

NSW Rural Fire Service Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade

November Newsletter 2025



From the President

As our brigade grows in function and numbers, I would like to thank Patrick for his leadership of the Transport and Logistics function as he steps down from that role.

Moving forward, we hope to add the important Community Engagement function which will take some of the burden from our district office. Additionally, we will be formalising the role of a Training Officer.

We will be putting motions forward to that effect at our December meeting as they need to be added to our Brigade rules and hope that you will have all given these some consideration.

Please bring a plate of goodies to share after the December Meeting as it is a lovely way to finish off the year.

Roza Sage
President

Brigade Social Night

Have you booked into our night out? We have 24 attending so far.

EVENT: SOCIAL NIGHT – DINNER OUT!
WHEN: FRIDAY 21st NOVEMBER
WHERE: GRAND VIEW HOTEL,
WENTWORTH FALLS
TIME: 6.30pm
WHO: All members and partners are welcome.



Contact Anne Brell on 0403 024 236 and book asap if you would like to join us.

General Meetings of 2025:
all commence at 1000hrs

December 14
followed by the Election of a
Deputy Captain Transport
& Logistics

(please bring a plate of goodies to
share after the meeting)

General Meetings of 2026:

February 22
April 19
June AGM 21
August 16
October 18
December 13

**Executive Committee Meetings
of 2025 - 2026**

January 28
March 4
May 6

Follow us on Facebook:

**RFS – Blue Mountains Group
Support Brigade**



Captain's News

The busy catering season for all the training events across the district has concluded. Congratulations to all our members who assisted with this essential tasking so that courses could operate and our fellow RFS members could be well fed. A huge 'Well Done' to our Catering Deputy Captain, Rosemary Mann, and our SDC, Ian Mann, for all the time and effort they put into making each catering session work as well as it did.

Special thanks go to our retiring Transport & Logistics Deputy, Patrick Leonard. Patrick is stepping back from the role to concentrate on his health, and we wish him all the best with this concern. He has established a great team of drivers and worked well with them to support the needs of the district over the past two plus years. Get well Patrick so we can enjoy your company again.

The position of Deputy Captain for Transport & Logistics will be elected at the December 14th General Meeting. Postal and proxy votes are possible for all members who are eligible to vote. The nominees will be announced December 1 via an email to all members.

Dianne Knight
Captain

Welcome to our Newest Probationary Members

	Probationary	Dual or New to Service?
1	Adam Hutchins	Blackheath/Mt Vic RFB
2	Rachel Hess	New to the RFS
3	Riley Williams	New to the RFS
4	Melissa Plant	Sth Katoomba RFB

We now have 10 probationers or new ordinary members interested in training in the Communications area.

This involves 5 skill areas: Radio, Logging, Disposition Boards, Mapping and Phone Operations.

Special training days / nights are being planned.

Computers are not an essential part of the CCA course so if any other members are interested in doing this course, please let us know.

Two Motions for December General Meeting

Notice is being given that two constitutional change motions are being presented at the Brigade General Meeting on December 14, 2025. Both have been discussed at previous meetings and are part of the Brigade Five Year Plan that we have worked through over the past 6 months.

Motion for Training Officer:

I move that the additional Administrative Officer position of Training Officer be added to the Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade Rule 12, Additional Administrative Officers, and that this position must be elected at the Brigade Annual General Meeting.

Motion for addition of Community Engagement function:

I move that an additional function namely, Community Engagement, be added to the Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade.

Kenny Street Hazard Reduction

Stage three of Kenny Street, Mt Victoria HR was a great success on Saturday 25th October. It was a very difficult burn as it was located on the edge of the escarpment and surrounded by numerous dwellings.

If you follow us on Facebook (RFS-Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade) you will have already appreciated the variety of tasking options open to our Support Brigade with such an event.

All five of our function areas performed admirably and were crucial to the job being undertaken in the field by 71 personnel.

Aviation (2 members) – established and managed Browntown Air Base for Helitak 270 (see video on FB)

Communications (2 members) – managed Bravo channel, CAD and ICON systems

Catering/Logistics (2 members) – delivered welfare (food and water) to the staging area

Transport (1 member) – crewed the bulk water appliance with a driver from a local brigade

Community Engagement (same Comms crew) – showed the Fire Mapper photo collection to an overseas group having a tour of the District Office with FCO1.



Fire Mapper photos provide us with more than just the visuals. Time stamp, location, direction etc are all valuable snippets from the field. Portrait, rather than landscape shots, help to prevent a sore neck.



Any Firemapper experts out there who can tell us how to rotate the photos within the system, if that is an option, please drop us a line. gsbbluemountains@gmail.com

Training

Over the last few months, I've enjoyed the privilege of helping our members who want to either continue or become part of the com's team, through one on one training, group training and scenario practice ready for our fire season live crewing again.

With the introduction of MDTs to our district, technology has once again made some changes to how we operate, especially when using the CAD system. Not in a scary way but a good way for operators, as it can make our lives a little easier, especially tracking vehicles.

Those who attended our October Com's Team training series got to see first-hand how much easier it is to receive certain initial information as units are coming on air, crewing, rolling & arriving on scene, via the

MDTs, as well as easily be able to repin an incorrect incident location, when a crew gets on scene & confirms the incident and it's status, via the "window sitrep" feature in the MDTs.

We also got to dust the cobwebs off our old scribe, radio and board skills. This was a good opportunity to include and show those who have been worried about the computer system that there was still a role in the team they could participate in. Guess what! Turns out our experienced team members demonstrated just how well our team can get it done, with a blend of old and new methods.

These newly learnt skills, plus the refresher of our old skills, has given our team attendees more confidence to assist again on both weekend and call-out shifts. It has been terrific seeing members grow and feel more capable of tackling the current season. I'm very proud of the effort everyone who came along to training put in and some have even stepped up for different events and shifts that have been available. You all have done so well embracing this new technology and changing our operating methods with these new tools. Special thanks to Peter Horn for his MDT scenario assistance too.

I have spoken with both Peter and Dianne regarding ongoing brigade training, especially with our new recruits doing CCA. Since we're in fire season and weekend crewing has started again, we will hold Wednesday evening training at least once a month, to help our new recruits and those who still feel they're not confident in getting on a shift yet. For our Com's Team we still need radio, scribe, ICON and disposition board operators. So make yourself available for shifts or these training evenings if you don't feel ready to attend a weekend crew shift yet.

As for training in our other portfolio areas, I'm still waiting for feedback from the heads in those areas, if they want to set up specific training for your teams. We will see the new state and district training calendars early next year but if there is in-house training you want to arrange training for your team prior to that, please let me know ASAP.

Happy days!
Heather Connolly
Training Officer

Halloween Helpers

Four of our brigade members joined in the community Halloween event at the Lawson Community Centre on Friday 31st October with Lawson RFB.

We were able to provide one Cat7 driver to assist Lawson Brigade with the afternoon event and were invited to learn more about community engagement with their experienced team.

Our thanks to Lawson RFB for the invitation to assist them.



Blue Mountains District IMX

The District Incident Management Exercise (IMX) was a great success. Two training days were organised with Day 1 being for the staff and interagency personnel to fine tune their skills and Day 2 for Group Officers, Captains and Senior Deputy Captains from across the Blue Mountains.

Both days required the support of members from our communications section of the brigade as the radio, CAD and ICON systems play a major role in the scenario enacted.

The Level 2 incident was at the lower end of the mountains, commencing with a bushfire in Mitchell's Pass and travelling across to Glenbrook and East Blaxland areas.

- Trapped bike riders at Elizabeth Lookout needed helitak bucketing.
- Non-essential RAAF personnel were seeking advice on evacuating.
- On both days there was a minor ding between an RFS Cat 1 and a civilian requiring an ambulance.
- Three strike teams were formed and attached to the incident.
- Houses in Mt Zion and Maraket Avenue were under property protection.

All sections of the Incident Management Team (IMT) practiced their jobs, tested out the room and considered the training opportunity to be worth repeating again next year.

Congratulations to the Capabilities team of our District who organised the two days. Well done to our Comms members for their effort on both Friday and Saturday to provide the link between the activation cell and the IMT participants.



Chef Caps Investigation

Investigations are underway to find our catering members a chef cap suitable for inside tasking as well as outdoor barbeque work.

The first example is all cotton from Chef Works, with adjustable back strap and one line of embroidery at \$30 per cap.

Members are encouraged to find other options for us to cost and consider. Please send photos and costing to the Captain.

