

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 178* September 2016



Rake-hoe work at Polo Flat: Pepe

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:

Mid-afternoon on *Tuesday 6 September* a grass fire was reported from Bunyan, opposite the glider club airfield on the Monaro Highway.

Cooma *Nine* was soon on scene. Cooma Captain Tom reported that the fire front extended several hundred metres and requested assistance.

Seven tankers were eventually deployed, including Cooma *Seven* and *One*, Jerangle *Seven*, Bredbo *Nine* and *Six*, and Colinton *Seven Bravo* (Barry, Graham).

Colinton Captain Graham reported that the fire was burning very hotly in thick lovegrass, and eventually spread along a 700-meter front covering 80-90 hectares.

The fire was blacked out and crews were home by evening. ☺

Fire danger period:

The official bushfire danger period begins on *1 October 2016*, and unless changed, will end on *31 March 2017*.

During this period, no fires may be lit without a permit. Permits include the following conditions:

1. *At least one person must be present at the site of the fire from the time it is lit until such times as it is extinguished, unless specified otherwise*

2. *This fire permit must be carried by the permit holder at the time a fire authorised by this fire permit is lit. The permit is to remain on site with those present, if applicable,*

throughout the duration of the fire, until extinguished.

3. Under Section 130 of the Act, and Clause 33, the permit holder must give either verbal or written notice of at least 24 hours (a minimum 24 hours applies unless specified otherwise) to adjoining occupiers or owners of land, including land that is separated by a lane, road or waterway.

4. Permits will be suspended by the Fire Control Centre if the Fire danger Index is expected to exceed High. Permit holders will be notified. ↪

Mower madness:

(adapted from Time Magazine, 21 August 2016)

Two men blamed for starting the Stouts Creek fire in Oregon last year will be billed \$37 million, the amount it cost to put the fire out.

Officials want Dominic Decarlo, 70, and Cloyd Deardoff, 64, to pay back the government for the fire, which started July 30, 2015 and destroyed 25,000 acres.

Investigators discovered the men's lawnmowers were the cause of the fire — at the time, people were barred from mowing lawns between 10 am and 8 pm due to fire restrictions. The Stouts Creek fire started in the afternoon.

The \$37 million will cover the cost of firefighting crews, helicopters, bulldozers and food for the firefighters. ↪

Bush Firefighter (BF) Course:

It used to be called "Basic" firefighter, but anyone who has been through it will recognise that the extensive BF course is far from "basic". The manual alone is like a phone book.

Some thirty new RFS members took part in the recent Bush Firefighter course (*Saturday and Sunday 27/28 August*) in Cooma.

Three Colinton members (Leo, Callum and Pepe) were involved, and Colinton Captain Graham, along with Nick and Sandra, were instructors.



More rake-hoes: Leo and Callum

Day one was mainly theory, day two mainly practical, with seven trucks heading to Cooma Back Creek to practice hosework, pumping, and drafting from the creek. ↪

The Coming Bushfire Season:

(adapted from the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre)

The *Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2016* shows a mixed picture for fire potential, with the exceptionally warm and wet conditions through winter likely to continue into spring.

Every month of 2016 has seen Australia's national mean temperature above the long term average, although with the breakdown of El Niño, rainfall has been above average across most of the

country - winter has seen the second wettest on record.

The pattern of heavy rainfall following a strong El Niño is not uncommon and is tied to the warming of ocean waters around Australia. Spring is likely to see above average across most of the country, with the exception of parts of New South Wales and Queensland.

There is a higher chance of above average rainfall across northern and eastern Australia.

The *Seasonal Bushfire Outlook* for southern Australia is used by fire authorities to make strategic decisions on resource planning and prescribed fire management for the upcoming fire season. The outlook is developed at an annual workshop convened by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council.

The Outlook map (see: <http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/>) shows the bushfire outlook for southern Australia through to the end of 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. ↪

Get Ready: *(from the RFS)*

Now is the time to get ready.

Research has found that for 90% of homes destroyed by bush fire, the cause was burning embers.

Embers can travel many kilometres from a fire. Even if you live well away from the bush you can still be at risk.

Little things you do now can make a big difference during a bush fire.

By trimming overhanging trees and shrubs, keeping your grass mowed, removing flammable material, clearing up fallen debris and leaves and preparing hoses to reach around your home you can help prevent burning embers from destroying your home.

If you follow the five simple steps to getting ready and have a bush fire survival plan you will reduce the risk to you and your home.

1 **TRIM**
overhanging trees and shrubs.

2 **MOW**
your lawn and remove all the cut grass.

3 **REMOVE**
material that can burn around your home (e.g. door mats, wood piles, mulch, leaves, outdoor furniture).

4 **CLEAR**
and remove all the debris and leaves from the gutters surrounding your home.

5 **PREPARE**
a hose or hoses that can stretch all around the house. ↪

Over there - US Fires:

A very good source of information about US fires is the website provided by the *National Interagency Fire Centre (NIFC)*, at Boise, Idaho (visited by Colinton members Sandra and Jeremy in 2015).

At the time of writing, according to the NIFC, there are fifteen major fires burning

in seven States: California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, covering an area of 546,661 acres. The largest fire currently burning is the Pioneer Fire in Boise National Forest, just eight miles from Idaho City, which covers an area of nearly 200,000 acres.

A Boise website reports almost one thousand firefighters fighting the Pioneer blaze, in 21 crews, 9 helicopters, 30 fire tankers, 4 dozers, 17 bulk water carriers, and three masticators. (Masticators? Do we need one?)

According to the NIFC, the fire is "56% contained." Authorities suspended aerial firefighting because of unmanned drones which spectators sent into the fire area, despite appeals to the public with the slogan:

IF YOU FLY, WE CAN'T.



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at nickgoldie@bigpond.com
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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



**And did the Earth move for you,
darling?**

At about nine p.m. (2100) on *Friday 2 September*, when most of us were watching a movie on television, there was a loud "Boom" followed by some seconds of shaking.

This was heard and felt on Lawler Road (Tony R), Poveys Road (Graham), Baroona Road (Nick), but no one knew what the cause was. It sounded like blasting – but on a Friday night? Could it be something very nasty on the Highway?

The Geoscience Australia website makes all clear, and has a questionnaire for anyone who heard or felt what was a real, but small, earthquake: a Magnitude Two 'quake 10km underground, situated in (or under) open ground between the Greenslopes turn-off and Micalago Station.

See:

<http://www.ga.gov.au/earthquakes/getQuakeDetails.do?quakeld=3866314&orid=1372129&sta=CNBd>

