

Colinton Courier

*Newsletter of the Colinton Rural Fire Brigade * No 95* October 2009*



'Blowdown' on the Eastern Gas Pipeline

Committee 2009-2010:

Fire Captain: Graham Povey
Senior Deputy: Nick Goldie
Deputies: Bob Morison, Jeremy Mears
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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:

September started with the Bongobilla fire. At around lunch time on *Tuesday 1 September*, the Anembo brigade was called to yet another love-grass burn which had escaped. Deputy Captain Allan quickly decided that he needed reinforcements, and trucks from Michelago and Colinton (Seven *Charlie*, Graham, and *Alpha*, Martin Tony R and Nick) set off up the Tinderry Road and then south along Calabash Road and the Calabash Fire Trail. The fire was burning steadily in scrub and rough country, but was under control by late evening. The last crews were home before midnight.

On *Wednesday 2 September*, brigade president Martin attended a motor vehicle accident on the highway near Bredbo North – he was by chance in the right place at the right time, as was *Michelago One*, returning from repairs at the shire workshop.

On *Saturday 5 September* there was a pager call at 1430 for a love-grass fire (again!) in the Bumbalong area. Colinton Seven *Bravo* was very quickly at the fire (Bob, Barry, Jacqui), with Seven *Alpha* (Ray, Nick) not far behind. Colinton member Brian was already on scene, while Tony R arrived in his own vehicle (only to be sent home again.) Bumbalong land-owners were also present in force with water tanks on utes, tractors, and a privately owned fire truck. Happily there was little wind, so the fire was quickly contained. Even without wind, flame heights reached about three metres, as four or five hectares of love-grass burned. Members were home by 1700.

At 1930 on *Tuesday 8 September* Colinton and Bredbo brigades were alerted by pager

to a motor vehicle accident in the vicinity of Bumbalong Road. Bredbo captain was first on scene; a single vehicle had left the road, rolled, and ended up a long way into a paddock. The driver was not seriously harmed. Colinton Seven *Alpha* (Ray, Bob, Nick) joined Bredbo *One* and *Nine*, while Colinton *One* (Tony R, Gill, Barry, Jacqui) were on stand-by at the station but were stood down as soon as possible. Bredbo and *Alpha* crews were home by 2200 after seeing the vehicle safely on to a tow-truck, and doing some temporary repairs to the hole in the fence. ⚡

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.

A Basic Firefighter (BF) course will be held at Colinton on *Thursday 12 and 19 November* (evening) and *Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 November*. Please tell Nick or Graham or Jeremy if you are interested in attending. ⚡

Training (2) – it's a gas ...

On *Tuesday 8 September*, members of NSW and ACT fire brigades and local RFS brigades (Cooma, Tom; Michelago, Aldo; Numeralla, Bruce; Colinton, Nick; Anembo, Hans), Martin representing Cooma Council, all with suitable hearing protection, attended a Gas Pipeline Emergency Response Training Session. This was arranged by the Jemena company at the Eastern Gas Pipeline training facility near the Burra Road. The event consisted of three 'blowdowns', where engineers from the gas company released natural gas under very high pressure (12,000 kpa) in a

controlled jet. This enables them to isolate and empty sections of the pipeline if repairs are needed. Advice to the fire brigades in the event of an 'incident' was: stay well clear and let the gas company know, soonest. Phone numbers are displayed along the pipeline. The gas is under such pressure that it does not ignite readily - but don't fly a helicopter into the top of the gas plume where the air/gas mixture is just right for ignition ... ⚡



Captain Tom (Cooma) at the gas release valve

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. ⚡

❧

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

❧

The Italian Job:

Colinton members Jeremy and Sandra returned recently from their European Grand Tour, during which Jeremy made a point of visiting fire brigades across the continent. In Venice, naturally, the fire trucks are boats ... ❧



Every brigade should have one ...

Weather:

We have just experienced the warmest winter on record, according to the Bureau of Meteorology. From Matt Cawood of *The Land*:

August 2009 was the warmest August on Australian record, and the past winter has been the warmest on record for NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The Bureau of Meteorology's National Climate Centre reported yesterday (1 September) that the mean August temperature for Australia shattered all previous records, with temperatures 2.47 °C above the long-term average, just short of 1 °C above the previous record set in 2006.


August mean day-time temperatures were 3.2 °C above the average and 1.14 °C above the 2006 record. The recent heat wave set records in 87 long-term monitoring stations, including 37.8 °C at



Martin at the gas blowdown

Mungindi, NSW, on the 24th and 38.5 °C at Bedourie, Qld, on the 29th.

NSW, South Australia and Victoria all had their warmest winters on record.

And in late September, the BOM issued its quarterly forecast, for the last three months of the year: hot, hot, and hot. 



Items for **The Colinton Courier** to Nick Goldie at
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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.



Fuel reduction:

*[from PS News 22 September;
by Mark Poynter, a professional forester with 30 years experience, a member of the Institute of Foresters and the Association of Consultant Foresters, and author of the book Saving Australia's Forests and its Implications. The full article first appeared in ABC's Unleashed.]*

"We can't afford not to manage forests and fire if we wish to avoid losing human life and property.


"The alternative notion that fire can be managed by concentrated expenditure on emergency bushfire suppression is unrealistic due to the tendency for fires burning in heavy fuels to become uncontrollable firestorms.

"Nevertheless, we have increasingly moved towards this model of massive expenditure weighted firmly towards emergency fire suppression at the expense of off-season, year round preventative activities.

"While there is a need for emergency bushfire suppression capability, it needs to be appropriately balanced against preventative land management activities such as fuel reduction burning.

"The reality is that we will always have bushfires, including ones that combine with severe weather to become beyond control.

"As we cannot control the weather or most of the means of fire ignition, forest fuels are the only factor that can be manipulated to reduce bushfire intensity.

"On this basis, the strategic use of fuel reduction burning should be embraced by the community as one of the few tools that can minimise bushfire damage." 

Victorian Report:

We have obtained a copy of the 360-page *Interim Report of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission*, should anyone wish to read it. Meanwhile ABC journalist Jane Cowan, who has covered the fires from the beginning, has written an unflattering account of the Commission for the ABC Opinion website under the heading [Euphemisms, spin and the Bushfires Royal Commission](#). "Make no mistake", she says, "the Interim Report is a scathing assessment of the bushfire system in place on Black Saturday." 