

SOUTHERN EMBERS NO.12 – December 2016

TASMANIAN VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES ASSOCIATION "Representing volunteer fire-fighters throughout Tasmania"

Welcome to the twelfth edition of Southern Embers, we hope you have all kept dry over winter and are getting ready for the summer ahead. The Southern Branch of the TVFBA has had a busy six months dealing with issues and concerns on behalf of volunteers at various levels over the fire season. The Southern Branch has also had its Branch AGM and the State Council of the Association has also had its AGM.

We would also like to congratulate Gerald Crawford on being presented with the Volunteer Medal for his service over many years in supporting Volunteers!

Upcoming Events

Southern Branch visit to Runnymede Station – Monday, 12th December 2016

Southern Branch visit to Bruny Island – Early 2017

Upcoming Weather Update from Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

The start of the fire season in Tasmania will be delayed as long as top up rains continue. Fuels less influenced by soil moisture such as moorlands, heaths and scrubs, have a normal bushfire potential, while forest fuels have normal to below normal bushfire potential. Grassland fuels have a normal to below normal potential, but will provide a significant threat in the New Year when they are cured. Given the wet outlook for the next few months, opportunities for planned burning will be very limited, at least until autumn. By early summer, without top up rain, most fuels will have a normal potential in terms of ignitability. Fire weather conditions are likely to be average or even subdued. However, if rainfall is above average the fire season potential will be below normal at least until the New Year, when grasslands will cure. Overall, the state has normal bushfire potential.

- See the full report: <http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/hazardnotes/019>

Hobart District Light Tanker Competitions

Congratulations Lenah Valley for winning the 2016 Hobart District Light Tanker Competitions, followed by Risdon vale in second place and Cambridge in Third. A great job done by the hosting brigade, Collinsvale and excellent support from Group Officer Lyndsay Suhr and all other volunteers who helped to host the day. The 4x4 Competitions are a highlight of every Districts year and are an excellent opportunity for networking, learning new skills and brushing up on the old ones!



State Council AGM

The Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association have held their AGM and the new Executive Team can be seen on our relaunched website with updated information and a new look. Feel free to have a browse and make suggestions via the 'contact us' page. You can keep up to date with Southern Embers via the Southern Branch page and you can also see what else is going on around the state. The website address is www.tvfba.org.au Watch this space!

The Southern Branch have also held their AGM and we welcome two new State Council Delegates, Joceyln Dunk and Tony Schultz. Tony has also been welcomed on board as the State Vice-President of the Association.

Internal Operational Review 2015-16

The Review into the recent bushfire season makes for interesting reading. The report highlights a number of key learning outcomes in terms of bushfire management. For those interested, the full report is available at the following link:

[Internal Operational Review 2015-16.](#)

Outline of the new Brigade Basics Package being rolled out to Volunteer Brigades

Mentor Course – Brigade Basics

Chris Ryan, Fourth Officer Cambridge Brigade

Over the past few months in the Southern Region, Learning & Development have conducted the course Mentor – Brigade Basics. The program that the Cambridge Brigade attended was delivered by two VTI's on a Saturday with a good number of Brigades in attendance from multiple Districts.

The course provides each Brigade with an updated resource folder to conduct Brigade Basics with new members. The manual has been totally revised with a new contemporary layout and design all tailored to ensure new members are provided with a solid grounding in the basics of being a volunteer firefighter prior to attending formally structured courses. A key improvement has been the development of a DVD that supports the written material for each stage of the Brigade Basics competency. It has been professionally developed and uses Tasmania Fire Service personnel and appliances. The addition of the DVD adds another element for all Brigade members to refresh their operational knowledge on a number of areas – another tool to use. CR.



50 Year Anniversary of the 1967 Bushfire Tragedy

The 1967 Tasmanian Bushfires, referred to as Black Tuesday, is the worst bushfire event in Tasmania's history. It is also one of Australia's worst bushfire events on record. In the lead up to the 1966-1967 bushfire season, Tasmania had an increase in vegetation growth due to a wet winter and early spring. This was then followed by the driest summer since 1885.

On the 7 of February 1967, there was approximately 110 bushfires burning in Southern Tasmania. Most of these fire burning where due to burning off on previous days, accidental causes or deliberately lit. Later in the day temperatures hit 39 degrees and the Forest Fire Index reached a rating of 128, which in today's scale is Catastrophic.

In only 24 hours the bushfires had killed 62 people and injured a further 900 people. 1,400 homes were destroyed plus a further 1,700 other structures lost.



The Cascade Brewery was destroyed during the Tasmanian Bushfires of 1967. 4 million beer bottles were fused together from the intense heat.

The bushfires also destroyed 80 bridges, 5,400km of fencing, 1,500 vehicles, killed 62,000 head of stock and burned over 264,000ha of land. Multiple towns were threatened from north in the areas of Hamilton and Bothwell, south to Snug and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, where there was a large amount of damage to farming infrastructure. Heavy agricultural damage also occurred around the Derwent Valley and Huon Valley areas and other bushfires destroyed public infrastructure, properties and bush east of Hobart, around Mount Wellington and many towns along the Derwent Estuary.



Homes on Forest Rd in West Hobart after the Tasmanian Bushfires of 1967

There is a memorial for the 1967 Tasmanian Bushfires in Snug, south of Hobart. The memorial consists of a plaque with all 62 names of the people killed, fixed to a brick chimney, as well as storyboards telling the story of the bushfires.

(All information derived from '<http://www.tasmanianbushfires.com.au/tasmanian-bushfires-1967>' retrieved 24/10/2016)



Message from Regional Chief South – Jeremy Smith

Operational Outlook.

After a challenging and long 2015/16 fire season, it has been a relatively wet and cool start to the 16/17 season. However we all know it only takes a few warm and windy days and this will soon change.

Thank you to all the brigades who have been actively participating in the fuel reduction program and localised burning across the Southern Region.

Staffing

The positions of Deputy Regional Chief South and Assistant Director (Deputy Regional Chief) Operational Training have been advertised. Once these positions are filled the vacant District Officer positions will be filled as soon as practically possible.

Firefighting Vehicles - New Build Program

25 light tankers from the current build programs will be allocated to the South of the State over the next 12 months. Once again, quality purpose built fire fighting vehicles from the team at Engineering Services.

A Medium tanker build program will be the focus of fleet replacement after the completion of the light tanker build. A “user group” is being established to provide opportunities for innovation and the practicality of layout, design and functionality.

Holiday period

I wish all our people a safe and quiet Christmas and summer holiday period, and thank you all for your ongoing commitment and support of the TFS.

I would also like to acknowledge the fifty year anniversary of the devastating Black Tuesday fires on the 7th of February 2017.

Stay safe!!

Jeremy Smith
REGIONAL CHIEF SOUTH

Don't Forget: The Gretna Brigade Juniors have a new one for us: MARS.
Mobile, Arrived, Returning, Stationed

If you have anything you wish to hear more about or have any issues where your local volunteer rep may be able to help, please contact the southern branch via email at southernbranchpresident@tvfba.org.au

