

NSW Rural Fire Service

Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade

July Newsletter 2026



From the President

Ahoy everyone! It's Winter, yay! Perhaps many of us prefer to stay warm and cozy near a fire, still, Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade members continue to work and train hard, as this Newsletter attests.

Thanks to all members taking training opportunities with the brigade – training, training, training keeps us ready for action during the upcoming warmer months. Winter is also a great opportunity to take a shift, so a big acknowledgement also to those members taking Catering, Logistics, Aviation and Communications shift, currently.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the excellent work of you, Roza Sage and thank you for everything you've done for Group Support, as President. Your calm, unflappable and thorough approach to everything you do, sets a great example for all of us.

Libby Gahl – President

Captain's News

The June 21 AGM saw some changes to elected roles within the Brigade. I would like to thank the outgoing members who are taking a break from previous roles – Rosemary, Roza, Anne, Heather and John W. My congratulations go to the incoming members – Libby, Rabi, David, Roza, Peter and Simon.

Our wonderful, long-servicing Catering leader, Rosemary Mann, has stepped down so she can take a well-deserved break from all the demands and organisational components of this very busy function area of Group Support. Rosemary will still be an active member of the catering team, but Rabi Higgs will now be taking on the Deputy Captain of Catering.

Dianne Knight - Captain

AGM 2026

Captain: Dianne Knight

SD Captain: Ian Mann

Comms Deputy: Peter Horn

Catering Deputy: Rabi Higgs

Aviation Deputy: John Brell

Transport & Logistics Deputy:
Bernd Luedecke

GSB Executive Committee:

President: Libby Gahl

Vice President: Roza Sage

Secretary: Regina McDonald

Treasurer: Sandra Whatham

Captain: Dianne Knight

Senior DC: Ian Mann

Executive Members: David Jones
and Peter McMahon

Additional BMGSB Positions:

Training Officer: Heather Connolly

WHS Officer: David Jones

Community Engagement Officer:
Chris Davidson

Equipment Officer: Simon
Ashdown

RFSA Representatives:
Peter McDonald and

Regina McDonald



Life Membership Recipients

Congratulations to our two latest Blue Mountains Group Support Brigade Life Members – Peter Horn and Paula Metcalfe.

Pictured below with some of our other Life Members present on the day – Janne Bent, Ian Mann and Rosemary Mann.



Welcome to our Newest Probationary Members

Probationary	Dual or New to Service	Probationary	Dual or New to Service
Jane Hope	Wentworth Falls	Merridee Arratoon	South Katoomba

Support Brigade Page now in OneRFS

It is with great delight that I can announce that there is now a page in OneRFS in the Our Volunteers drop-down section providing information on SUPPORT BRIGADES. This went live on Friday 19th June.

The documents located in this section have been transferred across from the Support Brigade Network Group in Teams/SharePoint. Members will notice several of our BMGSB training documents are included. This page is available to all volunteers to find out more about what support brigades do.

Shirts on Fire

Our Brigade now has extra apparel available to members for their personal purchase. Many brigades use Shirts on Fire to add to their casual attire for activities such as shed maintenance, tasking, training etc.

If approved at the August general brigade meeting then, as part of the bequest from the RFSA, every ordinary operational member will be able to select and order one item and have it provided for free. This will be a group order managed by one of our new Executive Members on the Committee – David Jones.

To see the selection of clothing available you need to go to the link below:

<https://www.shirtsonfire.com.au/collections/blue-mountains-group-support>

The password is BMGS526.

Premier's Flood Citation Awards at the Annual General Meeting

Congratulations to the recipients of the Premier's Flood Emergency Citation Award. Our thanks to Trish Doyle and Susan Templeman for assisting Superintendent Rob Vinznez with the presentations.



ANNE BRELL



CHRIS DAVIDSON



DIANNE KNIGHT



PATRICK LEONARD



PETER HORN



JOINED BY REGINA McDONALD & MICHAEL GREEN

Two additional dual members joined us for the group photo as they had received their Citations at a previous function.

Missing on the day were Wendy Horne and Antonia Ravesi.

Training Update

Communication Centre Assistant

Well done to the 6 new members who have completed their CCA course and doing their assessment this weekend.

They still have a lot of training to do in their training package, but our experienced Comms members will be available to assist them to practice their radio, logging, mapping, disposition board and phone skills.

The CCA modules are now loaded onto OneRFS on FUEL. Seven modules are available for anyone interested in revising or just looking at the beginning course for communications work.

Communication Centre Officer

CCO is the next comms course that our L&D Officer, Tracy Walsh, is going to run in late August. Our experienced comms members who have CCA and IMT (AIIIMS) can apply. Contact Chook if you are interested and want to discuss this further.

District CAD Proficiency

There is now a requirement for CAD Operators to pass the District CAD Proficiency assessment to qualify for or maintain their PRD level of access to CAD. All our current operators need to do some training sessions with Chook so they can be ready to sit the assessment before the next fire season. On the roster are 3 days - Tuesday 21 July, August 1 and 2.

Comms Shifts

As per our usual practice there will continue to be training opportunities within Comms shifts. Our Supervisors will listen to your needs and provide you with scenarios etc. to improve and revise all skills.

Our Brigade Marquee

The final expenditure on the Macquarie Grant was on the purchase of our Brigade marquee. This marquee will be a valuable resource for our Community events as well as any Brigade recruitment activities.

The instructions are the main kit bag. Please remember to always lay it down on returning it to our shed for safety reasons.



Check-In on RFSActiv

Please help support brigades across the State to get further improvements made to the new **Check-In** section of RFSActiv by using it. The system needs further drop down options in the Other section to cover the variety of tasking done in support brigades.

The state team who set the system up are willing to consider expanding its capability if the data collected shows a need.

Community Engagement has now been added to the selection in Reasons which is great.

Checking Out is also important but if you forget, those of us with admin authority can fix this up.

Catering the FF1 & 2 Assessment

Our Brigade catering team was serving up hot food at the FF Assessment on Saturday 11th July at South Katoomba RFB. Congratulations to the new firefighters who have completed this course.

Well done to the organisers, instructors and support crews who put a lot of time and planning into getting everyone through their initial course.

Working as part of our catering crew can take you all over the mountains visiting training brigades.

One of our teams is also off to the State Championships at Dubbo in September.

General Meetings of 2026:

August 16

October 18

December 13

General Meetings of 2027:

February 21

April 18

June AGM 20

August 15

October 17

December 12

Executive Committee Meetings of 2026 – 2027 (dates coming soon)

July

September

November

January

March

May



RFS Open Days in July

Several members attended the three Open Days offered at the Aviation Complex – Bankstown, State Logistics Centre – Marsden Park and the State Operations Centre – Sydney Olympic Park. A great initiative that was enjoyed by many.



Get Ready Weekend – Any Brigades interested in booking Clooney the therapy trained dog, need to contact our member, Louise Willis -

LouiseWillisvol@rfs.nsw.gov.au

He was booked by 4 brigades last year and is a popular crowd stopper so you can start those important safety plan conversations.

Clooney needs another RFS doggy jacket.

If anyone has a possible source for this, please let Louise know.



Clooney has visited many places in his therapy role:

Blue Mts Hospital
Local schools
State RFS
Headquarters.

He is also a trained sniffer dog!