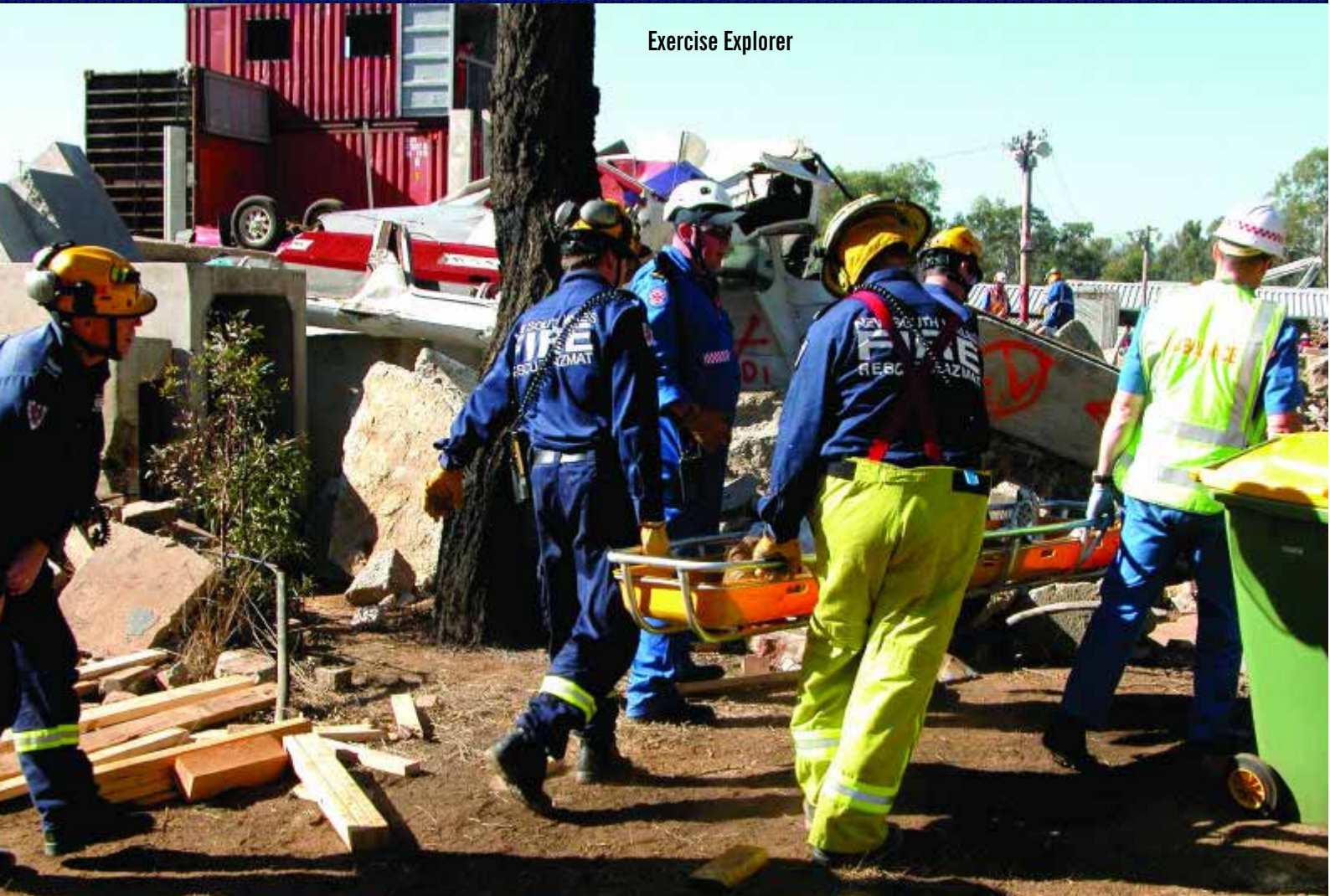


NSW FIRE BRIGADES



FIRE NEWS

Exercise Explorer



September 2004



Vol 8, No 3 September 2004

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FROM THE COMMISSIONER



It is amazing how quickly time slips by. At the time of writing, it is nearly 15 months since I was sworn in as Commissioner. The last 15 months have been very busy, there have been highs and lows, but overall it has been extremely rewarding. The support I have received internally and externally has been most humbling, and is greatly appreciated.

Highs included the successful introduction and roll-out of the new compartment fire behaviour training, placing the NSWFB at the forefront of safe work practices and skills training nationally and internationally, the continued renewal of our fire appliance fleet, seeing reduction of the average age of fire appliances to 9.6 years, and the commissioning of Fire Air 1, the shared NSWFB/NSW Police helicopter.

The lowest point of course was the loss, in the line of duty, of Firefighter Philip Viles at a tragic house fire where a two-year-old child also lost his life. As a result of their actions at this incident, Station Officer Denis Rayner and Senior Firefighter Phillip Brown have been awarded our highest decoration, the NSW Fire Brigades Medal for Conspicuous Bravery, while their colleagues from Doyalson and Budgewoi have also received awards for meritorious service. If anything can be salvaged from this event, it was the reinforcement of the values of dependability, courage and sacrifice that underpin the ethos of the NSWFB. This ethos ensures that firefighters are consistently rated amongst the most respected professionals in the community.

During the past year, I have worked hard to ensure that all employees have a voice in directions that the NSWFB should take into the future, and my job has been made much easier by the wealth of good advice and ideas that have come from all areas of the Brigades. Together with the Assistant Commissioners and Directors, I have listened to this advice, and as a result we have been reviewing current structures and processes to determine how to provide even better support to frontline prevention and response activities.

Early in 2005, announcements will be made about a number of major and minor restructures in areas such as human resources, information technology and prevention. Planning is already well advanced in some of these areas, and the assistance of job experts will be needed to "flesh out" how best to move forward. This will involve a number of levels of project management, as well as working groups comprising people from each area. This will not be an exercise in "downsizing" or cutbacks, but will involve some fundamental changes to ways in which we apply existing resources to best effect. For example, there will be a focus on eliminating inane and inefficient paper-based processes through better leveraging of technology. This, in turn, will release support staff to be trained for more interesting, value-adding roles.

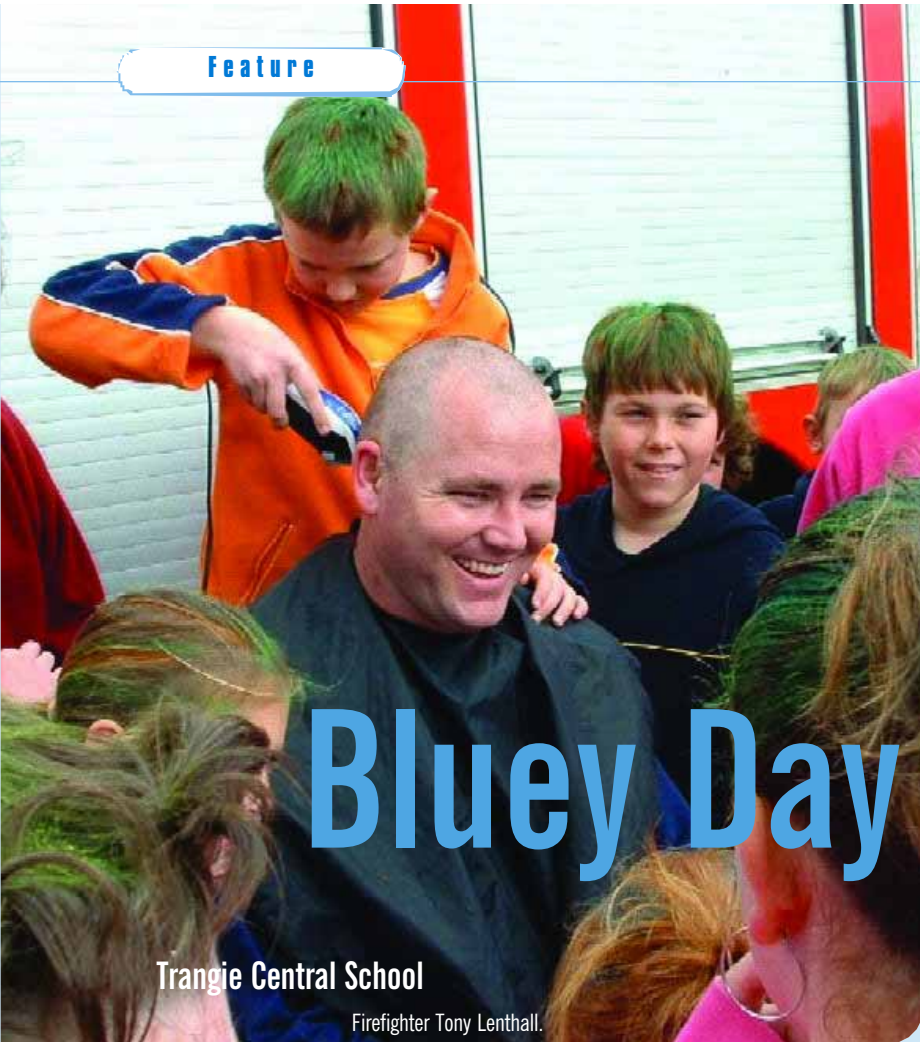
I look forward to the coming year as we lay the foundations for the next decade and cement and improve our standing as one of the world's best fire and rescue services. It is an exciting time to be a part of the NSWFB.

Greg Mullins AFSM

FROM THE EDITOR

Exercise Explorer, featured in this edition of Fire News, was a 48 hour-counter terrorism exercise. It was hot, dusty, noisy and tiring, but after spending several hours observing and taking photographs, I got to go home. Our NSWFB USAR team and many other emergency service personnel however, remained on site for the duration, and while most of us were sleeping, the extrication and treatment of "victims" continued throughout that night and the following day. I was impressed by the professionalism, dedication and sheer stamina displayed at Exercise Explorer, yet firefighters cheerfully tell me that this is "all just part of the job." Protecting the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week is a big "job", and while it's impossible to cover every single aspect of "the job" Fire News provides a small snapshot.

Jan Crombie-Brown



Trangie Central School

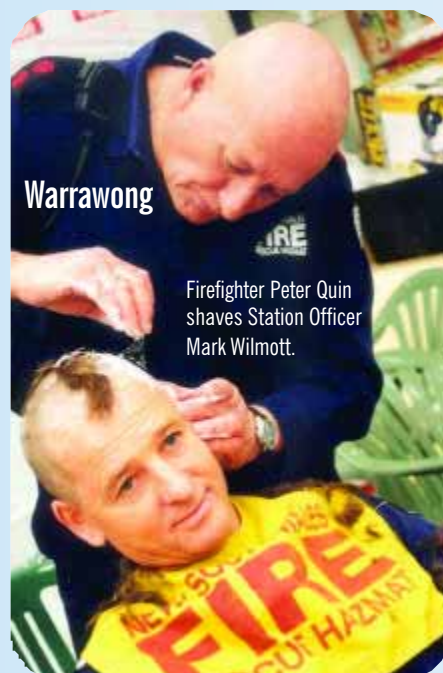
Firefighter Tony Lenthall.

On 7 August 2004, at Bunnings stores across the state, over 60 NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) staff along with other emergency service personnel were having their heads shaved to help kids with cancer. Each participant was required to raise \$1000 to receive the ultimate in haircuts and the NSWFB has exceeded its anticipated \$60 000 in donations by raising nearly \$100 000.

Acting Chief Superintendent Jim Smith, whose son, Nathan, is currently in remission, coordinated the NSWFB side of things. "It was a fantastic effort from everyone involved. We did a lot of fundraising in conjunction with other emergency services and Bunnings," he said.

Firefighters from Crows Nest Fire Station had their heads shaved to support colleagues Belinda Hooker and Tim Trenowden whose daughter has been battling cancer for the past couple of years. Belinda also sacrificed her locks on the day.

Northern Sydney Inspector Gordon Boath dedicated his mane to the memory of his nephew, Kevin Harant, who succumbed to leukaemia in 1994. Kevin was only four when he died.



Warrawong

Firefighter Peter Quin
shaves Station Officer
Mark Wilmott.

Photo Jan Crombie Brown



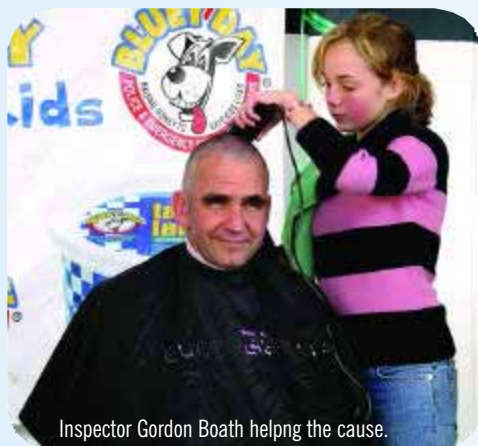
Wollongong

Firefighter Kath Dorahy
gives Firefighter Scott
Hamilton a close shave
at Wollongong.

Photo Jan Crombie Brown



Firefighter Scott Bennett.



Inspector Gordon Boath helping the cause.

Photo Graham Tait

When Bunnings at the Crossroads, Liverpool pledged \$1000 for every firefighter who had his or her head shaved, firefighters flocked to the scene. "From what I was told, 22 firefighters had their heads shaved, earning \$22 000 on the day... a massive effort there." Jim Smith added.

Another big day was at Bunnings Villawood, where several thousand dollars was raised.

Fundraising at Bathurst saw 15 emergency service personnel, including NSWFB Station Officer Peter Willard who donated his eyebrows for an extra \$200, lose their hair for a total of \$16 000.

Acting Chief Superintendent Smith, who gave first-hand advice and encouragement to shavees at Shellharbour, Warrarong and Wollongong, said he was overwhelmed by the fantastic effort of everyone involved. "Special thanks to all the participants and their sponsors for such generous support... we sincerely hope that the money will make a difference for the kids."

Funds will be going to the Children's Hospital at Westmead, Children's Cancer Institute of Australia, and the John Hunter Children's Hospital.



Firefighter Josh Turner and Greg Mullins, NSWFB Commissioner.



Firefighter Belinda Hooker sacrificing her locks.



Firefighter Brett Dixon.



Crows Nest A Platoon with Belinda Hooker (centre) and Inspector Gordon Boath (far right).

Photo Graham Tait



Brett Dixon with kids from the Trangie school.

Crossroads, Liverpool



Assistant Commissioner Murray Kear wields the clippers.
Photo Gary Sykes



Photo Kernin Lambert



Photo Gary Sykes

Riverwood

Photo Kernin Lambert



Below: Station Officers Dave Tai and Mick Hehir, Firefighters Darren Vatcher and Lee Phillips had head shaves. Also pictured are NSW Ambulance Paramedics Paul Featherstone and Garth Thomson, NSW Police Officer Sargeant Terry Hinds, General Manager of Fairfield Hospital Michael Woodhouse and Bunnings staff member Svjetlana Ilic.



Photo Kernin Lambert



Steve Carlin and Serv Mass.



Dubbo Primary School

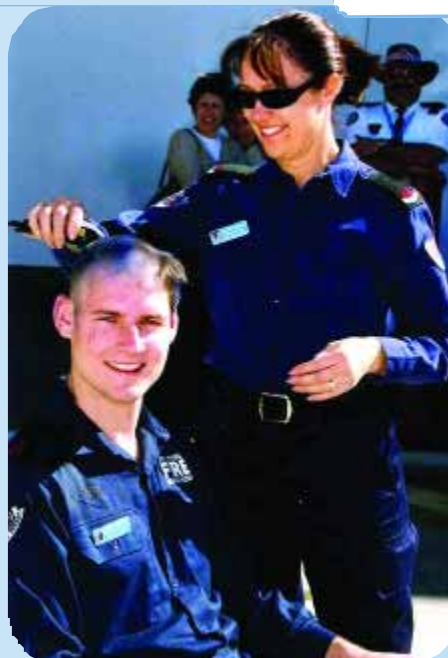
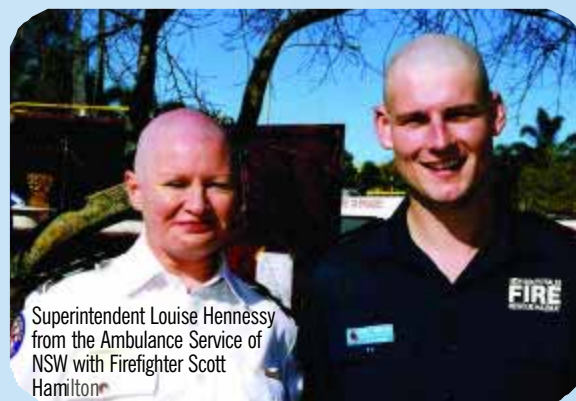


Photo Jan Crombie Brown



Superintendent Louise Hennessy from the Ambulance Service of NSW with Firefighter Scott Hamilton



Firefighter Justine Denton.



Wollongong

Photo Jan Crombie Brown



Shellharbour

Photo Jan Crombie Brown



“The purpose of exercises such as Explorer is to test our capability, to learn, and to improve. There will no doubt be some fine tuning for all of the agencies involved so that we can do even better in the event of a real terrorist attack or other disaster.”

NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins

At 10.00 am on Monday 31 May 2004, a shrill whistle pierced the morning, signalling the beginning of Australia's largest ever counter-terrorism exercise. Cars were set alight, the air filled with smoke and trapped and injured “victims” began screaming and calling for help. In just a few seconds, an area of Holsworthy military base was transformed into a Sydney CBD disaster site. The scenario: a deliberate detonation of explosives which resulted in the collapse of a six-level communications building. Thirty to forty people were trapped in the building, and a further 300 were injured as a result of the impact. As the drama unfolded, emergency service personnel swarmed over the site, helicopters circled overhead and emergency vehicles moved into position. After eight months of intensive multi-agency planning, the 48-hour Exercise Explorer was underway.

During the exercise, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams cut their way through glass, steel, concrete, office furniture, crushed cars and even reams of paper searching for, releasing and removing trapped casualties.

Exercise Explorer

Exercise Explorer

Exercise Explorer, an Investigation and Consequence Management Exercise, was a component of the National Counter Terrorism Committee's round of national exercises.

The exercise focused on several key areas including:

- Multi-agency state level command, control and coordination
- Response and triage in a mass casualty incident
- Urban search and rescue
- Incident command and control
- Major terrorist investigation
- Disaster victim identification and registration

“The exercise, however, was far broader than tunnelling through rubble piles,” said NSWFB Senior Rescue Instructor Station Officer Warwick Kidd. “It challenged our self-sustainability for extended in-field living and we passed with flying colours. The exercise provided a wonderful opportunity for the NSWFB and other emergency agencies to test their in-field performance against realistic parameters.

“Even though USAR training targets locating and rescuing people, the NSWFB communications and logistics capabilities came to the forefront, showcasing our ability to keep people working in the field,” said Station Officer Kidd. “There are so many aspects other than the USAR task force. The exercise highlighted the NSWFB as a holistic emergency service and not simply a first response unit. It not only reinforced what we already knew, it proved that skills learned at basic firefighter level equipped firefighters to deal with an incident of this magnitude.



Setting the scene.



USAR Task Force Leader, Superintendent John Denny.

"Exercise Explorer tested and demonstrated the efficiency of a multi-agency team," said Station Officer Kidd. "It provided a great opportunity for Government departments to work together and practice skills specific to their own particular areas of expertise. The NSW emergency services formed a cohesive emergency management team under a unified command, and confidently and efficiently got the job done."

Photos by Jan Crombie-Brown



Site Construction

Construction of the scenario which covered a 6000 square metre site took eight weeks.

Materials included:

- 1700 tonnes of pre-cast concrete
- 3000 tonnes of rubble
- 10 shipping containers
- 4 linear kilometres of timber
- 30 cars
- 2 concrete agitators
- 1 coach
- 1 clothing bin
- 1 bus shelter
- 5 truckloads of furniture
- 200 sheets of (1200 x 2400mm) plywood

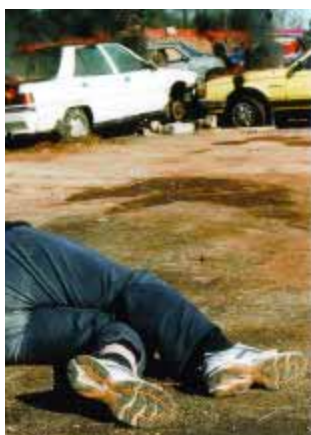


NSWFB commitment

NSWFB firefighters, officers and support staff had worked for many months to prepare for our response, and to design and build the props for the exercise. Commissioner Greg Mullins believes that this effort has paid dividends. "The months of hard work have been very worthwhile, with the NSWFB once again demonstrating world-class skills in USAR, Hazmat and emergency management.

"It was bitterly cold, it was very difficult, but we managed to pull together and do an excellent job, of which we should all be very proud. I know that our interstate fire service





observers and colleagues from other NSW emergency services were very impressed by our operations.

"Our commitment to this exercise has been immense. Over the 48 hours we contributed 235 firefighters, 72 station officers, 12 inspectors, eight superintendents, four chief superintendents, two assistant commissioners, as well as 37 pumpers, two aerial appliances, four rescue vehicles, three hazmat vehicles, one support vehicle, our USAR semi-trailer, Fire Air 1 and an Incident Control Vehicle.

"I visited the site, the State Operations Centre and the Major Incident Coordination Centre several times, and am immensely proud of each and every person who has been involved with Explorer. Thank you for your professionalism and dedication".



The victims

In the event of an actual major structural collapse, the State Emergency Service (SES) would support search and rescue operations, however in Exercise Explorer, the SES played a very different but essential role; that of providing the victims. Each of the 300 victims was allocated specific injuries, and professional moulage (make-up) artists worked for hours to reproduce a corresponding range of lifelike injuries ranging from mild concussion to protruding bones and full thickness burns. "Families" of victims were comforted on site by emergency service chaplains. "By providing realistic casualties, the SES volunteers made a significant contribution towards the ultimate success of the exercise," said Station Officer Kidd.



NSW Ambulance Chaplain and NSWFB firefighter assisting casualty.

Responding agencies

More than 1000 people were involved in Exercise Explorer including representatives from:

NSW Fire Brigades

NSW Police

NSW Health

NSW Ambulance Service

NSW Rural Fire Service

NSW State Emergency Services

State Emergency Management Committee

NSW Crime Commission

NSW Coroner

Australian Federal Police

ASIO

RailCorp

NSW Department of Community Services

Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability

Environmental Protection Agency

RTA

State Transit Authority

Sydney Water

Office of the Emergency Services

Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources

Department of Commerce

Transport NSW

NSW Premier's Department

Telstra

EnergyAustralia

** Information courtesy of NSW Police*



NSW Police Deputy Commissioner Andrew Scipione, NSW Police Commissioner Ken Moroney, Ambulance Service of NSW CEO Greg Rochford, NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins, Minister for Emergency Services Tony Kelly, Attorney General Phillip Ruddock, NSW Premier Bob Carr and Minister for Police John Watkins attend a briefing session.



Media Liaison Officer Superintendent Ian Krimmer briefs Minister Tony Kelly.



Media conference.

Alexandria industrial complex fire

In the early hours of Thursday 15 July 2004, a 6th Alarm fire in an industrial complex on Botany Road, Alexandria caused considerable damage to several smash repair workshops, a car storage facility, car audio and automotive repairers.

The first of many 000 calls was received at 1.35 am. Crews from Alexandria Fire Station arrived on the scene within six minutes and reported that the fire had taken hold of a panel beating shop at the rear of a large industrial complex measuring 100m x 20m. Firefighters initially called for a 3rd Alarm but fire spread quickly through the roof area and the call was escalated to a 5th Alarm.

Firefighting efforts were hampered by low water pressure, and extensive relay pumping from a number of surrounding streets brought water to the fire. A 6th Alarm was called for additional crews to assist with relay pumping.

Fire and BA/Hazmat crews battled the fire under difficult conditions, made even more arduous by exploding gas bottles and petrol tanks. It took five hours to bring the blaze under control, and firefighters were successful in preventing it spreading to several adjoining premises.

Botany Road was closed to all traffic until 11.30 am, and crews remained on scene for the rest of the afternoon to extinguish small pockets of fire.

NSW Police and the NSWFB Fire Investigation Unit, with the attendance of Ellie the sniffer dog, are investigating the cause of the fire.



Photos by Kernin Lambert



NSWFB attendance

Miranda
Redfern
Pymont
Rockdale
Balmain
Newtown
City of Sydney
Ashfield
Campsie
Hazmat
Concord
Matraville
Incident Control Vehicle
Leichhardt
Maroubra
Woollahra

Gladesville
Fairfield
Hurstville
Mascot
Alexandria
Glebe
Riverwood
The Rocks
Crows Nest
Kogarah
Operational Commander North
Operational Commander South
Zone Commander South
Regional Commander South
Acting Commissioner

Hazmat incident at Singleton

Fire crews from Singleton, Telarah and Kearsley Brigades responded to a call involving a 20-litre container of an unknown substance which a passer-by found lying on the roadside.

Using binoculars from a safe distance Captain Alan Suttner was unable to identify the substance, but noted that the container had split at the top and the contents had leaked onto the roadway.

When North 4 Country Inspector Mark Reilly arrived, an Incident Management Team was established.

Once the hot zone was cordoned off and security of the site confirmed, firefighters in fully encapsulated suits recovered the

drum and secured it into a 60-litre hazmat recovery bin. The area was then flushed with water.

The incident required a multi-agency response and called on the resources of NSW Police, Ambulance and local council workers who took control of the recovered substance and arranged for its safe disposal.

“While this incident was small in size and relatively minor in nature, it allowed us to fine-tune our working relationships with other emergency services for larger, more daunting incidents,” Captain Suttner said.

Photos Courtesy of the Singleton Argus Newspaper.



A tight squeeze

Story and photo by
Station Officer Guy Ellis

At 2.00 pm on 1 June 2004, NSWFB crews from Beecroft and Berowra responded to reports of a “car hanging off carpark” at Westfield Hornsby.

On arrival, crews found a car had been driven over the edge of the third level carpark onto the second level, becoming jammed and resting on a car parked below. Firefighters attached a Tirfor hand winch to the car to prevent it from falling further and attempted to stop a fuel leak.

The driver of the small hatchback escaped by climbing out of the rear window and was treated by NSW Ambulance officers.

Crews then began recovery of the vehicle. As most of the tow trucks on scene were too big to fit under the carpark, a small local tow truck assisted. It was decided that firefighters would use the hand winch on the rear of the car, while the tow truck lifted the front. After a few tries, this worked successfully.

It is not normally the NSWFB’s responsibility to help recover vehicles, but on this occasion it was necessary to remove the car as it was still leaking fuel.

A good effort by everyone concerned!

Banksmeadow paper mill fire

On Saturday 3 July 2004, at 7.02 pm, the Sydney Communications Centre began receiving numerous 000 calls reporting a fire at a large paper mill in Banksmeadow. Due to the high volume of calls, a 2nd Alarm was assigned.

When Station Officer Steve Welsh and the crew from Matraville Fire Station arrived on the scene, there was a large amount of smoke billowing from a four-level building, measuring 60m x 300m.

Firefighters donned breathing apparatus and entered the heavily smoke-logged building to investigate the location and extent of the fire. Their inspections revealed smoke issuing from the dryers.

It was decided to attack the fire through the drying vents. A second aerial appliance was called to provide better access to the roof directly above the main section of the fire. Firefighters began a fixed monitor attack using an installed monitor on the east side of the building.

Inspector Peter Fernandez, Operational Commander South 2, arrived on scene and took over incident control. Following a further size-up, the response was upgraded to a 3rd Alarm, with a special call for two extra aerals.

Internal crews were withdrawn. The roof monitor on Mascot's pumper was used to direct a water stream onto the roof, where the fire was venting. Firefighters from Glebe fought the fire from a hydraulic platform positioned at the front of the building, while firefighters from Kogarah used a hydraulic platform to attack the fire from the rear to prevent it spreading laterally through the roof void.

When Superintendent Peter Murgatroyd, Zone Commander South 6, arrived at the fire and took control of the incident, the fire was burning under the roof, in a 10m x 50m area known as the plenum chamber. The roof sarking was also burning.

Firefighters from City of Sydney under the command of Station Officer Sally Foote gained access to the roof void where they used a thermal imaging camera to determine the path of the fire. The ladder platform from City of Sydney was positioned so that the monitor stream could penetrate under the roof eaves and extinguish the roof void fire.

Crews extinguished the remainder of the fire with handlines, and the fire was confined to the plenum chamber and an area of roof.

Superintendent Murgatroyd sent the stop message at 2304 hrs.





Photos by Kernin Lambert



Mulch fire at Eastern Creek



On 4 August 2004, the NSWFB was called to assist the Rural Fire Service (RFS) at a mulch fire at Eastern Creek in Sydney's western outskirts.

The fire was fanned by strong westerly winds and involved a large area of green waste consisting mostly of mulch heaps. The NSWFB crew from St Marys, the first crew on scene, called for a 2nd Alarm and quickly upgraded to a 3rd Alarm. Firefighters confronted by the lack of reticulated water upgraded the response to a 4th Alarm, with two bulk water tankers and numerous RFS tankers responding.

To further alleviate water shortages, firefighters drafted from dams and relay pumped to the fire area. Water was also supplied via RFS water tanker shuttles.



Fire Air 1 (the joint NSWFB and Police helicopter) proved an invaluable asset. From the air, Station Officer Steve Moran was able to assess the full extent of fire spread and identify further areas of risk. This information was then relayed to the NSWFB Commander and the RFS Incident Controller, and the RFS helicopter water-bombed the fire.





Ultimately, the response reached 9th Alarm. Although the fire burned fiercely, at least half of the stored mulch was protected from ignition. Plant and equipment on site, including pieces of heavy earthmoving machinery, mulching machinery and elevated diesel tanks, was also protected.

Gusting winds moved the fire into bushland on the eastern side of the site, threatening sections of the water catchment around Prospect Reservoir. However, firefighters were able to prevent the fire from reaching this area.

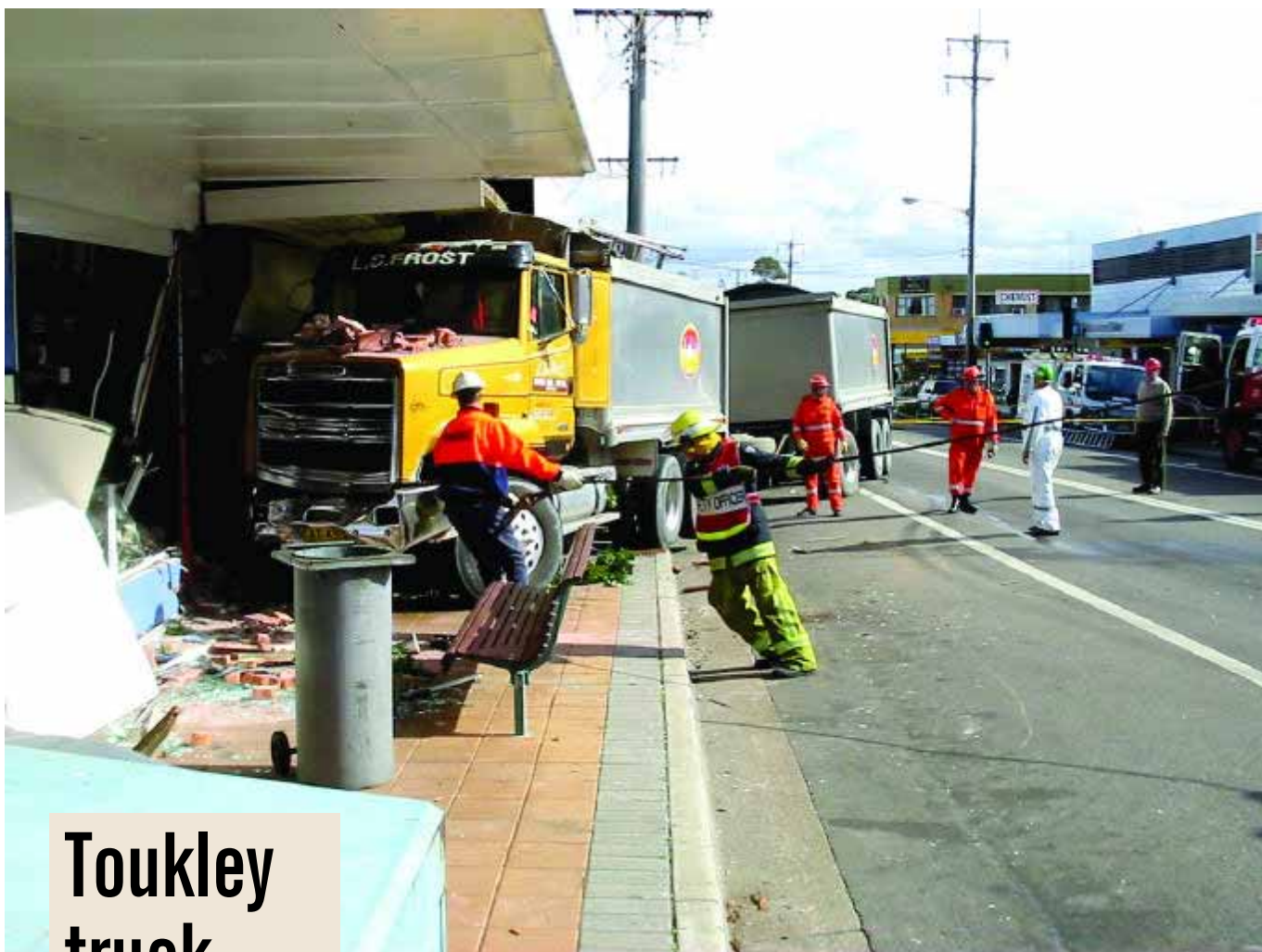
Firefighting continued through the night and into the following day as the deep seated nature of the fire within the mulch piles made it extremely difficult to extinguish.

"The successful outcome not only demonstrated the effectiveness of inter-agency cooperation, it highlighted the importance of using Fire Air 1," said Inspector Alex Scott.

"The fire moved so quickly that it was impossible to extinguish. Fire Air 1 was instrumental in providing vital information to assist us in developing strategies to contain the blaze."



Photos by Kernin Lambert



Toukley truck accident

Story and
photos by
Deputy Captain
Ross Beckley

On Friday 23 July, Toukley, Budgewoi and Doyalson Fire Brigades responded to a report of a truck into shops in Main Road, Toukley.

Toukley Station Commander David Gearside and his crew arrived within five minutes of the 9.00 am call to find a tipper truck with trailer had crashed into a dress shop and the vacant premises next door, causing major structural damage to the building.

The truck had also side-swiped a parked car, trapping the occupant. Toukley firefighters commenced rescue so that NSW Ambulance officers could gain access to the patient.

Both the truck driver and occupant of the car were transported to Wyong Hospital suffering minor injuries.

A structural engineer was brought in to assess the building before removal of the vehicles.

Central Coast Rescue Squad, Wyong State Emergency Service, NSW Police, Wyong Shire Council, EnergyAustralia and RTA representatives also attended. The scene was cleared around three hours after the initial call.





ComSafe in Malaysia

Station Officer Adam Dewberry from Dubbo and Senior Firefighter Daryl Manson from Turvey Park have just returned from tropical Malaysia where, on behalf of ComSafe Training Services, they delivered Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) to members of the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia.

The training delivery was the product of negotiations between ComSafe and a private company, International Code Services Australia P/L (ICS). ICS had previously installed eight CFBT gas-fired simulators in various Malaysian locations and looked to the expertise of the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) to complete the process.

Firefighters Dewberry and Manson formed the initial training team, travelling to four of the locations over a four-week period.

"It was a challenging and rewarding experience," said Station Officer Dewberry. "We managed to achieve our goal of delivering CFBT to 80 Malaysian instructors within the four weeks.

"The Malaysian people were extremely helpful and went to extraordinary lengths to make us feel welcome," SO Dewberry recalled. "The local firefighters tutored us in the Malaysian language which helped us to deliver training as well as communicate with people on the street. Of course, they couldn't resist having a little bit of fun with us, as we discovered while visiting at a local café!





"Towards the end of the four weeks, the Malaysian firefighters were able to practise delivering and developing their own training with Daryl and I critiquing and mentoring the instructors' performance."

ComSafe Training Services' Manager, Superintendent Selwyn Mathias reports that a second team of training officers will soon deliver another four-week program to the remaining sites.

"When the training is completed, 160 Malaysian instructors will be qualified to deliver CFBT to more than 10 000 firefighters of the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia. This is another step in showcasing the NSWFB knowledge and experience on the world stage," said Superintendent Mathias.





NAIDOC week celebrations

As part of this year's National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week celebrations, a street fair was held on Tuesday 6 July in the forecourt outside the new Redfern Community Centre.

Crews from Redfern and Alexandria Fire Stations turned out with two pumpers, delighting the children who were given a tour of the fire engines, seizing the opportunity to sit in the driver's seat.

Firefighters handed out community safety information and chatted with local kids and their parents about the role of the NSWFB.

The street fair was a huge success, with a large number of local residents and visitors turning out to enjoy Aboriginal dancers, performers and musicians; damper-making and bush medicine displays; and, it goes without saying, our two shiny red fire engines.

Photos by Andrew Bradley



NSWFB firies set high standards

An innovative child car safety device conceived by a group of NSWFB firefighters has won the Australian Design Awards' inaugural The Australian People's Choice Award.

The Buckle-Me-Up, a car dashboard mounted system which warns of any unfastened seatbelts, was described as a "practical little potential lifesaver" by Innovation, a Standards Australia publication.

A bright idea

"The idea was developed when a group of firefighters were discussing the need to prevent child deaths and injuries resulting from the non-wearing of seatbelts. According to statistics, almost half of child car crash fatalities could have been avoided with improved restraints and protection," says Station Officer Jim McMahon. "Unfortunately, if a child unfastens a seatbelt, quite often no-one realises."

During subsequent discussions and research, Jim recalls that they were surprised to discover no car companies had developed a road safety product designed to ensure all seatbelts are fastened.

"As firefighters, we know only too well the effect of road fatalities. There is great cost to the community, both financially and emotionally, and we decided to try and do something about it," said Jim. "We commissioned an inventor to design a warning system. Our aim was to reduce the trauma of car accidents, make the device suitable for all vehicles, and ensure ease of installation."

"The bottom line is, if passengers are wearing seatbelts, it will save lives. You can't ask for a better outcome than that!"

How it works

A belt clip transmits a signal to the dashboard monitor which beeps and lights up if a seatbelt is unfastened. The monitor attaches to the dashboard with a velcro strip and plugs into the cigarette lighter socket. Up to six belt clip transmitters can be used.



Left to right: Senior Firefighter Sean McKenzie, Senior Firefighter Warren Page, Inspector Keith Blades (retired), Station Officer Jim McMahon and Senior Firefighter Paul Duncan display the award.

The passing of an era

On Friday 16 July, Acting Commissioner Graham Dewsnap pulled the plug on the old automatic fire alarm (AFA) concentrator cabinets at City of Sydney Fire Station. Now that the AFA systems have been switched over to third-party providers, the historic cabinets have reached the end of their useful life.



The old watchroom

Smoke signals

Before the introduction of the telephone, city firefighters kept a lookout for smoke and raised the fire alarm from station watchtowers. Following the introduction of the telephone, fire alarm boxes were installed on Sydney streets where anyone could wind the handle and send an alarm to the station switchboard which was installed in what became known as the Relay Room at City of Sydney Fire Station.

Eventually, hospitals, gaols and major industrial sites had direct lines to their own district fire stations which had switchboard and relay cabinets. In the event of a fire, the automatic sprinkler system was activated, a signal was sent from the premises to the relay cabinet at the station and firefighters responded accordingly.

How did the AFA cabinets work?

Each AFA cabinet was connected to a customer's premises by a dedicated two-wire telephone line. The customer's

transponder connected to a sprinkler alarm or smoke/heat alarm (or both) which was sent to a corresponding alarm transponder in a cabinet at the fire station. Each AFA cabinet alarm had a buzzer and three lights: RED for fire, YELLOW for fault and GREEN for standby (usually a mechanic testing the system).

When an AFA was activated, the firefighter on duty in the relay room would acknowledge the alarm and retrieve the corresponding relay card from the filing system. The relay card provided information on the building: the address, door location, alarm panel location, key numbers and other information including the floor location of the sprinkler or smoke alarm.

This information was conveyed by phone to the City of Sydney Control Room which later became the Sydney Communication Centre (Sydney ComCen) at Alexandria. Ultimately, the customer alarms were able to communicate with both the AFA cabinets and the Sydney ComCen





Acting Commissioner Chief Superintendent Graham Dewsnap, Relay Officer from City of Sydney, Station Officer Dennis Shepherd, Firefighter Martin Newham, Acting Director Capability Development Chief Superintendent Mick Ryan, Comms Technician Barclay Fisher, Comms Alarms administrator Lynn Everett Miller, Senior Firefighter David Coyte, Inspector David Holden and Superintendent Ray Kelly.



computer without notification from a firefighter in the Relay Room. The Control Room or Communication Centre dispatched the appropriate fire engine to the building.

Until the decommissioning on 16 July 2004, firefighters on watchroom duty continued to manually acknowledge every cabinet alarm and keep the manual relay card system up-to-date. If the computer at Alexandria went down for any reason, the cabinets had a failsafe system so the firefighter on watchroom duty could continue to monitor locally the alarms coming into that station and provide turnout information.

What's happening now?

Rapid advances in technology meant that the old system was incompatible with current telecommunication infrastructure. It was not financially viable for the NSWFB to continue monitoring AFAs using the out-of-date communication facility, so new methods were researched.

Monitoring is now done by Automatic Fire Alarm Service Providers (AFASPs). AFASPs are private companies who have been contracted to provide a monitoring service to over 8900 fire alarms. By the end of 2004, all AFA systems in NSW (approximately 9500)

will be monitored and managed by AFASPs. Strict controls implemented on the changeover to ASASPs allows the NSWFB to retain control over the monitoring and receiving of fire alarms from premises.

The current method is proving to be far more reliable. Using mobile phone technology and fire optic cabling, it is 75% more accurate, and there are no additional costs to the NSWFB. The system is relatively failsafe as no interruption to the connection can occur from external influences such as roadworks or water deluge.

Today when an alarm at a customer's premises goes off, the system sends a signal to the AFASP, who passes it on to the ComCen computer. Details of the alarm, including address and the closest resources, are automatically available to the operator and to the responding firefighters.

The transponder cabinets at Windsor, Richmond, Penrith, Campbelltown, Camden, Picton and Gosford have also been decommissioned.

Congratulations to all who have worked on the five-year AFA change-over program.

Institution of Fire Engineers Patron

On 22 June 2004, NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins was installed as Patron of the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) Australia. Commissioner Mullins was expressly chosen by the Board of IFE Australia because of his standing within the fire service community and broader fire industry. He had been involved with the IFE for many years as State President and National Treasurer, and in 2000 was made a Fellow of IFE by the International Council in the UK.

The ultimate goal of the IFE is to provide information, education and interaction through a variety of networks and activities resulting in the establishment and enhancement of fire safe communities.

In his capacity as Patron, Commissioner Mullins will provide advice and guidance to the IFE, attend formal functions and other specific events, and assist IFE in fostering ongoing partnerships.

IFE's National President Mr Andrew Comer said he is delighted to have Commissioner Mullins working with him. Mr Comer said he is looking forward to the future relationship between the IFE and Commissioner Mullins, and trusts that the partnership will be of great benefit for many years to come.



Intermediate Hazmat Vehicle

The vehicles have been commissioned at the following stations:

Berkeley Vale

Leeton

Muswellbrook

Port Macquarie

Tamworth.

Bateman's Bay and Coffs Harbour have yet to be commissioned.

The Intermediate Hazmat Vehicle is a specialised appliance designed to attend hazardous material incidents throughout New South Wales. The vehicle is designed for rural and highway operations, but not for off-road conditions.

The vehicle accommodates two operators and is based on a Mercedes Benz Sprinter 413 CDi, high roof van with a wheelbase of 4025mm. The vehicle has a manual transmission and a turbo diesel engine with 95 kW power. Other standard features of the Sprinter are air conditioning and ABS.

The vehicle has a bull bar and a rear tow bar which is capable of towing the NSWFB foam trailer.

A 2.5m awning is provided on the near side of the vehicle to protect the firefighter from the weather. The interior of the Sprinter van has been designed to stow about 1350 Kg of hazmat specialist



equipment, including ten SCBA cylinders. OH&S principles are adhered to in the design of the stowage. Heavy equipment such as a diesel-powered skimmer pump is locked into special brackets on the floor of the vehicle while the vehicle is driven. A pair of portable ramps enables safe removal of the pump through the near side sliding door.

A stainless steel work bench with sliding drawers is installed in the van. This is also used to accommodate the facsimile machine and computer printer. The vehicle has a weather station and removable mast and carries the Emergency Medical Treatment kit.

An Auxilliary Control System console, GRN radio, CB radio, mobile phone and satellite phone are mounted in the front cabin in areas easily accessible to the operators.

Currently five Intermediate Hazmat Vehicles in this series are being built. The final number in this contract will be determined by the Fleet Steering Committee.





Firefighter Nathan Pascoe, Unit Manager of the maternity section of Broken Hill Hospital, Lea Birmingham, and Qualified Firefighter Sean Falconer.

Broken Hill firefighters help put kids in the picture

The fires in Broken Hill recently donated over \$900 from their own pockets so that the maternity and children's wards at Broken Hill Hospital could purchase a digital camera.

Staff at the hospital will now be able to burn pictures taken from the new camera onto a CD so that parents can take home a CD of images of their newly-born or sick child. Parents can then either save the pictures on home computers or have hard copies printed at a photo lab.

Quite often sick kids in Broken Hill are sent to Adelaide for treatment and the firefighters hope that having a few pictures of their little ones might help parents get through the tough times.

New MOU with Department of Corrective Services

On Wednesday 28 July 2004, NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins and Department of Corrective Services Commissioner Ron Woodham signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU is an agreement between the two agencies on fire safety matters within corrective services facilities. It covers areas such as staff training, procedures and planning, and the management of fires and incidents.

The MOU was facilitated by NSWFB Inspector Rick Parkes who is on secondment to the Department of Corrective Services as Liaison Officer.

NSWFB Chief Superintendent Ken Bryant, Department of Corrective Services Assistant Commissioner Brian Kelly and Superintendent Barry Mood attended to witness the signing.

Photos courtesy of the DCS Bulletin.



NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins and DCS Commissioner Ron Woodham shake on the new fire management agreement.



Front row: NSW Fire Brigades Commissioner Greg Mullins and DCS Commissioner Ron Woodham

Back row: DCS Supt Barry Mood and Commander Security & Investigations Assistant Commissioner Brian Kelly with NSW Fire Brigades officers Chief Superintendent Supt Ken Bryant of the Risk Management Directorate and NSWFB Liaison Officer to Corrective and Services Inspector Rick Parkes.



Flash, a very lucky cat.

On 3 August 2004, at a special ceremony at the City of Sydney Station, the RSPCA paid tribute to the NSWFB for its work in rescuing distressed animals.

RSPCA Chief Inspector Don Robinson officially thanked the NSWFB for donating a decommissioned fire appliance, now formally dubbed Rover, which will be used for animal rescues.

In presenting a plaque to Commissioner Mullins, Chief Inspector Robinson spoke of the humane efforts of NSWFB firefighters, who responded to more than 700 animal rescue calls in the past year.

There were some special VIPs at the ceremony; Flash, a small black kitten who was saved by firefighters last month, her owner Dr David Gallagher, and Ellie, the NSWFB's fire investigation dog.

While attending a house fire in Darlinghurst, City of Sydney firefighters rescued Flash from debris. She had to be resuscitated, but is happily making a full recovery.

Also at the presentation were RSPCA CEO Bernie Murphy, NSWFB Inspector Slade Macklin and NSWFB Director Human Resources, Wendy Barrett, who is a member of the RSPCA Board.



Ellie, the NSWFB's fire investigation dog.

Photos by Bronwyn Hilton

Letter of thanks from Flash's owner, Dr David Gallagher.

"On Monday, fire officers attended a fire that had been started by thieves that broke into my townhouse in Darlinghurst.

I would like to express my thanks for your efforts in fighting the fire and especially the fantastic efforts in providing assistance to my poor cats.

Sadly, Tinker the older cat died, but thanks to some great work by several of your officers my kitten Flash survived. The staff at the Veterinary Clinic at Sydney University have told me that without the excellent work of your officers, Flash would not have had any chance. As it is, the vets are confident that she will make a good recovery.

In your line of work, however, I realise that it is the work of the team overall that has the greatest bearing on the success of fighting fire and saving life. My thanks go to you all for your skill, dedication and commitment.

Kindest regards"

NSW Fire Brigades enlists a 'bug' to break cultural barriers

The NSWFB has enlisted the use of a brand new, bright red VW Beetle to help spread fire safety awareness to multicultural communities across NSW.

The unique NSWFB initiative is part of the Cultural And Linguistically Diverse Communities Program known as CALD. The program provides support and guidance to NSWFB firefighters so that they have greater confidence in communicating and interacting with different community groups.

The car, as part of a sponsorship deal with Southern Classic Cars in Wollongong, is to be used by CALD coordinator David Weir in his work of breaking down the linguistic barriers between the NSWFB and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

"Safety messages are the same for everyone," said NSWFB Commissioner Mullins, "but we must be aware of cultural differences within NSW communities and how to best communicate those messages to different groups. By getting out and about, forging partnerships and working closely with community groups, positive results can and have been achieved in reducing the risk of fires."

Accepting the keys from General Manager John Stapleton, Commissioner Greg Mullins commented, "CALD helps educate people about what they can do to prevent fires, and how they can protect themselves in the case of fire".

The car, affectionately known as the 000 Bug, sports the NSWFB's logo, website address and has '000 BUG' for its numberplate. David Weir and the bug will spread the fire safety message at many multicultural festivals and events throughout NSW.



Photos by Chris Lewis



Ensuring safer communities

Through a partnership with the Australian New Muslim Association (ANMA), firefighters from Lakemba Fire Station and members of ANMA's Community Safety Team installed the first of many smoke alarms in a home in Lakemba's Muslim community.

The ANMA have adopted the NSWFB SABRE (Smoke Alarm Battery Replacement for the Elderly) program and the ANMA Community Safety Team will continue installing smoke alarms for members of Lakemba's Muslim community.

"Our partnership with the ANMA is part of the NSWFB commitment to improve community safety," said NSWFB Regional Commander South, Assistant Commissioner John Benson. "We are currently implementing programs to further communication across culturally and linguistically diverse communities in NSW."



Australian New Muslim Association member, Ibrahim and Assistant Commissioner John Benson with homeowner Zaki Kanawati
Picture courtesy of Nick Bloukos, Canterbury-Bankstown Express

As part of this initiative, a community safety committee, the NSWFB and Canterbury Council have been working together to identify ways of enhancing community safety in that Council's area. Firefighters from Campsie, Lakemba, Ashfield, Burwood, Marrickville, Riverwood and Revesby have been actively involved in a program designed to raise community awareness in the home.

Canterbury is known as the City of Cultural Diversity, with residents from over 130 different cultures. With such a diverse population, getting the message out about what the NSWFB does can be a difficult task.

Canterbury Council and the NRMA sponsor the SABRE program, and the council's Community Centre coordinates a smoke alarm installation and battery replacement service which has proved extremely successful. Coupled with intense community safety campaigns and strong local community partnerships, positive results have been achieved.

Assistant Commissioner John Benson commended the local initiative. "Partnerships like this are important to the NSWFB because they forge closer links with the community and community groups".



At a special morning tea organised by Canterbury City Council, Mayor, Cr Robert Furolo spoke glowingly about the partnership with NSWFB and the SABRE initiative. NSWFB was represented at the morning tea by Assistant Commissioner John Benson, Chief Superintendent Paul Rugg, Superintendent Peter Murgatroyd, Operational Commander (South 6) Inspector Ross Brogan, Community Risk Management officer Brad Smith, and crews from Campsie, Lakemba and Ashfield.

A great escape!

The NSWFB Escape Day is held annually to encourage all NSW residents to devise and practise a way of escaping from their homes in the event of fire. This year on 31 August 2004, families and small businesses were urged to spend 20 minutes creating and rehearsing their own escape plans.

A home fire escape plan involves drawing the rooms of your house on a piece of paper and identifying escape points. It is advisable to have two escape points from each room if possible. The plan should also identify a place where all the occupants are to meet once they have safely escaped. Small businesses should also develop a plan for their premises, using the same principles, and practise it with their employees.

As many people are aware, the possibility of a fire or other emergency in the home or business premises is very real. Taking time to devise and practise an escape plan could save not only your own life, but the lives of your family or employees.

NSWFB fire investigators believe that fatalities occur because occupants do not know how to get out of their burning home, or because once out, they go back inside the building.

"You must know how to get out of your home or business and then you must stay out," NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins said.



Four year old Mikey practises his Escape Day plan. Photo by Bronwyn Hilton

"Make sure that everyone in your household or business knows the quickest way out of the house or premises and where to meet once they are safely outside.

"Discuss your home escape plan with other members of your family or your employees to see if it is suitable. Quite often people forget to include the elderly or those with reduced mobility in escape plans.



"Children can easily become disoriented, and if they don't have an escape plan, they could waste precious minutes searching for mum and dad or escape the wrong way and get trapped.

"Show them how to escape from each room and make sure they know what to do when a smoke alarm alerts them to a fire and where to meet once they are out of the home.

"Importantly, when they are escaping, tell them to get down low and go, go, go because smoke from a home fire is toxic".

Rehearsing an escape plan.

Photo by Jan Crombie-Brown

Firefighters are our friends

As part of the early school fire education campaign, Nowra firefighters visited Wayeela Cooinda preschool where many of the students are from the local Koori community.

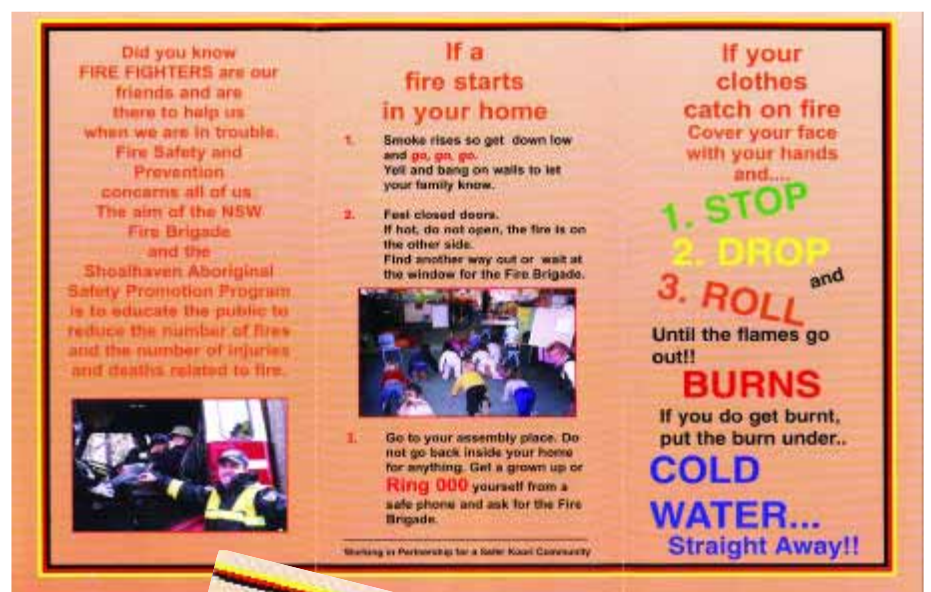
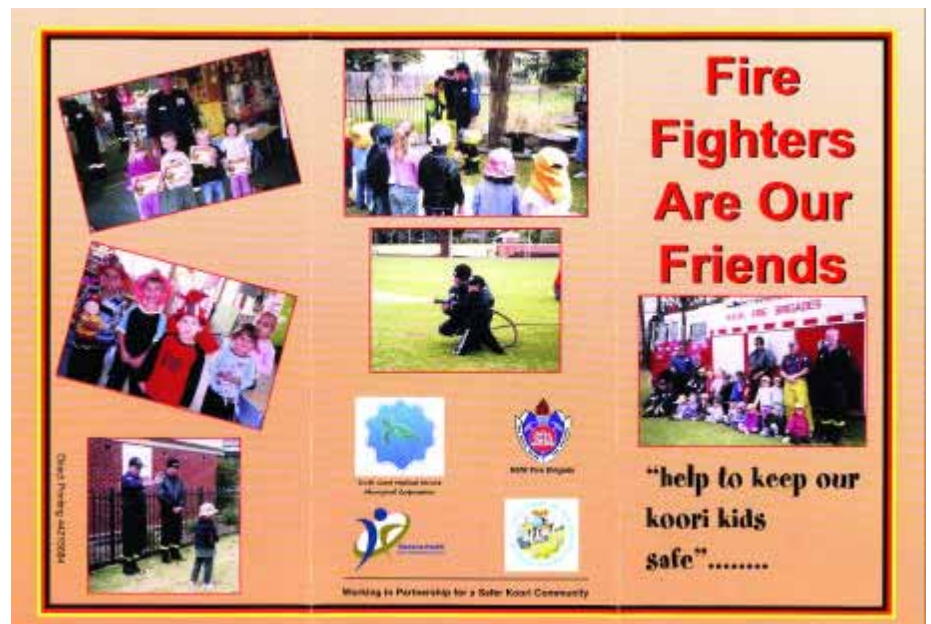
Wayeela means 'black cockatoo' and Cooinda means 'happy place'.

The visit consisted of an initial educational session with a follow up tour of the pumper. Some firefighters returned to attend a thankyou barbecue and launch of the promotional material.

Nowra Fire Station was then approached by South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation, and Illawarra Health who requested permission to use images from the NSWFB presentation to produce their own fire safety promotional material, aimed specifically at the Aboriginal community.

This material was developed as part of the Shoalhaven Safe Community Partnership. The final product is an A3 size colour poster and a colour brochure. The slogan is Firefighters are our Friends, and the poster emphasises that firefighters are not strangers.

Because the material targets preschoolers, it contains little text, but has lots of images depicting friendly firefighters. The brochure urges the children to 'get down low and go go go', 'dial 000' and 'stop drop and roll'. It also instructs them on the primary first aid for burns - cold water.





Rural Fire Service Commissioner Phil Koperberg, Minister Tony Kelly and NSW Fire Brigades Commissioner Greg Mullins.

Triple 0 - triple effort

If two's company, three's even better when it comes to fire safety education. In order to better provide consistent and accurate community fire safety information, the NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Rural Fire Service and ACT Emergency Services Authority have formed a joint fire safety committee.

The initiative recognises that while each agency has specific safety information, there are many safety messages that apply to all three services, and the committee will conduct specific education and media campaigns with monthly themes. The joint campaigns will reinforce key messages from the agencies.

The first campaign, focussing on awareness of the Triple Zero (000) number, was launched in July 2004. Not surprisingly, bushfire and summer fire safety will be a hot topic in coming months.

Photos by Andrew Bradley



000 goes offshore

Wollongong Communications staff, Station Officer Allan Pendlebury and Senior Firefighter Steve Peters received a curious call for help that had the two ComCen operators going out of their way, and out of their country, to assist someone in need.

On Wednesday 1 September 2004, they received a call from a gentleman in Albury NSW who had been speaking on the phone with a friend in Papakura, Auckland, New Zealand. The gentleman explained to Station Officer Pendlebury that his friend had abruptly cut their call short after telling him that his house was on fire and he had to grab the children and run.

The gentleman called the NSWFB because he was concerned for his friend across the Tasman and didn't know what to do. So, what was Wollongong ComCen's response? They called the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) to make sure help was on its way!

South Auckland firefighters are amazed that they had been called to a burning house in Papakura by a man in Australia via the NSWFB, and not the occupant of the house. The NZFS reported that all occupants were safe and the house suffered mostly smoke damage thanks to the concerned Aussie mate and the quick action of Station Officer Pendlebury and Senior Firefighter Peters.

CFU Training Day at Engadine

Photos by Jan Crombie-Brown and Bronwyn Hilton



On Sunday 22 August 2004, over 700 volunteers from NSWFB Community Fire Units (CFUs) from Sydney's southern and southwestern suburbs, the Illawarra, and the Southern Highlands gathered at Engadine for a day of information and practical training. The perfect weather added to the gala atmosphere with many CFU members bringing their families along. The serious business of training, however, was the number one priority.

Representatives from NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service conducted lectures, with the Salvation Army managing to feed the multitudes in less than 20 minutes.

CFUs were put through their paces under the watchful eye of NSW firefighters. Apart from the practical training, members were instructed on each emergency agency's role during a bushfire situation. They were also given information on fire prevention and preparedness, how to treat injuries, caring for native flora and fauna, and how to prepare fellow residents for evacuation.

The ACT Fire Brigade attended to learn more about coordinating and conducting community fire unit training so that this could be applied to their own program which was, they proudly announced, celebrating its first birthday.

The training day, organised by Region South CFU Coordinator, Karl Duesing, was hailed a real success. The response from participating agencies and CFU members was overwhelmingly positive. "It was great to see so many enthusiastic CFU members", said CFU Association President Greg Coli.

"The day was a wonderful opportunity for revising training and safety methods as well as gaining new information."

The valuable input from other agencies and the seamless coordination of training activities has created a new standard. Inter-agency cooperation as well as interaction with the local community was the order of the day. "It doesn't get much better than this" said a beaming Karl. "Congratulations to all those involved. What a great day!"

NSW has 260 CFUs which are operated by 4300 volunteers ranging from 18 to 88 years.



Manager CFU Station Officer Terry Munsey with representatives from ACT Fire Brigade.



CFU Team Leader retires - aged 80

By Trish Cassone



George at CFU 003.

After 74 years living in Sydney's Sutherland Shire, George Chellew was recently presented with a Hughes Community Award by Federal MP Dana Vale in recognition for his 10 years as Team Leader of the Community Fire Unit in Coolgardie Place, Jannali.

George joined the Engadine Bush Fire Brigade in 1950. "Back in those days, all we had was an old truck, a water tank, one stand pipe, three hoses, some knapsacks and no fancy uniforms."

During the January 1994 fires, George was admitted to hospital and his wife Marcia attempted to protect their property from the fire. With the fire rapidly approaching, local residents worked frantically to save their homes. "There was no water pressure and young people climbed onto our roof and put out fires with buckets of water taken from neighbours' swimming pools."

When Marcia next visited George in hospital she told him harrowing stories of fireballs roaring through tree tops and past their homes and of the herculean efforts of residents trying to save their properties. Damage to the homes in their immediate area was minimal, but neighbouring suburbs were less fortunate.

As George convalesced he was consoled by the fact that shortly before the fire he had replaced some old, warped and split timber on the eave of his home with some fire-retardant board. At the same time, he had also covered the air vents in the foundations with steel mesh.

In the aftermath of these fires, a newspaper article on the new concept of 'Community Fire Units' caught George's attention and by April 1994, Coolgardie Street had Community Fire Unit (CFU) No 3 installed and commissioned by the NSW Fire Brigades. A keen group of 20 residents formed a team and began training. With George's enthusiasm and prior training he was an obvious candidate for the role of CFU Team Leader.

In addition to well-maintained equipment and regular training, George believes that teamwork is the most important aspect of a CFU's success. "Any fool can put a hose together, but teamwork is what you need to succeed," he said.

In the 10 years since its commissioning, CFU No 3 has been activated many times during high risk conditions. George however, is clear about the role of the CFU during a fire. "We know where our priorities lie," he said. "We hose down the homes and surrounding area, put out spot fires and leave the rest to those professionals who are always ready to assist."

On George's 80th birthday he stood down as CFU Team Leader and took up the position of the Unit's Custodian. Now that he has taken a less physically active role within the CFU, his community spirit continues as George makes wooden toys for Camp Quality children suffering from cancer.



George's house after the 1994 fires.

Global warming - the heat is on

Global warming is a 'hot' topic - and not only in Australia where we are currently experiencing unprecedented dry climatic conditions and increasing temperatures. Global warming, once predominantly the domain of scientific experts, has become a very real concern for all of us, and the impact of dramatic climatic change is extensively reflected in worldwide media coverage.

Much of Australia is in the grip of drought, but global warming is also impacting on European fire services as they also battle unprecedented dry conditions and increasing temperatures. NSWFB Commissioner Greg Mullins was recently invited to speak about the international issue of global warming and the implications for fire services at the Institution of Fire Engineers' International Fire Science Conference in Dublin, Ireland. The focus of his paper was to highlight the challenges, and means of addressing them, that urban fire services in places like the UK, where bushfires used to be rare, will now have to face. The paper also highlighted the increased call upon fire service resources for severe weather events such as the 1999 Sydney hailstorm disaster, floods and storms.

Challenges for urban fire services

Commissioner Mullins highlighted the following challenges:

- increased temperatures, evaporation and decreased rainfall



Photo Kernin Lambert



Photo Jan Crombie-Brown

are leading to increased frequency and severity of bushfires in countries such as the UK.

- many urban fire services are unprepared for the operational and management challenges that this creates, and
- people living in urban/bushland interface areas that previously were not subjected to regular fires often don't know how to help themselves.

And offered a three-stage approach for tackling them:

- some urban fire services will need to change their modus operandi to meet new fire threats. This will include changes in training, equipment, personal protective equipment, technology, and command arrangements,
- fire services need to work with communities to help them build the capacity and understanding to withstand and take responsibility for fires, and
- planning and regulatory steps need to be implemented to keep communities and infrastructure safe from new threats. NSW leads the world in this respect and can be used as a "best practice" model.

“There will be a need for fundamental changes to the way urban fire services do business - the culture and operational ethos of fire services that are organised primarily to deal with structural fire risks will have to change in order to meet a different set of operational and fire engineering challenges.”

Commissioner Greg Mullins speaking at the Institution of Fire Engineers' International Fire Science Conference.



Photo Kernin Lambert

Prevention - the best medicine

How can Government and communities help reduce the impact of bushfire?

- Strengthening of building standards and regulations with mandatory construction measures to mitigate against fire. Simple construction modifications can eliminate or reduce the vulnerability of houses in bushfire areas and these modifications are now mandatory in NSW. The measures being overseen by the Rural Fire Service are leading to establishment of safer infrastructure, which in turn will save lives and property.

- Improved town planning with mandated protective measures such as perimeter roads between houses and vegetation, and establishment of fuel-free zones. Again, these measures are part of NSW Government reforms implemented after the disastrous Christmas 2001 bushfires.
- Community members taking measures for their own protection and for the protection of their properties through education, hazard reduction and preparation through programs such as Firewise (NSW Rural Fire Service) and Community Fire Units (NSWFB).

Where to from here?

“Action on a global scale is now required if we are to curb or put a halt to an increasingly perilous situation brought about by global warming,” said Commissioner Mullins. “Governments must take positive steps to stem global warming and greenhouse emissions and we should all do our part to encourage such action.”

Reference: “Climate Change Projections for Australia,” CSIRO 2001. Dr. Peter Whetton, CSIRO Atmospheric Research, PMB1 Aspendale, 3195 Victoria.

(<http://www.dar.csiro.au/publications/projections2pp.pdf>, July 29, 2004).



Photo Jan Crombie-Brown

Global warming and climate change

The 1990s was the hottest decade ever recorded, and the early 2000s have seen record temperatures in many parts of the world.

Australia's temperatures are slowly increasing, and rainfall patterns are also changing. CSIRO climate modelling predicts north-eastern and south-western NSW receiving 13% less rainfall. The decrease in rainfall will be most pronounced during winter and spring, the period leading up to the hotter summer months, increasing the threat of bushfire.

It appears that this new pattern is already emerging. NSWFB and NSW RFS firefighters are now being called upon throughout the year to battle major bushfires - not just during the hotter, drier Spring and Summer months.

Early bushfire danger period

The bushfire danger period usually runs from October to March, but due to current prolonged dry conditions, this year it has been brought forward to 1 August.

Grafton Firefighter Championships

On 24 July 2004, Assistant Commissioner Bob Dobson officially opened the Grafton Firefighter Championships which were hosted by the South Grafton Brigade. Crowds of enthusiastic spectators watched 14 teams participate in 13 events, and even though the weather was overcast, plunging temperatures failed to cool the hot competition.

Zone Commander North 6, Superintendent Geoff Barnes, said that all competitors demonstrated a high level of skill and expertise, especially in the breathing apparatus and search and rescue disciplines. He believes that the championships provide a great opportunity for firefighters to test their skills, one against the other, and highlights the good work they do every other day. "Training for and entering firefighting competitions has a definite flow-on effect when firefighters return to their stations," he said. "It's a great way to hone incident ground skills."

After a neck-and-neck battle with South Grafton, the Casino team took out the In Zone trophy with Glen Innes winning the Out of Zone title.

Coffs Harbour was declared overall winner in the Breathing Apparatus Urban Pump event, winning \$1000, and the team has been invited to represent NSW at the Queensland State Championships on 5, 6 and 7 August 2004.

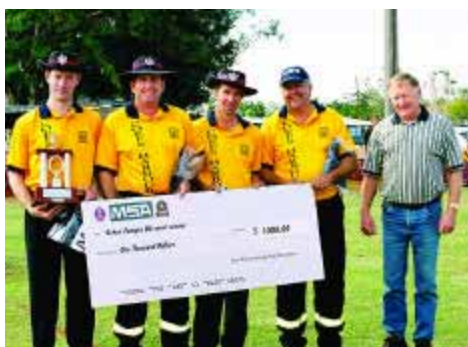


Going for gold at Balgownie

While our nation's top athletes were battling it out in Athens, some of the state's best firefighters were on a track of another kind in Balgownie for the South 3 Zone Championships.

In a close final, Nowra snatched a gold medal victory from the hosts Balgownie by a mere 2 points. The bronze went to Scarborough.

It's now just over a month until the State Championships in Port Macquarie. The games begin on 16 October 2004 with the famous NSWFB torchlight parade, and this is followed by a week-long schedule of events.



The winning Coffs Harbour team.



Photos by Sue Bowen

Station profile

New Lambton

By Natalie Laharnar



Captain Playford (far right) with his New Lambton crew.

Situated in the inner western suburbs of Newcastle with a history that stretches back to 1896, New Lambton Fire Station is truly part of the fabric of the local community.

Not a fair or festival goes by without a strong presence from the New Lambton Brigade. Two years ago, when a time capsule was buried in the local rose garden with information about the community, it included details of all the members of the New Lambton Brigade as well as photos of the station and a historic fire appliance. The local Chamber of Commerce has an active interest in the station and has provided significant support.

"The Brigade is a well respected service in the community which has been fostered over more than a hundred years," New Lambton Captain Alan Playford said. "We have a big turn out on Open Day, and a lot of people are interested in the well-documented history of the station."

"The station has been on the same spot since 1896 and has had a proud tradition of community involvement."

In those early days, the station was made of timber, had a dirt floor and featured a tower on top where people watched for

fires and rang a warning bell to alert firefighters, who then pulled a hose reel consisting of cylinder and hose mounted on two wheels to the scene of the fire before fighting the fire.

In 1932, the station was replaced with the current brick building, an attractive example of architecture of the period that now has heritage listing.

New Lambton Fire Station is a fully retained station with a captain and 11 firefighters who crew an Isuzu type 2 pumper. The firefighters have a variety of full time careers, for example, there's a paramedic, an electrician and a plumber in the crew.

"With our community profile and involvement, positions within the Brigade are keenly sought after by men and women," Captain Playford said. "In fact, we recently had 39 applicants for one position."

■ The station protects an area bordered by the suburbs of Kotara, Adamstown and Lambton and includes the John Hunter Hospital, the Westpac rescue helicopter base and a major shopping centre. Each year the crew attends around 300 incidents, across the whole spectrum of fires, rescues and hazardous material spills. Because of its location on the urban/bushland interface, its members are often called

to take part in task forces deployments. The Brigade is also heavily involved in Smoke Alarm Battery Replacement for the Elderly (SABRE) and makes regular visits to primary schools and child care centres.

Among the station's most notable incidents were:

- The Newcastle earthquake in 1989 where the crew was involved in rescue and recovery at the Worker's Club and in areas around the city (the New Lambton fire station itself sustained damage in the earthquake); and
- The 1994 bushfires during which the crew fought fires in many areas around the Hunter Valley.

The station received commendations for both incidents.

"One of our most challenging incidents was a fire on a container ship carrying material that expanded in contact with moisture," Captain Playford said. "Each time the firefighters put water on the fire, the material would expand, and there was a real concern that it would expand beyond the structural capacity of the ship. It took three days to extinguish the fire."

Firefighter Phillip Viles

On Monday 26 July 2004, Retained Firefighter Phillip Viles, together with crews from Budgewoi and Doyalson Fire Stations, was involved in a valiant search and rescue effort in a two-level house heavily involved in fire.

Along with other firefighters, Firefighter Viles made several attempts to enter the burning home and locate the trapped child. He was forced back by the intense flames and subsequently collapsed during firefighting operations. He was immediately treated by Ambulance Paramedics and transported to Wyong Hospital where he died a short time later.

Phillip will be remembered as a hero in the truest sense of the word, as will all those firefighters who attempted to rescue the child.

It took firefighters from the two brigades, an hour to bring the fire under control. Sadly, they were unable to save the small child trapped on the top floor.



A Hero's farewell

Retained Firefighter Phillip Viles was given a hero's farewell at the Central Coast hamlet of Noraville on Friday 30 July 2004. Hundreds of mourners lined the streets and gathered inside St Mary's Catholic Church to pay final respects to Firefighter Viles, and to hear tributes from family, friends and Commissioner Mullins.

Among those assembled were Minister Tony Kelly, NSWFB and Rural Fire Service firefighters, and representatives from the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, State Emergency Service, and the Volunteer Rescue Association.



Photos by Bronwyn Hilton



In a moving eulogy, Commissioner Mullins said, "Phillip Viles was a true hero. A hero to his family, a hero to his community and a hero to the men and women of the NSW Fire Brigades and our fellow emergency services."

Commissioner Mullins recalled two occasions where Firefighter Viles had rescued people and discreetly left the scene. He acquired the title of the unknown surfer after saving the lives of two people whose boat had capsized off the coast. He noticed the distressed couple, paddled out, rescued them, and then quietly went home.

Some years later he came to the aid of a person caught in a rip on a Central Coast beach, and again, left the scene before anybody could make a fuss of him.

"It is one of the saddest ironies, that while Phil was known for his big heart, it was tragically his heart that gave out on Monday night," Commissioner Mullins said.

"I can't claim to understand why, in this double tragedy, we lost one of our most promising firefighters, and the life of a two year old child. It doesn't make sense.

"I do know that Phil and the other firefighters did everything they could to rescue little Brent Londrigan. I also know that when Phil collapsed after the frantic rescue effort, the paramedics and firefighters did everything they could to save their colleague.

"Most importantly I know that Phil died as he lived - putting other people first."



Tributes to Firefighter Viles and messages of support to all NSWFB firefighters flooded in from members of the community and emergency services Australia-wide. Condolences were also received from Premier Bob Carr, Minister Tony Kelly, and Leader of the Opposition John Brogden.

After the service, Firefighter Viles' coffin, draped in the Australian flag and accompanied by a large arrangement of brightly coloured gerberas, was saluted by NSWFB firefighters and transported by the NSWFB hearse with a police motorcycle escort to the nearby cemetery.

Bagpipes and drums beat time as Budgewoi Captain Bruce Simpson, carrying Firefighter Viles' helmet, Station Officer Gordon Willson and recruits from the Training College marched before the hearse, while members of the Budgewoi Brigade, family and friends walked in procession behind.

At the graveside, Firefighter Viles' sons placed sand, seaweed and sea water on his casket, and members of the Budgewoi Brigade each cast a yellow rose.

In the words of Commissioner Mullins: "... we say goodbye to a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a firefighter, and a good mate. Most importantly, we say goodbye to a true hero."



Photo by Kerrie Hudson

Graduation

Class 1/2004

CLASS 1/2004

FIREFIGHTER

STATION

PLATOON

Dan Chau	Balmain	D
Yehya Abdel – Aatty	Parramatta	A
Timothy Jennings	Berowra	A
Andrew Forsythe	Silverwater	B
Stuart James	City of Sydney	A
Jason Gibbs	Crows Nest	D
Andy Chalmers	Newtown	A
Joel Sim	Eastwood	C
Daniel Lollback	Busby	B
Grant Stevenson	City of Sydney	C
Keith Lay	City of Sydney	D
Joel Walton	Campsie	C
Aaron Balding	Lidcombe	C
Matthew Franklin	City of Sydney	B
Roslyn Bailey	City of Sydney	A
Benjamin Dermody	City of Sydney	D
Anthony Clarke	Liverpool	B
Stephen Finnerty	Liverpool	D
Sally-Ann Roberts	Eastwood	A
Josh Hackney	Darlinghurst	A
Ashley Sutton	Crows Nest	C
Timothy Ryan	Seven Hills	C

Retirements

Permanent firefighters	Retirement date	Recognition
5309 Station Officer R Reid	11 June 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp Unit Commendation for Courageous Action - Lincoln St, Jannali Letter of Appreciation - Carnegie Circuit, Chifley
4694 Senior Firefighter B Cook	17 June 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp Letter of Appreciation - Montague Street, Balmain
5808 Station Officer G Evans	17 June 2004	National Medal
5467 Senior Firefighter K Roberts	17 June 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
7295 Senior Firefighter P Yabsley	18 June 2004	
4336 Qualified Firefighter J Neal	8 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
4363 Station Officer R Lysle	8 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
4628 Senior Firefighter J West	1 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp Unit Commendation for Courageous Action - Woronora Cres, Como
5305 Station Officer D Pendergast	8 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
5333 Station Officer R McLennan	8 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
6071 Station Officer B Brennan	2 July 2004	National Medal
4790 Senior Firefighter J North	8 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp Unit Commendation for Courageous Action - Christo Rd, Waratah
4540 Station Officer R Evans	8 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service - Thredbo Landslide
2984 Inspector E Thompson	22 July 2004	AFSM National Medal and 2 Clasps Australian Sports Medal
6020 Senior Firefighter B Smith	22 July 2004	National Medal
3498 Senior Firefighter D Kirk	22 July 2004	National Medal and 2 Clasps
5237 Station Officer D Beehag	22 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
4614 Qualified Firefighter T Wilson	22 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
5185 Senior Firefighter I Mitchell	22 July 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp
4857 Qualified Firefighter W Wray	2 August 2004	National Medal and 2 Clasps Individual Commendation for Meritorious Service
4097 Senior Firefighter E Tate	5 August 2004	National Medal and 2 Clasps Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service - Seaview St Mt Kuring gai
5143 Inspector B Staples	16 August 2004	National Medal and 1 Clasp Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service - Dennison St Hillside
3286 Inspector K McDonald	19 August 2004	National Medal and 3 Clasps

4693 Station Officer C Tindall 19 August 2004 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 4564 Station Officer G Rugless 19 August 2004 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service - Dennison St Hillside
 6823 Senior Firefighter B Lockhart 19 August 2004 National Medal
 4115 Station Officer R Fletcher 20 August 2004 National Medal and 2 Clasps
 3934 Qualified Firefighter R Beattie 20 August 2004 National Medal and 2 Clasps

Retained firefighters.....StationRetirement dateRecognition

Retained Firefighter S Donney West Wallsend 29 April 2004
 Retained Firefighter B L Hibberd Broken Hill 17 May 2004 Queen's Fire Service Medal
 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 Retained Firefighter P McKie Orange 26 May 2004
 Retained Firefighter W Wright Teralba 4 June 2004
 Deputy Captain J Coombes Gunnedah 30 June 2004 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service -
 Bloomfield St, Gunnedah
 Captain D Rixon Batemans Bay 30 June 2004 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 Captain LB Banister Taree 15 July 2004 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 Retained Firefighter B E Stanmore Leeton 15 July 2004 National Medal and 1 Clasp
 Retained Firefighter G R Evans Kandos 31 July 2004 National Medal
 Retained Firefighter W A Phillips Narrandera 16 August 2004 Queen's Fire Service Medal
 National Medal and 1 Clasp

Code 2

These are the names of former NSWFB members who have passed away.

Retired District Officer Kenneth James Hadlow

Retained Firefighter Phillip James Viles (in the line of duty)

Retired Retained Firefighter John Thomas Nicholson

Retired Captain Edmund (Ted) Gordon Speers

Retained Firefighter Robert Piggott

Retired Inspector William Diggs

The funeral of retired NSW Fire Brigades Inspector William (Bill) Diggs was held at Ourimbah on the Central Coast on 31 August 2004. Inspector Diggs, who died at the age of 97, had been the NSWFB's oldest surviving senior officer. He recounted his colourful career in the September 2003 edition of Fire News.

Long serving firies

Captain Kevin Muldoon

Captain Kevin Muldoon from Goonellabah has recently celebrated 40 years of service with the NSW Fire Brigades. He reckons that having the fire station conveniently located at the top of his street is a bonus.

"When those bells ring, you never know what to expect," he said. "As a firefighter, I've attended all kinds of incidents, but when it comes down to it, we're just helping people in their time of need." Captain Muldoon says he has no plans of retiring any time soon.

Inspector Ken McDonald

Recently retired NSWFB Inspector Ken McDonald retired on 19 August 2004 after 40 years and two months' service with the Brigades.

Although he admits that "every fire has its own inherent danger," Ken believes that being a NSWFB firefighter is the best job around. "It's not just the camaraderie," he said. "It's the discipline and the wonderful opportunities firefighters are afforded for advancing their careers."

During his years of service, Ken has seen a lot of changes, including the introduction of BA and a focus on community awareness and education. Reflecting on his career, Ken offers one piece of philosophical advice, "if you can't change it, wear it!"

Engine Keeper Ron Jarrett

Ron has recently celebrated 50 years of firefighting after joining the NSWFB in 1954 at Maitland. He is currently engine keeper at Telarah Fire Station, and is adamant that near enough certainly isn't good enough when it comes to maintaining fire engines and equipment. "There's no use going to a fire with equipment problems," he said.

"Firefighting has come a long way in 50 years and I have seen many changes," said Ron. "There have been huge advances in protective clothing, and we also get a lot more training now."

"I wanted to get the 50 years up, that was the main thing. I still enjoy it, so I'll keep going."

NSW Fire Brigades Retired Members & Wives Association

The Association is seeking to upgrade its records and therefore requests that any retired member who has not attended our Annual Luncheon or made contact in the last couple of years get in touch so that correspondence can be forwarded to your current address.

We have set up a website and an email address to enable easier contact for members.

Email: nswfbretirees@optusnet.com.au

Website: www.members.optusnet.com.au/~gincra

We also have in place a phone/fax contact with an answering machine.

Phone/Fax: (02) 9924 6211

This year's annual get-together will be held on Wednesday 13 October 2004 at 1200 hrs. The venue is the Masonic Centre, Castlereagh Street Sydney.

We encourage any personnel who are intending to retire in the near future to contact us as the time approaches. For further information you may contact any of the committee members listed below.

President	Dave Gardner	9727 2529
Secretary	Bruce Johnson	9924 6211
Assistant Secretary	Ted Thompson	9913 2487
Treasurer	John White	4471 3158
Committee	Ken Smith	9150 7859
Committee	Barry Lee	9602 7419
Committee	Stan Reeder	9832 8412

You've got mail

To: The Editor, Fire News

It was so sad to hear of the tragic death of one of your officers, Philip Viles, in the call of duty. My sympathy to you all.

Most people I think, take very much for granted the men and women of all the emergency services. They are always there when needed, doing a job most of us would shrink from, working unsociable hours, coping with and managing obstructive people and who knows what else. Whilst accepting the emergency services are there when needed, there is huge respect and gratitude for the work these men and women do.

Will you please convey to the crew at the Budgewoi Station my most sincere condolences at the loss of a much valued colleague.

From: Mrs Margaret Spinks

To: The Editor, Fire News

We would like to publicly thank through Fire News, members of the Armidale Fire Brigade who organized and conducted the benefit night for Matthew Wyknet last November.

Matthew lost his father Ron, mother Cecilia and sisters Sarah aged 7 and Brigitte aged 4 in a car accident on 1 October 2003.

We also would like to thank all members of the NSW Fire Brigades who donated and helped with the appeal and benefit night.

The benefit night was an outstanding success and we will be always grateful to these men and women and their families who have helped us with Matthew's path on life.

We will be eternally grateful to you all

From: Paul and Lexie Morrison,
Uralla, NSW,
Matthew's legal guardians

The Fire Brigade

To Brian:

I know some handsome heroes
At our local Fire Station,
They do a mighty job
In this dangerous occupation.

What would we do without them?
I really cannot tell
If my house caught alight
I'd think I was in hell.

I'm a golden oldie
And I would come to harm
If I tried to climb a ladder
To shut off my alarm.

They come with smiling faces
Oozing lots and lots of charm,
Batteries in their pockets
For my smoke alarm.

They do a mighty job
In this red-hot occupation,
So thanks to Brian and his crew
At the Wauchope Fire Station.

By: Winifred Godfrey
June 2004



To: Fire News

On Monday night 14 June, a fire started 100 metres south of Burrill Pines Motel.

Thanks to the quick action of a passing motorist who reported it, the fire brigade was able to control the fire before it became a major problem.

We would like to give a great big thank you to all those brave firefighters who gave their time and energy to help others in a time of need.

Without their prompt action, properties and maybe lives could have been lost.

Having up-to-the-minute equipment is so important, not only for quick results in extinguishing fires but to keep our firefighters as safe as possible. Their efficiency in fighting the fire was apparent in the way they carried out the whole operation. We have to be ever vigilant in keeping our homes and properties as safe as we can - it makes everyone's job easier.

Yours sincerely

From: The Morrow and Barker families

To: Bathurst Fire Station

Thank you for your prompt and thorough attention to a chimney fire at my mum and dad's place.

Thank you also for your advice. I cleaned the chimney myself, removing 20 to 30 litres of material (clinker coke ash and dust).

Yours sincerely,

From: Scott Richardson



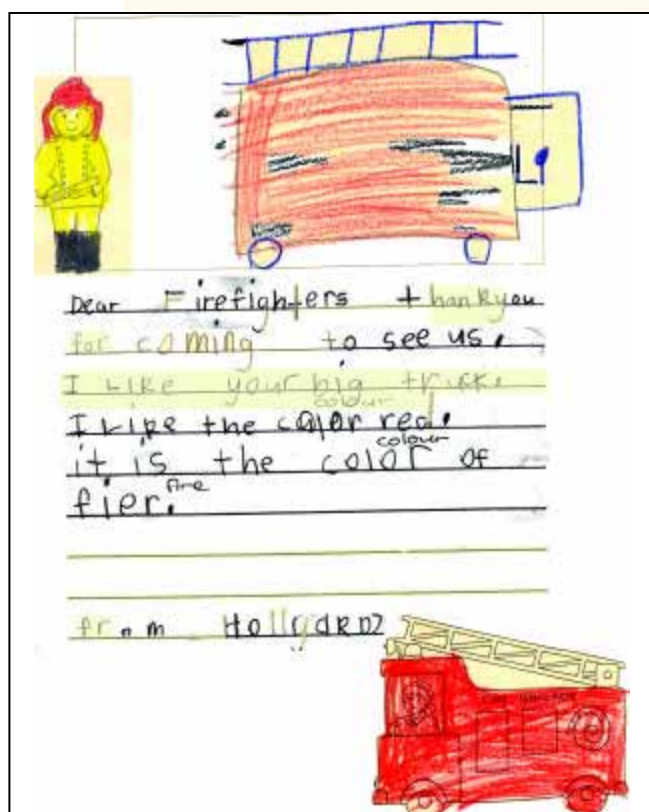
To: Superintendent Brian Johnson,
Region North

Avalon Public School would like to express appreciation for the wonderful support the Avalon firefighters have given our students over the past five years.

Each year 130 Year 1 students have greatly enjoyed and benefited from the visit by Avalon firefighters who present their fire education program with great enthusiasm and professionalism. The children have also gained much from the talks given by Firefighter Johnston of C Platoon, whose extensive knowledge and experience have proved to be invaluable.

The firefighters are always courteous and flexible when making arrangements and we are very pleased that our local community workers are visiting our school. We hope our relationship with the Avalon firefighters continues for many years to come.

From: Kathy Reid
(for Year 1 teachers)
Avalon Public School



To: Commissioner Mullins,

On behalf of Leon, Pano and myself I want to express our thanks to you for the tribute paid to Perce at his funeral.

We were very moved that you and your senior staff attended his funeral and that the Fire Service honoured him as people entered the chapel.

Perce would have been very appreciative of these gestures and very proud too. He had a strong connection with the Fire Brigades from his youth and he was very proud of his dad (Inspector) Felix Russo. As I mentioned in the eulogy, we have fond memories of our years as resident volunteer(s) at Dubbo Fire Station from 1949 to 1952 (incl).

Perce was an advocate for community health and fitness and a pioneer in the science of health and fitness. In developing the requirements for entering the Fire Service, in writing the Health and Fitness for Firefighters Book, in contributing to the well being and the maintenance of good health of firefighters, Perce was simply extending his vision and concept of a health and fit community and embracing the safety and health issues of a profession he knew and valued. I know that it was a pleasure for him to do this work and I know that he gained a sense of satisfaction from this work.

I have been fortunate to be with this exceptional man for 58 years. He was not only talented and outstanding in the fields of sports science, health and fitness and education, he was a loving and compassionate husband, father and son and friend to so many.

Again my thanks to you, Greg and members of the NSW Fire Brigades service for honouring Perce so appropriately and so beautifully.

From: Valda Russo



To: The Editor, Fire News

Special thanks to NSW Fire Brigades State Training College for their ongoing support of CareFlight. Throughout 2003 and 2004 NSWFB recruits raised in excess of \$10 000. CareFlight was privileged to attend each of the graduation ceremonies and was treated to an impressive display!

From: NRMA CareFlight

Dr Perce Russo

Dr Perce Russo spent many years researching aspects of community health and fitness. His initial work with the NSW Fire Brigades resulted in the construction of the Felix Russo Assessment Battery (FRAB), a series of tests that assessed potential firefighters' physical capabilities. The FRAB was a precursor to the current Physical Aptitude Test.

Following many hours of research, data collection, and actual fitness testing of firefighters, Dr Russo and Inspector Nicholas Ferrante published the book, Health and Fitness for Firefighters in 1995 which according to former NSWFB Commissioner Ian Mac Dougall, "is an integral part of our firefighter health and fitness policy."

To: Station Officer Scott Beers,
Moree Fire Brigade

On behalf of the staff and children at Vacation Care, I would sincerely like to thank you and your staff for attending the other day and explaining fire safety and other aspects of your job to the children.

They all enjoyed the session and I hope that they now have a better knowledge of fire safety.

From: Police and Community Youth Club,
Moree

To: The Editor, Fire News

I would just like to put pen to paper and whole-heartedly thank Commissioner Greg Mullins and his fellow officers for the outstanding job they did following the death of my good friend Philip Viles (Budgewoi Brigade).

Tracey (his wife), Trish (his sister) and I have been overwhelmed by the nature of your concerns and support.

Firstly, the chaplains Lindsay Smith and Topher Holland for their moral support. Chief Superintendent Doug Messenger for his unwavering guidance in the difficulties of workers compensation and D&D. To Superintendent Ian Krimmer who adhered to every possible family request to maintain integrity and compassion whilst dealing with the media and its continuous saturation of requests for interviews and such. To Station Officer Gordon Willson, and the recruits from the Training College at Alexandria for their commitment to protocol during the funeral, it was exemplary.

Finally, Superintendent Keith King who never stopped calling and liaising with the family and myself ensuring everything was dealt with appropriately due to the emotional difficulty.

The arrangements for the funeral were undertaken in a manner which made it easier for the family to grieve the loss of a husband/friend. Religious beliefs were always a precedence by the Brigade for the Viles family and hence, as unstressful as possible in this time of sorrow.

Yours thankfully and gratefully

From: Senior Firefighter Peter Oliver

To: The Editor, Fire News

My Dad is a firefighter.

My Dad puts the fire out.

My Dad is a hero because he saves people.

He saved someone's shop.

My Dad loves to help people when they are in trouble.

I am happy that my Daddy helps people when they're in trouble.

I like the way my Dad tells people about the fire-truck on open day.

From: Haley Snape



Photo by Mark Brandon, South Coast Register.



Dear Firemen,

Thank you so much. I was so worried until you came. You did a fantastic job.

I know it was hard, and the wind didn't help. You saved a lot of houses.

Here's a poem:

Firemen are red
Policemen are blue
You saved us
Yaba-daba-doo.

Yours sincerely,

From: Madelaine

To: Sean Falconer,
Broken Hill Fire Brigade

On behalf of the Midwives of the maternity unit at the Broken Hill Hospital, I would like to say thank you for your generous donation of the digital camera and disks.

The camera will be used for all newly-bereaved parents to have a memory of their baby and for all mums and dads separated from the babies for any reason.

The camera will be a very valued asset to the ward and I would like to say how grateful we are to have such thoughtful and generous people like you to raise money from your own pockets to help others.

Please extend our thanks to all of you who donated your money and time to purchase the camera for us.

Yours sincerely,

From: Lea Bermingham
Unit Manager
Broken Hill Health Service

To: Chief Superintendent Jim Smith,
Wollongong

On behalf of the members of Oak Flats Rural Fire Brigade, I would like to thank you for allowing us to use the NSW Fire Brigade Training facility at Albion Park Rail.

This excellent facility allowed our members to improve their firefighting skills in a situation as close as possible to the real thing without being in any real danger.

As members from the NSW Fire Brigades and Rural Fire Service are working together more often, I believe that this type of training is needed to allow members to gain a better understanding of what is required at an incident.

I would also like to thank your trainers on that day, Rudy Mattheus and Bob Wannell. Their knowledge and expertise was invaluable to the Oak Flats members. The trainers were willing to answer any questions and to assist in any way possible and I believe that they are an excellent asset to the NSW Fire Brigades.

I look forward to working with you in the future.

From: Captain R Barlow
Oak Flats Rural Fire Service

To: Superintendent Peter Casey,
Dubbo Zone Office,
NSW Fire Brigades

On Wednesday 11 August, our school played host to Station Officer Tony Lenthall and Qualified Firefighter Brett Dixon, both from Dubbo Fire Station. They visited our school as part of the Bluey Day fundraising campaign and had their heads shaved at our school.

Whilst at our school, both Tony and Brett took the time to speak with all our students on the importance of fire safety and fire awareness and their efforts certainly raised the importance with all the students of knowing what to do in emergency situations.

The purpose of this letter is to let you know that both Tony and Brett are a credit to the NSW Fire Brigades and if they are an indication of the type of staff in the Brigades then we are in great hands when it comes to fires and emergency situations. I want to compliment them on their enthusiasm and dedication and the rapport that they had with the students. They were wonderful people to have in the school.

I would appreciate it if you would take the time to show them this letter and award them their due recognition for what a great job they do in helping develop closer links with schools and the NSW Fire Brigade. You should feel very proud of the type of job they do.

Yours sincerely,

From: Peter Macbeth
R/Principal

To: The Commissioner, NSWFB

I would like to thank you sincerely for the donation of the generator. We are very grateful to receive this useful equipment.

Please be assured that it will be put to good use around the Rockdale area. The generator will make our work in emergencies easier, with power and lights.

We do thank you for your continued support in this area.

God bless you,

From: Major Kevin Hentzel,
Director,
The Salvation Army Emergency Services

To: Superintendent,
Region South 3,
Wollongong

Last Sunday night my fire alarm went off and despite my attempts, it kept stopping and starting.

Being new to the Village, I didn't know who to call. Finally I rang the Fire Brigade and after explaining the situation to them, they promptly came to my assistance, dismantled the alarm and told me what to do the next day as regards reporting it to the Village office.

I'm writing to you because I can't thank them all personally for coming to the aid of an old person, who was getting a little bit stressed. Such prompt and kind help needs to be recognised.

From: M Atkinson
St Lukes Village,
Dapto



To: The NSWFB

My wife and I would like to thank the four officers from Drummoyne Fire Station who came to our assistance.

From: Adrian Thorley

To: Mount Druitt Fire Brigade,
A Platoon

I would like to thank the Mt Druitt Fire Brigade for their recent visit to Dawson Public School - Pre-School. I have worked in the Early Childhood industry for many years, every year the district fire departments visit each centre to talk to the children about fire safety. I am delighted to say that the recent visit by your officers was the most informative, interesting and age appropriate safety talk for our children.

The children have not stopped talking about fire safety and firefighters (otherwise referred to as "Watermen"). It has sparked many discussions and I have been able to extend the children's understandings of fire safety including how to get out of a house, what to do if you are on fire, the phone number to call, good fires, bad fires and dangerous things to touch.

Thank you for the fantastic service in the local community.

From: Stephanie Pratt
Pre-School Teacher

To: Officer-in-Charge
Bathurst Fire Brigade

Please pass on my sincere thanks to all staff involved in the recent familiarisation walk-through conducted at St Catherine's Aged Care Facility.

It gives great comfort to residents and staff to see preventative action such as this taking place. The manner in which the officers conducted themselves was both courteous and professional.

Yours sincerely,

From: Elizabeth A Zachulski
Director of Nursing

To: Kevin Proud,
NSWFB, Region North

The Funday Committee wishes to thank your organisation for participating this year. It was a great day and everyone seemed to have a good time. The public rarely gets such a close up of the trucks and firefighters who drive them, when there is also time to talk. I am sure it helps improve the public awareness about fire safety in particular. If that makes your job a little easier then it is a good investment of your time. At least I hope it works that way.

We value the contribution the NSW Fire Brigades has made over past years to this event.

Would you please pass on my thanks to Geoff Body at the Forestville Fire Station and the firefighters who were there on the day.

Kind regards

From: David Schmidt,
Combined Forest Churches
Funday Committee



To: The Editor, Fire News

I would appreciate you passing on my sincere thanks to all the NSWFB people who attended my accident on 7 July 2004.

I was crushed by a very large truck and had to be rescued from my vehicle. The support from all the firefighters was really appreciated.

My brother, David Seelin, has just retired from the Brigades. He lost his wife Cathy in the Bali bombing.

I know how much support he had from everyone at the Fire Brigades and here they are again helping his sister through a very traumatic experience. They all seemed so relieved to find me not injured.

I can only imagine what they must have to cope with normally with an accident like this one.

Regards, and thanks once again.

From: Margaret Hennessy

To: All the Nowra Firefighters

We would like to thank all those firefighters involved in saving our home on 13 August 2004.

I have a disability and found this all very frightening as I could not do much only sit back and watch it all happen while mum and dad fought the burning embers from our home.

We just can't thank you all enough for the great job you did in fighting back the flames. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Kane Vandanberg, who made time the next day to come and check if we were OK and a little more settled.

Thankyou once again from us all with the great job you all did in putting out that ferocious fire.

From: The Foord family



COMMUNITY SAFETY CALENDAR SPRING CAMPAIGN 2004

SEPTEMBER

Spring clean for the bushfire season

Start preparing your property for the bushfire season.

Things you might like to consider:

- Prune back branches that could be a fire risk.
- Make sure all hoses, buckets and other fire safety materials are in good working order.
- Clean out the gutters.
- Remove any piles of weed or rubbish that have built up.
- Make sure firewood is stored safely away from the home.
- If your station is on the urban fringe consider working with your local CFU volunteers to invite the local media down to take a photo of residents preparing for the bushfire season.

OCTOBER

Chemwise - Chemical safety in the home

Making sure all hazardous chemicals in your home are safely stored.

Things to consider:

- What is a hazardous chemical?
- How do you store it safely?
- How do you dispose of it safely?
- How can hazardous chemicals be dangerous?
- What do you do if you have a spill?

To coincide with the launch of Chemwise, a template media release and fact sheet will be developed.

Ask your local hardware store if you can visit on the weekend and give away copies of the fact sheet to their customers, many of whom will be purchasing hazardous chemicals for use in the home.

Don't be a Tosser - New safety campaign to stop roadside grass fires caused by discarded cigarettes to be launched this month.

NOVEMBER

BBQ and backyard safety

Things to consider:

- There have been changes to the laws surrounding total fire bans.
- BBQs need to be properly maintained.
- Gas BBQs need to be used with safety.

There will be two fact sheets for distribution, one focusing of total fire ban rules and the other focusing on BBQ and backyard safety. There will also be a template media release.

Make copies of the fact sheets and give them to local BBQ retailers to hand out with every BBQ they sell.

Place fact sheets in your local tourism information office and caravan parks.

Invite the media to a BBQ at the station, where you show the community how to set up a safe BBQ on a total fire ban day.

REGION NORTH

Community Risk
Management Officer
Kerrie Pined,
Tel: 02 9901 2411

Public Affairs Officer
Natalie Lankar,
Tel: 02 9265 2907

REGION WEST

Community Risk
Management Officer
Steve Woods,
Tel: 02 9895 4510

Public Affairs Officer
Steve Norris,
Tel: 02 9265 2613

REGION SOUTH

Community Risk
Management Officer
Brad Smith,
Tel: 02 9742 7310

Public Affairs Officer
John Suter/Linton/Topsy Kawake,
Tel: 02 9265 2802

ABORIGINAL SERVICES OFFICER

Terry Hill,
Tel: 0407 002371

BUSH FIRE

Tel: 02 9742 7155

COMMUNITY FIRE UNITS

Tel: 02 9742 7346

CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

David Weir,
Tel: 0408 228740

JUVENILE FIRE SETTERS

Russell Airey,
Tel: 0409 129647

