



Yass River-Nanima Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

NEWSLETTER

November 2020

Message from the Captain and President

With COVID restrictions lifting a little in NSW we are very pleased to be able to restart fire-fighting training again in November. We will take suitable precautions and further information is below.

We hope that everyone has their fire plans and their properties prepared for the Bush Fire Danger Period. There is a wealth of useful information to assist you, and our brigade website is a good place to start: <https://yassriverbfb.org/preparing-a-fireplan/>.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like assistance with preparing a fire plan. You can also help us help you. Some handy tips for ensuring that our fire trucks can safely access your property, and rules for what you need to do if you want to light a fire, are included below.

We hope everyone keeps safe over the next few months and we look forward to seeing both old and new faces at our training sessions. Unfortunately, the continuing COVID risk means that we have taken the decision not to hold a Christmas function this year. Please remember to check in on friends and neighbours during this difficult time to see if they are OK.

Gareth Ellem, A/Captain and Peter Clark, President

Fire-fighting training to restart

Fire-fighting training will begin again for our brigade on November 10 at 6.30pm at our fire-shed. Due to COVID-19 restrictions everyone will need to register when they arrive, practice distancing and appropriate hygiene practices and remain home if feeling unwell. Unfortunately, there will be no post-training BBQ. If you can't scan the QR code on our fire-shed door on your phone when you arrive then you will need to manually enter your details using:

<https://form.jotform.com/NSWRFS/covidcheckin/>

There will be changes to how we conduct training for the foreseeable future and detailed instructions will be provided at the start of each training session. For the first training session we will carry out an inventory of the trucks and a debrief from last year's very demanding fire season. On this first occasion we encourage newer members to attend who would most benefit from increased awareness of the equipment in each truck.

If you would like to attend the November training session, I request that you RSVP to the BART invitation to attend and you will be notified if you are accepted as a participant. I look forward to seeing some of our members in November at our first training session.

Subject to further outbreaks of COVID-19 we plan to have training on the second Tuesday of each month during the Bushfire Danger Period. Information about future training sessions will be provided before each session.

Kylie Eggins, Training Officer

What to do if you want to light a fire



You are not permitted to light a fire in the open (except cooking fires) at any time of year unless you notify your neighbours, the local brigade (6100 6252) and the Yass Fire Control Centre (6226 3100) at least 24 hours prior to lighting the fire.

During the declared Bushfire Danger Period you must also first obtain a fire permit from your local brigade. The Bushfire Danger Period is usually from the 1st October through to the 31st March, although that can be varied depending on the season.

To obtain a permit contact the brigade on 6100 6252. One of our trained fire permit officers will work with you on the conditions of your permit, and may also inspect the proposed burn site. Note that permits are automatically cancelled during a declared Total Fire Ban.

The Yass Fire Control Centre must be contacted on a business day. As an alternative to calling the Yass Fire Control Centre you can fill out the form at the following website:

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fire-permits/burn-notifications>

Substantial fines and prison terms of up to 12 months may apply to persons found to be in breach of The NSW Rural Fires Act 1997 and its regulations. Civil law suits can also be brought against persons responsible for fire.

Never leave a fire unattended. If a fire does escape it is essential to call Triple Zero (000) immediately so that Emergency Services can respond effectively to minimise any possible damage.

There is a useful guide on when you can light a fire available on our brigade website at:

<https://yassriverbfb.org/resources/Lighting-A-Fire-Quick-Facts-A3.pdf> and a handy guide on Standards for Pile Burns at:

<https://www.yassriverbfb.org/resources/Standards-for-Pile-Burning.pdf>

Gareth Ellem, Senior Deputy

Please be alert to locations on your property that present challenges for fire trucks

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 2s and 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.

Please check the access to your property and prepare it as well as you can for our vehicles, in case you ever need them.

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?



Private fire truck bogged on the side of a driveway

Also, this year, with the forecast being for a wetter than average summer, please be alert to the fact that, even in the heat of summer, parts of your property may still have boggy conditions under the ground surface. A large fire truck full of water can easily break through the dry surface layer and become bogged. If you have a fire on your property, please inform the fire brigade of any boggy patches that we should avoid travelling through and be aware that fire trucks can be difficult to turn in tight spots.

Neville McMartin, Equipment Officer

Message for active brigade members

The NSW RFS is getting closer to delivery of the new Members Availability and Response System, including a smartphone application called RFS ACTIV. The app will be a customised version of BART that will integrate with NSW RFS systems such as personal information and qualifications.

We do not yet have a definite date when the changeover will occur, but it is very important, at this stage, that members ensure that their personal details on the MyRFS site are up to date.

If you have not updated your details by the time RFS ACTIV is launched you run the risk of not being able to respond to incidents, as RFS ACTIV will be the only way members will be alerted.

Further information is available at:

<http://rfs.e-newsletter.com.au/link/id/zzzz5f4c57f661077808Pzzzz501a49f58c051670/page.html>

and information about MyRFS is available from:

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/about-us/myrfs>

Please logon to the MyRFS site and check your details as soon as possible. If you have any difficulties, please contact the brigade for assistance.

Once the app is made available, we will all need to uninstall BART and install RFS ACTIV. Instructions will be provided at the time.

Until RFS ACTIV is launched active brigade members should continue filling out their availability using BART.

Gareth Ellem, Senior Deputy