

# Colinton Courier

Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade \* No 92\* July 2009



*Rein hands over Seven Charlie to Graham*

## Committee 2009-2010:

**Fire Captain:** Graham Povey  
**Senior Deputy:** Nick Goldie  
**Deputies:** Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears  
**President:** Martin Hughes  
**Secretary:** Nick Goldie  
**Treasurer:** Bob Morison  
**Training Officer:** Jeremy Mears  
**Equipment Officers:** Jeremy Mears  
**Community Awareness:** Nick Goldie  
**Permits:** Graham Povey  
**NSW RFSA Delegate:** Jeremy Mears

## Call out:

Nil



## Welcome Charlie!

Colinton's elderly Toyota 'Cat *Nine*', used primarily as the Captain's vehicle, has finally been replaced with a brand-new second-hand 'Cat *Seven*' to be known henceforth as *Seven Charlie*.

Colinton *Nine* will not be much lamented. She was elderly, occasionally temperamental, her water tank leaked, and – above all – she was petrol powered, which meant that she was no longer even allowed on a fire-ground.

Captain Graham took delivery of *Seven Charlie* on 10 July from Fire Control in Cooma, along with a couple of new hoses and a battery charger (just in case). Most of the fire-fighting equipment which *Charlie* needs will be recycled from *Nine*.

Newcomers to a fire brigade are sometimes puzzled by the 'Cat' numbers. In general, the smaller the number, the larger the truck. Category *One* is the largest vehicle used by the RFS, weighing 13000kg, with a water capacity up to 4000 litres, and a cab that seats five or six. Cat *Seven* trucks are described as 'light bush fire tankers' – no two trucks are quite the same, but they have a water tank holding up to 1600 litres, and a single (cramped) cab for three. Cat *Nine* vehicles are even less standardized, but are generally 4WD utes with a water capacity up to 800 litres.

Colinton's Sevens have been further modified so that *Seven Alpha* is equipped for bushfires, and *Seven Bravo* for

structural or vehicle fires – with the proviso that, in real life, whoever gets there first does the job. They all have excellent off-road capabilities.

The RFS also makes use of urban pump trucks, communications vehicles, community awareness trailers, troop-carriers, and a variety of cars, utes and wagons for carrying personnel. ↪



*Helen and Kim at the burn*

### **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.

Congratulations to Barrie, Jacqui and Martin who recently completed the Advanced Firefighter course; and to

Graham, Jeremy and Nick who completed the RFS Instructors course and the Assessment Advocate course.

Training for July was a 'burn' of a lovegrass paddock off Povey's Road. The weather was cold and unpromising, but the burn was completed successfully using the three Cat Sevens and crews including Graham, Jeremy, Bob, Nick, Tony, Gill, Noreen, Justin, Kim, Helen and Trish. ↪

### **Winter house fires:**

*One in three winter house fires start between 4pm and 8pm – as people light their fires and cook their evening meals.*

Officially launching this year's NSW Winter Fire Safety campaign, Emergency Services Minister Steve Whan joined the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) and NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) to urge people to take basic fire safety precautions.

"Winter is traditionally the worst time of year for fires in the home," Mr Whan said.

"There were more than 1500 house fires across NSW last winter, each one causing trauma and distress, especially for those unfortunate residents who lost their homes and all their possessions.

"NSW Fire Brigades research indicates that about one in three winter house fires occur between 4pm to 8pm. This is the time when a lot of families arrive home and start cooking dinner and warming up their homes with heaters and fireplaces.

"Vigilance during this time is important, particularly as the data shows us that almost half of all winter house fires in 2008 started in the kitchen and a further 22 per cent were caused by heating equipment such as portable heaters."

Mr Whan urged families to ensure they had working smoke alarms and home escape

plans and to make sure they took other simple steps to ensure their homes and families were protected.

"It is vital that people pay close attention to the stove when cooking, even at low temperatures, and not leave it unattended," he said.

"Portable heaters and other heating appliances were the second most common cause of winter fire deaths last year.

"People should ensure all heating appliances, including electric blankets, are in good working order and make sure flammable materials like clothes, curtains and bedspreads are at least one metre away from any heat source.

"A house fire can be devastating and potentially fatal. Every home must have at least one smoke alarm on each level, which can give you an early warning and the best possible chance to escape a fire."

NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins said families should also consider having a fire blanket and fire extinguisher in the kitchen.


"Some small fires can be extinguished with a fire blanket or fire extinguisher. You should only attempt to extinguish a fire if it is safe to do so and you have the appropriate equipment," he said.

"If not, get out of the house immediately and call Triple Zero (000) so the fire services can be dispatched as soon as possible."


RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons urged all residents to ensure that they knew how to escape safely in the event of a fire.

"People should develop a home escape plan, identifying two exits from each room where possible and a safe meeting place for everyone to go to once they're out of the house," he said.

"By practising the escape plan with your family, you can ensure that it can be implemented safely and effectively."

The NSWFB and RFS are currently running a series of community safety television advertisements in regional NSW highlighting winter fire dangers. 

### **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: \$15.00 for adults, \$5.00 for juniors. Donations are always welcome. Please provide a return address so a receipt can be mailed to you. 

  
*Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at [horehound@yless4u.com.au](mailto: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](http://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.*



### **Victoria:**

We have been watching with interest the Bushfires Royal Commission in Victoria, in particular the debate surrounding the "stay and defend or go early" policy.



Evidence presented by Kevin Tolhurst (Bushfire CRC, Uni. Of Melbourne) was reported in *The Age* (8 June).

“The Black Saturday fires were what Tolhurst described as a ‘blow-up’ – a combination of long and short-term weather, fuel loads, and the fire itself, which fed on and magnified its ferocity in a way only now being understood.

“Long term drought came first. Next was the late-January heat-wave – a week of 40-plus temperatures that ‘cured’ the landscape so that even green leaves went crisp and ready to burn. Then came the area’s hottest day on record, 47 degrees, with average winds of 60 km/h.

“The fire front, Tolhurst now believes, does not act like a wave lasting 15 minutes – a feature of the traditional model. Instead, this ‘area of fire’ envelops a place for an hour or two in heat so intense that survival is tough, and fire fighting impossible.”

The full story by *Age* writer Michael Bachelard is at:

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/anatomy-of-an-unstoppable-firestorm-20090606-bz84.html>

### Fire permits and winter fires:

A look at the RFS website <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/> will show that fire permits are not needed anywhere in the State at this time of year. However there are still some basic rules to observe if you are planning a burn.

At the very least, inform your neighbours, make sure that you have the right equipment to deal with any situation, and be aware of wind and weather conditions at the time and as forecast.

It is a courtesy to *let your local fire brigade know*. A plume of smoke generates

anxious phone calls from other residents and passers-by, which can keep emergency services needlessly busy while they investigate.



*At the burn - Noreen at the wheel*

### **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**