucker time at the 4WD course*



**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**



*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  
Committee member. For production assistance we  
are grateful to:*



Corporate Design  
& Print Solutions  
*and to*



**M & T MOTORS**

**24 Hour Towing - Mechanical Repairs  
6452 5250 – 0414 484 180**

*The Colinton Courier is also available at  
[www.michelagoregion.org.au](http://www.michelagoregion.org.au)  
Views expressed in The Colinton Courier are not  
necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the  
RFS.*



**Open Day Saturday 10  
September:**

Everyone is invited to meet  
Brigade members and have a  
look at our equipment and  
vehicles, during the course of  
the usual Brigade training day:  
*Saturday 10 September*, from  
2pm until 4pm.

