

NSW Rural Fire Service Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade November Newsletter 2024



From the President

Thank you to all those members involved in catering and community engagement. The photos in the newsletter this month demonstrate the worthwhile work that Group Support does to assist the Mountains brigades.

For those in communications please put yourselves down for a Bravo Day. It is a great way to hone your skills in readiness for any incident call. As the scouts say, 'be prepared'.

Roza Sage
President

Captain's News

In recent months we have had have various members unwell or having operations. We wish these members, as well as any with ops coming up, a speedy recovery.

On looking at our membership list there are various members who are extremely inactive and as such their training is not up to date. This gives a false impression to management of what our capability actually is. If you find you are no longer in a position to assist with brigade activities, then please consider your options:

- email us that you wish to change to associate membership
- email us saying you wish to resign from GSB membership

District Office are then informed and have a more realistic understanding of GSB capabilities for tasking.

Updating our garage to shed modification, we have now received a revised quote on stage 2 of the operation from the builder. This has been sent to have an order raised.

Ian Mann
Captain

General Meeting Dates

December 8, 2024
Catered light lunch

2025 Meetings

February 16, 2025

April 13, 2025

AGM June 15, 2025

August 17, 2025

October 19, 2025

December 14, 2025

Executive Meeting Dates

November 7, 2024

January 23, 2025

March 6, 2025

May 1, 2025

**Blue Mountains Group
Support Brigade
2000 – 2025.**

**Celebrating 25 years of
service in 2025!**

December Meeting

The December 8 General meeting will have Brigade Rule 1 – Criteria for Life Membership changes presented. As per the NSW RFS Constitution, only members present at the meeting can vote.

This meeting will have a catered light lunch at the conclusion of business.

Get Ready Weekend – September 21

Clooney and I would like to thank all who encouraged us to get involved in community engagement activities for the 2024 Get Ready weekend.

In particular, thanks to Chris Zito and his brigade team, and Geoff Booth and his brigade team, for including us in their planned community engagement activities at Wentworth Falls and in Springwood.

It was rewarding to see people smile, when they saw Clooney (in his own RFS uniform), and to then come up to pat him. It was a great way to be start talking about how important pets are in our bush fire survival plans. And also, how important it is to set up the Hazards Near Me app

The presence of Clooney was an opportunity to also talk about the role of Accelerant Detection Dogs and to therefore, encourage residents to consider any flammables near their homes, as part of bush fire survival plans.

Clooney and I also appreciated the support of the Zensational Coffee Cat team. We spent the Friday morning (before the Get Ready weekend), with a range of brochures, at the cart. It was a great opportunity to talk to the customers, about their bushfire survival plans, and to make sure they had downloaded/set up the Hazards Near Me app.



Current Roster

The communications roster is being trialled with one day per weekend at the moment. If these days fill up quickly then we can consider adding further days per month.

The starting time is flexible as if brigades request Bravo channel training opportunities, they tend to want to start at 0900hrs or 1000hrs rather than 1100hrs. If hot summer days do arrive then being in the ICC in the afternoons is often wise. It all comes down to the weather at the moment so check the roster for possible alterations. TOBAN days will be likely as well.



Training in the ICC during shifts

As presented at the October General Meeting and recorded in the minutes, there will be opportunities to train in the systems and practices used in the ICC for our Comms members. Supervisors have volunteered to specialise in a couple of areas that members have requested for revision. Place yourself on roster with a supervisor offering this extra training so you can revise the topics that suit your needs.

This training can happen when the 5-hour shift is quiet or in the final hour of the shift when the radio work has been finished off.

This will be available for the next 6 months so just look for the shift time that suits you, check the 2 topics that the Supervisor has recorded below and then request the ONE that you are hoping to cover when you

get on shift. We will do our best to support everyone with their 'brushing up" as well as the usual CAD, ICON, radio practice that every shift needs.

It is hoped that Bravo Days will continue to be requested by brigades following a week of rainy weather.

No	Training in Crew / Shift time	Supervisors
1	ITASC analysis and what the best ones provide.	David, Libby or Dianne
2	Magnetics T Cards – familiarisation of the new tag names, setting up an incident in sectors and divisions. T Cards and battle boards - using them.	Paula, Heather or Ian
3	Mapping and navigation skills using COP.	Peter or David
4	Firemapper – changes, advances, connection to the ICC tasks.	Peter or Dianne
5	ICON – Situation Reports step by step.	Paula, Libby or Dianne
6	Help with technology – RFSActiv, vol-email address, brigade website etc	Ian, Heather

RFSActiv

Please endeavour to 'colour in' your availability in RFSActiv so we have some idea of who may be able to be contacted for TOBAN days on short notice.

Garage to Shed Transformation

The financial management of the Federal Grant funds has been established and it is now "All systems go!"

As previously outlined in the last newsletter the first step will be to shift some of the racking to the left to create a gap for the internal wall to be erected by the builders. The racking will require forklift work and coordination with vehicles etc with District Office personnel. We are hoping to have this completed in November so we can book the builders for the new year.



In this phase we can also look at any archival documents that should make their way to cupboard space in our new brigade room.

We have one GSB member known to us with a current forklift licence. We have also secured the assistance of a forklift driver from one other brigade. If anyone knows of other retired RFS volunteers with a forklift licence, could you please let the Captain or SDC know. The racking movement job has to be done on a weekday.

Member Activity

Veronica is very involved with the catering section of GSB and is also a flamenco dance teacher. She has shared an upcoming January event with me to pass on to members.

This information has also been emailed to members.

FLAM at the Y
 Passionate flamenco music and dance with traditional Tapas!
 special guest artist **PACO LARA**
 flamenco dancer **TOMÁS ARROQUERO**
SAT 25 JAN 2025 - 7pm
 BYO Event
 Plus students from **FlamencoVerde, Katoomba**
 Tickets: <https://events.humanity.com/flamenco-at-the-y>
 yha 207 Katoomba St Katoomba NSW 2760

Pre-Fire Season Briefing Oct. 18

Congratulations to our catering team for an outstanding effort to cater for a variety of dietary needs and present a wonderful assortment of finger food for the 60 captains, SDC and district staff who were assembled to discuss the upcoming fire season.



Interesting snippets from the presentation:

- Prediction is for a standard fire season
- Weather predicted is for heat and rain throughout this summer
- Areas burnt in the 2019/2020 fire events have regenerated and would burn again
- Project Athena will add predictions to CAD/ICON on how an incident may proceed using all the data provided. An AI addition.
- COP is to have advanced 3D mapping added
- A PIG trailer is available for improving communication in black spots
- Hazards Near Me is about to be updated with a new alert level of “responding” then “going” is the next level
- Firemapper generates a map automatically when CAD/ICON creates an incident
- Using the District grant funds - every brigade will be going across to a swipe card access system
- The state finance management system for the grant expenditure will make things easier for all brigades

Catering an Assessment

The perfect lunch set up was assembled in the carpark of Marge's Lookout at Glenbrook on Saturday 26th October.

Five members from various brigades were being assessed for Crew Leader.

The call came for a change of location.



The hungry crews needed lunch down the fire trail at the Lookout!

Well done to our speedy 'pack and unpack' again catering pair.

They tell me that "service" wasn't as flashy the second time around, but the view was probably worth the lunch location change.



Operational Brief (hot off the emails)

One form of RPE is the use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The RFS has undertaken changes to training courses relating to the use of SCBA and now has two separate stand-alone training courses:

1. **Breathing Apparatus Operator (BAO)** – a foundational training course designed to provide members with the knowledge to safely select, don, operate and maintain SCBA in a respiratory hazardous environment, such as at a motor vehicle fire or when using defensive firefighting strategies at structure fires.
2. **Structural Fire Fighting (SFF)** – technical training that provides members with the training to safely undertake offensive interior structural firefighting, conduct search and rescue of persons inside a structure and ancillary operations.

Radio Terminology

To reduce confusion when members are radioing Firecom with their crew strength for BAO-trained individuals, members are to be identified as either being 'BAO' trained or 'structural' trained. For example, if there are four members on the vehicle, including two members who are SFF-trained and one member that is BAO-trained, the terminology would be:

"Ashbury 1 has a crew strength of 4, including 2 Structural and 1 BAO."

If you check crew into the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), then a radio call is not required as the BAO and SFF capability will be reflected on your crew details automatically.