

NSW Rural Fire Service Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade

January Newsletter 2026



From the President

Happy New 2026!

While the rest of the community is taking a break, Group Support members have been busy during our peak fire season. It has been a pleasure meeting the many keen new probationary members who will be joining our Group Support Brigade.

A big congratulations to Bernd Luedecke who was elected as Deputy Captain of Transport & Logistics. With a wealth of RFS experience Bernd is a very capable leader of this function.

At the December meeting the motion was passed to add the position of Training Officer to our Administrative positions. We will now need to vote to amend Brigade Rule 12 to add Training Officer and if passed, the position will be elected at our Annual General Meeting.

Lastly, further to initial discussions during the Five-Year Plan workshops, we will again review whether we add Community Engagement as an additional function of our Brigade or leave as is.

Roza Sage
President

Last \$1 232 of Macquarie Grant funds – member suggestions:

1. **Headsets** with 2 ear coverings for CAD Operators who prefer to quieten the noise even further.
2. **20 Chef caps** with brigade name embroidered on the front.
3. **10 aprons** with brigade name visible on them.
4. **Brigade t-shirts** with Brigade name displayed. Maybe a special logo/mascot style creation for these be explored by members?
5. **Shirt labels** of Brigade name and another with person's name for sewing onto yellow (and future blue) shirts.

General Meetings of 2026:

February 22

April 19

June AGM 21

August 16

October 18

December 13

Executive Committee Mtgs

January 28

March 4

May 6

Follow us on Facebook:

**RFS – Blue Mountains Group
Support Brigade**

SAVE THE DATES

February 10th Comms training for
General and CAD Operators
1830-2000hrs in ICC.

February 24th Supervisor updates
and training 1830-2000hrs in ICC.

March 28th and 29th
Communications Centre Assistant
training weekend for 10 new
Comms members.



Captain's News

We start the year with a Brigade Five-Year Plan 2025-2030, and two teams of AGM elected leaders who will guide us over the next six months to commence the work on areas within the Plan.

The **Executive Committee** have responsibility for the Systems & Practices:

1. Membership Recruitment and Retention
2. Advancing Technology
3. Expanding the Training Pathway
4. Acquiring Resources

The **Deputy Captains** have responsibility for assisting each other with 'Future Purpose Additions' which the members workshopped and believe are needed to assist the brigades of the district. At this stage we are remaining with the four functions of Communications, Catering, Aviation and Transport & Logistics. Community Education, as a function area, requires further consideration by the members.

The **Captain and Senior Deputy Captain** will work with everyone and continue to keep all members updated on progress made.

What have we achieved already:

1. Social Media started with Facebook in July, and we now have 735 followers and increasing daily
2. 16 new members in 2025
3. Business cards created and available for circulation
4. Chef hats (brigade name labelled) under investigation – a uniform requirement
5. Excel system being trialled for capturing volunteer work hours
6. RFS Activ being used to a greater extent by members across all four function areas
7. Cross-function taster workshops available and being offered to members
8. JotForm for training catering requests are now being used with District

Please continue to contribute and work with the brigade leaders to support the plans we have identified and commenced.

2026 will hopefully be a very good year for continuing to grow our brigade in both membership and tasking opportunities, to support the Blue Mountains brigades and community.

Dianne Knight
Captain

Welcome to our Newest Probationary Members

Probationary	Dual or New to Service	Probationary	Dual or New to Service
Lachie Smith	New to the Service	Cate Hocking	Katoomba/Leura member
Michael Stone	New to the Service	Phillip Psarras	New to the Service

Connecting with our District Group Officers

Our Blue Mountains Group Officers are a leadership team available to assist and support all 23 brigades of the Mountains. It is an enormous role for a volunteer to undertake as they work to guide us all in matters of safety, welfare, management, leadership, wellbeing, training, community risk and of course lead and guide in times of fire events.

The Central Sector brigades now have Stuart Fuller leading in the role of Group Captain 5, Chris Zito remaining as Deputy Group Captain 3 and Tim Parsley joining them as Deputy Group Captain 4. Our ten Group Officers, as well as the district staff members of the Capability Team have now been provided with 'view' access to our Brigade website roster system. This will allow them to follow our intricate crewing roster, so they know when we have a 'CAD capable' team in the ICC and are doing take back from Olympic Park. It will also allow them to see when and where we are catering training events throughout the next training season.

Fill a vacancy Withdraw offer

GSB Roster 1 Dec 2025 - 31 Jan 2026 rev 12810 as at 0953 Fri 19 Dec

The first crew position for ICC shifts is for a CAD operator.

Shift	Supervisor	Crew			Notes
		CAD			
ICC TOBAN Mon 1 Dec 1000-1800	Paula Metcalfe	Wendy Horne	Mick Metcalfe		
Memorial Service Wed 3 Dec 0945-1400	Dianne Knight	Peter McDonald	Kay Graham	Richard Jordan Regina McDonald	3 drivers and 2 assist
Deployment Dubbo Fri 5 Dec 1000-1600		Chris Davidson	Adam Hutchins		returning 9th November
ICC TOBAN Sat 6 Dec 1000-1800	Dianne Knight	Anne Brell	Sandra Croker	Melissa Plant Louise Willis	now have 2xCAD thanks
CAD Deployment Sat 6 Dec 1000-1600		Peter Horn			3 x Night shifts
ICC Sat 13 Dec 1100-1600	Heather Connolly	Sandra Croker	Dawn Foote		
Brigade General meeting Sun 14 Dec 1000-1200					BMFCC
ICC Sat 20 Dec 1100-1600	Paula Metcalfe	Peter McMahon	Mick Metcalfe	???	???
ICC Sun 21 Dec 1100-1600	Libby Gahl	Chris Davidson	Louise Willis	Anne Brell	Sandra Croker
ICC Sat 27 Dec 1100-1600	Heather Connolly	Louise Willis	???	Roza Sage	???

The colour coding is for different function areas.

KEY:

- Comms = blue
- Catering = beige
- Transport = green

Requesting Catering by JotForm

A JotForm catering request system has been created by the District Capabilities Team. It provides a fluid approach to requesting – crewing – accepting/declining job – supplying numbers - providing dietary needs – food selection preferred (hot/cold/grab & go etc) – staging area – timing. It is quick and easy to complete and flows into the invoicing and payment aspect as well for our Brigade.

The system was trialed for the last few training events of 2025 and will become 'the new way' to book Group Support for catering in 2026.

Who Drives What?

Essential information for those working in the ICC but it may be valuable to all our readers for situational awareness.

BLUE MOUNTAINS GROUP OFFICERS – COMMAND VEHICLES		
CALL SIGN	NAME	RESOURCE
BMG1	ANTHONY BLACK	BMCMDF
BMG2	GREG CORRIGAN	BMCMDG
BMG3 (retired call sign for the duration)		
BMG5	STUART FULLER	BMCMDH
BMG4	FRED TAYLOR	BMCMDI
BMDG1	COL BROWN	BMCMDJ
BMDG2	GREG MARTIN	BMCMDK
BMDG3	CHRIS ZITO	BMCMDL
BMDG4	TIM PARSLEY	BMCMDM
BMDG5	STEVE PARROTT	BMCMDN
BMDG6	PETER BENNETT	BMCMDO

Capturing Volunteer Hours

Support brigades across the state are trying to capture and record the number of hours members contribute to assist their districts and communities. Some use commercial products and others use QR code systems. The NSW RFS is also exploring a way to gather this data.

Group Support Brigade started experimenting with this gathering of hours for the month of November and the data was shared at our December 14 General Meeting. Collecting our hours is being done by:

1. One of the three sign-on books in different work areas.
2. The brigade website roster.
3. Emails of admin, and other tasks undertaken, to Bernd Luedecke at the end of each month.
4. Deployment records.

Our December total = 653.5 hrs.

BM GSB MEMBER HOURS		
Start	End	Duration
1-Dec-25	31-Dec-25	4w 3d
SUMMARY OF 19 TIME DONATIONS		
Activity	# Members	Member Hrs
Admin	4	53
Aviation	0	0
Catering	3.5	17.5
Com Eng	2	14
Comms	12	82
Meetings	24	36
Training	12	44
Trans&Log	8.5	47
Other	0	0
Out of Area	3	360
AVIATION+	1	0
TOTAL MEMBER HRS:		653.5
EXCL. AVIATION+		
HRS PER WEEK:		147.6

Training

The 2026 Training Calendar V1.0 has been placed in the **Blue Mountains District Portal**. Access to the Portal can be via the QR code here. Please load this essential Portal onto your mobiles or tablets. It has a great collection of resources available.



Please talk to our Training Officer, Chook Connolly, on matters concerning training at HeatherConnolly-vol@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Coming Up:

1. Deputy Group Officer 4, Tim Parsley, will be holding a Firefighter 1 & 2 training day followed by an assessment day in March or April. This is **an essential course for our 'new to the RFS' members**. The online section of these two modules can be found in OneRFS in FUEL. These studies must be done by the participants.
The following Group Support probationers need to get ready for the date which is soon to be confirmed: Lachie Smith, Phillip Psarras, Michael Stone
Talk to Chook if you have any questions via email (see above) or mobile 0474 424 445.
2. Chook is planning to offer training sessions for our current General Operators and CAD TRN/PRD Comms members on the second Tuesday evening of each month in the ICC from 1830-2000hrs. This will be starting on February 10th. Please make the most of this opportunity.
3. Our Comms Supervisors will also be having training update sessions on the last Tuesday of every month commencing February 24th in the ICC from 1830-2000hrs.
4. Our 10 new Comms members, who will be training to prepare for their CCA course (now scheduled for March 28 & 29, will get their invitation to sessions in February shortly. Plans still being finalised.

Catering for New Year's Eve 2025

Not your usual event to finish off the year but when you are invited, you go!

- BM Duty called for catering for the Lincoln Rock fire at Wentworth Falls at 1700hrs.
- Uniforms on and a crew of three head to Woolworths for fresh produce.
- Two trollies filled and joining the pay line – Woollies staff open a separate till just for our transaction – special treatment – you bet!
- BMCatering truck rolled out of the shed – loaded with food – driven to Wentworth Falls RFB.
- Firefighting crews released and fed.
- Pack up, then clean up back at the Shed.
- Missed the 9.30pm fireworks on the telly!
- Stay awake for the midnight ones or go to bed? Hmmm!



Deploying for Communication Night Shifts

Ever wondered about putting your hand up for CAD night shifts at a Section 44?

Peter Horn has recorded his December Quirindi experience and you can read it on the Brigade website in Brigade News.

- A truck breakdown at 3am calls for some local mechanical skills
- A “geographically challenged” crew need help to get the long distance to the event
- A Groupie is woken up to find the “lost” crew after failed welfare radio checks well into their shift
- Radio coverage is patchy, so which is it PSN, PMR, PSN COWS? No AVL and MDTs are a “mixed bag”. Skill flexibility is essential in the Comms world.

An entertaining read so have a look for it.