

August 2015

NO training on Tuesday, BF course, callouts, photos, and more

Just a reminder that there is no training on Tuesday evening (11 August). Normal monthly weeknight training resumes next month (Tuesday 8 September).

IN THIS EMAIL: Upcoming BF training course, Joint training exercise (and photos), improved training night catering, donation for family of Gunning brigade member, callouts, early fire season declaration in some areas, Emergency+ app helps locate lost Canberra couple, catering volunteers, do you have new neighbours? field days' preparations continue, new bushfire plan, can our trucks fit through your gates and under your trees?

Bush firefighter (BF) course in October

A BF course is being held at Gundaroo on the weekend of 24–25 October (8.30–4.30 both days), with a session on the Friday evening beforehand (23rd, 6.30–9pm). To be nominated for this course, contact Peter Clark (0427 484 237).

Joint training exercise

On Sunday 2 August, Yass River members were among the 65 or so participants in a big zone exercise for drivers, crew leaders and caterers, to increase familiarity with the roads and terrain in the Wee Jasper valley and give catering officers some hands-on experience with the zone's catering truck. Some crews also helped the SES remove fallen trees on one of the roads. (see photos at end of email). It was a great turnout, despite being one of the bleakest days of the year and heavy rain as lunch drew to a close. (The Yass SES and Murrumbateman brigade Facebook pages also have photos and there will be some on our website soon, too).

Improved training night catering

Having been spoilt by Ben D's seriously good food at a couple of training sessions earlier this year, the committee has decided to lift the standard of fare at training nights by including kebabs or similar. However, as there is a cost involved, and the intention of the original menu was simply to acknowledge the efforts of volunteers in turning out as well as providing an informal debriefing period, we will have a 'Tucker Tin' available for gold coin donations to cover the additional cost. Any funds left over will be put aside for donations, such as the one below.

Donation

The brigade is making a donation to the fund set up on behalf of the family of Gunning brigade member, Robert Carr, who died suddenly recently, leaving his 38-week pregnant wife and three young children, one with Down's syndrome and leukaemia.

Callouts

On 3 August, together with other emergency service personnel, we attended a single vehicle accident on Greenwood Road in which a badly injured driver was trapped and had to be freed (see some photos on the Murrumbateman brigade's Facebook page).

There were no callouts to fires in our area, but a little further afield, Stoney Creek brigade (in the Lake George zone) was called out late at night to a hollow tree on fire. Despite the cold and very damp conditions, hot coals from a slow combustion heater dumped a little too close to the tree in windy conditions were enough to start the fire. As Stoney Creek brigade

advises, please take care when disposing of hot coals – they can be a real trap and can come back to bite you hours or sometimes even days later.

There have also been grass fires at Mittagong and Bungendore in the past fortnight. And, of course, the huge Wentworth Falls fire only one week after the area was covered in snow.

Fire season declared early in the north

The fire danger season has already been declared in seven zones in the central north of NSW.

Emergency+ app helped save lost couple

A couple lost recently in bushland south of Canberra were located quickly because they had the Emergency+ app on a phone and could provide simple coordinates for emergency services. The Emergency+ app is available for IOS, Android and Windows phones.

Catering volunteers

The main responsibility of elected food controllers is to provide food for firefighters if a fire in their own area goes for more than four hours. If it goes much longer and we need to provide a series of meals, we rely on the support of volunteers from within our own and possibly nearby areas to help get this food together. In an event like the Cobblers Rd fire that threatened Yass for weeks a couple of seasons ago, southern zone's food controllers, particularly those in groups 2 and 4, are now networked and able to assist each other quickly in these emergencies, but additional help is even more needed. If you would be prepared to be on a list of volunteers I could draw on to help with catering in these (fortunately rare) circumstances, and to keep our own crews in snack packs throughout the season, please let me know.

Do you have new neighbours?

Feel free to forward the monthly newsletter to new neighbours. Ditto for the Christmas party invitation when it goes out. Newcomers are always very welcome.

Field days' preparations continue

Because the catering outlets at the field days are all run by community organisations, a lot of work is put into ensuring we offer great variety on the day without outcompeting each other. We work with the MFD organisers and other catering groups to settle menus, accept some external caterers (coffee, pizzas) – under the umbrella of a local community group – and finalise the siting plan, among other things. That side of things is pretty much all done now, and the RFS group is starting to focus on organising AI's Kitchen for the event (which raises a large part of Yass River's funds each year): stocktake, working out quantities for and ordering our stocks, organising equipment and servicing the chip fryers, setting up, and rostering – please save the date if you will be able to help: **third weekend in October, 17th & 18th, and Friday 16th**. If you don't want to work in the hot food shed, RFS brigades also handle the parking and rubbish collection, if that would suit you better.

Bushfire plan

A new bushfire plan is being developed (for release this fire season) intended to make it easier for people to complete a plan and prepare for bushfires. This follows research that shows that although about 30% of people in bushfire-prone areas have some form of plan in mind, only 10% actually write it down and most feel it's too hard to do one. The RFS is

looking for feedback on the new plan – RFS members can view the draft on My RFS and complete the online feedback form if you have any comments (you can also email).

Can our trucks fit through your gate and under your trees?

In a bushfire, our big category 1 (Cat 1) tankers are used for house protection as they carry considerably more water than the smaller Cat 7s. A Cat 1 tanker is 2.4 metres wide, 7.5 metres long, needs at least 3.5 metres clearance in height (preferably 4 metres) and weighs 13.7 tonne. Its 17.5m turning circle makes it difficult to negotiate sharp corners or make U-turns. Is your driveway too tight for us? Would overhanging/overgrown vegetation impede us? Can we get to the rear of your house? Are there any bridges or grids to cross and will they carry the weight? If not, are they marked accordingly? Please check the access to your property and prepare it as well as you can for our vehicles, in case you ever need them.



In a bush fire Cat 1 tankers are used for house protection as they carry considerably more water than the smaller Cat 7.

A Cat 1 tanker is 2.4 metres wide and 7.5 metres long and the 17.5 metre turning circle makes it difficult to negotiate around sharp corners or make U turns.

Can we get to the rear of your house?

What about any bridges or grids will they stand the 13.7 tonne load and if not are they marked accordingly?