

SOUTHERN EMBERS NO.14 – February 2018

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

Welcome to the fourteenth edition of Southern Embers, we hope you have all had a good Christmas and New Year with your families. Luckily in the south so far this summer we have been mostly lucky with the fire season so far however there is still a bit more of summer to come!

Upcoming Events

State Conference – The Fire and Emergency Services Conference 2018, 'Back to Basics' will again this year be held at the Country Club Tasmania in Launceston on Saturday 26th May 2018.

Brian Rainbird's Retirement *Brian with son Gavan, grandson Nathan and granddaughter Nicole*

Brian Rainbird has contributed a great deal of time and effort into the Primrose Sands Brigade, has energetically promoted fire protection and prevention in the Sorell Municipality and has made a substantial contribution to the development of the Tasmania Fire Service by way of his activities within the Competition and Volunteer Associations.



Brian joined the Lauderdale Fire Brigade in 1966 transferring to Primrose Sands Fire Brigade on the 13th February 1972 and was appointed Deputy Brigade Captain on that date. He was appointed Brigade Chief on 26th February 1975, a position Brian held for decades. Brian served as the Group Officer for the Sorell Group of Brigades from the 17th April 1989 and spent countless years as an active member of both the Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association and the Tasmanian Fire Brigades Championships Association.

From the Southern Branch of the TVFBA we wish Brian the very best for his well-deserved retirement. (Photo: Dodges Ferry Fire Brigade)



We would like to hear from you

If you have any ideas or stories about what's going on in your brigade or district please send your ideas via the association website at:

www.tvfba.org.au/contact-us/



Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Volunteer Leadership Program

The Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) and Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (Bushfire CRC) have coupled together to provide a volunteer leadership program for volunteer emergency responders around the country. The program is facilitated by Red Cross Australia and runs across three days with courses being held across various cities and towns across Australia. The most recent course was held in Hobart with emergency sector volunteers from Fire, SES, Ambulance, marine rescue and aid relief workers from around the country converging on the Old Woolstore in Hobart. The course is funded by the partnership between AFAC and Bushfire CRC which is known as AIDR with accommodation and meals also provided.

The course was an excellent way for emergency volunteers to gain an understanding of themselves and how they operate best and then using that style of leadership to apply to others within the team in which we work. In emergency situations, it is always necessary to rely on the team you have around you and as a crew leader understanding how to build up that relationship with your team is one of the most important things we as first responder can do. Understanding what motivates others is an important factor for not only Brigade Chiefs but also for all officers and crew leaders especially when it comes to dealing with, or avoiding the need for, conflict resolution within a high stress environment.

The course also teaches you a lot about yourself, some of the exercises and workshops highlight that while we as leaders know how other members of the brigade should be looking after themselves, we have a tendency to not always take our own advice when it comes to taking a break or switching off for a while when we should. With such an excellent opportunity available to us as volunteers I could not more highly recommend nominating your future brigade leaders for this course. Applications can be found on the AIDR website, with the next Tasmanian based course in Burnie, at:

<https://aidr.org.au/programs/volunteer-leadership-program/>



Photo: December 2017 AIDR Volunteer Leadership Program held in Hobart



An Update from the Fuel Reduction Unit - Emma Gardner, Community Engagement Officer, FRU

We've had a bit of change at the top this last year at the FRU. Many of you would already know that our District Officer Gerald Crawford retired late last year and has left some pretty big shoes that have been yet to be filled. On top of Gerald's retirement our Unit Manager Sandy Whight got promoted to Director Community Fire Safety. Her shoes are being amply filled by our Operations Manager Alex Bradley who will be Acting Unit Manager until mid-2018.

The Unit has been busy planning and implementing our burn program, and successfully completed our biggest ever spring program undertaking 17 burns, fuel reducing over 1400 hectares and reducing risk for communities across the state. We're going from strength to strength and are building capacity not only in our own team, but hopefully in our volunteers and in private landowners who are generous enough to let us undertake burns on their property. We've become a lot more mobile as a team, so don't be surprised to see unit members from one region helping out in another. I recently had the pleasure of getting out of Hobart and helping out on a burn at Mt Edgcombe, near Launceston, and it was great to have a chat with volunteers from the Northern Region who were giving us some very valuable assistance.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers who have helped us with our program. As a volunteer myself I know that it's not just those who come out on the fireground who have helped us, but brigade officers and operational support members who make things happen behind the scenes. They make it possible for us all to go out and have some fun and do some good work for the community. From a community engagement perspective I'd personally like to thank everyone who has spoken with their neighbours and communities on our behalf and encouraged landowners to take part. Your good work helps me enormously, without your local knowledge I can't be half as effective in my job. One of my key goals for 2018 is to try and work closer with local brigades so don't be surprised if your Brigade Chief gets a call from me if we are planning a burn in your brigade area.

Have a safe summer, I hope it's a quiet one so we can all enjoy some time with our friends and families, and hopefully I'll see you on one of our burns in the autumn.

Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment Update – Regional Chief NW Shane Batt, PPE Chair

The State Personal Protective Clothing Committee is currently reviewing a large number of clothing items and we are prioritising items due to risk, supplies, necessity and expiree. To confirm what the committee is currently working on I have included a list below to clarify where we are currently at with the procurement process.

BR9 Helmets

The BR9 has been the helmet issued to career firefighters for over seven years now and has been a remarkable improvement on the bushfire jockey helmet. The roll out of the BR9 has been an initiative of the current minister for Police Fire and Emergency Management, Mr. Rene Hidding and will see all volunteers in a new helmet within the next five years.

This roll out will also see some minor changes with fireground identification using different coloured helmets and reflective tape combinations. Career firefighters will see changes with consistency with the rescue helmet aligning in colour with your structural helmet. Rank insignia will also be included on the helmet to assist with skill set identification for both career and volunteers.

Career firefighters will transition into the new colour as your existing helmet is due for replacement as per use by dates.



Structural Helmets

Funding has been confirmed in the 2017/18 budget for the new structural firefighting helmets. The PPC committee is working with Property and Procurement Services (PPS) in calling for tenders on an Australian Standards approved firefighting helmet. Once tenders have been received a review process will be undertaken and a new euro style helmet will be purchased. A trial has already been completed of the two helmets that meet the Australian Standard so a decision will be very quick once the tenders have been received.

Canister masks

½ face silicon canister masks will also be released for tender this financial year through PPS and an evaluation committee will be formed to evaluate the responses from the invited tenders.

The canister mask has been identified in a number of operational analysis reviews as being a gap between the 3MP2 dust / smoke mask and then Breathing Apparatus. The canister mask will fill this void for operational firefighters.

Structural ensembles

An additional 130 sets of Gemini structural ensembles have been ordered this financial year and should be delivered in the first quarter of next year. This will see the continued roll out of garments for our volunteers and also see the TFS maintain a number of common sizes for career staff.

Rescue / Wildland Overall

As part of the ongoing innovation and ensuring efficiencies within the TFS the SPPC committee as part of the tender procurement has called for samples of a wildland compliant rescue overall. The committee is looking for new modernization of the current cotton proban overall that has been trialled by some of our RCR teams. The new overall will also replace the current bushfire overall currently in the TFS store and will be available as a replacement ensemble for the two-piece bushfire PPC.

Message from Acting Regional Chief South – Paul Salter

Bushfire activity in the south so far this summer has been generally good with the northern and north west regions experiencing several bushfire events. Thank you to those of you that travelled to the St Helens fire to assist our northern colleagues. I hear comments that we have been lucky so far but I don't really agree with that, we had a dry winter and spring period leading into summer with some scattered rain in December however much of the south and midlands lack significant rain fall. Areas of the region are recording significant soil dryness indices that are of concern including Tea Tree 131mm, Ouse 161mm, Bruny Island 130mm, Geeveston 117mm and Hobart City 150mm.

During January we had four days of total fire ban for the southern region with fire danger ratings reaching severe in several locations. It could be argued that a lack of strong wind on those days is a key missing ingredient but I believe our strategies to minimise fire potential are working. Preparedness for forecast fire weather conditions include;

- Hot Day Response (double Brigade response to vegetation fires)
- Permit Embargos – this helps top limit the amount of fire on the ground ahead of bad fire weather.
- Parks and Wildlife have imposed restrictions on camp fire in reserves.



- Total Fire Bans are being flagged well in advance where traditionally we have waited for confirming weather forecasts the day before.
- Brigades and District staff are checking any known fires leading into bad fire weather.
- Regional Operations Centres and Incident Management Teams are standing up in preparation, this includes;
 - Strike Teams being prepositioned in expected high risk areas.
 - Prepositioning aircraft and dozers.
- Tire 2 Hot Day Response – this is usually on days of total fire ban where Police undertake additional patrols in identified areas or visit known offenders.
- Prosecuting fire offenders – we are working closely with Police to charge anyone lighting fires without a permit during a permit period and anyone lighting a fire on a day of total fire ban. This is a good strategy that appears to be contributing to limiting the amount of fire in the landscape on bad days, I encourage you to contact Police or your District staff if faced with one of these scenarios.

So not luck, preparedness and weight of attack, the key is to hit any new bushfire starts with lots of resources as fast as you can to minimise the chance of them developing into significant fires.

Southern Region staffing continues to faces some disruption while the Deputy Chief Officer position is vacant. These are the current appointments;

- Acting Deputy Chief Officer – Jeremy Smith
- Acting Regional Chief – Paul Salter
- Acting Deputy Regional Chief – Andrew Mc Guinness
- East Coast District Officer – Mark Klop
- East Coast Field Officer – Glen Greenland
- Midlands District Officer – Dale Rayner
- Midlands Field Officer – Stacey Peters
- South West District Officer – Andrew Fyfe (Stuart Males is on leave until mid February)
- South West Field Officer – Brendon Burridge
- Hobart District Officer – Rod Sherrin
- Hobart Field Officer – Barry Bones
- HFB Brigade Operations District Officer – Phil Smith
- Planning & Capability District Officer – Mark Dobson

Don't Forget: With the bushfire season upon us: LACES.

Lookout
Awareness
Communication
Escape Routes
Safety Zones

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

