

NSW Rural Fire Service Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade March Newsletter 2025



Where do we see the brigade being in 5 years?

LOGISTICS CATERING COMMUNICATIONS AVIATION
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This discussion topic will be a part of the Agenda for the General meeting at Lawson RFB on April 13th.

Our FCO2 suggested we look at this question as a whole brigade and then decide what we have to offer potential new members when planning a 2025 recruitment drive.

Please start discussing this question, on what you believe our brigade needs, to be a strong, active brigade, five years from now.

Captain's News

The GSB Shed modifications are progressing well and the aircon was tested recently when it was 30 degrees outside and very cool inside while doing catering prep for training courses.

Thanks to those who have been able to assist with catering. This will be ongoing for the foreseeable future as well as any Hazard reduction assistance.

With various out of area commitments by the district, our transport team has been busy with trips to and from the airport. Thanks to you all as it is well appreciated by the troops you take down or bring back.

I have attached the latest updated brigade contact list. This is produced directly from RFS SAP files. The changes are the addition of 3 new members Ian Brown, Phil Selman and Simon Ashdown. Please adjust your devices with relevant information.

Ian Mann
Captain

1. GSB Newsletter Reports / Photos can be sent to the Secretary at gsbbluemoountains@gmail.com

General Meeting Dates of 2025

Commencing at 1000hrs

April 13
Lawson RFB

AGM June 29 +
Long Service Medals /
Clasps presented

August 17
Location TBA

October 19

December 14

Executive Meeting Dates

May 1, 2025

Further dates will be confirmed
by the next Executive after
the June AGM.



Grant Progress

Our brigade now has its own shed! The dividing wall has been completed as part of the federal grant.

The shed has 3 split system air conditioners installed which can be turned on or off using the one handset or via an app. Both the captain and SDC have their mobiles paired to the system so if anyone drives off, and wonders if they turned the aircon off, just call one of these officers to check.

An emergency light, and the green man exit box above the western wall door has been installed. These were essential WHS additions.

An air ventilation system, to extract dust particles, is to be installed soon. **Please turn it on when you are working in the shed.** The air quality monitor will show you how polluted the shed air may be prior to using the system and how it is after use. The system will turn itself off after 2 hours in case we forget. It has been installed for our member wellbeing.

The next step in the grant renovations will be for the sink and freezer area of the shed. Quotes are being gathered for the installation of a new sink and work bench. An upright freezer will replace one tuckerbox freezer.



Next Generation Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

The third and final workshop was conducted at District Office on Saturday 15th March and attended by Peter Horn and myself as the GSB representatives. The Plan is nearly across the line with the focus areas being identified and the hazard reductions proposed for the next five years.

The community consultation phase will hopefully commence in April and run for 6 weeks.

Hazard Reductions (HRs) will be scheduled from now onwards. We are hoping for a busy season so that at least 10 HRs can be achieved.

Hazard Reduction activities

Hazard reductions require a team effort across a number of our function areas.

Communications – Bravo channel from the ICC requires 2 crew members with 1 being CAD to log all the sit reps and ICON information. 2 CAD operators is a luxury but not essential.

Logistics / Catering – HRs prefer the packed lunch option so they can grab their lunch and move to their location to work. Our catering team order, receive and supply with the help of logistics members.

Notice of many HRs will be last minute as the weather conditions need to be perfect.

Please let the Captain know of your availability asap when a message is sent via an email, RFSActiv or an SMS.

The role of the Executive Members

Our Executive Members, Paula and Anne, have accepted a new task within the Executive Committee of:

Supporting New Members through the Mentoring Program

They will be:

- Connecting to probationers via an email or chat
- Introducing them to the membership at their first General Meeting
- Supporting and explaining things to them at meetings
- Providing them with a mentor who works in their first function of choice
- Answering any questions they may have on shifts, tasking, rosters, contacts etc

We welcome our first 3 Probationers of 2025:

Ian Brown – retired from National Parks & Wildlife and as a Navy Reserves Officer. Interested in working in the ICC.

Phil Selman – dual member from Blackheath / Mt Victoria. Driver with a HR licence and interested in working in Transport & Logistics.

Simon Ashdown – interested in experiencing all four function areas. Firefighting trained. Dual member interest.

Non-Fire Season Training 2025

The 2025 Non-fire season training roster will commence in May. It has been planned with the support of the Deputy Captains from each function area of GSB. Dates are still being organised with the presenters so a copy will be emailed out to you in April.

Any further ideas from members should be forwarded to a DC or the SDC.

What are MDTs?

Mobile Data Terminals

Mobile data terminals (MDTs) are touchscreen Panasonic Toughbook tablets installed in NSW RFS appliances and configured with the Adashi incident response software. MDTs provide members with number of benefits:

- MDTs enable two-way, real-time sharing of operational intelligence between members in the field and Incident Management Teams (IMTs)
- Responding crews, Incident Controllers and Incident Management Teams can access a single source of incident information, enabling better pre-incident preparation and informing actions by crews and strike teams
- MDT communicates with existing RFS systems (such as CAD, ACTIV & ICON), improving dispatch and response capability
- Simplified data collection to improve data quality and inform decision-making

While MDTs enhance the operational response they do not replace the vital function that radios have within NSW RFS. MDTs will allow radio traffic to be significantly reduced due to incident information being readily available in the field. This will allow radio communications to be reserved for urgent or critical intel.

Check out the two training modules in OneRFS in FUEL – Technical.

MDTs are now used in many districts across the state and will hopefully come to the Blue Mountains late 2025. Let's get ready for them!

District Community Engagement support –

Administration Tasking Success!

The call went out for at least 6 members to fold and fill 400 information folders for two Youth events planned for the upper and lower areas of the Blue Mountains.

7 workers x 2 hours = 400 completed folders. We had a great time chatting as we worked.

Lisa from DO was thrilled and asked that her thanks be passed on to those who saved her days of work to get the job done.

Col Church, who leads CE across the district, has also asked me to thank members for their assistance and hinted that he has other tasks we may be asked to assist with in the future.

Future district task requests to our Community Engagement Officer, Chris Davidson, will come out via RFSActiv. Please consider loading and using the app for **RFSActiv** as it provides equal opportunities for any member to contribute time and energy to our brigade and district.

All GSB members with training in Community Engagement (ICE online in FUEL) will also be asked to consider working with the SDC conducting Membership Drives and developing Recruitment packages for our brigade.

Support Brigade Forum 25

The first Support Brigade Forum was held in 2023. It had support brigades for Communications, Aviation, Operational Support and Catering from across the state in attendance.

Following an EOI a State Working Group has been formed to plan and develop the Agenda for the Forum 25 on July 25-27. The Forum 25 WG has a representative from the following districts: Castlereagh, Chifley/Lithgow, Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai, Lower Hunter, Shoalhaven, Southern Highlands (2) and Blue Mountains.

As the WG representative for the Blue Mts I will keep you all informed of the plans as they develop for this Forum.

Dianne Knight SDC

Six Foot Track Marathon

The weather caused the postponement of the 2025 marathon event which was disappointing.

The race organisers are negotiating a September marathon date so stay tuned for further updates.

Many thanks go to all those members who worked pre-race days as well as those rostered to fill roles on the day.

