

Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 83* October 2008



Open Day – making Sandra welcome ...

Committee 2008-2009:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey

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Training Officer: Jeremy Mears

Equipment Officers: Graham Povey, Nick Goldie

Community Awareness: Nick Goldie

Permits: Graham Povey

NSW RFSA Delegate: Jeremy Mears

Call out:

September brought gusty weather and grassfires, with the Bredbo and Numeralla brigades particularly busy. At 1300 on *Thursday 11 September*, Colinton was asked to assist Bredbo with a grass fire on the Jerangle road, which threatened a building. Colinton Seven *Bravo* (Graham, Barry) attended, while *Alpha* (Martin, Nick) was held on stand-by. Crews were home by mid-afternoon.

At around 1800 on the same day, there were reports of smoke across the highway near Ryries Hill Road. This soon turned out to be a grass fire burning briskly, and crews from Michelago and Bredbo were joined by Colinton Seven *Alpha* (Bob, Aldo, Nick) and Seven *Bravo* (Graham, Barry). The fire was extinguished by 1930. Seven *Alpha* (Jeremy, Nick) returned to patrol the fire the next morning.

Crews were on stand-by on *Monday 22 September*, a day of Total Fire Ban.

On *Tuesday 23 September* Colinton *Nine* (Graham, Barry) and Seven *Alpha* (Martin, Jeremy, Nick) carried out a small hazard reduction burn at a property near Ingelara.

Colinton crews (*One*, Graham and Barry, and *Seven Alpha*, Nick and Jeremy) were asked at around nine o'clock to relieve Bredbo crews attending a serious motor vehicle accident which had happened in early morning mist, just north of Bredbo on *Wednesday 24 September*. The highway was blocked until early afternoon, with traffic diverted at Cooma, Williamsdale and Michelago.

On *Saturday 27 September*, crews from Bredbo, Michelago and Colinton took part in a major burn at the new Bush Heritage

reserve at Scottsdale. The weather was warm and windy, so the burn was handled with caution, and after a long day not much more was achieved than a substantial fire break in dense love-grass along the eastern border of the hundred-hectare burn area. All four Colinton trucks attended: Seven *Bravo* (Bob, Aldo), Seven *Alpha* (Jeremy, Sandra, Nick), *One* (Martin, Barry, Jacqui, Ray) and *Nine* (Graham). ↪

Open Day 2008:

RFS Open Day was held on *Saturday 20 September*. Colinton members enjoyed a BBQ and welcomed a small number of visitors. Junior brigade members showed their skills in extinguishing a (small) fire, making damper, and toasting marshmallows. By mid-afternoon the day had turned gusty, so the planned HR burn was postponed to another day. ↪



Open Day - making damper

Training:

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday, at

two o'clock, at the Station at Colinton. Everyone is welcome.

The Junior brigade is in action, every second Thursday night. Contact Bob Morison or Tony Campbell for details. ↪

Total Fire Bans:

During a Total Fire Ban no fire may be lit in the open. All Fire permits are suspended. This includes incinerators and barbecues which burn solid fuel, e.g. wood or charcoal. You may use a gas or electric barbecue, but only if:

- *It is on a residential property within 20 metres of the house or dwelling;*
- *It is a picnic area and the appliance is approved by Council, National Parks or State Forest ;*
- *It is under the direct control of a responsible adult;*
- *The ground within 2 metres of the barbecue is cleared of all materials which could burn;*
- *You have an immediate and continuous supply of water available.*

Lighting a fire on a day of Total Fire Ban attracts a fine of 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 \$100,000 and/or 14 years gaol. Civil law suits can also be brought against the person responsible for a fire by those seeking compensation for losses sustained. ↪

Brigade membership:

Membership: please pay by cash at training, or cheque to The Treasurer, Colinton Rural Fire Brigade, 88 Weemala Lane, Michelago NSW 2620.

Membership fees: \$10.00 for residents, \$50.00 for non-residents. Donations are always welcome. If paying by mail, please

provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you.



Open Day - marshmallows ...

Media skills:

The RFS held an intensive course for Media Liaison Officers (MLOs) at Orange on 25-26 September.

The course was given by RFS media manager Rebel Talbert and two of her colleagues. Cooma-Monaro was represented by Nick and by Sandy Robinson of Cooma FCC. The task of MLOs is to deal with local media during fires and other incidents. This is very important when communities are depending on the media, especially radio, for accurate information about possible threats to life and property.



Bushfires and radio communication:

Scratchy radio? A research paper published by James Cook University in Queensland concludes it could be caused by the amount of potassium in burning fuel.

The authors of the paper did a number of experiments involving VHF and UHF radio transmitters, and quite large bonfires on the grounds of JCU. Their conclusion was that radio communications can be seriously affected by ionization derived from minerals, mainly potassium, in the fuel; varying from low (typically, eucalypts) to very high (savannah grasses), and that this can lead to effects ranging from minor distortion to total radio blackout.



Radio Communication – helpful hints:

[In October 2003 we published some 'helpful hints' from Louise Povey, a trained and skilled radio operator with RFS Fire Control Centre in Cooma. With her permission, we reprint her hints, noting that there are also RFS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).]

Communication on the fireground is of utmost importance. It is your link to other crews, your leader and Fire Comms. Below are some helpful hints.

- Think about what you want to say before you talk – in the heat of the moment your mind may be thinking a thousand things at once.
- Press the button on the microphone *before* you start to talk – absolutely vital on PMR as there is a short delay before transmission (take a breath).
- Identify yourself – eg “Fire Comms, this is Colinton Seven Bravo, over.”
- Do not release the button until after you have finished talking – you want them to hear all of your message.
- Keep message brief – others may be waiting to transmit.
- If you have a long message, transmit in small sections - emergencies can cut in and logging can be done.
- Speak clearly, evenly, calmly and a little slower – we are not deaf and do not like it when you shout at us.
- Become familiar with colour codes and use them – eg “Fire Comms this is Colinton

Nine, yellow, over”, this indicates the priority of the call.

- Call Fire Comms when:

- leaving the station – eg
“Fire Comms this is Colinton Seven Alpha, over.”
“*This is Fire Comms, go ahead Colinton Seven Alpha, over.*”
“Seven Alpha en route to ... with a crew of 3, Elvis Presley, Tom Jones and John Farnham, over.”
- On scene
- Other information as necessary, GPS readings etc.
- Changing location
- Leaving the scene
- Returning to station
- Closing down – Fire Comms need to know where you are at all times, for your safety.

- Check that the volume on the radio set is at a level that can be heard at all times – it is embarrassing to be told over the UHF to turn up the volume on the PMR.

- Avoid ‘feedback’ from a handheld radio when using the truck set – a horrible screeching noise is all that can be heard at the other end. Turn off handheld PMR when in the vehicle.

As with all things, practice makes perfect. These are just a few hints and not intended to cover all you need to know. For more detailed information, come to training and/or contact your captain. LP.

Summer Rosters:

During the hotter months, especially at weekends and holidays, the brigade needs to know who is available to attend call-outs.

To this end, we are compiling summer rosters. If you are a brigade member, and are NOT going to be available at any particular times or dates, please let us know well in advance.

It is also helpful to know if properties will be unattended. If you are going to be out

of area during a time of fire danger, especially at weekends or holidays, let the brigade know!

Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at horehound@yless4u.com.au
02 6235 9190
by the first Saturday each month, or to any Committee member. For production assistance we are grateful to:
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The Colinton Courier is also available at www.michelagoregion.org.au/bushfire/brigades.htm

Views expressed in **The Colinton Courier** are not necessarily those of the editor, the Brigade, or the 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 4131
0419 406 908