

NSW Rural Fire Service

Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade

March Newsletter 2024



From the President

The RFS has changed over the years in many ways. Volunteers are required to take various courses to upskill to the level required of a professional organisation. This includes our procedures and administrative processes which have become standardised.

As volunteers, we need to adhere to certain codes and practices which are now normal in the modern workplace. I would encourage members to revisit our code of conduct, so we treat each other with the respect and dignity each brigade member deserves to harmoniously work together.

Roza Sage
President

Captain's News

Group Officer elections 2024 will be held in May and GSB has a vote for Group Leader and central sector group officers. When we receive more information from the District Office, we will pass it to all.

Following the introduction of this funding initiative at our last general meeting we can now announce the revision of the timelines. The major one being submissions now need to be in by 30th June 2024 not 1st March 2024. Basically, Brigades can apply for up to \$50 000 but must fit guidelines in the documents attached.

If you have any ideas, please send to Roza, Dianne or myself. Any suggestions need to have supplier and approx. cost attached and must adhere to documents. The reasons behind the suggestions need to be attached. It would be helpful if we had any ideas by Friday 30th March.

General Meeting Dates 2024

April 21
June 16 AGM
August 18
October 20
December 8

Executive Meeting Dates

2024
May 2

Executive Members

Have been elected to help members with any questions or concerns.

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All ideas will be presented at the April 21st General Meeting.

This is an example of one idea and would go close to costing \$50000 - Fixed wall dividing Katoomba FCC shed into 2 sections so the brigade catering/food storage area can limit diesel fuel air particles contaminating work surfaces in the brigade section of the shared facility. To create a cleaner and safer workspace for sorting and handling food items required in field catering, the training needs of 21 brigades and the storing of items in the available cold room. The current catering area of our brigade is difficult to keep clean due to the diesel fume particles of the adjacently garaged appliances. By erecting a floor to ceiling partition wall, we can decrease the excessive cleaning needs prior to commencing food storage and supply work. As the building is already in use, we simply need to divide it into 2 sections to improve the food handling area.

Further ideas are welcomed but please move quickly.

Ian Mann
Captain

Welcome!

At the February General Meeting we welcomed Aston Mohamed to full membership within our brigade. Aston is a dual member from Blackheath and has been working in the GSB function areas of Transport & Logistics as well as catering.

We would also like to welcome a new probationer dual member to Transport & Logistics. **Richard Gomez** is a driver from the Medlow Bath Brigade and has recently assisted us with shifts in catering as well as transport for the Six Foot Track Marathon.

Probationer, **Carol Lemon-McCoy**, a dual member from Blackheath, also joined us as a comms crew member for the Marathon from 0600-1200hrs. She learnt about magnetic t-cards and managed a few hours of scribing.

Catering

Our catering members are off to the usual very busy training season with approximately 80 courses or workshops already scheduled over the coming months. Check the roster or contact Deputy Captain Rosemary Mann if you want to know more about opportunities to assist.



JUST ONE DAY – Sunday 3rd March

At Valley Heights RFB we prepared chicken burgers from the Blue Mountains Catering appliance. The Village Firefighter participants jimmied and whacked the solid door open. Hungry work!

One the same day we had another catering crew cooking lasagne in the FCC at Katoomba for the participants of the Crew Awareness & Safety Course. That garlic bread smell drives them crazy!

Both courses had to be fed on the Saturday as well so one weekend saw 4 successful catering jobs completed. Over 70 more to go!

Six Foot Track Marathon 2024

Well done to all those who were available to fill various shifts in comms, catering, transport and logistics areas to support the running of the Six Foot Track Marathon on March 9th. While all the Blue Mountains brigades play essential roles in getting this race safely managed, the Group Support Brigade has to be recognised for carrying the biggest load.

This year we were asked to sort the supplies for collection by all the checkpoint brigades which has historically been done by South Katoomba. Part of our new logistics role and done well by those available for the Wednesday shift. There was also success with setting up a lighting trailer as a new logistics task. Bus transport was appreciated as usual by all those at the race. Catering had last minute adjustments but somehow the Captain was still available to fire the starting gun for wave three runners.

Another change was in the ICC where CAD was employed as we now have the second mountains channel (Bravo) which was in use. The new magnetics were terrific and helped us sort, from CAD, the appliances 'on scene'. Three ambulances were required with some serious medical issues or carry out needs. Hopefully all three patients are now tracking well.



Thanks to Bernd Luedecke for the race photos.

The GSB After Action Review (AAR) on this event has been loaded onto the Brigade website for members.

BMGSB Training!

The Blue Mountains District Training Calendar and the Greater Sydney Area Training Calendar have been released to you all via email and loaded onto the Brigade website. The application process for both District and GSA training opportunities came to you with the calendars.

Group Support Roster for Non-Fire Season Training

The April Comms roster is a trial. If it works, it will continue until September.

- We will have Supervisors opening up the ICC on the first 2 Saturdays of the month and the 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month. One day per weekend. Sessions called Crew Training. Up to 10 can roster on these sessions.
- When a General Meeting is scheduled, there will be no Crew Training on that weekend.
- All training times on these 4 weekend days will be 1000 – 1300hrs as suggested by members.
- Crew Training segments have been suggested to encompass:
 - 1 hr of revising your skills in CAD/ICON individually or in a pair situation
 - 1 hour of a Scenrio action session as a group
 - 1 hour of sharing what you have learnt or using the CAD Manual / CAD 5+5 Folder / CAD Operator Levels tasks to improve your capabilities.
- One of these 4 days per month will be stolen from crew training to become a **Special Training Event**.

Special Training Event ideas to date:

1. Training package on how to approach “holding SARS’ when you are on a Comms shift with aviation activated – **DC Peter Horn & DC John Brell**
2. Essentials for ICC Crewing – Flowchart / Triple 000 call to Stop message / ITASC / scenarios / IAPs
SDC Dianne Knight & Supervisor Libby Gahl
3. Setting up the lighting trailer demonstration – **DC John Brell & DC Patrick Leonard**
4. Advancing your tech keyboard skills - **DC Peter Horn**
5. **Open to further suggestions and volunteer presenters for any function areas.**

Note: All training and rostering plans are open to change if a Hazard Reduction is suddenly announced.

CAD on RFS Connect Episode:

Watch the link below for a great overview on CAD. This episode was from Connect on Nov. 27, 2023.

<https://d.docs.live.net/bfb77c908db91f68/Desktop/computer-aided-dispatch-connect-local.htm>

Social Events!

Just a reminder that we have an elected Social Organiser for our brigade and any ideas for future events would be best run past her. Chris has organised several successful dinners for us all to gather and chat.

Anne has had suggestions passed on to her for a West Sector bus trip day and a potential Trivia Quiz night. I am sure Chris would be happy to chat to these members. Keep those ideas coming to Chris!

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Life Membership Nominations can Happen!

As we all work through ideas to adjust sections of the Life Membership nomination and selection process, please be aware that this should in no way stall current or future nominations from being put forward.

We have a system, and it can be used now as we look at ways to improve it.

The current system is that any member can nominate someone they feel has contributed greatly to the brigade. To do this you:

- seek membership details such as service years, roles in the brigade from the Captain or SDC which they can get off OneRFS.
- write out all the candidate has contributed to support, improve, manage areas, make a difference etc and get others to assist with the wording, details etc.
- contact the President or Captain and request the nomination goes before the next Executive meeting and then your paperwork is shared with the Exec.
- You can attend the Executive meeting to support your application and seek their views on the strength of the application.
- If the Executive approve the application to go forward, then members are informed of the candidate's name and that a vote will happen at the next general meeting.

Concerns the Committee has been asked to address by members are:

1. The candidate will know this is happening so there is no way to shield them from disappointment if the members vote against a successful outcome.
2. The Executive have the power to stop the initial application and perhaps this is too big a responsibility?
3. How many years of service within the brigade are appropriate before nomination?
4. What criteria do the Executive judge the nomination by?
5. Should all GSB members at the meeting have the right to vote?

It may be a long process to work through the additions and adjustments that brigade members would like to see put in place to the current nomination process so please feel free to use the existing life membership process if you wish to achieve this honour for a GSB member in 2024.

AGM 2024

The May edition of the GSB Newsletter will have all the usual information required about the 16th of June Annual General Meeting. This date has just been approved by the District Manager.

As per usual, all positions will be declared vacant, so opportunities arise for members to consider. Administrative positions have no training pre-requisites but a new RFS package, to support Presidents and Treasurers, is currently nearing completion.

Operational positions do have training pre-requisites, and these are all listed for each position in the documentation on the brigade website.

Our long-serving Treasurer, Bernd Ludecke, has indicated he would like to pass the job to someone else. Our thanks go to Bernie for all his efforts.

He is available to talk about the workload with anyone who is interested.



Member's Farewell

Wishing all the best to Maureen and husband, Gary, in their new brigades in northern NSW. I love the relaxed and practical polo work shirts!

"As we have moved in the last month back into NSW, I have transferred to Clarence Valley Catering Brigade and will also be joining our local brigade - Gulmarrad.

After 29 years in Blue Mountains brigades - original Communications Brigade, Glenbrook Lapstone, Group Support and Winmalee, I've had a great many valuable experiences and made many close friends. Been on deployments to many places - Victoria, Canberra and many others in NSW. The 2000 Olympics, World Youth Day, catering with Patrick, Chris and Ann at the State Championships in Temora.

Many thanks for your friendship over the years. I hope to catch up with you again some time." Maureen Walsh



Lego Enthusiasts!

Love Lego?

A fairly new member, in a brigade somewhere across the state, has constructed this NSW RFS Pumper to submit to Lego for a possible design idea. He has fully kitted out the interior cab as well.

I wonder if he has an MDT or just a status panel in the cab?



To be considered by Lego it needs to be supported by 10 000 people around the world.



"I would really appreciate it if anyone who liked my model would vote for it by heading to the Lego ideas website:

<https://ideas.lego.com/projects/4a3644ba-beae-42cb-95f5-555790750bec>

If you don't have a Lego account, you can make one in approximately two minutes. As I need as much support as possible."

Isaac Mil